5-1-2005

As the World Goes to College: International Student Experiences

Kimberly Gillette

AS THE WORLD GOES TO COLLEGE:
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCES

by

Kimberly Gillette
Bachelor of Arts, St. Olaf College, 1990
Master of Arts, Lesley University, 1994

A Dissertation

submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillments of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Grand Forks, North Dakota
May
2005

UMI Number: 3199526

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI®

ii

This dissertation, submitted by Kimberly Gillette in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

Margaret a. Healy
Chairperson

Jason L

Kathleen Gershman

Janet Goldenstein Ahler

Douglas C. Munski

This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

Joseph N. Benoit
Dean of the Graduate School

April 29, 2005
Date

iii

PERMISSION

Title   As the World Goes to College: International Student Experiences

Department   Educational Leadership

Degree   Doctor of Philosophy

      In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a graduate degree from the University of North Dakota, I agree that the library of this University shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor who supervised my dissertation work or, in her absence, by the chairperson of the department or the dean of the Graduate School. It is understood that any copying or publication or other use of this dissertation or part thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of North Dakota in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my dissertation.

Signature _Kelly Gillette_

Date _4/22/05_

iv

TABLE OF CONTENTS

v

vi

vii

LIST OF FIGURES

viii

LIST OF TABLES

ix

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people I need to thank for their support and encouragement throughout this process. Without these people behind me, completing this dissertation would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible. My sincerest thanks to each of them as they have supported me in their unique ways.

Dr. John McCarthy provided much appreciated humor and helped start me on the path of research. Dr. Katrina Meyer prodded me along and saw me through the initial proposal. Although she left UND, she did not leave me. Dr. Margaret Healy was brave enough to take me on and see me through the rest of the journey. To my committee members, Dr. Janet Ahler, Dr. Kathleen Gershman, Dr. Jason Lane, Dr. Douglas Munski, for helping me grow as a researcher and making this dissertation the best it could be. Ms. Sharon Fields for being my "Go-To Gal" and jumping in at the last minute to proofread the reference list.

There are many people at my home institution that I must also thank. The library staff gave me a study room where I could hide and fulfilled numerous interlibrary loan requests. Jill Holsen, Janet Hohenstein, and Ludmi Jinadasa for so amply taking over my responsibilities so that I could have time for research and for writing. Also, they provided a much needed sounding board and offered daily encouragement. Vice-President Wiese and President Barden approved my sabbatical request making it easier for me to complete this project. I must also thank all of the international students for offering encouragement and support. They have been very patient with me during this

x

process and have understood when I have needed to be away from the office. Also, it meant a lot to me having them be in my cheering section. I thank those students, staff and faculty who have dared asked me about the research and listened (with interest) to my ramblings!

I must also thank the students who participated in this study. Their openness and honesty was much appreciated. I enjoyed getting to know them and wish them all the best. I will be forever indebted to them.

Most importantly, I need to thank my immediate and extended family. For without them, I would have never embarked upon this journey. This work is as much theirs as it is mine. They are my T.L.s.

To the International Students at MSU

ABSTRACT

Students from all over the world come to the United States each year in pursuit of higher education. Representing over 200 countries, students come to learn English, improve their skills or learn new ones, gain educational experience, and/or earn a degree. To achieve their goals, these students must make successful transitions to their new educational and social environment.

The purpose of this inductive qualitative study was to discover what international students perceived as being important to them for making a successful transition to a university in the United States. This study was limited to international students who were unfamiliar with the U.S. higher educational system and were attending an U.S. university for the first time. Twenty-five eligible students were invited to participate and seven self-selected to be in the study. These students were asked to keep a written journal in English throughout their first term. They were asked to write at least three times a week. Each student was observed in a minimum of two classes. The observations provided a basis for the interviews. Each student participated in between two and four interviews throughout the semester. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Journals, observation notes and interview transcriptions were coded and analyzed for emerging themes.

During their transition to the U.S. university system, international students perceived a change in their level of dependency. Students coming from independent situations felt more dependent and childlike during their initial transition to the U.S.

university and students from dependent situations felt more independent during this transition. International students were more likely to seek advice from other students than from university personnel or services. International students wanted to feel connected to others on-campus, including other international students, and with American students. They experienced differences, anticipated or not, in the educational system including differences in teaching, use of language, approachability of faculty, and the concept of general education.

The study concludes with a discussion of findings, implications and recommendations for universities and for further research.

xiii

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Students from all over the world come to the United States each year in pursuit of higher education. Representing over 200 countries, students come to learn English, improve their skills or learn new ones, gain educational experience, and/or earn a degree. They come to language centers, technical schools, community colleges, four-year colleges, universities, private institutions and public institutions, bringing with them their own culture, language, experiences and expectations. To achieve their goals, these students must make successful transitions to their new educational and social environment. The experiences of Luis and Ian, presented below, demonstrate some of the challenges international students face during this transition. Luis and Ian are not representative of any individual international student but rather are a composite of several international students and their experiences.

The Story of Luis

Luis obtained his visa on the first try. He had been told that it was very hard to obtain visas to study in the United States. He heard of others who had to go to the American Embassy on three or four different occasions before their visas were granted.

Luis arrived on-campus the Saturday before orientation and was surprised to find that no services were open on-campus. He spent the weekend by himself exploring campus. He did not see very many students and felt very alone.

1

Luis was relieved when the orientation program finally began. He was finally able to meet some other students. The orientation program was good and helped to keep Luis busy. However, he was still anxious to find out about his course schedule. He had been advised during orientation that he would need to have some ideas about what classes he would like to take prior to meeting with his advisor. Luis really did not have any ideas about classes. He was used to being told which courses he was going to be in, and figured his academic advisor would create a schedule for him.

Luis' advisor did not create a course schedule for him, but rather gave him a list of general education requirements, major requirements and a general sequence of courses. Luis still felt anxious and unsure about the registration process, but could not find the words to describe his concern to his advisor. So, he just nodded and left the office. After several attempts, Luis finally registered for classes.

Classes were not what Luis had expected. Luis tried to talk to the students next to him, but they seemed to already have friends and did not acknowledge him. The professors explained how the class would be structured and that class participation would be large part of their grades. Luis could not imagine what this could mean. He was used to sitting in class, listening to the professor, and taking notes. Plus, he was not always sure that he understood what others were telling him. He had to listen hard and even then he did not understand some of the words. Instead of asking others to repeat or explain, Luis retreated into himself.

Luis spent countless hours emailing back to his family and friends. His parents really wanted Luis to study in the United States because a degree from the United States held such prestige back home and tried to encourage Luis to stay and give it a try. Luis,

2

however, was not sure that he liked the educational differences and certainly felt he did not have a support system.

Four weeks after his arrival, Luis withdrew from the university and returned home.

The Story of Ian

Ian had to postpone his dream of studying in the United States for two years because he had been unsuccessful in his attempts to obtain the appropriate student visa to enter the country. The officials at his prospective university in the United States had kept correspondence with him. They postponed his enrollment date on numerous occasions and faxed letters to the U.S. Embassy on his behalf. Ian's third and final attempt at securing the F-1 student visa was successful. However, his visa was issued only one week prior to the start of orientation. Because he had been refused on two other occasions, Ian had not bothered to make flight arrangements to or housing arrangements in the United States. This left little time to make proper arrangements. Despite this, Ian was able to purchase a plane ticket for a week later.

After thirty hours of traveling, Ian arrived two days before classes began. His flight landed at 10:00 p.m. He found his way to the university. Nobody at the school knew what to do for him, as he had not applied for housing. Two other international students heard his dilemma and called a third student about putting Ian up for a few days. This student was more than happy to help. He collected Ian and his things and spent the next day helping Ian find housing and helping him figure out some classes.

On the first day of classes, Ian was able to meet up with his advisor. His advisor assisted Ian in finalizing his schedule, and even made a few phone calls about getting Ian

3

into some full courses. Ian's advisor also walked Ian through the on-line registration process and made sure that Ian understood the philosophy behind general education requirements and how that fits into being a well-rounded person. At the end of their first meeting, his advisor asked him about his living situation and invited Ian to come see him anytime about anything. Ian was elated. He never expected that sort of treatment from a professor.

Classes were much different than Ian had anticipated. The professors used the internet to post lecture notes and study materials. It took Ian a little while to feel comfortable with accessing technology for studying, but he found it helpful to be able to look over lecture notes before going to class. It gave him time to look up words he didn't know. He felt better prepared and better able to follow the lecture. He also found his professors were very approachable and appreciated that they had set hours in their offices. At first he was timid to approach faculty during their office hours, but his friends assured him that it was acceptable and that faculty did not mind having students come to see them. Ian realized his friends were right at his first visit with his professor.

Ian found each day to be challenging as he was adjusting to a new language, environment, culture, and educational system. However, he found some others with whom he could share. Some days were better than others. But, with each passing week, he was feeling more and more acclimated to his new school.

Purpose of the Study

The experiences represented in Luis' and Ian's stories are typical of those faced by international students. Often, international students experience extreme uncertainties and difficulties in obtaining their student visas. They may be left with a relatively short

4

amount of time to arrange final details including making travel arrangements, both to the United States and the institution itself, and securing last minute housing. Unlike their U.S. counterparts, many international students are not sure of their matriculation to the university in the United States until a month or two before school starts, and in some cases, not until a week or even a day before school starts because of the uncertainty in obtaining visas and flights. This can add to the stress students face in arriving on-campus. Once on-campus, these students face many other adjustments. They experience differences in language, weather, food, educational structure, societal expectations, and culture. Making a successful transition, even in the face of these differences, is vital to the students' success and continued enrollment at the institution.

But, why focus on international students? First and foremost, institutions have an obligation to their students. By admitting international students into their programs, institutions must provide services and programs to help these students succeed. Their success has four potential outcomes. First, institutions and communities benefit financially by having international students at the university. For example, international students at Midwestern State University spent $522,600 for tuition and fees and contributed $3,018,600 to the local economy during the 2002/03 academic year (Institute of International Education (IIE), 2003). Second, international students bring diversity to the campus and the classroom, enriching the educational experience (NAFSA Association of International Educators (NAFSA), 2003). Third, international students contribute to research. International students account for 13.3% of the total student enrollment of all graduate enrollments in the U.S., compared to 2.7% of Bachelor's level (IIE, 2003). Fourth, foreign nations benefit. International students often return home,

5

using their knowledge and skills acquired in the United States to help their own nations develop. World leaders from over 70 countries have studied in the United States. Some of the positions held by former international students include President, Prime Minister, Ambassador, Minister of Health, Minister of Finance, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, just to name a few (Department of State, n.d.).

How do institutions ensure the success of international students as they make the transition to a new educational system, culture, language, and society? To answer this question, it is important to discover what international students perceive as being important during their adjustment to the university. The purpose of this study was to discover what international students perceive as being important to them to make a successful social and academic transition to a university in the United States.

The first year is important because it is a critical period in a student's adjustment to the university and to his or her ultimate success (Choy, 2002; Gardner, 2001; Tinto, 1987). Research shows that undergraduate students who complete their first year of higher education and return for their second year are more likely than not to obtain a degree (Horn, 1998) and a greater portion of undergraduates leave higher education during or after their first year than in all later years of study (Horn, 1998; Tinto, 1998). Approximately 35 percent of higher education students drop out without earning a degree (Wirt, J., Choy, S., Rooney, P., Provasnik, S., Sen, A., & Tobin, R., 2004). Students who returned for their second year were more "academically integrated" having had more contact with other students and faculty (Choy, 2002).

Student attrition and retention studies have been designed to determine why students drop out and why students stay. Theories on student retention and attrition (e.g.,

6

Tinto, 1975, 1987; Bean, 1982; Anderson, 1985; Noel, 1985) state that a myriad of factors play a part in a student's decision to continue in higher education or to drop out. Some of these factors include the difficulty or lack of difficulty of coursework, incongruence or lack of fit between the student and the institution, a feeling of isolation from others on-campus, and the student's social and academic integration to the university.

One component of academic integration is the adjustment to the U.S. learning environment. Chickering and Gamson (1987) wrote the "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" which is based on 50 years of research on good teaching and learning in classrooms in the United States. The principles they encourage are student/faculty interactions inside and outside of the classroom, the development of reciprocity and cooperation among students, the use of active learning techniques, prompt feedback, the emphasis of time on task, the communication of high expectations, and a respect for diverse talents and ways of learning. However, what constitutes effective teaching and learning, acceptable faculty/student interactions and appropriate classroom behavior are not universal in nature, but rather culturally based (Anderson & Powell, 1991; Beykont & Daiute, 2002).

This research was designed to hear from a special population, the international student population, about perceptions of their experiences during their transition to an institution of higher education in the United States.

<center>Potential Significance</center>

There have been many studies recently on international student adjustment (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van Horn, 2002; Rajapaksa & Dundes,

<center>7</center>

2002; Zhai, 2002; Nicholson, 2001; Udoh, 2000; Robinson, 1992; Parr, Bradley, & Bingi, 1992; Kagan & Cohen, 1990; and others). These studies have been varied in format and focus. The one element that has been consistent is that these studies have approached the question of international student adjustment with preconceived ideas or expectations of areas of importance by limiting questions through questionnaires or a set question guide. While having parameters is important and necessary in designing research, it is also useful to have some studies that evolve and emerge with the data and allow for perception checking.

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on international student adjustment by adding the students' perspectives as to what was important to them during their first term. As an inductive qualitative study, the researcher refrained from leading the topics of discussion but rather allowed the students to guide the research. This allowed for the students to speak about what was important to them and not what the researcher thought was important. The guiding questions outlined later in this chapter were designed as a place to begin as all students in this study were coming to the United States for study. Most interviews, however, began with "What do you want me to know?" and ended with "Is there anything else you would like to share?" These questions allowed the students to guide the conversations and resulted in many different topics being discussed and different themes to emerge.

Background to the Study

There are multiple reasons that international education is important including improving security and foreign policy of the United States, developing economically, and training a competent workforce. Having an understanding of other peoples and cultures,

8

as well as sharing the culture and customs of the people of the United States with others is vital to the security and economic development of the United States (American Council on Education (ACE), 1995; American Council on Education & Commission on International Education, 1998; Johnson, 2003; NAFSA, 2003). "Without international competence, the nation's standard of living is threatened and its competitive difficulties will increase" (ACE, 1995, p. 1). In 1998, the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Commission on International Education described the new global context, or "global village":

> From the neatly defined bipolar structure of the cold war to today's complex multipolar structure, economies, societies, and politics are simultaneously more global and more regionally integrated. Traditional political and military threats to American security are now augmented by newer and less familiar challenges, such as terrorism, regional conflict, and the global organization of crime and narcotics traffic.
>
> Worldwide free trade and sustainable development, increasingly important to American prosperity, are less likely to flourish in undemocratic nations. Americans have come to understand that our national security depends on efforts to defend human rights and support democratic values around the world (p. 1).

This interdependency results in needing people and a workforce that is internationally aware and competent in working with diverse people. "Unless today's students develop the competence to function effectively in a global environment, they are unlikely to succeed in the 21st century" (ACE, 1995, p. 1).

9

One way to address this need is through international education. One vital component of international education is to ensure that international students are successful in their study in the United States.

By hosting international students, we generate an appreciation of American political values and institutions, and we lay the foundation for constructive relations based on mutual understanding and goodwill. The ties formed at school between future American and future foreign leaders have facilitated innumerable foreign policy relations...perhaps our most undervalued foreign policy asset (NAFSA, 2003, p. 5).

Besides the foreign policy aspect, international students contribute to the economy and educational system within the United States. Economically, international students and their dependents put nearly $12 billion in the U.S. economy in the 2002 – 2003 academic year, making "international education a significant U.S. service-sector export" (NAFSA, 2003, p. 6). The educational benefits are two-fold. First of all, graduate international students provide invaluable service and contributions to teaching and research. They help fill under-enrolled science courses, often making "the difference for a school's ability to offer those courses" (NAFSA, 2003, p. 6). Secondly, "international students enrich American higher education and culture" (NAFSA, 2003, p. 6), providing many American students with their first close contact with foreigners (NAFSA, 2003). These contacts "begin the process of preparing these students [American students] to be effective global citizens" (NAFSA, 2003, p. 6) and enhances the internationalization of learning (NAFSA & Alliance for International Education and Cultural Exchange, 2003).

10

Internationalization is often thought of in terms of foreign language offerings, expansion of study abroad opportunities or strengthening international and area studies in the curriculum (Altbach & Peterson, 1998). Arum and Van de Water (1992) define international education as "the multiple activities, programs and service that fall within international studies, international educational exchange and technical cooperation" (p. 202). The three main components of this definition include international studies (curriculum), international education exchange (movement of people), and technical cooperation (sharing of expertise). Other definitions typically divide internationalization into three components: (1) international students coming to study in the United States, (2) study abroad, and (3) the curriculum, including language study, area and ethnic studies and adding international units into existing courses.

NAFSA Association of International Educators and Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange (2003) define internationalization of learning as learning of foreign languages and knowledge of other cultures by Americans, study abroad by U.S. students, students from other countries coming to study in the United States, the exchange of scholars and of citizens at all levels of society, and the enhancement of the educational infrastructure through which international competence and research is produced. This study will focus the third component of this definition by looking at international students coming to the United States to study. It is hoped that this research will also add to the last component of this definition with the results enhancing the educational infrastructure.

11

Research Questions

The purpose of this inductive qualitative study was to discover what international students perceived as being important during their initial transition to a university in the United States. Guiding questions for this study included: What did international students experience during their first term at an institution of higher education in the United States? What expectations did international students have about their educational experience prior to coming to the United States? Were these expectations met and did they change? How did their educational experiences in the United States compare to those in their home country? What challenges did they face coming and studying in the United States? What information would have been helpful to know prior to studying here?

Methodology

This is an inductive qualitative study and relied on student journals, observations of international students in their classes and interviews with the students. Seven international students at Midwestern State University (MSU) participated in this study. All eligible students (25) were asked during fall orientation to participate in the study and seven students self-selected to participate. Selected students were attending an educational institution in the United States for the first time. These students had no prior experience with the U.S. educational system. Students were asked to keep journals documenting their experiences, impressions, thoughts and perceptions during their first term at MSU. Students were asked to write, at a minimum, three journal entries per week. Observations were conducted of the students' classes. The observed classes were mutually agreed upon by the researcher and the students. The purposes of the

12

observations were to gain insight into the classroom setting and to serve as a framework for the interviews. Interviews were conducted using open-ended questioning techniques to gain an understanding of student thoughts, expectations, perceptions and experiences during their first term at an institution of higher education in the United States.

Assumptions

This research study is designed and guided by the following set of assumptions.

1. International students are willing to share their experiences, thoughts and perceptions openly and will be honest in their reflections.

2. International students will have the language skills necessary to express their thoughts and experiences.

3. Faculty and students will behave during the observation as they typically would when not being observed.

4. The researcher has the necessary skills to be a good research instrument.

Limitations

This study is limited to gaining an understanding of international students during their first term at Midwestern State University. Also, only students from Turkey, Armenia, Nepal and Sri Lanka participated in the study. Since the study is limited to Midwestern State University and had limited national representation, the results may not be generalized to other international students at other institutions. Because students were known to the researcher, students may have felt obligated to the researcher and may have provided responses based on what they believed the researcher wanted to hear and not their own opinions and experiences.

13

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to clarify the terms associated with this study:

International Students: According to the Open Doors Report 2000: international students are those who are enrolled for courses and who are admitted under a temporary visa. These individuals are overwhelmingly admitted expressly for the purpose of study but also may include spouses or other dependents of individuals admitted temporarily for other purposes. They do not include recent immigrants, resident aliens, or refugees (IIE, 2000, p. 3).

International Education: For the purposes of this study, the NAFSA Association of International Educators and Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange's (2003) definition will be used. International education includes learning of foreign languages and knowledge of other cultures by Americans, study abroad by U.S. students, students from other countries coming to study in the United States, the exchange of scholars and of citizens at all levels of society, and the enhancement of the educational infrastructure through which international competence and research is produced.

Retention: Retention refers to keeping students in higher education until graduation (Moxley, Najor-Durack, & Dumbrigue, 2001). Retaining students from one year or one term to the next is important for student success.

Student Success: Student success refers to retention, graduation, and goal attainment of the student.

14

Student Engagement: Student engagement refers to the amount of "time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities" (Kuh, 2001, p.7).

Liberal Studies, General Education, and General Studies: These terms are used interchangeably in this study and refer to the broad educational background students receive in addition to their major studies.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I provided the background and introduction to this study. Chapter II provides background information relevant to this study. Chapter III outlines the research design and methodology to be used for this study. Chapter IV is presentation of the data. Chapter V reports the findings, conclusions, and implications for further research.

15

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this chapter is to provide relevant background information on international students. First, the history of international education in the United States is presented, followed by information about the presence of international students in the United States, in Minnesota, and within the Minnesota State Colleges and University System. Finally information about relevant studies on student departure and retention, student success in the learning environment, and international student adjustment is presented.

History of International Education

While the history of international education in the United States dates back to its colonization (Altbach, Kelly & Lulat, 1985; Brickman, 1965; Brubacher & Rudy, 1999; DuBois, 1956), only the time since World War I will be reviewed since this time period is when the United States emerged as a center for foreign study (Altbach, Kelly & Lulat, 1985).

Various United States' programs and policies have influenced the flow of students and scholars within and outside the United States. Some of these programs and policies include the founding of the Institute of International Education, the Good Neighbor Policy, the Marshall Plan, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Fellowship programs, the Fulbright Program, the Point Four Program, the Mutual Education Exchange Act, the Peace Corps, Title VI of the Higher Education Act, the

16

North American Free Trade Association, and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act.

A strong foundation for foreign nationals studying in the United States was established after World War I. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, Elihu Root, Secretary of State under President Theodore Roosevelt, and Stephen Duggan, Sr., professor at the College of the City of New York, saw the need to increase international understanding and founded the Institute of International Education (IIE) in 1919 (IIE, n.d.; Klinger, 1965). The Institute of International Education was founded on the belief that lasting world peace was impossible without greater understanding between nations and that the strongest basis for creating and fostering such understanding was through international educational exchange (IIE, n.d.). The Institute of International Education acted as a catalyst for educational exchange by becoming a central point of contact for foreign nations interested in educational relations with the United States (Lengyel, 1947). It also lobbied on issues concerning international students and scholars.

The Immigration Act of 1921 or Quota Act imposed limits on the numbers of new immigrants allowed into the United States. This was the first time such limitations were imposed and it created the national origins systems, setting "an annual limit on the number of admissible immigrants of a given nationality at 3 percent of their numbers already living in the United States" (Bender, 1995, p. 13). The second Quota Act was passed in 1924 substantially reducing the size of quotas to 2 percent and limiting annual immigration to 165,000 per year (Ueda, 1994). The Institute of International Education lobbied Congress to reconsider these quotas as they pertained to international exchange.

17

The Immigration Act was amended and created non-immigrant student visas, "by-passing the post-war quotas" (IIE, n.d.). During this same time, other nations began looking to the United States for assistance in understanding and reforming their own educational systems. Between 1924 and 1926, John Dewey consulted with China, Turkey and Mexico about educational reform (Brickman, 1965). Also, a group of American educators, the Educational Inquiry Commission, visited Iraq and presented its report on educational reform to the government of Iraq in 1932 (Brickman, 1965).

With the onset of World War II, the number of German scholars escaping Hitler's Germany and coming into the United States increased. Many European universities were closed, delaying higher education for at least one and sometimes up to three generations (DuBois, 1956). There was also an increase in international education programs sponsored by the United States to combat the Axis propaganda threat, including exchanges with Latin America (DuBois, 1956). The Good Neighbor Policy of the late 1930s and early 1940s was one such program. It encouraged Latin Americans to come to the United States for study and for United States students and scholars to go to Latin America. Franklin D. Roosevelt first referred to the good neighbor policy during his first inaugural address in 1933 (Guerrant, 1950). Then at the Seventh International Conference of American States held in Montevideo in December 1933, the United States formally renounced its right to unilaterally intervene in the internal affairs of other nations by supporting the Convention on Rights and Duties of States proposal (Guerrant, 1950). This marked a dramatic shift in foreign policy from the right of intervention to a non-intervention policy (Guerrant, 1950). By doing this, relations between the United States and Latin American countries greatly improved.

18

After World War II, the United States became a world leader and had a new position of responsibility in world affairs (DuBois, 1956; Myers, 1942). Returning veterans brought back a new interest in other countries and desire to know more about other countries (DuBois, 1956). The infrastructure of higher education was almost completely destroyed in Europe and most of Asia (DuBois, 1956). Former Axis countries needed to be purged of their "educational poison" and coaxed into the fold of peace through understanding (Lengyel, 1947). The United States launched massive democratization and re-education programs in Africa, Germany, Korea and Japan (DuBois, 1956). Almost simultaneously, many technological underdeveloped countries began programs of economic and social development. They looked to the United States for training in these areas because the United States was the leader in technology and science (DuBois, 1956).

In an effort to stabilize conditions in post World War II Europe, the European Recovery Program or Marshall Plan was enacted. The program's purpose was to rebuild the economy as to "permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist" (Marshall in Price, 1955, p. 25-26). Financed by the United States, the Marshall Plan was to rehabilitate the devastated economies of western and southern Europe within four years (Mayer, 1969; Price, 1955).

The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) Fellowship program began in 1946 (Falnes, 1952). Fellows from UNRRA-sponsored countries received grants to improve their education and training in the United Kingdom and the United States. The average periods of study ranged from four to eight months. Very few of the fellows enrolled in regular university courses, although most studied

19

under professors and researchers at universities. A total of 155 fellows participated in the program. Of those, 126 came to the United States. UNESCO planners found this to be successful and urged the expansion to educational, scientific and cultural affairs on a larger scale (Falnes, 1952).

The Fulbright program was founded officially in 1946, based on legislation introduced by Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas. The Fulbright program's purpose has been and continues to be to increase mutual understanding between people of the United States and other countries, through the exchange of persons, knowledge, and skills (IIE, n.d.). The original funding came from the sale of weapons by the United States to foreign governments. Now, annual appropriations are made through the Department of State (IIE, n.d.). The Department of State administers the program, provides staff support, negotiates agreements covering educational exchanges with foreign governments, and maintains liaisons with the United States embassies and consulates abroad. The Fulbright program maintains offices in the United States and operates in 51 countries and provides grants to citizens of participating countries for university teaching, advanced research, graduate study and teaching in elementary and secondary schools (IIE, n.d.). There are grant opportunities for both outbound and inbound students, scholars, professors, teachers and administrators.

In President Truman's inaugural speech of 1948, he announced a new program to bring scientific advances and industrial progress to underdeveloped nations. This plan became known at the Point Four Program because it was the fourth and final point of "proposed courses of action intended to achieve 'peace and freedom'" (Donovan, 1982). Point Four was part of the Foreign Economics Assistance Act, which established, for the

20

first time as a matter of national policy, the commitment to economic development of poorer nations (Donovan, 1982).

The Mutual Educational Exchange Act of 1961 opened up another visa category: the "J" visa (Agarwal & Winkler, 1985). This visa provided several categories of visitors: professors, teachers, researchers, trainees, specialists and students. The Act of 1961 added a two-year home residency requirement in response to concern about "brain drain." Foreign countries were concerned that international students and scholars coming to the United States remained in the United States upon completion of their study. These students and scholars were needed at home to help build their home country. This requirement ensured that the J visa holder would return home for a period of at least two years upon completion of the program (Agarwal & Winkler, 1985). In 1970, this two-year requirement changed and now only applies to those visitors who are sponsored by the United States government or their home government, or whose skills are needed in the home country (Agarwal & Winkler, 1985). Another change in immigration law during this time enabled students to stay in the United States for the duration of their studies without seeking annual extension of their stay (Agarwal & Winkler, 1985). Prior to this time, international students had to apply annually to be allowed to remain in the United States to continue their academic programs.

Also in 1961, the Peace Corps Act was passed. This measure assisted other countries in education, agriculture, health, trade, technology and community development. Peace Corps volunteers were assigned to specific projects on the basis of their skills, education and background. By the end of 1961, 700 volunteers were either already on overseas assignments or in training (Sullivan, 1964). By the Peace Corps'

21

third anniversary, 7,500 volunteers were serving in 46 different countries (Shriver in Sullivan, 1964). According to the 2005 Peace Corps Fact Sheet, there are 7,733 volunteers and trainees active in 72 countries. This program attracts many types of people including many college students or recent graduates. Over 80% of volunteers have a college degree (Peace Corps, 2004).

Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965 initially supported "individual faculty members interested in internationalizing their courses (Mestenhauser, 1998, p. 5). Amendments to the Act have increased support to United States postsecondary institutions for developing undergraduate study abroad programs in under-represented world regions and for developing programs to bring under-represented populations to study in the United States. Title VI provides funding for international and foreign language studies, graduate and undergraduate language and area centers and programs, language resource centers, undergraduate international studies and foreign language programs, research and studies. It also funds American overseas research centers and access to technological innovation and cooperation. Of interest in the 1998 amendment was the awarding of grants to historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribally Controlled Colleges or Universities, and minority institutions to strengthen international affairs programs (P.L. 105-244, TITLE VI, Sec. 622 (a)).

The North American Regional Mobility Program (RAMP) had roots in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). RAMP was implemented in 1992 with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). This program provides avenues for academic

22

exchange and professional training. It is an informal consortium of universities in

Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The aim is to foster academic and professional

mobility in engineering, business, and environmental studies. Students and scholars

from participating institutions are eligible to participate. These students and scholars

"exchange" places with outbound students and scholars (IIE, n.d.).

The Program for North American Mobility in Higher Education also has its roots

in NAFTA and had its first grant competition in 1995. It fosters student exchange within

the context of multilateral curricular development. Selected students from participating

schools in Canada, Mexico and the United States benefit from having a North American

component added their curriculum. The purpose is "to promote a student-centered, North

American dimension to education and training in a wide range of academic and

professional disciplines that complements existing forms of bilateral and trilateral

exchange programs among the three countries" (U.S. Department of Education & The

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, 1999).

By 1995, nearly one-half million international students were enrolled in United

States colleges and universities (IIE, 2002). Some educational leaders took an alarmist

view to the growing number of international students (Brubacher & Rudy, 1999). They

were concerned that American institutions were jeopardizing the nation's future by

failing to produce a significant number of native-born high achievers (Brubacher &

Rudy, 1999). Not enough United States citizens were enrolled in high-technology fields

of study (e.g., computer sciences, engineering). Others were concerned that more

financial aid and scholarships were being given to foreign students than to needy

minorities. This led to controversy in the United States Congress. In 1995, bills were

23

introduced to withdraw government subsidies to foreign university students (Brubacher & Rudy, 1999). Also, in response to growing concerns of illegal immigration, Congress passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996. As part of IIRIRA, Congress mandated the development of an automated entry/exit control system to record the arrival and departure of every non-citizen. Lack of funding and technology hampered this mandate. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was mandated to establish electronic reporting of foreign student data by IIRIRA. INS initiated the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) to do this.

President Clinton issued an executive memorandum on April 19, 2000 directing the federal government to strengthen its commitment to international education. This executive memorandum of the United States on International Education Policy stated: "To continue to compete successfully in the global economy and to maintain our role as a world leader, the United States needs to ensure that its citizens develop a broad understanding of the world, proficiency in other languages, and knowledge of other cultures" (Clinton, 2000). This memorandum addressed not only the need for study abroad opportunities but also the need to address the issues of international students coming to the United States. Clinton outlined the importance of international education in ten directives:

1. Increase and diversify study and internship abroad,

2. Attract foreign students and scholars to the United States,

3. Address obstacles to exchange,

24

4. Support the development of international awareness, knowledge, and skills in the classroom and on campuses, including second language learning in the United States, and the learning of English abroad,

5. Coordinate and support United States government-sponsored exchanges,

6. Develop comparative information on education performance and practices and sharing United States education expertise with other countries,

7. Strengthen cross-national academic partnerships,

8. Build international expertise in United States institutions,

9. Promote the wise use of technology for international education, and

10. Ensure that results are measured and reported in conformance with the Government Performance and Results Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

Madeline Albright, Secretary of State under President Clinton, responded to Clinton's April 2000 Executive Memorandum on international education emphasizing the administration's commitment to international education:

U.S. international leadership, competitiveness, and national security are increasingly dependent on international and cross-cultural awareness on the part of U.S. citizens. Our foreign policy goals are enhanced immeasurably by international education - both American scholarship abroad and international leaders who have studied in the U.S. and consequently better understand our culture and system of government (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on U.S. soil prompted Congress to

25

pass legislation that fundamentally changed past practice and amended previous laws. This legislation, known as the USA PATRIOT Act (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act), had a direct effect on international education, in particular on policies and laws concerning international students. The USA PATRIOT Act was signed into law (Pub. L. No. 107-56, 115 Stat. 272) by President Bush on October 26, 2001 and has the stated purpose "to deter and punish terrorist acts in the United States and around the world, to enhance law enforcement investigatory [sic] tools, and for other purposes" (Mitrano, 2003, General Information about the Patriot Act section, ¶ 1).

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 was changed by the enactment of the USA PATRIOT Act. The government acted to implement

> systems designed to: (i) incarcerate and prosecute those foreign nationals
> in the United States who are suspected of being terrorists or who may have
> ties to terrorist groups; (ii) strengthen controls at border crossings and
> other ports of entry; and (iii) implement computerized systems to track the
> status of foreign nationals in the United States (Lebowitz, 2002).

The USA PATRIOT Act addressed the issue of lack of funding and technology for the implementation of the entry/exit control system that was mandated by IIRIRA by focusing resources on the development of biometric technology and tamper resistant documents (Lebowitz, 2002). The system must interface with law enforcement databases to identify and detain individuals who pose a threat to national security (USA PATRIOT Act § 414(c)). Provisions in the USA PATRIOT Act also provided increased funding to make SEVP fully operational and established deadlines as to when institutions had to be

26

compliant with SEVP in order to continue having approval to host international students.

Institutions of higher education in the United States have seen a fundamental change in job responsibilities in International Programs offices since the enactment of the USA PATRIOT Act. International student advisors have had to keep abreast of the rapidly changing immigration policies in order to give accurate and clear information to the international students at their institutions. While this always has been a responsibility of the campus administrators, the changes in immigration law due to the USA PATRIOT Act has been substantial and rapid. The major change has come about with the full implementation of SEVP. Institutions are now required to track international student information in the United States government database, the Students and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS). To comply with this requirement, many institutions began entering information into their own database as well as the federal SEVIS system. This has resulted in a shift of time and resources away from providing services for international students to maintaining records for the U.S. government.

<div align="center">International Students in the United States</div>

Foreign nationals studying in the United States are classified into one of two categories: immigrants or nonimmigrants. Immigrants are people who reside legally in the United States for an indefinite period of time (Agarwal & Walker, 1985). They maintain citizenship in their home country but maintain residence in the United States. They have the same rights as United States citizens except for voting privileges and the right to hold public office (Agarwal & Walker, 1985). They are permanent residents. Nonimmigrant students and scholars seek temporary admission to the United States for the purposes of study and research (Agarwal & Walker, 1985). They must abide by the

<div align="center">27</div>

limitations placed upon them by their immigration status and are expected to leave the United States upon completion of their studies or research (Agarwal & Walker, 1985). Their stay is temporary. The terms "international student" and "international scholar" refer to nonimmigrants for the purposes of this paper.

Brief Background on International Students

International students and scholars come to the United States for a variety of reasons. Agarwal and Walker (1985) cite the benefits that international students experience in coming to the United States to study as including the "quality of instruction and research, higher expected lifetime income, the prestige of a foreign degree (especially a graduate degree from an American university), and international contacts that may facilitate future business dealings, travel, or research" (p. 514). Other variables that influence why international students come to the United States to study include "political upheaval in the country of origin, racial or religious persecution, and avoidance of military service" (Agarwal & Walker, 1985, p. 514).

Altbach, Kelly and Lalut (1985) delineate the differences in motives and trends for foreign study by economic conditions of home countries. Students from industrialized nations tend to spend a shorter period abroad and follow more of a study abroad approach, spending a semester or a year at a foreign institution and transferring those credits back to the home institution. These students study abroad for "linguistic training, cultural enrichment, or learning and often for the experience of living in another environment" (Altbach, Kelly & Lalut, 1985, p. 15).

For understanding the motives of students from developing nations for study abroad, Altbach, Kelly and Lalut (1985) described a push/pull model. The push factors

28

are events, policies, and interests of individuals, families, and government in the home country. Examples of push factors include sufficient availability of scholarships for study abroad, poor home country educational and research facilities, and failure to gain admission to local institutions. The pull factors are those motivations, policies, and interests of the receiving country. Examples of the pull factors include availability of scholarships to international students, good quality education, advanced research facilities, and a congenial political situation. Ultimately, politics, economics, prestige, and the desire for knowledge factor into the motivating forces for international study (Altbach, Kelly and Lalut, 1985).

Spaulding and Flack (1976) identified three studies that focused exclusively on international students' reasons for study in the United States. Upon review of those studies and data presented from broader studies, Spaulding and Flack (1976) conclude that the

> major reasons for coming to the United States are to get advanced
> education or training that is not available at home, to acquire prestige
> through a degree from a U.S. institution, to take advantage of available
> scholarship funds, to escape unsettled political or economic conditions,
> and simply, to learn more about the United States (p. 23).

Mazzarol and Soutar's (2002) study on international student mobility is parallel to Spaulding and Flack's conclusion in that the majority of students felt the education abroad was better than what was offered at home and that they simply wanted to "gain a better understanding of 'Western culture' through an international education (p. 84).

29

The end of World War II saw a major inflow of international students to the United States. This was also a time of rapid increase in the numbers of United States students attending universities or colleges, due in part to the G.I. bill (Brubacher & Rudy, 1999). The United States student population grew about 100% from 1930-1953, while the international student population increased 300% (DuBois, 1956). Since the initial influx, international student enrollment figures have been increasing steadily with a major increase between 1974 and 1979 (Agarwal & Winkler, 1985; IIE, 2003). The most rapid growth was from Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Asian countries as well as countries that experienced rapid growth in personal income (Agarwal & Winkler, 1985). During this time the United States government greatly reduced its financial aid to students and scholars from developing nations (Agarwal & Winkler, 1985). The Department of State reported that the number of international students supported by United States Agency for International Development declined from 6,827 in 1964 to 902 in 1979 (Agarwal & Winkler, 1985). Likewise, the number of scholars supported by Fulbright monies declined from 1,853 in 1966 to 922 in 1976 (Agarwal & Winkler, 1985).

International Students within the United States

Statistics on international students comes from the Open Doors Report published by the Institute of International Education. The annual report is produced from surveys about international students at 2,689 regionally accredited institutions of higher education in the United States. For the 2003 report, there was a 90.0% response rate. (IIE, 2003).

For the 2003/04 academic year, 572,509 international students came to study in the United States. This is a 2.4% decrease from the number of international students who

30

came to study in the United States the previous year (586,323). This is the first year the

United States has experienced a decrease in the number of international students coming

to study in the United States since 1971/72. International students comprised 4.3% of the

total enrollment (13,383,553) at institutions of higher education in the United States.

However, the proportion remains high. This information is shown in Table 1.

Table 1- Foreign Student and Total U.S. Enrollment 2003/04

Year	Foreign Students	Annual % Change	Total Enrollment	% Foreign
1954/55	34,232	_	2,499,800	1.4
1959/60	48,486	2.6	3,402,300	1.4
1964/65	82,045	9.7	5,320,000	1.5
1969/70	134,959	11.2	7,978,400	1.7
1974/75	154,580	2.3	10,321,500	1.5
1979/80	286,343	8.5	11,707,000	2.4
1984/85	342,113	0.9	12,467,700	2.7
1985/86	343,777	0.5	12,387,700	2.8
1986/87	349,609	1.7	12,410,500	2.8
1987/88	356,187	1.9	12,808,487	2.8
1988/89	366,354	2.9	13,322,576	2.7
1989/90	386,851	5.6	13,824,592	2.8
1990/91	407,529	5.3	13,975,408	2.9
1991/92	419,585	3.0	14,360,965	2.9
1992/93	438,618	4.5	14,422,975	3.0
1993/94	449,749	2.5	14,473,106	3.1
1994/95	452,653	0.6	14,554,016	3.1
1995/96	453,787	0.3	14,419,252	3.1
1996/97	457,984	0.9	14,286,478*	3.1
1997/98	481,280	5.1	13,294,221	3.6
1998/99	490,933	2.0	13,391,401	3.6
1999/00	514,723	4.8	13,584,998	3.8
2000/01	547,867	6.4	14,046,659	3.9
2001/02	582,996	6.4	13,511,149	4.3
2002/03	586,323	0.6	12,853,627	4.6
2003/04	572,509	-2.4	13,383,553**	4.3

* In 1997 the College Board changed its data collection process.
**The College Board Annual Survey of College data on U.S. higher education enrollment.

IIE (2004). Open doors report on international education exchange. New York: author.

31

Table 2 includes information about the leading countries of citizenship for international students for the 2002/03 and 2003/04 academic years. The top five sending countries for 2003/04 included India (6.9% increase from 2002/03 to 2003/04), China (4.6% decrease), Republic of Korea (1.9% increase), Japan (11.2% decrease), and Canada (1.9% increase).

Table 2- International Student Totals by Leading Places of Origin 2002/03 & 2003/04

Rank	Place of Origin	2002/03	2003/04	2003/04 % Change	% of U.S. Int'l Student Total
	WORLD TOTAL	586,323	572,509	-2.4	
1	India	74,603	79,736	6.9	13.9
2	China	64,757	61,765	-4.6	10.8
3	Korea, Republic of	51,519	52,484	1.9	9.2
4	Japan	45,960	40,835	-11.2	7.1
5	Canada	26,513	27,017	1.9	4.7
6	Taiwan	28,017	26,178	-6.6	4.6
7	Mexico	12,801	13,329	4.1	2.3
8	Turkey	11,601	11,398	-1.7	2.0
9	Thailand	9,982	8,937	-10.5	1.6
10	Indonesia	10,432	8,880	-14.9	1.6
11	Germany	9,302	8,745	-6.0	1.5
12	United Kingdom	8,326	8,439	1.4	1.5
13	Brazil	8,388	7,799	-7.0	1.4
14	Colombia	7,771	7,533	-3.1	1.3
15	Kenya	7,862	7,381	-6.1	1.3
16	Hong Kong	8,076	7,353	-9.0	1.3
17	Pakistan	8,123	7,325	-9.8	1.3
18	France	7,223	6,818	-5.6	1.2
19	Malaysia	6,595	6,483	-1.7	1.1
20	Nigeria	5,816	6,140	5.6	1.1

IIE (2004). Open doors report on international education exchange. New York: author.

Table 3 shows fields of study from the international student data of 2002/03 to 2003/04. The top three areas of study for both years were Business & Management,

32

Engineering, and Mathematics & Computer Sciences. These three areas of study account

for 47.5% (272,106) of the international students in 2003/04.

Table 3 – Fields of Study of International Students 2003/04

Field of Study	2002/03 Int'l Students	2003/04 Int'l Students	% of Total	% Change
TOTAL	586,323	572,509	100.0	-2.4
Business & Management	114,777	109,187	19.1	-4.9
Engineering	96,545	95,183	16.6	-1.4
Mathematics & Computer Sciences	71,926	67,736	11.8	-5.8
Other	58,473	60,212	10.5	3.0
Social Sciences	45,978	54,083	9.4	17.6
Physical & Life Sciences	43,549	44,605	7.8	2.4
Fine & Applied Arts	31,018	31,817	5.6	2.6
Undeclared	36,395	29,265	5.1	-19.6
Health Professions	28,120	25,693	4.5	-8.6
Humanities	19,153	16,593	2.9	-13.4
Education	16,004	15,888	2.8	-0.7
Intensive English Language	17,620	14,971	2.6	-15.0
Agriculture	6,763	7,276	1.3	7.6

IIE (2004). Open doors report on international education exchange. New York: author.

International Students in Minnesota

According to the 2003 Open Doors Report (IIE, 2003), Minnesota is ranked 19th

in the nation for receiving international students with 8,985 international students

attending school in Minnesota. It is estimated that international students expend

$178,500,000 in Minnesota. The institution with the most international students in

Minnesota was the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities with 3,351 international

students.

Table 4 lists the top fields of study for international students in Minnesota for

2002/03. The top majors include Math and Computer Science, Business & Management,

33

Engineering, Social Sciences, and Physical and Life Sciences. This mirrors national

patterns.

Table 4- Leading Field of Study for Foreign Students-Minnesota

Field of Study	% Total	Total	National Rank
Math & Computer Science	19.3	1734	3
Business & Management	16.0	1438	1
Engineering	13.4	1204	2
Social Sciences	10.8	970	5
Physical & Life Sciences	7.6	683	6

IIE (2003). Open doors report on international education exchange. New York: author.

Table 5 shows the top countries of origin for international students attending

schools in Minnesota. The top sending countries are the same as at the national level

with only a difference in rank order.

Table 5- Leading Country of Origin for Foreign Students-Minnesota

Country of Origin	% Total	Total Number	National Rank
China	11.3	1,012	2
India	10.4	939	1
Japan	6.6	589	4
Republic of Korea	6.2	561	3
Canada	5.1	461	5

IIE (2003). Open doors report on international education exchange. New York: author.

International Education and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Background

The Minnesota State Colleges and University (MnSCU) system was formed by

state legislation in 1991 and became operational on July 1, 1995. It combined 34

technical college campuses, 21 community college campuses, and 7 state universities.

MnSCU is now comprised of 34 institutions: 7 state universities, 6 community colleges, 9

technical colleges, and 12 combined community and technical colleges; with 53

34

campuses in 46 communities throughout the state. A 15-member board of trustees governs the MnSCU system. The governor appoints the trustees. The Board of Trustees is responsible for selecting the chancellor and has broad policy responsibility for system planning, academic programs, fiscal management, personnel, admissions requirements, tuition and fees, and policies and procedures (MnSCU, n.d.).

International Students in the MnSCU System

The 2003 MnSCU report indicated that 36 of the 37 reporting MnSCU institutions had international students on-campus (Daines, 2003). The total international student population of MnSCU schools in the 2003 report totaled 3,293 students from 136 countries. This marks a 36% increase from the 1998 report (2,420 international students in 1998 compared to 3,293 international students in 2003). MnSCU deviates from the national and state trends for top sending countries. Japan is the only country that ranks in the top five sending countries on the national, state and MnSCU levels. Table 6 lists the top sending countries and the total number from those countries.

Table 6- Leading Countries for MnSCU

Country	# of Students	MnSCU Rank	Minnesota Rank	National Rank
Japan	291	1	3	4
Kenya	290	2	*	15
Nepal	273	3	*	24
Pakistan	182	4	*	17
Bangladesh	159	5	*	37

*Minnesota Report only lists top five sending countries.

Daines, J. (2003, June). *Survey results international programs and services 2003. (MnSCU report)*

Japan is the top sending country in the MnSCU system. This may be due to an agreement between the Minnesota state government and the Japanese government and joint operation of the Minnesota State University Akita campus in Japan. Under that

35

agreement, students may earn their Associates degree at Akita and transfer to any of the

MnSCU universities to earn a bachelor's degree while paying in-state tuition. Individual

institutions may have incentives or connections with a particular institution, country or

world region which may account for the other differences in the leading countries for

MnSCU schools.

The MnSCU institutions with the largest international student population for 2003

included St. Cloud University (824 international students), Minnesota State University –

Mankato (630 international students), Winona State University (332 international

students), Minneapolis Community and Technical College (232 international students),

and Metro State University (216 international students).

<div align="center">Relevant Studies</div>

Information on research and theories about student departure and retention,

student success in the learning environments, and international student adjustment are

presented in this section. These studies serve as a framework for the presentation of

findings found in chapter IV.

<div align="center">*Studies on Student Departure and Retention*</div>

Studies on and theories about student departure try to pinpoint the factors that

lead to a student's early departure from the university. Cope and Hannah (1975) argue

that this is vital because "the effectiveness of higher education can be improved if we

learn more about why a large proportion of students withdraw, what happens to them, and

what can be done" (p. 6). There are several theories about student departure and

retention (e.g., Cope, 1978; Bean, 1982; Anderson, 1985; Noel, 1985; Tinto, 1987);

<div align="center">36</div>

Tinto's theory of student departure and subsequent studies on minority student retention are the basis for this study.

Tinto's Model on Student Attrition and Retention

Tinto (1987) examined student attrition and identified individual and institutional factors that were related to voluntary student departure from higher education. At the individual level, Tinto identified intention and commitment as being important personal attributes for student retention. Individual intentions are the educational or occupational goals that the student has with regards to participating in higher education. Commitment refers to the drive, ambition, motivation, or effort on the part of the student. The more commited a student is to work toward his or her goals, the more likely the student will succeed. Likewise, lack of effort is a critical part of student departure.

Other factors that influence a student's decision to persist or to dropout involved the student's interactions with others and with the institution. Tinto (1987) considered these to be institutional level attributes. He described adjustment, difficulty, incongruence, and isolation as the four interactional roots of student departure. That is, the "quality of individual interactions with other members of the institution following entry and on the individual's perception of the degree to which those experiences meet his/her needs and interests" (p. 47).

Adjustment refers to the social and intellectual transition to higher education. Tinto argues that there are two distinct sources for a student's difficulty in making the adjustment to the university: the inability to separate from past forms of association and patterns of behavior, and the need to adjust to a new and likely more challenging social

37

and academic environment. "Academic difficulties, social isolation, and sheer sense of bewilderment" (Tinto, 1987, p. 49) can cause major difficulties in the adjustment period.

Difficulty in meeting academic standards is another factor in student departure (Tinto, 1987). Good study skills and habits are necessary for academic performance and poor study skills and habits are good predictors of academic dismissal (Tinto, 1987).

Incongruence refers to the "mismatch or lack of fit between the needs, interests, and preferences of the individual and those of the institution" (Tinto, 1987, p. 53-54). Students who feel at odds with or do not feel like they fit in or belong at the institution may voluntarily depart. Sources of incongruence may arise within the formal and informal academic domain and within the social system. Academic incongruence may result from either excessive academic demands or insufficient academic demands (Tinto, 1987). Tinto argues that students do not need to feel a perfect or even extensive congruence with the institution as a whole, but do need to find some "compatible academic and/or social group with whom to establish membership" (p. 58).

Student departure also arises "from individual isolation, specifically from the absence of sufficient contact between the individual and other members of the social and academic communities of the college" (Tinto, 1987, p. 64). Tinto acknowledges that while isolation could be associated with incongruence, it can also arise independently in students who are not very different than other members of the university. The degree and quality of student to student and student to faculty contacts and relationships are critical in student persistence (Tinto, 1975, 1987; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1977; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977; Pascarella, 1980; Munro, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1983). Likewise, the lack of contact is the most important predictor of student departure

38

(Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977, Tinto, 1987). Student-faculty contact, both within and outside of the classroom are important in student persistence.

In 1998, Tinto took this theory a step further and listed several key aspects that research has shown on student persistence:

1. Students who are more academically and socially involved and interact with other students and faculty are more likely to persist.

2. Students who experience both academic and social integration have a higher persistence rate than when only one is present.

3. Integration or involvement can happen either inside or out of the classroom.

4. Student persistence is impacted by both experiences within and outside of the classroom.

5. Involvement in the first year, especially during the first ten weeks of adjusting to the new college environment, matters the most.

Kuh and Love (2000) add to Tinto's theory and present eight heuristic propositions related to student departure:

1. The college experience, including a decision to leave college, is mediated through a student's cultural meaning-making system.

2. One's culture of origin mediate the importance attached to attending college and earning a college degree.

3. Knowledge of a student's culture of origin and the cultures of immersion is needed to understand a student's ability to successfully negotiate the institution's cultural milieu.

39

4. The probability of persistence is inversely related to cultural distance between a student's culture(s) of origin and the cultures of immersion.

5. Students who traverse a long cultural distance must become acclimated to dominant cultures of immersion or join one or more enclaves.

6. The amount of time a students spends in one's cultures of origin after matriculating is positively related to cultural stress and reduces the chances they will persist.

7. The likelihood a student will persist is related to the extensity and intensity of one's sociocultural connections to the academic program and to affinity groups.

8. Students who belong to one or more enclaves in the cultures of immersion are more likely to persist, especially if the group members value achievement and persistence (p. 201).

Adding the cultural perspective extends Tinto's theory of student departure by reconceptualizing the departure process, moving it from an individual decision and act to a group-oriented process. It adds to understanding the various factors that influence a student's decision to leave (Kuh & Love, 2000).

Minority Student Retention

The few studies done on minority students have indicated that the most frequently reported concern for the minority university student included adjustment to college, academic performance, financial resources, feelings of loneliness and isolation, racial/ethnic identity development, racial hostility in the form of harassment, feelings of alienation or not belonging, issues of entitlement (which pertain to a feeling of not

40

deserving to be in college), and lack of connection to the college environment (Ponce, 1988).

Armstrong-West and de la Teja (1988) describe the social and psychological factors influencing minority student retention. The social factors affecting minority student retention on predominately white campuses include institutional racism, monocultural curriculum, faculty expectations and attitudes, cultural conflicts, socialization, and family support (Armstrong-West & de la Teja, 1988). The psychological factors include the student's self-concept, self-esteem and racial identity. Armstrong-West and de la Teja postulate that these social and psychological factors can be grouped into three major issues: the role of the family, social isolation, and self-identity. The authors recommend that retention programs aimed at minority students need to recognize these issues. In addition to these areas, they argue that Chernin and Goldsmith's (1986) list of assumptions apply to all retention programs, including those for specific groups. These five assumptions are (1) students who feel part of the institution are less likely to drop out, (2) families play an important role in determining a student's persistence, (3) freshmen are more likely to withdraw or drop out of higher education than upperclassmen, (4) retention strategies should be implemented during the first year, and (5) interactions between students and faculty are important for retention.

Rendón, Jalomo, and Nora (2000) argue that Tinto's theory, although the most well-known student retention theory, is lacking when it comes to minority students. At the base of Tinto's theory is Van Gennep's (1960) three-phase rites of passage process that includes separation, transition and incorporation. In the first phase, separation, the individual separates from past associations and experiences a decline in the interactions

41

with members of the group. The second phase, transition, is when the individual begins to interact with the members of the new group. During the final phase, the individual becomes incorporated into the new group, taking on the new group's norms.

Rendón, Jalomo and Nora (2000) cite three assumptions that underlie this rite of passage theory as it pertains to going to college. First is that students should disassociate themselves from "their native cultural realities in order to assimilate into college life" (p. 132). Thus, "minority students most reconcile the fact that they must leave the old world behind in order to find full membership in the new college world, since the two are distinctly different" (p. 132). The second assumption underlying this theory is that there is one "dominant" culture and "that in order to succeed, members of minority cultures should become more similar to this dominant culture" (p. 132). The final is "that it will be relatively easy to find membership and acceptance in the new college world and that individuals who become integrated will have little or no contact with members of their old groups" (p. 133).

However, concepts of biculturalism and dual socialization challenge the assumption of separation and must be considered when investigating minority students' transition to college (Rendón, Jalomo & Nora, 2000). The premise behind biculturalism is that individuals can be socialized into two different ways of life or cultures simultaneously, allowing the individual to maneuver between the two cultures. These cultures are distinct and separate. Dual socialization, on the other hand, argues that the two cultures are not distinct and separate, but that there is some overlap between the two cultures resulting in some shared values, beliefs, perceptions and norms for behaving.

42

Both of these theories challenge the separation assumption that students must disassociate themselves from their own culture to adapt or adjust to the college culture.

Tierney (1992) also questions Tinto's basis of the "rites of passage" theory for his theory. Tierney argues that "rites of passage" are intracultural transitions, moving from one stage to another within the same group, and not applicable to cross-cultural transitions as suggested by Tinto's theory.

Adding the cultural component to understanding student departure changes the perspective of student departure from an individual, psychological experience to primarily a sociocultural phenomenon (Kuh & Love, 2000). Thus, even though the decision to leave higher education is made by the individual, that decision is shaped by cultural forces (Kuh & Love, 2000). This perspective limits the utility of Tinto's assumption that there is a single dominant culture that defines the norms and attitudes of for all members of the institution as it does not account for "the experiences of members of different groups, especially those that may interact frequently with multiple subcultures" (Kuh & Love, 2000, p. 199).

> Culture in higher education is thought of as the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behavior of individuals and groups…and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off-campus (Kuh & Whitt in Kuh & Love, 2000, p. 198).

Universities and colleges develop cultures, accepted ways of doing things, which in turn, shape how individuals think and behave (Kuh and Love, 2000). The culture is constantly being shaped through interactions between old and new members and interactions with

43

others outside the organization. So, Kuh and Love (2000) argue that interactions between individuals "influence and subsequently change both the students and the larger institutional environments and subenvironments" (p. 198). The advantage to using a cultural perspective in examining student departure is that it takes into account student behavior that results from "interactions of cultural properties, specifically the effects of these interactions on process variables – involvement, effort, and perceived belonging (Attinasi, 1989; Hurtado & Carter, 1997)" (Kuh & Love, 2000, p. 199).

Studies on International Student Adjustment

International students are more likely to experience greater difficulties in adjusting to the new college environment than their American counterparts (Hechanova-Alampay, et. al, 2002). Besides experiencing greater culture change, international students have less access to support systems, family and friends, for coping with the transition (Pederson, 1991). These students face an adjustment to new social norms and customs, their role as foreigners, the ignorance of host nationals about their home country and culture, the difficulty in making new social contacts, the differences in language and nonverbal communication, and sometimes racial discrimination and relationship problems (Church, 1982).

Cross-cultural Adjustment Process

Cultural adjustment is a multi-level process, in which the individual shifts from his or her home or native culture to build an association with his or her host's culture. It refers to the degree of psychological comfort the student has with various aspects of the host culture (Hechanova-Alampay et al, 2002). Some theorists have described the adjustment of international students in terms of a U-curve (Adler, 1975). The U-curve

44

hypothesis describes five stages through which an individual passes during adjustment to a new culture. The first phase, initial contact, is marked by the euphoria or the excitement of the new experience. The second phase, disintegration, refers to the period of confusion and disorientation. The individual has more interaction with the host culture and notices more dissimilarities and becomes more isolated and frustrated. This leads into the third phase called "reintegration phase." During this phase, the individual rejects the host culture and may tend to withdraw into the security of the familiar. The fourth phase, autonomy phase, is when the individual becomes more competent and understanding of the host culture. The individual develops appropriate coping skills. The final stage is "independence" and is where the individual is able to accept the differences between the home culture and the host culture, and adapt and respond appropriately in it. However, there has been no clear, consistent research to support the U-curve theory (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Church, 1982).

In more recent years, two different approaches on the adjustment process have emerged (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). One perspective is that the cross-cultural adjustment process is a cyclical and ongoing process "requiring a string of adjustments to environmental obstacles that may come at different times and requires different responses" (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002, p. 261). The other perspective is that the adjustment process is linear but variable and depends upon individual characteristics (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002).

45

Factors in Adjustment

Several factors have been identified that correlate with adjustment. One trait is self-efficacy (Black & Mendenhall, 1991; Harrison et al., 1996). Self-efficacy refers to the level of confidence that individuals have in their ability to accomplish tasks (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). Research by Black, Mendenhall and Oddou (1991) and Harrison, Chadwick, and Scales (1996) supported the idea that the level of self-efficacy has a high correlation with adjustment. Those with higher self-efficacy are more willing to learn new behaviors and were better adjusted to their environment, work roles and interactions with host nationals than those with low self-efficacy. Another factor is the cultural novelty of the host country. The more culturally different the host culture is from the individual's home culture, the more difficult the adjustment is (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). Another factor to consider in the cross-cultural adjustment process is social support. The loss of known support systems intensifies feelings of being uprooted and the feelings of loss and homesickness are common for international students (Pederson, 1991). Many international students seek people from their own country as sources of help (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Zhai, 2002; Johnson, 1993; Pedersen, 1975). Research indicates that international students who have little contact with Americans report more feelings of isolation and alienation then those students who foster U.S. student contact (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002).

Rajapksa and Dundes (2002) found that the international student concept of social network was closely related to adjustment. Students who were more satisfied with their social network were less likely to feel loneliness and homesickness than those who were not satisfied with their social network. Thus, it can be argued that having a positive

46

social network or connections is important in transition of international students to the university. While having more connections, interactions, and friendships with host country nationals may be more important in the long run in the adjustment process (Hechanova-Alampay, et al., 2002), having connections and interactions with those from the same culture can also aid in the adjustment process by providing a much needed social network.

Issues in Adjustment

There are several challenges that international students face during their transition to the U.S. educational system. Some of these challenges include cultural and social differences, language challenges, academic difficulties, and adjustment to the U.S. educational system, (Zhai, 2002; Parr et al., 1992; Robinson, 1992).

Some cultural and social changes students face include problems in social integration, isolation, financial concerns, and family stress (Zhai, 2002). Many studies recognized that language proficiency is one of the major adjustment issues for international students (Soontiens, 2004; Zhai, 2002; Littlemore, 2001). Differences in accent, enunciation, slang and use of special English words caused the most difficulties with the language (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1991). Academic difficulties include adjusting to the amount of individual responsibility expected of them for their own academic problems, the American concepts of cheating and plagiarism, assessment in the classroom (exams, attendance, and participation), and the pacing of coursework (Zhai, 2002).

Adjustment to the educational system entails encountering differences in culture. Educators have assumptions and expectations of what is considered to be appropriate

47

classroom behavior (Zhai, 2002). Anderson and Powell (1991) note that "people tend to think that the learning environment with which they are most familiar is representative of learning environments in general" (p. 208). However, the rules, procedures, and behavior within the educational system are not universal values, but rather culturally based (Anderson & Powell, 1991).

Effective teaching, learning and faculty/student interactions are also culturally based. Students may be coming from systems where the teacher is a "revered individual who is teaching sacred truth" (Anderson & Powell, 1991) and the student is there to absorb the knowledge. Even the pace and interactions within the classroom can reflect different cultural traditions and values. Anderson and Powell (1991) give this example:

> Cultures reflecting a Buddhist tradition hold that knowledge, truth, and
> wisdom come to those whose quiet silence allows the spirit to enter.
> Classrooms in the United States tend to reflect more of a Socratic ideal,
> where teacher and student interact a great deal in pursuit of knowledge (p.
> 211).

Thus, the seven principles for good practice in undergraduate teaching (Chickering & Gamson, 1987) are culturally bound. Chickering and Gamson's principles are based on 50 years of research on good teaching and learning in the United States. These principles are (1) to promote contacts between students and faculty inside and outside of the classroom encouraging student motivation and involvement; (2) to develop reciprocity and cooperation among students, as collaboration with other students enhances learning and often increases involvement in learning; (3) to use active learning techniques to enhance students' learning as they talk about and incorporate what they are

48

learning; (4) to give appropriate and prompt feedback to help students learn what they know and don't know, focusing learning; (5) to emphasize time on task so students learn how to allocate realistic amounts of time for effective learning; (6) to communicate high expectations of all students; and (7) to recognize and respect diverse talents and ways of learning.

Chapter II provided relevant background information on international students including a history of international education with the United States, the presence of international students in the United States, in Minnesota, and within the MnSCU system. Information on student departure and retention, student success in the learning environment and international student adjustment was also provided in Chapter II. Chapter III will provide information on the methodology used for this study.

49

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to discover what international students perceived as being important during their initial transition to a university in the United States. This is an inductive qualitative study and relied on student journals, observations of their classes, and interviews with the students.

Qualitative Research

The purpose of conducting qualitative research has historically been "to explore, explain, or describe the phenomenon of interest" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 33 [emphasis deleted from original]), or in other words, to understand, develop or discover (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Qualitative methodology is useful for research that "attempts to understand the meaning or nature of experience" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11) and to find "out what people are doing and thinking" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11). Qualitative research is used to "obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11).

Qualitative research based on the "naturalistic-phenomenological" philosophy assumes that multiple realities exist and are constructed both individually and collectively in the situation (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989). The phenomenological approach focuses on understanding the meaning events have for participants and acknowledges that participants cannot be removed from

50

their worlds. The participant and his or her world are interwoven and cannot be separated (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Participants' understandings are based on their own experiences, and not on any beliefs, assumptions or preconceived notions that the researcher has.

Qualitative research can be used to understand "the social phenomenon from the participants' perspectives" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1989, p. 14) and is useful when trying to understand, or make sense of, participants' experiences and viewpoints of a particular phenomenon. Qualitative research methodology is an appropriate approach for this study since it's purpose is to explore international students' perceptions during their first term at an institution of higher education in the United States.

According to Creswell (1998), there are four basic types of information that may be collected during qualitative research and used in the data analysis: observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials. Although it is not necessary to have data from all sources, collecting data from a variety of sources aids in triangulating the data. "The combination of interviews and observations from the field, along with reviews of relevant documents increases the likelihood that the phenomenon of interest is being understood from various points of view and ways of knowing" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 146). Also, "the more information you have about something from multiple standpoints and sources, the less likely you are to misconstrue it" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 53). For this study, the primary data collection techniques were observations, interviewing, and document collection.

51

Observations

Participant observations can take many forms: from the observer being an outsider to the observer being an insider, and anywhere in-between (Jorgensen, 1989). Participant observations focus "on human interaction and meaning viewed from the insiders' viewpoint in everyday life situations and settings" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 23). These observations provide access to the participants' world of meaning through direct experience and observation (Jorgensen, 1989). The observer records, or keeps field notes, of what is seen and said, without adding interpretation (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). For this study, each student was observed in two of his or her classes. The observations provided context for the interviews. Field notes were kept that included the physical layout of the room, time line of events, interactions between students and instructors, and students' activities and responses, including non-verbal gestures.

Interviews

Interviews are conversations with a purpose (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). This purpose is to understand the experience of other people and the "meaning they make of that experience" (Seidman, 1998) and is important for gaining "participant perspectives" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994 [italics deleted from original], p. 82). Interviews can be formal or informal, structured or unstructured (Jorgensen, 1989, Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Structured, or formal, interviews often employ a research guide or a structured set of questions. In the informal interview, the researcher has a general set of issues to be discussed (Jorgensen, 1989). Maykut and Morehouse (1994) state that in the unstructured interview, the researcher asks open-ended questions and listens carefully for clues to guide what questions to ask next. For Jorgensen (1989) informal interviews are

52

useful when the researcher has a "general idea about a matter of interest and desire to be more certain of the insiders' perspective" (p. 88). Jorgensen goes on to say that the "informal interview is an especially useful strategy for discerning different viewpoints held by insiders" (p. 88). To gain insight to the viewpoints and perspectives of the international students, the informal, open-ended interview technique was employed. Each student was interviewed at least two times. Six of the seven students were interviewed four times throughout the semester.

Document Collection

Having participants keep a journal or diary during the research study is one form of a document that can be collected and analyzed in a qualitative study (Creswell, 1998). In a journal, the participant "sets down only such events, thoughts, and feelings as have importance" (Allport, 1942, p. 95) to him or her. "The diary represents the immediate recording of experiences, unimpaired by reconstructions and distortions of memory" (Denzin, 1989, p. 193). These "uncensored outpourings" (Denzin, 1989, p. 193) shed light into the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of participants and the meanings participants give to them. Using journals or diaries has been a valuable way to augment data in some studies (e.g., Darvill, 2003; Leigh, Howarth, & Devitt, in press) and is recommended as part of a multiple method approach (Meth, 2003). For this study, students were asked to keep a journal during their first term to gain greater insight into their thoughts and feelings, as participants may reveal feelings in a journal that they may not otherwise share (Denzin, 1989).

53

Site Selection

Marshall and Rossman (1999) provide four considerations in determining site selection. These criteria are that entry is possible, there is a high probability that a rich mix exists of processes, people, and interactions of interest, the researcher is likely to be able to build trusting relationships with participants, and data quality and credibility of the study are reasonably assumed. These criteria were met at Midwestern State University.

The Setting

Midwestern State University is one of the Minnesota State Colleges and University System schools. The campus is located in a residential part of town. MSU offers undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs and bases its undergraduate studies in the liberal arts. Over one-half of the students enrolled at MSU are residents of Minnesota. Approximately 21% of students live in the campus residence halls.

Selection of Participants

The original goal was to select between six and ten international students to participate in this study. Students needed to be unfamiliar with the educational system in the United States, having had no previous exposure or experience with the educational system in the United States. They have not studied in the United States before nor have they studied at an American style university in other country. Of the 80 international students beginning their studies at Midwestern State University fall semester 2004, twenty-five were coming to study at an American university for the first time. The 25 students included students from Japan, the United Kingdom, Kenya, Turkey, Armenia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka and included freshmen, transfer students, exchange

54

students and one graduate student. All 25 students were invited to participate in the study. Information was handed out during the International Student Orientation program and again in an undergraduate course strictly for new international students. Seven international students self-selected to participate in the study. Another two students from Japan initially expressed interest in participating but decided that the journal keeping portion of the study was too much for them to do, especially since the journal was to be kept in English. As seven students fit within in the initial parameters of the study, no additional participation was sought.

Process for Gaining Student Participation

The researcher made an announcement about the study during the fall 2004 international student orientation program. This announcement was made to all incoming international students and the criteria for participation were explained. The researcher also brought copies of the consent form to the "Life in the U.S." course which is offered only to international students in their first term at the university. After a verbal explanation, students were encouraged to ask questions and consider participation in the research. Interested students were asked to stay after class for further explanation of the research proposal and clarification of questions. Participants were asked to sign a letter of consent that outlined the objectives of the study, expected length of the interview, anticipated risks, right to withdraw consent, confidentiality, data storage, consent form storage, use of collected data, and destruction of data after termination of project.

Once a student agreed to join the study, the student was asked to return the signed consent form (Appendix A) and begin journaling. Arrangements were made with the student as to a time and location for a 15-minute preliminary meeting. The preliminary

55

meeting served as an opportunity to discuss in greater detail the consent form, research, and expectations as to time commitments. Students were given a copy of their signed consent form. All student questions were answered, the student's class schedule was obtained and the first observation and interview were scheduled.

At the start of the interview, permission to tape record the interview was verbally sought. Once that was negotiated, the interview, which relied on open-ended questions, began.

Description of Participants

Confidentiality of the students was guaranteed in the consent form and approved IRB proposals. So, all students' names have been changed and identifying information such as age, major and nationality have been omitted from their profiles. The students participating in this study were from Armenia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkey. They varied in age from traditional freshman age (18) to older than average. Three of the students were freshman and have never studied at a university. The others had attended universities in other countries before coming to study in the United States fall semester 2004.

Shekar comes from a family of ten and is the youngest of 8 children. He has six sisters and one brother who is his twin. Of his six sisters, four are married and two are still studying. Shekar and his brother studied at a boarding school in India since the age of 9. His father was concerned about the quality of education they were receiving at home, so he sent them to a school in a town two hours from Delhi. The community there was about the same size as his community in the U.S.. After high school, Shekar returned to his home country to study medicine at the university there. His twin brother

56

came to study environmental science in the United States, an area of need but currently not offered for study in his home country. Shekar had every intention of remaining at home to complete his studies in medicine, where he could also look after his parents. Due to the political climate, which closed down major parts of the country including the university, Shekar's father felt it would be better for Shekar to complete his studies in another country. Since Shekar's brother was already in the United States, Shekar's father sent him to the United States too. Shekar's brother picked out Midwestern State University for Shekar to continue his studies. Shekar was reluctant to come at first as he was worried about the competition for medical studies in the United States and was reluctant to leave his obligations to care for his father and mother. He did not know anyone at Midwestern State University. Shekar lives off-campus with three other students from his home country.

Lily won a very competitive scholarship awarded by the United States' government to study at an institution in the United States and has all of her tuition, fees, and room and board paid by the United States' government. As part of her scholarship, Lily is expected to complete 40 hours of community service/volunteer work. Her family consists of five and includes her mother and father, two sisters and herself. Back home, Lily was living at home with her mother, father, sister and niece while attending the university. Since coming to the United States, Lily's parents have encouraged her to return home if she thinks it is too hard. Lily has found her parents' attitude to be discouraging. Lily also worked as a tutor back home to help earn some extra money for her own entertainment. Lily lives on-campus.

57

Almira is currently working on her second Bachelor's degree. She already completed the university back home and was a dentist when she decided to return to school to become a teacher. Almira completed two years of her teacher education back home when she decided to come to Midwestern State University to complete her degree. She has a mother and father, a brother who is working for the Financial Ministry back home, a brother who is a taxi cab driver in Europe, and a sister who is married with three children. Almira had another brother who had some "adaptation difficulties". He passed away four or five years ago. Almira's brother and father have been very supportive of Almira's decision to come to the United States to study. In fact, her brother studied in the United States and felt she would have an easier time transferring her credits to the U.S. as opposed to the Canadian system. Her father also encouraged her by sharing his stories of living in Germany when he was younger and not knowing the language. He said that if he could do it, she surely would be able to. Almira's mother, on the other hand, keeps questioning Almira's motives for studying in another country when she should be closer to home. Almira lives on-campus.

Elina is experiencing her first time away from home. Elina's mother is a retired teacher. Her father retired from the army and started his own business. He is retired from that now as well. Elina has one elder brother (29), an elder sister (26) who is married and has her own child, and another elder sister (22) who is married and lives in Canada. Her brother and sisters lived in a hostel and studied in India while growing up because at that time the education was better in India. She has a neighbor studying at Midwestern State University and lives off-campus with him and 2 other students from her home country.

58

Ranpale was living with her mother and father back home before coming to the United States. She has a sister who is married and lives back home. She also has one brother who studied at Midwestern State University and is still living in town. Ranpalee was working back home and taking courses on the side. She did not have high enough grades on her university entrance exams to enter the university for the internal degree, which would have meant free tuition. However, education was so important for her and her family that she decided to pursue her degree in the United States. She figures she has a better chance of getting into a Masters program back home with a Bachelor's degree from the United States as opposed to the external degree from her home country. She also thinks she was only allowed to come to Midwestern State University because her brother was here and would be able to take care of her. She lives off-campus with her brother and sister-in-law, who is also from her home country.

Susrutha studied for two years at a university in New Zealand before coming to study in the United States. He has one sister who is also studying at a university in the same town as MSU where she has been for about a year and a half. His mother lives back home and calls everyday to check in on her children. She is now alone in the house and has bought a dog for company. Susrutha's father has been living for the past eight years in Australia where he owns an importing/exporting fish company with his brother-in-law. Susrutha has not seen his father for about six years now. Susrutha lives off-campus with his sister.

Kate is an only child. Kate was escorted everywhere back home, including to and from school. Kate's boyfriend is studying at MSU and Kate wanted to come to be with him. Kate's parents made arrangements with her boyfriend's family so that Kate would

59

be cared for at the university too. Her parents agreed to allow Kate to study at MSU only because her boyfriend was here. Kate even traveled to MSU with a neighbor who was also coming to study there. Kate is living off-campus with her boyfriend and another student from her home country. She wrote, "We live like one family."

Data Collection

For this study, student journals, interviews and observations were the primary techniques for data collection. Students were asked to journal and chronicle their experiences and feelings throughout their first term. Interviews were conducted between two and four times with each student throughout the semester. Six students were interviewed four times and one student was interviewed two times. All interviews were recorded with the consent of the participant and transcribed by the researcher. In addition to the interviews, observations of the students' classes were conducted two times fall 2004 and field notes taken. The duration of classes varied between 50 minutes and 75 minutes in length. In order to gain the most and not be disruptive for the class, observations lasted the entire class meeting. Care was taken so that observations happened on a non-test day.

Protocol

Interviewees' names are coded and known only to the researcher. Interviews were audio recorded and the tapes transcribed. Upon verification of the transcribed tape, the tape was erased. Only one electronic format of the transcribed data will be kept for the required three-year timeframe. Signed consent forms will also be kept for a period of three years. These items will be stored in a separate and secure location in the

60

researcher's home. After the mandatory three-year period, all consent forms and electronic transcriptions will be destroyed.

Journal Protocol

Students were asked to keep a journal about their perceptions, expectations, and experiences during their first term at the university. Students were encouraged to write about whatever they would like to share. Students were asked to journal, at a minimum, 3 times per week. Students were encouraged to keep a journal in any format that they chose, hand-written or electronic format. All students chose to keep an electronic journal and submitted it to the researcher via email.

Interview Protocol

International students were asked to discuss their experiences. Six students were interviewed four times and one student was interviewed two times throughout the semester. Out of respect for the students' busy schedules, each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The interviews were semi-structured and students were asked questions concerning their expectations and experiences. Other questions emerged from the data. The following questions were designed to begin the interview, and stimulate reflection on the part of the students:

1. Tell me about what you envisioned the university to be like before you left home.

2. What did you expect your classroom experiences to be like?

3. Tell me about your first impressions here.

4. What are your biggest concerns about being here?

5. Describe your interactions with other students, faculty and staff here.

61

6. How does this compare with your interactions with students, faculty and staff back home?

Other questions that emerged from the conversations and journals included:

1. Tell me about your living situation here and back home.

2. What advice would you give someone from your home country about coming here?

3. What have been your biggest struggles or challenges in being here?

4. What have you enjoyed the most about being here so far?

Observation Protocol

Mutually agreed upon classes were observed. The guiding principle for the observation was to observe the international student in the classroom environment. The questions guiding this phase of the data collection are:

1. Where does the international student sit in the classroom in relation to the professor and to other students?

2. Does the international student interact with others before, during, and after class? If so, how?

3. How is the class organized (i.e., lecture, small group discussion)?

4. What does the international student do during class (i.e., take notes, ask questions, talk to neighbors, sleep)?

5. How does the international student seem to be treated by the professor? Does this differ from how other students are treated?

62

Data Analysis

Journals, interview data and field notes were analyzed for regularities, patterns and emerging topics. In qualitative research, the data are not analyzed by predetermined criteria, rather the meanings and themes emerge from the data. Qualitative research is an inductive process (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). During this process, notes and interviews are read and reread for meaning "from the words and actions of the participants in the study" (p. 128). This process is called coding. Seidman (1998) refers to it as the "process of noting what is interesting, labeling it, and putting it into appropriate files" (p. 107). Maxwell (1996) refers to it as the "fracturing" of data and its rearrangement into categories that aid in the comparison of data (p. 78).

During the coding process, smaller units or "chunks" of meaning were identified and labeled with an identifying word. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) refer to this process as open coding (p. 143). In open coding, the researcher reads notes line by line to "identify and formulate any and all ideas, themes, or issues they suggest, no matter how varied and disparate" (p. 143). Maykut and Morehouse (1994) posit that the search for meaning in the data is "accomplished by first identifying the smaller units of meaning in the data, which will later serve as the basis for defining larger categories of meaning" (p. 128).

The Ethnograph v5.08 is a software package designed to "enhance and facilitate the process of qualitative data analysis" (Seidel, 1998, p. 3). This software allows researchers to import data files (text files) and then electronically code the data. Researchers are then able to view and edit code lists, search data for single or multiple code words and retrieve coded data for further analysis. Changes made to the code list

63

are automatically updated in the data files. This software does not perform the data analysis. The researcher still must code the data and perform the actual analysis. This software does, however, aid in searching and retrieving researcher-selected code words. It also aids in quick recoding of files as code words are modified.

The data files were imported into *The Ethnograph*, printed out, read and coded. The initial code set numbered 191 words. The code list was reviewed for common or similar codes and any typographical errors. This review resulted in the combining of the codes (i.e., "grades" and "grade" into one code) leaving 161 viable codes.

After this initial coding, the transcripts, journals and notes were reread with the initial list of codes. Codes that suggested similar meanings within the text were combined into one code. For example, the code "annoy" was used one time and referred to how Kate was feeling about expectations of her household duties versus those of her boyfriend who is from the same country:

> Kate: sometimes I feel annoyed because I am also studying as they are and paying the bills equally as they do, but I am the only one who supposed to cook alone everyday. I think which is not fair at all.

The initial code was used to describe the emotion that Kate was feeling. On second review of this passage, the cultural expectations placed on Kate by her boyfriend seemed to be more important as that was the cause of Kate's annoyance. So, it seemed more appropriate to code that section as "cultural norms" and not "annoy". Thus the code "annoy" was changed to "cultural norms."

64

During this process, two codes were deleted. The code "SSN" was used to describe a Lily's concern about not receiving her Social Security Number and what that meant for her bank account.

> Lily: I was worried about my social security number as my bank account was going to be closed because of the absence of social security number. Yesterday I talked to them, today I got some stuff and my number.

She was the only student to mention the Social Security Number. That passage was recoded as "banking" and the "SSN" code was deleted. Likewise, the code "Exchange" was deleted. That code referred to Lily's sponsoring agency and the paperwork she had to complete. As this did not pertain to any other student and was only mentioned five times by the student, the passages were recoded as appropriate and the code was deleted. All other codes were either left alone or combined, making the total code list 151. (Appendix B has the full list of 151 codes.)

From this focused-coding, the remaining code words were sorted into emerging clusters. Each code was written upon a post-it note. These post-it notes were then clustered or grouped together with items that seemed similar in nature. For example, "accent", "language", "English", and "names" were all codes that ultimately dealt with different aspects of language and were clustered together. Each code was reviewed against the text it represented by using *The Ethnograph* to search for each code. This process grouped the areas into 23 clusters. Table 7 is the full listing of the areas. (Appendix B diagrams how the 151 codes were grouped into 23 clusters.)

Table 7 - Coding Clusters

Academics	Research	Interaction
Health	Adjusting	Working
Faculty	Campus services	Time Management
Communication	Assistance	Socialize
Language	Connections	Future
Family	Personal traits	Presentations
Living	Culture	Background Information
Dependency	Weather	

The data were reread within the context of these categories and some codes were reconsidered. The code "working" was used initially on segments of text when the student referred to working. When the students were talking about working, it was not about having a job and working as much as it signified independence.

> Shekar: When I came here, I found that people said, even my friends said before I came here, "Now, you've got to be independent. And, you've got to work yourself. Not be dependent upon your father."

Thus "working" became clustered with "dependency".

Other changes to the category list included clustering "faculty" with "academics", "language" with "communication", "interaction" with "communication", "future" with "time management", and "personal traits" with "background information"; and dividing "Campus Services" into "academics" and "adjusting". Also, "family" was divided into "communication" and "health", and "presentation" into "academics" and "communication". Finally, "time management", "socializing", "adjusting", "connections", "culture", and "health" were combined into one category "survival". The resulting category list is presented in Table 8 along with the frequency of those areas

being mentioned in the data. (A diagram of these clusters is found in Appendix C.

Appendix D is the final code list by categories.)

Table 8 - Category List with Frequencies

Academics	392
Survival	353
Communication	202
Dependency	114
Research	32
Background Information	18

"Research" referred to the questions and concerns the students had about the research and

the research process throughout the semester. "Background Information" referred to

information the student presented about him or herself that was useful for getting to know

him or her better and being able to present his or her profile. Figure 1 shows the concept

map with categories and sub categories. The overarching theme is adjusting. All of these

categories ultimately deal with the students' adjustment to studying in the United States.

67

Adjusting			
Academics	**Survival**	**Communication**	**Dependency**
Class	Health	Difficulties	Dependent
Technology	Emotional	Language	Cared For
Groups	Physical	Misunderstanding	Helpless
Exams	Connections	Interactions	Lost
Materials	Feeling	Meeting People	Independence
	Connected		
Faculty	Country Friends	Friends	Working
Interactions	Family	Students	On Own
Quality	Feeling	Faculty Communication	Self-reliant
	Disconnected		
Help	Living	Family Communication	Culture
Advisor	Roommates		Cultural
			Norms
Education	Food		Marriage
Comparison	Housing		Gender
Grades			
General			
education			
Study			
Homework			
Internet			
Resources			
Advice from			
Students			
Write Site			
Library			
Office Hours			

Figure 1. Themes, Categories, Codes and Sub-Codes

The search functions of *The Ethnograph* allowed for testing of patterns and aided in formulating assertions. The following assertions and subassertions which will be described in greater detail in Chapter IV included:

Assertion #1: <u>International students perceived a change in their level of dependency.</u>

    Subassertion #1a: Students from "dependent" situations felt more independence.

    Subassertion #1b: Students from "independent" situations felt more dependent.

Assertion #2: <u>International students were more likely to listen to other students, especially from their home country, than seek assistance from university services or personnel.</u>

68

Assertion #3: International students wanted to feel connected.

Subassertion #3a: International students wanted connections with other international students and their home country.

Subassertion #3b: Connections with Americans helped international students feel welcome.

Assertion #4: International students did not fully anticipate the differences they would experience.

Subassertion #4a: International students experienced differences in teaching, including the use of technology.

Subassertion #4b: International students appreciated having friendly and approachable faculty.

Subassertion #4c: International students liked the concept of general education, although they struggled in non-major courses.

Subassertion #4d: International students struggled more with the language than they anticipated.

Validity and Reliability

Validity is generally defined as "the trustworthiness of inferences drawn from data" (Eisenhart & Howe, 1992, p. 644). According to Maxwell (1996), validity is a goal and not a product of research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) equate validity to trustworthiness –the internal consistency of participants' stories, actions, and nonverbal clues. In qualitative research, it is important to look for and account for validity threats, ways in which the interpretation may be wrong. These threats can occur during the description, interpretation, and theory phases of the project (Maxwell, 1992). Description

69

validity threats occur when data are inaccurate or incomplete. Maxwell (1992) states that "descriptive validity can refer to issues of omission as well as of commission" (p. 287). Audio or videotaping of observations and interviews with verbatim transcriptions is one way to alleviate this threat. Interpretation validity threats happen when the researcher imposes his/her own meaning rather than understanding the perspective of the people studied (Maxwell, 1992). Validity threats during theory building are a result of not collecting or paying attention to discrepant data and not considering alternate explanations.

Two other validity threats include researcher bias (researcher's preexisting theory and preconceptions) and reactivity (the influence the researcher has on the setting or individuals studied) (Seidman, 1998). The goal is not to eliminate these two validity threats, but rather to explain personal biases and how the researcher controls for them, understands their influence and uses them productively.

In this case, I have been involved with international education and worked with international students and scholars for over 10 years. These experiences have affected my outlook and expectations. Knowing that the admissions requirements include a certain level of English proficiency, there was a bias that English would not be as challenging as it was to all of the students. I also had the expectation that international students wanted to be able to work in order to cover expenses. To alleviate this bias, I did not mention anything about working until four of the students mentioned working. The other students were then asked about working to examine any commonalities or discrepancies with that topic. Other comments I have heard from international students throughout my years in international education and that bias my thinking include

70

statements such as "Americans are so superficial," "Americans are hard to get to know," "Americans do not know anything about the world." I expected the international students to comment more about their difficulties in meeting and befriending Americans. Given differences in educational systems, I expected the international students to express their discomfort with the American classroom and learning environment. To control for these biases, I refrained from asking about these areas and only followed up on them once the students raised them as areas of interest.

Validity tests help to identify possible threats. Validity tests include the search for discrepant evidence and negative cases (identifying and analyzing discrepant data and negative cases) (Creswell, 1998; Denzin, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1984), triangulation (collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings using a variety of methods) (Creswell, 1998; Denzin, 1989; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1984), feedback (seeking input/feedback from others) (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 1988), member checks (seeking feedback from the people being studied) (Creswell, 1998; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 1988), and obtaining "rich" data (obtaining detailed and complete enough data to provide a full and revealing picture of what is happening) (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 1988). Rich data allows for "thick descriptions." According to Denzin (1989), a thick description goes beyond the mere reporting of an act to describe and probe "intentions, motives, meanings, context, situations, and circumstances of action" (p. 39).

71

Various techniques were used during this study to verify the findings. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim to alleviate the descriptive validity threat. Data were collected from a variety of sources including journal entries, observations and interviews with students. Participants were asked for their feedback on the themes that emerged. Discrepant and negative cases were explored further, and early perceptions on the part of the researcher were examined and alternate explanations were sought. Students whose responses were very different than the others were asked about the differences. For example, all the students mentioned either having a job or wanting a job except for Almira. When asked further about this, she was very concerned with her English ability and did not want to jeopardize her grades. She did want to work, but just not during the term. There were times during the interviews when the researcher felt she had a strong grasp of what the student was saying. This was because of her background with international students and not because of what the students were saying. She was aware of this and instead of taking it for granted asked follow up questions such as "tell me more about that," "what do you mean by that?" For example, when Shekar spoke about his seniors (see chapter IV, assertion #2), instead of attaching her own meaning to that word, the researcher asked Shekar to explain who he considered his seniors to be. Thus, the definition presented is that of Shekar and not that of the researcher.

Time Span of Research

The researcher sought approval through the Institutional Review Boards of the institution where the research took place and the University of North Dakota and had the research protocol approved after the committee approved the dissertation proposal. Interviews and observations took place during fall term 2004 at Midwestern State

72

University. The researcher has been a professional within international education for nine years, working with international scholars for two and a half years and with international students and international exchange students for six and a half years. Transcriptions of interviews and field notes were continuous as the interviews and observations were completed. Data analysis began during the transcription process and was completed during fall 2004. Writing the results was completed during January and February 2005.

Chapter III explored the research methodology. Chapter IV presents the research findings.

73

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to discover what international students perceived as being important during their initial transition to a university in the United States, by examining their journals, observing their classes, and conducting multiple interviews during their first term at the university.

Chapter III outlined the research methodology used in this study. The description of the analysis presented in this chapter comes directly from the seven students who participated in the study. Their perceptions about their experiences on beginning studies at a university in the United States are presented here. The students' names have been changed.

Findings: Assertions and Subassertions

The assertions and subassertions described in this chapter are from the students' perspective and are the result of sharing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Figure 2).

74

Assertion #1	International students perceived a change in their level of dependency.
Subassertion #1a:	Students from "dependent" situations felt more independence.
Subassertion #1b:	Students from "independent" situations felt more dependent.
Assertion #2	International students were more likely to listen to other students, especially from their home country, than from university services or personnel.
Assertion #3	International students wanted to feel connected.
Subassertion #3a	International students wanted connections with other international students and with their home country.
Subassertion #3b	Connections with Americans helped international students feel welcome.
Assertion #4	International students did not fully anticipate the differences they would experience.
Subassertion #4a	International students experienced differences in teaching, including the use of technology.
Subassertion #4b	International students appreciated having friendly, approachable faculty.
Subassertion #4c	International students liked the concept of general education, although they struggled in non-major courses.
Subassertion #4d	International students struggled more with the language than they anticipated.

Figure 2. Findings - Assertions and Subassertions

Assertion 1: International students perceived a change in their level of dependency.

The following assertion and subsassertions relate to the student's own perception

of their level of dependency upon others and how that changed from their home country

to their host country.

75

Dependence

The students from Nepal and Sri Lanka were accustomed to being cared for on every level in their home countries. Kate talked about how her mother and father were very caring, they were "giving everything." She wrote:

I have no habit of waking up early in the morning to an ALARM!! (I never heard my alarm.) Back in my home it is [sic] my father who woke me up everyday to go to school. My father usually gives [sic] me a warming hug when I woke up and he take me to the bathroom door as I am so sleepy and rubbing my eyes.

She said that because she was an only child, her father and mother would not let her shop alone, they were always with her. Kate also shared a story about going to the British Council office for some studies. Because of the timing of her class, her parents were unable to pick her up. Kate was very scared about going because she did not know how to travel by bus. Here is her account of the first day:

I was kind of lost. I was really panicked. "What am I supposed to do?" [My parents] draw me a map how to get the bus and stuff, and were really sorry they couldn't do this. I had to travel alone that day. And, I don't know. Fortunately, [a friend] helped me. [*How old were you?*] 16 years old. Yeah, that's my first experience alone. But, even there, I met [my boyfriend]. He helped me out of that. I can remember. I couldn't, I couldn't cross the road. I was afraid. And I was standing there, and [he] came to me asked me to cross the road. "So, may I help you?" I said

76

because, frankly, I don't want. I said, "No, I can manage myself." Then,

he just went aside. And, I still couldn't get it. I was waiting and he came

again and said, "OK, I'll do that for you."

After that experience, her boyfriend picked her up and accompanied her to

and from class even though he lived far from her. (These instances took place

prior to them becoming boyfriend and girlfriend.)

Ranpalee also wrote about being cared for back home. "Because when I was in

Sri Lanka, I was with my parents. They did all the things for me when I was there. My

mother prepared my meals, bought my stuff what I need and other things." She attributed

her loneliness at Midwestern State University to missing her dependence on her parents.

"So actually, I feel, after I came here I feel really lonely. Because, in Sri Lanka, I was

with my parents. And, they were doing all the things for me."

Elina explained that in Nepal, "we don't have to worry about anything." Her

parents "did everything" for her. All she had to do was to have fun and study, although

she had more fun than she did studying.

> They [her parents] did a lot for me. They would take care of me. They
>
> would cook and clean. I didn't have to do anything. My mother was
>
> strict, but I could always go to my father and he would usually let me go
>
> or give me money if I needed it. Here, I have to do everything.

She even explained that her upbringing did not follow the traditional norms of her

country. "Back in Nepal, it is the girls who learn how to cook, clean and take care of the

house. But not me." Her parents did everything.

And Shekar, who had studied at a boarding school in India, noted that:

77

we are dependent on father. They put all their money in education. And after we pass around 21, 22, or 23 [years of age], the father starts to go back providing money and all [less support]. At that time, we have to do [provide for] our self."

Susrutha, who studied for two years outside of his home country, mentioned "I never used to do stuff around the [house]. I mean I used to clean the house and stuff but I never used to help with cooking and cleaning. I never used to wash my clothes. Now, I have to do everything. She [mom] used to iron them [clothes]."

Independence

Each of these students described how they have become more independent during their initial stay in the United States. While Kate still showed dependency by continuing to rely on her boyfriend for transportation, she also expressed her desire for more independence. She wrote:

I am working during the morning. [My boyfriend] have to wake up at 6:30 to fetch me there...I feel really guilty to wake him and to bother his sleep to fetch me...I think I will change my working hours next semester so I will not be a burden to [him] anymore. Once I told him that I will go alone to the work because it will only take 20 minutes walk to MSU from my apartment.

In our last interview, Kate explained that her boyfriend will be graduating in May and most likely be moving to another city for graduate school. In this conversation, Kate described her need to do some things by herself.

And I know it's going to be a big loss. He'll definitely go to Missouri or somewhere and I have to manage myself here alone [laughs]. And I need

78

to take the driver's license. Because I don't think that I can walk all the

time. I don't know where will I stay after he's going. I mean I have to

find a roommate. And, actually I didn't find anybody suiting my desires.

So I was wondering who to choose. I have no idea what will happen in

next semester to me. [laughs]. Because when I was coming, I didn't have

anything to think about. Because everything was ready. My home. My

room and stuff. All things. But now I have to do it all by myself.

[laughs] It's a challenge. [*Are you ready?*] I'm not quite sure, but I know

I have to. And I think I will. But it's not clear to me what will I do like. I

mean I'll take as it comes like. Because I came here, I have to the courage

to. I should have to do it by myself.

She described her time in the United States as a time for growth, "Actually, I think now is

the time that I'm learning about myself and how to mingle with people and to face

society."

Ranpalee wrote, "I think in here the life is very independent. We can do anything

what we want. But in my country my parents always take care of me" and "but after I

came here, we have to do everything by myself. We have to prepare our meals by

ourselves." Ranpalee found a job on-campus to help cover her expenses. The job has

also added to her sense of independence. When she first arrived and before she found

work, her brother and sister-in-law took care of her expenses. But now, Ranpalee is

contributing to the rent and bills and becoming more independent.

Actually the first month I, after I came here, he [brother] do all. He paid

the food for me. Yeah. He paid food, rent, other. Now, I'm doing, now

79

I'm working also that's why I share with them: the rent, and food. He's working but he has an idea to go to graduate school. Then after that I can't depend on him…So, I have to find the rent, and food.

Additionally, Elina mentioned having to do things for herself. "Here I have to do everything. I don't know how to cook or clean or wash clothes. My roommates, they're boys, they're telling me how to things. They are teaching me to cook and clean." Elina said she had been told by some to be prepared for this change. "Some people warned me. They said you would have to learn how to do everything on your own."

Shekar also spoke of advice he received from others:

Since you have come, even if the States is independent, they said, "you've got to do yourself. You can do anything." "That's why," they told me, "that now you have to come to this place, you've got to be independent. You've got to look after yourself. Because over here, at the age of 15, they started working. So, you too, may start working," they said.

He talked about not knowing his way around campus. So, he took a map and took a tour around campus to orient himself. "One day, I took myself for a stroll all around the campus. I took a map. I only had a little maps. [sic]. So, I took a map. 'OK, this is this building.' I have to go and have a look myself."

Susrutha mentioned that he is missing his mother and especially her cooking. He is learning to cook and says his sister is a pretty good cook, but "moms cook the best!" Susrutha is also learning to take care of himself and washes and irons his clothes every Saturday.

80

Subasssertion #1b: Students from "independent" situations felt more dependent.

Almira had already lived away from her family and although Lily came from a country where many students were completely dependent upon their parents, she was used to working to help pay for her own entertainment expenses. "But many students [from my home country] don't [work]. Just parents take care of everything they do. But, I have always worked." Both Lily and Almira expressed concern about not being able to do things on their own. Lily wrote:

> it was terrible, I can't make photocopies, these are the things that many of my [sic] international students face, but I do that in the worst way. I was told to get some practice papers for my Spanish class, I couldn't find it either. I was getting in a panic (so easily), when I sat at the [computer] and wrote to my friends, 'I am growing mad help me'.

Almira wrote:

> The first day that I came here I couldn't close my window, I was cold, I want to close my window but I couldn't. Than [sic] after three days I met my RA [resident assistant]. She closed my window for me. Another day I wanted to open my window. I injured my finger terribly. We have no windows like that in my country. That is why I had so much trouble.

She mentioned several times feeling like a child or a baby. "So many times, I'm feeling myself like a five year old." "It is written on the 'Seedfolks[1]' that living a foreign country makes people like a child. I believe that statement because I live the same things

---

[1] Seedfolks (1997) is a book written by Paul Fleischman. The book contains 13 interwoven mini-stories of people creating a neighborhood garden in a vacant lot. The narrative by Gonzalo speaks of two grown men (his father and uncle) coming to Cleveland and not being able to converse in English. These men were reduced to being like a "kid in diapers" (p. 14).

81

right now." "When you are a baby you couldn't explain your problem than you would cry. I have never thought I would cry in the first week I came here. I believe that I am a strong person, but I cried." Almira also talked about not being able to do things on her own, "you can't do your job yourself." When asked why she couldn't do it herself, she responded by saying, "I'm afraid of getting lost." The follow up question was "what would happen if you did get lost?" Her response was:

> Actually, maybe I can tell someone and they can help me. And I can get
>
> some [help] but, it's a [laughs] [pause] it's a shame. [*Why?*] I don't want
>
> to be a problem for other persons. I don't.

Finally, Almira felt that the bad thing about coming to the United States was the change in her role, from being productive contributor to being dependent user. "The bad thing, I'm a consumer here. I am. In my country I was working and I could do something for myself and for my family. That made me feel good." Here Almira can only use and spend, she feels she can not contribute or give back.

Assertion #2: International students were more likely to listen to other students, especially from their home country, than seek assistance from university services or personnel.

Whether the task was finding a place to live, picking classes for next term, or figuring out what to do for class, students relied on the advice of other students to answer their questions. Even when not seeking advice for a particular problem, students listened and followed the advice of other students.

When Shekar arrived, he thought he would be able to go directly to the Housing Office and secure a room on-campus. He assumed that the room registration was similar

82

to how it had been for him in India. He arrived at 11:30 p.m. and was told there was no room for him. Two international students helped him find some temporary housing with a third international student.

> They really helped me a lot the first week. I was in a problem and they were at the middle of the night, they were ready to do anything for me…And at last, I got to stay with [a student] and I asked him what should I do about this things [housing]. 'You'd better stay outside [off-campus], you have not got anything now [room on-campus]. It will take about 7 days or 5 days of this mess. So, I know a Nepali boy, this is his.'
> He gave me his phone number so that I contact [sic] with him.

Shekar followed the student's advice, contacted the Nepali student and moved into his apartment.

Kate spoke about picking classes for the next term. She went to her advisor and received help in creating a schedule. Then, she received advice from fellow Sri Lankan students as to classes and professors.

> Kate: Because you know these people, Sri Lankan people, they have this specific professor which they think is easy to get an A. So, all of them are like if you choose classes choose this professor, it's easy to get "A". So, all of them go that professor. This professor is the same, I think. I can't remember the name, the Saturday class. So everybody tell it's easy to get an "A" from him. Every Sri Lankan go to that professor.

83

Interviewer: So, word gets around. You tell each other who you had and who you liked?

Kate: Yeah. Basically they are telling like don't go to this professor. He's so tough on grading. So, nobody will go to that professor. Like that. So actually they are helping a lot to choose classes for us.

Interviewer: OK. So you're getting a lot of your advice not so much from your advisors as much as from your fellow...

Kate: Yeah.

Kate also mentioned receiving advice on writing and other assignments. She described one assignment where she had her boyfriend read it and give her advice on the paper before turning it in.

When I was writing the first assignments, I didn't know how to write because he [the professor] didn't tell us. He just give the question and said us to double space it and like that. And, I didn't know. Then, I just wrote because as we used to write in Sri Lanka. I wrote it. And when I showed it to my boyfriend, he was like 'What have you done? This is not the way to write it.' And he just told me how to write.

Kate said that her boyfriend taught her how to reference materials and websites. He also told her about the writing services on-campus. When asked if she used the services yet, she responded, "Not yet. I'm hoping to." Her boyfriend served as a reference for other assignments, too. For example, she had to write an assignment about Walmart. She said, "I haven't heard anything, because I'm new to here. And I feel like an alien. So, I asked

84

[my boyfriend] about what's this all about." He provided her with basic ideas. She did the research. And her boyfriend edited her projects.

Ranpalee also spoke indirectly of the influence fellow students have on decisions. Ranpalee was influenced by another Sri Lankan student at MSU even prior to arrival in the United States. Her sister-in-law advised her to be a Speech/Language/Hearing Science major like she was. However, midway through Ranpalee's first semester, she decided to change to biotechnology.

Interviewer: When you first came, you came in as Speech Language Hearing Science?

R: Yeah, because [my sister-in-law's] studying that so she asked me to do that. But after I came here, I thought that biotech is interesting because I did, I told you that I did "A" levels for biology. And, I think that is good.

Due to visa and travel problems, Elina joined the university after classes had already begun. She was able to get registered with the help of the Advising Support Center. She explained that for her Biology class, she met with her professor to get the syllabus and get caught up in the class. This professor put all of his lecture notes and other information on a course management system. He gave Elina the URL for the website where she could get all the information for class. Elina said it was easy to figure out due to her friends. "They were also doing the same." For that same class, she had a question about the syllabus. She said she tried to email the professor but didn't receive a response. So, she went to her friends and asked what they did.

85

> I emailed him. He didn't answer. And, I asked my friends what they did.
> And, they told me that they print it out and they do this signature and hand
> it, ah, the syllabus to [the professor]. And, I did the same.

In Elina's case, she did try to contact the professor first. But on not having a response, she turned to her friends.

Susrutha and Shekar both talked about the influence and advice of friends about working. Susrutha intended on waiting for one year or at least one semester before looking for a job so as to give himself time to adjust to being here and studying. However, his friends teased him that his sister had a job and he didn't. It did not matter that his sister had already been studying in the U.S. for a year and a half already. Susrutha said, "my friends were like, 'oh your sister's working, why aren't you working?' Then I decided to do some a little bit work. Not a lot." So, Susrutha changed his plans based on his friends' advice.

Shekar was also influenced by his seniors, people from his country who were older and had been in the United States longer than he had. He listened to them because "they are very experienced. Seniors means who is more experienced than me." His seniors told him that

> you have to independent. Now you can't depend upon your father. And
> they told me to work whatever job you get, you take it. Don't feel sorry.
> Everybody does work here, and it doesn't really matter how, what work
> you do.

86

Shekar secured a job cleaning buildings on campus. To understand the impact of this advice, it is important to understand there is caste system in Nepal. Shekar explained that,

> working there [as a custodian], if I work in that particular place in my country that means I have no respect. If I work that particular job means my father's prestige will be down. This is not a job that we do in our country. And for this particular work, there is some particular caste who does this work. And, there's always a caste that goes around [and cleans].

Not only does the caste system exist, it plays a part in Shekar's own acceptance of the work he is doing.

> I don't feel awkward working there when Americans see me. I don't feel awkward at all. But when I see people from my country, I feel really embarrassed. Embarrassed of myself, because I'm working [that type of job]. Because they have an attitude. Even I have the same attitude. Somebody works in this placement, he is very low. It's a low job. And, this is still in my mind even when I come to the United States. That won't change.

Additionally, Shekar felt he could not share this with his family. "It [type of job] really matters in my country. I have told him [father] I have a job, but I've never said that it is this kind of job."

International students are influenced and follow the advice of students from other students, especially those from their home countries.

Assertion #3: International students wanted to feel connected.

87

Internationals students spoke often about connections they had with others and sometimes the lack of connection they felt with Americans.

Subassertion #3a: International students wanted connections with other international students and with their home country.

The students in this study commented on how important it was for them to feel connected and make connections with people from their home country. Susrutha began his journal with an entry about arriving in the United States and attending orientation:

> I came a week ahead than the start of classes and it gave me some time to
> adjust with jet lag and the weather. The first time I came to college, there
> was a group called "The Diplomats", they were International Students. I
> was really happy to see two students from Sri Lanka because it was easier
> to connect with a person with similar backgrounds and culture.

Shekar and Lily also mentioned orientation and feeling connected with other international students. Shekar said this about the picnic at international student orientation, "we had communication, means we interacted with all the international students." Lily said this, "It was really nice to get acquainted to international students. I started to consider myself a part of a group."

Besides the connection with other international students, Lily spoke about her connection to her homeland, Armenia:

> I have always loved my country, Armenians, but now I love them even
> more. They are so warm, so encouraging, so nice, so humorous. I get so
> many letters from my friends and these letters make me love everybody,
> love the whole world.

<div align="center">88</div>

Lily's academic advisor had connections to Armenia and invited Lily over.

>I was invited to my academic advisor's house, whose father is an
>Armenian. There was another Armenian family invited too. I spent a
>wonderful time there and when I returned I saw that I am not alone, that
>there are people I can rely on.

Lily also wrote about needing to have connections with her Armenian friends:

>We [my friends and I] made an appointment and joined an Armenian chat
>program. It was so nice, I was so happy. I was doing it during my class
>(Shame on me). I was listening to the professor and chatting with my
>friends. I felt as if they were with me.

Almira connected with another student from Turkey. They spoke almost everyday and often in Turkish.

>I'm always speaking Turkish with my friend. If [my friend] doesn't come,
>she calls me. And we almost every day we are speaking Turkish. And I
>have Turk friends

Although, Almira often wondered whether they would have been friends back in Turkey.

>And sometimes I think about this. If I met her in Turkey, I wouldn't speak
>to her, maybe. Maybe she wouldn't speak [to me] because she's different,
>I'm different. But here we are sharing too much things. And she's really
>cared about me. She was trying to help me about everything.

Elina explained that she was not feeling as homesick as when she first arrived. She attributed part of this to living with three other students from Nepal. They are also

89

cooking Nepali food everyday, so she's not missing it. There is also another Nepali girl who lived across the way. Elina talked about staying up late talking with her.

It helps to hear about the other experiences and I realize I don't have it so bad. [The other student] tells me about how it was when she first came. She didn't make her Dragon ID and so she didn't eat for two days. She only had water. She didn't know anyone else and she was all alone. The first time she had Nepali food was during her 3rd month here. I knew [my roommate], he was a neighbor back home. That helped a lot.

Kate appreciated socializing with students from her home country.

I organized a party last Friday. I met with all the Sri Lankans, not all, actually most. And I cooked a very grand Sri Lankan meal. Yeah. And everybody was saying, 'oh, it's so great and delicious.' I'm so happy.

Subassertion #3b: Connections with Americans help the international students feel welcome.

Many of the students expressed interest in befriending American students. Some of the students, like Shekar, seemed to be making friends and feeling connected with American students easier than others. Shekar said, "I have many American friends. I enjoy talking to with them. The best thing that I found that the people of USA, people are helpful, understanding, frank, and are not conservative minded." In his November 2nd journal entry, Shekar wrote this about one of his American friends, "She is very helpful and kind…she always teaches me the new English word and many other stuffs [sic] too. Well my days are becoming better and better and I started liking environment very much."

90

Lily, on the other hand, did not start out with a good experience. She arrived a week before her American roommate did. She did not know her roommate, but was excited nonetheless to meet her and share a room with her. She was getting lonely in her room. She made a welcome poster, and wrote her roommate's name in Armenian to welcome her roommate. When her roommate arrived, Lily said, "she was a nice girl. I like her, because I wanted to like her." At first all seemed good with her roommate. But later, Lily had the impression that things were not right with her roommate. "When she saw me outdoors she didn't even look at my face, while there were people who greeted me even when they didn't know me." Eventually, she and her roommate discussed things and Lily moved into another room.

In Lily's August 29th journal entry, she wrote:

I was already starting to think that being an international student is not so good here, that they are not so much loved (though in my country we love foreign students and people very much), but my opinion has been changed since I met people who would like to have me in their rooms, who consider this a new way to learn about different parts of the world, different culture and to be open to the world. Now I feel better when I see that there are many people who can take the advantage of being here, and appreciate it.

Later she wrote, "I was made to think that Americans are too busy people to take any minute from them. Now I don't think so. They are really busy, but some people who can really do everything to help you."

91

Almira was concerned with her interactions with her roommate. She was wondering if she was talking too much.

> Almira: She's nice. She's not talking. Almost never talking. And when I first moved I asked some questions to her to know to her. Then after three or four questions I said 'Am I bothering this girl? Am I asking too much questions?' I said, 'don't try' [laughs]. 'Be calm. If she asks you then you can try again.' [laughs]

Interviewer: But she hasn't asked you?

> Almira: Not too much. And she's only 19. I don't know. But if I were a girl from another country came to my room, I would be more curious. I don't know. I would want to get to know her, and her country. I don't know. Americans, I think not. They are different.

Despite this roommate situation, Almira made some connections with others.

> [An American friend] came and accompanied me [to breakfast]. Then she offer me to go to their [sic] home at Christmas. That made me so happy because these days I was feeling that American people did not like me, did not care about foreign people. Then I saw I had been wrong.

Lily found support with her group in her Educational Psychology class.

> Sometimes we work in separate groups. The name of [my] group is "apres" (good for you in Armenian). This is a very happy fact for me. I like my classmates very much. They help me a lot, otherwise I sometimes used to feel confused when I did not understand the task, but wanted to

92

take part in it so badly. When my classmates look at me, when they talk to

me I feel that they like me, my ideas, too. This encourages me a lot.

Kate expressed her desires and lack of ability to meet Americans in one of our first

meetings. She explained that she was the only international student in her economics

course. She tried to initiate conversation with an American student. Kate felt that the

student did not want to talk to her and Kate felt "that she doesn't like me or something, so

I didn't go to talk to her after that." Earlier Kate mentioned how she was uncomfortable

in talking with people she did not know. So when asked why she initiated the

conversation, she responded

Because I felt really alone in that class and I just thought that I needed to

talk to somebody. I need to make a friend there. Because I'm totally lost

like in that class. But she's, she seems not that much friendly.

Later in that interview, Kate explained that the

Class is huge. They have formed sort of gangs like. They are doing their

own works and not interested with us [international students]. So, I'm just

sitting in a corner and just listen to the [professor], and that's it. I'm

coming home... They have own, their own friends. So, I'm like an alien.

In the last interview, Kate was really excited. She had a new American friend.

Actually there is the American friend. I told you before that I found that

Americans are really not friendly that much. But I found this very nice

one guy and a girl. And this guy actually invited us to spend [some of] the

summer.

93

This friend helped Kate figure out some information about the health system here. Kate had hurt her finger and the health services on campus referred her to get an x-ray. She did not know what to do and her friend made some phone calls to find out hours of operation and costs. "I was totally kind of lost. And he helped me a lot."

Ranpalee did not always feel welcomed here:

Some people, I don't know, sometimes they ignore me. And I don't know why is that. So, sometimes here some people are not friendly and I mean not all the people. There are a few people I think not friendly...I think they ignore me because I think they sometimes, they don't like that, I mean black and white here. [You mean the skin colors?] Yeah, yeah right. So, I thought that is the reason, but I don't know actually what is the reason for that.

Ranpalee said that she had lots of friends at home and she used to go everywhere with her friends. But she feels that she does not have many friends here. She has made a connection with her boss. Ranpalee describes her as "good" and "kind" and "interested in my country." Ranpalee also made connections with her lab partners. She had a partner from Korea, England and North Dakota. The four of them worked well together and even took pictures of their outing to Target to buy the supplies to prepare their presentation.

Assertion #4: International students did not fully anticipate the differences they would experience.

Subassertion #4a: International students experienced differences in teaching, including the use of technology.

94

The international students in this study spoke about various aspects of the classroom instruction including how it compared to their expectations, assignments and testing, group work and presentations, and the use of the internet.

Shekar said that although the education is different in Nepal compared to the United States, he was expecting there to be differences in the classroom, especially around the area of technology use. He had heard while still in Nepal that the United States has technology that Nepal did not have. Even though he was anticipating these differences, it was also causing him some problems. He said he was having some difficulties in the class because of "the new technology they use in the class, which I have never seen." Shekar continued his assessment of the differences by explaining that the courses in the United States have a more objective and practical approach to them. In Nepal, the students had to write down what the professors taught and provide that same information on the exams. Shekar feels it is better to have the practical component. He thinks the education he is receiving in the United States is helping to build the creative mind and students have to work out the problems themselves.

Almira explained her expectations about the classes and classrooms are being met. She watched many films about American schools in Turkey. She noticed that "the kinds of classrooms and tools which are used in the classes are similar to that in my country." One difference that Almira commented about was that in Turkey it is the professor who is moving classrooms, not the students. The students studying Education only need to leave their classroom for lunch and the technology class. Otherwise, it is the professors who move around the campus. Another difference that she has experienced was that she was given much more homework during the first week of class.

95

Our lectures generally do not give us so much homework at the first week.

I think everything develops here faster than that in my country. Maybe it

is because of being a foreign [sic] I cannot understand somethings [sic]

and I am slower than other students.

Susrutha did not feel that the work load was too much. In fact he said, "the work

is alright, the work load is fine. You have to write programs every day and stay in

touch." However, he did write about the amount of quizzes he had to take, "quizzes and

more quizzes," and "he gives tests" every other week.

Ranpalee and Kate both felt that education was more competitive in Sri Lanka

than at MSU. Kate described it as "deadly competitive." Ranpalee felt the exams here

are easy compared to the exams in Sri Lanka. She said, "The tests are not very hard

compared to home. I feel that the exams are very easy here."

Shekar expressed his thankfulness to the differences in testing. He explained that

he was able to do take home tests and assignments for his English class here. In Nepal,

he used to take three hour essay exams where spelling and grammar counted. He thought

the stress of that type of exam affected his performance. Comparing that to here, Shekar

said, "Over here, when we had to write an essay, we could have taken as long as we

wanted [to] time [wise]. As we write it [at] home."

Something new for several students was group work. Almira spoke and wrote

about two classes where the students were told to form groups. In her Speech

Communication class, this happened within the first week. Almira was at a loss for what

to do. She did not know anyone in her class. She looked around but no-one was looking

at her. This was also the case in her Mathematics course. In both cases, the professor

96

came by and facilitated the group making process for Almira. Group work was also used

for class assignments in her English course. As this course is for non-native English

speakers, Almira did not feel ill-at-ease with group work in that course.

Lily also mentioned having to form groups and work on projects. She did this in

her English class and her Educational Psychology class. She often felt behind in the

group discussions because she was unable to contribute as much as she wanted due to

language. However, she found her Educational Psychology group to be very supportive

of her and genuinely interested in her contributions.

Kate and Ranpalee both mentioned having to work with lab partners. In Sri

Lanka, they were not used to having such small groups for conducting experiments. Due

to the amount of equipment and materials available, they were conducting experiments in

small groups of about 10 to 20 students. In biology, they are in groups of four students

for their lab work. In chemistry, there are two students in a lab group. Both Kate and

Ranpalee indicated that the chemistry lab was not causing any problems. But Kate was

having difficulties in her biology lab. Grades are very important to Kate and she was

receiving full marks on her individual projects. However, for her group projects, she and

her lab partners are receiving marks of only 60 to 75%. Kate has tried talking to her lab

partners about the grades and assignments but feels they are not listening to her. She

doesn't know what to do about the situation.

Ranpalee spoke about preparing for and giving her first presentation ever. It was

in her biology lab and was given with her lab partners. She felt it was a very worthwhile

project because, "we have to study a lot about that subject. Because they're [other

students] are asking questions and we have to answer these questions."

97

Finally, the use of the internet and new technology was mentioned several times as something different for international students. Ranpalee both wrote in her journal and discussed in the interviews the use of the internet here. She explained that there is limited internet access in Sri Lanka, but here, students can "access the internet and find anything they want." She is finding that most of her assignments are done through the internet. She uses the internet for downloading her biology notes, finding related subject details and communicating with the professor and students. Also she has a lot of chemistry assignments and most of them are through the internet. This use of the internet was something new for Elina as well and something she was not expecting. Her biology syllabus, notes, and quizzes are online through a web-based course management system. Ranpalee says that such extensive use of the internet and technology are "new things for us international students."

Subassertion #4b: International students appreciated having friendly and approachable faculty.

Feeling encouraged, supported, and cared for by faculty members were important to the international students. Comments were made about being able to communicate with faculty by email, to see faculty during office hours, and the encouragement of and friendliness towards international students. Ranpalee spoke about being able to contact faculty "by telephone or email" to ask questions outside of class being a "good thing." Susrutha mentioned office hours, "All my professors have office hours which I think it's really good because I can always go and ask them "what's up?" Any problems that I have." Lily also mentioned office hours, "professors have office hours. That you can

98

just go and ask some questions…here you can just see the schedule and go to visit your professor."

Students mentioned being able to talk to their professors and being comfortable with them. Ranpalee said, "We can ask anything from them, when we have questions." Shekar liked that the professors are approachable and "friendly and you can tell them any problems." Susrutha takes a stroll with one of his professors everyday after class and visits with another professor every week for some additional help with his assignments. He relayed a story about going to the writing center for some help with a paper. The director of the writing center had been a guest speaker in one of his classes. When he showed up at the writing center, he saw her there.

> She remembers my name, and, yeah. She remembers my name and where
> I was from. I was surprised. That's another thing about [another
> professor] he remembers you and he remembers what you are doing there,
> where you are staying, where you're from.

Lily wrote that her English professor was "so kind, helpful" and she's "approachable." She thinks her professors "are so good." Kate had this to say about her advisor, "actually, because I think she's like a mother. She's really good."

Shekar, Elina, Susrutha, and Ranpalee all said that professors are friendly here. "We talk when we meet." "Interactions here are friendly." "The professors here are really friendly." "Some professors seem they are friendly."

Lily and Almira appreciated receiving encouragement from their professors. Lily spoke about the way her English professor graded her papers:

99

She's very encouraging. Every time I write something or I receive "very

good" or "nice writing" or she just grades it in a very special way. Not

just a mark. That's really encouraging. I know that it is done on purpose

to encourage, but at the same time, I'm really touched.

Almira spoke about receiving encouragement from her Speech Communication

professor:

My first presentation, I was shaking, I was really nervous. But, after I

finished my presentation, that's really comfortable. I saw her face. She,

she was great because my speech. [*So, seeing her face helps you

understand?*] Yes. And after I sat in my chair, she said, "Good

quotation."

That encouraged Almira.

Lily sums up her thoughts about faculty in this journal entry:

My professors are interested in international students (once I felt that local

students don't like internationals (I am not speaking of me)). I was afraid

they may dislike me, but I felt quite good and self-confident during the

classes.

All of the students mentioned the friendliness and approachability of faculty on-

campus. The students felt comfortable knowing faculty had office hours and could be

asked any type of question.

Subassertion #4c: International students liked the concept of general education,

although they struggled in non-major courses.

100

Shekar mentioned the general education courses in response to a question about how he was enjoying his major courses. He responded that he has not taken major courses yet as he is fulfilling his general education requirements. Towards the end of the semester, Shekar mentioned that he dropped his psychology class which was one of his general education courses. He dropped that course because he was having difficulties in the class. He consulted with the professor and realized that he would not get a "A" or "B" for the class and choose to drop it instead.

Ranpalee explained that having a general education requirement was a main difference between studying in the United States and studying back home.

> So, I think it is good that liberal studies and the major, we are doing them
> both together. Because in our country, we are only studying our major
> thing. So, I think here, that is a good thing...I think it is good because we
> can get the knowledge of all things.

Susrutha mentioned that he did not have the option of general education courses in his degree program in New Zealand. He studied computers there and "nothing else."

> So, it was kind of boring. I mean if you mess up in one subject you tend
> to loose interest in all your subjects because it's all about one, but it's not
> like this here. Because you have so many different subjects to study
> about, it's interesting.

Further in the conversation, Susrutha spoke about his classes this term:

> I take one liberal studies class this semester. Yeah, I really like it. I had
> an exam yesterday and I had to write with my pen for the first time in

101

about two years, because I've been doing everything on the computer.

And, anyway, it was really tiring and my hand is like hurting.

Finally, to describe how he felt about having to take general education courses, Susrutha said, "I think it's a good thing."

Kate was taking an Economics course to fulfill part of her general education requirements. Her background was in the sciences only. She is struggling in Economics and really dislikes that course.

Actually, I'm not sure whether I get a "C" even for my econ. I'm really

scared. Because, actually, I'm struggling with these terms...So, because

I'm really afraid that I'll get a drop in my GPA because of my econ.

Ranpalee also studied sciences back home and is struggling with one her general education courses this term.

I find Anthropology hard. I have to read a lot and I don't understand book.

I study a lot on weekends. I read lecture before class, so I can understand

what lecturer says...Yeah, compared with other subjects, that is my lowest

mark, for Anthropology for that. So, I studied hard for that Anthropology.

All the time I read that book, because I want to get higher marks for that

and I want to get an "A" for that.

Despite her concern about grades in the Anthropology course and the amount of time she has to study, she still thinks general education courses are a "good thing."

Subassertion #4d: International students struggled more with the language than they anticipated.

Six of the students in this study, regardless of English language ability, spoke about their struggles with English. It was not always a matter of not knowing the language but also the accent, tone and use of words that caused problems.

Ranpalee wrote, "And sometimes in here, some people are talking faster. I don't understand what they are telling." As for the accent, Ranpalee said, "[I] don't understand the accent here, especially professors. They have a hard accent. *I didn't consider that the accent would be a factor before coming here.*" (Emphasis belongs to researcher.) Shekar also mentioned professors, "some of the professors pronounces [sic] different." Kate mentioned the accent, "And another problem which I face here is the accent. It is very hard to understand sometimes." Almira spoke about the difficulties in her Speech Communication class, "I have really [sic] difficulty in the Speech Communication classes because every student makes their [sic] speech and I can't understand. I don't know. I can't be able to understand the...I think there are different accents."

Shekar felt that one of his biggest problems during his first term was language. He wrote:

> The first problem that I faced was that I had difficulty in conversation with
> the people of USA. It is not that I did not know English, but the thing was
> that my pronunciation was somewhat different from what people of the
> United States spoke. So, whenever I say them anything, they find it hard
> to understand me. This way, I had to think before I said something. The
> problem was that I had difficulty in understanding them because they
> speak too fast which was a problem for me.

103

He also mentioned that the tone was difficult to get used to. "Because the tune that they use in the United States is somewhat different from our country. It's the tune that applies to saying something."

Susrutha brought up another interesting point about language. He said that his Computer Science professor "had an accent." But the accent to which he referred was not an English or American accent, but a Russian accent.

Kate, Lily and Almira each mentioned that they did not fully understand class. Kate said, "I just have a sense of what he [the professor] said, like a summary. But, not the other things." Lily wrote in her journal, "Every time I try to catch everything that professors [say] but there is always something I fail. Maybe this is the problem of my being a non-native speaker." She also said, "Sometimes I miss something [that the teacher says]. For example today, he [the professor] told us that we are going to have a class in another room for the next one, and I haven't caught that until I found out that later." (Another student made sure she understood.) Almira expressed being upset by not being able to understand her classmates in the Speech Communication class.

Almira: And, makes me upset. [*Why?*] Because I don't understand. If I could understand, it would be entertaining.

Interviewer: So, so you're upset because you miss a lot of the humor that's in the class from what the students say?

Almira: Yes.

Lily spoke about the difficulty in being understood in her Spanish class. The professor described a word in Spanish and the class has to guess the English equivalent. Lily said:

104

I know the Armenian variant, but I don't know the English. So, I can't say that. Sometimes I don't pronounce the word in the right way, but I mean the same word. So he doesn't catch that. Then he says the word. I was right, but I didn't pronounce the word in the right way.

Almira mentioned the difficulty in finding the right word. She described the time she hurt her finger while trying to open her window. She went to the dining services to get some ice for her hurt finger.

It was so hard because I couldn't remember the word 'ice'. I showed my finger to a worker at [the dining services]. She tried to understand what I need. Then she could find for me the word 'ice'. I think I know so many words in English but when I was talking I can't find even really basic words.

Lily also expressed frustration in not understanding, "I didn't understand my RA's [resident assistant] English, and I was ashamed of saying 'SORRY?' all the time."

Kate and Ranpalee expressed their struggles with learning new terms. Kate said, "I'm struggling with these terms. Though it's in English. And, sometimes the typical word meaning is not the word, the exact meaning in econ. So, I'm just struggling hard to get those definitions." And when asked about advice she would give to a new student from her country, Ranpalee responded, "I think, actually, it's not an easy thing here. We have to study hard. Because the main thing is our languages are different from when we are doing something, because we have new words to learn and other things."

Finally, Susrutha and Almira mentioned American names. Susrutha was trying to describe the student who helped him at the writing services. He said he couldn't

105

remember that student's name and quickly added, "I'm not good with names." Almira

was trying to remember a student's name from her Speech Communication class. "I

can't remember. This is the main, the names of them. Really, I can't remember."

People's names are foreign to them.

Chapter IV was a presentation of the findings. Chapter V presents the

conclusions and recommendations.

106

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to discover what international students perceived as being important during their initial transition to a university in the United States, by examining their journals, observing their classes, and conducting multiple interviews during their first term at the university.

The previous chapters described the rationale for this study, the background of international education and international students within the United States, the methodology for this study, and the presentation of the findings. This chapter focuses on conclusions of this study and recommendations for students and institutions based on these results. This chapter concludes with recommendations for further study.

Summary of Findings

Through journals, observations, and interviews, seven international students at Midwestern State University provided their thoughts, experiences, and perceptions during their first term at an institution of higher education in the United States. The findings from the three different data sources and from the seven different students were consistent. During their first term in the U.S. university system, international students perceived a change in their level of dependency, sought advice from other international students, wanted to feel connected to others on-campus, and experienced differences, anticipated or not, in the educational system.

107

Assertion #1: International students perceived a change in their level of dependency.

Subassertion #1a: Students from "dependent" situations felt more independence.

Subassertion #1b: Students from "independent" situations felt more dependent.

Each of the seven international students spoke about their feelings of dependence and how that changed from their situation in their home countries. Five of the students came from more dependent situations. They relied heavily on family for money, clothes, food, cleaning, laundry and even transportation. These students expressed the feeling of independence they gained while being in the United States. They could no longer rely on family and friends for all of their needs and began to take an interest in providing for their own spending money. Being able to work helped them in this feeling of gaining independence. One of the students still spoke of her dependence on her boyfriend here for transportation to and from the university, but she did not attribute this to still being dependent upon someone. She had a job and was learning how to take care of herself and that added to her sense of independence.

The two students who came from independent situations (i.e., earned their own money, lived on their own) experienced a profound change in their own feelings of independence. During their first term in the United States, they no longer felt independent. One student described it as reverting back to being a child. Whenever she wanted to do something off-campus, for example go to the store or the post office, she needed to wait for someone else to take her. She did not feel comfortable in exploring the town by her self. This feeling of dependency was a major source of frustration for her.

108

Assertion #2: International students were more likely to listen to other students, especially from their home country, than seek assistance from university services or personnel.

When it came to finding a place to live, determining majors, or deciding which classes to take, the students in this study first sought the advice of other students. The students who had others from their home country on-campus or in the community sought advice from them first. For those international students who did not have someone from their home country, they sought the advice of other international students. When asked about seeking advice from faculty or campus support personnel, the international students did mention that was an option, but was not their first choice. They also said it was not always appropriate to approach university faculty or staff with questions or dilemmas (i.e., personal problems, roommate issues).

Assertion #3: International students wanted to feel connected.

Subassertion #3a: International students wanted connections with other international students and their home country.

Subassertion #3b: Connections with Americans helped international students feel welcome.

It was important for the international students in this study to keep and find connections to their home country. This was evidenced by the students talking about staying up late with other students from their home countries and discussing issues from back home, or connecting with other students and making traditional meals. For the student from Armenia, she spoke and wrote about connecting with an older community

109

member who was from her country. After meeting him, she realized how important that was to her to have that connection to home.

Likewise, the students spoke and wrote about meeting Americans and making friends. All were able to connect with at least one American, whether a student, professor, or staff member. Each of these connections helped the student feel more welcome and connected on-campus. One student spoke about how she felt when walking around campus, feeling ignored by American students, and how that made her feel unwelcome.

Assertion #4: International students did not fully anticipate the differences they would experience.

Subassertion #4a: International students experienced differences in teaching, including the use of technology.

Subassertion #4b: International students appreciated having friendly and approachable faculty.

Subassertion #4c: International students liked the concept of general education, although they struggled in non-major courses.

Subassertion #4d: International students struggled more with the language than they anticipated.

The international students spoke and wrote about the differences they encountered in the academic setting. They had heard stories and had an idea of what to expect in terms of differences. But even so, they were not completely prepared for the differences they experienced. The differences they encountered were the use of technology both in the classroom (i.e., powerpoint lectures) and outside (i.e., electronic classroom, posting of

110

lecture notes), small group work in the classroom, the approachability and friendliness of faculty, general education requirements, and the use of language. While these differences were not fully anticipated, the students did appreciate the use of technology, small group work, the approachability of faculty and the concept of general education. They struggled more with language than they anticipated and offered several suggestions to assist in this regard.

Discussion of Findings

The review of literature took place after the data were collected and analyzed. Three different areas of literature, student departure and retention, successful teaching and learning, and international student adjustment, were presented in Chapter 2 and are relevant to the findings of this study.

Tinto's (1987; 1993) theory describes factors in a student's decision to leave. These factors include pre-entry attributes, individual goals and commitments, and institutional experiences (both formal and informal academic and social interactions) which directly affect a student's social and academic integration. Some researchers on U.S. minority student retention (Kuh & Love, 2000; Rendón, Jalomo & Nora, 2000) call certain aspects of Tinto's theory into question, including his concept of adjustment. They argue that a cultural component needs to be addressed in looking at student retention. Effective teaching and learning can enhance academic integration. Chickering & Gamson (1987) offer seven principles of effective undergraduate teaching. Their recommendations, based on 50 years of research of U.S. classrooms, are based on the U.S. style of teaching and learning. It appears that international students may experience a larger negative impact when these principles are not followed.

111

The following section will link the findings of this study to Tinto's theory on student departure and retention, minority student retention theory, Chickering and Gamson's principles of effective teaching and learning, and international student adjustment.

Connections to Student Attrition and Retention

Academic and social integration is important in student retention (Tinto, 1993). Positive interactions enhances academic and social integration. Some of the situations or events that appear to influence student departure are adjustment, difficulty, incongruence, and isolation (Tinto, 1987). Tinto argued that difficulty in adjustment stemmed either from the student's inability to disassociate him or herself from past associations and patterns of behavior, or the adjustment to a more challenging social and academic environment. The assumption of having to disassociate oneself from his or her native culture has been called into question by Rendón, Jalomo, and Nora (2000) and Kuh and Love (2000). Instead of completely rejecting or disassociating from one's native culture, it is important to recognize that students need the connections with their home culture.

Assertion #3a (international students wanted connections with other international students and with their home country) is parallel to this aspect of minority student retention theory. Students cannot completely disassociate themselves from their native country. To do so would add to the students' feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Tinto (1987) refers to difficulty as the challenge in meeting academic standards. Difficulty in this sense does not seem to be an issue for international students. While previous studies found adjustment to the U.S. educational system to be challenging for international students (Zhai, 2002, Parr et al., 1992), it was not the difficulty as defined

112

by Tinto that was an issue. It was the differences in language and cultural assumptions about teaching and learning that led to academic challenges.

The results of this study are parallel to those done on international students (Zhai, 2002; Parr et al., 1992), and not Tinto's theory. The students in this study did not mention difficulties in academics, but did mention having to adjust to the differences in teaching styles, class structures, the pace of classes, and the language. Assertions #4a (international students experienced differences in teaching, including the use of technology) and #4d (International students struggled more with the language than they anticipated) are similar to these studies.

For Tinto (1987), incongruence refers to the lack of fit, or the mismatch, between the students' individual needs, interests and preferences and those of the institution. Tinto notes that students might feel incongruence with parts of the institution but may find pockets or groups where they feel compatible. Kuh and Luv (2000) expand on this concept in the minority student retention theory to state that students who belong to one or more enclaves or small groups in the culture of immersion are more likely to persist. One student in the study struggled with why she was here and whether this was the right place for her. These lingering thoughts had more to do with her language struggles and her feeling of dependency on others than to any feelings of incongruence to the school or her major. The other students in this study had strong feelings of congruence and spoke about how their study here would help them in securing employment or further education back home.

Isolation, for Tinto (1987), refers to the lack of contact between the student and others in the social and academic community. Armstrong-West and de la Teja (1988)

113

add that social factors such as institutional racism, monocultural curriculum, faculty expectations and attitudes, cultural conflicts, socialization and family support, and psychological factors such as the student's self-concept, self-esteem, and racial identity, are factors in minority student retention. This study found that feeling connected, whether to students from their home country, other international students, American students, or faculty, is very important to international students, and is consistent with Tinto's theory. Assertion #3 (international students wanted to feel connected), Assertion #4b (international students appreciated having friendly, approachable faculty) and Assertion #3b (connections with Americans helped international students feel welcome) are consistent with the idea that feeling connected is important for retention. Students also struggled with their own socialization and how to integrate into the university setting in the United States, which is parallel to Armstrong-West and de la Teja's research.

Connections to Student Success in the Learning Environment

Chickering and Gamson (1987) presented seven principles for good teaching: (1) encouraging contacts between students and faculty, (2) developing reciprocity and cooperation among students, (3) using active learning techniques, (4) giving prompt feedback, (5) emphasizing time on task, (6) communicating high expectations, and (7) respecting diverse talents and ways of learning. Of these seven principles, the international students in this study spoke of the importance of principles (1) encouraging contacts between students and faculty, (2) developing reciprocity and cooperation among students, and (3) using active learning techniques.

Student-faculty interactions are important. "She is like a mother to me." "He offered me to stay at his place." "He always asks me how's it going." "She remembers

114

my name." "I feel like I have a friend." These are just some of the comments made by the students in reference to their professors and academic advisors. It indicates the appreciation the students have for their interactions with the faculty, Assertion #4b (international students appreciated having friendly, approachable faculty), and is consistent with Chickering and Gamson's first principle of encouraging contacts between students and faculty.

Parallel to Chickering and Gamson's second and third principles (developing cooperation among students and using active learning techniques), the international students in this study told about how working in groups, preparing and giving presentations, and working on peer review projects added to their learning and interest in the subject matter, even though that was not something they were accustomed to doing. They were used to sitting in lectures and taking notes. They found this difference in teaching and learning to be beneficial to their own understanding of the materials.

Connections to Studies on International Student Adjustment

The results of this study are similar to several aspects of other studies conducted on international student adjustment. These areas included issues with language, academic adjustments, working, and sources of support.

Sandhu and Asrabadi (1991) noted that most difficulties with language were due to differences in accent, enunciation, slang, and use of special English words. Ranpalee spoke about the difficulties with the accent and with having to learn new, specialized words for some of her subjects. Shekar spoke about the "tune" of the English used here. Kate also spoke about having to learn new vocabulary, especially for her general

115

education courses. Assertion #4d (international students struggled more with the language than they anticipated) is parallel to these studies.

Parr, Bradley and Bingi's (1992) study found concerns about finances were focused more on work opportunities than on living expenses. Only one student in this study spoke about working for money to pay for food and rent. In delving deeper into this issue with her, Ranpalee spoke more about wanting to help her parents and not being a burden on them. She was very aware of the cost of her education and the cost of living in the United States. And even though her parents did not expect her to work, she feels an internal obligation to help out. Susrutha described it as a sort of peer pressure. He felt bad in asking his parents for entertainment money, especially when he saw his friends from the host country working and not asking for money from their parents. He said this idea rubs off. The other students spoke about work in terms of gaining experience for future careers and gaining some independence, not in terms of survival. The idea of working in this study is parallel to Parr, Bradley, and Bingi's findings and is included in Assertion #1a (Students from "dependent" situations felt more independence.").

The results of this study are consistent with the several studies that indicated that international students preferred to seek advice from family or friends (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002; Zhai, 2002; Johnson, 1993; Schneider & Spinler, 1986; Pederson, 1975). This study also indicates that the advice seeking is not just limited to family and friends, but to "seniors", those students from the same country who have been in the United States longer and are older, as well as other international students. Assertion 2 (International students were more likely to listen to other students, especially from their home country, than from university services or personnel) are similar to these findings.

116

Conclusions

International students experience many differences during their initial term at an institution of higher education in the United States. The students experienced a change in their level of dependency with students who were coming from more dependent living situations in their home countries feeling more independent while those coming from more independent situations feeling more dependent during their first term. All the international students in this study were more likely to first ask for advice from a fellow student than from university personnel. Making connections to their home culture either through other students on-campus, faculty members, community members, or staying connected to friends and family back home, were important to the students during their transition to the university. Having connections with American students and faculty helped the students feel welcome at the university, and, conversely, having students ignore or not respond to them made them feel alienated and unwelcome. And while they anticipated some differences such as the use of technology in the classroom, the students were not always ready for the degree of differences as Ranpalee noted about the language, "I didn't consider that the accent would be a factor before coming here." Even though the concept of general education courses was new to them, the international students felt that the philosophy behind them was good. The international students found many of the faculty to be friendly and approachable and they appreciated being able to talk to the professors outside of the classroom.

117

Recommendations

International students are not always aware of or ready for the transition to the academic and social life in the United States. To assist these students, institutions need to be aware of the experiences these students face and to provide adequate resources and programs to aid them in their transition. International students have far reaching impact on college campuses. They live in the residence halls. They eat at the dining services. They attend classes. They study in the library. They use the computer labs. They work out in the fitness center. They utilize the health service. They come in contact with a variety of individuals each day. Their interactions are institution wide. Thus, measures to assist these students should be institution wide.

The following is a set of recommendations that would assist international students in making a successful transition to new educational system, culture, language, and society.

Assertion #1: International students perceived a change in their level of dependency.

Subassertion #1a: Students from "dependent" situations felt more independence.

Subassertion #1b: Students from "independent" situations felt more dependent.

Being able to work was important for these international students. Working gave them a sense of independence and also increased their interactions with others (Assertions #1a and #3). Ranpalee spoke of her relationship with her supervisor and how her supervisor provided another level of support and connection for her. However, finding work on-campus is not easy. Therefore, it is recommended that the federal government ease working restrictions on international students by making it easier for them to work off-campus. Currently, international students are restricted to only being

118

able to work on-campus and only up to 20 hours per week during school and 40 hours a week during breaks. International students must obtain special permission to work off-campus. International students are required to be in their student status for one academic year before being eligible to apply for the special work permission. By working off-campus, these students would have a positive impact on the community in terms of the economy. Plus, being able to work off-campus would serve to enhance these students' experiences by extending their connections into the community and aiding in their social integration. It is also recommended that the President's Office at MSU do more to promote the hiring of international students and to create more regular-funded work opportunities for these students.

Assertion #2: International students were more likely to listen to other students, especially from their home country, than seek assistance from university services or personnel.

Since international students are more likely to seek assistance from students from their own country first and they want to feel connected to their homeland, International Programs should work at strengthening its peer programs. Currently, International Programs offers a peer-assisted orientation program. This program is designed to have current international and American students serve as Orientation Counselors. This program needs to be expanded to include more country representation and to run throughout the first semester. Also, for those countries not active in the formal program, some on-going training and mentoring programs should be developed on an informal basis. Since students are obtaining most of their assistance and information from peers,

119

their peers should be armed with appropriate information and resources to effectively aid the student.

Assertion #3: International students wanted to feel connected.

Subassertion #3a: International students wanted connections with other international students and their home country.

Subassertion #3b: Connections with Americans helped international students feel welcome.

Student Affairs can assist international students make a successful transition to the university setting by providing support and programs that encourage interaction between international students and their American counterparts.

Research shows that international students who have contact, support and friendships with host country nationals are better able to adjust to the new environment and experience less strain during their adjustment (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). However, as research suggests,

one of the biggest barriers to good relations between American and international students appear to be negative American attitudes toward international students, a relative lack of sensitivity by Americans to cultural differences and the international students' own isolation as foreigners (Lee, 1981). (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002, p. 472).

So, creating opportunities for international students to meet and interact with American students and providing cross-cultural skill building workshops for American students would help both sets of students to become aware of and more sensitive to other cultures and aid in the international student feeling welcome on-campus (Assertion #3b). Areas

120

where programming can occur include in the Residence Halls, the Office of Student

Activities, Campus Activities Board, campus organizations, leadership workshops,

student senate, dining services, orientation and new student registration, Homecoming,

and health services. Also, Residence Life should ensure careful selection and training of

roommates for the international students who will be living on-campus. Feeling welcome

and wanted in one's own room adds to feeling connected to others.

Assertion #4: International students did not fully anticipate the differences they would

experience.

      Subassertion #4a: International students experienced differences in teaching,

      including the use of technology.

      Subassertion #4b: International students appreciated having friendly and

      approachable faculty.

      Subassertion #4c: International students liked the concept of general education,

      although they struggled in non-major courses.

      Subassertion #4d: International students struggled more with the language than

      they anticipated.

      MnSCU should also take an active role in providing faculty development.

Faculty should be given opportunities to learn about the needs and cultural impact that

international students bring to the classroom and implications for teaching (Assertion #4).

For example, Littlemore (2001) refers to the difficulties that international students

experience in the classroom due to the fact that faculty "often assume shared knowledge

on the part of students" (p. 333). A study by Beyknot and Daiute (2002) addresses the

classroom inclusiveness issues around international students. The students in that study

121

wanted to participate more but found it difficult due to language and variations in learning. Students suggested that faculty begin the semester by outlining the "typically implicit expectations of American higher education classrooms to help students understand what is expected of them" (p. 39). Given this, faculty need to be aware of these expectations and how these assumptions vary across cultures. Also, faculty need to be aware of differences in thinking and communication and what impact that might have on their classes.

International Programs should do more to prepare students prior to their arrival about the differences in educational systems, appropriate classroom behaviors, and the use of technology. Some of this material can be sent in print to the student in a prearrival document. Another option to explore is a predeparture on-line orientation program. A program like that can provide a "virtual introduction to a campus and community and to the cultural mores of a country" (Murphy, Hawkes, & Law, 2002, p. 38).

Academic Affairs units need to look at the academic integration and continued support of the international student. The recommendations that follow address classroom needs, faculty development and language support programs. While some of these recommendations would benefit all students, there is a more severe negative impact on international students if not provided.

Classroom

Since international students experience differences in teaching and the use of technology (assertion #4a), faculty cannot take it for granted that international students have the same classroom expectations and technological savvy of their U.S. counterparts. International students are coming from different educational backgrounds and from

122

systems with various and, oftentimes, limited access to technology. Likewise, it should

not be assumed that students have the same broad-based academic preparation. Teaching

international students about the U.S. educational system, what to expect in the classroom,

and acceptable classroom behavior is just as important as the content area. Avoiding

slang or acronyms or providing handouts with definitions are useful additions for the

international students functioning in the class and help them in adjusting to the language.

Faculty should seek out and learn the names of the international students in their classes.

Although the international students expressed gratitude that faculty had office hours, they

did not seek faculty out until asked by faculty to do so. They also expressed concern in

asking questions during the class due to their perceived language skills and previous

educational experiences (Assertion #4d).

Another recommendation in conjunction with the classroom, is to offer a class

specifically for international students. This class would give students the opportunity to

meet other international students who are also making the transition to a new educational

system, culture, language, and society. This environment would allow the students to

discuss their transition and provide cultural and academic information. It would address

assertions #3 and #4 by helping the student make connections and providing academic

information to assist in their transition.

Faculty Development

Faculty are at the heart of the international student experience. They are a key

element in whether the international student makes a successful transition or not. While

the recommendations that follow are beneficial to all students, it may have a greater

impact on the successful transition of international students. Faculty should be

123

encouraged to foster relationships with students both inside and outside of the classroom (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Tinto, 1987). Several students in this study spoke about at least one professor with whom they felt connected, to whom they could go for assistance (Assertion #4b). Also, by providing prompt feedback in the classroom, faculty assist the international student building self-efficacy which aids in adjustment (Hechanova-Alampay et al., 2002). One way to encourage building these skills is to have faculty write them into their annual personal development plans.

Language Support

While it is required that all international students provide proof of English language proficiency to attend a university in the United States, students often face difficulties revolving around language when they arrive (Assertion #4d). International students are often expected to communicate at a similar level to native speakers and low "English communication skills are recognized as obstacles to student learning" (Soontiens, 2004, 302). The institution needs to provide opportunities outside of the classroom for these students to improve their English skills. Some examples of programs are "conversation partner" programs; workshops for students to learn slang and colloquialisms; writing assistance including information on how to write an academic paper in the United States and cite sources; and as Lily suggested, American study partners for their courses, someone who will share notes and answer questions about terminology for the course.

Recommendations for Further Study

This is an inductive qualitative study designed to elicit students perceptions about their experiences during their initial first term transition to the American university.

124

Many findings of this study confirmed aspects of other studies focusing on international students. However, the concept of dependency versus independency during the international student adjustment process has not been noted in the other studies. This may be due in part to the research design of the studies. The studies done on international student adjustment, transition and even needs assessments of international students were either quantitative in nature, using surveys or questionnaires to collect data or used a set research guide to elicit responses. For example, the qualitative study by Zhai (2002) limited the scope of information given by using questions such as "What are the most important adjustment problems you encountered after you came to the United States? Please list two." Using the multiple interview technique combined with journals allowed for students to share what was important to them. Likewise, student development theory to date has not adequately addressed this concept. The sample was small and no conclusions should be made from this finding until further research is conducted.

Further studies on international student retention in the light of minority student retention theory and of student success theory are also recommended to validate the findings in this study. Also, to assist in gaining wider representation of nationalities, students could be encouraged to keep an audio journal as opposed to a written one.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to conduct follow-up studies. The students involved in this study were successful and continued in their studies at MSU. One question that arose was to what extent did the international students' participation in the study impact their success at MSU? Further research into the impact of participating in a research study on student success would be useful.

125

Final Thoughts

So, how do institutions ensure the future success of international students as they make the transition to a new educational system? First, institutions need to provide as much information as they can to students prior to their arrival about what they can expect in terms of academic structure, registration process, academic advisors, and daily living including health services, food options, housing and weather.

Upon arrival, students need to be given extra assistance during the registration process and given ample opportunities to discuss classroom behavior, teaching styles, writing expectations, and study requirements. These concepts need to be given more than just one time. Faculty and academic advisors should be encouraged to seek out the international students and make a special effort to connect with them. These students will not always turn to their professors and will most likely wait until the professor encourages interactions.

English assistance needs to be offered at a variety of levels, including those who only need assistance with vocabulary to those who need more help with grammar and structuring a paper for the American classroom. Keeping a journal for English learning purposes have been found to be helpful in language acquisition (Kirshnan & Hoon, 2002) and can be incorporated into classes.

Opportunities for interactions between international students and American students need to be provided. Students who feel connected to others are more likely to stay in school. International students may feel shy and timid about their own language ability and may not know how to approach American students.

126

Finally, these efforts cannot come only out of one office. Many institutions have an office or a person who is "in charge" of international students on-campus. While it is a federal requirement to have someone on-campus designated to assist these students in their immigration matters, the recommendations above cannot fall solely on that person or office. In order to truly ensure the success of international students, the whole campus needs to get involved. Faculty and students have daily interaction with international students, while international program offices tend to see the students only when there is an emergency or an immigration issue to be discussed. There is a far greater chance for impact from faculty and students. So, as the world goes to college, all aspects of the institution need to be involved with fostering positive interactions and relationships with international students.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Kimberly Gillette, a doctoral student at the University of North Dakota, examining the impact international students have on faculty teaching. Data gathered from this study will culminate in a dissertation leading to a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership.

You will be asked to participate in one interview lasting approximately one hour. Interviews will be taped, transcribed without your name or any identification that could identify you, and archived in electronic format (CD-ROM). CD-ROMS will be kept in a locked and secure area in the researchers home and will be destroyed three years after the completion of the study. Once transcribed and verified, all tapes will be erased. Only the investigator will have access to the files. Your signed consent form will be stored in a separate, secure, location from the data in the investigator's home. Likewise, the consent form will be destroyed three years after the completion of the study.

Your decision to take part in this research study is entirely voluntary. You may decline to be interviewed or decline to answer any specific questions. There is minimal risk that could result from this study. Strict safeguards will be followed to ensure full confidentiality is maintained. You may withdraw from this study at any time prior to the publication of work.

Should you have any questions at any time about the nature of this study and the use of your responses, please contact Kimberly Gillette or Dr. Katrina Meyer at (701) 777-3452. If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact the Office of Research and Program Development at (701) 777-4279.

-- ---

I have read the above description of this research study. I have been informed of the risks and benefits involved, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. Furthermore, I have been assured that a member of the research team will also answer any future questions I may have. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. I will retain a copy of this consent form for my records.

_____   _____
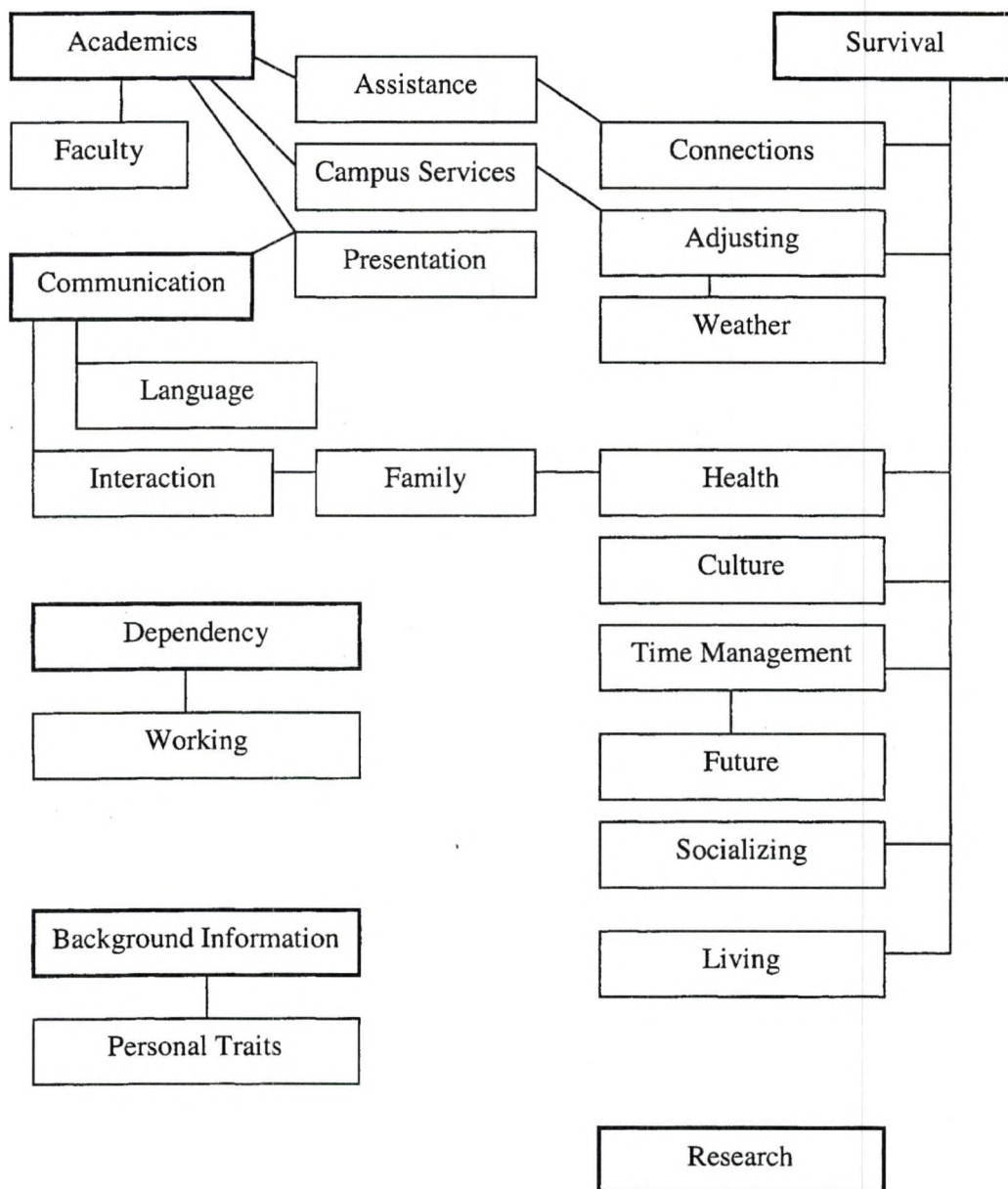
Signature   Date

129

APPENDIX B

CODE LIST

International Office	
Health Center	
Library	
Legal	Campus Services
Supplemental Instruction	
Write Site	
Orientation	
Campus Tour	

Cultural Norms	
On own	
Equal	Culture
Gender	
Marriage	

Exams	
Class	
Class Materials	
Class Size	
Class Problems	
Classmates	
General Education	
Education	
Cheating	
Not Challenging	
Grades	
Honors	
Groups	
Group Study	
Homework	Academics
Internet	
Studying	
Plagiarism	
Compare Education	
Comparing Study	
Confusion	
Major	
Registration	
Technology	

Personal traits	
Care for others	Personality

Halloween	
Invite	
Socialize	
Party	
Visit	Socialize
Shopping	
Travel	
Compare Visiting	

Interaction	
Meeting People	
Student Interactions	Interactions
Friends	

Ask Me	
Interviewer Error	
Research Concern	
Journal	Research
Confirm	
Counsel	
Interviewer Advice	

Compare Housing	
Comparing Living	
Cooking	
Food	Living
Housing	
Living	
Roommate	

Faculty Accommodation	
Faculty Address	
Faculty Help	
Faculty Interaction	
Faculty Qualities	
Faculty Relationships	
Faculty	
Effective	Faculty
Office Hours	
Teaching	
Teaching Skills	
Advisor	

130

Left column

Items	Category
Cry, Sad, Homesick, Regret, Nervous, Miss Family, Sleepy, Health, Smoke, Sport, Emotions, Happy, Stress, Cheated	Health
Career, Future, Future?	Future
Accent, English, Language, Names, Understand, Writing	Language
Adjusting, Expectations, Improve, Visa (immigration), Banking	Adjusting
Schedule, Time Management, Busy	Time Management
Advice (Friends), Country Friends, Help	Assistance
Working, Money	Working

Right column

Items	Category
Background, Major	Information
Connection, Theater, Suggestion, Alien, Alone, Lonely, Isolation, Unconnected	Connections
Clarify, Communication, Email, Family Communication, Friendly, Faculty Communication, Lack of Communication, Miscommunication	Communication
Childlike, Dependent, Helpless, Guidance, Lost, Taker, Transportation, Independent, On Own, Self-reliant	Dependency
Discourage, Family, Encourage, Cared For, Home, Obligation, Siblings, Relationships	Family
Weather	Weather
Presentations	Presentations

131

CLUSTERS TO CATEGORIES

Academics	**Survival**
Assistance	
Faculty	Connections
Campus Services	
Adjusting	
Presentation	
Communication	Weather
Language	
Interaction	Family	Health
	Culture
Dependency	Time Management
Working	Future
	Socializing
Background Information	Living
Personal Traits	
	Research

132

COMPLETE CODE AND CATEGORY LIST

Academics	Class	Class matters
		Class size
		Classmates
		Class problems
		Technology
		Confusion
		Exams
		Not challenging
		Plagiarism
		Faculty accommodation
		Groups
		Cheating
	Education	Compare education
		General Studies
		Grades
		Honors
		Major
		Registration
	Study	Internet
		Group Study
		Homework
		Compare Study
	Resources	Advice
		Library
		Office Hours
		Orientation
		Supplemental Instruction
		Write Site
	Faculty	Advisor
		Effective
		Faculty Address
		Faculty Help
		Faculty Interactions
		Faculty Qualities
		Faculty Relationship
		Teaching

133

Survival			
	Time Management	Busy	
		Future?	
		Schedule	
	Socialize	Compare Visiting	
		Halloween	
		Host Family	
		Invitations	
		Party	
		Shopping	
		Travel	
	Health	Cheated	
		Cry	
		Emotions	
		Happy	
		Homesick	
		Lonely	
		Miss Family	
		Nervous	
		Regret	
		Sad	
		Health Center	
		Sleepy	
		Smoke	
		Sport	
		Stress	
	Living	Compare Housing	
		Compare Living	
		Cooking	
		Food	
		Housing	
		Roommate	
	Connections	Connection	Theater
			Suggestions
			Presentations
		Family	Obligation
			Relationship
			Siblings
		Country Friends	
		Unconnected	Alien
			Alone
			Isolation
	Adjusting	Banking	
		Barriers	
		Expectations	

134

		Improve	
		Religion	
		Visa (Immigration)	
		Campus tour	
		Weather	
Communication	Clarify		
	Email		
	Faculty Communication		
	Family Communication	Discourage	
		Encourage	
		Home	
	Friendly		
	Difficulties	Lack of Communication	
		Miscommunication	
		Language	Accent
			English
			Names
			Understanding
			Writing
	Interaction	Friends	
		Meeting People	
		Student Interactions	
Dependency	Dependent	Childlike	
		Guidance	
		Helpless	
		Lost	
		Cared For	
		Taker	
	Independent	On Own	
		Self Reliant	
	Transportation		
	Working		
	Money		
	Culture	Cultural Norms	
		Equal	
		Gender	
		Marriage	
Background Information	Personal traits	Care for others	
Research	Ask me		
	Confirm		
	Counseling		
	Interviewer advice		
	Interviewer error		
	Journal		
	Research concern		

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Adler, P. (1975). The transitional experience: An alternative view of culture shock. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 15*, 13-23.

Agarwal, V., & Winkler, D. (1985). Migration of foreign students to the United States. *Journal of Higher Education, 56*(5), 509-522.

Allport, G. (1942). *Use of personal documents in psychological science.* New York: Social Science Research Council.

Altbach, P., & Peterson, P. (1998). Internationalize American higher education? Not exactly. *Change, 30*(4), 36-40.

Altbach, P., Kelly, D., & Lulat, Y. (1985). *Research on foreign students and international study: An overview and bibliography.* New York: Praeger.

American Council on Education. (1982). *Foreign students and institutional policy toward an agenda for action.* Washington, DC: Author.

American Council on Education. (1995). *Educating Americans for a world in flux: Ten ground rules for internationalizing higher education.* Washington, DC: Author.

American Council on Education & Commission on International Education. (1998). *Educating for global competence: America's passport to the future.* Washington DC: American Council on Education.

Anderson, E. (1985). Forces influencing student persistence and achievement. In L. Noel, R. Levitz, D. Saluri, & Associates (Eds.), *Increasing student retention: Effective programs and practices for reducing the dropout rate* (pp. 44-61). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Anderson, J., & Powell, R. (1991). Intercultural communication in the classroom. In L. Samovar & R. Porter (Eds.), *Intercultural communication: A reader* (6th ed., pp. 208-214). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Armstrong-West, S., & de la Teja, M. (1988). Social and psychological factors affecting the retention of minority students. In M. Terrell & D. Wright (Eds.), *From survival to success: Promoting minority student retention* (Monograph Series Vol. 9, pp. 25-54). Washington, DC: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Arum, S., & Van de Water, J. (1992). The need for a definition of international education in U.S. universities. In C. Klasek (Ed.), *Bridges to the Future: Strategies for internationalizing higher education* (pp. 191-203). Carbondale, IL: Association of International Education Administrators.

Attinais, L., Jr. (1989). Getting in: Mexican Americans' perceptions of university attendance and the implications for freshman year persistence. *Journal of Higher Education, 60*(3), 247-277.

Bean, J. (1982). Conceptual models of student attrition: How theory can help the institutional researcher. In E. Pascarella (Ed.), *Studying student attrition: New directions for institutional research* (No. 36, pp. 17-33). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

138

Bender, D. (Ed.). (1995). *Immigration policy*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press.

Beykont, Z., & Daiute, C. (2002, April). Inclusiveness in higher education courses: International student perspectives. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 35*(1), 35-42.

Black, J., & Mendenhall, M. (1990). The u-curve adjustment hypothesis revisited: A review and theoretical framework. *Journal of International Business Studies, 22*, 113-136.

Black, J., Mendenhall, M., & Oddou, G. (1991). Toward a comprehensive model of international adjustment: An integration of multiple theoretical perspectives. *Academy of Management Journal, 16*, 291-317.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (1998). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Borg, W., & Gall, M. (1989). *Beyond borders: A model for student and staff development* (5th ed.). New York: Longman.

Brickman, W. (1965). Historical development of governmental interest in international higher education. In S. Fraser (Ed.), *Governmental policy and international education* (pp. 17-46). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Brubacher, J., & Rudy, W. (1999). *Higher education in transition* (4th ed.). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Chernin, M., & Goldsmith, R. (1986). Family day: An event to improve student retention. *Journal of College Student Personnel, 27*(4), 364-365.

Chickering, A., & Gamson, Z. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin, 39*(7), 3-7.

139

Choy, S. (2002). *Access & persistence: Findings from 10 years of longitudinal research on students.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Christie, R., & Ragans, S. (1999). Beyond borders: A model for student and staff development. In J. Dalton (Ed.), *Beyond borders: How international developments are changing student affairs practice* (New Directions for Student Services, Vol. 86, pp. 79-87). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Church, A. (1982). Sojourner adjustment. *Psychological Bulletin, 91*(3), 540-572.

Clinton, W. (2000, April). *Memorandum for the heads of executive departments and agencies.* Washington, DC: White House.

Cope, R. (1978). Why students stay, why they leave. In L. Noel (Ed.), *Reducing the dropout rate* (New Directions for Student Services, Vol. 3, pp. 1-11). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cope, R., & Hannah, W. (1975). *Revolving college doors: The causes and consequences of dropping out, stopping out, and transferring.* New York: Wiley & Sons.

Craig, B. (1981). Variations and themes in international education. *Educational Record, 62*(1), 41-46.

Creswell, J. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Daines, J. (1998, December). *International programs and services in MnSCU: Survey results.* St. Paul: Minnesota State Colleges & Universities.

Daines, J. (2003, June). *International programs and services in MnSCU: Survey results 2003.* St. Paul: Minnesota State Colleges & Universities.

140

Darvill, A. (2003, June). Testing the water – Problem-based learning and the cultural

dimension. *Nurse Education in Practice, 3*(2), 72-79.

Denzin, N. (1989). *The research act* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Department of State. (n.d.). *Foreign students yesterday, world leaders today.*

Washington, DC: Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Retrieved on

March 3, 2005, from http://exchanges.state.gov/education/educationusa/

leaders.htm

Donovan, R. (1982). *Tumultuous years: The presidency of Harry S. Truman 1949-1953.*

New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

DuBois, C. (1956). *Foreign students and higher education in the United States.*

Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Eddy, M. (1979). *Foreign students in the United States: Is the welcome mat out?*

Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education. (ERIC

Document Reproduction Service No. ED165524)

Edwards, J., & Tonkin, H. (1990). Internationalizing the community college: Strategies

for the classroom. In R. Greenfield (Ed.), *Developing international education

programs* (New Directions for Community Colleges, Vol. 70, 17-26). San

Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Eisenhart, M., & Howe, K. (1992). Validity in education research. In M. LeCompte, W.

Millroy, & J. Preissle (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research in education*

(pp. 644-680). New York: Academic Press.

141

Ellingboe, B. (1998). Divisional strategies to internationalize a campus portrait: Results, resistance, and recommendations from a case study at a U.S. university. In J. Mestenhauser & B. Ellingboe (Eds.), *Reforming the higher education curriculum: Internationalizing the campus* (pp. 198-228). Phoenix: American Council on Education/ORYX Press.

Emerson, R., Fretz, R., & Shaw, L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Falnes, O. (1952). The UNRRA fellowships program. *Journal of Higher Education, 23*(6), 303-307, 343.

Feinberg, B. (2002, May 3). What students don't learn abroad. *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* p. B20.

Fleischman, P. (1997). *Seedfolks.* New York: Joanna Cotler Books.

Gardner, J. (2001, Fall). Focusing on the first-year student. *Priorities, 17,* 1-15.

Glesne, C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers.* New York: Longman.

Guerrant, E. (1950). *Roosevelt's good neighbor policy.* Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press.

Harrison, J., Chadwick, M., & Scales, M. (1996). The relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and the personality variables of self-efficacy and self-monitoring. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 22*(2), 7-16.

142

Hechanova-Alampay, R., Beehr, T., Christiansen, N., & Van Horn, R. (2002, November). Adjustment and strain among domestic and international student sojourners: A longitudinal study. *School Psychology International, 23*(4), 458-474.

Horn, L. (1998, September). *Stopouts or stayouts? Undergraduates who leave college in their first year* (NCES No. 1999-087). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Hurtado, S., & Carter, D. (1997). *College transition, campus racial climate: Perceptions and sense of belonging among Latino college students.* Unpublished manuscript.

Institute of International Education. (n.d.). *A brief history of IIE.* Retrieved October 3, 2001, from http://www.iie.org/Content/NavigationMenu/About_IIE/History_of_IIE/History_of_IIE.htm

Institute of International Education. (n.d.). *Fulbright program overview.* Retrieved October 3, 2001, from http://www.iie.org/FulbrightTemplate.cfm?Section=Fulbright_Program_Overview

Institute of International Education. (n.d.). *Regional academic mobility program.* Retrieved October 3, 2001, from http://www.iie.org/Template.cfm?&Template=/programs/ramp/overview.htm

Institute of International Education. (2000). *Open doors: Report on international educational exchange.* New York: Author.

Institute of International Education. (2002). *Open doors: Report on international educational exchange.* New York: Author.

143

Institute of International Education. (2003). *Open doors: Report on international education exchange.* New York: Author.

Institute of International Education. (2004). *Open doors: Report on international education exchange.* New York: Author.

Jenkins, S. (2000). Cultural and linguistic miscues: A case study of international teaching assistant and academic faculty miscommunication. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 24,* 477-501.

Johnson, K. A. (1993, April). *Q-methodology: Perceptions of international student services in higher education.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta, GA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED363550)

Johnson, V. (2003, April 11). The perils of homeland security: When we hinder foreign students and scholars, we endanger our national security. *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* pp. B7-B9.

Jones, Z. L. (2002). Organizational strategies for internationalization: A case study of the University of Alberta (Doctoral thesis, University of Alberta). *Dissertation Abstracts International.* (UMI No. 0-612-68585-3).

Jorgensen, D. (1989). *Participant observation: A methodology for human studies.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Kagan, H., & Cohen, J. (1990). Cultural adjustment of international students. *Psychological Science, 1*(2), 133-137.

Kirshnan, L., & Hoon, L. (2002, July). Diaries: Listening to "voices" from the multicultural classroom. *ELT Journal, 56*(3), 227-239.

Klinger, M. (1965). The development of the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs from "idea to institution." In S. Fraser (Ed.), *Governmental policy and international education* (pp. 89-108). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Kuh, G. (2001). *Improving the college experience: National benchmarks of effective educational practice, NSSE 2001 report.* Bloomington, IN: National Survey of Student Engagement.

Kuh, G., & Love, P. (2000). A cultural perspective on student departure. In J. Braxton (Ed.), *Reworking the student departure puzzle* (pp. 196-212). Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Kuh, G., & Whitt, E. (1988). *The invisible tapestry: Culture in American colleges and universities* (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Rep. No. 1). Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Lancy, D. (1993). *Qualitative research in education.* White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing Group.

Lebowitz, L. (2002). A summary of the changes in immigration policies and practices after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001: The USA Patriot Act and other measures. *University of Pittsburgh Law Review, 63*(4), 873-888.

Lee, M., Abd-Ella, M., & Burks, L. (1981). *Needs of foreign students from developing nations at U.S. colleges and universities.* Washington, DC: National Association for Foreign Student Affairs.

Leigh, J., Howarth, M., & Devitt, P. (in press). The role of the lecturer practitioner: An exploration of the stakeholders and practitioners perspective. *Nurse Education in Practice.*

145

Lengyel, E. (1947). International education as an aid to world peace. *Journal of Educational Sociology, 20*(9), 562-570.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Littlemore, J. (2001, July). The use of metaphor in university lectures and the problems that it causes for overseas students. *Teaching in Higher Education, 6*(3), 333-349.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1999). *Designing qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Maxwell, J. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review, 62*(3), 279-299.

Maxwell, J. (1996). *Qualitative research design.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Mayer, C. (1969). *German recovery and the Marshall Plan, 1948-1952.* New York: Edition Atlantic Forum.

Maykut, P., & Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning qualitative research.* Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.

Mazzarol, T., & Soutar, G. (2002). "Push-pull" factors influencing international student destination choice. *The International Journal of Educational Management, 16*(2), 82-90.

McMillan, J., & Schumacher, S. (1989). *Research in education: A conceptual introduction* (2nd ed.). Glenview, IL: Harper Collins Publishers.

Merriam, S. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

146

Mestenhauser, J. (1988). Portraits of an international curriculum: An uncommon multidimensional perspective. In J. Mestenhauser & B. Ellingboe (Eds.), *Reforming the higher education curriculum: Internationalizing the campus* (pp. 3-39). Phoenix: American Council on Education/ORYX Press.

Meth, P. (2003, June). Entries and omissions: Using solicited diaries in geographical research. *Area (London, England; 1969), 35*(2), 195-205.

Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. (n.d.). *History and governance.* St. Paul: Author. Retrieved April 7, 2005, from http://www.mnscu.edu/about/historygovern.html

Mitrano, T. (2003). *Taking the mystique out of the USA Patriot Act: Information, process, and protocol.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University. Retrieved October 22, 2003, from http://www.cit.cornell.edu/oit/PatriotAct/article.html

Moxley, D., Najor-Durack, A., & Dumbrigue, C. (2001). *Keeping students in higher education: Successful practices & strategies for retention.* London: Kogan Page.

Munro, B. (1980). Dropouts from nursing education. *Nursing Research, 29,* 371-377.

Murphy, C., Hawkes, L, & Law, J. (2002, Spring). How international students can benefit from a web-based college orientation. In B. W. Speck & B. H. Carmical (Eds.), *Internationalizing higher education: Building vital programs on campuses* (New Directions for Higher Education, No. 117, 36-43). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

147

Myers, A. (1942). The democratic ideal of equality of education and equality of opportunity. *Journal of Educational Sociology, 16*(1), 3-14.

NAFSA Association of International Educators. (2003, January). *In America's interest: Welcoming international students: Report of the Strategic Task Force on International Student Access.* Washington, DC: Author.

NAFSA Association of International Educators & Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange. (2003, May). *Toward an international education policy for the United States: International education in an age of globalism and terrorism.* Washington, DC: Author.

Nicholson, M. W. (2001, April). *Adaptation of Asian students to American culture.* South Bend: Indiana University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED453751)

Noel, L. (1985). Increasing student retention: New challenges and potential. In L. Noel, R. Levitz, D. Saluri, & Associates (Eds.), *Increasing student retention: Effective programs and practices for reducing the dropout rate* (pp. 1-26). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Parr, G., Bradley, L., & Bingi, R. (1992). Concerns and feelings of international students. *Journal of College Student Development, 33*, 20-25.

Pascarella, E. (1980). Student-faculty informal contact and college outcomes. *Review of Educational Research, 50*, 545-595.

Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (1977). Patterns of student-faculty informal interaction beyond the classroom and voluntary freshman attrition. *Journal of Higher Education, 5*, 540-552.

148

Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (1983). Predicting voluntary freshman year persistence/withdrawal behavior in a residential university: A path analytic validation of Tinto's model. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 75*, 215-226.

Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (1991). *How college affects students.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Peace Corps. (2004, December). *Peace Corps fact sheet 2005.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved March 7, 2005, from http://www.peacecorps.gov/about/pdf/pc_facts.pdf

Pederson, P. (1975). Personal problem solving resources used by University of Minnesota foreign students. In R. Brislin (Ed.), *Topics in cultural learning 3* (pp. 55-65). Honolulu: East-West Center.

Pederson, P. (1991). Counseling international students. *The Counseling Psychologist, 19*, 240-245.

Ponce, F. (1988). Minority student retention: A moral and legal imperative. In M. Terrell & D. Wright (Eds.), *From survival to success: Promoting minority student retention* (Monograph Series Vol. 9, pp. 1-24). Washington, DC: National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Price, H. (1955). *The Marshall Plan and its meaning.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Rajapaksa, S., & Dundes, L. (2002). It's a long way home: International student adjustment to living in the United States. *College Student Retention, 4*(1), 15-28.

149

Rendón, L., Jalomo, R., & Nora, A. (2000). Theoretical considerations in the study of minority student retention in higher education. In J. Braxton (Ed.), *Reworking the student departure puzzle* (pp. 127-156). Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Robinson, J. (1992, October). *International students and American university culture: Adjustment issues.* Paper presented at the meeting of the Washington Area Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Arlington, VA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 350968)

Rossman, G., & Rallis, S. (1998). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rubin, H., & Rubin, I. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sandhu, D., & Asrabadi, B. (1991). *An assessment of psychological needs of international students: Implications for counseling and psychotherapy.* Reno, NV: American Association for Counseling and Development. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED350550)

Schneider, L. J., & Spinler, D. G. (1986, August). *Help-giver preference patterns in American and international Asian students.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED272794)

Schoorman, D. (2000). *Internationalization: The challenge of implementing organizational rhetoric.* Boca Raton: Department of Teacher Education, Florida Atlantic University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED444427)

Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Sootiens, W. (2004). When in Rome ... the realities of skill development in an "Anglo" educational environment. *Journal of Research in International Education, 3*(3), 301-318.

Spaulding, S., & Flack, M. (1976). *The world's students in the United States: A review and evaluation of research on foreign students.* New York: Praeger.

Stafford, T., Jr., Marion, P., & Salter, M. (1980). Adjustment of international students. *NASPA Journal, 18*(1), 40-45.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sullivan, G. (1964). *The story of the Peace Corps.* New York: Fleet Publishing Corporation.

Terenzini, P., & Pascarella, E. (1977). Voluntary freshman attrition and patterns of social and academic integration in a university: A test of a conceptual model. *Research in Higher Education, 6*, 25-43.

Tierney, W. (1992). An anthropological analysis of student participation in college. *Journal of Higher Education, 63*(6), 603-618.

151

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research, 45,* 89-125.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college* (2nd ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (1998). Colleges as communities: Taking research on student persistence seriously. *The Review of Higher Education, 21*(2), 167-177.

Udoh, B. (2000). *Cultural adjustment of foreign students in an institution of higher education* (Doctoral dissertation, Louisiana State University). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED464560)

Ueda, R. (1994). *Postwar immigrant America: A social history.* Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). *Census 2000.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved April 7, 2005, from http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

U.S. Department of Education. (2000, November 11). *Strengthening the U.S. government's leadership in promoting international education: A discussion paper.* Retrieved April 7, 2005, from http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/ discussion_paper.html

U.S. Department of Education & The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. (1999). *Program for North American mobility in higher education.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Van Gennep, A. (1960). *The rites of passage* (M. Vizedome & G. Caffee, Trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

152

Wirt, J., Choy, S., Rooney, P., Provasnik, S., Sen, A., & Tobin, R. (2004). *The condition of education 2004* (NCES No. 2004-077). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Wray, H. (1981). Abroad in the U.S.: Foreign students on American campuses. *Educational Record, 62*(3), 68-71.

Zhai, L. (2002). *Studying international students: Adjustment issues and social support.* San Diego: Office of Institutional Research, San Diego Community College District. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 474481)