International Students in a University Environment: Transitional Experience and Residence Life

A Thesis

Submitted to Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Vocational/Technical Education

University of Regina

Judith Amundson
Regina, Saskatchewan
November, 1999

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-54685-3

Canada

ABSTRACT

Residence life can play a critical role in developing a living environment which supports and enhances the educational experience of residence students. In addition to relating to a new learning environment, international students face the challenges in adapting to a new culture and language. To effectively contribute to this educational experience, residence professionals must understand the complex developmental adjustments students undergo as they arrive on campus. Through the varied experience accounts of international students themselves, the purpose of the study was to explore the meaning of transition into a new culture and learning environment as well as the adjustments to academic, social and emotional life encountered by impatriate international students living in residence. It was expected that further understanding would be gained as to how these expressed needs and underlying issues can be better accommodated through innovative programming or other responses to enhance the on-campus residential experience of impatriate students. A literature review was completed in order to gain insights into relevant theoretical writings and models.

Drawing from the University of Regina residence population, interview data were collected from a sample of eight students. Respondents were selected on the basis they were international students living in residence and in their first year studying abroad outside their home country. The eight respondents were all young adults in their twenties and for whom English was not their first language.

A narrative approach was selected to enable issues and themes to evolve from the participants' rich and varied experiences. Therefore, data collection included the use of minimally structured in-depth individual interviews which became part of a narrative record. Each respondent was interviewed twice, with the second interview providing the student with opportunity to confirm or embellish upon themes and issues gleaned from the first interview.

Upon review and analysis, the researcher identified five essential themes emerging from these experience accounts, including: 1) the decision to study abroad; 2) personal development, moving toward adulthood; 3) cross-cultural adjustment and social interaction; 4) cultural integration and adjustment; and 5) choosing the residence

experience. The study further identified 14 findings from these transition experiences which have important implications for residence and other university professionals in better meeting the needs of impatriate students, as well as enhancing the learning experience for the general university community.

On-campus residence provides a wealth of opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular, social and educational activities to enhance the mutual benefits of sharing experiences with students from different cultures. The study found impatriate students in residence possess an experience base on which further learning can be grounded. Their diverse experiences and backgrounds provide excellent opportunities for shared learning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Rationale

A stronger emphasis on global awareness, international trade and intercultural relationships calls for Canada's post-secondary institutions to enhance their programming by developing a multifaceted institutional effort that provides programs, services and activities for a broader spectrum of clientele. By increasing the international and multicultural focus on campus, institutions can benefit a diverse body of students, faculty, and the communities they serve. In facing the challenges of globalization in the university, the responsibility for promotion of multiculturalism on campus is typically assigned to special program or student service areas. These areas include university residences, which offer students the most intense and encompassing university experience.

The transition to post-secondary education for students involves social, emotional and academic adjustments which are seen as normal, but often stressful, life processes. New students are confronted by a variety of developmental issues involving changes in identity, family support networks, academic challenges, social life and personal freedoms.

Developmental theory provides one of several lenses to analyze and understand life events, and it is more universal to the general student population than culture specific. Levinson (1978) studied men's lives from the ages of 18 to 47 and asserted that adults develop by periods with each period engaging in specific tasks. The life course follows a basic life cycle and the journey from birth to old age typically follows a universal pattern within which there are cultural and individual variations. A crucial turning point in the life cycle is the period bridging adolescence to early adulthood, occurring between ages 17 to 22.

Similar to Levinson, Sheehy (1976) explores adult development for both men and women. Sheehy identified the Pulling Up Roots passage (ages 18 to 22) as the time when a person is in transit between the intimate circle of family and the adult world.

Developmental tasks during this passage include locating oneself in a peer group, sex role

and anticipated occupation, and developing a worldview.

Donald Super, a prominent theorist in the field of career development and choice,

also supports developmental theory in his concept of life stages (in Salomone,1996).

Super connects life stages to vocational phases and tasks, and he placed value on

transition.

Kenny and Perez (1996) suggested that the developmental process becomes even

more stressful when combined with dramatic socio-cultural change facing international

students. Feelings of isolation, alienation and lack of support can be greatest for those

students located in environments where the predominate racial and ethnic culture differs

from the student's own culture. Studies by Kenny and Perez (1996) show a positive

correlation between social integration into campus community and academic success.

The development and promotion of multicultural initiatives constitutes a large, but

necessary assignment; yet, many institutions overemphasize the importance of academic

and intellectual skills to the detriment of emotional, social and personal development

(Heaps et al., 1993). It is in bridging this gap between academic and personal life that

residence staff can play critical roles in developing living environments which support and

enhance the educational success of residence students. To successfully develop programs

and training opportunities, professional staff must understand the adjustments new

students undergo as they arrive on campus and move through, especially during their first

year. International students, in particular, face additional challenges in adapting to a new

culture and language, and relating to a new learning environment.

Mission statements for residences in a university or college setting typically include

an aim to provide a safe, secure and comfortable living environment conducive to student

academic, social and personal growth. The presence of such statements is important

because living in residence provides a wealth of opportunities for participating in extra-

curricular, social and educational activities and sharing experiences with students from

different cultures. Stage and Hamrick (1994) state that, by recruiting and admitting students of diverse backgrounds, institutions have accepted a moral responsibility to create and maintain an environment that maximizes the opportunities for them.

The field of Adult Education provides some guiding principles related to residential education and programming (Herr, 1991), with the first principle being that students in residence possess experience bases on which further learning can be grounded. Another principle is that meeting people with diverse backgrounds and experiences presents an excellent opportunity for shared learning (e.g., developing concepts, acceptance, communication) and acts as a catalyst for creative and diverse program development by the host institution. The content and format of programs can also take an andragogical approach whereby the role of the residential educator becomes one of coaching and helping students learn, rather than transmitting information (Herr, 1991). From Herr's perspective, today's residence professionals need to build a responsive environment which is based on andragogical principles of development and actively promote discussion and programming efforts respecting diversity issues and multiculturalism.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore the meaning of transition into, and adjustment to, academic, social and emotional life for impatriate international students living in a residence setting. University residences are an integral part of universities and have traditionally housed both international and Canadian students. My own work as a residence professional includes being responsible for planning, developing, supervising and evaluating of all aspects of residence life in one of three residences at the University of Regina where international students make up approximately half of the total resident population. My experience managing a residence has provided a unique opportunity to observe the needs and issues faced by international students upon their arrival at the

residence, and as they adjust to life in a new academic setting, city and culture. To gain further understanding as to how those needs and issues can be best accommodated, either through programming or other responses to residence life, the researcher decided to focus her thesis on this topic.

The focus of the study on the transitional experiences of international students is a result of the my personal observations and experiences in my position as residence manager. Shortly into my first year as residence manager, I encountered many international students facing a variety of challenges upon their arrival in a new country and environment, and having a great deal of difficulty in adjusting to academic and residence life. Some of these difficulties led to attempting suicide, acting out using physical aggression, problems communicating and withdrawing socially. It was also apparent there were considerable differences amongst international students in accessing social support networks at the university, in residence, and in the broader community. Some international students, for example, quickly became part of a support network in residence because of religious affiliation, country of origin or choice of academic program. Other international students seemed to have very few support networks and were left with their personal coping strategies. In observing the differences in abilities of international students to adjust to their new environment, my impression was that these differences and difficulties crossed gender and ethnic lines. In undertaking this study, I believed that soliciting and describing the experiences of a diverse group of international students would improve on understanding the issues and dimensions of transition. I employed a narrative inquiry for the study, an approach that seemed to hold the most promise to solicit and describe the complex experiences faced by international students from a variety of cultures.

Significance of the Study

The study explores theoretical writings from developmental and cross-cultural perspectives about underlying issues, causes and relationships in respect to international students adjusting to university and residence life experiences (e.g., developmental theory, cultural dislocation, self-validation). The description of the lived experiences from the participants' perspectives is useful in exploring these theoretical writings, and to explore to what extent this body of theory gives guidance in understanding issues that are important for international students in their transition and adjustment to university and residence life.

Although exploring the relevance of theoretical perspectives was important to the researcher, of more immediate interest to her is the potential for enhanced understanding and practical applications for her own work with students, as well as with practitioner colleagues including other residence professionals, marketing and administrative officials from the host university and other post-secondary institutions in Canada. The study stresses the importance of bridging the gap between academic, and personal and social development to enhance the overall educational experience for international students. It is an attempt to understand the importance of the lived experiences from the participants' perspective. By describing the experiences of the eight participants, and considering the issues and dimensions of these experiences, new insights can be gained as to how international students' needs and underlying issues can be better accommodated through diverse and innovative programming to enhance the on-campus residential experience of impatriate students.

Operational Terms

The following terms are central to this thesis:

1. *Culture* refers to commonality of experience and a group of people who share past experiences, history, human action and tradition. It is a complex system that promotes

implicit and explicit patterns of thinking, feeling, evaluating, interpreting, behaving and it ultimately influences how we relate to self and others.

2. *Cultural shock* refers to anxiety resulting from losing one's sense of when and how to do the right thing.

3. *Cultural dislocation* refers to a subjective experience of feeling displaced or not at home in a given sociocultural environment.

4. *Multiculturalism* includes aspects such as communication, cultural information, the appreciation of differences and the notion of all human beings among divergent cultures interacting in ways they feel productive, effective and included.

5. *Impatriation* refers to international people who come into a host culture to reside. Those same impatriates who come into a host culture are also expatriates from their own culture.

6. *Self-validation* refers to the recognition and affirmation of all aspects of self and the value and meaning of personal existence.

Limitations of the Study

An important limitation of this study centered around language and communication issues because most participants were in process of learning English as a second language and had varying levels of fluency in the English language. Each participant was interviewed on two occasions with the interview length being approximately two hours. For participants who had been in Canada for a limited period of time, the communication process was slower, thereby limiting the gathering of significant data.

Another limitation of this study involved the type of residence facility and services provided for participants. The study sample included participants from only one residence facility at the University of Regina which features private rooms, shared washroom and shower facilities, and a meal plan which is mandatory for all residents. The other main residence on campus managed by the researcher has a dormitory-style living arrangement

which includes shared kitchen, living room area and washroom facilities. The difference in the type of residence facility may affect the experiences of participants and is, therefore, a limitation of the study.

Summary

This chapter provided an introduction to the study. The research question was introduced and the researcher discussed the purpose, limitations, and significance of this study. Chapter 2 will review the relevant literature, and Chapter 3 will present the methodology to be used. Chapter 4 will present the experience accounts and dimensions of the transition. Chapter 5 will present the themes, findings, summary and recommendations, suggestions for further study and the researcher's reflections.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on a review of the literature of numerous theories and

conceptual models that can be applied to the transition and adjustment experiences of

international students. It is important in a university setting that faculty, administrators

and residence professionals who work with international students understand the nature of

the cross-cultural transition experience and problems these students frequently encounter

in their adjustment to university life. Newcomers are exposed to the realities of adopting

different lifestyles, a changed pace of living, communication problems, fundamental

differences in values and behaviors and feelings in inadequacy. Homesickness, insecurity,

depression, cultural and personal uprootedness, loneliness, frustration, and other emotions

are not rare experiences among students who come into a host culture.

Based on the researcher's experience as residence manager, it appears clear that in

a culturally diverse university setting it is necessary to encourage students to share their

cultural and ethnic backgrounds and talents, and appreciate and reward each other and

learn from each other. All individuals from the main stream culture or a minority ethnic

group have stories about their personal qualities and accomplishments to share with the

rest of the world.

Transition

Students in their first year of university leave their familiar environment of home

and high school and are expected to adjust to a largely unknown university environment.

Making the transition from high school to college can be both exhilarating and anxiety-

ridden. Students are confronted by a variety of unique developmental and environmental

issues such as changes in identity, family support, academic challenges, social life, and

personal freedoms. In addition to normal developmental themes of adolescence,

international students often have to cope with the multiple impact of cross-cultural

transition.

The literature suggests numerous theories and conceptual models that describe the

experiences traditional-aged first-year students have as they adjust to university life.

Hurtado, Carter and Spuler (1996), in their study of Latino students and adjustment and

transition to college life, conceptualized college adjustment as a function of student

attributes, psychological and sociocultural stresses, and the strategies students use to cope

with these stresses. These researchers used the Student Adaptation to College

Questionnaire (SACQ) to assess adjustment to typical areas of student concern. The

SACQ measured academic, social and personal-emotional adjustment as well as

attachment, the degree to which students feel they belong in an institutional environment.

The study results showed that management of resources (money, time, schedules) were

positively associated with personal-emotional adjustment; maintaining family support was

positively associated with personal-emotional adjustment; distance from home and residing

on campus were not significant indicators of adjustment; and, assistance to students from

individuals associated with the college had important influence on social attachment to the

institution. Student in-college experiences, therefore, affected adjustment to college as

much as students' background characteristics.

Although the study approach was distinctly psychological in nature, Hurtado et al.

(1996) build on the sociological implications including environmental influences such as

structural and climate characteristics of campuses that may facilitate or hinder areas of

college adjustment. Study results found confirmation of Smedley, Myers and Harrell's

(1993) findings that revealed a significant contribution of climate-related minority status

stresses over and above some of the transitional difficulties.

The Transition Framework

Transition, as defined by Schlossberg (1989), is an event (such as returning to

school after working for many years) or nonevent (staying in school over an unusually

long period of time) that alters ones roles, relationships, routines, and assumptions. The

transition process can be compared to a trip; preparation for the actual trip and its

aftermath, elicits feelings and reactions. Schlossberg (1989) states, "To understand the

transition process in the lives of adult learners, we must break it down into three main

parts; moving into the learning environment, moving through it, and moving on, or

preparing to leave" (p. 21). These three parts are useful in considering the journey or trip

international students embark upon as they move to a host country to begin their post-

secondary education and live in a multicultural residential setting:

First Stage - Moving in. Individuals moving into a new situation have some

common needs. They need to become familiar with the rules, regulations, norms, and

expectations of the new system to gain confidence. Orientation sessions are a common

process for helping individuals learn about explicit and implicit norms, roles and culture, as

well as what the expectations are.

Second Stage - Moving through. The moving-though stage begins once learners

know what is expected of them and how to access what they need. This period can be a

long transitional phase and learners may require assistance and support from institutions in sustaining their energy and commitment.

Third Stage - Moving out. This stage involves the ending of one series of transitions and begins to ask what is next. Grieving can occur in leaving familiar surroundings and people, or the ways of functioning and interacting as one has become accustomed to.

Schlossberg's (1989) study of adult learners revealed their agendas for returning to education centered on identity, achievement, change, generativity, and competency. These findings overlap with those of Chickering's (1969) study of young adults entering higher education for the first time, where seven tasks, *vectors of development,* were found to together create a force for human development and change. The seven vectors of development are:

Developing Competence. The first vector involves a general sense of competence, an intellectual competence that influences professional and vocational choices; a physical competence relating to the stamina needed; and, an interpersonal competence that involves the ability to work cooperatively with others.

Managing Emotions. This vector focuses on self-control and expressing oneself appropriately.

Developing Autonomy. The third vector comprises emotional independence, the ability to act and cope without seeking help, and a recognition and acceptance of interdependence.

Establishing Identity. This vector involves clarifying ideas of physical needs and characteristics, personal appearance, sexual identification, gender roles, and behavior.

Establishing a solid identity enables the individual to develop in the three remaining

vectors.

Freeing Interpersonal Relationships. The fifth vector means increasing one's

tolerance and the capacity to engage in trusting and intimate relationships.

Developing Purpose. This vector involves a time for individuals to plan and

prioritize, and give direction and meaning to their lives. At this point, individuals begin to

seek clear answers about vocational plans and lifestyle considerations.

Establishing Integrity. The seventh vector is a time when internally consistent

sets of beliefs are formed that give guidance to behavior.

The seven vectors to the agendas apply to both adult learners and traditional-age

students (adolescent); however, there are some major qualities that differentiate adult

learners from traditional-aged students. Adult learners generally have more past

experiences, multiple demands and responsibilities, and are more concerned about

practical application. They also have a greater need to cope with transitions and issues

such as competence, emotions, autonomy, identity, relationships, purpose and integrity.

Mattering

Mattering is a critical dimension for traditional-aged adolescent as well as adult

learners, whether they are moving in, moving through or moving on in an educational

experience. Mattering refers to the beliefs people have (whether right or wrong) that

others care about them and appreciate them. In looking at ways to facilitate learning,

mattering must focus on both individuals and the institution.

Attachment Model

The degree to which family attachment is related to psychological well-being of students has not been researched as thoroughly as the emphasis on campus support systems. A study conducted by Kenny and Perez (1996) assessed the validity of the attachment model for understanding the leaving-home process for culturally diverse students. The study examined the degree to which family attachment was related to psychological well-being at the time of college orientation for a multiethnic sample (70 African American, 60 Latino, 42 American) of first-year college students and found a positive correlation.

Astin (1984) suggests a theory of student involvement, for predicting retention of traditional-age college and university students. Student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy a student devotes to the academic experience. The theory of student involvement focuses on students' level of motivation and how much time they devoted to the learning process. The theory is more concerned with the behavioral mechanisms or processes that facilitated student development (the HOW of student development) than with theories of developmental outcomes (the WHAT of student development).

Astin's research (1984), based on the traditional-age student population, has identified the following factors in the college and university environment that significantly affect students' persistence in higher education: living in a campus residence, participating in extracurricular activities, holding a part-time job on campus, attending a four-year college rather than a two-year college, identifying with the college or university

environment through similarity of race, religious background, or size of institution, and,

interacting frequently with faculty.

Developmental Theory

Gail Sheehy's (1976) road map of adult life shows the inevitable changes

individuals go through during their teens, 20s, 30s, 40s and beyond. Beginning at age 18

until age 22, the road map suggests a transition called *Pulling Up Roots* where individuals

try to separate their personal view of the world from their family's view. This is a stormy

passage, but necessary in facilitating the normal progression of the adult cycle life. Belief

systems are often tested and individuals are drawn into fads. Individuals turn to their

contemporaries as their allies, rather than their parents, so long as their allies' perspectives

mesh with their own. Fearfulness is characteristic of this age group as individuals seek to

restore the safety and comfort of merging with other individuals. Sheehy states the tasks

of this passage are for individuals to locate themselves in a peer group role, a sex role, an

anticipated occupation, and a world view. These individuals need to establish the

identity to begin leaving the family and home environment both emotionally and physically.

Sheehy indicates the *Pulling Up Roots* stage often draws a great deal of attention with late

adolescents in constant turmoil and parents alarmed at the tumultuous behavior.

Levinson (1978), who studied the lives of men from the ages of 18 to 47, asserts

that adults develop by eras with each era engaging in specific tasks. Men move from one

era to the next only when they start working at new developmental tasks and build a new

structure for their lives. The life course follows a basic sequence, or life cycle, and the

journey from birth to old age typically follows a universal pattern within which there are

cultural and individual variations. The life cycle evolves through a series of eras lasting

about 25 years:

- Childhood and adolescence - age 0 to 22

- Early adulthood - age 22 to 45

- Middle adulthood - age 40 to 65

- Late adulthood - age 60 and up.

The transition between eras takes about 5 years. Though early adulthood begins

around age 22, Levinson (1978) describes the Early Adult Transition period as extending

from about age 17 to 22. This period provides a bridge from adolescence to early

adulthood and is a crucial turning point in a life cycle. Levinson maintains all individuals

live through the same developmental periods, although individuals go through them in

unique ways. It was expected that international students who participated in this study

likely faced similar developmental tasks as they terminated pre-adulthood and moved into

the Early Adulthood Era. This transition includes developmental tasks such as questioning

personal views of the world, deciding what aspects to keep and which to reject, and

considering wishes and possibilities for the future.

Donald Super, a prominent theorist in the field of career development and choice,

also supports developmental theory in his concept of life stages (Salomone, 1996).

Super's theory of occupational development identifies the following life stages:

Stage 1 - GROWTH - birth to age 14;

Stage 2 - EXPLORATION - occurs between ages 15 and 25 and is
characterized by exploration, trial and transition;

Stage 3 - ESTABLISHMENT - occurs between ages 25 and 44 and involves
implementation of a career choice and stabilization within an
occupation;

Stage 4 - MAINTENANCE - occurs between ages 45 and 64 and involves
continuity of vocational behavior along established lines, although

a re-evaluation may occur; and

Stage 5 - DECLINE - occurred at age 65 and up and was characterized by
retirement and discontinuing work.

Stage 2, exploration, is relevant to the age group of students participating in this study. Super connects life stages to vocational phases and tasks and also places value on transition between the various life stages (Salomone, 1996).

Revised Developmental Theory

Hoffman (1990) suggests alternatives to traditional adolescent development theory are needed which were more congruent with the experiences of contemporary students. Students entering college in the 1990s will have grown up in an era characterized by economic stagnation, falling expectations and rising social dislocations (record increases in crime, suicide and divorce rates). In addition, this generation of students takes racial and gender opportunities for granted in ways untrue of earlier generations. Women's career aspirations coupled with changing attitudes toward sexuality has also profoundly affected the ways students thought about intimacy and long-term relationships.

There are new patterns emerging in this generation's transition from adolescence to adulthood. Indicators of adult status have traditionally included moving outside of the parental home, completing education, full time employment, marriage, parental responsibilities as well as participating in adult social and political activities. These indicators, typically associated with adult status, are not the reality of many contemporary students lives and suggests contemporary students are prolonging adolescence well into their 20s. More specifically, contemporary students are staying in college longer, staying

single longer, remaining childless or postponing childbearing and remaining at home after

college. Hoffman (1990) suggests the reasons for these changes are primarily economic

as students worry about occupational opportunities and how to finance their education.

Life choices are made in an economic context which provides severe constraints on their

ability to establish independent households.

What does culture say about this generation of students? Hoffman (1990)

suggests these students are often described by the culture as being self-interested and

unable to develop a meaningful set of principles or values beyond the self. For faculty

and student professionals working with students, this poses a challenging task of

rethinking the more traditional developmental theories of the transition to adulthood.

Adolescence has traditionally been characterized as a period of separation, individuation,

self-reliance and emotionally autonomous.

New models of the maturation process are needed which place side-by-side

concepts of relatedness and interdependence with autonomy and self-reliance. Student

developmental needs, according to Hoffman (1990), are best served by helping them frame

their discovery of self in the context of mutually supportive interaction with others.

Autonomy and self-knowledge are not necessarily sacrificed in relationships which seek to

enhance the growth and self-knowledge of the other; that interdependence could foster

independence.

Self-Psychology Developmental Theory

Schwitzer, Robbins and McGovern (1993) suggests Kohut's (1977) *psychology of*

the self theory has proven to be somewhat useful in understanding and predicting college

adjustment. Kohut's theory suggests an individual is born with a set of archaic self-structures that eventually form the nuclear self in early childhood. As the child develops, a firm, cohesive self-system emerges that serves as the mature self, the center of the personality. The mature self consolidates inner resources and promotes adjustment in adult life. Adolescence is the time when the emerging young adult begins to set reliable goals and ideals, and begins to sustain and nourish the self. This is necessary for productive work and effective psychological functioning to occur in adult life. Success in adjustment to college life, therefore, may be limited by the degree of maturity in an individual's self-structure.

Numerous studies have demonstrated a relationship between one personality construct derived from a self-psychology perspective, goal instability, and college student adjustment. Goal instability reflects within the self a lack of a mature system of values and goals to direct efforts toward achievement. Goal instability may also interact with social support to mediate adjustment at times of life transition. Kohut (1984) theorized that individuals with higher levels of goal instability experience greater discohesion and poorer coping when faced with the normal stress of life transitions and, therefore, have a greater need for the buffering effect of social support.

A study conducted by Schwitzer, Robbins and McGovern (1993) explores college student adjustment from a comprehensive developmental theoretical framework based on Kohut's psychology of the self theory and reports on how personality and social support factors interact to influence changes in college freshman adjustment over the first year of school. The Global Instability Scale (GIS) (Robbins & Patton, 1985) was the clinical scale used to predict adjustment to academic and personal aspects of college life. Findings

revealed the interaction effects of goal instability, as well as classroom support and support naturally found in the university social environment, mediated normal first-year adjustment declines for some students. Social support may, therefore, serve a buffering function for students experiencing high levels of goal instability by helping them to restore self-functioning during the freshman transition.

These findings support the utility of identifying and intervening with students at risk for poor adjustment due to psychological developmental level. In addition, the findings support the importance of including a social support component in orientation seminars, residence programs, or other freshman adjustment interventions.

Cultural Shock Theory

An interesting viewpoint that helps us to understand the trials and tribulations of the first year experience lies in the body of literature describing culture shock. First-year students move from one culture (their home and high school) into the university culture, and the adjustment process they experience is culture shock (Zeller, 1996). The experiences and feelings by people as they enter and integrate themselves into a foreign culture are analogous with the experiences individuals have as they move into the university environment. The existing traditions, mores and characteristics of the university community take time and effort to integrate into ones personal set of values and behavioral patterns.

The concept of culture shock was first introduced by Oberg (1960) to describe anxiety resulting from losing ones sense of when and how to do the right things. Those experiencing culture shock had difficulty recognizing cultural norms and establishing an

appropriate response to these norms. Some frequently cited indicators of culture shock include: absence of familiar cues about how to behave, reinterpreting familiar values of what is good and bad, emotional disorientation, nostalgic idealizing how things used to be, a sense of helplessness in a new environment; and, feelings of discomfort (Pederson, 1997). Pederson suggests that any new situation which involves an adjustment of role and identity could result in culture shock. Anyone entering a new culture experiences some dissonance and may feel like foreigners, including traditional-aged students leaving home for the first time; thus, the experiences of first-year students can be compared to the experiences everyone has in entering and adjusting to a new culture. International students in a similar age group may experience additional sources of dissonance as they experience differences in lifestyle, customs and cultural practices.

One of the earlier and best know models for describing culture shock comes from Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963). Their W-curve model describes five stages that foreigners feel as they move into a new culture:

1. Honeymoon stage

   The honeymoon stage has a high level of satisfaction as students positively anticipate their arrival on campus and being in a host culture. First-year students arrive on campus and typically work through the admissions process and attend orientation sessions.

2. Culture shock

   Culture shock sets in and the novelty of change gives way to frustration with the differences between home and host culture. A downswing occurs in this stage as

students begin to face unfamiliar territory and they are faced with the realities of adjusting to a new environment. In addition to environmental changes, the first-year student also continues a development cycle of moving away from parents, becoming more autonomous, and dealing with identity issues (Chickering, 1969).

3. Initial Adjustment

The initial adjustment phase sets in and there is some level of assimilation and feelings of confidence in mastering the academic, physical and social environments. Value conflicts between home and the university may still exist (Zeller, 1996).

4. Mental Isolation

The mental isolation phase sets in as students become more comfortable with the physical environment but feel a sense of isolation as they begin to make comparisons between their host culture and familiar home culture. Students may feel their beliefs and value systems being challenged and strong feelings of homesickness begin to surface.

5. Acceptance and Integration

Acceptance and integration involves renewed positive feelings towards host culture. Students develop a history of experiences with the new culture and gradually become connected with the campus community.

Cross-cultural Issues

International students inevitably face cross-cultural adjustment difficulties and experience feelings of loss and homesickness when they moved to a new culture. Culture

shock, discouragement and homesickness often accompany a drastic change from a familiar environment (Taft, 1977).

Lee & Westwood (1996) describe some general adjustment factors related to culture shock:

1. Host Culture

Attitudes of individuals in the host culture affect an individuals cross-cultural adjustment. Boekestijn's (1988) study of professional immigrants suggests that interaction fatigue is relevant to the adjustment process. Interaction fatigue occurs when immigrants lack an expected level of acculturation and people of the host country react by keeping contact to a minimum. The result is that immigrants felt isolated and depressed because attempts at interaction failed.

2. Expectations

In Boekestijn's (1988) study, the expectations of immigrants entering a host culture may influence the quality of acculturation for two reasons: (1) immigrants may be more motivated to adapt to a different sociocultural environment because they chose themselves to live in a new country, and (2) immigrants may not expect to have a support network in close proximity. Boekestijn states that the above reasons reflect a state of readiness for change and adjustment. Despite this motivation and readiness for change, the adjustment process can be difficult and lead to feelings of inadequacy. This is similar to international students entering a post-secondary institution in a host country.

3. Individual reactions

Each individual experiences a unique adjustment learning curve upon their arrival in a new country, and individual reactions vary in the acculturation process. Some international students desire integration, but spent the majority of their time socializing with members of their ethnic community. Others seek a more total assimilation into the majority cultural group. Lee & Westbrook (1996) refer to a study by Hanassab (1991) of Iranian women between the ages of 17 and 32 who migrated to the United States. The purpose of the study is to assess the extent to which young Iranian women in Los Angeles kept their traditional values and the extent to which they identified with the liberal values introduced to them in the United States. The findings of the study reveal that the younger the age of individuals leaving the former culture, the higher the level of expected success in cultural adjustment. Also, for those individuals expecting to remain for only a brief period (e.g., 2 years or less), they may not be motivated to fully adapt to the host culture. Conversely, the longer the expected stay, the higher the level of expected success in cultural adjustment.

Self-Validation Model

Transition also involves adjusting to a new linguistic and cultural system, leaving behind some of the significant sources of self-validation which used to provide a sense of self-worth and meaning in life. Ishiyama's (1987) model of self-validation provides a framework for understanding and working with students who are going through personal transitions and is used for working with individuals with cross-cultural issues. The model is concerned about the experiential world of relations, meanings, and values.

Self-validation refers to a subjective experience of physical, social, personal and spiritual well-being by means of affirmation of one's sense of self, purpose in life, and meaningful personal existence in a given sociocultural context. The model postulates that individuals are motivated to seek validation, and have the need to be validated (Ishiyama, 1994). Healthy sources of self-validation provide security, self-acceptance, identity and being connected with others. Life experiences can be both self-validating and self-invalidating. Being criticized or ignored, for example, could be one of the most self-invalidating experiences since lives revolve around social relationships and self-concept. Another invalidating experience may be a first-year student moving away from a familiar and comfortable home environment, losing an important support system, and being uprooted. For some international students, having others attack or persistently disagree with their worldviews and values can be an invalidating experience. Needless to say, these experiences affect an individual's self-respect and self-identity and need to be faced and confronted with the task of restoring inner harmony and seeking self-validating relationships and activities. The experience of validation in Ishiyama's model is characterized by five interrelated psychological themes:

1. Security, comfort, and support versus insecurity, discomfort, and abandonment

   The first component of the self-validation model is concerned with the feelings of physical and emotional security and comfort, familiarity with the environment, and social support. The experience of self-invalidation, on the other hand, may be characterized by feelings of insecurity, discomfort and abandonment. For many international students, adjustment difficulties are compounded by deficiencies in social

and communication skills and unfamiliar cultural values and practices.

2. <u>Self-worth and self-acceptance versus self-depreciation and self-rejection</u>

The second component of the self-validation model is concerned with self-worth and self-acceptance as the basis for internalizing security and developing healthy relationships with others, in contrast to self-deprecation and self-rejection. The degree of self-acceptance is unique to each individual and depends on his/her past experiences and relationships, as well as reference points used for defining and evaluating self. When, for example, individuals invests a lot of energy into academic achievement, their academic self-identity serves as the primary reference point in validating self-worth and acceptance. For international students leaving home for their first time, they are often dependent upon external sources of validation, such as parents, peers, teachers from their home culture. When international students are separated from their home culture, they may experience intense loneliness and a yearning for a familiar environment. Self-worth and self-adequacy are threatened if their experiences include difficulties in developing friendships in the host country or in academic work.

3. <u>Competence and autonomy versus incompetence and helplessness</u>

The third component of the self-validation model is concerned with the areas and the degrees of competence and autonomy experienced in various life dimensions (e.g., social, intellectual, physical, financial, vocational, etc.). The areas of social competence and autonomy essential to cross-cultural adjustment include social sensitivities, abilities to communicate, problem solving, accessing others resources and seeking help from others. It is necessary to understand and use social metaphors,

customs, languages and value sets to achieve academic, vocational, and social success in the host culture (Herr, 1987). Acquiring these skills is necessary for social survival and adjusting to life in the host country. International students who experience difficulties in expressing ideas, and accessing and processing information may feel frustrated, inferior and helpless. International students may be competent in certain technical or knowledge areas, but demonstrating their knowledge and competence may be quite limited because of language difficulties. Feelings of pride and competence are subsequently replaced by feelings of humiliation and self-doubt. Self-doubt and performance anxiety may also be experienced around social activities for international students. Some international students suffer from a lack of recognition, encouragement and no praise. It is important that they receive peer support and guidance from the host country by participating in various activities and social networks. For some international students, however, practicing selective social avoidance can be counterproductive and immobilize the student in developing appropriate social skills and competencies to deal with developmental issues and difficulties in cross-cultural adjustment.

4. Identity and belonging versus identity loss and alienation

The fourth component of the self-validation model is concerned with identity and a sense of belonging. Erikson (1968) suggests that issues such as identity crisis, loss of status, role confusion, and social exclusion are important concerns for people of all ages. People define and attach significance to physical appearance, gender and sexuality, occupation, reference groups, social status, academic achievement, roles,

religion and political and philosophical orientations. Peoples' identity and sense of belonging are often threatened in a new culture. In the self-validation model, self is regarded as multidimensional, having five experiential levels of self: 1. physical, 2. familial, 3. sociocultural (socially or cultural sanctioned roles and statuses), 4. transcultural-individual, and 5. transpersonal (collective and spiritual). How people define themselves is closely related to the culture and the social group to which they belong, and each culture promotes and emphasizes different types of identity. International students inevitably have to deal with identity and membership issues in the process of cross-cultural adjustment or they strive for the validation of their social self-identity in a new cultural context. Taft (1977) suggests status discrepancy is one of the features of culture shock that is accompanied by feelings of rejection and discomfort. International students in a new cultural context can no longer hang on to their previous roles and social recognition of their accomplishments in the home culture. International students also face cultural conflict in simultaneously developing a social identity and a cultural-ethnic identity. The desire to be part of a peer group may soon be waned by racial prejudice, stereotyping, and insensitive remarks about their cultural-ethnic dispositions. Defining and judging self in rigid conformity to a sociocultural norm can have negative effects on individuals and relationships, especially within a cross-cultural context; therefore, transcultural appreciation of people as individuals, despite culturally different appearances, needs to be promoted.

5. <u>Love, fulfillment and meaning in life versus lovelessness, emptiness, and</u>

   <u>meaninglessness</u>

   The fifth component of the self-validation model is the central theme in human

   existence, a dimension of love, fulfillment and meaning in life (Ishiyama, 1987).

   Individuals need to live constructively and harmoniously in both their private and social

   domains of life. International students moving to another culture often experience

   social isolation and a lack of intimate relationships. This could induce defeat, grief, and

   threaten the central theme of human existence (Ishiyama & Westwood, 1992).

   Individuals going through these hardships need to find other relationships and activities

   that instill a new sense of love, fulfillment and meaning.

Cultural Dislocation

   Cross-cultural adjustment difficulties inevitably involve the above five

psychological themes, and often culminate in a rather subjective experience of cultural

dislocation, the experience of feeling displaced, or not at home in a given sociocultural

environment. Cultural dislocation can, therefore, result in experiences where there is a

lack of validation of self and is characterized by the negative psychological themes

mentioned above. A major transition, such as moving to an unfamiliar culture, can

threaten the integrity and strength of an individual's validation network which is

comprised of various sources that help to maintain, restore and expand one's sense of

well-being. It is important for international students to learn about the host culture's

values and different modes of communication in order to have desirable effects upon

cross-cultural interactions. It is equally important for university faculty and administrators to recognize the individual and cultural uniqueness of the international student.

Cultural dislocation also involves the experience of being uprooted where emotional bonds and cultural roots are left behind. As students recognize they no longer have the kind of social validation that was enjoyed back home, self-identity can be impacted significantly by cultural dislocation. Self is experience and identity formed in various relational contexts (e.g., relationships with the family, friends, co-workers, local community, nature, society, God and universe). Identity is intricately related to changes in an individual's relationship with the social environment (Gergen, 1987). The role of self is threatened when what used to elicit positive responses from others is no longer reinforced in the host culture.

Various conflicts around cultural difference and identity dissonance are also characteristic of cultural dislocation. Individuals who appear to be adjusting well to their host culture may privately experience intercultural conflicts and cultural dislocation to varying degrees. These individuals have to face the less-than-perfect side of reality in the host culture, contrary to their initial optimism and high expectations of success and dream fulfillment at the pre-entry stage (Ishiyama & Westwood, 1992).

Ishiyama's (1987) self-validation model has three inter-related areas or activities -- social, personal, and physical -- of self-validation. These areas help to restore or enhance a general feeling of self-worth and a meaning of life in the direction of ego-transcendence and spiritual union with others. The following is a review of these three areas:

1. Social self-validation

   Social self-validation refers to our need from others for social and emotional survival.

   Ishiyama (1987) states,

   > Moving to another city or country is an extremely challenging experience. Being
   > uprooted from a familiar and well-developed network of social support and
   > transplanted into a new environment usually would mean loss of the familiar and
   > validating relationships. Because much of our self-identity is based on cultural
   > conditioning, a validating experience might be to communicate with someone who
   > shares the same cultural norms and values. (p.19)

2. Personal validation

   There is some overlap between social and personal validation because many of our

   personal activities happen in social contexts. In personal self-validating activities the

   intrinsic reward of doing something personally meaningful and productive is valued.

   The environment is usually familiar and one experiences a sense of peace and quiet.

   Personal activities may include meditation, playing music, star watching, reading,

   nature walks, and creative or artistic activities.

3. Physical validation

   Physical validation occurs by restoring comfort, pleasure, energy, and familiar physical

   sensations. Physical activities may include sleeping, engaging in physical exercise,

   dietary activities, and so forth. Ishiyama (1994) indicates that appropriate physical

   self-discipline, combined with right attitudes, can transcend from a mere physical

   activity into a spiritually enlightening and ego-transcending experience. The mind and

   body essentially become one.

Cultural Conflict Model

Ishiyama (1994) presents a cultural conflict model to assist in determining levels of

conflict:

1. Low cultural conflict state (LL)

   In this state, individuals are relatively conflict-free with either culture and have

   achieved a reasonable level of adjustment. Both cultures can be accommodated within

   their personal constructs of self and the world. Homesickness can be felt, depending

   on the level of cultural attachment.

2. Host cultural conflict state (HL)

   Individuals in this state experience conflict between their cultural values and practices

   and those of the host culture. This conflict is a result of a general lack of self-

   validation in the host culture, and often accompanied by feelings of defensiveness,

   skepticism and hostility.

3. Home cultural conflict state (LH)

   In this state, individuals have assimilated cultural values and practices with the host

   culture, and experience conflict with aspects of their own home culture. Individuals

   who experience this state may feel like an outsider when they visit their home culture.

4. Bicultural conflict state (HH)

   Individuals experience ambivalence and conflict with both cultures in this state. This

   state often leads to an uncomfortable inner dissonance and ambivalence between both

   cultures, and the individual experiences difficulty in reconciling the home cultural self

   and the host cultural self. This conflict can also stimulate the development of a unique

bicultural and transcultural self-identity where there is a unique blend of two cultures.

The issue of self-validation, particularly loss of validation of the cultural self, seems to be a significant life theme throughout the process of dealing with cultural conflicts and other adjustment issues. Individuals need to explore their feelings and experiences around cultural dislocation and cultural and intrapersonal conflicts.

The cross-cultural challenges faced by new international students are multiple and need to be acknowledged and supported by the host institution with the objective of promoting a smooth and successful transition.

University Responsibilities

Hibbs (1997) visualizes that universities have outlived their purpose and will not survive the test the free market will soon impose upon them -- the irresistible forces of competition, technology and the new dynamics -- there is opposition to practices which are wrapped in cultures where change represents danger. In addition, will students, as customers of the university, still come to institutions where prices are high, efficiencies low, and outcomes questionable? The ability to offer courses by distance will definitely affect the survival of most universities as virtual universities are everywhere and so are the customers, the students. "There are new markets, new languages and new cultures to consider as we market, sell and document products and services around the world, for the world" (Winters, 1997, p. 1).

Hibbs (1997) predicts that, with free market competition on the increase and taxpayer subsidy on the decrease, the result will be better quality products at cheaper prices; degrees will matter less as more attention is paid to the mastery of the humanities.

Home-schooling will grow dramatically with mini knowledge facilities situated in even the most remote locations, and with the free market, courses must be offered on-line if the university plans to survive.

In today's complex world, universities are looking to stay competitive in a global economy. While academic reputation will continue to be the primary recruitment tool for higher education, providing outstanding customer services once students are on campus will be the key element in retaining students. International students typically have a great many choices where to spend their educational dollars, and they will shop around for the best deal.

Given the increasing global community and the need for intercultural contact, the beneficial effects and contributions of international students can, and should be seen, as a very significant gain for the individual host institution and for the host country (Saidla and Grant, 1993). Additionally, there is a financial gain to the institution and the benefit of having a diverse group of students working and learning at our colleges and universities as each culture brings with it certain traditions, beliefs, skills, perspectives, and more. By better understanding aspects of different culture, doors are opened to an enhanced understanding of a global society and contribute toward building cultural pluralism.

An institution committed to retention of international students must assist them in their adjustment to campus life. The mere presence of international students is not sufficient; institutions need to look for ways to facilitate intercultural relationships that are meaningful.

Connection Between Academic Life and Student Life

The idea of connecting academic life to student life is not new. Over the past 700 years, residential colleges at Oxford and Cambridge provided a setting where faculty and students have pursued academic interests in an intensive living and learning environment. This is often referred to as the Collegiate model in which student experiences blended in classrooms, faculty groups, dining rooms and recreational space. The first institutions of higher learning in America adopted this model with its common residences, structure communities, shared intellectual interchanges and spiritual purpose and practices. Training the mind and molding of personal character were inherent in this model.

During the 1800s there was a movement toward the German model of education and emphasis was placed on independent study and residences. Very little support was offered for student out-of-classroom experiences, including housing needs.

Early in the 20th century, Woodrow Wilson, President of Princeton College, became again interested in the development of a campus community and began to build student residences at Princeton which emulated the residential colleges of Oxford and Cambridge (Ryan, 1992). Alexander Meikeljohn from the University of Wisconsin developed an experimental college in the late 1920s, a sub-college within the university where he created a residential opportunity for students and faculty to come together in an intellectual community. This experimental college is often seen as today's forerunner of the learning community movement. This movement, however, was curtailed in the 1940s after World War II. A new trend occurred where academic and extracurricular life became increasingly disconnected and resulted in the separation referred to as academic and nonacademic culture. The two phenomena discouraging the development of

expanded intellectual opportunities beyond the classroom were the highly pragmatic career needs of students after the war, and the significant support of research activities from the federal government.

In the 1960s, the arrival of the baby boom generation resulted in expansion of housing and campuses. New facilities such as high rise residence halls were constructed with little attention to the educational impact of selected architectural designs. The residence settings were generally not conducive to faculty and students sharing mutual educational experiences. While efforts were made to continue the trend linking living and learning, the separation of in-class and out-of-class educational experiences continued through the 1970s and 1980s. A greater specialization of functions occurred in both student and academic affairs.

In his study of higher education Boyer (1987) found a great separation, sometimes to the point of isolation, between academic and social life on campus. Boyer reported that what was learned in residence halls had little connection to the classroom; academic affairs functions tended to center around the study of cognitive development, while student affairs functions centered around affective and personal growth. Students were left floundering between the two sets of experiences and finding a connection between them both.

In the 1990s, the cultures of both student affairs and academic affairs have begun to merge because of a renewed emphasis on teaching and learning, as well as mutual interests in areas of service learning, internationalization, diversity education, freshman year experience. There appears to be a resurgence of interest toward development of residential colleges, living-learning centers, and academically-based theme housing

opportunities. Residence programs, in turn, have responded to these developments and have begun to transform their role and purpose. The new commitment toward creating partnerships between academic and student affairs sets the stage for university residence professionals to also become partners in the institution's educational enterprise.

Residence Facilities and Staffing

Universities in the 21st century are expected to undergo significant transformation driven by technological and demographic trends which will impact university residential housing. With the huge expansion of housing inventories in the 1960s, the need exists now to renovate with the goal of designing quality educational space that supports academic and learning endeavors.

New construction of residences and renovations of current residential facilities need to support residential learning by including areas for group study, computer labs, academic advising centres and tutorial spaces. Budget reconfiguration that allows housing administrators, academic administrators and executive officers achieve institutional goals may also be required. External funding sources may need to be sought to support residential learning initiatives.

Technology needs also must be considered in residences of the future. Residence-based technologies are becoming common on campus and may include in-room connectivity to the internet, residence computer labs and residence cable TV networks to support campus learning initiatives.

Finally, existing staffing patterns may not fit the program reforms taking place. Residence professionals need the social and linguistic skills and background to function

effectively in settings including the academic area, the student area, and the new arena

created by the overlap of the two cultures.

Residence Life

Social contact is a very important predictor of international students alienation on

a university campus (Saidla & Grant, 1993). Saidla and Grant investigated the

interpersonal relationship between college roommates living with someone from the same

culture (American/American roommate pair) or from a different culture (International

American roommate pair). Findings from this study revealed that American/American

roommate pairs did not enjoy greater rapport than International American roommate pairs.

In his research Collins (1984) found that international students who spent more of their

leisure time with American students were significantly better adapted than those who spent

more leisure time with fellow citizens. Heikinheimo and Shute (1986) reported similar

results from their studies of Asian and African students. International students who

experience high levels of rapport with host nationals appear to have an easier time

becoming culturally adjusted. This outcome, in turn, promotes intercultural understanding

within each partner.

Globalization

Modern society must place a stronger emphasis on global awareness, international

trade and intercultural relationships as countries become more dependent on each other

for material goods, supplies and services because of advances in technology and a scarcity

of resources (Norfleet & Wilcox, 1992). Because isolationism is no longer possible, post-

secondary institutions must be responsive and build and foster international and

intercultural relationships by providing comprehensive educational programs and services. In addition, institutions must also develop and strengthen relationships across the globe by creating international and multicultural focus on their campus. This undertaking requires significant human and financial resources as the support of post-secondary governance boards, administration, faculty, staff and community is vital to strong and well-received programs.

Developing international educational programs will strengthen the ability of a post-secondary institution to recruit and enroll students from other countries; however, institutions must develop a multifaceted institutional effort that provides programs, services and activities for a broad spectrum of clientele. This effort may include developing a plan to recruit students from abroad; developing programs/events that promote awareness of other cultures; developing strategies for international course offerings; promoting opportunities for faculty and staff to study abroad; and, involving community to provide direction for development of cultural diversity programs, services and activities. The challenge for post-secondary institutions will be to identify trends, events and issues in the external environment to improve their long-term future.

Summary

The literature on transition and cross-cultural issues confronting first-year international students in their adjustment to residence life suggests it is necessary to consider the implications of these same issues for the university residence professional. Residence life professionals must understand the students' inner world of meanings and feelings, especially those associated with coming to a new country. They must also

understand the culturally influenced style of communication and the culturally shaped expectations of students living in residence, and work toward developing effective cross-cultural relationships.

Development and delivery of programs must be culturally sensitive in valuing and preserving the integrity of the students' original cultural identity. The purpose of the programs would be to enable new students to learn to communicate with others in the host culture and handle cultural differences, rather than simply working toward assimilating international students into the dominant cultures way of living and interacting.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) served as the primary research tool in this study because the fundamental purpose of this research was to describe transition and adjustment experiences to university life for international students living in residence. As a research method for the study, narrative inquiry was chosen because it is descriptive in that it is attentive to how things appear, and provides a synthesis of knowledge about the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 1994). Narrative is a study of the way humans experience the world. Narration is the kind of discourse that answers the question, 'What happened?' (Zeller, 1995).

Connelly & Clandinin (1990) state, "Narrative and life go together and so the principal attraction of narrative as method is its capacity to render the experiences, both personal and social, in relevant and meaningful ways" (p. 10). It also takes into account the complexity of emotions and behaviors elicited during interviews that enrich a story in its fullness and depth. Humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives

Max Van Manen (1990) states, "Story form has become a popular method for presenting qualitative or human science research" (p. 115). Stories offer a way of knowing, and a process of cooperative inquiry that derives, through language, meaning and new insight from a reflection of peoples' experiences and behaviors. Stories are a way of capturing the complexity, specificity and interconnectedness of the phenomena or experiences to be studied. Narrative is both a phenomenon and a research method. The phenomena, or the experience to be studied, is called a story. The inquiry into the phenomena is called the narrative.

The research process used to guide the collection and analysis of data involved three major processes: 1. Pre-interview process, 2. Interview process, and 3. Data analysis and reporting of research findings.

Pre-Interview Process

Literature Review. This stage included reading literature related to the topic and designing and verifying the research methodology.

Focus Group. In qualitative research, focus groups can be used as a technique for collecting qualitative data through group discussions that explore opinions, experiences and personal reactions (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Its main feature is the explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights (Grinnell, 1993). The focus group technique has some clear advantages in that it provides rich data in a relatively short time, and the group offers various perspectives that can pull out issues that might not emerge in individual interviews. Some of the disadvantages of focus groups are that individual expression may be curbed and participants may be reluctant to participate depending on the sensitivity of an issue. For the purposes of this study, a focus group was conducted with six international students to initially explore the issues and themes related to the transitional experiences of international students in their adjustment to university life, and to gain a sense of the utility of this study. Some of the challenges identified by these students in the focus group included separation from family, lack of prior knowledge of Canadian customs and practices, feelings of anonymity, sense of community isolation, ability to manage resources, including finances and personal time, perceived language barriers, and confidence in his/her own academic ability. Those students who verbalized a wider degree of self-confidence with respect to their abilities had social support systems upon their arrival in Canada and they seemed to more quickly adjust to their new surroundings. The data from the focus group served as a guide for the participant sample interview questions and study boundaries. An interview guide encompassing the challenges presented by the focus group was prepared to guide the individual interviews (Appendix A) with participants.

Data Collection. The proposed method of data collection was the use of minimally structured in-depth individual, tape-recorded interviews from which transcripts were and became part of the ongoing narrative record. As indicated earlier, interview questions were prepared using the issues and challenges discussed by the members of the focus group to guide the individual interviews; however, each question or topic area was not necessarily covered in interviews as the focus of the interviews was on the lived experiences of the participants, their life events, relationships, feelings and insights about coming to a university residence and the transition into campus life.

Study Sample. The study sample was purposeful in balancing gender, and from the eight participants, four were female and four were male. The study sample was also broad in that participants were from different ethnic backgrounds and countries. It was felt by the researcher that having mixed genders and a broad range of ethnic backgrounds was more representative of groups of international students living in residences. Posters outlining the purpose of the study and contact information were placed on bulletin boards throughout one of the residences at the University of Regina. For those students who expressed interest in participating, the purpose of the research, the research approach and method, and the nature of the participant's involvement was outlined to them. Interview times were set up and contact information was established. The first four male and female international students who agreed to participate in the study became the study sample. The participants were assured confidentiality and were invited to sign a consent form (Appendix B). Participants were selected on the basis that they were international students living in residence and that this was their first year of university studies outside their home country.

Interview Process

Rationale for Interview Questions. The rationale for the interview questions was based on a review of the literature and the data gathered from the focus group. The interview process included setting up appointments and conducting two interviews with each participant. The first interview focused on descriptions of lived experiences (stories, recollections of experiences, etc.), as well as thoughts and feelings related to those life experiences. Interview questions focused on demographic information, education degree sought, perceived level of English proficiency, language spoken away from campus, cultural composition in residence, retention of cultural practices, conflicts in cultural practices, and barriers to cross-cultural communication. Participants were also asked to offer any suggestions and recommendations that might improve or sustain the residential climate. The focus of the second interview was to more fully explore the description of the participants' lived experiences. Different probes were used to direct the interview in obtaining information about the timing and details of events. The interview was also directed toward validating data collected in the first interview. This format was very important in that communication was difficult for some participants due to varying degrees of proficiencies in the English language.

Interview length. The interview length for each participant was approximately two hours and the spacing of interviews was usually two to three weeks apart to allow time for participants to reflect on the preceding interview. Interviews were conducted in various private locations throughout the university to accommodate the participants' needs. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed.

Informed Consent. As previously noted, informed consent was obtained at the beginning of the first interview. The researcher explained the study to each participant to clarify purposes of the research, identify the researcher, outline possible risks for the participant, with whom the researcher intends to share the results of the studies, how the

participants may benefit from involvement, the rights of participants to leave the study at any time, and assurances of confidentiality.

Data Analysis and Reporting of Findings

The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using the following process. Each interview was transcribed verbatim and, because of language and communication issues, a narrative was prepared following the first interview. This transcription and narrative were reviewed by each participant in the second interview for corroboration and/or correction. In some cases, further corroboration of information by participants was required following the second interview. After reading the transcripts of both interviews, lists were made of issues per participant and a list of common themes and findings were written to incorporate data gathered from all participants. Chapter 4 following presents the outcomes of the analysis of data.

CHAPTER 4: EXPERIENCE ACCOUNTS AND DIMENSIONS OF TRANSITION

Chapter 4 presents the participants' stories and the themes that emerged from each story. The emergent issues were deemed significant by the researcher in facilitating or hindering the transitional experiences at the University of Regina. Some ideas for issues emerged from the focus group input; others were identified by the participants; and, others by the researcher's analysis of data.

Hamza

Hamza was 22 years old and a student in the ESL program. He was born in Germany where he lived with his family until the age of 7. His father was studying medicine in Germany and the family moved back to Turkey upon completion of this program. Hamza's mother was a homemaker, and he had one younger sister and an older sister who is currently studying architecture in Cypress.

Hamza had 4 years post-secondary education prior to coming to Regina; one year studying English at East Mediterranean University in Cypress, and three years studying engineering at American International University in Girne, Cypress. When asked why he chose the University of Regina's ESL program, Hamza said he learned about the ESL program through family friends who were studying in the ESL program in Regina. Hamza said, "They tell me you can come here and learn English; after, you can finish here - engineering." The possibility of completing his engineering program, along with his desire to learn English, caused him to apply to come to Canada to study at the University of Regina. Supported by his parents who also understood the importance of learning

English, Hamza said, "It is important to study English because English is international. English is, in my country, going to be more important, because you can work in a good company if you have good English." (Interview 1, line 65).

Hamza's initial plan was to come to Regina for six months, learn English, and return to Cypress to complete his fourth year in engineering. At the time of this study, Hamza's plans were modified. After completing the ESL program at the University of Regina, Hamza plans to stay and continue studying in the engineering program at the University. He will then return to Turkey to look for employment.

Previous Education and Personal Development

The first issue that emerged from Hamza's interview as influencing/shaping his transitional experience was his previous education and how that placed limitations on his career choices and post-secondary educational programs. In high school, Hamza indicated he was interested in studying other languages, especially English. His parents, however, wanted him to take sciences in high school in order to enroll in medicine at a post-secondary institution. Hamza indicated he had no interest in pursuing medicine as a profession. His high school marks were low and he did not take any of the sciences that were required to study medicine.

In choosing a career direction and post-secondary institution, Hamza's mother assumed a dominant role. Hamza stated, "For me, she told me I can go into Civil Engineering; she said if I don't like civil engineering, maybe industrial engineering." (Interview 1, line 264). Like medicine, Hamza did not have the necessary prerequisites from high school (physics) to enroll into an Engineering program; therefore, he had to take physics at a post-secondary institution.

Hamza indicated his maturity level upon graduating from high school was another factor in limiting his choices in attending a post-secondary institution. His father felt he should return to Germany to study; his mother, however, felt Germany was too far away and that Cypress would be a better option because it is near Turkey. Hamza said, "They didn't trust me because I was 18 years old." (Interview 2, lines 64-65). Another reason why Cypress was chosen was because friends from high school were also moving to Cypress to study in the same post-secondary institution.

The decision to move to Cypress was made and supported by all family members, including Hamza. In his first year, Hamza indicated his desire to study English was respected by both parents and he attended a program at Eastern Mediterranean University in Cypress similar to the ESL program in Regina. While the purpose of enrolling in the program was to study English, Hamza noted the first semester as not being particularly productive due to lack of study and excess partying. Hamza indicated he had to repeat some subjects and continue studying throughout the summer months to complete the program. Hamza lived in residence during his first year at Eastern Mediterranean University. The residence facility was similar to the facility here in Regina; however, it did not include a meal plan. Small kitchen facilities were shared and dining consisted of making some easy-to-prepare dishes and/or ordering in food. Hamza indicated that many of his high school friends attended this university also and he enjoyed their companionship socially. This resulted in his studies being neglected and forced him to continue his studies into the summer months.

In his second year of university, Hamza enrolled in an Engineering program at the International American University in the city of Girne. He completed three years of a

four-year program at this university. Hamza indicated that during his second year he had

to take physics classes as this was required in the program. Hamza's sister also studied at

International American University but contact was minimal and they had separate living

arrangements. The participant shared an apartment with other university students and this

contributed to his experience in a multi-cultural, multi-national environment.

Family Support Relationships

Another issue that emerged from the interviews with Hamza was the supportive

relationships he maintained with his family, both emotionally and financially. As noted,

Hamza reported that his mother played a dominant role in choosing an area to study for a

career. Hamza stated, "My mother was more interested in which department I will

choose" (Interview 2, line 7). During his interview he stated that, while Engineering was

not his first choice in programs, he would comply with his mother's wish to complete an

Engineering program, whether it be in Cypress or Regina. He still maintained, however,

"Even if I finished engineering, I could work in another company like tourism and other

things" (Interview 2, lines 86-87). Hamza said tourism, hospitality and business were his

personal choices of a future career.

Hamza indicated he was also supported financially by his parents in his educational

endeavors, and appreciates the fact that he has never had to work even on a part-time

basis to support himself. He enjoyed the freedom of purchasing clothes, music systems,

televisions, etc. for his own enjoyment in the privacy of his bedroom. Hamza still

maintains frequent telephone contact with family members from Turkey.

Previous Travel

When asked to list what factors contributed to his ease of transition into the University of Regina, Hamza noted another issue, previous travel experiences. As a child, he lived with his family in Germany until moving to Turkey at the age of 7. He also traveled to foreign countries with his family and had experience in dealing with different languages and customs. Hamza personally had an interest in learning other languages and found his travel experiences interesting.

Another important aspect was Hamza's previous experiences living outside the family home for four years when he was a student attending post-secondary institutions in Cypress. Hamza indicated he found the move to Cypress relatively easy because of the short geographical distance from his family home in Turkey, he was joined by many high school friends, and the language and customs of Cypress were similar to Turkey. For Hamza, the move to Canada was more dramatic because of the geographical distance and greater differences in terms of language and customs. He experienced feelings of homesickness during his first few months living in Canada, however, he said he now feels better adjusted to Canadian life and customs as time goes on.

Arriving in Canada

Another issue that emerged from the interviews was Hamza's recollection of his experience arriving in Regina on December 29, 1998. Hamza indicated he experienced nervousness upon his initial arrival. He had not done a lot of research about Canada as a country, the cities in Canada, or the university. His only knowledge of Canada was that French people lived in Quebec and the country was not highly populated. Hamza indicated he had some previous knowledge about the university, the residence, and the ESL

program because of his friends from Turkey who had lived here and were already enrolled in the ESL program. He expected very cold weather and was prepared by bring warm winter clothing.

Hamza was met at the airport by his friends and taken immediately to the university residence where a Resident Assistant gave him his keys and showed him his room. Hamza indicated he appreciated the support he received from his friends, and felt it would be difficult for those students without any support systems in place. For him, the move to Canada was much more dramatic than the move to Cypress where the language was similar, he was surrounded by friends from high school, and the journey home was only a thirty minute flight by air.

Orientation to ESL and University of Regina

A fifth issue that emerged from the interviews was Hamza's thoughts about the orientation he received upon arrival at the university. He spoke of the orientation sessions delivered by an ESL instructor in the first few weeks of his ESL program. The orientation session involved discussions about Canadian life and customs, relationships between males and females, human rights, legal issues and included some useful information about busing, restaurants, banking, and other issues related to community life. The orientation session also included excursions such as a skiing trip, a trip to the mall, as well as attending the IMAX theatre in Regina and a workshop on candle-making. Hamza noted the skiing trip and workshop on candle-making, in particular, as being fun and enjoyable.

Hamza noted his friends from Turkey, who had already been enrolled in the ESL program prior to his arrival, played the most important role in his transitional experiences. Their support occurred even prior to Hamza arriving in Regina, and included making all

the arrangements for the payment of fees for the ESL program and residence. When

Hamza arrived in Regina, the support of these friends continued and they taught him about

Canadian life and customs, showed him the Regina malls, nightspots, restaurants and bus

schedules, and showed him how to access the gymnasiums and swimming pool at the

University of Regina. These friends also provided Hamza with a wealth of information

about the ESL program. Hamza indicated the ESL program in Regina was far superior to

the program he had taken in his first year at Cypress, "because a lot of homework is given

and we always speak English" (Interview 1, line 40). The difference in the ESL program

in Regina was the blending of academic and social life.

Cultural Practices

Cultural practices was another issue that emerged from the interviews. Hamza

noted that, although he initially assumed a lot of similarities between Turk and Canadian

cultures, there were differences that were not always immediately obvious. He stated,

"You don't find the differences when you first come. You are first looking at what you

are wearing. The way they are speaking you look at also" (Interview 2, lines 21-22). He

noted the differences in elements of culture such as religion, marriage and male/female

relationships became more obvious as he became more familiar with Canadian culture.

Religion was one element of culture where Hamza felt there were some

differences. He described his religious system as Muslim, a less dominant religion in

Canada. Hamza said that within the Muslim community at the university there are various

religious practices that are practiced both in his home country and Canada. He explained

the two main religious cultures in his home country, Turkey, are the Alevis and Sunnais.

Both groups believe in one God, Mohammed, but believe in different religious leaders.

Hamza described himself and his family as belonging to the Alevi group. This group is considered much more liberal than the Sunnai group who follow strict rituals such as praying and reading the Holy Book, the Koran. The Sunnai group also observe and/or enforce Muslim traditions such as women wearing veils in public, no alcohol consumption, and practices in marriage and divorce related to male domination of women. Hamza indicated he has found these traditions and rules outdated, and refused to acknowledge them as traditions and practices, even when living in Cypress and Turkey. He noted belief systems vary between students who are of the Muslim faith; however, these are his personal beliefs. Hamza described himself as tolerant of most religious belief systems, whether they be Muslim, Christian, Jewish, etc.

Marriage and male/female relationships were other cultural issues Hamza noted as being different in his observation of Canadian customs. He indicated the practices of Alevi religious group are far less harsh than the Sunnai religious group where marriage includes more than one partner and males have total authority in the relationship. Hamza indicated he aligns himself to the belief system of the Alevi group where they believe in one marriage for a lifetime. Furthermore, he suggested a prospective marriage partner for him wouldn't necessarily have to be of the Muslim faith. "I don't care if this is the one I love" (Interview 2, line 21). Without strictly observing Muslim traditions, Hamza felt he was free to develop relationships with both Canadian and international students who may or may not have similar religious belief systems.

Language

Language was another issue Hamza noted as being important in his transitional experience. When asked about how he perceives himself in fitting in socially with

Canadian students, Hamza indicated fitting in centers mostly around communication - the ability to speak English properly, and to understand English vocabulary and slang terms used in Canada. Hamza was anxious to learn English and achieve a reasonable level of proficiency. He felt this would help him establish rapport and enable him to develop friendships with Canadian students. Hamza indicated he spoke English most times, especially in the company of other international and Canadian students. He admitted, however, to speaking Turkish when he is with Turk friends, a practice he knows is detrimental to learning English, and a practice he knows would be totally unacceptable to his family, particularly his father. Hamza spoke of his father's experience in Germany studying medicine and how learning the German language contributed to his understanding of the German culture.

Hamza indicated that personality is also important in learning and practicing the English language. He observed some international students as being extremely shy in communicating with other students. Hamza indicated he was fortunate that he had a more outgoing nature and did not feel inhibited in speaking to other students and instructors. He also indicated that, because Canada is an English-speaking country, the ESL program enabled students to engage in conversation with others both inside and outside the ESL classroom. At times, however, Hamza said he was frustrated in learning the English language and especially found learning vocabulary difficult and "slow going - sometimes I feel that I learned more one day than another" (Interview 2, pages 7-8).

Choice of Accommodations

Hamza saw his choice of residence life versus homestay as important in his transitional experience. He was familiar with residence life because he had lived in

residence while attending his first year at a post-secondary institution, Eastern Mediterranean University in Cypress. Hamza found residence facilities and life in Regina similar to his previous residence experience, with the exception of a compulsory meal plan and dining together as a group of residents.

Hamza indicated his first impressions of residence life in Regina were positive. He found it convenient living on a campus and enjoyed the interaction and close proximity living with other students, both international and Canadian. When asked about his tolerance for noise levels and other students' habits, Hamza indicated he has a high tolerance level for noise and partying and would simply leave his room to study in the library if it was becoming a problem for him to concentrate.

The dining experience and compulsory meal plan seemed desirable at first in that it provided another opportunity for interaction with Canadian and international students. At first, the experience seemed positive; however, Hamza soon felt his dietary needs were not being met. Hamza indicated the food choices were not varied enough, and that timing was becoming a problem for him. He would sometimes miss the meal hour and then have to order in food later in the evening.

In going off campus, Hamza noted some frustration in relying on the bus systems in Regina. In Turkey he always had access to a vehicle, even while living in residence. This factor appeared to cause frustration for Hamza, and he said the inability to go off campus at times caused him to be bored. It was during these times when Hamza would experience feelings of homesickness, at least earlier on in his transitional experience.

When asked about his participation in residence events such as movie nights, party nights, dances, etc., Hamza indicated he attended some residence events. He favored

going out with other international and Turk friends to disco bars, shopping, visiting and/or watching movies, and indicated he felt very comfortable socially with this group. Hamza recently purchased a television and VCR system and now watches television shows, sporting events and movies in his own private bedroom.

Hamza indicated his experience in socializing with Canadian students centered mostly around sport activities in the university gym (e.g., basketball, football, swimming and gym activities). The participant noted language as the reason for socializing mostly with international students: "I don't have too many Canadian friends because I can't speak very good" (Interview 1, line 185). The good thing about sporting activities was language was not a main factor in feeling accepted among a group of students.

Suggestions for Improvement of Residence Life

In speaking about improvements that could assist international residents in adjustment to residence and university life, Hamza identified the following factors as important:

1. Modern and well-maintained facilities as well as adequate furnishings are important first impressions.

2. Residence staff should be knowledgeable about different cultures as they are key in helping students adjust in their new environment. Hamza said residence staff should "Learn every culture and you can help them very easily" (Interview 1, line 325). In having some knowledge of where students come from and their respective cultures, residence staff could be more empathetic in understanding the various interactions and needs of international students.

3. Having friends to show new students around the residence, university and the city was helpful for new international students. Hamza indicated he felt sorry for other acquaintances who had limited or no support from friends, "It is very difficult for them" (Interview 1, line 327).

4. Residence staff need to clearly communicate the rules and regulations of the residence in order for the new resident to know what constitutes good and bad behavior, and the consequences. International students cover a wide range in understanding vocabulary and language, and for those who are limited in understanding rules and parameters, their inability to communicate can cause some problems at a later time.

The above captured the main thoughts of Hamza in describing his transition to residence and university life.

Amara

Amara was a 24-year-old student enrolled in the ESL program at the University of Regina. She arrived in Regina in late December, 1998, and planned to stay until August 31, 1999, to complete her ESL program. She then planned to return to Turkey to find employment.

Prior to coming to Regina, Amara attended the University of Istanbul in Turkey where she completed a 5-year degree in Biology. Previously, she lived with her parents in Turkey; her mother was a homemaker and her father owned and operated a large farm producing cotton, corn and wheat. Amara reported having two younger brothers, ages 16 and 21 years; her younger brother was in high school and her older brother studied Civil Engineering in Turkey.

The following are issues that emerged from the interviews with Amara.

Studying English to Broaden Career Opportunities

The first issue that emerged from Amara's interviews as influencing her transitional

experience was her strong desire to study English in order to broaden her career

opportunities. She knew a degree in Biology alone was not sufficient if she wanted to

pursue career opportunities in a large, internationally renown pharmaceutical organization.

She stated, "because it is an international company, everybody has to learn another

language and English is an international language" (Interview 1, line 28). Amara indicated

that she would broaden her career opportunities and salary level would be higher as well.

Amara noted her parents were supportive of the need to have a second language, and have

similar expectations for their two sons to learn English as a second language after they

complete their post-secondary education.

Family Support Relationships

A second issue that emerged from the interviews with Amara was the supportive

relationships she maintained with her immediate and extended family members. While

living in Istanbul and pursuing her biology degree, Amara shared an apartment with

various family cousins, and also had numerous relatives on her mother's side living in the

city of Istanbul.

After researching ESL programs in both Canada and the United States, Amara

decided to enroll in the ESL program in Regina. The decision to come to Regina was

largely based on her male cousin deciding to take the ESL program in Regina at the same

time. Amara indicated her parents would not have been supportive of her coming to

Canada to study English in the ESL program if her cousin had not decided to take the

same program. She indicated her father, in particular, was very protective because he "loves me because I'm just his one girl and first child" (Interview 1, line 60). Her father felt comforted by the fact that his daughter would have another relative close by for support. Amara noted she was also comforted by having her cousin living in the same residence as her, and indicated he was usually a part of a group she socialized with both inside and outside of residence. Amara said she would never go to nightclubs or be outside of residence after 9:00 pm if her cousin was not with her.

In her post-secondary experiences in Istanbul and Regina, Amara was always supported financially by her parents, a cultural tradition which, according to Amara, "is normal in Turkey" (Interview 1, line 203). She noted that this tradition has changed over the past few years and Turk students are now working part-time to assist financially in educational endeavors. Amara stated she was conscious of her spending habits; however, she could afford to do some travelling with friends while in Canada to Vancouver and Edmonton.

Amara described her relationship with her parents as being excellent and she communicates regularly by e-mail and telephone. She attributes this relationship to her parents being younger in age and understanding her needs.

Previous Travel

Previous travel experiences was another factor which positively contributed to the transition experience for Amara. As a child, Amara traveled extensively with her family to countries such as Spain, Italy and France. She had already experienced living with differences in language, cultures and customs so the experience coming to Regina was not as overwhelming as she initially thought it might be.

Arriving in Canada

The participant's recollection of her experience arriving in Regina on Christmas day, December 25, 1998, was another issue that emerged from the interviews. When asked what stood out for her when she first arrived in Regina, she found the extreme weather conditions unfamiliar to her. Amara indicated she had never experienced such severe weather conditions in Turkey. She also indicated she was very tired after her 24-hour long journey and it took her about a week to start normal sleeping patterns.

Amara was met by two childhood friends from Turkey who were already studying English in the ESL program in Regina. She was driven to the residence at the university, and recalled feeling overwhelmed when she was first shown her residence room. During the break between the fall and winter semesters, very few students live in residence and Amara indicated there were no other residents living in the quad she had been assigned to. The lighting appeared dim to her, there were no other residents nearby her room, and she was told the residence cafeteria was closed during the Christmas break. Amara decided to stay with one of her friends during her first week in Regina as she did not want to live alone until the beginning of the semester when other students would move in to residence.

Amara reported feeling very homesick during her first few weeks in Regina. Her first week living in residence with her friend was especially difficult for Amara, and she contacted her parents about quitting the program and returning home. Amara's parents convinced her to stay in Regina. Her father told her, "she had to stay six months because she needs the English language" (Interview 1, line 96). Amara decided to remain in Regina to honor her parent's wishes. She knew she had to study English to broaden her career opportunities in Turkey, and was fortunate to have the emotional support from her

friends who had picked her up at the airport. Amara indicated her cousin who also lived in residence, was very supportive during this difficult period.

Orientation to ESL and University of Regina

Another issue that emerged was Amara's thoughts about the orientation she received upon arrival at the university. The orientation sessions were delivered by an ESL instructor during the first few weeks of her ESL program. Amara indicated she learned about banking systems, bus schedules, and the location of malls closest to the university. She also learned where the various services and facilities (e.g., gym, library) were located at the university. Amara recalled one session, in particular, when the males and females were separated in classrooms and a discussion was held about appropriate behavior and roles in bars and nightclubs. Amara felt this discussion was inappropriate for her culture because she believed customs, such as dating, male and female relationships, etc. were similar to those in Turkey. She personally believed the discussion was more relevant for other cultural groups such as Korean and/or Chinese students.

Language and Social Barriers

Language, and the barriers it created socially, were other issues that came out of interviews with Amara. Language was seen as a barrier in understanding and interacting with Canadian students. During her first few months in Regina, Amara indicated she was reluctant to speak English to Canadian students because of the fear of being misunderstood and not understanding conversations, especially when slang terms were used. Amara noted the ESL program teachers as being instrumental in instilling in her the confidence to practice her English skills with other students. The ESL teachers told her she could, "not be afraid of speaking English because that is the main reason for coming to

the ESL program in Regina" (Interview 1, line 80). Amara indicated she has opportunities to practice her English skills in the ESL classroom and in talking to other international and Canadian students in residence.

Cultural Practices

Amara noted some distinct differences in religious practices between Turk and Canadian cultures. Amara said she was a Muslim who continues to follow her belief system and religious practices while living in Canada. The one exception for Amara was attending church or Mosque on a regular basis. She does not attend Mosque in Regina because, "her friends do not go and her vocabulary is not very good" (Interview 2, line 463); however, she prays daily and celebrates special religious occasions on her own. Cleanliness of body and surrounding area is important for Amara before engaging in prayer.

Amara noted some similarities as well as differences between Turk and Canadian cultures in the area of dating relationships between opposite sexes. In Turkey, dating rituals are similar in that they include going out to movies or parties. Amara indicated she finds Turk males to exhibit more gentlemanly behavior than Canadian males in the company of females. Assisting someone to put their coat, or opening up doors for females has not been part of the participant's experience while living in Canada. Amara also observed that both female and male Canadian students experienced a lot of freedoms in having various sexual encounters. Her personal belief system was that virginity was important to maintain until marriage, a belief system which she said is a result of her personal religious beliefs and cultural practices in Turkey.

Choosing Residence Life

Amara saw her choice of residence life versus a homestay arrangement as important in her transitional experience. She described herself as a shy person who would likely not be assertive enough to communicate her needs and wishes in a homestay environment. Amara also felt it was important to live in an environment where residents would be of similar age to her.

First impressions of residence life, as mentioned earlier in describing Amara's arrival experiences, were not encouraging for the participant. The residence had very few students living there over the Christmas break, there was no meal plan, and the residence halls appeared dark and bleak. Amara noted the atmosphere changed considerably when students began moving in early January, 1999. As time when on, Amara indicated she found residence life to be fun and interesting. She reported having made a lot of friends with both Canadian and international students, and enjoys the multicultural environment.

The compulsory meal plan was noted by the participant as important in terms of quality of residence life. She chose a residence where a meal plan was available because she didn't want to make her own meals. Amara indicated the meals in residence adequate; however, she found the diet to be repetitive and mostly consisted of fried foods. The diet in Turkey consisted of more vegetables, hotter spices and different types of desserts. Structured meal times was also challenging for Amara, especially suppertime. On many occasions, Amara found herself hungry in the evenings and now stocks a supply of various snack items in her room.

When asked about her participation in residence events, Amara indicated she enjoyed attending some of the events such as a spring formal and movie nights. She enjoyed socializing with other residents unless she is sleeping or studying in her room.

Suggestions for Improvement of Residence Life

In discussing possible improvements to the quality of life, Amara outlined the following areas where residence life could be improved:

1. Amara felt residence staff were generally helpful in responding to questions; however, residence staff could enhance their services through making more of an emotional connection with students. She said, "Maybe they (residence staff) will talk to us because sometimes international students get homesick" (Interview 1, line 320). In Amara's experience, she was fortunate to have friends, her cousin who lived in residence, and her parents from Turkey who she could talk to about her feelings. She said students who do not have the support systems could benefit from talking to residence staff members. It was important for Amara to have somebody to talk with about her feelings and thoughts. Without that support, she may have made the decision to return to Turkey.

2. Amara indicated residence staff could provide more information to incoming students about the university, their programs and services. She said, "We need information about university, about jobs, because we did not know what we have to do, we do not know" (Interview 2, line 336). The information she received was limited to payment of fees and some information about the facilities and residence life.

3. While residence facilities were generally adequate, Amara indicated a preference for a

room that included a private washroom. Amara said that other residences that had

private washrooms were, "Just a little more comfortable than Luther" (Interview 1,

line 120).

In general, Amara felt comfortable with residence life and enjoys the friendships

she has developed since December, 1998. She viewed her stay in Regina as temporary

with the main purpose being to gain some proficiency in the English language in order to

broaden career opportunities in Turkey.

Hyo Kyum

Hyo Kyum was a 20-year-old ESL student at the University of Regina. She was

born and raised in southeast Korea. Hyo Kyum indicated her father had a law degree

from a recognized university in Korea; however, he never practiced law and made his

living as manager and owner of a landscaping business. The business fortunately survived

the tough economic conditions faced by Korea approximately 2 years ago when many

business owners went bankrupt and jobs were lost. Hyo Kyum's mother was a home

interior decorator (makes cotton blinds and drapes) and worked out of her own home.

Hyo Kyum had one younger brother, 18 years-of-age who is currently studying carving

(similar to totem poles) in his first year of university in Korea. His goal is to complete his

degree in carving and then take a business course. The plan, according to Hyo Kyum, was

for her brother to eventually take over her father's landscaping business.

Hyo Kyum indicated she had completed three years out of a four-year degree

program in French language and literature at a university in Korea before coming to

Regina in January, 1999, to study English at the University of Regina. Her original plan

approved and supported by her parents was to complete the ESL program by the end of

December, 1999, and then return to Korea to continue in her fourth year of her program.

Hyo Kyum indicated her personal preference would then be to complete her 4th year at

McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, and hoped her parents would support her choice

and provide the necessary financial support. If not, Hyo Kyum indicated she would return

to Korea to complete her program.

Interest in Languages Related to Educational Pursuits

The first issue that emerged from Hyo Kyum's interview in her transitional

experiences was her interest in learning languages and how this related to her decision to

come to the University of Regina. Hyo Kyum reported she has been interested in learning

languages since high school when she took two languages, Japanese and English. Her

interest in learning French as a language peaked around the same time as a result of

looking at some television dramas; in particular, Beverly Hills 90210, where the actors and

actresses spoke French. She found the language intriguing and thought she would like to

pursue learning French. She majored in French language and literature at a Korean

university for three years; however, the language training was limited, and about 80% of

her studies centered around French literature. Hyo Kyum indicated that, initially, her

decision to take French language and literature was motivated by interest only and not so

much by a future career possibilities. She increasingly became aware of the need to learn

English as a second language because it is a highly marketable asset to have if you are

seeking employment.

Hyo Kyum researched several English as a second language (ESL) programs in

Canada since her second year of university and had originally decided on Montreal to take

the program two years ago.   This plan did not unfold due to the poor economic situation in Korea at that time, and Hyo Kyum decided to continue her program in French language and literature in Korea. After three years in that program, Hyo Kyum again researched several ESL programs, and decided that University of Regina was more affordable than going to Montreal, both in living and tuition costs. After completing the ESL program, Hyo Kyum indicated her plan was to continue her education either in Montreal, Quebec or return to Korea where she will complete her degree with her first major in French language and her second major in journalism.

Family Support

A second issue that emerged from the interviews was the support received from family members, both emotionally and financially. Hyo Kyum reported having a very special, but different relationship with each parent. She described her father as protective because she was his only daughter.   He does not encourage Hyo Kyum to enter into relationships with the opposite sex and was extremely hesitant in allowing her to come to Canada to study English on her own. Hyo Kyum indicated her father communicates frequently with her by telephone and plays a major role in life decisions for Hyo Kyum. While being overly protective at times, Hyo Kyum noted her father's compassionate side. Hyo Kyum's relationship with her mother is different in that she is very trusting and supportive of what Hyo Kyum chooses to do. Hyo Kyum indicated her mother encourages her to go on social outings and enjoys her daughter being popular amongst her peers.

Hyo Kyum was supported financially by her parents. Since coming in January, 1999, she indicated her parents pay residence fees, tuition fees, and provide a generous

amount of pocket money each month. More recently, Hyo Kyum was given a credit card

and indicated she enjoys the convenience of a credit card versus drawing money from a

bank account which is what she did during her first few months in Canada.

Future Employment Possibilities

When asked how her language training in French and English fits into future

employment possibilities, Hyo Kyum indicated she had done some thinking about future

employment possibilities in areas such as broadcasting, journalism and translation. She felt

that having English training would be an important asset if she secures a position in any of

the above areas as English is the most important foreign language in Korea. Hyo Kyum

indicated that at the present time, the three most marketable assets for Korean people are

knowledge of English as a second language, possessing a driver's license, and having

computer training.

Choice of Accommodation and Orientation

Another issue that emerged from interviews with Hyo Kyum was her choices of

accommodation and how that affected her orientation to university life . Hyo Kyum first

arrived in Regina in January, 1999, and lived with a homestay family for the first four

months. Being a latecomer into the ESL program, Hyo Kyum missed the orientation

sessions from the ESL teachers and had to rely mostly on her homestay family to provide

assistance in finding her way around the city. She also received support from friends she

made in the ESL program and they assisted her in things such as opening a bank account

and buying a bus pass.

Arrival in Canada

Hyo Kyum's recollection of her feelings when she first arrived in Canada was another important issue that emerged from the interviews. She described her feelings as, "First time is so exciting. No fear. Only excitement. I arrived in Regina and should study" (Interview 1, lines 387-88). She found the experience exhilarating and felt that her dream to come to Canada was finally being realized. She had wanted to come to Canada for the past two years, but had not been successful in doing so because of difficult economic times in Korea.

Hyo Kyum was greeted at the airport by her homestay family and looked forward to an exciting experience. While she experienced some initial nervousness in meeting her homestay family and arriving in a new country, Hyo Kyum reported not experiencing feelings of homesickness during her first few weeks in Canada. Jet lag from the 15-hour-long journey was a problem for Hyo Kyum for at least one week after she arrived.

Language

An important factor in Hyo Kyum's transition experience was her concern about her English and communicating with others, "I have a lot of concern about my English" (Interview 1, line 354). She described her English language speaking skills as, "So-so, not so high, not so low" (Interview 1 , line 364). Hyo Kyum indicated Korean and Japanese students have traditionally been known to be strong in English grammar and spelling skills; however, she was weak in both areas; "In my case, I confuse it with French" (Interview 1, line 356). She reported finding English to be very difficult language to learn, even since high school.

Hyo Kyum reported being the only female Korean student living in the residence at this point in time. Her friends were predominantly classmates from the ESL program and other international students living in residence and they communicated primarily in English. Hyo Kyum reported also having Korean friends and in their company, they communicate mostly in Korean, not English.

Cultural Practices

In adjusting to Canadian cultural practices, Hyo Kyum noted some similarities and differences in culture that stood out for her. One cultural difference of significance for her as she attempts to look at future job prospects in Korea is the difficulty women have in Korea finding employment compared to employment opportunities for women in Canada. Hyo Kyum indicated the best chance for women to find employment in Korea is if they are educated and attractive, in particular, "tall, thin and beautiful" (Interview 1, line 431). Women who are not well educated but very attractive may even have an opportunity for employment given to them. Physical attractiveness is extremely important for women in the workforce, according to Hyo Kyum. She reported having knowledge of woman who actually had surgery on their faces to repair noses, eyelines, etc in order to survive in the job market. Hyo Kyum's self-assessment was that she is too short and would not meet some of the beauty standards required by successful women who have careers.

A second cultural difference noted by Hyo Kyum was personal aspirations and the role of the family in making life choices. Hyo Kyum indicated her father plays a dominant role in her life decisions, a role she felt was common between fathers and daughters in Korean culture. She described her father as a, "typical Korean, very strict" (Interview 1, line 192) who told her, "You don't need to work after university; get married to a very

rich man" (Interview 1, lines 425-426). Hyo Kyum appeared to have similar aspirations in that her goal is to eventually marry a man who is financially secure, have at least middle class status, have a good job, be interested in music, and not be involved in observing strict religious practices. She clearly was not interested in a 3-D man as a potential marriage partner, 3-D meaning "dangerous, difficult, dirty" (Interview 2, line 1704). A 3-D man, according to Hyo Kyum, would be classified as being in the working class in Korean culture.

Hyo Kyum indicated she was raised in a Christian home during her childhood and attended church regularly while living in her family home. Since being away from the family home, attending university in Korea and now at the University of Regina, Hyo Kyum has not continued attending church regularly as she felt "Church was ceremony" (Interview 2, line 1554). She was not supportive of churches like the one she attended in Canada where congregational members were expected to contribute significant sums of money. Hyo Kyum indicated she believed in God, but was not a practicing Christian in the sense that she did not pray and worship. She noted feeling a sense of guilt about not attending church regularly since being away from the family, even to the point of questioning whether or not she is a true Christian person.

Impressions of Residence Life

Choosing residence life in May, 1999, rather than continuing her homestay arrangement was another issue that emerged from the interviews with Hyo Kyum. She felt the move to residence was a positive one because it gave her more opportunities to meet other students in a similar age group. In her homestay arrangement, Hyo Kyum indicated she lived with a family where there were children, ages 10 and 13. While she

enjoyed the companionship of the children, she found she did not have a lot in common and would spend a lot of time alone in her bedroom. Hyo Kyum felt living in residence has been good for her, "I want to meet many new people, many Canadians" (Interview 1, line 590). Hyo Kyum indicated she had some previous knowledge of residence life from her experience living in residence during her first year of university in Korea. She shared a four bedroom suite with three female students and was on a meal plan similar which is similar to her experience here in residence.

Hyo Kyum enjoyed living in residence and found residence "very free" (Interview 2, line 1345) than living in residence in Korea. The rules are relaxed and students have total freedom in having guests visit their rooms. Hyo Kyum noted her experience in residence living in Korea as being very different. In Korea, rules were strictly enforced, and a penalty system was implemented based on a point system. Residents who did not return to residence by 11:00 pm were assessed 1 point; students who came in drunk and were disorderly in residence were assessed 2 points; and, students who left residence without permission were assessed 3 points. Any student who received 4 points during a semester period was automatically released from residence. The only way for students to be outside of residence beyond 11:00 pm was to have request approval from residence staff noting the date(s) they would be away, their destination and signature. Hyo Kyum indicated students in Korea soon used the approval system as a way to have some freedom to come and go as they pleased, sometimes for week at a time.

Mealtimes in residence for Hyo Kyum provided an excellent time to interact with other students, and she indicated she liked the food, "I don't know how to cook. So I can't complain to residence for their cooking" (Interview 1, Lines 601-602). Hyo Kyum

noted she is accustomed to western food as her mother frequently cooked this type of food in her family home. In addition to western food, Hyo Kyum indicated she also loves chocolate and has put on eleven pounds in weight since her arrival in Canada.

Suggestions for Improvement of Residence Life

In discussing improvements that could assist international students in adjustment to residence and university life, Hyo Kyum identified the following factors as important:

1. Hyo Kyum said rules and regulations should be explained thoroughly, especially for international students. She talked about one particular situation where a student had to pay rent for items such as blankets and sheets. At the time this student was given the blankets and sheets he did not understand that he would be charged a rental fee. At the end of the semester, Hyo Kyum recalled him paying $120 for rental of blanket and sheets, "Because he didn't know he should go out and buy a blanket" (Interview 2, line 1456). She indicated she also knew of other examples where international students were charged for renting items.

2. While enjoying the new freedoms living in residence in Canada, Hyo Kyum said some residents may feel uncomfortable having residents of the opposite sex, particularly in their washroom areas, at different times of the day or night. Hyo Kyum recalled, "One time I suffered, when I went to shower, I forgot my towel so I went back to my room again. Suddenly I saw one guy and he see me just like this" (Interview 2, lines 365-367). She found herself somewhat alarmed and expressed concern about others who may experience similar feelings of being uncomfortable.

3. Hyo Kyum felt the residence facilities and furnishings were generally adequate in

comparison to the residence facilities in Korea; however, she indicated her preference would be to live in residence where a private washroom and bath are part of your room. She said, "I do not like to share washroom and shower" (Interview 2, line 599).

Idris

Idris was a 21-year-old student from Turkey who arrived in Canada in September, 1998, to study English in the ESL program. His parents were originally from Bulgaria, but are of Turkish descent, and speak Turk, Bulgarian, and some Russian. Idris indicated his mother and father both had post-secondary degrees, and his mother was employed as an Accounts Manager in a textile company, while his father was a general physician. Idris had a 9-year-old sister living in Turkey who attended a private school until recently when her father lost his job and could no longer afford to pay the fees. This was very disappointing for family members as studying and educational achievement have been highly regarded by the family.

Educational Pursuits and Career Development

The first issue that emerged from interviews with Idris was how his educational pursuits were chosen as a means to broadening career opportunities. After high school, Idris planned to study engineering at a public university in Turkey where he would receive free tuition; however, in order for him to attend a public university, he had to pass two entrance exams. Unfortunately, he was successful in only one of the two exams. As a result, Idris's options were limited to enrolling in a private university in Turkey, a very expensive option. Idris indicated that, in order to attend a private university, he would

have had to move to another city in Turkey, and pay living costs as well as tuition costs. In comparing the costs of attending a private university in Turkey to coming abroad, the costs were comparable. Idris indicated he decided to study abroad because he was also very interested in learning languages, including English and French. He would also enjoy seeing and living in a new country.

Idris and his parents discussed various options such as going to Australia, the United States, and Canada. Idris indicated his parents did not want him to go to Australia because of the distance from Turkey, and tuition and living costs appeared to be cheaper in Canada than the United States. Idris further researched options by attending a lecture in Turkey where various universities from the United States, England and Canada presented information on their programs. Following the lecture, Idris approached the presenter from Regina who was the Marketing Coordinator from the Language Institute at the University of Regina. The Marketing Coordinator explained the ESL program and the procedures related to application to Idris, and also provided information about the various faculties and program offerings at the University of Regina after completion of ESL program. Idris later discussed the ESL program with his parents and then proceeded to fill out the necessary documentation. Idris indicated the University of Regina appeared to be an excellent choice in that it offered both a language study program and an engineering program, two areas he was interested in pursuing in his post-secondary education experience. A longer term plan for Idris would be to move to Montreal, Quebec, where he would take language training in French. He indicated he has enrolled in a non-credit conversation class in French through the ESL program.

Family Support Relationships

A second issue that emerged from the interviews with Idris was the supportive relationship he maintained with his family, especially his parents. Idris indicated his parents fully support him financially in paying his tuition and residence fees. The recent situation that arose with his father losing his job caused Idris to feel some uncertainty about his future. He was told by his parents to continue on with his studies despite their recent financial setback. Idris indicated he was concerned about his parents situation and may have to return to Turkey after completing his ESL program.

In discussing his emotional attachment to his family, Idris felt that moving abroad has helped him establish some emotional independence. While he described his relationship with his parents as positive, he also said the relationship with his parents had changed since his first arrival in Canada in September 1998. Idris indicated he now handles life situations and experiences on his own, independent from his family. "I live alone here and I have no relatives here. I have to do everything by myself" (Interview 1, line 197).

Previous Travel Experiences

When asked what other factors contributed to easing his transition into university and residence life, previous travel experiences emerged as an important factor. Idris indicated he has done some travelling to other countries on his own and felt it was not a big deal for him to be living abroad. He reported travelling to countries including Bulgaria, Switzerland, Italy and Greece on his own and sometimes with his family. Idris indicated he felt comfortable being in different lands and cultures, and learned from previous travel experiences how to access information he needs.

Arriving in Canada

A fourth issue that emerged from the interviews was Idris's experiences when he first arrived in Canada. Idris reported feeling excited coming to "a new country and new people" (Interview 1, line 159). He was met at the airport by a Turk student who was already enrolled in the ESL program and was familiar with residence and university life. The Turk student drove Idris to residence, assisted him in getting settled in his room in residence, and showed him around the residence and university facilities. Idris indicated being in a different country with different customs, laws, etc. was something he was familiar with in his previous travel experiences.

Orientation

Orientation to the residence, university services and facilities, and Canadian culture was another issue that emerged from the interviews. Idris indicated he attended several Orientation sessions presented by ESL teachers. Topic areas included Canadian life, acceptable social norms and rules for the ESL program, services such as banking and bus, location of restaurants and malls, nightspots, etc. The topic area that stood out for Idris was the discussion on acceptable social norms. Idris explained that for discussion purposes, male and female students were separated into two groups and each told how to approach the opposite sex, what were acceptable and unacceptable behaviors, how to handle oneself in nightspots or bars, and things such as, "What we should say to girls and how we should we speak to them" (Interview 1, line 63). Idris said the discussion was useful; however, he viewed a lot of similarities in what they were saying about Canadian customs and social norms to those in Turkey. He said, "Life is not too different in Turkey and Canada" (Interview 1, line 71). Idris indicated the sessions may have been more

useful for other international students such as the Asian population, whose customs and culture in his opinion had more differences from Canadian culture.

Language and Social Barriers

When asked if language was important in Idris's transition to residence and university life, Idris indicated he felt insecure in his ability to speak English with people and stated, "If I meet new people, sometimes I am afraid to speak with them. Sometimes I am afraid to speak in front of a Canadian" (Interview 1, line 76). Idris indicated he knew some English when he first arrived in Canada in September 1998, because he had taken English courses in high school. Idris also indicated he spoke English with his classmates from the ESL program and other international students; however, when he is with his Turk friends, he spoke Turk language because it was easier. Idris felt more comfortable with Turk and other international students than Canadian students. He recalled some occasions when he sat with other Canadians at lunchtime, and, "They don't pay attention too much" (Interview 2, line 493). Idris indicated that improving his speaking ability and level of understanding in the English language would alleviate some of the above social barriers with Canadian students. He stated, "I think if I speak more English, maybe the problem is changing" (Interview 1, line 87).

Peer Support

Another issue that emerged from the interviews was Idris's reliance on peers for support and friendship. Idris indicated his peers were mostly international students who provided important input for him when he had to make a decision. He felt that, because they were international students, they could better understand his problems and he could learn from their personal experiences. Idris stated, "They have to be friends because they

can't speak with Canadians and they can't be close friends with Canadians and they have to find some friends. They are understanding of each other" (Interview 1, lines 92-93).

Cultural Practices

During the interviews, Idris discussed various areas where he noticed cultural differences in Canada. Religion was one area he noted as being culturally different, being of the Muslim faith. Idris indicated he did not practice his religion formally in Regina even though there is a Muslin community here in Regina who attend Mosque on a regular basis. Idris indicated on occasion, he felt guilty for not practicing his religious beliefs formally; however, his sense was that, "Older people believe more than younger people" (Interview 2, line 747). He also noted the rules about drinking alcohol, dating, etc. in the Muslim community were too strict. Idris noted that location alone, being in Regina, was not a barrier to him practicing his religious beliefs as he did not believe or live any differently in his home country, Turkey.

Dating life in Canada for Idris had some similarities to Turkey, but also some cultural differences. Idris was pleasantly surprised to find Canadian girls respond immediately to a request to go out on a date. In Turkey, "Turk girls won't go right away. They sort of push you away" (Interview 2, line 651). Idris also noted that, even in a dating relationship in Canada, "Everyone pays their own bill" (Interview 2, line 669). In Turkey, his experience was that males typically were expected to pay the expenses in a dating relationship.

When asked about a long-term commitment such as marriage, Idris was quick to state, "For marriage, I prefer a Turkish girl" (Interview 2, line 680). He explained that, in future years, problems would likely arise in opinions about life, marriage and children.

Furthermore, Idris explained that Turk males are the main decision-makers in families, a custom that might be hard for Canadian women to accept.

Choice of Accommodation

Idris saw his choice of accommodation as important in his transition experience. When he first arrived in Canada in September 1998, he stayed with a Homestay family for his first three months in Canada before moving into residence at the university. Idris described his homestay experience as boring and said the distance he had to travel to the university inhibited his ability to establish friendships with other students. Since moving into residence Idris reported being happier because, "Everybody is the same age. I mean 18 to 24 or 25. And most people are young. I mean, I feel more comfortable with the young" (Interview 1, line 83). Idris enjoyed meeting both Canadian and international students in his age group and it was important for him to be integrated in the residence community. Idris indicated he enjoyed participating in residence functions such as movie nights and dances, and occasionally would play pool or watch television in the games area with other residents.

When asked about his dining experiences, Idris expressed some displeasure with the residence meal plan and food choices; however, he felt the alternative, cooking his own meals, would be worse. Structured meal times was mentioned as an important issue for Idris, especially the supper hour. If, for some reason, Idris missed the mealtime, he had to buy or order in food in the evenings because he was hungry.

Suggestions for Improvement of Residence Life

Idris identified the following as ways residence life could be improved:

1. Although Idris's experiences with residence staff were generally positive, he said there were too many rules and residents needed more freedom. While he agreed that rules about noise levels, drinking in public, etc. had to be observed by residents, he said residence staff were at times harsh in their enforcement of the rules. He recalled, "One time I drank in the common area and my floor Resident Assistant told me I cannot drink" (Interview 1, line 256). While Idris commented that rules were necessary, he said, to strictly enforce the rules, "Sometimes it bothers people" (Interview 1, line 261).

2. Idris believed residences should promote more communication between students, especially those of similar cultures and backgrounds. Because Idris was in ESL, he was made aware of other Turk students who were arriving at later dates. He felt socializing with members of the same ethnic and cultural community was important, especially for newcomers. Idris noted, "When I came here there was two Turk students who helped me" (Interview 2, line 827).

3. Idris indicated the compulsory meal plan was necessary for residents; however, he said meal times were too structured and should be more flexible. He suggested a later mealtime hour for supper would allow students more flexibility, "I think it should be between 7:00 pm and 8:00 pm" (Interview 2, line 618).

4. Idris stated the residence should provide more information to students prior to their arrival. Other than the information he received through the ESL program, he had very

little information about the university.

The above issues captured the main thoughts of Idris in describing his transition to residence and university life.

Taro

Taro was 22 years-of-age from Japan and a student in the ESL program since January 1, 1999. His permanent residence was his family home in Osaka, one of the largest cities in Japan. Taro indicated his parents separated four years ago, and he lived with his father and 18-year-old sister until coming to Canada. His father had a doctorate degree and was employed as a scientist with a scientific company in Japan. His sister resides with her father in Japan and is taking social work at a local university. Taro noted he has limited contact with his mother, but sees her on occasion. Both parents were supportive of Taro's decision to study abroad, although the financial support came from his father.

Education and Potential Career Opportunities

The first issue that emerged from the interviews with Taro that shaped his transitional experience was his previous education and anxiety about career opportunities when he returns to Japan. Taro indicated he studied English literature at a private university in Japan for three years before coming to Canada in September 1998. During the fall months of 1998, Taro studied tourism in a private school in Vancouver, British Columbia where he lived with a homestay family. Taro noted his homestay family heavily

influenced his decision to come to University of Regina to study English, "They told me good things about Saskatchewan" (Interview 1, line 153).

Taro stated his future plans were to complete the ESL program in Regina and then return to Japan to complete his fourth year in English literature. With an English literature degree, Taro indicated he likely could obtain employment as a teacher in Japan; however, he felt a teaching position would very hard work for relatively low pay in Japan, especially in a public school. A preferred option for Taro would be to obtain employment with a tourism and/or hospitality international company.

Taro indicated he felt anxious and uncertain about his future, "When I think of my future sometimes, like what I am doing, sometimes I feel not good" (Interview 2, line 901). He hoped the education he receives from the ESL program will broaden opportunities for employment when he returns to Japan because, "Japanese economy was not good right now" (Interview 2, line 915).

Choosing the ESL Program in Saskatchewan

Another issue that emerged from the interviews with Taro was the number of factors that influenced him to choose the ESL program at the University of Regina to study English. Taro indicated he researched various universities and found the Language Institute in Regina interesting because students could enroll in other non-credit language courses while studying English in the ESL program (Taro indicated he was currently studying Spanish). Word-of-mouth was also a factor in that his homestay family and friends from Vancouver told him about the ESL program and life in Saskatchewan. Taro liked the idea of "countryside and quiet" (Interview 2, line 273). In addition, the cost of

tuition was lower than other universities and other countries (e.g., United States,

England). Taro indicated feeling safe was also a very important factor in his decision to

come to Regina. He described his life here in Regina as "safe, not so much crime. I don't

hear, or hardly hear sirens because when I was in Vancouver, always. When I was in

Osaka, more always" (Interview 1, lines 233-235).

Interest in Travel and new Cultures

When asked what factors contributed to Taro's ease of transition into the

University of Regina, Taro indicated his interest in travel and living in different cultural

surroundings. "I like to see different cultures or people. I didn't want to finish just seeing

one culture. I wanted to see other cultures, other than my country" (Interview 1, lines

204-206). Travelling to different countries was important for Taro during his high school

and university years in Japan. As a high school student, Taro participated in a homestay

program in New Zealand where he studied English for one month. Since then, he traveled

extensively to various countries such as Korea, China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Australia,

Singapore, and Vietnam mostly on his own.

Arrival in Canada

Another issue that emerged from the interviews with Taro was his thoughts about

his first arrival in Canada. As mentioned earlier, Taro had already lived in Vancouver,

British Columbia, for about three months before moving to Regina to study in the ESL

program. During that time he lived in a homestay family environment and was able to learn

about various Canadian customs and lifestyle. This experience, along with his previous

travel experiences to various countries, helped ease his transition into university and residence life.

Taro indicated he was met at the airport by an employee of the ESL program and taken to her personal residence for dinner that evening. He then was taken to residence where he was met by a Resident Assistant and given his keys for his room. Taro noted that, because he moved into residence between semesters, there were very few students living there. He said he felt very much alone during that time and frequently called his father and sister in Japan. Taro recalled experiencing feelings of homesickness during his first weeks in Regina; however, those diminished as time went on and he began to develop friendships with other residents and ESL classmates.

Orientation

When asked whether the orientation for new ESL students delivered by the ESL teachers was helpful in easing Taro's transition to university life, his response was, "It was basic stuff that I can do by myself" (Interview 2, line 617). He found the information about life in Canada, university services and facilities, the banking systems, malls, and so forth somewhat useful, but indicated he was capable of finding things out for himself.

Family Support

Family support was another issue that emerged from the interviews with Taro. Although both his father and mother were supportive of Taro's decision to study abroad, he indicated the financial support comes mainly from his father. Taro explained that in Japanese culture, parents are expected to support their children until they complete their education. He stated, "90% of students are financially supported by their parents"

(Interview 2, line 933), and the other 10% of students received scholarships. Taro indicated that, even though financial support from parents is culturally accepted, Japanese students do work part-time while attending university, but for pocket money only. He had a part-time job sorting mail in the post office during his first few years of university.

Language and Social Relationships

Another issue that emerged from the interviews was language skills in English and how that affected Taro in developing social relationships with others. Taro indicated he had some basic knowledge of the English language when he first arrived in Canada and felt fairly comfortable with other English-speaking people. His experience with Canadians, particularly students, was that they, "speak a lot of slang and speak fast" (Interview 2, line 667). In conversations with Canadian students, Taro found he could not always "catch the main words," (Interview 2, line 673) and felt it would be inappropriate to interrupt. He said, "I should interrupt but you know I don't like interrupting" (Interview 2, line 116). This sometimes resulted in him feeling even more distant in relating socially. International students were easier to understand for Taro because they spoke English at a slower pace, even though they all had different accents from their native languages.

Taro had already worked out a plan to continue practicing his language skills when he returns to Japan. For English, he could access several English channels on television and radio; for languages such as Spanish, Taro would have to learn mostly from radio. Taro found television to be very useful in learning and understanding English, "You get an idea from their body language" (Interview 2, line 707), even if you do not understand the words.

Cultural Practices

In discussing cultural practices in different countries, Taro identified the following cultural similarities and differences important to him:

1. Taro reported being raised as a Protestant in a Christian Church and attended church services regularly with his father and sister. Since living in residence, Taro attended religious services on an occasional basis and found his religious background had more similarities to Canadian culture than other international cultures, especially from Middle east countries.

2. Taro indicated his parents have been separated now for approximately four years. In Japanese culture, Taro explained that the wife controls her husband's salary. Since his parent's marital separation, Taro's father controlled his own salary. This was important for Taro in that his mother had been part of a religious group that demanded large sums of money in order to participate, and "she spent a lot of money" (Interview 2, line 837). Taro described the religious group as a very strange cult, and expressed the view that this custom in Japan has to be changed where both marriage partners become responsible for contributing and controlling financial resources for the household.

3. Taro described most Japanese people as having a shy nature and observed in his classroom experiences that Japanese students sometimes use laughter as a way of

coping when they are not understanding an English discussion or conversation. Taro's view was that Japanese students, "Don't want country people to know about their lack of skill" (Interview 2, line 1253), and engage in laughter instead. At times, Taro indicated the ESL teachers displayed very little understanding of this and would discipline students for their behavior. Later in the interview, Taro indicated he, personally, used laughter sometimes to cover up his own feelings of inadequacy and this was often misinterpreted in a Canadian cultural context. This was the reason for his sensitivity to this cultural difference.

Residence Life

Another issue that emerged from the interviews with Taro was choosing to live in residence rather than a homestay arrangement. Taro chose residence because he thought he could improve his English skills as he could, "Have help with speaking English anytime" (Interview 1, line 668). He also thought living in residence with other Canadian students would provide him the opportunity to understand Canadian culture and customs. Meeting Canadian students and developing friendships was also important for Taro. His original expectation upon arrival in Regina was that he would be make new Japanese and Canadian friends to hang out with, "Just Canadian students or just me on my own" (Interview 1, line 468). Instead, Taro found his friends were mostly international students.

Taro stated that, in residence, two groups of students socialized and ate together at mealtimes - the Canadian students and the international students. In his opinion, reasons for the separate groups were the inability of international students to speak

fluently in English and different cultural backgrounds. Taro reported feeling inadequate speaking English with Canadian students and sometimes avoided social interactions. When asked about his participation in residence events such as dances or movie nights, Taro stated he had not participated in residence events because he was busy studying and completing school assignments. After further probing, Taro admitted he was hesitant in participating because he thought it might not be fun for him. His shy and reserved nature, compounded by his personal feelings of inadequacy in communicating and understanding the English language were some of the reasons he gave for his lack of participation. Taro noted he realized that active participation is necessary, "I did a little, but kind of mistake since I came here. I used to hang out with international students so this means Canadian's can't enter. Hanging out with all the same people separate many, many groups" (Interview 2, lines 162-164).

Suggestions for Improvement of Residence Life

Taro suggested some ways that could assist international residents in adjustment to residence and university life:

1. While Taro felt the meal plan was an excellent feature of residence since he had not experienced cooking for himself, the diet was limited and repetitive. Taro felt that opportunities should be made available to international students to cook their own foods on designated occasions. He said, "Maybe I can show, introduce, like how Japanese food is to other Canadian students" (Interview 1, lines 710-711). This would break up what the routine diet and other students, especially Canadians, could benefit

from experiencing foods from other cultures.

2. Taro indicated residences should seek additional ways to encourage participation in events or activities. This would allow for more interaction between international and Canadian students. He suggested, "How about having an event to introduce international culture or international food when you have many international students in the same place (Interview 2, lines 1411-1413).

3. While the facilities at the residence were found to be adequate by Taro, Taro felt the walls in the rooms could be made more pleasant to the eye either through color or having pictures on the wall.

At the end of the two interviews, Taro indicated he felt the interview experience was useful because it offered him the opportunity to provide a life summary of his experiences. He said he was, "Able to think about some of the choices he made since coming to Canada" (Interview 1).

Yuri

Yuri was a 22-year-old international student from Iran registered in the Faculty of Engineering. He arrived at the University of Regina on January 1, 1999, on a student visa for one year. Up until the time Yuri came to Canada, he resided with his family in a very large city, Tehran, Iran. He stated he had one sister, 20 years-of-age, who was lived in the family home in Tehran and is taking economics in university.

Yuri completed 2½ years in electronic engineering at a large university in Tehran. His plan was to complete his program in Engineering at the University of Regina and then continue toward working on a graduate degree in Business Administration at the University of Regina.

Language Training

The first issue that emerged from the interviews with Yuri was his previous training in English since the age of 11, and how that eased his transition into residence and university life. Yuri stated, "In Iran, it was something that anybody intellectual should speak English" (Interview 1, lines 483-484). His parents registered him in a language institute to study English until the age of 15 when he transferred to a better language institute where the teachers and books were mostly American. In university, Yuri attempted to continue his study of English but could not enrol in an English class because of high enrollments. He then made the decision to continue studying on his own, and translated reports on electronics, economics, and even the martial arts. Yuri noted he and his family also watched three or four American movies each week to help improve their English skills.

Yuri stated that, prior to coming to the University of Regina, he wrote and passed the English Language International Testing System (IELTS), a language exam that is accepted by all Commonwealth countries except the United States. He felt his English language skill was adequate to comfortably adjust to and fit into Canadian culture.

Educational Background

In addition to language training, another issue emerging from the interviews involved Yuri's educational background and how that related to his transition experience.

Yuri felt his excellent study habits contributed to his achievements both in Iran as well as here at the University of Regina. In high school, he spent his final year in a private school where criteria for entry were based on high academic achievement and job status of parents. For university, Yuri explained that the educational environment in Iran was very competitive and that in order to attend a prestigious university, he had to pass two very difficult entrance exams. Yuri succeeded in passing these two exams and went on to complete 2½ years of university majoring in electronics. The commute to university for Yuri was about 2½ hours each way, and he found this quite difficult and tiring, especially in a highly polluted, overcrowded city. University life for Yuri was not an enjoyable experience because of the restrictive environment. Yuri stated he initially was very excited about going to university; however, "When I went I was very shocked, it was very awful. I couldn't stand the environment (Interview 1, line 204). Approximately half of the students were from a military or paramilitary background. In addition, "It was very bad conditions, especially for girls" (Interview 1, line 210). "They had their bags checked to see if they don't have costumes or make up. You think it's strange; we think it's strange too" (Interview 1, lines 212-214).

Decision to Study in Canada

Yuri stated his initial decision to come to Canada was not supported by all family members. He explained that, in Iran, two years of military service was required for all young males beginning after high school at about 18 years of age, or after graduating from a university in Iran. The only exceptions were for students like Yuri who were granted a visa to study abroad and agreed to pay a substantial amount of money to be held in trust by the government. He stated, "It was very hard to get to Canada. I was one of those

rare people that could come to Canada because it is very hard to leave the country without the permission from the military service" (Interview 1, lines 107-109).

Yuri reported his father and mother as having mixed reactions to his decision. His father said it was not good for a man to leave his country and not finish his military services. Yuri and his mother felt differently; it was a waste of time to go into military service for two long years, the first three months in war training and the rest of the time working in some type of job for the military.

Yuri explained that, in his family and culture, the mother was mainly responsible for the children, not the father, "He does not interfere with our growing up" (Interview 1, line 152). His father was busy enough working three jobs to make a living because of the poor economy in Iran; he has a full-time job as a professor at the university, he runs a home business, and he participates in research projects.

Yuri also noted another reason for wanting to come to Canada to study and live. He wanted to have, "a feeling that he was under control" (Interview 2, line 660) rather than, "feeling he was not free" (Interview 2, line 662). He explained that in his country, government structures have been relatively unstable and can change quickly and significantly affect life choices related to career, job opportunities, etcetera. The instability is upsetting for Yuri and he seeks to maintain a sense of security and freedom in making life choices.

Yuri spoke of his early childhood when he and his family spent two years in the United States. His father had a scholarship to get his doctorate degree from a university in the United States and had some job opportunities offered to him. Instead, his father felt he should return to his home country. For Yuri, he said, "I can't understand that, because

it was a very big mistake. If we had stayed in the United States, we would be citizens by now and part of that society, not a foreigner" (Interview 1, lines 243-245). Yuri reported having numerous discussions with his family about moving to the United States and/or Canada, and his mother told him recently that his father was no longer objecting to moving outside his home country. For Yuri, this was good news and he hopes to have his parents and sister come in the next few years.

Yuri indicated another reason for choosing to study in Canada was the experiences of family relatives living in different countries throughout the world. He had listened to their experiences and stated, "I have many experiences of different relatives that are living in other countries (e.g., Canada, United States, Germany, Norway, etc.), they have good jobs, good lives" (Interview 2, lines 1369-1371). His closest relatives live in Toronto, Texas and California and all of them, according to Yuri, are enjoying prosperous and meaningful lives.

Yuri recounted a time in his third year of university when his dream of studying outside his home country felt real. Yuri indicated a discussion with a friend about going to Canada as an immigrant prompted him to begin contacting all the Embassies in the country. Out of all his applications it worked out that he would come to Canada. Yuri contacted 12 universities in Canada and received admittance from the University of Regina. There were many barriers to overcome, the largest one being that his country would not allow him official transcripts because he did not complete his military service. The University of Regina responded by allowing admittance with the provision that he would work out course descriptions and similarities with the Faculty of Engineering. In addition, large sums of money were required to give to the government because he did not

go into the military, and to satisfy requirements for the student visa that he had sufficient financial sponsorship in Canada. The financial commitment was met by Yuri's family and his uncle in the United States.

Family Relationships

The strength of family relationships, including an extended family, was another issue that emerged in the interviews with Yuri. He felt he had drawn closer to his family since being in Canada and said he communicated daily by e-mail and telephone. He also conveyed a feeling of increased independence in making financial and personal decisions. Perseverence and optimism characterized Yuri's attitude about being in Canada away from family and friends. His father told him before coming to Canada to expect a hard life where other people might tease or insult him. Yuri's response was that, "I said to myself that it is natural and it is normal that I will have difficulty at the beginning, but I can get rid of those" (Interview 2, lines 1365-1367).

Yuri indicated he was financially supported by both his parents and an uncle who lives in the United States. His parents paid the fee for leaving the military service to study abroad, tuition and residence fees; his uncle from the United States paid the amount of money required to be in a Canadian bank account prior to obtaining the visa to come to Canada. Yuri said, "It is very important for me and any family member to go to university, so it is like an investment" (Interview 2, line 96). Yuri was appreciative of the support he receives, and plans to pay back the money he owes. He said, "For my parents it's not easy at all. It is possible that they have to sell their car or something like that to pay" (Interview 2, lines 2159-2160).

Yuri was excited about an opportunity to apply for a 4-month co-op work placement through the engineering faculty. Up until recently, international students were not allowed placement in a co-op position because they were on a student visa. If Yuri is successful in obtaining a position, he noted he will save most of his earnings to pay tuition in the next academic year, and this will alleviate some of the financial pressure for his family.

Arriving in Regina

Yuri arrived in Regina late in the evening on New Year's Day, January 1, 1999. His journey from Iran lasted 34 hours and he was very tired upon his arrival. Yuri indicated that because of the late hour of arrival, the airport was dark and security personnel were locking doors. He asked for their assistance to find a hotel near the university and they gave him the number of the Imperial Motel. He called a cab and went to the Imperial Hotel where he was met by the receptionist and arranged for payment and a key to his room. Yuri stayed at the Imperial Motel for three days, until Monday, January 4, 1999 when he called the International Office at the University of Regina and got in touch with a staff member who picked him up at the hotel and drove him to the residence.

Yuri indicated that the three days spent in the motel were long and quiet. His only contact with people was in the restaurant or attending the front desk to ask a question. After moving into residence, Yuri was very busy attending to details around payment of fees, location of university services, banking commitments, and so forth. He also met with a professor from the Faculty of Engineering to discuss what courses would be accepted as

credit toward his engineering program. Yuri reported feeling very positive about his new life in Canada and never had second thoughts about his move here.

Cultural Differences

When asked whether about cultural differences between Iran and Canada, Yuri indicated freedoms associated with religious beliefs stood out from his experience. He stated, "Religion has very, very deep roots" in families from my home country (Interview 2, lines 1617-1618). He recounted an expression used in Iran, "They are religious because of the scare of hell, not the love of heaven" (Interview 2, lines 1625-1626). Yuri stated approximately 99% of the population would identify themselves as Muslims, although, in his opinion, most Muslims do not practice their faith in that they consume alcohol and rarely attend Mosque. Yuri explained that Iran is not overly tolerant of other religious beliefs or people who publicly profess to be atheists. In Muslim tradition, he says, "One who says he's atheist will be killed, they will not do that in my country, but there might be problems for you" (Interview 1, lines 559-560). Religious beliefs, therefore, were basically kept private with families and relatives. Yuri believed Canadians are much freer to express their religious beliefs publicly. He found it amazing to find Bibles in the dresser drawers of the hotel room. Furthermore, he observed that many Canadians celebrate special religious holidays such as Easter.

In learning about Canadian culture and customs, Yuri indicated finding partners for marriage was also significant cultural difference. Again, he felt that Canadian culture had more freedoms in terms of choice of a partner and ceremony. In traditional Iranian culture, Yuri explained that families were included in the process of finding suitable marriage partners, and that class status played an important part. In a traditional marriage,

"the boy will owe the girl a huge amount of money" (Interview 2, line 1802), an amount which is owed but not actually paid at the time. The boy will also, "Buy a complete set of jewellery and clothes" (Interview 2, line 1842) for the girl. "The girl brings the house furniture" (Interview 2, lines 1818-1819). This tradition, according to Yuri, was very costly and sets up barriers for people to marry, especially those earning lower incomes. They simply could not afford to follow this traditional custom and this often resulted in the couple not marrying. Yuri's viewed a prospective marriage partner to be of similar intellectual level and be knowledgeable about the environment. In terms of ceremony, Yuri thought both male and female should share expenses, purchase inexpensive clothing, and have a simple ceremony with only a ring exchanged.

Choosing Residence Life

When asked why he chose residence life for accommodation, Yuri said he wanted to live in residence because of the convenience of being right on campus, and he also saw it as one of the greatest opportunities to have friends from many different countries including Canada. He was comforted by the help received from residence staff, especially the Resident Assistant who showed him his room and explained where the location of the dining room, laundry room, common recreational areas, and so forth. He had a problem shutting his bedroom door and the Resident Assistant called maintenance on his behalf to have it repaired.

Yuri indicated his father's parting words that he would have a difficult adjustment in living alone were powerful for him during his initial adjustment to residence and university life. His optimistic attitude and sheer determination help through the first month of living in residence. He said, "I was afraid of loneliness and I made myself quite

ready for a very hard life" (Interview 1, lines 523-524); however, his experience had been positive. Yuri said he enjoyed watching television, socializing at mealtimes with Canadian and international friends, and participating in other social activities.

Yuri's greatest fear was that he could not make friends. He thought, "Some people would ignore me, insult me because of my race or country" (Interview 1, line 630), but that has not been his experience. He reported having made friends from Bangladesh, Nigeria, France, Belgium and Canada. He said, "I found Canadian people very good people" (Interview 1, line 534).

Noise levels required some adjustment as Yuri's home environment in Iran with his family was very quiet. He now says, "Our quad is very noisy, but I like that because when they make noise they bother me, but when they go away for weekends, I was wishing that they were here" (Interview 1, lines 529-530).

In discussing participation in residence events, Yuri reported rarely participating in residence events, especially if they are held outside of residence. Yuri indicated this was largely due to his group of friends not wanting to attend these events and that he does not like loud music and to be in social environments where there are many people you don't know.

Suggestions for Improvement of Residence Life

Yuri suggested the following as ways to ease the transition for international students to residence and university life:

1. An orientation session delivered by residence staff would be useful to incoming students to learn how to access services and locations of buildings. He said, "I think it

would be a good idea if they had an orientation to show where everything is" (Interview 2, lines 2057-2059). Yuri said, "In Canada, tell them (international students) not to be shy asking questions" (Interview 2, lines 2062-2064).

2. Residence staff should be knowledgeable about the traditions and customs of other cultures. This would increase their understanding of how to handle certain situations.

3. Yuri said residence staff should, "Be in touch and talk with international students; it is very important" (Interview 2, lines 2197-2198). Yuri's observation was that international students were sometimes shy in nature due perhaps to language/communication abilities and their unfamiliarity with the environment.

4. Residence activities/events should attract both Canadian and international students in order that each can share in each others culture. Yuri stated, "I think an international potluck ceremony would be a good idea" (Interview 2, lines 2595-2596).

5. Amenities such as Computer labs would be particularly attractive for students like Yuri who had had to go outside of residence to access a computer. With e-mail as a primary source of communication with family for international students, access to computers in a residential environment becomes increasingly important. Yuri indicated the residence had two computers in their Library but these computers could not be used for e-mail until after 4:00 pm daily. He said, "It was not very convenient" (Interview 1, line 811), so he used the computer lab in the Education building at the University of Regina.

6. For residences where there was both Canadian and international students, the staff, particularly the Resident Assistants, should be a mix between Canadian and

international. Yuri stated, "If he is a Resident Assistant and he has been in Canada for awhile, he can help me as another international student" (Interview 2, lines 2248-2250).

7. Residences need to be clear and detailed about policies and regulations.

8. Residents need to feel a sense security and having security staff available on weekends to handle any disputes was useful. He recalled one experience where, "Some people drank too much and started fights" (Interview 2, lines 2311-2313), and were removed from residence by security staff.

The freedom to make personal decisions was very important to Yuri. Since his arrival in Canada, he felt more secure and had gained a sense of certainty in making decisions about future educational and employment endeavors.

Marta

Marta was 29 years old and a student in the ESL program at the University of Regina. She arrived in Regina on January 8, 1999 from Bogota, a large city in Columbia, South America. Her parents divorced several years ago and she resided with her mother and one brother who is 23 years old. Marta reported her mother being employed as manager of an advertising agency in Columbia, and her father was a retired colonel in the airforce. In the fall of 1999, her brother moved to Connecticut in the United States to study mechanical engineering. Marta explained that most of her aunts, uncles and one grandmother live in Connecticut and only her mother and father, and one cousin are left in Columbia.

Marta indicated she completed a five-year undergraduate degree in administration at a university. She then worked as Manager of Administration for a marketing company that marketed items such as cell phones, diapers, and so forth, and conducted written and telephone surveys on behalf of other organizations. Her responsibilities as Manager of Administration included handling financial matters, overseeing the staff's physical environment, and hiring staff. She left the company in December, 1998 to pursue language training in the ESL program. She stated, "I wanted a change because I wanted to work in a larger company so I can learn more" (Interview 1, lines 196-197).

Choice of Study and Career Development

The first issue that emerged from the interviews with Marta was her choice of study in preparation for a different career, given the limited job opportunities in Columbia. She stated, "In Columbia, it is not easy to find jobs because of economic problems" (Interview 1, lines 175-176). In the past few years, many workers have been laid off and the economy depressed. Marta said, "My parents don't want me to go back because they know I will not work, so they are happy I am here" (Interview 1, lines 177-178). Learning English as a second language would be a great asset when Marta returns to Columbia to seek employment. There was no doubt in her mind that she would be returning to Columbia to work, "When I finish this study, I have to go back and work because I will need money" (Interview 2, lines 93-95). Marta saw other benefits as well such as having the opportunity to travel and learning about other cultures.

Marta indicated her plan after completing the ESL program in June was to pursue studies in an undergraduate program in Social Work. She felt her administrative background, coupled with social work classes, would allow her the opportunity to work in

the human resources field. Marta noted she enjoyed working with people and felt she

would enjoy that particular field of work.

Previous Travel Experience

A second issue that emerged in easing Marta's transition was her previous travel

experience. Since her high school years, she had traveled to other countries and was

interested in learning the customs and languages of each country. She stated she liked to

learn languages and that in Columbia a lot of people are interested in learning another

language. At age 14, Marta participated in an exchange program in the United States for

one year during her high school years. She also traveled with her family to Europe,

United States and throughout South America.

Decision to Study ESL in Canada

A third issue that emerged from the interviews centered around Marta's reasons

for deciding to study ESL in Canada. First, Marta stated the cost of studying English in

Canada was almost half of the cost to attend a similar institution in the United States.

Second, while having the option to study in Connecticut and stay with relatives, Marta

said she wanted to live separated from her family, including extended family, "I told them I

wanted to live alone for awhile. I have always lived with my parents in Columbia. That's

the custom in Columbia until you get married" (Interview 1, lines 126-129). Third, word

of mouth was a factor in Marta's decision. Marta had a girlfriend and her brother who

came to study in the ESL program and they told her the program was good.

Arrival in Canada

Marta's experience arriving in Canada was particularly memorable for her in

describing her transition experience. She arrived at the Regina airport on January 8, 1999,

and was met by an ESL staff member. She said, "I felt nervous and I felt alone; it was difficult" (Interview 1, 249). Marta described the ESL staff member as being very nice to her and told her that if she needed anything, he would help her. He drove her to the university, showed her where to show up for her ESL classes on her first day, and then took her to residence where they were met by a Resident Assistant. Marta felt the ESL staff member was very helpful to her and said, "If I came on my own and no one picked me up I would be lost" (Interview 1, lines 283-284).

Upon arrival at residence, a Resident Assistant did some paperwork, gave Marta her room keys and showed her to her room. Marta indicated the Resident Assistant gave her phone number to her and told her that if she needed something, she could call her. She also told Marta that she would be available anytime to go for a walk, talk to her or maybe even go to a movie. Marta felt comforted by the Resident Assistant during her initial adjustment, but indicated she has not pursued getting together, "It's more like my fault that I don't go to her to say, 'Okay, let's go to a movie or something'" (Interview 2, lines 877-878). Marta expressed some minor irritations in residence during her first few days, "I didn't eat for one day because I didn't know the hours" (Interview 1, lines 306-307). She also was frustrated with her inability to communicate effectively with other people, even to say she is lost and needs help finding something.

Marta indicated that, while she received support from the ESL staff member and resident assistant, they "Were not like friends that your feel comfortable around" (Interview 2, lines 787-788), like the people from Columbia she met during her first few days in Regina. Her friends from Columbia were most helpful to her and showed her bus schedules, how to access telephone service, location of malls, and so forth, "If it were not

for them it would be difficult. They showed me how to do everything" (Interview 1, lines 254-255). "I know that the Columbians who come here (University of Regina) do not have problems getting support and assistance" (Interview 1, line 339).

Family Support

Another issue that emerged from the interviews was the difficult adjustment Marta experienced in being separated from family and the support she received from family. Marta reported feeling very depressed and homesick during her first few months in Canada. Access to family members, especially her mother, was extremely important to her and she would call her frequently when she was insecure about something or needed someone to talk to. She would tell her mother, "I don't want to be here, I want to go back" (Interview 2, line 840). After a few months, Marta felt more settled, "Now I'm so happy and I want to continue living here. The people are so friendly" (Interview 2, lines 843-844).

Financial Responsibility

Marta spoke of her decision to assume financial responsibility as an important issue in her transition experience. When she first arrived in Canada to study English, her parents supported her financially. She now has decided that she had to assume the financial responsibility, "I am 29 years old and my parents are always paying me so I don't want that. I want to have my own responsibility. I think this is better" (Interview 2, lines 97-100). She discussed her recent decision with her parents and they are supportive of that decision. Marta indicated that, after she completed her ESL program and was in the general student population at the university, she will attempt to find work on campus. In addition, she made application for a student loan from Columbia.

Orientation

An issue that emerged from interviews with Marta was the orientation she received from the ESL teachers. She found the orientation sessions to be helpful and enjoyed the tours outside the university to the banks and malls. Marta also found the information about Canadian customs and life useful but somewhat condescending given her age and life experience. She said, "They talked about how we (females) should behave. If we are offered a drink from a stranger we should say 'No'" (Interview 1, lines 518-519). Marta reported feeling, "Like a baby because they say don't do this and don't do that" (Interview 1, lines 520-521). The real learning experience, according to Marta, was to attend social events with friends and learn from other Columbian, or international students who had experienced differences in lifestyle.

Cultural Differences

When Marta was asked about her experiencing cultural differences in her transition, she identified some differences that stood out for her:

1. Marta's religious affiliation was Catholic and she reported no barriers to practicing her religion on and off campus; however, she noted differences in how they celebrate special religious holidays such as Easter. She stated, "In Columbia, we don't celebrate Easter with eggs and chocolate" (Interview 1, lines 460-461); she usually went on an extended weekend vacation with her mother and brother to another city in Columbia. She also noted New Year's Eve as being different in terms of celebration. In Columbia, New Year's Eve would be spent with close family and friends. "Here it is different, the young people go to the bar" (Interview 1, lines 473-474). Marta recalled

her experience in Connecticut in the United States before coming to Canada on New Year's Eve in December, 1998. She went out with a friend who picked her up in a limousine and went to a bar and drank champagne. Afterwards, she and her friend went out for dinner and then to a casino. Participant described this experience as very different to her experience in Columbia.

2. Marta's knowledge of human-rights issues, and her observation of differences between her home country and Canada, was also noted as significant in her transition experience. She learned her rights as a woman through her orientation sessions in ESL, "If a man is looking at me in some way, I can tell him I don't like it and it is bad for the boy. In Columbia not that way" (Interview 1, lines 540-541). Marta explained that in Columbia, abuse of women is a significant social problem, especially among the lower socioeconomic classes, "Here (in Columbia), men can hit their women and women won't do anything because they are afraid" (Interview 1, lines 552-553). Such abuse could even extend to choices for women to work or not work. A husband, for example, could tell his wife she can't work and, "If she works she will have problems" (Interview 2, line 672). Marta further explained that, in Columbia, there are two main socioeconomic groups, the rich and the poor, and it was very difficult, especially for poor people, to move beyond their family's socioeconomic level because of the inability to obtain a good education.

Residence Life and Suggestions for Improvement

When asked why residence life was chosen, Marta indicated she wanted the convenience of living on campus and felt the meal plan would be beneficial in that she would not have to shop and cook. Marta reported her experience living in residence has

been positive in that she felt very secure and sometimes forgot to lock her door at night. She admitted she was not an active participant in residence events and programs, but said overall the programs were important for residents to feel part of a larger group.

In residence, socializing and establishing friendships with other residents, particularly Canadian residents, was not that important for Marta. She noted three main groups in the cafeteria who sit together at tables, groups of Canadian students, groups of international students and groups of police officers. For Marta, her experience was that Canadian students were not overly friendly and did not extend their friendship easily. Marta was quite accepting of this, "We are not accepted" (Interview 1, line 726), and indicated she did not desire to break into the Canadian group to develop friendships. She was part of the international group and commented, "We are different from them (Canadian students), because all the students who are the same ate together" (Interview 1, line 704). Marta indicated she socialized mostly with international residents from the ESL program and her Columbian friends in and outside of residence. She enjoyed going to the gym on campus to work out, shopping, and occasionally to nightclubs.

Marta identified the following as suggestions for improvement of residence life:

1. While the facilities were adequate for Marta, she found the bedrooms, in particular, to be cold and unattractive. She explained that for international students, "It's difficult because you don't bring from your house many things" (Interview 2, lines 1345-1347). For Canadian students, they live closer and can bring pictures to decorate their room. Marta suggested that pictures or plants in the bedrooms could help present a warmer environment.

2. Over time, Marta indicated her feelings about the meal plan changed, "No I don't want to continue eating here" (Interview 2, line 908). She reported the food as being always the same and tastes like cafeteria food. She indicated residents could benefit from having international students cook their foods from their home countries on designated days. This would allow the opportunity for residents to sample food from other countries and give the international students the experience of having a home-cooked meal.

3. Another suggestion from Marta was that residences need to provide incoming students with information on bus schedules, meal schedules, how to hook up a telephone, and so forth. In her experience, hooking up her telephone was critical because of being depressed and needing that connection emotionally with her family.

Marta indicated she was returning to Columbia to work after she completed her social work program in Regina. Her plans might include possible marriage to her special boyfriend who works and resides in Columbia. She explained that when she first came to Canada, she and her boyfriend had broken off their relationship; however, since being in Canada, they communicated frequently by telephone and he appeared anxious to have her return to Columbia. Marta's response to her boyfriend was her first priority was to finish her studies before returning to Columbia.

Yuko

Yuko was a 20-year-old student enrolled in the ESL program at the University of Regina. She came to Regina in April 1999 on a student visa from Japan. Yuko stated her father and mother were both employed in a banking organization in Osaka, Japan, her

father being in a more senior position than her mother. She had one older brother, age

23, who was studying economics at a private university in Osaka, Japan. Yuko indicated

her brother's program was very expensive because he had to attend a private university

and study an extra two years for failing to pass the entrance exam to attend a public

university.

Educational Pursuits to Enhance Career Possibilities

The first issue that emerged from the interview with Yuko in her transitional

experience was her interest in English language training and how this training would

broaden career possibilities for her in Japan. Prior to coming to the University of Regina,

Yuko completed two years of a four year post-secondary program in English language and

composition at Notre Dame Women's College in Kyoto, Japan. The college was run by

the Christian Catholic church and had a student population of approximately 1,200. Yuko

indicated that classes in religion were also included as part of the four-year English

language training program even though most students didn't believe in God or consider

themselves to be Christians. Yuko noted the college was a well known and respected

institution in Japan, with high educational standards. Some students lived in a dormitory

style residence located on one floor inside the academic institution while others, including

Yuko, resided with their parents. The college was approximately a one-hour commute

from Yuko's home by train and bus.

Yuko indicated her program at Notre Dame Women's College had some

similarities to the ESL program at the University of Regina, "ESL program and my college

program a little similar" (Interview 1, line 93); however, she noted that studying English in

an English-speaking country such as Canada would provide her with a better knowledge

and understanding of the English language. Yuko said a solid background in English would improve future employment prospects and wages in Japan with its current depressed economy and highly competitive employment market. She indicated that the average age for women and men to marry in Japan was now about 26, rather than 23 or 24, because of the highly competitive employment market and the importance of obtaining skills for employment purposes. Yuko indicated a preference to complete her education and establish her career first before entering into a marriage relationship. Her plan after completing ESL was to return to Japan to complete her four-year program in English language training at Notre Dame Women's College.

Family Relationships and Support

Another issue that emerged from the interviews with Yuko in assisting her transition to university and residence life was the continuing support she receives from her parents, both emotionally and financially. She indicated her father and mother supported both her brother and herself in their educational pursuits and encouraged them to study very hard. Yuko reported having a very special relationship with her mother, and Yuko experienced some homesickness when she first arrived in Regina. At times, Yuko indicated she found it difficult to communicate to another person in English, "I want to communicate my feelings about my life, my experience but I can't communicate. I feel sad and lonely" (Interview 1, line 856). On these occasions, Yuko contacted her mother by telephone, or sometimes wrote to her friends in Japan, "They would worry about me" (Interview 1, line 880).

Yuko reported that her parents both had to work to pay expenses for her and her brother to pursue their education. Yuko explained her brother's educational expenses

were very high because he attended a private university in Japan, and her expenses abroad included fees for tuition, residence and meals. Yuko stated she and her brother had part-time jobs in Japan and paid for some of their own clothes and transit fees.

Coming to Canada to Study English in the ESL Program

A third issue that came out of the interviews with Yuko centered around Yuko's decision to study in the ESL program at the University of Regina. Yuko reported initially looking at various options such as the United States, England and Canada as her goal was to study English for one year in an English-speaking country. She had two friends who were already in the ESL program in Regina and they spoke very highly of the teachers and quality of program. Yuko said she also learned that the tuition costs for the ESL program were cheaper than other universities in different countries. Most importantly, Yuko liked the city size of Regina and stated, "smaller is, I think safe" (Interview 1, line 499). Safety was a major consideration for both Yuko and her parents. Yuko said her parents weren't as concerned about her safety living in Canada as the United States. She stated her parents told her they wouldn't allow her to live in the United States because, "the United States attacked another country" (Interview 1, line 515), and their impression was it was unsafe to live there because of the media coverage on violence in some of the bigger cities. Yuko also had some negative experiences in her travel to the United States. She and a friend went on a vacation to New York and Florida, but were constantly nervous and fearful about being robbed or assaulted; Yuko recounted a story about a Korean university student being murdered just two blocks away from where she and her friend were staying in New York.

First Response to Arriving in Canada

A four factor that was important for Yuko in her transition to residence and university life was her first response to her arrival in Canada in April 1999. Yuko was met at the airport by an ESL staff member and driven to residence where she was met by a Resident Assistant who provided her with keys and showed her room to her. She recalled the ESL staff member as being very helpful in taking her around the university to show the different facilities and buildings. Yuko recalled being very excited about being in Regina and looked forward to meeting her classmates and other students from residence. In her first few days, she met two ESL students who had been students at the same college she had attended when living in Japan.

Yuko found Regina to be a very quiet city and was peaceful living in the university residence, "I can be confident in university on campus. Some places have security guards. I think that there is less crime" (Interview 1, line 533). She also found her schedule to much less active in Regina than Japan where she was constantly watching the time to catch buses and trains to be on time for college classes and/or her part-time job at the bakery. Yuko stated, "In Japan I watch my watch, always what time is train or what time should I get on the bus" (Interview 1, line 898).

Orientation

Another issue that emerged from the interviews was Yuko's thoughts about the orientation she received upon arrival at the university. The orientation sessions were delivered by an ESL instructor during the first few weeks of her ESL program. Yuko indicated she learned about banking systems, location of malls and bus systems. She also

learned where the various services and facilities (e.g., gym, library, etc.) were located at the university.

Language and Social Barriers

An issue that emerged from the interviews was language and the barriers it created in communicating with other students, especially Canadians. Yuko said she usually apologized when conversing with other students, staff or teachers, "If I meet some Canadian students in the cafeteria, but I can't speak to someone because I can't speak English, I think I apologize to someone" (Interview 1, line 674). When asked how she felt about coming to these interviews, Yuko indicated she was initially nervous as she found it difficult to converse in English.

Yuko's experience learning English skills at the women's college in Japan was different from learning in an English-speaking country. She said the accents used in Japan were different, and found the pace of conversation to be faster here in Canada. Yuko indicated she practiced English language skills with other classmates from the ESL program and residents who are mostly international students. In the company of Japanese friends, Yuko admitted to speaking mostly Japanese, not English, because of the comfort level.

Cultural Practices

Another issue that emerged from the interviews with Yuko was different cultural practices she observed since arriving in Canada. She identified the following practices as significant in her transition experience:

1. Yuko found Canadian people in general to be more friendly and outgoing in

comparison to Japanese people. For example, "If I meet someone I don't know, in Japan I can't greet each other, but in Canada I can do that." She stated that it is not part of Japanese culture to be as open as Canadian culture, and an individual would not get a response if greeting someone they did not know.

2. In dating relationships, Yuko observed some similarities and differences in Canadian and Japanese cultures. She noted that couples who are dating in Canada and Japan go on similar outings such as having a meal together, shopping, or perhaps going out for a drive. She indicated that Canadian couples who are dating do not involve their families as much in their relationship as would be expected in Japan where a male and female would be introduced to each other's parents early in a relationship.

Choosing Residence Life

An important issue that emerged from the interviews was choosing residence life versus homestay. For example, Yuko indicated that, although ESL students who chose a homestay arrangement had an advantage in actually living with a Canadian family and learning about Canadian traditions and customs, she chose residence life because of the convenience of being on campus, and living with other students in a similar age group. She had no previous experience living in residence when attending the Notre Dame Women's College in Japan, however, knew of friends who had lived in residence there. Yuko indicated the facilities in Japan were similar, but rooms were smaller and the general living environment was more controlled with many rules and policies.

Yuko's first impressions living in residence at the University of Regina were positive and she found Canadian students to be friendly. She said that she liked to socialize with other students, and participated in activities in residence in order to improve

her English. Yuko indicated she has not developed a lot of friendships with Canadian students, but enjoyed the social interaction with other residents at various residence events. Yuko indicated she tends to be shyer at such events because of her concern about communicating with other students in English; however, she participated because she wanted to develop her language skills and develop friendships with other Canadian students.

Mealtimes in residence for Yuko provided an excellent time to interact with other students; however, she indicated the menu included a lot of fried foods and was always the same. Yuko indicated she missed having a diet with rice and vegetables as the main staple foods, and occasionally visited friends in another residence where kitchen facilities were provided to cook and eat meals together.

Suggestions for Improvement of Residence Life

In discussing improvements that could assist international students in adjustment to residence and university life, Yuko identified the following factors as important:

1. Yuko found the residence facilities and meal plan adequate; however, she indicated her preference would be to live in dormitory-style residence where kitchen facilities, lounge areas, and washrooms were shared. She indicated this type of living arrangement was more conducive to a family or communal type of environment. Yuko stated, "Many people share the room so they use kitchen so like family" (Interview 1, lines 838-839). Cooking her own food was important for Yuko as she found the menu in a fixed meal plan to be unsatisfactory for her needs. Yuko said, "I want to cook Japanese food" (Interview 1, line 832).

2. Yuko indicated it was important for residence professionals to consider opportunities to promote social interaction between international and Canadian students. Yuko recalled a recent event when she went to a party with food for international students sponsored by the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship group. She said maybe in residence, "We could support international students with a party" (Interview 1, line 928). Yuko indicated international students with weak English skills sometimes are hesitant to participate in social events, but this needs to be promoted and encouraged. She stated that input from international students would be important in developing such events.

3. Yuko personally enjoyed physical fitness activities such as aerobics, and indicated that residences could consider having such activities as part of their residence programs. Physical fitness and sport activities do not necessarily require strong language skills and would be an obvious link for all residents, both international or Canadian.

4. Yuko indicated she has observed ESL students as having different needs and desires in terms of cultural integration. This has implications for residence staff in terms of programming efforts and levels of intervention. Yuko indicated that even though her time studying in Canada was limited, she wanted to learn as much as possible about Canadian life and culture. She said, "I am Japanese so I become friends with all these people (Japanese) but I want to have Canadian friends" (Interview 2, lines 168-71). She further stated, "Living life with Canadian people, I want to see, to know" (Interview 2, lines 205-206).

CHAPTER 5: THEMES AND FINDINGS

This study explored the meaning of transition and adjustment to academic, social and emotional life for international students living in a residence setting. It is important that residence professional staff understand the environmental dynamics that influence the experience of new students. Residence staff play critical roles in developing living environments that support and enhance the educational success of their resident students. Staffing patterns, programs, and opportunities can be developed to focus on the special needs of new residents. To successfully develop such schemes, it is important to understand the adjustment students undergo as they arrive on campus.

Themes emerged from the information provided by participants in the interviews. This chapter presents themes that emerged from the interviews, the findings, summary and recommendations, suggestions for further study, and researcher's reflections.

Themes

Decision to Study Abroad

The first theme that emerged from interviews with participants was the reasons for them deciding to study abroad. Although participants had already completed, or were in process of completing, a post-secondary program at a university in their home country, seven of the eight enrolled in the ESL program at the University of Regina to learn English as a second language. Language training was seen to be a highly marketable asset in seeking out employment opportunities in their home countries. For participants, such as Hyo Kyum and Yuko, who majored in English language training in their post-secondary education in their home countries, learning English in an English-speaking country was

viewed as a unique educational experience. Hyo Kyum and Yuko were exploring options to continue study and anticipated careers related to their language training.

All seven participants reported researching various universities for ESL programs, and found that, among the universities they surveyed, they found the costs for living and tuition fees to be less expensive at the University of Regina. Word of mouth was also important as five of these seven participants indicated they had contacts, friends or people they knew through friends, from their home countries who were students enrolled in the ESL program, and these contacts spoke highly of the program quality. These contacts were also helpful to the participants before their arrival in Regina by providing assistance in completing the appropriate application and residence forms, paying fees, and gathering general information. The contacts also met them in Regina when they first arrived to show them around the university and residence.

Yuri was the only participant in the study who was not enrolled in the ESL program. He was enrolled in the engineering program and his decision to study abroad was largely based on the unfavorable national political climate prevailing in his home country and its universities; a climate he described as nationalistic and restricting.

Personal Development Issues, Moving Toward Adulthood

The second common theme found from the interview data with the participants was related to personal development issues associated with the age span of the group of participants in this study (ages 20 to 29).

Financial Support from Family. All participants were financially supported by their immediate and extended family in their educational pursuits both in their home country and in Canada. This was a culturally accepted practice for participants, although

three participants reported working part-time while attending university to pay for clothing and transit fees. Some participants, in observing most Canadian students worked part-time to support their education, noted a similar trend was happening more frequently in their home countries because of difficult economic conditions.

Emotional Connections with Family. Strong emotional ties with family members from their home countries also characterized the participants' views and they reported feelings of loneliness and homesickness especially within the first few weeks living in Canada. Amara indicated she would have returned home shortly after arrival in Canada had she not received the encouragement and support from her father to stay. Most participants had some previous experience living away from their family homes, either through traveling or attending other post-secondary institutions in or close by their home countries. They found their previous away-from-home experiences not so dramatic for them compared to their move to Canada because they lived relatively close to their family home (or country) where the language, customs and value systems were familiar to them.

Academic Challenges. Participants reported feeling pressure from family and themselves to be successful in their academic studies and they recognized the significant cost to their families in providing them the opportunity to study abroad. The academic challenges for many of the participants were difficult, and it was expected participants would have a reasonable level of proficiency in the English upon their return to their home country. Being successful in learning English meant increased employment opportunities and salaries when they returned to their home countries. Participants who planned to continue studying in an English-speaking country had to overcome many of the obstacles

associated with learning a new language and being able to speak and write at a level similar to indigineous students.

Increasing Independence. An increased sense of independence characterized most participants because of their distance away from home. Most participants defined being independent as living alone with no family around to help them make decisions. Yuri anticipated his experience of being independent as one of persevering in his studies without a lot of support networks.

Cross-Cultural Adjustment and Social Interaction

The third common theme, cross-cultural adjustment and social interactions, supported Ishiyama's (1988) model of self-validation, an affirmation of one's sense of self, purpose of life and meaningful personal existence in a given sociocultural context. In Ishiyama's model, healthy sources of self-validation provided security, self-acceptance and connection with others. International students struggled to validate their social self-identity in a new cultural context by learning social skills such as the ability to understand social metaphors, customs, language and values of the host country. It was important for participants to learn about the host culture's values and different modes of communication in order to enjoy cross-cultural interactions.

Accessing Social Support Networks. The ability to access social support networks other than immediate family was important for participants in their transition experience. For participants enrolled in the ESL program, their experiences were generally positive in that their first contact at the airport was with an ESL staff members and students from their home countries. These contacts enabled an important mediating function in bridging the participants' home culture with the new culture. For some

participants, this was crucial in easing their transition and adjustment because of weak language skills and limited knowledge of how to access services such as a telephone or bus. Yuri, the engineering student from Iran, arrived late New Years Day, and was the only participant who had no contact with anyone from the university or residence until four days later when the winter semester began. At that time, he contacted the International Services office at the University of Regina and was picked up by a university staff member and taken to residence. Yuri relied mostly on university and residence staff to access resources and services, and unlike the other participants, did not have a support network immediately available to him. He noted that, after arriving in residence, residence and university staff members were helpful to him in accessing resources and services.

First Arrival Experiences. Most participants reported being nervous and excited when they first arrived in Canada but the conditions for moving into residence during the break between fall and winter semesters were not ideal due to minimum staff levels in residence, and the closure of all university offices and services. Most participants reported they were fortunate in having ESL staff members and/or students from their home countries provide them with information they required.

Orientation Experiences. Participants reported having some common needs in their cross-cultural adjustment to familiarize themselves with the rules, regulations, social norms and expectations of a new cultural system. Schlossberg's transitional framework (1994) is useful in considering the three main stages (moving in, moving through, and moving out) that international students embark upon as they move to a new country for post-secondary education. Orientation sessions have been commonly used to help individuals learn about a new culture and its norms, rules and expectations. Six of the

eight participants participated in orientation sessions delivered by ESL teachers as part of their program (one participant was a latecomer to the ESL program and missed out on orientation). The orientation program covered a variety of topics such as banking, social norms, location of malls in Regina, bus schedules and services.

Most participants reported already having access to some basic information through their initial contacts about various topic areas covered in the orientation session, but still, overall, found the information useful. Hyo Kyum, who arrived late for the ESL program and missed the orientation sessions, initially experienced some problems finding her way around the university; however, she quickly became acquainted with other ESL students in the program who supported her in accessing information about services such as banking. Yuri, the only participant in the study who was not an ESL student, did not have an orientation program available to him and relied mostly on residence and university staff to assist him in finding various locations and services around the university and city.

Communicating With Others. The ability to communicate and understand the English language was also a critical factor in cross-cultural adjustment. Yuri was the only participant not in ESL who passed an internationally recognized English language test in his home country prior to arriving in Canada. He had studied English in language institutes in his home country during his high school years. At university he practiced English skills on his own by translating reports on electronics, economics and martial arts. As a result, Yuri was articulate in the English language and found it relatively easy to communicate with Canadian students, international students, classmates and professors.

The other seven participants were ESL students with different levels of proficiency in the English language, and most participants reported some reluctance in conversing

with Canadian students because of inadequate language capacity. The frequent use of slang terms in conversing with Canadian students only added to the participants' frustration in understanding the meaning of conversations, and they reported experiencing self-doubt and anxiety in social interactions and, therefore, purposely avoided them on occasion. This lack of contact often immobilized them in developing the appropriate social skills and competencies needed to build friendships with Canadian students and, consequently, most social interactions occurred with other international students. These interactions were more comfortable for the participants in that the conversation pace was slower and easier to understand.

Participants reported speaking their indigenous languages when speaking with other students from their home countries. This usage created some internal conflict for some participants whose sole purpose for studying in Canada was to learn English, but found their primary social interactions to be with other classmates or students from their home country.

The ability to access information through social support networks and orientation programs, as well as the ability to communicate verbally, were found to be essential for participants in their adjustment to a new culture in social situations. Participants from the ESL program often noted experiencing difficulty in expressing their ideas or accessing and processing information which sometimes led to frustration and helplessness.

Cultural Integration and Adjustment

Short-term Stay. A fourth theme that emerged from the interviews with the participants centered around cultural integration and adjustment. Most participants communicated a desire for cultural integration with host culture members; however, they

reported that contact was limited to participation in residence and/or university events. Participants spent the majority of time socializing with students from their respective ethnic community, and some participants consciously avoided social situations by not participating in residence or university events. Participants' reactions were varied in why their desire for cultural integration was not met. Some participants appeared resentful that they were unable to establish relationships with Canadian students, while others were very accepting of this situation. A few participants continued to strive toward building these relationships. The participants most accepting were ESL students who viewed their stay in Canada as temporary as their purpose for studying was to gain some language skills and then return to their home country for future study and/or employment. They were not seeking a total assimilation experience with Canadian life. These findings for the purposes of this study confirm Hanassab's results (1991) in a study of Iranian women who between the ages of 17 and 32 migrated to the United States. Hanassab's findings revealed the motivational level to fully adjust to the host level was affected by length of stay in the host culture (two years or less). Conversely, the longer the expected stay, the higher the level of expected success in cultural integration and adjustment.

Orientation to University Life. Participants in the ESL program reported having positive interactions with fellow classmates and teachers as they were provided with an extensive orientation which included a blend of academic activities and social excursions such as skiing and attending cultural events. These excursions included primarily international students who were studying in the ESL program. Exposure to Canadian students for participants centered mainly around participation in residence and/or university programs and activities, including the dining hall at meal times. In residence,

most participants found Canadian students to be generally friendly; however, exchanges in conversation were limited to extending greetings or acknowledgement of one another in residence hallways, dining halls or group areas. The only participant who attained a reasonable level of success in developing friendships with Canadian students was Yuri, the Iranian student in the Faculty of Engineering, who interacted daily with fellow residents, classmates and faculty members in the mainstream university population.

Cultural Differences and Practices. The extent of cultural differences between the home and host cultures was significant in that five participants reported being Muslims, a religious faith not dominant in Canadian culture. Most participants indicated there were a few practical barriers in practicing their religious faith in Canada as they had not attended Mosque (a building which serves as the main place of worship for Muslims) regularly nor engaged in required prayer rituals even while living in their home countries. Amara was the only participant who indicated she would have preferred some contact with the Muslim community in Regina by attending Mosque, but chose not to do so because her peers did not attend Mosque. Instead, Amara practiced daily cleansing and prayer rituals in the privacy of her residence room.

Other cultural practices such as courting relationships were discussed with the participants in the interviews. Some participants reported being concerned about males and females being separated in an ESL orientation session to discuss gender roles, human rights issues, and use of appropriate behaviors. Marta expressed her view that her home culture (Columbian) and Canadian culture had many similarities and found the discussions condescending. Cultural practices such as courting relationships did not appear to be a

major issue for most participants whose duration of stay was temporary. Feelings of cultural dislocation appeared to be accepted by most participants as a temporary measure.

Choosing the Residence Experience

Decision to Live in Residence. A fifth theme that arose out of interviews with the participants was choosing residence life and experiences living in residence. Reasons for choosing residence life were varied for the participants. Three participants moved into residence after living with a homestay family for a semester. While the homestay environment met their physical needs, participants indicated they preferred an environment where there would be more social interaction with students of a similar age group. In addition, participants indicated the convenience of living on campus and not having to travel back and forth to the university by bus was a major advantage, especially in the winter months. The remaining five participants chose residence for similar reasons, the convenience of living on campus, and the perception that the residence experience would provide them with opportunities to meet Canadian and international students of a similar age group. The compulsory meal plan was an added bonus for many of the participants who indicated they had no experience with, or chose not to prepare meals for themselves. Other participants noted feeling secure in a residence setting as another reason for choosing residence life.

Residence Experience. Participants described their experiences living in residence as positive and they especially enjoyed being in a setting with other students. They also found the residence staff to be helpful, in that they provided residents with basic information they required. Some participants reported having to adjust to the higher noise levels within the dorms and had to make some adjustments such as going to the library to

study. The compulsory meal plan was a consistent theme in the interviews with most participants reporting the dietary plan to be repetitive, and meal times as structured and inflexible. Participants found themselves ordering in food later in the evening if for some reason they were unable to meet a meal time. Other participants reported being content with the meal plan, and for them it was a preferable option to shopping and preparing one's own meals.

Those participants who had either lived in residence or had been exposed to residence life experiences in their home countries found the rules and regulations in residence more lenient than residences in their home countries. They also found the facilities to be adequate but very basic in terms of any amenities such as posters, pictures or plants. Two participants spoke of Canadian students being advantaged in bringing personal effects from their homes to personalize their private rooms

Findings

This study set out to describe transitional experiences and adjustment to academic, social and emotional life for impatriate international students living in a residence setting. The study identified 14 findings in the transition experiences of international students which have important implications for university and residence professionals.

Motivational Factors to Study Abroad

Two major groups emerged from the interview data as having different motivational factors in their decision to study abroad. One group of participants enrolled in the ESL program with the sole purpose of learning English as a second language in

order to expand career opportunities in their home countries. Their stay in Canada was temporary and focused for a very specific purpose. The second group of participants had some previous post-secondary experience in learning languages in their home countries and sought the experience of learning English in an English-speaking country. The participants in this group were in an exploratory mode and did not have any set goals in terms of future educational and/or career aspirations. One of the eight participants, Yuri, who was studying engineering in the mainstream university indicated his decision to study abroad was very specific, to leave his home country to study, and then to seek status to remain in Canada or the United States and seek employment.

Degree of Preparedness

The degree of preparedness of participants can facilitate or inhibit a successful experience. Participants ranged in age from 20 to 29. They had previous travel experience with families or on their own, and were familiar with the problem solving involved in finding your way around a new location, accessing information, etc. Participants also had previous educational experiences in their home country's post-secondary systems.

Economic Forces in Life Choices

Hoffman's revised model of developmental theory (1993) was useful in considering that life choices, for many of the participants, were made in an economic context as they worried about future occupational opportunities in their home countries. Hoffman's model suggests that typical indicators of adult status has traditionally included key factors such as moving outside of parental home, completing education, obtaining full-time employment, and marriage. The data from interviews with participants suggest some

validity of Hoffman's ideas that contemporary students are staying in college longer and prolonging what has traditionally been thought of as adolescence well into their twenties. Hoffman suggests new models of the maturation process are necessary by which concepts of relatedness and interdependence are set side-by-side with autonomy and self-reliance.

Ability to Access Social Support

The participants, for the most part, appeared very mature and independent in handling the normal stresses of transition and adjustment; however, most participants had some initial social support systems such as friends, ESL teachers and staff, residence staff, and university staff to mediate adjustment. Participants indicated it was important for university and residence professionals to be able to identify and intervene with students at risk for poor adjustment, as culture shock and loneliness affects international students differently. Amara reported feeling very lonely and homesick on many occasions during her first few weeks. While she did have some support networks in place through the ESL programs and friends from her home country, she indicated some additional support from university and/or residence staff may have eased her through these difficult times in her transition.

Social support networks were mostly informal and existed only through the ESL program where students would be made aware of new students arriving from their home countries. The benefit to newcomers in the ESL program was the immediate link with students who would have a heightened sensitivity to some of the issues facing newcomers. Participants reported residence staff as having limited involvement in linking students from similar cultures to ease their transition.

First Concerns in Arriving in Canada

Participants indicated that when they first arrived in Canada, their first priority was to settle into their new living environment and fit in with other students as peers. Their immediate concern did not center around differences in cultural issues such as religion, belief systems, etc.; however, these issues emerged over time as international students became more familiar with differences in Canadian culture and lifestyle.

Expectations of Social Interaction

Social interaction was very important in cross-cultural adjustment and integration into a community. The expectation to establish and develop friendships with other Canadian students was common to most participants upon their arrival. Their experiences, however, were different from what they expected. The ESL program provided many programs and opportunities for exposure to Canadian lifestyle, language and customs, but did not necessarily provide as many opportunities for social interaction with Canadian students in a similar age group. Residence living appeared to be a more conducive setting to allow for social interactions between international and Canadian students, either formally or informally. This, unfortunately, was not the experience of most participants who stated feeling a certain alienation or distance between themselves and Canadian students. Social avoidance occurred in some cases and resulted in two groups, the international students and Canadian students, forming and interacting together particularly at mealtimes.

Language and Communication

Language and communication areas were also found to be barriers to social interaction. Participants spoke of frequent misinterpretations and confusing signals,

especially the use of slang terms, in their interactions with Canadian students. To successfully adapt to another culture, an individual should be able to communicate in that culture which means going beyond knowing the language, gestures and behaviors of another culture. The development of language and literacy are facilitated by sharing a common culture. For instance, if two students are conversing about sports, each needs to know not only the language associated with sport, but an understanding of this particular aspect of Canadian culture.

Culture Shock

Varying degrees of culture shock were found as a result of barriers in language and communication. Some participants initially reported feeling a sense of discomfort and helplessness in their new environment. Ishimaya's self-validation model (1988) provided a useful framework for understanding students who are going through personal transition as well as cross-cultural issues as each individual needs some affirmation or validation of their social self-identity in a new cultural context. Students who had problems connecting with others would feel displaced or discomfort in a given sociocultural environment. The issue of self-validation seemed to be a significant life theme throughout the process of adjusting to a new culture. In exploring feelings and experiences with participants, there was no doubt many experienced some invalidating experiences on occasion, such as inability to communicate, lack of knowledge, etc. These cross-cultural challenges need to be acknowledged and supported by both the residence and university.

Cultural Integration

Data from the participants suggest cultural integration was a preferable option to total assimilation, rejection of the host culture, or deculturation, the rejection of both

home and host culture. Most participants enjoyed some features of the host culture such as clothing and food, while maintaining important elements such as religion, values, and relationships from home. There appeared to be very few barriers to practicing religious beliefs and maintaining value systems; however, as noted early, many participants had been questioning some of their practices and value systems prior to their arrival in Canada. They appeared to behave and live in a fashion similar to when they were in their home environment.

Perceived Attitude of Host Culture

Several participants described Canadian students as apathetic and indicated they did not appear interested in interacting with international students. Westwood and Lee (1992) indicated that attitudes of the host culture affect cross-cultural adjustment. Interaction may be minimized if people of the host culture perceive interaction with international students as troublesome, tiring and superficial.

Residence Facility Conditions

A well-maintained and designed residence facility was found to be an important factor in students choice of residence life. All participants agreed the facility conditions would be a consideration in moving out or remaining in residence. Most participants felt the Canadian residence facility condition to be better than the residences they had lived in or knew of in their home countries. Some participants noted most students would have preferred living in a residence where a private washroom was an extension of their private bedroom rather than having to share washroom facilities.

Importance of Meals and the Dining Hall

Participants reported enjoying the residence dining hall as a place where meals and conversation with others students were shared. The dining hall provided a meeting place where participants could develop and expand their social networks. For most participants, this was especially important when they first arrived and provided an opportunity to meet and connect with other students, mostly international.

For most participants, the major complaint centered around restricted service hours and repetitive meal plans. If a meal hour was missed, participants had to order in food during the evening sometime or go out to a restaurant, and their view was they were paying again for a meal for which they already paid.

Staff Awareness

Participants indicated they had not experienced racism or other forms of discrimination at the personal or institutional level. They did, however, note a lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity on the part of the host institution and residence staff. They indicated staff should be more reflective of and knowledgeable about different cultures and countries in the world. Participants reported not always being clear at times on some of the policies of the university and residences, and that these need to be communicated to new residents either orally through formal orientation sessions and/or by print.

Opportunities for Residence Programming

Residence professionals were not seen to be effective in creating opportunities for international students to be exposed to Canadian lifestyle and customs. Participants indicated that engaging international students in the surrounding residence environment

should extend beyond arrival and settling into their room. This finding emerged from the participants' comments that activities that did not require as much verbal contact were important in the transitional experience. Activities that are largely nonverbal, such as sports, were preferred by participants.

Summary and Recommendations

Based on an analysis of the data generated in interviews with the participants and the literature review, seven issues have been summarized with recommendations for residence and university professionals.

Cultural Integration

The intent of residences should be to integrate, not segregate, international and Canadian students. Opportunities must be created to expose international students to Canadian life because it is important for international students to learn about values and modes of communication to have positive cross-cultural interactions. For ESL students, the duration of stay is relatively short; however, opportunities must be made available to these students as well to enhance their learning both inside and outside the classroom. Social and recreational activities provide excellent opportunities for participation. It is important that planned activities not always have language as the main vehicle for communication as this inhibits participation for many of the international students. Engaging in activities such as sport events, photography, music and cultural exchange games are some examples of activities where language proficiency is not as critical to the interaction.

Residence professionals need to determine what level of interventions should occur with groups of international students. Some residence professionals may feel that if international students choose to create their personal barriers in socializing with others as indicated by some of the participants, then that decision be respected. They may argue that international students should have the same privileges extended to them as rural and urban Canadian students who decide to not join in or participate in residence activities. Other residence professionals may feel interventions through programming efforts are necessary for those international students who desire more cultural integration through opportunities for social interactions. If residence is to be seen as an extension of academic life as indicated in the literature review and supported by participants in this study, then it would appear that interventions to promote social interaction are necessary. Ongoing dialogue with residents is needed to establish the appropriate level of intervention and programming efforts. Levels of intervention should be inclusive, not obtrusive, and empower residents to make personal choices about their level of involvement and participation in residence life.

Residence Staffs' Knowledge and Support

Residence staff should be knowledgeable of the different cultural groups living in residence in order to increase sensitivity to some of the issues residents may face coming into the institution. The University of Regina ESL program and teachers were key in easing the transition for international students enrolled in their program by providing orientation programs and opportunities for exposure to Canadian lifestyle, language and customs. For students like Yuri in the mainstream university population, there was no formal network of support offered to them.

Residence staff members are sometimes the first contact for new international students, so they need to be empathic and caring. New residents need to be heard and understood as respectable and worthy individuals. Residents such as Amara who may be grieving as part of cultural dislocation need to have the nature of their painful separation from family members acknowledged and supported. Strategies should be developed by residence professionals to identify and assist international students who are experiencing difficulty in dealing with culture shock and cross-cultural adjustment. Adjustment to life must be made as early as possible to mitigate the effects of culture.

Residence staff should also initiate and facilitate interventions from the first arrival of new residents, to ensure new residents are socially networked to both international and Canadian student groups. This may alleviate some of the distance or alienation felt by international students. Inclusion in various activities and networks of peer groups are not only rewarding, but essential from the self-validation and social learning perspectives.

Residence Facility

A well-maintained and designed residence facility was found to be an important factor in a student's decision to remain in residence. Residence facilities should help create an environment by provision of adequate furniture, quiet space, and activity space, and space to support learning such as computer labs and tutorial areas. Facilities should also consider technological needs and the need for students to be able to access internet networks and electronic communication systems so they can readily and easily stay in contact with home, parents, and close friends.

Residence Dining

The residence dining hall played a significant role in impacting the personal, social and educational development of residents. Residence dining halls may consider the following as impacting resident satisfaction level and possible retention:

1. Service hours should be convenient to students and extended to allow for flexibility;

2. Variety in meal plans was a high priority for participants and an effort should be made to include a variety of foods, including international dishes;

3. Late night food options would be desirable for residents. Some participants felt the dinner hour was early in the evening and they often had to order in food in the evening;

4. The residence dining hall would be a suitable location to market and deliver residential programming. Programs could be integrated around meal time, where invited speakers and/or peer speakers are invited to speak or discuss a particular topic area.

5. The residence dining hall could provide opportunities to promote interaction between faculty, staff and students through special invitation or speaking engagements.

6. The residence dining hall should present an inviting atmosphere for residents to study and meet friends, and should promote interaction among residents and staff.

Involvement in Planning Residence Programs

Residence professionals must develop more comprehensive and meaningful programs for international students, with both international and Canadian residents having input into program development. For orientation programs, international students with some experience living in residence should be actively involved in planning and delivery of the sessions. International students who experienced sources of differences in a new culture may be most likely aware and sensitive to issues facing newly arrived students, and

possess an experience base on which further learning can be ground. International student issues can also provide excellent opportunities for shared learning (e.g., communication, acceptance, tolerance of diversity), and act as a catalyst for diverse program development by the host institution. Adult education principles focus on the learning process as related to and making use of the experience of learners. Learners should, therefore, accept a share of responsibility for planning and perhaps delivering a learning experience.

Engaging residents in the surrounding residence environment should also extend beyond orientation. Residence life programming might include:

1. Programs to directly support academic success and promote faculty-student interaction outside the classroom. Examples of programs include orientation, academic skill programs (e.g., reading and, study skills, overcoming test anxiety), career advising programs, and programs involving faculty.

2. Multicultural programs aimed at enhancing understanding and appreciation of diversity.

3. Programs which promote physical growth such as health issues, relaxation, and nutrition.

4. Programs for new students to assist them in making a successful transition to university life and culture (e.g., peer tutoring services, links to the first-year student services, links to the ESL staff).

5. Programs fostering personal, emotional, and social growth (e.g., staff training, stress management, interpersonal communications, alcohol and drug education, self-esteem).

6. Community service programs which facilitate resident student involvement in community service activities and projects.

community service activities and projects.

The residence office can facilitate implementation of some of the ideas of residents by being a catalyst for developing and implementing programs and innovative activities other than standard activities such as banquets, movie nights, game nights, and potluck events.

Residences, Part of a Larger Community

The university has a role in building and fostering intercultural relationships by having comprehensive educational programs and services, and must create a multicultural focus on campus. Residences should enhance the university community by building connections inside and outside the classrooms.

Residence professionals need to see themselves as essential contributors to the fulfillment of the educational missions of the university in considering design of facilities, budget and resource allocation, and decisions about staffing. It is essential that residence professionals prepare a mission statement which should contribute and relate directly to the mission of the university of which it is an integral part.

Residence professionals also need to work more closely with faculty to promote out-of-classroom interaction between students and faculty through residence programming. The purpose would be to move the university learning experience well beyond the confines of the classroom into the living areas, so students get to know faculty as individuals outside the classroom in the hope of bringing student/faculty worlds closer together. In return, faculty awareness of and participation in residence programs increases, and faculty learn more about the out-of-classroom student environment and the various cultural backgrounds.

To encourage and promote faculty interaction, residence professionals could cultivate connections through students living in residence. They might also assess and respond to academic goals and need areas such as Diversity Education or Internationalization by arranging in-service training delivered through the Teaching Development Centre at the University of Regina. In addition, academic support services such as tutoring and study groups can be enhanced through faculty and residence connections. The dining hall also provides a viable opportunity for faculty to eat and meet with students for such occasions such as special dinners, faculty/student meetings, and recreational activities. All of the above help create connections between faculty and students.

University residences are also part of a broader community, and involvement of international students with cross-cultural contacts can broaden and enhance their experiences. Residence staff would have to be current and be knowledgeable of cultural organizations in the city and province, and encourage these contacts to occur.

Residence Life in the Future

Students living in residence live in a community and the virtues of a successful community life generally include a respectful regard for one another, tolerance, compassion, and responsibility. These virtues are tested constantly in everyday life. Students in a residential community learn citizenship in participating in the leadership of organized community life and the value of the social bonds that are often formed through friendships and networks. Most important, students learn from one another and contact with peers from different cultural backgrounds can only enhance learning and mutual understanding.

Suggestions for Further Study

This study represents a collection of accounts by eight international students and their perceptions of personal experiences and the meanings that they attached to their experiences in their transition and adjustment to university and residence life. It was an attempt to understand some of the issues (developmental, cross-cultural, etc.) by focusing on the subjective lived experiences narrated by the students themselves. Following are suggestions that would further enhance the study of transitional experiences and adjustment to residence life for international students:

1. This study focused on transitional experiences from one perspective, the international student. Other stakeholders including fellow classmates, residents, residence staff, parents, ESL staff members and community members would offer additional perspectives in understanding the transition experience of international students.

2. As shown in this study, international students are not a homogeneous group. Cultures are different, maturity levels vary and motivation factors to study abroad are different. Further research is needed on the various indigenous groups within the international community and their perceptions of each other.

3. Another area of study could involve the type of residence facility needed for international students whose duration of stay is short-term, versus those students who continue their studies in a post-secondary institution over a longer period of time. The duration of stay may have implications for type of facility, type and range of programs and services, and technological requirements, particularly given the socio-historic period in which today's typical 22-year-old student lives.

4. Resident input is important in determining levels of intervention needed as well as types of programming. Comparing levels of intervention through orientation and programming between residences, and how much input was sought from residents themselves, could be the subject of another research study.

5. The multiple roles of the Resident Assistant as peer helper, community developer, friend, and policy enforcer need to be re-examined. Resident Assistants typically spend the majority of their time confronting policy violations and, therefore, have limited time to plan programs, have positive interactions with students, and building community. Perhaps the design of the Resident Assistant position needs to be reconfigured where more specialized roles are established.

Researcher's Reflections

In reflecting on this research study, three primary dimensions came to mind. The first dimension centered around an academic pursuit of the literature and theory surrounding the issues of adjustment and transition to university and residence life for international students. My background in education, human resource management and current position as residence manager led to a strong desire to gain a deeper understanding of the theoretical writings and important factors found in previous studies in the literature surrounding this area.

Because theory informs practice and practice informs theory, a second dimension, practical application, was also a driving force in exploring this issue as international students comprise approximately half of the student population in the residence managed by myself. With globalization of educational opportunities and the current movement

toward recruiting more international students at the University of Regina, I believed the study would help me gain a better understanding of the issues of adjustment and transition for international students in order to develop a living environment which supported and enhanced the educational success of international residence students. The study would also help me as a concerned professional to better serve the client base which includes students, faculty, staff and the community.

Other practical applications of the study concerned the development of the residence community in a multicultural environment. In addition to the added richness of living in a diverse community, Canadian students living in residence would enhance their understanding of other cultures, and be better equipped to handle their own educational or work experiences which seem to be taking an increasing number of Canadian students outside of their home country. By being made aware of cultural diversity gives Canadian students and residence professionals an opportunity to reflect upon their own cultural and social mores and what is valued.

In practical terms related to programming and responding to the needs of international students, I found the study showed the need to engage international students in providing opportunities to interact with Canadian students in order to learn Canadian culture and lifestyle. Most participants of the study expressed a desire for this type of engagement; however, they found opportunities to be limited. As residence manager, this was an important finding in that the international students within the residence community can not be treated as a homogeneous group as their diverse personalities, previous backgrounds and experiences, as well as varying academic motivations, greatly affect involvement and participation patterns in different residence events and programs.

The third dimension that emerged for the researcher in the course of the study was my parental perspective in addition to the academic and practical perspectives. A parental perspective became important in that my daughter's age is comparable to that of the study participants. Just prior to undertaking this study, my daughter demonstrated a keen interest in working with international students and issues, she struggled with similar issues of the participants in terms of exploring career options as she pursues an undergraduate degree, and is in the process of becoming an independent adult. In reflection, the study has helped me better understand both my daughter's interest in cross-cultural experiences and the complexity of relationships young people face during transition phases.

Having conducted this study and examining issues from the academic, practical and parental perspectives, I found myself to have a heightened sense of sensitivity to the complex issues and needs facing international students. Issues such as language and communication, especially for new international students with minimal knowledge and understanding of English, are important as they affect residence interactions ranging from orientation sessions to ongoing communication with other students and staff. For instance, as residence manager, I will provide more sharing opportunities through interactions in residence suites where Canadian and international students live and are invited to share their feelings expectations about living with others, cleaning standards, borrowing items, finances, and so forth. I believe the key to such shared interaction is commitment, not compliance.

I also gained new insights from the study as to the appropriate and timely levels of interventions in order to increase student involvement in both the active design and participation in various programs and events for international students and their Canadian

counterparts. Within such a diverse and multicultural environment, shared learning of cultures can only enhance the experience of both Canadian and international students and contribute to the university's understanding of the lives of international students as adult learners in transition.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Personnel, 25*, 297-308.

Boekestijn, C. (1988). Intercultural migration and the development of personal identity: The dilemma between identity maintenance and cultural adaptation. *International Journal of International Relations, 19*, 83-105.

Boyer, E. L. (1987). *College: the undergraduate experience in America.* New York: Harper & Row.

Chickering, A. W. (1969). *Education and identity.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Connelly, M. F., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990, June/July). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 2-12.

Elmers, M. T., & Pike, G. R. (1997). Minority and nonminority adjustment to college: differences or similarities? *Journal of Research in Higher Education, 3*(1), 77-97.

Erickson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis.* New York: Norton.

Gergen, K. J. (1987). *Self and identity: Psychosocial perspectives.* New York: Wiley.

Grayson, J. P. (1997). Place of residence, student involvement and first year marks. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 27*(1), 1-24.

Grinnell, R. M. (1993). *Social work research and evaluation.* Itasca, Illinois: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc.

Gullahorn, J. T., & Gullahorn, J. E. (1963). An extension of the u-curve hypotheses. *Journal of Social Issues, 19*, 33-47.

Hanaasab, S. (1991). Acculturation and young Iranian women: Attitudes toward sex roles and intimate relationships. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 19*, 11-21.

Heaps, R. A., Isakson, R. L., Franklin, J. L., Hanna, R. V., & Kesler, M. W. (1993,Winter). Promoting student development through cooperative efforts of a counseling centre and residence hall. *Journal of College and University Student Housing, 23*(2).

Herr, E. L. (1987). Cultural diversity from an international perspective. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 15*, 99-109.

Herr, E. L. (1997, March). Super's life-span, life-space approach and its outlook for refinement. *The Career Development Quarterly, 45*, 238-245.

Herr, S. (1991). Adult education and college student housing. *Journal of College and University Student Housing, 21*(2).

Hibbs, J. W. (1997). *Will universities be relics?* The Benjamin Franklin Institute on Global Education, 1-4.

Hoffman, F. L. (1989). Developmental issues, college students and the 1990s. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy, 4*(2), 3-12.

Hurtado, S., Carter, D. F., & Spuler, A. (1996). Latino student transition to college: assessing difficulties and factors in successful college adjustment. *Journal of Research in Higher Education, 37*(2), 135-157.

Ishiyama, F. I., (1995). Culturally dislocated clients: self-validation and cultural conflict issues and counselling implications. *Canadian Journal of Counselling, 29*(3), 262-275.

Ishiyama, F. I. (1994, March). Language dysfluency exercise: Understanding migrant's experience of communicative frustration and social invalidation. *Simulation & Gaming, 25*(1), 113-120.

Ishiyama, F. I. & Kitayama, A. (1994). Overwork and career-centered self-validation among the Japanese: Psychosocial issues and counselling implications. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling, 17*, 167-182.

Ishiyama, F. I. & Westwood, M. J. (1992). Enhancing client-validating communication: Helping discouraged clients in cross-cultural adjustment. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 20*, 50-63.

Ishiyama, F. I. (1989). Understanding foreign adolescents' differences in cross-cultural adjustment: A self-validation model. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 5*, 41-56.

Ishiyama, F. I. (1987, Winter). On self-validation. *Heartwood: A Journal of Experience, Expression, and Odyssey, 5*(4), 7-18.

Kenny, M. & Perez, V. (1996, October). Attachment and psychological well-being among racially and ethnically diverse first-year college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 37*(5), 527-535.

Kohut, H. (1984). *How does analysis cure?* Chicago: The University Press.

Kohut, H. (1977). *The restoration of the self.* New York: International Universities Press.

Kvale, S. (1992). *Ten standard responses to qualitative research interviews.* Denmark: Aarhus University.

Lee, G. & Westwood, M. J. (1996, March). Cross-cultural adjustment issues faced by immigrant professionals. *Journal of Employment Counselling, 33,* 29-43.

Levinson, Daniel J. (1978). *The Seasons of a Man's Life.* New York: Random House, Inc.

McFarland, J. (1998). *Impatriation via a not-for-profit organization: an interpretive study of the cultural adjustment of international Catholic priests and sisters to living in the upper midwest United States and the role of the organization.* Paper presented at a conference, Academic Human Resource Development, Oak Brook, Illinois.

Mak, A. S., Westwood, M. J. & Ishiyama, I. F. (1994). Developing role-based social competencies for career search and development in Hong Kong immigrants. *Journal of Career Development, 20*(3), 171-187.

Morrison, T., Conaway, W. A., & Bordent, G. A. (1994). *Kiss, bow, or shake hands: How to do business in sixty countries.* Massachusetts: Adams Media Corporation.

Navaratnam, K.K., & Mountney, P. (1992, February). *Meeting the needs of overseas students: exporting quality vocational education and training.* Paper presented at a conference on Quality in International Education, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia.

Norfleet, L., & Wilcox, B. (1992, August/September). Internationalizing college campuses. *AAGJC Journal,* 25-29.

Oberg, K. (1960). Cultural shock: Adjustment to new cultural environments. *Practical Anthropology, 7,* 177-82.

Pederson, P. B. (1997). *Culture-centered counseling interventions: striving for accuracy.* California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Robbins, S. B., & Patton, M. (1985). Self-psychology and career development: Construction of the superiority and goal instability scales. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 32,* 221-231.

Ryan, M. B. (1992, September/October). Residential colleges: A legacy of living and learning together. *Change*, 26-35.

Saidia, D., & Grant, S. (1993, May). Roommate understanding and rapport between international and American roomates. *Journal of College Student Development*, *34*.

Salomone, P.R. (Spring, 1996). Tracing Super's theory of vocational development: a 40-Year retrospective. *Journal of Career Development*, *22*(3).

Schlossberg, N. K., Lynch, A. Q., & Chickering, A. W. (1989). *Improving higher education environments for adults*. SanFrancisco: Jossey Bass.

Schwitzer, A. M., Robbins, S. B., & McGovern, T. V. (1993,January). Influences of goal instability and social support on college adjustment. *Journal of College Student Development*, *34*, 21-25.

Sheehy, G. (1976). *Passages: predictable crises of adult life*. New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc.

Smedley, B. D., Myers, H. F., & Harrell, S. P. (1993). Minority-status stresses and the college adjustment of ethnic minority freshmen. *Journal of Higher Education*, *64*(4), 434-452.

Stage, F., & Hamrick, F. (1994, September). Diversity issues: fostering campus wide development of multiculturalism. *Journal of College Student Development*, *35*.

Taft, R. (1977). *Coping with unfamiliar cultures: studies in cross-cultural psychology*. *1*, 121-153. London: Academic Press.

Tomlinson-Clarke, S., & Clarke, D. (1996, January/February). Institutional effects on alienation and student effort at three campus environments. *Journal of College Student Development*, *37*(1), 60-67.

Van Manen, M. (1992). *Researching lived experience: human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. University of Western Ontario: Althouse Press.

Waddy, C. (1990). *The Muslim Mind*. London: Grosenor Books.

Weinrach, S. (1996, September/October). The psychological and vocational interest patterns of Donald Super and John Holland. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, *75*, 5-16.

Westwood, M. J., & Ishiyama, F. I. (1991,December). Challenges in counseling immigrant clients: Understanding intercultural barriers to career adjustment. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 28*, 130-143.

Winters, E. (1997). *Globalization of Education*. The Benjamin Franklin Institute of Global Education.

Zeller, N. (1995). Narrative strategies for case reports. *Qualitative Studies in Education, 8*(1), 75-88.

Zeller, W. J. (1996). Two cultures united: residential programs of the 21st century. *The Journal of College and University Student Housing, 26*(2).

Zeller, W. J., & Mosier, R. (1993, Winter). Culture shock and the first-year experience. *The Journal of College and University Student Housing, 23*(2).

Wrightsman, L. (1994). *Adult personality development*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

APPENDIX A: Interview Guide

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

The following topic areas will be addressed within the initial interview with the aim of having the participant provide meaningful accounts or stories of their experiences.

Demographic Information
- Age
- Gender
- Are you a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant?
- What is your permanent place of residence?
- Length of time in residence at the university?
- Are you registered through the University of Regina or through an affiliated college?
- What faculty are you enrolled in at university?
- Educational degree sought

Applying to attend a post-secondary institution
- How did the idea of attending a post-secondary institution arise?
- Did you approach others or were you approached by others about studying abroad?
- Did you always assume you would go to another country to study some day?
- How did you decide on the University of Regina? (location, size, support systems, academic programs, etc.)
- How much did you know about Canada, its government, size, etc. before arriving?
- Did you attend an orientation session about the university? About Saskatchewan/Canada?
- How concerned were you about the following:
  - language/communication issues
  - university program areas
  - residence life
  - social life
  - separation from family
  - carrying on cultural activities practiced in your country
- How helpful or useful was the university in responding to your need for information in your process of applying to and deciding on this university?

Arrival in Canada
- As you reflect on your arrival in Canada, how did you feel? What stands out for you about this initial period of adjustment?
- Did you have family or friends meet you when you arrived?
- What were your expectations of the university, the residence, other people, etc.?
- What really happened when you arrived? Did it fit with what you expected?
- How did you first find your way around the university?

Economics
- Would you consider yourself economically independent?
- If not, what support do you receive and from whom?
- How would you describe your ability to manage resources (financial) effectively?
- To what extent does your economic situation affect your life in university residence?

Language
- What is your perceived level of English proficiency?
- What language do you speak away from campus?
- Is language a factor in your adjustment to university life? To what extent does it affect your life here in residence?

Relationships
- How do you feel about separation from your family and friends at home?
- Do you feel the separation has changed your relationship with family members or special friends?
- How would you describe your ability to freely explore possibilities and make choices about new friends here at the university?
- Who helps you in Canada if you need something or need to find out about something? (family, friends, University services, etc.)
- Does residence life help or hinder you in establishing relationships?

Academic Ability
- At what academic level would you consider yourself to be relative to your classmates? Your friends?
- Are there any barriers that might be contributing to your level of success?

Time Management
- How would you describe your ability to manage your time effectively?
- How do you spend your time? Is there any connection between your use of time and range of friends and activities here at university?

Cross-cultural issues
- What aspects of your own culture have you been able to keep?
- How has North American culture limited or enhanced your ability to retain cultural practices?
- What conflicts have you found between North American and your own culture?
- What aspects of culture have you abandoned because of conflict with North American culture? How does that affect you? In what way?
- Have you found some barriers to cross-cultural communication?
- What suggestions do you have for removing these barriers in residence life?
- To what extent have you been able to practice your religious beliefs?
- In what way does residence life help or hinder your practice?

Residence services

- Do you consider yourself success in finding and knowing your way around the university? What contributed to this success? Who helped you?
- Upon your first arrival, what type of orientation did you receive to the university and from whom did you receive it? Was this service helpful for you? In what way?
- Why did you choose to stay in residence?
- Do you plan to continue living in residence? Why? Why not?
- Do you generally attend and participate in residence programs? If yes, why? If not, why?
- Are you member of an international organization at the university? If not, why? If so, what organization?
- What types of activities do you enjoy doing with others?
- What interests do you have?
- Do you prefer doing things alone or with others?
- What is it about residence life in the university that you like? What would you change if you could? Why?
- What could residence staff do to make your stay more enjoyable?
- What would you change to make transitions easier for international students?
- Have we missed anything that is important for you as an international student living in a university residence?

APPENDIX B: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM
Title: International Students in a University Environment: Transitional Experiences and Residence Life

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The purpose of the study is to explore the meaning of transitional experiences and adjustment to academic, social and emotional life for international students living in a university residence environment.

ROLE OF THE PARTICIPANTS: You will be asked to participate in at least 2 interviews of approximately 2 hours each. A mutually convenient time will be set, and interviews will be held in a private location.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: You may gain some insight into the meaning of your personal experiences and how they affect your adjustment to academic and university residence life.

POTENTIAL RISKS: There will be no risk to your participation in this research.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE DATA: As pseudonyms will be used in reporting the data, you will be assured confidentiality of the data you provide. No persons other than the university-based members of the research team will have access to the original data, and you will have access to the final document.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STUDY: Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without question or obligation.

OFFER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS: If you have any questions regarding this research, please feel free to contact the researcher at 585-5623 or 789-7960.

This project was approved by the Human Subjects Ethics Committee, University of Regina. If participants have any questions or concerns about their rights or treatment as research participants, they may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee as 585-4461.

Your signature indicates that you have read the above information, that you are fully informed about the research project and your role in it, and it indicates your decision to participate in the study. You will be provided a copy of this form. Thank you for your co-operation and time.

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE: _____   DATE: _____

RESEARCHER SIGNATURE: _____   DATE: _____

Researcher is Judy Amundson   Business Telephone: 585-5623
                                     Home Telephone: 789-7960

APPENDIX C: Submission to the Human Subjects Research
Ethics Review Committee

UNIVERSITY OF REGINA
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Application for Approval of Research Procedures

Section I: Application Checklist:

1.   Do you feel that this project involves:

     ❑   HIGH Risk to participants
     ❑   MEDIUM Risk to participants
     ❑   MINIMAL Risk to participants

If other than MINIMAL, please explain. (Please refer to Section C1 of the Tri-Council document for details.)

There will be no risks for participants involved in this study. They will be asked to share their views on the transition into residence life at the University of Regina.

2.   Do you feel that the research findings from this project might be commercially valuable or that there might be the potential for conflict of interest? (Please refer to Section D1 Article 2.4 (e) of the Tri-Council document for details.)

Yes   ❑

No   *X*

If Yes, please explain.

Section II: Identification and Purposes

1.   Date: *November 23, 1998*

      Name of Applicant(s): *Judy Amundson*

      Address: *2606 Shooter Drive*
                       Regina, Saskatchewan , S4V OY9

      Title of Research: *International Students in a University Environment: Transitional Experience and Residence Life*

2.   If the project will be part of a thesis, or class requirement, give the name of the supervisor:
         Dr. Kevin Quinlan
      Department or Faculty: *Vocational/Technical Education, Faculty of Education*

3. Purposes. Give a brief outline of the main features and variables of the research problem. Include a brief statement which describes the significance and potential benefits of the study.

The purpose of the study is to explore the transitional experiences of international students in a university environment and the role residence life plays in the transitional process. Upon their arrival in a new country and university environment international students must deal with a developmental dimension (life course events/passages) as well as a cross-cultural dimension (the notion of impatriation, or bringing their culture into the host culture). Residence professionals play a key role in helping students deal with the issues associated with these dimensions, particularly in maintaining a responsive environment and actively promoting discussion and programming efforts concerning the adjustment of these students in their academic, social and personal aspects of development.

Section III: Subjects

1. Briefly describe the number and kind of subjects required for data collection. How will the name/addresses/phone numbers of potential subjects be obtained? What will potential subjects be told when they are presented with a consent form?

There will be six (6) subjects in total – three females and three males. All subjects will meet the University of Regina's Guidelines of the University for "international" students, be a first-year student, and live in the Luther College Residence.

Approval will be sought from Dr. Bryan Hillis, Academic Dean of Luther College, and Rhonda Litzenberger, Residence Life Coordinator from Luther College, for the researcher to post an invitation for international students to participate in the study. Upon receiving approval, an Invitation to Participate in a Research Study will be placed on Luther College Residence bulletin boards inviting potential subjects to contact the researcher. The researcher's first name and telephone number will be included in the invitation. Subjects who telephone will be provided an overview of the study and their role in it, and those who express an interest in becoming involved will be invited to meet with the researcher. In this meeting, the subjects will be provided a written outline of the study and a copy of the Consent Form (Attached) which they will be asked to sign.

2. What information about the research problem and their role in the project will potential subjects be given?

When potential subjects have self-identified though a bulletin-board recruitment approach, the researcher will inform subjects of the purpose of the research, the research approach and method, the expected time commitment, and nature of their involvement. The subjects will be assured confidentiality, as pseudonyms will be used in reporting the data.

3. How will the consent of subjects be obtained? Please indicate whether a consent form will be used and how consent will be obtained (e.g., who will approach the potential subject?

Subjects who express an interest in becoming involved will be provided a written outline of the study and a copy of the Consent Form (Attached) which they will be asked to sign.

4. What will the subjects be required to do in the course of the project?

Each subject will be required to participate in at least 2 interviews of approximately 2 hours each. A mutually convenient time will be set, and interviews will be held in a private location. Permission will be sought to hold the interviews in the private dining room at Luther College cafeteria so the researcher can meet with subjects in their own environment.

5.   What assurances will research subjects be given and what precautions will be taken regarding the confidentiality of the data or information which they provide in the study?

As noted in Section III, 2., subjects will be assured confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms.

6.   Will children be used as a source of data?

Yes   No   *X*

If Yes, indicate how consent will be obtained on their behalf.

7.   Will the researcher or any member of the research team be in a position of power or authority in relation to the subjects? (For example: A teacher doing research and having a class as subjects or a counselor collecting research data from clients).

Yes   No   *X*

If Yes, indicate how coercion of subjects will be avoided.

8.   Will deception of any kind be necessary in the project?

Yes   No   *X*

If Yes, explain why and indicate how subjects will be debriefed after the study is complete.

Section IV: Access to Data and Findings

1.   Who will have access to the original data of the study?

The researcher and her thesis supervisor will have access to all data, and each subject will have access to her or his data.

Will subjects have some access to the findings of the study?

Yes! The researcher will share the findings with subjects, and a copy of the thesis will be available in the university's Education Library.

2.   What will be the final disposition of the original data after the study is completed? (Data must be archived for a minimum of 3 years)

The researcher will hold in data in a secure location in her office for a period of 3 years, after which time it will be destroyed.

Signature of Applicant(s):

_____

Signature of Advisor or Instructor:

_____

APPENDIX D: Approval of Research Procedures

DATE: February 24, 1999

TO: J. Amundson
        2606 Shooter Drive
        Regina, SK
        S4V 0Y9

FROM: G.W. Maslany, Chair
        Research Ethics Board

Re: **International Students in a University of Regina:
        Transitional Experience and Residence Life**

Please be advised that the Board has considered this proposal and has agreed that it is:

__X__ 1.   ACCEPTABLE AS SUBMITTED. Only those applicants with this designation
            have ethical approval to proceed with their research as described in their
            applications. **Ethical clearance for data collection expires four (4) years
            from the date ethical clearance has been given. To renew ethical
            clearance, researchers must contact the Research Ethics Board on how to
            proceed.**

_____ 2.   ACCEPTABLE SUBJECT TO CHANGES AND PRECAUTIONS AS DESCRIBED
            IN THE ATTACHED COMMENTS. Changes must be submitted to the Board
            and approved prior to initiation of the research. **Please address the concerns
            raised by the reviewer(s) by means of a supplementary memo only. Do not
            submit a new application.** Once changes are regarded as acceptable,
            approval will be granted.

_____ 3.   UNACCEPTABLE AS SUBMITTED. Please contact the Chair for advice on
            whether or how the project proposal might be revised to become acceptable.

_____
G.W. Maslany

cc: K. Quinlan, supervisor

GM/ab/ethics2.dot