Exploring Cultures and Expanding Horizons: The International Experience
of the Students Crossing Borders Community

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Abstract

This case study examines the experiences of international and U.S. domestic students living in an international residence hall. In-depth interviews with ten students and two staff combined with participant observation determined what events led to meaningful interaction between domestic and international students, and how students' perspectives on the influence of culture on their worldviews transformed. In addition to qualitative methods, a grounded survey was administered incorporating data from the interviews and participant observation. In alignment with contact theory and transformative learning, residents reported increased comfort with cultural difference and knowledge of other cultures through friendships formed on the hall. The findings of this study offer insight for staff and administrators of international residence halls in creating an environment that increases students' ability to understand other worldviews and develop cross-cultural skills.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Introduction

Increasing university students' exposure to different cultures and perspectives through campus internationalization has been an issue of high importance to universities in the United States in recent years (Parsons, 2009; Childress, 2009; Bok, 2006; DeLong et al., 2011; Knight, 2004; Otten, 2003). Factors driving institutions to incorporate international elements into the post-secondary education experience include advancements in technology and communication, an emphasis on the market economy, a focus on knowledge in society, increased levels of private investment, and decreased public support for education. The concentration on internationalizing the campus is a response to global influences and shifts in society (Knight, 2004). Further, the number of international students studying in the U.S. who can participate in on-campus programming and classes continues to increase, numbering 723,277 in 2011 (Institute for International Education, 2011). This large population of international students on university campuses offers institutions a chance to encourage interaction between its domestic and international students, helping both groups develop intercultural skills that would be useful in these shifting societies.

Campuses can establish numerous curricular and co-curricular programs to aid students in exploring global perspectives. Mestenhauser (1998) refers to the university campus as a "laboratory" (p. 9) for interacting with people from diverse backgrounds, a place to generate and share ideas. These laboratories create real-world interdependent and competitive situations both in the classroom and in activities around campus. This

includes adding international elements to the curriculum, sharing research done abroad in domestic classes, foreign language partnerships, international faculty, and on-campus clubs and activities (Mestenhauser & Ellingboe, 1998).

In this study, I will focus on the experiences of students in an international residence hall, a type of co-curricular program that provides students with exposure to international perspectives. The residence hall in this study is Students Crossing Borders (SCB), a living-learning community located on the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus. This community aims to provide international and domestic students with "interactive cross-cultural learning" (International Student and Scholar Services, 2011) and is sponsored and coordinated by the offices of Housing and Residence Life and International Students and Scholar Services. The community began its first full year of operations in the fall of 2010, and it currently hosts 132 students from 25 different countries.

The goal of this chapter is to offer background information useful for understanding the context of the study and the reasons for conducting research in SCB. In the introduction for this study, I will first introduce my research questions. Following this explanation, background information on campus internationalization efforts in the United States and on the University of Minnesota campus will be covered. This explanation will include the country's current accent on study abroad and the reasons for expanding internationalization efforts to the whole campus, and the position of international residence halls within these efforts. A brief explanation of methods used in the study will

follow the information on campus internationalization, and the last section will identify

the significance and limitations involved this study.

Statement of Study Purpose and Research Questions

This study was conducted to explore the experiences of domestic and

international students living in the SCB community and how their experiences contribute

to their perceived gains in intercultural competence. The study attempts to answer the

following questions:

1)   What kinds of experiences within the SCB community, including planned

events, unplanned events, and formed hall traditions, contribute to

residents' sense of increased intercultural competence?

2)   What kinds of friendships are formed between students, and how does

contact with other students in the hall potentially contribute to an

increased understanding of cultural differences and recognition of one's

own culture?

3)   How does leadership within the hall further intercultural gains amongst

residents, and from whom does this leadership originate?

The Focus on the International Experience: Study Abroad

For many universities, offering study abroad and international opportunities to

students is one of the primary methods of internationalizing. Study abroad can be an

important experience for students for future career benefits as well as for the acquisition

of cultural understanding. According to a survey of 352 businesses conducted by the Council for International Exchange, study abroad or international internship experiences are more important than any other factor in the hiring of recent graduates except for a student's major and the study of a foreign language (Trooboff, Vande Berg, Rayman, 2008). Additionally, the Lincoln Commission report states that sending U.S. students abroad is critical to the nation's competitiveness and national security. This report contains the goal of sending one million students abroad every year. According to the report, providing opportunities for U.S. students to experience different cultures, languages, and lands will prepare them for success not just in the U.S., but anywhere in the world (Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, 2005). The number of students from the United States studying abroad reflects the efforts of universities to send more students abroad, a number which has more than tripled over the past two decades with approximately 75,000 students studying abroad during the 1989/1990 school year, and 270,604 students studying abroad in 2009/2010 (Institute of International Education, 2011). However, this number represents a small percentage of total students enrolled in universities, indicating that the majority of students remain in the United States for their education.

Study abroad offers students an opportunity to improve intercultural skills, but it cannot function as the only method of internationalization used by universities. In a study conducted by Siaya and Hayward on the status of internationalization at community, liberal arts, comprehensive, and research universities, study abroad and overseas courses affect only a minority of U.S. students. Most students receive exposure to international

learning, including topics such as knowledge of other countries and cultures, foreign

language study, and an international focus to courses, in the classroom or on campus

(2003). To create the competencies necessary for operating in a more diverse world,

some scholars argue that study abroad must link with other opportunities on campus that

could offer an international perspective (Paige, 2003). Unfortunately, the number of

students participating in such intercultural activities on campus, including foreign

language classes, internationally-focused courses, international residence halls, language

partner programs, and international/domestic student buddy programs also tend to be a

small percentage of the campus population (Siaya & Hayward, 2003). The lack of

participation in such activities indicates that improvements need to be made in this area to

encourage participation in international activities on campuses that wish to

internationalize their campuses.

Creating an International Campus

Adding an international focus to university operations is another common

approach of internationalizing. These methods are often referred to as campus

internationalization or internationalization at home (IaH), and they include the interaction

between domestic students on campus and international ideas and peoples. Campus

internationalization encompasses institutional operations at all levels. Successful campus

internationalization means bringing international elements into curricular and co-

curricular activities on campus. These activities include agreements with partner

institutions abroad, faculty exchanges, and the recruitment of international students and

faculty. Campus internationalization also includes internationalization as part of the institution's mission and goals, and implies support for study abroad (NAFSA, 2006; Mestenhauser & Ellingboe, 2008).Whereas campus internationalization focuses on institutional operations as a whole, IaH, a newer term coined in Europe by Bengt Nilsson, encourages campuses to draw on local cultures and resources within campus borders to develop intercultural competencies (Nilsson, 1999; Paige, 2003; Knight, 2004). Nilsson (1999) describes IaH as "the knowledge and attitudes about international relations gained at the home university by the majority of students who will not be able to study abroad" (p. 12). In the United States, IaH is typically referred to as the global-local nexus (Woodruff, 2012). The global-local nexus is a response to the fact that despite increases in the number of students studying abroad, the majority of students in the U.S. remain at their home institution throughout their undergraduate experiences. It focuses on developing intercultural skills amongst students who remain at their home universities, drawing on the resources on campus and in the region to provide intercultural experiences that encourage interest in matters outside of the home country (Paige, 2003). These resources can include the international student population on campus and activities related to the SCB community on the University of Minnesota campus. If employers show preference for study abroad experience, as Trooboff, et al. suggests, then additional intercultural opportunities provided by the university could aid students, who for various reasons cannot study abroad, to find employment upon graduation.

Internationalization at the University of Minnesota

The University of Minnesota utilizes various methods run by the administration and students to internationalize its campus. Paige analyzed the efforts of the university to internationalize and included in these efforts the International Students and Scholar Services Office, workshops, multicultural student organizations, university partnership programs, international research conducted by faculty, and the college's international communities. These efforts occur in addition to study abroad options presented by the Learning Abroad Center. Directed toward IaH, Paige also includes the Minnesota International Center located near campus, which hosts international scholars and provides connections for the campus community (1993). In addition to the Minnesota International Center, I would also add Minneapolis's immigrant and cultural communities to IaH efforts that contribute to campus internationalization. The Somali, Hmong, Latino, and other communities offer opportunities for intercultural experiences without leaving the Twin Cities area through community programs, outreach efforts, and businesses.

Following her research on internationalization of the University of Minnesota campus, Ellingboe describes the efforts of campus internationalization as a "colorful ribbon that weaves throughout college cultures, from individual faculty of one discipline to a college's dean's office" (Mestenhauser & Ellingboe, 1998, p. 199). She contends that campus internationalization must rise from the efforts of leadership from multiple departments at various levels. At the conclusion of her research, Ellingboe identifies six components of an internationalized campus:

       1) support of international education from college leadership

2) faculty members' involvement in international research

3) an internationalized curriculum

4) the availability of study abroad programs

5) the integration of international students, scholars, and faculty into university life

6) international co-curricular units (residence halls, conference planning center, student unions, career centers, cultural immersion and language houses, etc) (p. 205)

A great deal of research exists on internationalizing curriculum and the effect of hiring international faculty or faculty involved in international research. However, research on Ellingboe's final component, co-curricular units on campuses, is an area that has not been fully developed. One of these units, international residence halls, appears on many campuses to provide intercultural experiences, but depending on the resources available to campuses and the composition of residents in the communities, the atmosphere and operations can be different. According to Kevin Dostal Dauer, the Program Director of Residence Life at the University of Minnesota, resources at individual universities cause variance in how residences are arranged and led (personal communication, December 20, 2011). The University of Minnesota is one university that uses an international residence hall to further its campus internationalization goals, and its approach to building an international community on campus is unique to the university due to the resources, composition of domestic and international students, and space available on the campus. While not all aspects of the University of Minnesota's

international residence hall can be replicated elsewhere, it does share a goal that many

other international residence halls on other campuses share: to provide an international

experience to residents that broadens their perceptions of both their culture and the

cultures of others. Therefore, this Plan A paper examines the experiences, interactions,

and leadership within the community to determine in what ways residents' intercultural

perceptions broaden. In the remainder of this first chapter, I will present a brief overview

of international residence halls and describe the methods used in this study. This chapter

will conclude with a description of this study's significance and its limitations.

International Residence Halls

International residence halls are a type of living and learning community that

create an environment in which domestic and international students live together and

interact. Learning communities, in general, do the following:

> Incorporate active and collaborative learning activities and promote
>
> involvement in complementary academic and social activities that extend
>
> beyond the classroom. Such approaches are linked with such positive
>
> behaviors as increased academic effort and outcomes such as promoting
>
> openness to diversity, social tolerance, and personal and interpersonal
>
> development. (Zhao & Kuh, 2004, p. 116)

International residence halls consist of a group of students living together bound by a

common interest with the goal of learning from one another. Students living within these

communities experience daily exposure to different cultures and people from other

nations. As described above by Zhao and Kuh, international residence halls promote openness to diversity and social tolerance through cooperative and interactive activities. Research on campus internationalization often includes residence life living arrangements that contribute to intercultural interactions, including international residence halls and language houses (Siaya & Hayward, 2003). Additional literature on specific characteristics of living learning communities will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter Two.

Methods Overview

To address the research questions, a case study was used for this study in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of how and in what ways SCB programming may increase residents' awareness of culture. I chose a case study for this research due to the environment in which the research occurred and time constraints on the research. SCB is a unique community that cannot be duplicated at another university, though elements from the community, including activities within the hall, leadership initiatives, and hall demographics, could be generalized. Further, as the researcher, I could not control or manipulate events that occurred on the hall, which makes a case study appropriate. Another methodology with which I have had some experience is ethnography, and while this study borrows some ethnographic methods, I could not contribute the time necessary in the field to accomplish an ethnography of the residence hall. A generalizable situation, the length of time spent in the field, and the inability to control the environment made a case study ideal for conducting this research (Yin, 2003).

Several research methods were utilized in this case study, including interviews, participant observation, document research, and surveys. Five domestic and five international first-year residents were interviewed during the course of the study to obtain in-depth accounts of occurrences in the community. Six of the residents were able to be interviewed once during the fall semester, and once during the spring semester. The remaining four were only interviewed during the fall semester. A mixture of international and domestic students were chosen for the study to examine how experiences living in the dormitory might form different perspectives on cultural difference, and to better comprehend the background of students, motives for joining SCB, and the relationships formed within the hall. Two of the four community advisors (CAs) were interviewed at the beginning of the spring semester as a means to explain the various programs attempted and organized by leadership within the hall. CAs are undergraduate student staff hired by Residence Life who support fellow students living in residence halls on campus. These individuals provide leadership on the hall through programming and by providing a connection to Residence Life. The perspectives of staff members were important as a means of providing the intent behind various activities, and as a means of comparison to residents' perspectives. Additionally, as staff members have lived in traditional residence halls in past years, the staff could gauge some of the differences between living in SCB versus traditional student housing.

Early conversations in the spring of 2011 with administration in charge of SCB programming the previous year revealed that students remained polarized between international and domestic students for a portion of the first semester. When research

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began in October of 2011, participant observation was therefore conducted to observe the composition of groups formed during hall activities as well as how students' interactions with one another changed throughout the year. Observations included planned and unplanned hall events conducted throughout the year from October 2011 until March 2012. Planned events appeared on SCB's blog, website, and on the Facebook page, allowing me to plan my observation times to coincide with these activities. My attendance at events planned by residents occurred upon receiving invitations from students to join these activities, such as movies and social lounge conversations. During the fall semester, observations tended to be sporadic and consisted of mostly planned events as I slowly got to know individuals in the hall and built trust. After January 2012, observations occurred once per week from the social lounge, usually on the fourth floor. The study also used a grounded survey to obtain a larger view of how relationships within the hall formed, what groups existed within the hall, and how students developed cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally while dealing with intercultural issues. The purpose of the survey was to obtain students' perspectives on how they felt their performance in intercultural situations improved, in addition to gauging the extent to which they understood how their own culture affects their behaviors and thoughts.

Documents related to SCB, including the online documents listed above, brochures, and advertisements were also analyzed. These documents provided background on the formation of SCB, and information regarding the community's mission and goals. A more in-depth explanation of the methodology chosen and the research tools used in this study will be given in Chapter Three.

Significance of the Study

Examining the development of students' comfort with difference, the building of friendships, and their increase in intercultural skills while living in an international dormitory is not a novel research topic. While researching past studies done in similar environments, I uncovered several studies on such dormitories conducted in various decades (Nesdale & Todd, 1998; 2000; Gareis, 2000; Bockner, McLeod, Lin, 1977; Bochner, Hutnik, Furnham, 1984; O'Brien, 1998). This study, therefore, builds upon the work completed in the past by adding information on the student experience using more qualitative research as opposed to quantitative. It contributes specifically to the University of Minnesota's efforts to internationalize its campus by providing new knowledge about participants in its international residence hall.

As I examined research done in the past in international residence halls, I noticed two particular points that I wish to address in my research. First, international residence halls have become more purposeful—they provide more programming and have moved beyond just providing a place to live. Second, much of the research done in these halls seems more quantitative than qualitative. Many of the older studies, prior to the 1990's, occurred in halls in which international and domestic students lived together, but the research never took into account any specific programming in the halls directed towards helping the two groups interact. However, later studies reveal programming in halls conducted by leadership in the community aimed at increasing students' ability to interact with students from different cultures. The Nesdale and Todd studies (1998; 2000) show that residence halls with leadership and programming directed at improving students'

intercultural competence tend to achieve that goal. Further, it seems many studies use quantitative methods that measure the level of students' intercultural competence or the number of people from other cultures with whom students interact. This study is significant because it examines the students' experiences in the residence hall rather than focusing on a pre-determined set of variables. Through the evolution of studies on these environments, it has been proven that these environments have some effect on students' intercultural competence. This study seeks to explain what leadership and experiences lead to the enhancement of that competence for the SCB community.

The University of Minnesota has been striving to internationalize the campus through its curriculum, faculty, research, and on-campus programs for the last 30 years (Paige, 1993; Mestenhauser & Ellingboe, 1998). This study is significant for the University of Minnesota because it will give one of the most recent offices contributing towards campus internationalization, the Office of Residence Life, a broader view of the student experiences within its community, and offer some insight into ways it could improve the SCB community in the future.

Researcher Positionality

I became interested in international residence halls and learning communities as an undergraduate student at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. During this time, I served as a resident assistant (known as CAs at the University of Minnesota) for another learning community—the Japanese House. The Japanese House at William and Mary numbers among eight language and cultural resident halls on

campus consisting of domestic and international students. These residences are living-learning communities for foreign language students and international students. As a resident assistant, I mediated difficulties students encountered both as college students and as representatives of their cultures. This experience allows me to understand some of the challenges students and staff at SCB face.

As a graduate student at the University of Minnesota in the Comparative and International Development Program, I studied the theory and challenges inherent in cross-cultural communication and understanding. In this study, I combine the knowledge I have obtained as a graduate student with the experiences of living in and leading an international community on a college campus.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this research project that warrant discussion. The largest limitation of this study was the voluntary nature of participation. Without financial incentives or personal benefit from the study, finding students willing to be interviewed and to take a survey became difficult. International students were especially reluctant to answer requests as research participants. Thus, the students involved in the study had a strong interest in the research, and they seemed to be particularly interested in increasing their ability to interact effectively with people from other cultures. This self-selection by students biases the study because participants likely had higher levels of motivation to seek cultural exchanges than the average hall resident. Tied to this issue, several of the students who participated had significant international experiences through

study or travel prior to their inclusion in SCB. This could differentiate them from the other residents in the community as they have experienced the struggle of adapting to a new culture in the past.

Another limitation was the small number of events I was able to observe in SCB. Planned events were posted online and in the hall, but unplanned events, many of which residents considered significant, were not observed. Amongst these events, residents mentioned late night study sessions, shopping trips, and meals together. As residents considered these events to be amongst the most influential in their time in SCB, the inability to observe these events affects what can be explained regarding the effectiveness of hall events contributing to the development of intercultural competence as a whole.

A third potential limitation was that my presence in the hall as both a researcher and participant observer may have affected the results of the study. Knowing that their actions and words could be recorded, students may not have behaved as usual while I conducted research within the community. More importantly, my interactions with interview participants caused those students to think deeply on their experiences when they may otherwise have not had those periods of reflection. As stated in the section on transformational learning in Chapter Two, having time to reflect on experiences affects the cognitive process of understanding intercultural experiences. Reflection aids in the development of intercultural competence. Thus, interviewed residents may be perceiving gains in their competence due to these periods of reflection, and this is not necessarily typical of the experience of the majority of the residents in SCB. Other SCB residents

may not be as aware of their improvements in intercultural interactions as the interviewed residents.

One must acknowledge that the lenses through which the data are viewed affects one's interpretation of them. While I tried to be as objective as possible, my own background and biases about international residence halls and intercultural relations undoubtedly influenced, to some extent, how I made sense of the data. Additionally, the survey used in this study measures the residents' perception of their improvement in intercultural skills, not their actual improvement. In this case, the residents are the lens through which data are filtered.

In the remainder of this paper, I will provide an overview of related literature and describe the study in more detail. Chapter Two will describe relevant theories and research that aid in understanding the study. Chapter Three will describe the methods used in the study in more detail, and Chapter Four contains data derived from the qualitative and quantitative research conducted for the study of SCB. Findings, conclusions, and the study's implications will appear in Chapter Five.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

Introduction

This literature review offers an overview of the theoretical and empirical literature about interacting with different cultures and cultural learning to provide background for this study on the SCB community. It begins with a description of intercultural competence and the methods scholars have used to measure gains in an individual's skill in managing intercultural interactions. This section provides a description on how scholars view intercultural competence, and some of the most important aspects of what makes an individual interculturally competent to gain a better understanding of what kind of competencies residents living in SCB may be developing. The second section explains the development of learning communities and offers an overview of how these communities, including international residence halls, are being used on campuses. The next section examines the evolution of intergroup contact theory, which clarifies the conditions necessary for meaningful intercultural interaction to occur. Following the explanation of contact theory, a description of transformational learning is discussed in relation to the need for students to shift their worldviews in order achieve greater understanding of other cultures. The final section delves into how an intercultural living situation could enable individuals to begin seeing events from a cultural perspective different from their own, using both etic and emic frames of reference.

Intercultural Competence

Universities and organizations around the world have recently begun to include intercultural competence as a goal for students, faculty, staff, and administration (Nam & Fry, 2010). However, what is intercultural competence, and what exactly should be expected from an individual who has achieved a high degree of intercultural competence? Trying to pinpoint an exact definition for intercultural competence provides experts in the field with a challenge because there remains no agreed upon determination of what components contribute to the theory (Nam & Fry, 2010; J. Bennett, 2008; Deardorff, 2008; Deardorff, 2006; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Fantini, 2009; Van de Vijver & Leung, 2009). To add further complication, not every definition fits all cultures, contexts, and conditions (J. Bennett, 2009). Some experts conceptualize intercultural competence as a group of qualities or behaviors, whereas more recent research describes a broader concept that includes attitudes and knowledge (Parsons, 2009). The majority of definitions and measurement tools attached to the term intercultural competence generally include knowledge (cognitive), motivation (emotion, affective), and skills (behavior, action) as necessary components (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

Deardorff (2006, 2008, 2011) offered one attempt to create conceptual boundaries for the topic of intercultural competence. She used a method called the Delphi technique to gather data from top international administrators at universities in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, collecting their definitions of intercultural competence as a means to determine what components should be included when discussing the concept. The only component on which all scholars agreed was the need for

understanding the worldviews of others. According to the study, a change in worldview is

critical to the development of intercultural competence. Worldviews consist of

distinctions appropriate to a culture. People with higher intercultural competence have a

greater sense of these differences, and can construe cultural difference with greater

complexity (Hammer, M. Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). Other top components included

adaptability, cultural self-awareness, listening and observation skills, openness toward

intercultural learning, and ability to adopt varying intercultural communication and

learning styles (Deardorff, 2008). The favored components tended to be general as

opposed to specific components. This may speak to administrators' desire to apply the

definition to various students and situations. However, one of the criticisms of

intercultural competence definitions is that they are either too general or present a

disjointed combination of attributes (Deardorff, 2006).

Professionals' difficulty in defining intercultural competence is not unique to

Deardorff's study. At a meeting of the Society for Intercultural Education Training and

Research (SIETAR), members were encouraged to examine and share their thoughts

about which components create intercultural competence. SIETAR did this to compile the

most common and most comprehensive labels in use in the professional field. However,

the group produced no conclusive results. The lack of results presented the issue of

whether or not relevant abilities within intercultural competence were present to assess,

and if these abilities were properly addressed in education and training (Fantini, 2009).

A plethora of similar terms used in related disciplines further complicates the

search for a definition of intercultural competence. Fantini (2009) unearthed multiple

terms in the literature and assessment fields that share similar, though not synonymous, components with intercultural competence, including multiculturalism, cross-cultural adaptation, global competence, and international communication. A term commonly interchanged with intercultural competence is intercultural sensitivity (Nam, 2009; Hammer, M. Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). Hammer et al. (2003) distinguishes between the two terms by defining intercultural sensitivity as "the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural difference," and intercultural competence as "the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways" (p. 2). Their research also concludes that greater intercultural sensitivity leads to the potential for a higher level of intercultural competence.

For the purpose of this study, I will use Janet Bennett's (2008) definition of intercultural competence: "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts" (p. 16). In addition to mentioning external behaviors and interactions, this definition includes the cognitive and behavioral factors necessary to support actions. Further, the understanding behind the actions in effective cross-cultural situations comes from the general ability to shift worldview and not an overreliance on cultural or regional specific knowledge.

Just as many definitions exist for intercultural competence, a variety of models and tools exist for explaining and measuring these competencies. These models and measuring tools include the Cultural Intelligence Scale (Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, Yee Ng, Templer, Tay, Chandrasekar, 2007), Fantini's Assessment of Intercultural Competence

(AIC), Olebe and Koester's Behavioral Assessment Scale for Intercultural Communication, and Mason's Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Fantini, 2009). However, I believe the model most useful for this study is the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). First, the scale allows for study participants to show characteristics of various stages of the model and does not lock participants permanently into one step; it is a continuum. This means that the model allows for changes in participants as they gain experience throughout the year. The stages within the DMIS model also link to the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), a tool used in the assessment and development of intercultural competence (Hammer, M. Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). Residence Life has expressed interest in using the IDI to measure the change in SCB residents' intercultural competence during their time in the community. Should the office wish to conduct IDI tests in the community at a later date, the results of the IDI could be easily aligned with this study. Another reason to use the DMIS is the prevalence of this model for intercultural research on the University of Minnesota campus. A great deal of research in the field of campus internationalization at the university conducted by offices, departments, faculty, and students use the DMIS when referencing intercultural competence. Thus, using the DMIS for this study incorporates this piece into the university's body of research.

Milton Bennett designed the DMIS scale to explain why some people proved more skilled at communicating across cultural boundaries while others appeared ineffective (M. Bennett, 2004). The DMIS conceives of the development of intercultural competence and sensitivity as sets of skills that develop along a continuum. Thus, as

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experiences of cultural difference become more complex, the potential for gains in intercultural competence increase (Hammer, et al., 2003).

Milton Bennett divides the continuum in half between ethnocentric worldviews—avoiding cultural difference—and ethnorelative worldviews—seeking cultural difference. The ethnocentric worldview consists of three levels: denial, defense, and minimization. Denial describes a worldview in which individuals consider their own culture as unquestionably the only true or real culture. Individuals in defense consider their own cultures as the only viable culture, superior to others. Related to defense, some individuals may find themselves in reversal. Reversal occurs when the benefits of an outside culture are heightened and positive, and the individual's own culture is seen as negative. Those experiencing minimization see their cultural worldview as universal. Individuals in the minimization stage accent similarities between cultures. It includes the belief that deep down, everyone is human. With this thought, no need exists to recognize cultural patterns or make cultural adaptations.

The ethnorelative worldview also contains three levels: acceptance, adaptation, and integration. The acceptance level includes people able to view their own culture as one of many possible options. These individuals have begun to recognize differences, and begin to see that these differences play a role in thoughts and interactions in society. Those in the adaptation stage shift perceptions and behavior to suite another culture. It should be understood that adaptation is not assimilation but an expansion of beliefs and ideas. Bennett describes the final stage, integration, as the expansion of oneself to allow for movement in and out of different worldviews. People at this level often centralize

their identities on the margins of cultures, not one central culture (M. Bennett, 2004). For a model of the DMIS, see Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Experience of Difference →

| Denial | Defense | Minimization | Acceptance | Adaptation | Integration |

Ethnocentric Stages   Ethnorelative Stages
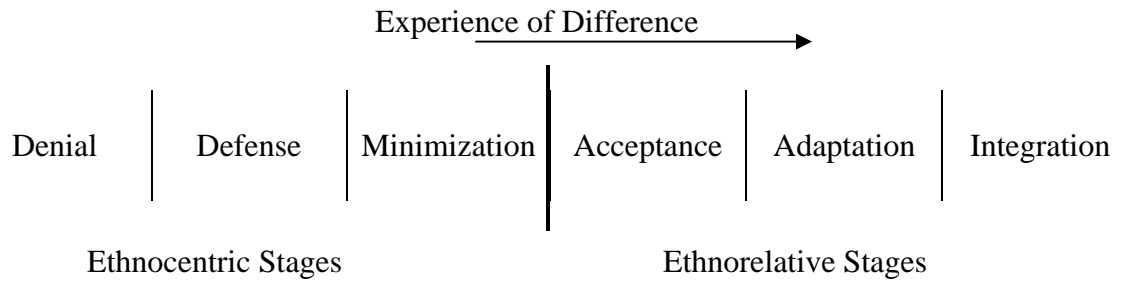
Source: J. Bennett (2009)

In this study, the DMIS served as a means of gauging approximately where residents in SCB currently stand in developing intercultural competence, keeping in mind that the DMIS is a developmental model. Developmental models identify stages of progression through which a person's intercultural competence evolves (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009). Thus, individuals will not remain at one stage; rather, they may progress between stages, or even skip stages. It is also possible for individuals to be at different stages simultaneously, depending upon the situation (Nam & Fry, 2010). While the model cannot perfectly describe every aspect of an individual's intercultural development, it allows for individual growth in situations with a lot of new cultural stimuli. The DMIS model served as a marker for SCB students' intercultural progress, providing a tool that describes how students experience and grow as their encounters with

cultural differences increase. Research participatns will likely be in different sections of the continuum not only during their time in SCB, but will fluctuate between the sections of the DMIS during the period in which they remain students at the University of Minnesota.

In sum, intercultural competence involves the ability to effectively handle cross-cultural situations, though various scholars have suggested different definitions. One consistent theme is the focus on how one's worldview must change for intercultural competence to increase. Achieving a unified definition of intercultural competence, however, does not explain how individuals develop intercultural competence. Further, given the difficulties developing a definition and a means of measuring the phenomena, describing the process of developing intercultural competence is unique to the situation. Someone living in a new country, who must become immersed in the culture to survive, has the potential to develop differently than someone living in an international dormitory within their home country. Ways in which residents living in SCB could begin cultivating intercultural skills and knowledge will be discussed later in this chapter.

Learning Communities

The use of learning communities to raise the quality of academic and social life for students has become common at a number of higher educational institutions (Stassen, 2003). As stated in Chapter One, learning communities link academics and social activities on college campuses to achieve learning opportunities outside of the classroom. The result of this linking between the academic and social spheres on a campus leads to

several positive factors for students including higher academic performance, increased

engagement in learning, higher satisfaction with the college experience, and personal

development (Stassen, 2003; Eck, Edge & Stephenson, 2007; Inkelas, Vogt, Longerbeam,

Owen & Johnson, 2006; Zhao & Kuh, 2004; Lenning & Ebbers, 1999).

The history of learning communities consists of a series of rises and falls as

various individuals and institutions throughout the years have tried to form bonds

between the academic and personal development aspects of students' lives. The first

learning communities appeared during the 1920's led by the "Experimental College" at

the University of Wisconsin, a program established by Alexander Meiklejohn in response

to the emergence of specialized academic departments. The Experimental College

attempted to link courses within various departments with a focus on democracy and

creating community. This program lasted only five years due to low enrollment and

disagreements amongst the faculty regarding values and the power structure of the

university. However, the college influenced another rise in the 1960's that aimed to

humanize the curriculum. The contemporary version of the learning community arose in

the 1980's in conjunction with the growing need for experiences leading to greater

personal development and student learning in institutions (Smith, 2001).

Learning communities link together academic knowledge with experiences

outside of the classroom. As reflected in their history, learning communities universities

establish learning communities for various reasons and with varying amounts of success.

Additionally, scholars have devised a number of learning community models according

to the type of participants, the environment in which the learning community forms, the

involvement of faculty, and the type of engagement students have with one another (Stassen, 2003). For example, Lenning and Ebbers (1999) place learning communities into the following categories:

1)   Curricular learning communities: communities that focus on coursework from different disciplines linked together by a common theme;

2)   Classroom learning communities: communities that focus on the classroom and integrate group learning through shared activities and cooperation;

3)   Residential learning communities: communities in which students who live together in a dormitory setting share common courses or a common academic interest;

4)   Student-type learning communities: these communities serve particular types of students on a campus such as honors students, underrepresented students, students with disabilities, or students who share a common academic interest.

Within learning communities, international residence halls like SCB are considered residential learning communities, in which students residing in the residence hall share one or more courses, and live in close physical proximity to increase out-of-class interactions. These interactions are designed to create further learning opportunities (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). However, the success of the added residential component to learning communities requires further investigation as the majority of research on learning communities in recent years has not involved residential models (Stassen, 2003).

In a study conducted by Siaya and Hayward (2003) on the internationalization at community colleges, liberal arts colleges, comprehensive universities, and research universities, only five percent of undergraduate students reported participating in an international residence hall, but twenty-four percent claimed they were interested in the opportunity. Of the institutions studied, thirteen percent offered international residence halls as a living option for students. At large research universities like the University of Minnesota, six percent of the student population reported living in international residence halls. The Siaya and Hayward study consisted of 752 U.S. colleges and universities, and 1,290 undergraduate students. While participation seems small, it is important to keep in mind that one residence hall is a small portion of an institution's population, and not all institutions offer international residence halls as a living arrangement. As stated earlier, establishing an international residence hall requires a number of resources, including a space large enough to house a community and a sponsoring department, which may not be available at all institutions. It is also important to note that students participate in learning communities voluntarily (Lenning & Ebbers, 1999). For international residence halls, this point is of particular relevance because integration of an individual into another culture is usually a voluntary process that only occurs when the individual seeks such contact. Voluntary contact could also explain why fewer students on campuses participate in international residence halls or other intercultural activities because not all students arrive on campus willing to interact with cultures different from their own. After a year of programming, SCB does not have enough applicants to fill its rooms—not all residents

volunteer to live in the community. More details about the voluntary nature of intercultural contact will be discussed in the section on Transformational Learning.

International residence halls are intended to benefit all students in the community by allowing residents to share cultural differences and interact with individuals of various backgrounds. Through my research into the SCB community and my own experiences living and working in international residence halls, these communities serve an important role for domestic students who do not plan to travel abroad by offering them a chance to explore other cultures within the boundaries of their home campus. Additionally, these halls make meeting international students easier because of living proximity. For students planning to travel abroad for course credit, experience interacting with international students offers general intercultural skills and culture specific knowledge that these students may use while abroad in the future. Living in international dormitories also aids international students by increasing their exposure to the host culture, which helps students acclimate to the campus, and gives them host culture guides through their domestic student hallmates.

On the surface, international residence halls offer domestic students and international students a good opportunity to interact because students are living, studying, eating, and doing activities together. However, these residence halls must offer more than proximity for the development of the relationships and trust necessary amongst students to build intercultural competencies. According to Deardorff (2008), a necessary component for developing intercultural competence is meaningful intercultural interactions that cause shifts in worldview and transform how people perceive events and

actions. Thus, a key component of SCB's success lies in students' abilities to view the world from differing points of view, developing both emic and etic lenses through which they can process cultural information. The development of these views and the interactions between students that lead to these shifts can be explained through contact theory and transformational learning. Contact theory explains what kind of interactions between students lead to situations capable of contributing to an expanded worldview, and why these interactions create stronger understandings between students from different cultures. Transformational learning explains how these interactions lead to an expanded worldview and a greater realization of how the students' own cultural background and assumptions form the lens through which they understand the world.

Contact Theory

Intergroup contact theory is based on the premise that any kind of contact across cultures would reduce stereotypes and prejudice (J. Bennett, 2009). Researchers studying contact theory examine the relationships between different groups of people and how in-groups interact with people who lie beyond their group's boundaries, people in the out-group. People everywhere organize their understanding of the social world into categories, which tends to maximize perceived differences in people outside of an individual's in-group, and accent the similarities shared by people within the in-group. Generally, individuals feel more positively towards people they perceive as being similar to them. The intergroup contact theory, sometimes called the contact hypothesis, attempts to describe how the salience of categories can be reduced and how groups can

recategorize their conceptualizations in order to include previous out-group members into their in-group (Brewer, 1996).

SCB itself reflects a community consisting of a series of in-groups and out-groups. When students join SCB, many belong to cultural in-groups and enter the community with preconceived notions of how individuals from other cultures should think and behave. Thus, the students tend to locate themselves and others into categories. In addition to cultural groups, Welcome Week plays an important role in forming in-groups. Welcome Week is a week-long period in which freshman on campus become introduced to campus life. Throughout this period, students remain with a designated group of students from their residence hall, completing activities together and forming new friendships. Often, this is the first group of students new freshmen meet on campus. Intergroup contact theory helps explain how barriers between these groups may be broken down and what kinds of programs could be used to facilitate understanding.

According to Pettigrew and Tropp (as cited in Nam, 2011), intergroup contact theory originated during the 19th century, but was dominated by Social Darwinism, which led to a negative view of intergroup contact due to hostility between different groups and the sense of superiority felt by certain groups. However, events following World War II caused a shift towards a more optimistic perspective based on the perceived benefits of shared interracial experiences, common objectives, and mutual understanding. Based on social psychological disciplines and William's (1947) four principles for reducing intergroup tensions, Gordon Allport (1954) developed four conditions for optimal contact

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which he published in a book titled *The Nature of Contact*, which continues to be used today. These conditions include:

1)   Equal Status: Individuals involved in the situation should hold equal status regardless of their status outside of the situation.

2)   Common Goals: Sharing a common goal furthers the process of reducing prejudice and increasing contact between groups.

3)   Intergroup Cooperation: Goal attainment must be an interdependent effort without competition between groups.

4)   Support of Authorities, Laws, or Customs: Authorities, laws, and customs establish the norms of acceptance within a society. In order for contact to occur and be successful, the contact must be supported by one or all three of the above mentioned components.

        (as cited in Pettigrew, 1998, pp. 66-67)

Since its creation, research on the viability of Allport's hypothesis has been mixed. While controlled laboratory tests have shown support for the theory, little research is available on whether or not all four of Allport's conditions could be met in real-life situations (Nesdale & Todd, 1998; 2000; Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Research by Pettigrew (1998) questioned the necessity of all four of Allport's conditions to achieve a reduction in prejudice and added that Allport's hypothesis only suggests "when" contact changes attitudes and behavior, not "why" or "how." Further, Allport's conditions contain too many stipulations, making it difficult to disprove. Pettigrew also mentioned

causal sequence problems with Allport's hypothesis—people with strong in-group biases may avoid out-groups altogether.

Further difficulties arise from generalizability. Results from research on the theory must be generalizable in a variety of situations for in-groups and out-groups beyond the research. To overcome these issues, Pettigrew suggests viewing Allport's four points as facilitators rather than requirements. Having any of Allport's conditions present in a situation makes the chances of successful contact higher and possibly easier, but intergroup contact that reduces prejudice and increases understanding can occur without all of Allport's conditions (Pettigrew, 1998). Having all of Allport's conditions present does not guarantee positive contact. An article by Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, and Christ, reviews further criticisms of contact theory, including the possibility of negative views on differences occurring. In situations in which individuals do not voluntarily choose to have encounters with a different group, the result is an increase in prejudice rather than a decrease (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner & Christ, 2011).

In addition to describing Allport's conditions as facilitators, Pettigrew also expanded the theory to include a fifth, and required, component: "the contact situation must provide the participants with the opportunity to become friends" (1998, p.12), something more applicable to the development of intercultural competence than the reduction of prejudice (Bennett, 2009). In this study, friendship is defined as individuals who spend significant time in one another's company who are able to share and empathize with each other's experiences. Friendship is important because it invokes all four mediating processes identified by Allport. The addition of friendship also suggests

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that constructive contact relates to long-term relationships instead of initial contact (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The role of friendship played an important role in the study on SCB. However, it should be noted that residents of SCB defined friendship somewhat differently. More details about this will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Pettigrew and Tropp supported the above claims through a meta-analytic study (2006). The analysis consisted of 515 studies and more than 250,000 subjects. As a result of this study, Pettigrew and Tropp concluded that intergroup contact does reduce prejudice, but that Allport's conditions do not determine the success of the reduced prejudice. Added to Allport's conditions, Pettigrew and Tropp closely examined the role of friendship in contact, and determined that forming friendships leads to reduced prejudice because friendships involve common goals, cooperation, and equal status over a period of time (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). A second meta-analysis conducted by Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew, and Wright also supported the role of friendship in the reduction of prejudice, stating that initial contact including self-disclosure reduces anxiety, and that continued friendship leads to empathy that can be expanded to other members of an out-group. The study also closely links friendship to the development of intercultural competence:

> The more actual interactions that take place between cross-group friends over the
> course of the relationship, the more opportunities exist for friends both to be
> reminded of their differing group memberships as well as to learn that they are

each unique individuals who may share some meaningful commonalities.

(Davies, Tropp, Aron, Pettigrew & Wright, 2011, p. 341).

As stated in the previous section, a large portion of developing intercultural competence relates to the recognition of different worldviews and one's own culture. Recognizing the differences between groups while utilizing commonalities to establish connections simultaneously cements the foundation for building greater intercultural competence. Further, a lasting friendship offers time to explore differences in greater depth with increasing complexity as anxiety decreases.

Other research using contact theory also supports the importance of friendship in developing intercultural competence. Pettigrew and Tropp's meta-analysis influenced Parson's (2009) study on the effects of internationalized universities on domestic students in the United States and Australia. Parsons measured the outcomes of internationalization based on six scales: foreign language proficiency, knowledge of a specific region or country, international knowledge, international attitudes and perceptions, cross-cultural skills, and international behaviors. Students who had three or more international friendships scored higher on the greatest number of scales.

Nesdale and Todd (2000) conducted a comparative field study in two international residence halls in Australia in an attempt to determine the effects of intervention designed to promote contact between international students and domestic students. They claim that:

Halls of residence have a particular relevance to the assessment of the contact

hypothesis. To some extent, they can be seen as mini-societies in which people

eat, live, work and socialize, but in a comparatively small geographical area. (p.

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Additionally, residence halls provide an everyday environment in which the facilitating

factors compiled by Allport and other researchers appear naturally. At the conclusion of

the study, domestic students who participated in the residence hall with programs

designed to encourage intercultural interaction showed increased cultural knowledge, felt

they had more intercultural contact in the hall and on campus, and felt that intercultural

friendships were important (Nesdale & Todd, 2000).

As a study conducted within a residence hall, Nesdale and Todd's research

highlighted other issues related to contact theory relevant to my examination of SCB. The

international students in Nesdale and Todd's study did not show any improvement on any

of the scales used for the research, and they hypothesized that international students

living in the hall had previous international experience. Thus, the results were not as

dramatic as the results for the domestic students (Nesdale & Todd, 2000). This aspect of

their research is particularly relevant for this study, as SCB's international student

population possessed a similar background of prior international experience.

The variety of international and domestic students in the halls also presented the

researchers with a challenge. Students who came from the majority culture or who were

among large numbers of individuals from their culture on the hall tended to interact more

with people from their own cultures. Students who represented minority cultures on the

hall tended to interact more with individuals from different cultures due to lack of people

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from their own culture with which to interact. Remaining within groups bound by common culture presents fewer difficulties than crossing those boundaries, and without programming or an interest in other cultures to encourage them, most individuals choose to remain with others from their own culture.

Another study conducted by Bochner, Lin, and McLeod (1977), utilized a modification of Milgram's "small world" method. The small world method examines the length of social distance between groups of people in a society. Milgram's study revealed that human society is a small world type network with short paths. Bochner, Lin, and McLeod traced friendship patterns in residence halls at the University of Hawaii. Though domestic students and international students lived together in the residence halls, friendship groups consisted mostly of individuals from the same cultural group unless the population of a group on campus was too small to form its own group, forcing these individuals to form more intercultural friendships.

While establishing friendships may be an important part of understanding a new culture, the methods used to relate to friends within that new culture must also be learned (Nesdale & Todd, 2000). The nature of friendship differs according to culture. How friends are made, the time it takes to form friendships, and the types of relationships with different friends vary greatly across cultures (Pettigrew, 1998). An example of this phenomenon occurs in a study conducted by Gareis (2000) on intercultural friendships between U.S. and German students. Though Gareis concluded that the German students were content with the friendships formed, issues arose around differing views of friendship formation, the depth of friendships, and the definition of the word "friend."

Further, the positive affect given towards the students' intercultural friends was not extended to the out-groups those friends resided in as a whole.

Contact theory describes the conditions in which the development of intercultural competence flourishes, and targets friendship as the medium through which it may develop. Friendship is an important aspect of first-year college life in general as friendships made during this period could reoccur and continue affecting students through all four years at the institution. Thus, if international friendships occur during first-year, they could continue to have an effect on the individual throughout the entire college experience. Due to potential for long-term benefits, I believe that these friendships not only contribute to the effectiveness of an international dormitory, but to campus internationalization as a whole. Contact theory, however, does not entirely explain the process through which individuals can develop intercultural competence with these friends, nor what happens cognitively to change worldview. The following section outlines another theoretical perspective, transformative learning, that can help explain the process through which individuals develop intercultural competence.

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning offers insight on the thought processes behind worldview changes that may occur when individuals encounter a new culture. Alder (1975) claims that "all persons are, to some extent, culture-bound: they are products of the culture in which they have lived" (p. 20). Living within a culture causes an individual to become comfortable within the borders of that culture. Being a member of a culture means

understanding behavior, mannerisms, and traditions, knowing that those same aspects of the culture are understood by everyone else in that culture. This establishes a mindset that can cause conflict when two cultures come in contact because various aspects of one culture cannot be implicitly understood in the other culture. Adjusting to situations in a new culture requires a shift in the way an individual views the world and how it functions. Contact theory indicates that the process of developing intercultural competence is an active process that does not occur only due to proximity to a new culture. Mezirow (1991), in his research on transformative learning, similarly states, "Approved ways of seeing and understanding, shaped by our language, culture, and personal experience, collaborate to set limits to our future learning" (p. 1). Also, constructs and theories only have value within an individual's limited range of experience, and may not be true outside of that experience. For an individual to change perspectives and understand constructs beyond the individual's range of experience, Mezirow (1991) also calls for conscious action and reflection.

Mezirow (1991) perceives transformational learning as something that ends in a changed worldview, something necessary for the development of intercultural competence. This conceptualization is particularly important for my study for a couple of reasons. First, as pointed out by Deardorff's Delphi study discussed previously, scholars disagree on necessary attributes for intercultural competence. However, one agreed upon point is that a change in worldview must occur for intercultural competence to increase. Additionally, changing worldviews indicates an ability to recognize aspects of one's own culture, and thus a better recognition of where differences occur between cultures.

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Understanding cultural differences indicates a shift from the ethnocentric worldview in the DMIS, to more ethnorelative worldviews.

Mezirow's conceptualization of transformation contains ten steps, and it begins with a disorienting dilemma. A disorienting dilemma severs as the catalyst for change that occurs when an individual encounters a situation that forces the individual to question long-held beliefs. This dilemma often appears as a life crisis, such as the death of a loved one or the loss of a job. After this dilemma, the individual moves through feelings of guilt or shame, begins assessing sociocultural, epistemic, or psychic assumptions, and eventually begins recognizing the discontent and sharing the experience. The individual eventually explores new options for roles and relationships, plans a course of action, acquires the skills and knowledge necessary for the plan, builds competence, and reintegrates the new perspective into everyday life (Mezirow, 1991).

Transformational theory shares some elements with culture shock as individuals who travel abroad and immerse themselves in a new culture experience many of Mezirow's ten steps in transformational learning (Taylor, 1994). Culture shock occurs when anxiety, frustration, and confusion from living abroad build up within an individual, which continues until the individual begins to adapt (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2010). Generally, the stages of culture shock appear on a U-curve that includes cultural euphoria, confrontation, adjustment and adaptation (Lysgaard, 1955) or on a W-curve (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). Though research involving these two models has shown that few international experiences match these curves exactly, intercultural trainers still rely on these models (Ward, Okura, Kennedy & Kojima, 1998).

However, researchers such as Adler (1975) take the concept further and suggest a transformational growth and learning experience that results in a change of consciousness in values, beliefs, and understanding. These changes resemble the shifts in consciousness Mezirow describes in transformational learning.

In addition to sharing some commonalities, elements of culture shock added to transformational learning help explain the transformation of worldview in cultural situations with more depth. Taylor (1994), through qualitative research examining people identified as interculturally competent, merged elements of culture shock with transformational learning to create a new process. According to Taylor, transformational learning partially explains the process of developing intercultural competence. Taylor points out several weaknesses in Mezirow's theory, but two are relevant to this study. First, cultural adaptation is a recurring process. People placed in a new culture constantly experience moments of disequilibrium, readjust, then become unbalanced again. Second, Mezirow's theory does not account for experiences people bring to a new cultural experience. Individuals typically enter new cultural experiences willingly, adding an element of readiness to the theory. This point is especially relevant to this study because all students in SCB voluntarily enter the community or have expressed interest in learning about different cultures, and many enter with prior experience abroad or experiences with different cultures in their home communities. Taylor's process for becoming interculturally competent, therefore, includes a more comprehensive set of factors leading to a change in worldview while interacting with different cultures. These factors include:

1) Setting the Stage: this includes the individual's background, including past experience with other cultures, goals, and the individual's learning readiness.

2) Cultural Disequilibrium: Periods of dissonance that cause stress and intense emotions.

3) Cognitive Orientation: the extent to which and individual reflects on new experiences, whether this be through thoughtful action or drawn out periods of reflection.

4) Behavioral Learning Strategies: This includes how the individual learns new behaviors and gathers information, including through observation, participation, and friendship.

5) Evolving Intercultural Identity: Includes changes in values, increased self-confidence, and changes in worldview. (1994, p. 162)

Again, Taylor's model portrays an iterative process leading the individual back to the beginning upon reaching the end. New experiences gained through the evolving intercultural identity become part of the individual's background as the process begins anew. However, the idea of disorienting dilemmas leading to changes in cognition and eventually to changes in worldview works with both Taylor's and Mezirow's theories.

Transformational learning theory helps explain the complex cognitive process that leads to an increase in intercultural competence. This process differs from normative learning, and accents the end result—a change in worldview. Hunter (2008) explains the difference between what happens to an intercultural learner's perspective during a

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normative development process versus a transformative process. In the normative

process, the student shuffles the disorienting dilemma into existing meanings

perspectives. A meanings perspective is the meaning an individual places on an action or

event. To express this, Hunter (2008) used the example of a U.S. student studying in

Spain. Even though the student physically resides in Spain, the student could still be

having a U.S. experience should that student not obtain an emic view of cultural

encounters. To experience Span from a Spanish perspective, the U.S. student would not

only have to live in Spain, but understand the meaning behind cultural phenomena.

Transformative learning results in a change in the student's entire frame of reference.

This new perspective is based on a reinterpretation of not only *what* to consider but *how*

to consider the meaning schemes. Going back to the example, when the U.S. student

studying in Spain begins viewing events from the Spanish perspective, understanding the

underlying cultural assumptions that lead to action and thought, the student begins having

a Spanish experience. This student can understand the same event from both a U.S.

perspective, and a Spanish perspective (Hunter, 2008). Once this transition has occurred,

events cannot be perceived in the same way they were before the shift. This refined

perspective is the ideal result of SCB, and more holistically, campus internationalization.

Taylor's alterations of Mezirow's thoughts on transformational learning affect

this study as students in SCB go through much of this process. As stated earlier, the

majority of SCB participants arrive with either prior international/intercultural

experiences, or with past events that affected their interests in different cultures. All

students in the community at least have shown interest in international-related studies

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whether or not they applied for SCB. Further, living with people from other nations suggests the possibility of several instances of disequilibrium throughout the year. Students in SCB live in close quarters and build friendships between people from various cultures, and throughout the duration of these relationships students encounter instances where differences surface. Living in an educational environment that focuses on intercultural issues also encourages students to reflect on their experiences. In transformation learning theory, reflection is necessary to cognitively understand changes occurring in values and beliefs because it forces individuals to confront preconceived notions and alternatives to those notions (Mezirow, 1991; Hunter, 2008; Taylor, 2008). Finally, SCB offers opportunities for students to interact with one another in multiple ways, including as an observer, a participant, and a friend. Both planned and unplanned events occur in the hall, and students choose their level of participation. Some students prefer to only watch events as they occur and observe interactions, others participate more actively. All students develop friendships in the hall, though these friendships have various degrees of depth. Some students living in SCB might stick to cultural discussions focused on surface level elements, such as a culture's food, clothing, and everyday lifestyle. However, some students could discuss aspects of cultural difference, including views on politics, religion, and family values—the relationships Pettigrew and Tropp identify as necessary to the development of intercultural competence.

Conclusions

In order for students to move forward in their development of intercultural competence, they must begin to view the world from multiple perspectives beyond the one provided by their own culture. To obtain these worldviews, students must encounter cultural differences that bring about changes in cognition, affect, and behavior. In a sense, they must experience the world through the eyes of a person with a cultural background different from their own. In theory, one of the best methods of gaining knowledge of other cultures and becoming better able to empathize with individuals from other cultures is to develop cross-cultural friendships. Further, developing understanding between friends can be furthered by equality of status between friends, cooperation, shared goals, and support for the friendship by authority figures.

The following chapters will describe the study of SCB residents in more detail. Chapter Three will cover the methods used in the research including further discussion on the interviews, observations, and survey.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction

The review of the literature in the previous chapter revealed that a change in worldview and the development of strong relationships contribute to higher levels of intercultural competence. This chapter will focus exclusively on the SCB case and the methods used in data collection and the way in which the data were used to answer the research questions introduced in Chapter One. Thus, this chapter begins with an explanation of case study research and the rational behind selecting case study methodology to frame this study. After explaining the research methodology, the research context is considered, specifically the SCB community. Next, greater detail on the qualitative and quantitative methods used in the study will be covered.

Research Context: The Students Crossing Borders Community

The focus of this study was the Students Crossing Borders (SCB) community located on the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus. The 2011-2012 school year marked its second full year of official operations in which intentional programming occurred to serve domestic and international students interested in learning about different cultures. The community was formed after significant research on similar communities at other large universities in the Midwest and at other Big Ten institutions.

SCB differs from traditional student residence halls in several ways. First, to join the community, interested students had to complete an application specifically for SCB in addition to the application for Residence Life housing. Within the application, students

explained their previous international experience and the cultures or nations that interested them. Asking these questions allowed Residence Life to pair students as roommates who shared interests and reasons for exploring a cross-cultural community. Second, Residence Life provided additional funding to community advisors (CAs) to coordinate extra cultural-related activities, and provided resources for CAs to learn about the countries and cultures represented on the hall. The establishment of cultural activities to increase knowledge of other cultures and the living arrangements of residents within the community were intentional.

The community hosted 132 residents from 25 different countries during the 2011-2012 school year. Of these residents, 55 were domestic U.S. students who were born and raised in the United States, and the remainder were from countries outside of the United States. Of the international students on the hall, the largest population came from China with a population of 34 (see Table 1). The gender ratio on the hall was split fairly evenly, with 67 men and 65 women (the ratio of male to female students was even, but there were three male staff and only one female staff member). This figure included both international and domestic residents.

Table 1: Residents in SCB: Top 5 Countries of Origin

Country of Origin	Population in the Community	Percent of Population
United States	55	42%
China	34	26%
Third Culture Students[1]	6	.05%
India	5	.04%
South Korea	5	.04%

SCB occupied the third and fourth floors of Middlebrook Hall, located on the University of Minnesota's West Bank. The community shared the building with other learning communities, including Honors Housing and the West Bank Arts House. Each SCB floor was divided into four co-educational wings, each of which contained approximately 16 students. There were two CAs per floor.   Both floors also contained a social lounge and TV lounge for socializing and events, as well as a study lounge.

In addition to living together, students in SCB had the opportunity to participate in activities reserved exclusively for SCB residents, including language clubs, leadership activities, and an SCB class. Language clubs consisted of Arabic, French, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish clubs. Students also participated in various leadership activities. Leaders Crossing Borders, which began during the middle of the fall semester, consisted of SCB residents who gathered weekly to plan hall events and activities. Additionally, individual students had the opportunity to plan and conduct hall activities such as movie

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[1] Third Culture Students are students who have spent a significant portion of their lives outside of the culture of their parents. Often, these individuals have contact with multiple cultures , but may not have full ownership of any of them. In the case of SCB, they are U.S. citizens who were born or raised abroad in one or several different countries. Typically, these students tend to be the children of military personnel stationed abroad for long periods, individuals in the foreign service, missionaries, or individuals conducting business abroad.

nights and holiday gatherings. In order to investigate the intercultural learning within the SCB context, a case study method was selected.

Case Study Research

Case study research is ideal for research involving observation of participants in natural situations, such as a residence hall. According to Yin (2003), "the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events…" (p. 2). SCB contained a real-life living situation with events that could not be changed or manipulated for the research. Case study methods offered many opportunities for first-hand observation. Additionally, I could not control events in the community or the behavior of residents, which was supported by case study methods. Given that this study attempted to answer "how" students improve intercultural competence on the hall, and that the researcher had no control over student behavior, the case study was the ideal framework. This research is a single case study utilizing mixed research methods.

In order to develop validity in case studies, Yin (2003) suggests various tactics that can be implemented during the initial research design, data collection, data analysis, and composition phases of the research. One of these tactics is using theory to support the research questions. Thus, I used contact theory and transformative learning theory to help ground the research questions, data collection, and data analysis processes.

Another tactic recommended by Yin is triangulation, which means using multiple methods in a study to improve the confidence of the results. During data collection, I

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used multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative evidence for triangulation.

Interviews contributed detailed data on events occurring in the hall and relationships

being built. Also, by interviewing both students and CAs, I was able to gain two

perspectives on events occurring within the hall. Participant observation of events

mentioned in interviews allowed me to observe interactions amongst residents first-hand,

and reviews of documents contributed information on events I could not attend. The data

from these qualitative methods contributed to the creation of a grounded survey, a survey

that incorporated data received from other methods into items to determine whether

conclusions reached from those methods were transferable to a larger portion of the

population. This survey allowed me to gauge whether or not data given by individuals

was reflective of the hall as a whole. All questions developed within these methods were

linked within a chain of evidence, which allowed me to trace answers given by

respondents directly to my research questions. To create this chain, I developed a

secondary set of questions that needed to be answered in order to obtain the answers to

the research questions. Then, I identified which methods could be used to answer each

question: interview, survey, or observation. Finally, using that information, I developed

the questions that were asked directly to participants via interviews or the survey. Thus,

after all data was collected, I traced common answers to questions in the interviews and

survey back to the secondary questions, and from there to the original three research

questions. According to Yin, such a chain of evidence with a study protocol increases

validity and reliability of data (2003). For the chain of evidence used for this study, refer

to Appendix 1. To ensure validity of data, I offered the research results to interviewed

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residents and the CAs to confirm that my data matched their own perceptions of the hall. This was done through a combination of in-person meetings and e-mail communication.

Qualitative Methods: Interviews

In order to attain a more nuanced understanding of the students' experiences in SCB, multiple qualitative methods were used to obtain data. Semi-structured interviews with students and staff members served as the primary research method in this study. According to Fetterman (2009), interviews "determine similarities and differences in the ways people see the world" (43). Interviews serve as the primary method for this study because increasing intercultural competence relies heavily on being able to recognize varying worldviews. By interviewing students, more details surfaced regarding their individual views on the development of the hall. Fetterman also describes several types of questions interviewers may use to elicit different types of information during the multiple stages of an interview. Many interviews begin with survey or "grand tour" questions aimed at getting a broad picture of how a system functions. These types of questions also develop boundaries for the remainder of the session or the study as a whole. While conducting the research on SCB, broad questions were asked regarding participants' interest in signing up to live in SCB and their feelings on SCB as a whole. Upon defining boundaries, interviewers then develop more specific questions to delve further into a subject and provide deeper knowledge on a participant's views (Fetterman, 2009). This approach was also utilized during the interviews with SCB students, as they were asked to discuss how their international and domestic friends in the hall handle conflict and

interact. Both student and staff interviews included a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions illuminated conflicts between different worldviews in the hall, and closed-ended questions quantified behaviors of residents.

Specifically, the research consisted of ten student interviews and two staff interviews. Five international students and five domestic students were interviewed in order to obtain an inside perspective on events in the hall and the occurrence of cross-cultural situations. Of these interviewees, five were men, and five were women. All interviewed residents are referred to by pseudonyms for this study. For a breakdown of the residents interviewed, see Table 2. Each interview took between 20 minutes and an hour. All ten residents were interviewed once during the fall semester. Six of these interviewed residents were available during the spring semester for a second interview. The second series of interviews were conducted through e-mail and online chatting due to scheduling constraints of residents and the researcher. Two of the four student staff members on the hall, one male and one female, were interviewed once during the school year in the spring semester to determine what kind of programs were purposefully introduced to the community to facilitate the development of intercultural skills and reflection on cross-cultural experiences. Both staff members were from the fourth floor and have had experience as staff in other residence halls in previous years. Thus, staff provided valuable insight into the differences between living in a traditional residence hall and SCB. All interviews and participant observation data were coded using Atlas.ti. The interview questions used in the collection of data appear in Appendix 2.

Table 2: Interviewed SCB Residents

Name	Origin	Fall Interview	Spring Interview	Floor	Prior International Experience	Application to SCB
Frank	U.S.	X	X	3rd	• International Friends	Applied
Elana	U.S.	X		3rd	• Short trip Abroad to Italy, France, Spain, and Egypt in high school for one month	Did not apply
Lyla	U.S.	X		4th	• Father from abroad • Lived in Switzerland for two years when young	Applied to SCB
Elizabeth	U.S.	X	X	4th	• Attended school in a diverse area • Week immersion in Costa Rica senior year of high school	Did not apply
Aaron	U.S.	X	X	3rd	• Traveled to Norway for a month in junior high school • 5 summers of Concordia College's Norwegian language and cultural immersion program	Applied
Reika	International (East Asia)	X	X	4th	• Multicultural family • Year abroad in Italy during high school	Applied
Amir	International (Middle East)	X	X	4th	• Minority in his country • Travel to nearby countries • Summer writing camp in the United States	Did not apply
Xavier	International (Latin America)	X	X	4th	• International friends in home country • Aunt lives in the United States	Did not apply
Anna	International (South Asia/Africa)	X		4th	• Grew up in a country different from her ethnic heritage • Some travel abroad for vacation	Did not apply
Justin	International (East Asia)	X		4th	• Lived in Hawaii for two years at the end of high school	Did not apply

Qualitative Methods: Participant Observation

Participant observation was chosen as a method in order to gain support for data gathered from the in-depth interviews through observing the behavior of students in the SCB community. Fetterman claims that "participant observation combines participation in the lives of the people under study with maintenance of a professional distance that

allows adequate observation and recording of data" (2009, p. 37). Participant observation, like interviewing, begins with a wider scope and eventually narrows to capture finer details of a situation. The observation of greater detail begins when the researcher begins to understand more about the group being studied. Fetterman also states that researchers often use participant observation to serve as a basis for more refined techniques such as projective techniques and questionnaires. Observation for this research was not as continuous or long as participant observation used in other methods such as an ethnography, which often require a least one year in the field with near constant contact with the subject. Observations conducted om SCB mostly contributed to interview questions and the grounded survey at the end of the research. The observations enabled me to ask detailed questions regarding behavior in the community to interview participants, and served as a means of confirming data patterns obtained from interviews.

One area of concern noted by Fetterman that is relevant to this particular study is the degree to which the researcher is familiar and friends with the participants. As a researcher becomes more embedded in the community and the setting becomes familiar, the researcher may begin to take events for granted and not notice important data (Fetterman, 2009). Although I did not spend as much time in SCB observing students as I would have for an ethnography, my background as a member of the student staff in an international dormitory during my time as an undergraduate student makes SCB a familiar setting. Though other data from interviews, the survey, and documents serve to counteract some of the issue of familiarity, the possibility exists that some important data were not recorded. Some of these unrecorded data could also connect to the participants'

relationship with the researcher. As someone only slightly older than the participants, I was more easily able to relate to their issues than someone several years removed from a first-year undergraduate experience. However, as someone not part of their community, there may have been reluctance to reveal details individuals believed would be best left amongst the community.

Participant observation occurred approximately three to four times per month during planned events on the hall, and once or twice per month for unplanned events. Planned events included those organized in advance by members of the student staff or residents. Notification for these events were posted on the SCB blog, Facebook pages specific to SCB, and on bulletin boards within SCB. Planned events included language groups, a haunted house, games, and movie nights. Unplanned events consisted of events that occurred in public areas of SCB without prior planning. These included conversations in the common area and study groups.

Quantitative Methods: Grounded Survey

The grounded survey offered a general idea of how residents of SCB viewed their experiences in the community and the community's overall effectiveness as a place to gain cross-cultural skills and knowledge. It also addressed what activities on the hall, planned and unplanned, were effective in helping the students better understand one another. Items in the survey were based off of responses to interviews, themes that appeared in written documents, and participant observation. Upon completing all in person interviews and coding the data obtained from the transcripts, overarching themes

were noted in regards to the events students found helpful, the cultural representation of

their friendship groups, their relationships with their friends, and their perceptions of

different cultures. The survey included five demographic questions, one multiple choice

question regarding friendship groups, a rank order question for activities on the hall, and

twelve five-point Likert scale items. Two additional open-ended items were included so

that residents could add additional information they perceived as important. A total of 21

items were used for the survey, which I administered using UMSurvey. The online

survey link was sent to residents' e-mail addresses via the Office of Residence Life. A

reminder for residents to complete the survey was also posted on the fourth floor

community's Facebook site. A copy of the survey completed by residents appears in

Appendix 3.

Chapter IV: Data Collection and Analysis

Introduction

    The purpose of this chapter is to explore the experiences SCB residents had during the 2011-2012 school year between September and March. In order to obtain a broad view of experiences and the effect those experiences had on SCB residents, a mixed-methods approach was used to gather data. To present data gathered from these methods, this chapter has been divided into two sections: qualitative data and quantitative data.

    Although this study started with an examination of theory, the analysis of the qualitative data was mostly inductive as questions and observations led to the patterns in which the data was organized and coded. The qualitative section contains data from the ten resident interviews conducted during the fall semester and six interviews done with the same residents during the spring semester. The majority of the data derives from these semi-structured conversations with residents. In addition to resident interviews, CA interviews, observation data, and data obtained from SCB related documents add support to information drawn from the resident interviews.

    A description of quantitative data follows the qualitative section. The quantitative data includes information from a grounded survey taken in the community at the end of the school year. The survey drew on the themes discussed above and attempted to examine to what extent experiences mentioned in the interviews are representative of the SCB community as a whole.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data in this study provided in-depth information about the kinds of international experiences residents had prior to entering the hall, the kinds of friendships that formed, and the types of activities that residents felt helped them interact with peoples from different cultures on the hall. After the completion of the interviews with the residents and staff, the resulting transcripts along with information collected from participant observation were coded. The resulting analysis led to the four themes covered in this section of the chapter: the mentality of SCB residents, the recognition of differences in the community, the formation of friendships, and leadership and activities.

The Students Crossing Borders Community Mentality

"The Key is Being Friendly and Open." (Renaldo, November 2011)

During the interview process, residents described their time on the hall and several overarching themes quickly became apparent. One overarching theme mentioned by residents is what I called the community's mentality. All residents, and the two interviewed CAs, explained that residents entered the community with the desire to learn more about different cultures; they were open to new ideas.

The community retains a high level of interaction amongst its residents that allows individuals to build relationships. Aaron, one of the interviewed residents from the third floor, estimated that "there's about a consistent 20 maybe 30 students on my floor that are very active. They're always in the lobby and always talking, they know each other" (November, 2011). Through my own observations of the fourth floor and through

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conversations with the interviewed students and other students on that floor, it can be determined that roughly half the students on the floor were extremely active. These students, a mixture of international and domestic students, spent significant time in the social lounge talking to other students, attending planned activities on the floor, and participating in events planned by students both on the floor and out in the larger Twin Cities community. This high degree of activity demonstrates an eagerness to engage with individuals in the community from different cultures and get to know other residents on the hall.

All ten interviewed residents shared some of these interactions and with them a possible reason behind the high levels—the SCB mentality. According to students, living in the hall required open-mindedness: "I've never been exposed to this...great amounts of cultures, but it seems like everyone on our floor has this huge acceptance for others. So, it's… I guess you need to be the type of person who wants to learn and listen. And I think a lot of people on our floor have that" (Elizabeth, October 2011). Whether students applied to SCB or not, interviewed residents referenced the acceptance of others and the desire to learn more about other cultures as traits held by individuals on the floor. Other words commonly mentioned include openness, inclusiveness, acceptance for others, international mindset, and interconnected. In addition to being mentioned by the residents, the CAs interviewed mentioned these ideas both in their descriptions of the hall and in relation to the design of their programs. Thus, it appears that students not only entered SCB with this open mentality, but that the CAs supported and utilized in their programs, strengthening the idea. In addition to the openness, residents and CAs

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mentioned one aspect that supported this mentality and bonded residents together—

despite differences, the majority of the hall was new to the SCB experience.

Surprisingly, this mentality appeared in the hall despite the fact that many

residents did not apply for the experience. Every interviewed resident mentioned that not

every student in SCB applied to be part of the community—of the ten residents

interviewed themselves, only four applied. Sarah, one of the CAs on the floor, expressed

shock when I mentioned that I found residents for this study who applied to be part of the

community because the majority of residents living on her floor did not apply to be in

SCB. Nevertheless, residents reported that the community made the best of the situation

and attempted to learn from one another. Aaron stated:

> I was under the impression coming here that everybody had applied, too. But I'm
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> the only person that I know so far that has actually gone out of their way to say
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> 'hey, I want to be a part of SCB' and put it on my application…Even though it's
>
> not the thing they [the residents] want to do the most, they're still enjoying
>
> themselves, they're still going out of their way to meet new people and getting
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> that worldly perspective. (November, 2011)

Aaron's words support what Kevin Dostal Dauer explained during his interview. Still in

its second year of existence, SCB has not yet acquired enough applicants to fill every

open room in the community. Residence Life recruited additional residents who

demonstrated interest in different cultures through other applications to the University of

Minnesota. Due to openness being such an important factor in the community's

operation, for some of the residents who did not apply to be in the community, the first

several weeks caused some discomfort. Koji, a CA on the fourth floor, explained that "some of those students [who did not apply] were surprised and dealt with the students or the roommate conflicts not as openly as somebody who was expecting to have those problems. It surprised people." Residents who did not apply might have expected to have a roommate, but came unprepared for the cultural differences implicit in having a roommate from a different culture. Some residents had to learn that openness. SCB also lost a couple residents in the beginning of the fall semester due to roommate conflicts.

The mentality of the hall appeared in the context of several conversations, linking it to several other themes, including supportive family-like relationships, sharing cultures, and residents' reaction to conflict. The level of acceptance on the hall led to supportive relationships. Justin stated, "We haven't like made a bondage as like a friend deeply. But, I rather regard the whole, person on this floor as a friend. It's like a family living on the same floor" (Justin, December 2011). Three other residents echoed this idea of the floor functioning like a family in terms of supporting one another. The domestic residents mentioned helping their international counterparts with homework and papers. International residents, especially the residents who had no other members from their culture on the floor, found the support of peers helpful in dealing with issues.

On the fourth floor, the family-like atmosphere included eating together during the day as a floor in the cafeteria: "It started out from...at lunch, we were like, this round table can only sit four people, and we were like ten or twelve around it… We have a ritual that all of us eat dinner or eat lunch together" (Anna, December 2011). Only one other fourth floor resident, Elizabeth, recalled the dinners in SCB. However, residents

often went to dinner during my observations, and groups of individuals often left during my observations. The following excerpt from field notes, written February 10, 2012, describe an instance in which I was invited to accompany the residents to dinner:

> At about 5:30, I could hear doors opening on the other side of hallway and a large group near the elevators. Residents from the side of the hall closest to me began leaving their rooms. Some went back and forth between the group by the elevators and the rooms. One resident stopped in the social lounge and asked if people were ready for dinner. Justin asked me if I would like to come. I said I would, and joined the group by the elevator. Another resident offered to pay for my dinner with extra points on her card. I followed the group to the first floor cafeteria. After gathering food, I joined the group of 14 students, taking the only remaining seat at the table.

The nightly dinners attended by fourth floor residents appeared to offer time to talk and share stories. These dinner groups always consisted of a mixture of students from various cultures, and residents typically left the fourth floor in groups—no one ever wanted to go to dinner alone. Usually when I observed the fourth floor between five and six o'clock, at least one resident would stop in the social lounge and ask residents sitting there if they were ready for dinner.

Being open and willing to learn encouraged students on the hall to share their cultures. Students, mostly international residents, shared cultures through organized activities such as language clubs and culture nights, but they also often volunteered information during informal conversations. Through observation of events in the

community and interviews, domestic residents shared more through events outside the hall or in personal conversation that occurred in the lounge. The majority of the information related to visible aspects of cultures, such as food or lifestyle. However, more complicated subjects, such as political views, could be shared when individuals on the hall showed an interest in a particular culture. Further, international students seemed to value finding individuals willing to listen to their points of view on various topics regarding their country or culture. For instance, Amir, a minority within a country faced with conflict, stated his reluctance to talk about his country's conflicts and issues due to the heatedness that usually accompanies those discourses. However, when speaking with a hallmate who was studying that aspect of his country:

> We ended up talking a few times, and sometimes, I'm like no, not right now, please. And we had like…when we talked, he didn't cut me off in the middle and say, 'no it's not like that.' It was more of a discussion than an argument…we'd end up talking for an hour or two. Just talk about general stuff, politics, what do I think, how do I feel, how do I get treated there. (November, 2011)

While not every student in the hall listened with as much openness as the individual Amir spoke with, he was able to find at least one individual who listened to his point of view. Two other international residents shared similar stories regarding stereotyping as well as the frustration at countering stereotyping on the floor, but they found at least some other residents willing to learn. Coupled with the idea of stereotyping, these same residents explained their viewpoint to other residents to increase knowledge of their culture. During his second interview, Amir commented that, "I have learned that my culture is not

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entirely known to others, and it is my job to introduce it at a certain level" (March, 2012). Despite the frustration of having to adjust to cultural misunderstandings, there was a sense that students began to accept the presence of stereotypes, and recognize that they needed to be addressed.

The openness of the hall contributed to how students react to conflict. When asked, residents responded that very few conflicts occurred in SCB between residents other than a few students moving out at the beginning of the fall semester. However, when students shared anecdotes about occurrences in the hall involving themselves or friends, two methods of conflict resolution became apparent. In some cases, students mentioned maintaining harmony: "Even if you have one [conflict], we like to make it...because we're living in the same location and like it...you'd better not have a conflict, you don't want to annoy other people" (Justin, December 2011). This strong urge to maintain harmony within groups came from international residents that were interviewed, and did not appear in conversation very often. Besides this approach, six of the residents mentioned talking about their conflicts and sharing their perspectives on issues to increase understanding. Residents in the hall explained viewpoints to hallmates and shared points of view when misunderstandings occurred. Justin and Reika even mentioned using third parties who could explain from a common cultural perspective to explain incidents. Reika provided an example. If one of the international students did not understand how a comment could be considered racist or sexist to a U.S. domestic student and the domestic student could not explain or the international student did not understand the explanation, another international student could offer additional insight to

clarify the issue. However, just because a resident explained a point of view and that view was accepted does not mean that point of view was understood. Reika recalled an incident when a domestic friend on the hall questioned her actions towards another friend of hers from her own culture. After her explanation, she was not sure if her domestic friend entirely understood: "I don't know if he really understand it. But...I already explained." These two methods of dealing with conflicts were not mutually exclusive.

The Recognition of Differences

"Yeah, People are Different, Really Different"(Reika, October 2011)

All residents interviewed recognized cultural differences between themselves and their hallmates. The type of differences noticed most by residents during interviews related to visual aspects of cultures including lifestyles, food, occupations, and languages. For example, Frank recalled one of his most memorable experiences as talking with one of his international friends on the floor:

> …[it] is always interesting because the lifestyle there is so laidback and different. He talks about going to the beach all the time. He's never seen snow which will be kind of a shock for him. It was really interesting to talk to him because his life is so different. (October, 2011)

This recognition of lifestyle differences aligns with what other interviewees mentioned. Other residents talked about food, clothing, fashion, and holidays. Of the differences recognized, lifestyle differences were mentioned twice as much as other differences.

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Interviewed residents also reported numerous incidences where they noted differences in communication and interaction. These differences include being able to understand the English used in conversations and being able to ascertain the acceptability of conversations to other residents. For instance, Reika commented on her own shift in speech: "I'm becoming more direct, yeah. Because a lot of Asian people do not express their feelings…" (October, 2011). Fewer residents noticed differences in how friendships form and the interaction between friends, and differences in cultures' influence on perspective. Understanding the formation of friendships and interactions between friends of another culture included elements such as recognizing how humor is used amongst friends, different levels of friendship in various cultures and the implications behind levels of friendship. In the remainder of this section, I will expand on the residents' perceptions of difference, starting with how residents discovered more about their own cultures through difference. Then, I will explain how residents' experiences prior to SCB affected their perceptions of difference.

All six residents who participated in the second interviews were able to express observations about their own cultures that they acquired during their year in SCB. Residents exhibited two types of observations regarding their own cultures. The first type was a better understanding of how values affect systems and lifestyles in their own country. For example, the differences Reika encountered in the community led to reflections on her own culture:

Through the differences that I saw between myself and other people, I recognize how my culture built me into a different person from anyone else. For example,

people in my culture communicate in a indirect way, we value diligence more

than other cultures, and how my Buddhist culture different from Christianity and

Catholic. (March 2012)[2]

These reflections led to a greater understanding of values due to contrast and established

a sense of uniqueness about the residents' own cultures. Learning more about their own

cultures and values indicates they obtained an emic view of their own cultures. The other

residents interviewed during the second session expressed receiving an etic view of their

own culture—they obtained an increased awareness of how other cultures perceive theirs.

Aaron explained this view well:

I feel like I've had the opportunity to notice how other cultures actually view me

and my culture… It's made me more aware of my actions and not just how they

affect me and how my culture views my actions, but also how it also affects other

peoples and other peoples' cultures. (March, 2012)

All six residents recalled moments of etic or emic insight on their own cultures, with

three residents expressing both. The international residents interviewed also demonstrated

more reflection on the increased knowledge of their own culture and their own identities,

showing how the new cultural knowledge affects their everyday lives and reactions to

different cultures.

The depth at which residents noticed and explored differences seemed to depend

on what kind of international experience the resident had prior to arriving in SCB. All

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[2] All quotes are coped verbatim from the interviews and appear on the page exactly as they were said or written.

residents shared stories of their time abroad or of international friends they knew in their own country, experiences that sparked their interests in learning more about other cultures. However, both domestic and international residents who had had immersive experiences in another culture prior to their time in SCB noted more recognition of differences in communication, interaction, and perspective than did residents without those experiences. In addition, the students with more intense international experiences tended to include differences in their interactions with residents from different cultures. The students with more immersive international experiences included Elizabeth, Aaron, Reika, Amir, and Justin.

Accompanying this recognition of difference, residents with prior immersive international experiences seemed more comfortable seeking out and interacting in ambiguous situations. Further, these residents spoke about their efforts in the hall to put themselves in ambiguous situations. Reika quoted, "There is no growth in the comfort zone, and there is no comfort in the growth zone" (March, 2012). Reika spoke frequently about challenging herself to encounter new situations. It was also her advice to individuals thinking about joining SCB. The very culture shocks that caused frustration were the same shocks that offered new insights and knowledge. Aaron spoke more about actually seeking out situations that moved him beyond the comfort zone:

> From my experience, the most rewarding things that have ever happened to me have been when I have been way out of my comfort zone. The more safe you are, the more mundane everything is... And being able to have that excitement and that

sort of sense of adventure, you can only do that when you take that risk I guess

and actually being able to jump in head first. (November, 2011)

Aaron's comments suggest experience with successful navigation of ambiguity in the

past, and a willingness to tolerate discomfort if the exchange means experiencing

something new. Because these residents have experienced being out of their comfort

zones prior to living in SCB, it is possible that they may be willing to take more risks

while in SCB. In addition to taking more risks, these residents tend to be able to immerse

themselves in conversations and situations involving people from cultures with very

different to opposite view points from their own.

Further, these residents also demonstrated shifts in behavior according to the

differences they noticed, especially during communication. For example, Amir

mentioned humor as a bonding point between himself and his friends, but he also

recognized that joking about certain topics would not appeal to everyone: "One thing that

might be like normal for me to talk about and like for other people might be like really

offensive or sensitive topic to talk about. So the approach it has to be different"

(November, 2011). Behavior adaptation to communication seemed to be the most

prevalent change in behavior.

Although SCB residents were able to identify differences between themselves and

their friends from other cultures, many residents, especially residents with less intensive

international experience, tended to accent similarities. Residents usually brought up

similarities when it came to talking and having conversations with people on the hall

from other cultures: "They're just the same for me, we can talk about the same things"

(Anna, December 2011). In terms of wanting to talk to other residents, interviewed

residents found a common bond, and spoke with individuals in the hall in a similar

manner as they would to friends back home. Residents also drew parallels between

political ideas, values, cities in different countries, and personalities.

Friendships and Groups: Interactions and Barriers

"…we're not acquaintances we're all friends. We just have different levels of friendship."

(Anna, December 2011)

In relation to friends in the community, residents agreed that a friend is someone

an individual spends a significant amount of time with on a regular basis with qualities

the individual respects. Interviewed residents discussed the difference between friends

and acquaintances, and distinguished different levels of friendship within the community.

This included the distinction between friends in the community, best or close friends, and

friends from home. While the domestic residents overall expressed a sense of forming

connections with other individuals on the hall rather quickly, all but one international

resident expressed the need for more time to build a significant friendship. Both domestic

and international students expressed the idea of friendships from SCB continuing into the

future, even overseas: "I am a person that believes that it is very hard to find a real

friendship, but over the year, I can say that I've made friends for a lifetime here" (Xavier,

March 2012). International residents also accented the importance of friendship in

forming a "home away from home" (Amir, March 2012). As international students on

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campus, friends formed a support network that helped them adjust to living in a new environment.

Interviewed residents on the hall all mentioned having a mixture of friends from their own culture and other cultures, or a group of friends comprised of people from cultures entirely different from their own. International residents did not distinguish between the depth of friendship between friends from their own culture and friends from different cultures. However, three of the five domestic students identified marked differences between their domestic and international friends: "With the domestic students, I think we just tend to do more stuff together, because it will be like 'let's go see this,' so the international kids I do more homework with and in the evenings we hang out, while on the weekends I hang out with the domestic kids" (Lyla, October 2011). The activities domestic students participated in with international students seemed to be more related to classes or hall functions. These three students expressed difficulty in meeting and getting to know international residents, and usually met international residents through introductions made by other friends in the community. The remaining two domestic residents interacted with groups of mostly international residents and oftentimes with residents from cultures very different from the United States. These two domestic students both had significant international experience prior to their time in SCB.

Residents described the community as separate but intersecting groups. Groups of friends on each floor often came together for activities, or had members with close friends in other groups and on separate floors. However, the majority of friendship

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groups spent more time with one another than as a whole floor. When asked about the pattern of groups on the floor, Xavier explained:

> Heather: You hang out with the same group of people everyday?
>
> Xavier: Yes, that's something. And probably, you hang out with another group of people and you get along really well with them, but it's not the people that you always hang out with. (November, 2011)

Xavier described the friendship structure of SCB as a series of main groups with members that would occasionally split to join other groups depending upon activities. Sarah, from a CA's perspective, described it as a web: individuals held connections to others on the hall including their main group of friends, and other friends they connected to through commonalities. These groups formed based on common hobbies or interests, similar personalities, common cultural interests, and intersecting class schedules. Often, groups combined for large events on campus or in the hall. Facebook also served as a primary method of uniting people from various friendship groups, recruiting people for activities, homework help, resources, and trips. A few groups did appear to form based on cultural similarity: "occasionally there's a larger group of Chinese students because I think that's where they feel most comfortable, which is fine because sometimes they'll be a large group of domestic students" (Elizabeth, October 2011). Based on observations, domestic residents, Chinese residents, Spanish-speaking residents, and Korean residents spent time in groups in common areas. However, groups comprised of entirely domestic, Spanish-speaking, or Korean residents were rare.

Gathering of groups containing only Chinese residents seemed to be extremely common. All but one of the interviewed residents discussed the commonality of groups of all-Chinese residents. Four of the five domestic residents and one of the international residents expressed frustration in trying to create friendships with the Chinese students:

> …a lot of them I haven't actually been able to meet with…they really like to stick together and they're always studying together in the sort of study room, and I'm not quite sure it's that they don't like to socialize with other people. I'm not sure that's the case, but they don't actively sort of pursue that sort of thing. Um, they don't really go out of their way to meet new people. (Aaron, November 2011)

Due to the large number of Chinese residents living in the community compared to the other populations of international students, the Chinese residents were able to find members of their own culture with whom they could interact. They did not need to take on the additional ambiguity of making friends outside of their own culture. This group of friends also formed their own traditions: ramen nights, often done with the Korean residents, and Chinese games. Reika and Justin, two Asian students, supported the idea of comfort and a shared language making it easy for these residents to bond. Although the Chinese residents formed a cultural group, this does not mean that all Chinese residents interacted only with other Chinese residents. On the contrary, a few did regularly interact with other groups of residents on the hall, especially on the fourth floor, based on fourth floor interviewees and observations from the CAs. The group of Chinese residents did attempt to get to know residents who seemed comfortable interacting with their group. Elizabeth, who had mostly Chinese friends at the beginning of the year, explained that

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after she grew comfortable with an unfamiliar language being spoken and spent time with the group, making friends was simple.

Several factors in the community severed as barriers to friendship. Language acted as both an instigator and inhibitor of interaction. The community formed several language clubs over the course of the year, and residents mentioned tutoring in languages even outside of these clubs. Learning new languages was one most common responses when residents spoke about their interests in the community. However, when asked about their fears upon entering the community, three out of the five international residents expressed concern regarding their English: "Well, back home, I never use [English] really often, so that was my first concern, just communicating orally with people" (Xavier, November 2011). Three of the domestic student mentioned international students struggling with English for class and communication.

In addition to language, the method in which most people in the hall chose to go about meeting one another did not suit all residents. When meeting other residents for the first time, "sometimes just like, you're in a place, you see it and you don't know anyone. You just introduce yourself. That's pretty much how I've met everyone here" (Xavier, November 2011). Residents explained that getting to know other residents on the hall generally involved introductions amongst a group of strangers. However, this method of getting to know other residents caused discomfort for some residents who were described as introverted or shy.

Activities and Leadership

I guess we just spend a lot of time in our lounge, and we meet a lot of people that way.

(Elana, October 2011)

Activities brought up by interviewed residents included planned events, unplanned events, and hall traditions. Planned events consisted of activities designed and advertised in advance, typically by CAs. Unplanned events occurred randomly in the hall instigated by a combination of environment and residents. Hall traditions generally began as unplanned events that become more organized with the passage of time. Traditions occurred on a daily or weekly basis, and were usually attended by the same residents.

Overall, residents found unplanned events and hall traditions to be the most useful in getting to know other residents, learning more about other cultures, and forming friendships. Residents seemed to enjoy unplanned events due to the increase in freedom to interact and explore interests:

> If you have planned event, you feel like you need to say something and so
> sometimes when you need to say something, this thing you said um, not really
> what you think. But, uh, if you're in an unplanned event, you feel more free to say
> anything, so you'll talk more about yourself. You'll talk about what happened
> today and it'll be more. (Reika, October 2011)

Conversation feels easier and more honest with unplanned events and traditions. Residents show more willingness to talk and share according to their own interests. Based on observations, it seems like unplanned events and hall traditions like eating meals together included more depth when talking about culture.

Residents connected the use of the social lounge to unplanned events and conversations about cultures. The social lounge, a central location on both the third and fourth floors, served as an area where residents could do homework together, watch movies, plan projects, play video games, or relax. During my observations, the number of residents in the lounge at any one time ranged from two to as many as twenty. Several residents mentioned the lounge as a congregation point to go when people wished to talk: "I don't go to the lounge much, because I cannot do anything over there, I start talking to people. I waste a lot of time. There are so many people out there" (Anna, December 2011). In addition to the number of people, rarely did one particular cultural group occupy the lounge—the space was usually taken by people from multiple cultural backgrounds. The CAs also remarked on the importance of the social lounge as a central meeting point for residents. Koji compared SCB's lounges to other residence halls on campus: "You just walk by on the way to your bedroom and you get to see people. Whereas other dorms, there's kind of like just a hallway and not as interactive" (February, 2012). SCB serves as more than a place to live for its residents. To accomplish the goals of the program, residents need to be able to interact.

Planned activities brought residents together in the beginning of the school year and some allowed them to work together in presenting cultures to the campus community as a whole. Of the planned activities, Welcome Week, provided by the University of Minnesota for all first-year students, was instrumental in developing the friendship groups residents formed. Residents described Welcome Week as "basically like your tight circle of friends because you spend as much time with them, and then, like their

roommates are your friends too" (Elizabeth, October 2011). Welcome Week groups formed the first network of support for residents that helped them adapt to living at the University of Minnesota. However, Welcome Week for SCB contained one flaw—many international students did not attend. Reasons cited for the lack of attendance included jet lag, late arrival, conflicts with other meetings for scholarships or fellowships, and for some international students, second-year status. Not attending Welcome Week not only made navigating campus more difficult, but these residents needed to put forth more effort to become acquainted with their hallmates because they did not participate in those initial bonding activities.

Leadership in the community shifted between the CAs and the residents, though most large events were still planned by the CAs. Residents considered CA leadership and larger planned activities especially helpful at the beginning of the school year at which point residents are still meeting one another; the two interviewed CAs backed up this viewpoint. The CAs attempted to get as many residents involved in activities as possible, and tried to establish an SCB community. At the beginning of the year, CAs attempted to create a new normal for students:

> They kind of… they don't know what's, quote, 'normal'. And so kind of what we do is the normal. So if we're kind of over the top crazy interactive with people having all these events for them giving them a chance to communicate, they're gonna well, 'even though I don't feel comfortable doing this, I'm kind of obligated to so I will. (Koji, February 2012)

This description matches what the residents perceived. Planned events allowed people to interact with one another, but they could feel obligatory and not as targeted toward personal interest as unplanned events. All residents, regardless of country of origin, entered a new community where no one felt completely comfortable—this ties into the shared sense of newness to the SCB community mentioned earlier. Not only did the residents pick up on the newness of the SCB experience from the CAs, but CAs programmed the idea of inclusiveness into planned events: "because we do want to share that culture but we don't want to push a culture on somebody and make them obligated to do something. It's just finding that line…" (Koji, February 2012). Inclusiveness allows more residents to participate, and supports the open-minded mentality in the community. However, it does subtract from learning deeper details about cultures. This could explain why residents described planned events as activities that brought the hall together and working toward one goal, but did not necessarily create tighter bonds between individuals.

Residents took on leadership roles later in the first semester as event planners, coordinators, and advisors. The first major event planned by a student, with CA aid, was the haunted house during Halloween on the fourth floor, an event that aimed to put the full floor's efforts into creating a memorable experience for Middlebrook Hall residents while introducing international students to Halloween:

Approximately half the residents on the fourth floor spread out along the wing closest to the social lounge. Around seven members of the floor gathered near the elevators, waiting to guide guests through the haunted house and control the

number of guests touring at once. The remainder occupied several "rooms"

created by dividers and cardboard. Residents had decorated the rooms with fog,

strobe lights, and props, including a large clown named 'Natasha.' Additional

residents dressed in costumes wandered the area freely in the dark, prepared to

scare guests. Koji told me to keep the sound system running at the end of the hall.

(Researcher's field notes, October 28, 2011)

Events such as this one targeted residents' interests more closely and allowed large

amounts of participation. The haunted house encompassed the entire fourth floor and

attracted participants from the entire building. However, large events such as this planned

by residents were rare. More often, residents led smaller events such as movie or game

nights, dinners, and outings. Several of these events became hall traditions that the same

group of residents attended on a regular basis. To organize these events, residents on the

fourth floor primarily communicated through Facebook postings, which allowed all

participants input in planning. These posts included small activities like watching Star

Wars in the lounge, invitations to a cappella performances in which members of the floor

participated, to setting times for planning for larger events like Halloween. Additionally,

residents posted pictures of many of the events that took place on the floor, allowing for

comments.

CAs described the importance of having resident leaders in solving issues and

conflicts within the community. Though CAs live on the floors, they have their own

rooms and as such can be somewhat removed from the community due to their lack of

ability to fully emphasize with the experience of having a roommate from another

culture. When unable to reach a resident who seems to be detaching from the community, the CAs send a resident leader, typically someone in the community who is more interactive than average with more international experience, to speak to the troubled resident. Other residents also have the advantage of being on the same level of authority, whereas a CA discussing issues of disconnection with residents may make these residents feel as if they have done something wrong.

Both interviews with residents, observations, and shorter conversations with residents during events revealed a stark contrast between the environments on the third floor and the fourth floor. Whereas the fourth floor residents mentioned numerous events planned by CAs and high levels of interaction amongst residents on the floor, the third floor seemed quieter. Events mentioned by third floor residents seemed more student-driven, and not as inclusive as some of the activities on the fourth floor. Interviews also revealed a lack of communication between the two floors, as individuals on one floor rarely knew individuals on the other floor. In fact, Lyla's final comment in her interview and her hope for the spring semester was "I hope that third and fourth floor get to know each other a little better. I don't know any of the people on third floor" (October, 2011).

Quantitative Data

The survey, grounded in the responses received from interview responses and participant observations, was conducted in the hall online through the UMSurvey tool to determine whether or not reported incidents and opinions received from interviews could be attributed to a larger portion of the hall. The survey consisted of 21 questions, beginning

with five demographic questions, followed by a question related to friendship groups and activities in the community. The remaining 13 items consisted of Likert scale questions asking residents about their perceived ability to interact effectively with different cultures.

Unfortunately, low response rates for the survey limit the amount of information that can be garnered from this tool. The overall response rate in relation to SCB as a whole was only 17%, too low to make any generalizations regarding the entire SCB population. Of the 132 residents, only 22 responded. Several reasons could account for the low response rate. Prior to sending out my survey, the Office of Residence Life released a satisfaction survey to SCB. Residents may have been overwhelmed with both surveys so close together. Further, the survey occurred in March, close to mid-terms for most students. Mid-terms would have limited the amount of time residents would have been willing to spend on a survey.

The response from domestic residents far outpaced their international counterparts. The response rate from the domestic population was 33%. Of the 52 domestic residents, 17 responded. Though this rate is not as high as desirable, the rate does allow for some generalizations to be made regarding the domestic students. The low response rate from the international residents could be due to the survey arriving via a forwarded e-mail from Residence Life. While recruiting residents for interviews, I noticed that international students did not respond to e-mail requests as often as domestic students. It is possible that international residents did not reply to the survey because of the method of communication. Additionally, the interviews revealed language barriers in

the hall. As the survey was conducted in English, non-native English speakers may have had difficulty understanding all of the survey questions. In reporting the survey results, I will begin with a description of the demographic data of the respondents. Following this will be information on activities in the community these residents considered helpful and common responses to Likert scale questions. Due to the low response rate, further analysis such as correlations or linear regression could reveal skewed results and will not be included in this paper.

Demographics

The survey asked residents for demographic data involving their origins, international experiences, and their close group of friends in SCB. In terms of languages spoken, the majority of residents spoke two languages including their native languages, with another large percentage speaking one language. Most residents report never having been abroad for reasons other than travel, but a few have some experience in other countries. Seven residents stated that they have spent time in one other country, three in two countries, and one in more than three. In this study, language and time abroad did correlate, with all individuals who spoke more languages reporting more time spent in another culture.

Two sets of data from the demographics section supported conversations that occurred in interviews. First, most survey participants reported that they did not apply to live in SCB (see Figure 2). Nevertheless, the majority of residents rated their experiences in the hall as positive overall based on their responses to the Likert scale questions. This

seems to match remarks made in interviews related to applying to SCB; despite not everyone choosing to live in SCB, residents found value in their time spent in the community.

Figure 2: Application Status of Residents in SCB

Residents Applying to SCB
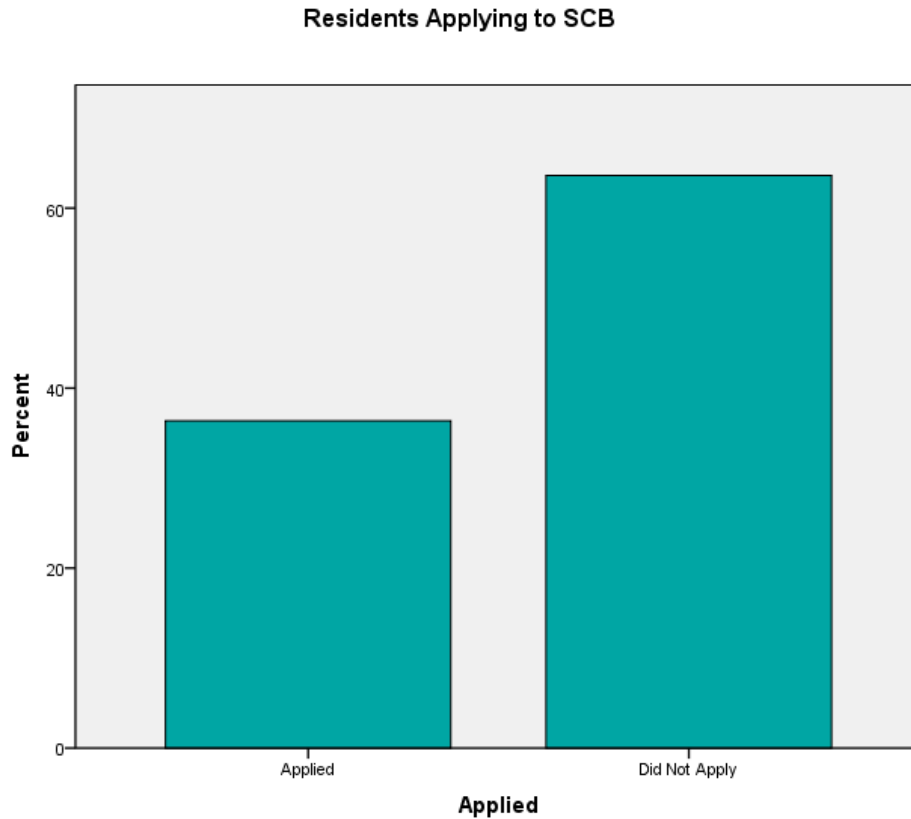
Data residents provided regarding their friends on the hall also seems to match some of the remarks from the interviews regarding cultural representation with groups of close friends. Examining only the data from domestic residents, the majority interact with groups containing friends from a mixture of cultural backgrounds. These residents describe their group of friends as either consisting of half friends from their own culture and half from different cultures, or 80% friends from their own culture and 20% friends

from different cultures. A smaller number describe their friends as mostly other domestic

residents, and a smaller percent interacts mostly with international residents. A graph

representing this data can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Intercultural Friendship Groups in SCB

Domestic Student Friendship Groups

- 90% friends members of own culture
- 80% friends from my culture, 20% from a different culture
- 80% friends from different culture, 20% friends from own culture
- 50% friends from own culture, 50% friends from different culture

23.53%

35.29%

5.88%

35.29%
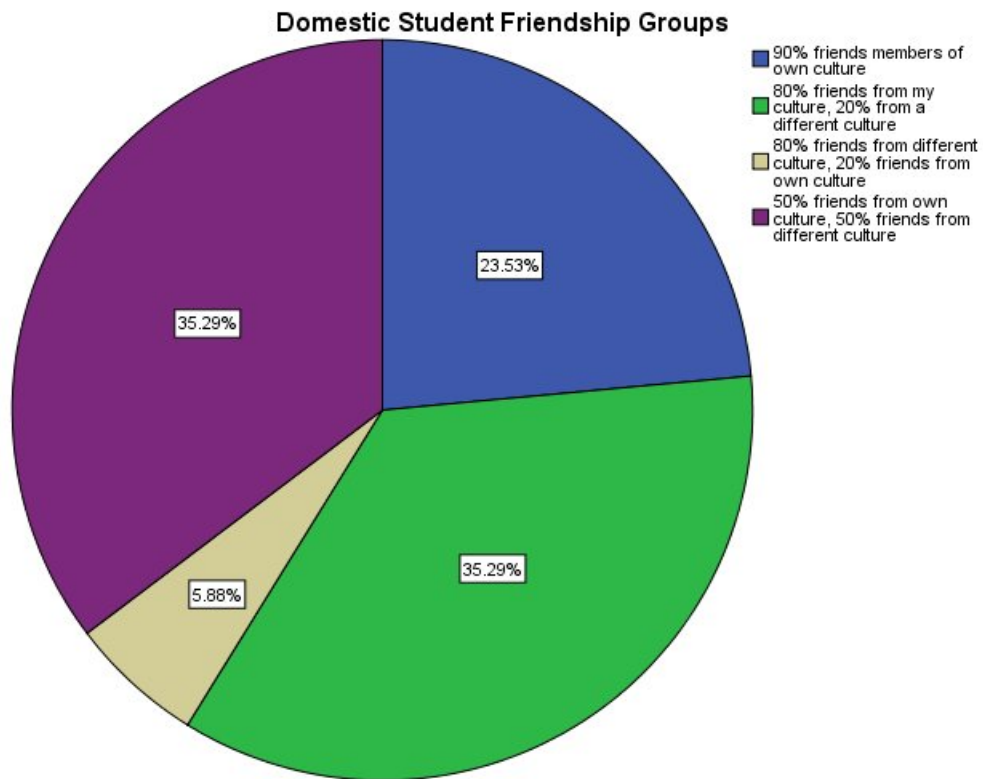
Activities in the SCB Community

Regarding activities in the SCB community, the survey confirmed the importance

of the lounge as a place for residents to congregate. To ascertain the importance of

activities in the community in relation to aiding residents in getting to know individuals

in the hall from different cultures, participants were asked to rank items from a list

containing types of activities recorded as important during previous interviews and

observations. Residents' responses to which activities they ranked as the most useful in

getting to know individuals from different cultures appear in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: SCB Community Activities

Hall Activities Aiding Cultural Interaction
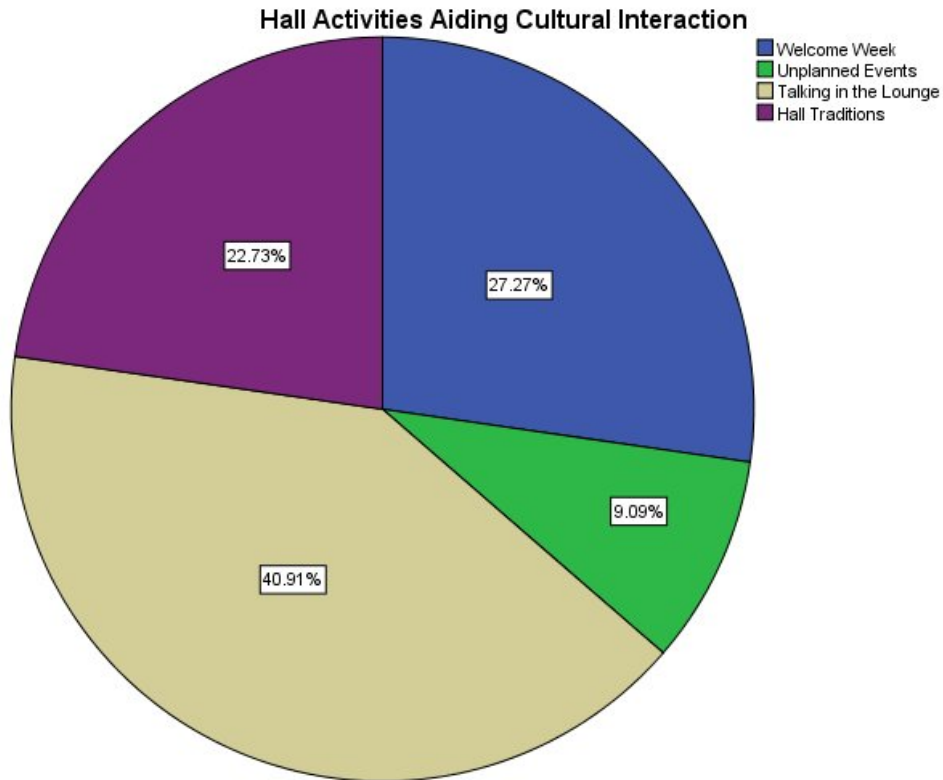
As depicted in the graph, the residents accented the importance of the lounge area and

conversations with other residents in developing relationships with people from different

cultures on the hall. Not only does this align with the qualitative data, but a number of

residents ranked conversations in the lounge as their second most important event. Thus,

all but five residents noted the lounge as either the most important or second most

important method of getting to know other residents. Hall traditions, regularly scheduled

activities set by residents such as gathering for dinner and Friday game nights, seemed to

show a similar pattern.

Welcome Week, mentioned as one of the most important events to interviewed residents, received mixed responses in the survey data. As seen in Figure 4, approximately 23% of residents identified Welcome Week as the most important activity in meeting individuals from other cultures. However, a slightly small percentage (17%) ranked Welcome Week as the least helpful method of getting to know individuals from another culture. This mixture in rankings did not appear to correlate with any other factors, and the importance of the activity seems to depend on individual perception. A couple factors could explain this dichotomy. First, the question specifies that the ranked activities must be ordered according to helpfulness in interacting with people from different cultures. For domestic residents, the majority of respondents, this would be international residents. According to the interview data, many international residents were not able to participate in Welcome Week. Thus, if domestic residents made more international friendships later with individuals who did not attend Welcome Week, then the activity would not be as useful. The timing of the survey could also be involved in this split in information. Welcome Week occurred before the beginning of the fall semester. As such, seven months have passed since Welcome Week, and its impact may not be as strong at the end of the spring semester as it was at the beginning of the year.

Resident Opinions of Intercultural Experiences

Though the survey yielded a lower response rate, common responses to questions indicate significance and could be used to inform data. In the section in which residents reported on the magnitude of their own intercultural experiences, several questions

received very strong responses, meaning more than 50% of residents selected the same response. The questions in this section were tabulated into five point Likert items: strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, strongly disagree.

In the survey, residents 'strongly agreed' that the SCB community allows residents to form valuable friendships that residents would like to continue, and that living in SCB led to knowledge of customs and lifestyles of people from different cultures. Both of these responses align with comments made in interviews. Much of the conversation from interviews focused on friendship, and many interviewed residents commented on the friendships they had made in the hall with individuals from different cultures. Interviewed residents saw their friendships lasting beyond SCB, which matches the responses to the question on the survey regarding the development of valuable friendships. When discussing differences in the qualitative study, the majority of noticed differences included points about lifestyles and customs. This also matches the corresponding question on the survey. Frequency charts for these two questions on the survey appear in Table 3. In addition to a large magnitude of 'strongly agree' responses in the above mentioned questions, several questions received a high volume of 'agree' answers. Survey respondents agreed that SCB leads to increased knowledge of one's own culture, that it can change an individual's perceptions of other cultures, and can help residents better understand the point of view of someone from another culture. These responses also correspond to information gathered from qualitative data.

In addition responses with a large representation of agreement, four questions received no answers of disagree or strongly disagree at all. Two included learning more

about the customs and lifestyles of other cultures, and the ability to understand the point

of view of a person from another culture mentioned above. The remaining two points

reported are the increased confidence in one's ability to enter completely new cultural

situations, and the confidence to get to know individuals from other cultures.

Table 3: Frequency Tables

Increased Knowledge of Other Cultures' Customs and Lifestyles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	12	54.5	54.5	54.5
	2	8	36.4	36.4	90.9
	3	2	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

Established Valuable Cross Cultural Friendships

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	12	54.5	54.5	54.5
	2	5	22.7	22.7	77.3
	3	2	9.1	9.1	86.4
	4	2	9.1	9.1	95.5
	5	1	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	22	100.0	100.0	

These tables contain data from residents' responses to Likert items regarding developing valuable friendships on the hall they would like to maintain, and a feeling of increased knowledge of other cultures' customs and lifestyles. The valid column on the left corresponds to the Likert item answers: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree.

Synthesis of Analysis

The findings from this study demonstrate that communities like SCB can facilitate interactions between students from different cultures. Residents can begin to recognize differences and gain insights into both their own cultures and the cultures of others. Through the qualitative and quantitative data gathered, several items regarding the SCB community can be concluded regarding the demographics of the community, friendships, cultural knowledge and competence, and the activities conducted.

Looking at the demographics of SCB, both qualitative and quantitative analysis points to a low portion of residents applying to be part of SCB prior to the start of the school year. Of the residents who responded to the survey, over 60% did not sign up for SCB on their housing applications. Fewer than half of the interview participants, four of the ten, applied to SCB. Yet, despite the low application rate, the amount of interaction between residents of all cultures in the community seems high. With residents describing 20% of the fourth floor as highly active, several hall traditions, and various events constantly occurring, all residents seemed to have thrived within the community.

Though SCB demonstrated high levels of interaction, it should be noted that not all residents in SCB were engaged and interested in learning about other residents on the hall. Not all residents considered the experience valuable. Residents spoke of suddenly seeing people on the floor they have never seen before, or not knowing people on the floor: "There are people that walk around in the hallway, and I have no idea who they are" (Frank, October 2011). According to Sarah, approximately 10% of the fourth floor rarely engaged in activities, and seemed to have few connections to the SCB community.

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For some students, living in SCB negatively changed their perspectives on different

cultures. One of the responses from the survey stated:

> I've found that the SCB experience has made many from my culture more racist,
>
> and ignorant towards other cultures. There really has been no force or desire for
>
> individuals from different backgrounds to get to know each other if here are
>
> others around with similar cultural experiences, and that increased negative
>
> sentiment between cultures on the floor.

The comment regarding the lack of incentive for residents on the floor to get to know

individuals from different cultures could link to various sources: lack of leadership

encouraging interaction, unwillingness on part of the residents to interact, difficulty

making friends in the community, or a bad experience with an individual from another

culture. However, this response to the SCB experience did not occur during interviews

nor was it observed during activities in the community. Disengagement from SCB

seemed to be an exception rather than the norm of the community.

The connections between residents from different cultures and the building of

friendships appear frequently throughout the data. Rather than forming friendships within

cultural boundaries, friendship groups tend to contain members from different cultures.

Groups containing mostly members from one cultural background seemed to be rare. Not

only do residents create friendships with people from cultures different from their own,

but they see their friendships lasting beyond this year in SCB—they wish to see these

friendships continue into the future. Through these interactions, residents claimed an

increase in the knowledge of customs and lifestyles of peoples from different parts of the

world, and they have developed an increased confidence in interacting with people from unfamiliar cultures. These friendships and the increased cultural comfort seem to connect to the openness and inclusiveness in the hall, as well as the residents' willingness to learn about different ways of viewing the world. Residents stated the experience helped them to better understand the perspectives of peoples from different backgrounds.

The programs residents found most useful were those that allowed them to interact with their friends at a level in which they were comfortable. Of the events in the hall, residents found talking in the lounge with other residents the most useful in learning about people from different cultures. Talking in the lounge gave residents a sense of comfort; there was no pressure to speak or share information, residents could control the flow of the conversation, and they could explore their own interests. Similar to talking in the lounge, hall traditions, especially eating meals together, seemed to create closer bonds between residents. Of the planned activities, Welcome Week, was important in establishing initial interactions amongst residents, and helped in the formation of friendship groups during the first couple of weeks in the community. While some residents by the end of the year considered Welcome Week irrelevant in getting to know residents in SCB, the survey in March did reveal that many still considered it one of the most important experiences for SCB.

The role of leadership in the community differed between the qualitative data and the quantitative data. Residents who responded to the survey seemed split between whether or not their CAs were effective in getting them involved in activities that increased their contact with residents from different cultures. On the other hand, when

interviewed residents commented on the CAs, they stated that their CAs did a lot of programming and actively encouraged residents to participate in events. This split in data could be explained by several factors. First, not all residents noticed the efforts of the CAs, including those who had distanced themselves from SCB. Any resident in the community could have taken the survey, but the residents involved in the interviews tended to be residents interested in the community and relatively active. Another explanation could be the difference in leadership between the third and the fourth floor. Interviewed residents who commented on the CAs were all fourth floor residents. According to the interviewed fourth floor CAs and residents from the third floor who appeared during large events like the haunted house on Halloween, third floor activities seemed to decrease after the first month of the semester. On the fourth floor, based on interviews with residents and the two CAs, and observations, the CA's strategy of high engagement low-risk activities at the beginning of the year that slowly tapered off towards the end of the year seemed to help shape the fourth floor into an active floor. The beginning activities led the residents to a level of increased comfort with one another and allowed residents to get an idea of who lived on the floor. Groups slowly began to form, and when residents were comfortable, CAs helped them create their own programs.

The data from this study provides insight to the experiences of residents living in the SCB community including details about friendship, interaction with other residents during events, and leadership. This chapter covered the common themes derived from the qualitative and quantitative methods used in the research and an interpretation of the data. Chapter Five will link the data results from this chapter to the initial research questions

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developed for this study in addition to applying these results to some of the theoretical

concepts discussed in Chapter Two. Based on the findings of this study and the answers

to the research questions, suggestions for residence life professionals will be made as

well as some recommendations for further study.

Chapter V: Implications and Conclusions

Reflections of the Research Questions

The preceding chapter analyzed data obtained from qualitative and quantitative sources on the experiences of residents living in SCB, including information on the open-minded environment, the recognition of cultural differences by students, and interactions between residents. This chapter includes further discussion of the outcomes of this study in relation to the research questions and the theories discussed earlier in Chapter Two. In addition, the implications of this study for residence life offices will be included followed by more details on the study's limitations. Finally, this chapter will make recommendations for further studies, provide a few last reflections on the study's limitations, and provide overall conclusions.

The last chapter presented the findings and analysis of the study conducted on the SCB community. These findings indicate that the community has met its set goals; it has provided a "global experience through interactive cross-cultural learning" (International Students and Scholar Services, 2011). Through living in SCB, residents gained experience with intercultural communication and acquired knowledge of cultures from around the world. Residents experienced cultural difference daily, interacted with cultures previously unfamiliar to them, and were able to learn more about their own cultures in the process. Friendships were formed between people from around the world, and residents considered these relationships something valuable and lasting. Though attaining an exact measurement of the increase in intercultural competence of individuals in the SCB community exceed the boundaries of this study, it can be concluded that the

experience has left a lasting impact on the people living on these two floors in Middlebrook.

This study was established to explore the experiences of residents living in the SCB community. While international residence halls are not rare, and studies have been conducted in living-learning communities aimed at facilitating intercultural interactions, I was not able to find prior research that shed light on activities, experiences, and friendships that contributed to intercultural development from the students' perspectives. To explore the intercultural benefits for residents living in SCB, three research questions were developed. These three questions were:

1) What kinds of experiences within the SCB community, including planned events, unplanned events, and formed hall traditions, contribute to residents' sense of increased intercultural competence?

2) What kinds of friendships are formed between students, and how does contact with other students in the hall potentially contribute to an increased understanding of cultural differences and recognition of one's own culture?

3) How does leadership within the hall further intercultural gains amongst residents, and from whom does this leadership originate?

In regards to the first research question, unplanned activities and formed hall traditions tend to be most popular for residents and contribute most to residents' sense of increased intercultural competency. During these events, residents feel a greater sense of control and are able to follow their own interests. Unplanned events and traditions lack a sense of obligation to participate, and residents feel they can control the level of

involvement they have in these activities. The ability to control the level of involvement relates to Taylor's point regarding the degree of readiness for encountering new cultures. When individuals engage in a new culture, they do so voluntarily (1994). Having control allows individuals to choose the amount of ambiguity they wish to tolerate. This is especially true for conversations between small groups of people, which occurred frequently in the lounge area.

These activities also led to residents' sense of increased cultural competence through the promotion of discussion and questions. Residents described the lounge as an important location for congregating and talking. Discussions in the lounge with smaller groups seemed to have more depth than interactions from planned activities. Residents were able to discuss more complex cultural phenomena such as values and religion, and discuss points of conflict arising from behaviors or conversations. The lounge specifically offered a place to talk with friends, further deepening relationships that yielded insight on differences between cultures. Residents in these settings felt no obligation to contribute details or opinions they would rather withhold. Though these activities could cause conflict, the open-minded mentality of the community made residents more comfortable in making cross-cultural mistakes, and allowed residents to guide or inform other residents of other points of view on issues. In this way, errors became learning experiences.

A great deal of data regarding friendship formation and its role in supporting the development of intercultural skills came from this study. The brief period in which residents live in SCB does not provide enough time for deep friendships, the level at

which individuals might share personal struggles or issues, sometimes called "best friends" by residents. However, individuals in SCB did form good friendships that they would like to continue beyond their period in SCB, and the relationships on the hall were described as familial in their support. Further, groups of friends tended to be culturally mixed, giving residents a higher chance of encountering cultural difference.

The friendships formed in this community included spending time together daily, participating in activities and outings together, and sharing aspects of various cultures. The mentality of the community—the idea that everyone is new to SCB and open to learning about different cultures—helped residents form bonds beyond cultural lines. All residents were able to recognize differences between cultures, and were able to reflect on aspects to their own cultures. Additionally, these friendships built on a shared interest in the learning of and respect for other cultures. They encouraged residents in the community to discuss experiences on the hall with one another as a form of reflection. In order for perspectives on a culture to shift, reflecting on the acquired information and comparing it to other ways of knowing, including one's own culture, is necessary (Mezirow, 1991).

The complexity of the differences noticed by residents and the likelihood of residents incorporating those differences into behaviors seemed to depend on prior international experience. The more immersive the experience a resident had prior to SCB, the more comfort they showed with ambiguity at earlier points in the year. These residents tended to have more friends from different cultures amongst their closest groups of friends. Thus, they achieved more exposure to different worldviews, and appeared to

move to more ethnorelative stages at a faster rate than do those who did not have prior immersive experiences abroad.

The majority of the community appeared to function within the minimization stage of the DMIS upon entering SCB given the accent residents placed on similarities when interacting with their fellow hallmates. Few residents, especially domestic residents, believed that interacting with residents from other cultures was different from interacting with individuals from their own cultures despite noticing differences in lifestyle. There seemed to be a sense of everyone in the community being "human," or "just like us." However, residents' recognition of other possible lifestyles and encountering and overcoming stereotypes experienced through SCB could move them further along minimization and towards acceptance. Residents with more international experiences, especially immersion experiences, appeared to be closer to acceptance with a number approaching or in adaptation due to not only the recognition of differences, but recognition of the values supporting those differences and the ability to shift behavior according to the culture and situation. The international residents interviewed were also able to relate the experiences they had in the community to their identity, examining the effects their culture and others had on them personally.

Friendship groups also provided barriers for residents to overcome in terms of achieving understanding of complex cultural differences. Non-Chinese residents who attempted to find a place amongst the group of Chinese residents met with various responses—a few successes, puzzlement, and frustration. Beyond the number of Chinese residents present in the hall making it easy for them to bind together, a series of stress

factors could have made interacting with the Chinese residents more challenging. Paige describes ten stress factors that increase the intensity of cross-cultural interactions, including cultural differences and language (1993). The Chinese culture is a very unique culture. If higher degrees of difference between cultures increase psychological stress, then the group of Chinese residents would have been one of the most difficult to approach for some residents, especially since Chinese residents were often together in large groups. Residents who successfully managed to make a lot of Chinese friends and other Asian residents seemed to better understand the Chinese residents' need to be together. Other groups experienced more frustration. Additionally, no residents outside of the Chinese residents spoke Chinese, and residents stated that there were difficulties speaking to some of the Chinese students in English. All these added a higher level of difficulty for interactions.

Leadership in the SCB community supports inclusiveness, interaction, and respect on the floors, and it begins with the CAs. Though planned activities conducted by the CAs did not lead to the experiences that residents felt gave them a better understanding of other cultures, these activities introduced students to other residents, offered a common goal to work towards, and created interactive opportunities. Further, all activities done on the hall contained a cultural element, including programs that must be done in every residence hall on campus. The CAs also recognized the complexity of cultural experiences and sought to challenge residents to learn more about other cultures without crossing the boundary of discomfort too far beyond what residents could tolerate. The

CAs promoted the open-minded mentality of the hall, and strove to involve all residents to the extent which the residents were comfortable.

The CAs empowered residents to become leaders through creating their own events and helping other residents. This effort served several important functions. First, it allowed residents to create programs that targeted their interests and a degree of cultural interaction with which they were comfortable. Additionally, allowing residents to approach other residents having trouble interacting with the community or with a roommate not only allowed residents to practice mediating an intercultural situation, but it changed the power dynamic during these interventions. Unlike a CA, another resident would have been equal in authority to the resident experiencing difficulties. Another resident had the advantage of living with a roommate from a different culture, which inspired empathy, and it made the conversation carry on more like a discussion between hallmates rather than making a resident feel like something was wrong.

Reflections on Theory

At this point, I will return briefly to some of the theory mentioned in Chapter Two beginning with Deardorff's Delphi study in which she identified the recognition of different worldviews as critical to the development of intercultural competence. Attaining intercultural competence means going beyond surface knowledge of a culture such as food and customs. Instead, knowledge of a culture must include depth in contexts such as history, politics, and society. More important, intercultural thinking must be developed along with behavior (2011). There is no way to ascertain the exact degree to which

residents' worldviews in SCB shifted. However, there appears to be progress towards improved intercultural thinking through the recognition of differences on the hall and the ability to take into account these differences during interactions with people from other cultures. Though this demonstrates progress, besides the few international residents with prior immersion experiences, the study lacks evidence proving this community views these differences as valid. For instance, residents did not always display an understanding of values supporting differences or a recognition that other cultural ways of knowing were equal to their own. Given the increased depth of noted differences and ability to tolerate ambiguity accompanying immersion experiences, an ability to shift worldviews could be possible over time for the residents of SCB should they continue to seek exposure to differences.

The SCB experience could be described as transformative for most residents as demonstrated by the increase in confidence during cross-cultural situations and in some cases, the realization of cultural values. In reviewing Taylor's model for becoming interculturally competent (1994), the study revealed patterns within the community that appear to match Taylor's explanation, especially his first three points.

Taylor begins with accenting the importance of past experiences and the degree of readiness when entering a new cultural situation. For SCB residents, prior international experiences seemed to be the largest determining factor in how much risk residents were willing to tolerate and the number of close friends from various cultures in one's social group. Additionally, the desire to participate in the community by all residents impacted

the amount of interaction in the hall—individuals wanted to talk to people from other cultures during activities.

The second point in Taylor's model focused on the presence of disequilibrium, something necessary in transformative learning. Residents in SCB experienced a bombardment of cultural differences due to the mixture of international and domestic students within groups of friends, and residents' desire to share information about their own backgrounds. This was especially noticeable on the fourth floor where CAs encouraged a high level of interaction amongst individuals and groups; the exchange of cultural information was high.

These groups of friends also completed Taylor's third point in the model together—reflection. Though some residents regretted not keeping a written account of their experiences in SCB, the majority of interviewed students did participate in active reflection. Residents shared events they experienced with friends on the hall, thinking about those experiences while simultaneously gaining feedback. Several interviewees also reported sharing experiences with family members and friends outside of SCB, which provided external interpretation of experiences. All these reflections allowed residents to cognitively process events in the community.

Taylor's fourth point accents the inclusion of behavior strategies to accompany acquired cognitive knowledge. The extent to which residents applied new cultural knowledge to behavior varied greatly. Some residents explained gaining understanding in what would be offensive to someone of another culture. For some residents, these actions were explained to them by an individual from that culture, for others, their understanding

grew through observation. For example, Aaron, who harbors a deep interest and passion for Tibetan culture and supports Tibetan independence, realized that his enthusiasm for Tibetan independence could upset his Chinese hallmates. In response, he became more cognizant of his words and actions about Tibet around the Chinese residents. A few were able to shift communication styles and ways of interacting with friends. Again, these variances occurred according to prior SCB international experience.

Fewer residents displayed Taylor's final point: evolving intercultural identity. The majority of residents displayed an increased confidence in interactions with individuals from other cultures. However, as discussed above, understandings of cultural values and changes in worldview seemed to be rarer. In terms of the model displaying an iterative process, it appears in the case of SCB that some residents do make it through the entire model and start anew from the beginning. However, more commonly, residents progress through the reflection stage, and then begin again. Reflection helps individuals rectify disequilibrium and makes them more conscious of the learning process while at the same time righting some of the imbalances caused by confrontation with difference (Taylor, 1994). If reflection increases the consciousness of learning, perhaps as residents reflect further, changes in behavior could become more common, leading to the final point in the model. The completion of some but not all of Taylor's process by residents also suggests a group of individuals in the process towards accepting and understanding different worldviews, and that the ability to better comprehend other worldviews could occur with time and experience.

In their study on an international residence hall in Australia, Nesdale and Todd accented the importance of residence halls as an ideal place to test contact theory because the communities meet the criteria for favorable contact established by contact theory (2006). A large portion of SCB's success can be attributed to the environment supporting the residents' cultural explorations. SCB met all four of Allport's criteria for favorable contact (1954) in addition to Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) criteria of intergroup friendship. In relation to the idea that members of the group must be of equal status, the concept of all members within the SCB community being new to SCB and the situation of sharing space with people from so many other cultures placed everyone on an equal level. The second stipulation, common goals, occurs in the hall through residents' eagerness to share their cultures with other residents. They united through the common goal of learning more about the cultures represented in the hall. The third criterion in contact theory is cooperation. In SCB, cooperation occurs through active participation in hall activities and discussions. The last condition from Allport is the support of authority. The CAs in the community created programming to support the inclusive nature of the hall and accent inclusion of all residents in activities. These ideas enforced by the CAs established the foundation for the community's open-mindedness that allowed the high degree of interaction seen on the fourth floor. The additional necessity of friendships being formed within the environment amongst people from different backgrounds occurred through the variety of friendship groups containing multiple residents from different cultures in SCB.

Overall, the environment in SCB that welcomed inclusiveness and the exchange of ideas led to a community that sought out and appreciated differences. Though these differences did not necessarily lead to shifts in worldview for all residents, individuals created lasting friendships, broke down stereotypes, and were able to gain confidence in interacting with people from around the world. While the SCB community is specific to the University of Minnesota, international residence halls sharing similar traits with the community occur on other campuses across the United States and abroad. Elements from this study could inform residence life offices interested in establishing an international residence hall or making changes to an operating international residence hall on campus.

Implications for Residence Life Professionals

This study offers several implications for residence life professionals or other student affairs personnel in the establishment of international residence halls. Mimicking the exact results SCB achieved during the 2011-2012 school year would be impossible because a portion of the success relates directly to the group of students and staff present in the community that year. However, certain aspects of the community environment and structure could be generalized in other programs and facilitate positive interaction between domestic and international residents in other international residence halls. These factors include the type of residents recruited for the community, the staff and activities, and the presence of a communal area in the hall.

The open-mindedness of residents proved to be one of the largest factors in facilitating interaction between residents from different cultures. Residents wanted to

share cultural information and showed support for cultural learning. Individuals displayed a high degree of readiness for cultural disequilibrium in the community. Thus, finding residents willing to put themselves in situations of cultural difference and willing to learn more about other cultures is necessary in communities like SCB. Koji, the CA on the fourth floor, explained this by stating that most students in a residence hall expect to have a roommate and they expect to have roommate conflicts. However, to add cultural conflicts to the situation when a resident does not expect to be facing those conflicts could cause an increase in issues the resident is not willing to resolve. If possible, students recruited for an international residence hall should be placed in the residence voluntarily.

In addition to recruiting residents with an interest in cultural learning, adding residents to the community with a variety of past international experiences could aid international and domestic student integration. Though the number individuals with significant international experience at the traditional college age in residence halls is likely small, having residents more comfortable with ambiguity and able to integrate into groups of residents with cultures greatly different from their own benefit the entire community. These residents serve as cultural informants and can act as mentors to other residents because they perceive more differences and integrate these differences into their actions. Further, regardless of the amount of international experience that occurred prior to living in the community, all residents willing to learn about new cultures seem to benefit from the community by gaining new knowledge and skills. Thus, this experience

is equally important for someone experienced in intercultural interaction as for someone with less experience.

In terms of student staff leadership in the community, recruiting staff with an interest in other cultures and experience with cultural difference either abroad or in their home country seems to be helpful. With this experience, staff can empathize with residents living in the community. Further, the willingness of staff to be open to cultural difference makes it easier for that support of differences to carry on to the residents. It is also important that staff include this open-minded approach in interactive activities, and encourage all residents to become involved in interactive activities as quickly as possible. While residents valued the ability to direct their own activities according to interest, early planned activities aided residents in meeting people in the community and gaining comfort interacting with hallmates. Further, friendship groups tended to be made within the first several weeks of the year, meaning getting all individuals involved at the beginning when these friendships first form is important.

As resident led activities and conversations allowed residents in the study to develop their intercultural abilities at a pace comfortable for them, having an area in the residence hall in which any group of residents can freely interact at any time seems to be helpful. This area, like SCB's lounge, serves as a place for conversation, getting help with school work, hall meetings, and planned and unplanned activities.

Additional Limitations

Many limitations exist in relation to this study, several discussed in the first chapter. However, I would like to discuss a few limitations that arose during the course of the study that could be improved in future research. First the number of participants in the study represented only a small portion of the hall. The largest portion of data came from the in-depth interviews conducted with ten of the residents. The provided information contained great detail, and the backgrounds of these ten residents varied greatly. Nevertheless, the experiences of these ten residents represented only a small portion of the community who were among the more active members of SCB. Some bias towards the interviews comes from the low response rate to the survey. The response rate for the domestic residents was 37%, enough to draw some conclusions regarding the experiences of this group. However, only five international residents responded to the survey—far too low to draw any conclusions. The study would have benefited from a longer window in which to complete the survey, and perhaps additional methods of distributing the survey beyond e-mail.

Although member checking was used in an attempt to increase the validity of the data, few participants participated in the member checking. After coding all data from the interviews and participant observation and completing the analysis, all information was compiled into an e-mail and forwarded to residents who participated in the interviews. Of the ten residents interviewed, two briefly responded with confirmations that the data appeared correct. The same analysis and results were shared with the two CAs

interviewed. One CA responded via e-mail that the data aligned with what he observed on his floor. The remaining CA shared her views on the data in a face to face meeting, and also stated that the results described the community.

The lack of information regarding the third floor of SCB could also limit the results because it does not provide sufficient insight into the activity from that portion of the community. While three of the interviewed residents lived on the third floor and a number of domestic students who answered the survey had to be third floor residents, I had no communication with leadership on the third floor and was not able to observe many interactions on that floor due to lack of activity during my observation periods and my own time constraints. My own schedule of observations could contribute to skewed results because I observed during the same time every week except during advertised events. This means I observed many of the same residents every week, and could have observed more had I appeared at different times of day.

As stated previously, this study offers no exact measurements of intercultural competence for students and all data was self-reported. However, being able to measure intercultural competence and record change during the time residents live in SCB would be helpful in determining to what extent living in SCB actually improves intercultural skills. In this study, improvement in intercultural skills was determined by the residents' perceptions. A tool such as the IDI would provide more exact data.

Additionally, the majority of domestic residents in the SCB community during the study came from the same demographic—middle-class and white. Thus, further studies

conducted at other sites could be complicated with variances in the domestic resident population.

Recommendations

In this section, I will cover recommendations for the SCB community and for future studies in this community. For SCB, most recommendations relate to preparations for the school year. Currently, no training in working with residents in a cross-cultural setting exists for the CAs. Intercultural training for CAs has been brought up by SCB administrators, and in interviews CAs also accented the help such training would provide. Though integrating such training into the CAs' already full training schedule for the year would be challenging, it would be helpful. Continuing to recruit students into the community will benefit the community by ensuring that high levels of cultural interest exists in all residents, likely increasing engagement in hall activities. Ensuring interest could also lead to residents taking on more leadership roles in planning activities of interest to the community.

Once the fall semester begins, residents must be engaged from the beginning because friendship groups begin forming within the first several weeks in the community. Increasing engagement at the beginning of the semester will increase the level of comfort residents have with hallmates from different cultures, helping friendship groups become more culturally mixed. In conjunction with early interaction, attempting to conduct additional activities alongside or immediately following Welcome Week during a time when international residents can participate could aid international residents in becoming

more engaged since a number are unable to attend Welcome Week programming. Additional reflection beyond conversing with hallmates could benefit students, allowing them to process their experiences in the community. Something such as individual journals or an online forum, depending upon the community's comfort with one another, could be incorporated in the class for SCB residents. Later in the year, the community would benefit from resident led programming that could be aligned with the interest of students. Leadership from the residents would encourage the exploration and sharing of cultures, and would provide experience in leading in a cross-cultural context.

As a young program on campus, SCB offers several avenues for research related to this study. After the 2011-2012 school year, a number of residents have selected to remain in SCB for a second year. Though the community retained a few residents from its first year of operation, a larger number plan to return next year, meaning the community next year will contain a higher percent of returning students, which will likely change the dynamics on the hall including the leadership and possibly friendship groups. Brought up previously by SCB administration, another course of study would be an exploration of the effect SCB has on other communities in Middlebrook. SCB fills only two floors of Middlebrook Hall. The building houses several living learning communities who occasionally attend SCB events. Several members from other communities in the building spend so much time in SCB that the community has "adopted" them. Another study could examine the effects SCB has on students beyond their first year on campus. In order to ascertain the effects SCB has on residents after they leave the community, a

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longitudinal study on residents that follows their intercultural engagement could be informative.

Conclusions

When describing efforts that could be taken to develop intercultural competence at universities, Deardorff stresses the "great need for programs to bring domestic and international students together in meaningful interactions" (2011, p.72). The SCB community creates opportunities for friendship, cooperation, and learning for residents. Individuals living in this community have a chance to challenge themselves, and learn more about their own cultures and identities. SCB broadens participants' horizons, opens minds, and contributes to campus internationalization efforts. SCB, along with other curricular and co-curricular programming on the University of Minnesota campus offers students a more complex view of the world.

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Appendix 1: Chain of Evidence: Level 1 and Level 2 Questions

Research Questions and Chain of Evidence
- Research Questions (Level 1)
    i. What kinds of experiences within the SCB community, including planned events, unplanned events, and formed hall traditions contribute to residents' sense of increased intercultural competence?
    ii. What kinds of friendships are formed between students, and how does contact with other students in the hall potentially contribute to an increased understanding of cultural differences and recognition of one's own culture?
    iii. How does leadership within the hall further intercultural gains amongst residents, and from whom does this leadership originate?
- Secondary Questions (Level 2)
    i. A. Do students' perspectives on other cultures in SCB transform? (observations, interviews, survey)
    ii. B1. Do students realize their own cultural identity and cultural influences? (survey, interview)
    B2. How do their identities change within SCB? (interviews)
    iii. C1. How do domestic students attempt to increase their intercultural competence when their own cultures exist outside of SCB on campus? (interviews, survey)
    C2. Do domestic students experience a kind of 'culture shock'? (observation, interview) Mini-culture shocks?
    iv. D1. What kind of in-groups and out-groups form? (interview, observation, survey)
    D2. How and why do those groups shift throughout the year? Do they? (interviews, observations)
    v. E1. What factors increase interactions between students from different cultural backgrounds? (observation, interviews, survey)
    E2. Who facilitates these interactions, and how? (interviews, observations, staff interviews)
    vi. F1. How do students within SCB develop relationships within the hall, and what kind of relationships are they? (interviews, observations, and survey)?
    F2. How do these friendships lead to an increase in cultural knowledge and cross-cultural behavior?
    vii. G1. Why do students choose to live in SCB? (interviews, survey)
    G2. How do past experiences influence students' experiences in SCB? (interviews)
    viii. H. What barriers inhibit students from interacting? How do they overcome them? (interviews, surveys)

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Student Interviews Session 1 (End of September 2011)

- ✓ *Review the consent form with the participant and go over any questions the participant may have. Ensure the participant is over 18 years old.*
- ✓ *Thank the participant for helping with the study.*
- ✓ *Although written in the consent form, remind the participant that the recorder can be turned off at any point during the interview, and that the participant may refuse to answer any questions that cause discomfort.*
- ✓ *Review the purpose of the research with the participant and how it affects the Students Crossing Borders Program.*

Domestic Students

1) What influenced you to apply to the Students Crossing Boarders Program (SCB)? (G1 & G2)
2) Think of someone on the hall from another culture whom you have met this month and have gotten along fairly well with. This can be your roommate or someone else on the hall. Have you noticed any differences in the way this person perceives issues or handles situations? (B1)
3) Prior to living in SCB, what kind of international experiences abroad or in the U.S. have you had? What kind of connections do you have with people whose culture is different from your own? (G3)
4) What do you value in a friend? (F1)
5) How do you feel about living with someone from another country? Is there anything in particular you are worried about? (E1)
6) Have you and your roommate had any arguments so far? How do you solve (or how would you solve) disputes? (A & B1)
7) Have there been any activities or events (planned or unplanned) that you felt helped you bond with or understand your roommate better? Describe the activity. (E1 &E2)
8) Since arriving, has there been anything, including conversations, information, or events, that have surprised you? Why did it surprise you? (C2)
9) How easy is it right now to interact with the international students? From your perspective, what makes it easy or difficult? (A & B1 & H)
10) Empathy for international roommate or other international students on the hall.

International Students

1) What influenced you to apply to SCB? (G1 & G2)
2) Think of someone on the hall from another culture whom you have met this month and have gotten along fairly well with. This can be your roommate or

someone else on the hall. Have you noticed any differences in the way this person perceives issues or handles situations? (B1)

3) Prior to living in SCB, what kind of international experiences abroad or in the U.S. have you had? What kind of connections do you have with people whose culture is different from your own? (G3)

4) What do you value in a friend? (F1)

5) What is your impression, so far, of your U.S. roommate? How do you get along and is there anything that worries you? (E1)

6) Have you and your roommate had any arguments so far? How do you solve (or how would you solve) disputes? (A1 & B1)

7) Have there been any activities or events (planned or unplanned) that you felt helped you bond with or understand your roommate better? Describe the activity. (E1 &E2)

8) How easy is it right now to interact with U.S. students? From your perspective, what makes it easy or difficult? (A & B1 & H)

9) Since beginning SCB, has anything about the U.S. students or U.S. culture in general that has shocked you? Why? (B1)

10) Having lived here in SCB for several weeks, is there anything you wish you had known more about SCB or U.S. culture prior to leaving your home country? Describe information that would have been helpful. (G3 & H)

Student Interview Session 2 (February/March 2012), All Students Via E-mail

1) What were some of the challenges you faced this year as a resident of SCB, and how did you overcome them? In what ways do you believe these challenges will affect or help you later? (H)

2) A student visiting campus says that he is thinking about living in SCB next semester, and wants to know what living in a hall with people from many different cultures is like. He says that he is worried about living in a residence hall where people have vastly different backgrounds from his own, but he is interested in different cultures. What do you tell him about SCB, and how do you allay his fears? (G1 & H)

3) How has your relationship with people on the hall from different cultures changed over the course of a school year? (F1 & D2)

4) Many people who spend a significant time in another culture often say that they learned more about their own culture during their time spent away than about the culture they were immersed in. What have you learned about your own culture during your time in SCB? (B1 & B2)

5) How do you reflect on your time in SCB (this would include talking with other

residents, keeping a journal, linking your experiences in the hall for class assignments, or even just thinking)?

Staff Interviews (January/Febrary 2012)

- ✓ *Review the consent form with the participant and go over any questions the participant may have.*
- ✓ *Thank the participant for helping with the study.*
- ✓ *Although written in the consent form, remind the participant that the recorder can be turned off at any point during the interview, and that the participant may refuse to answer any questions that cause discomfort.*
- ✓ *Review the purpose of the research with the participant and how it affects the Students Crossing Borders Program.*

Interview Questions

1) Did you choose to switch from your previous position in residence life, or were you placed in SCB? Why did you switch? (G1 & G2)
2) Getting to know new dorm-mates is always a challenging experience, especially for first year students. How did you and your co-workers attempt to facilitate student interaction and help the hall get to know one another? (E1)
3) Is there anything in particular that you try to keep in mind when developing programs for your hall? What are these points and why are they important? (C1 &D2 & E1)
4) Looking back at the past semester, what were your most successful programs within the hall? What programs were not as successful as you hoped? Why do you think your successful programs had a good response from the hall? (E2 & H?)
5) What was your biggest concern about working with this group of students when the school year started? How did you address those concerns and were those concerns valid? (A & B1 & D2)
6) If you were to give advice to your successor about working with this hall today, what advice would you offer?
7) What kind of additional training did you have to go through to be an SCB staff member? How does this differ from training other staff go through? Was the additional training useful?

Appendix 3: SCB Survey

Demographic Questions

1. Are you a U.S. born domestic student, or an international student? Please choose one.
   a. I am a domestic student.
   b. I am an international student.
2. How many languages do you speak at a conversational level, including your native language? Please choose one.
   a. One
   b. Two
   c. Three
   d. Four
   e. More than four
3. How many countries besides your home country have you been to for purposes OTHER THAN travel or vacation (ie: study abroad, language immersion in another country, mission trips, service trips, living abroad)? Please choose one.
   a. One
   b. Two
   c. Three
   d. More than three
4. Did you apply to Students Crossing Borders? Please choose one.
   a. Yes, I applied.
   b. No, I was placed here.
5. Which answer best describes how long you have lived in the Students Crossing Borders Community?
   a. More than one full school year
   b. Less than one full school year, but more than one full semester
   c. Less than one full semester

The Students Crossing Borders Experience
6. Which best describes your closest group of friends in Students Crossing Borders?
   a. My friends are mostly (90%) members of my own culture.
   b. My friends are mostly (90%) members of cultures different from my own.
   c. Many of my friends (80%) are from my own culture, but some are from cultures different from my own (20%).
   d. Many of my friends are from cultures different from my own (80%), but a few are from my own culture (20%).
   e. My friends are from my own culture (50%) and from cultures different from my own (50%).
7. From this list, please rank the items you feel best helped you get to know people from other cultures on the hall with 1 being the highest ranking and 8 being the lowest ranking.
   a. Welcome Week
   b. events planned by CAs
   c. unplanned events (such as snowball fights after a snowfall, unplanned parties)
   d. talking with people in the lounge
   e. regular traditions done on a consistent basis (such as eating meals together, weekly study sessions, Friday videogame nights)

    f.   events or trips planned by members of the hall to places outside of Middlebrook
    g.   language clubs
    h.   shared classes

8. Are there any other activities that helped you get to know residents from other cultures on the hall not listed above? If yes, please explain.

Read the following statements carefully. After reading each statement, please choose a response.

9. My CAs were effective in getting me involved in activities that increased my contact with people from other cultures.
    a.   Strongly Agree
    b.   Agree
    c.   Neither Agree nor Disagree
    d.   Disagree
    e.   Strongly Disagree

10. I feel that I have made friendships with people from other cultures on the hall that are valuable and that I would like to continue in the future.
    a.   Strongly Agree
    b.   Agree
    c.   Neither Agree nor Disagree
    d.   Disagree
    e.   Strongly Disagree

11. After living in Students Crossing Borders, I have learned more information about the customs and lifestyles of people from cultures different from my own.
    a.   Strongly Agree
    b.   Agree
    c.   Neither Agree nor Disagree
    d.   Disagree
    e.   Strongly Disagree

12. After living in Students Crossing Borders, I have more confidence in cultural situations that are completely new to me.
    a.   Strongly Agree
    b.   Agree
    c.   Neither Agree nor Disagree
    d.   Disagree
    e.   Strongly Disagree

13. After living in Students Crossing Borders, I feel that I have learned more about my own culture through my interactions on the hall.
    a.   Strongly Agree
    b.   Agree
    c.   Neither Agree nor Disagree
    d.   Disagree
    e.   Strongly Disagree

14. After living in Students Crossing Borders, my perceptions of other cultures on the hall has changed.
    a.   Strongly Agree
    b.   Agree

    c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

15. After living in Students Crossing Borders, I feel that I adjust my behavior depending upon the culture of the person I with whom I am interacting.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

16. After living in Students Crossing Borders, I feel that I have greater confidence in understanding the point of view of someone from another country.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

17. I feel that interacting with an individual from a culture different from my own requires more thought than interacting with an individual from my own culture.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

18. After living in Students Crossing Borders, I feel more confident in meeting and getting to know people from other cultures.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

19. Living in Students Crossing Borders has made me want to explore other international or cultural opportunities during college that I had not considered prior to living in the community.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

20. I feel that the people in Students Crossing Borders from other cultures are mostly the same as myself.
    a. Strongly Agree
    b. Agree
    c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
    d. Disagree
    e. Strongly Disagree

21. Please use this space to address any additional information on the Students Crossing Borders community, the people you have met here, the experience as a whole, or to clarify any responses from above. Thank you.