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International student navigation through u.s.-american colleges and universities: an autoethnographic analysis of discourse

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT NAVIGATION THROUGH
U.S.-AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:
AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE

by

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DISSERTATION

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DEDICATION

To all of my family, students, teachers, and friends who have educated, supported, and

inspired me.

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Although I am listed as the author of this dissertation, I am indebted to my family, friends, teachers, and students who have inspired and supported my work. The support from multiple individuals who believed in me during this process has motivated me throughout my life to continue to teach, learn, and work toward creating a world of love, peace, and social justice.

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v

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE- INTRODUCTION

I am sitting in a foreign land but have not left the country. Looking down at the

syllabus for my first ever college course I am feeling an odd combination of nervousness

and excitement, but mostly the former, as I am quite confused by the eight page

document that sits on the desk in front of my eyes. I have dressed for the trip to the

foreign land by leaving behind all my apparel from my hometown that bears the name of

any public school so I could look as if I would fit in with the rest of the wanderers who

have been here before. I sit quietly waiting for class to start, wondering if it was a good

idea to sign up for Spanish 375: Conversation and Culture. After all, this was not one of

the classes that any other friends were taking. My fortunate circumstances of having the

opportunity to take six years of Spanish in my K-12 years bought my ticket to this room.

I sit imagining what the professor will be like and wondering if I will be able to keep up.

As I sit staring, worrying, wondering, flipping through the pages of the syllabus, a large

wave of expensive cologne trails a well-dressed and attractive man who carries a

briefcase. This must be the teacher, the one who will help guide me through this journey.

He begins talking as he walks to the front of the room. "Hola chicos. Me llamo Dr.

Benito Palmero-Luz[1] y bienvenidos a mi clase, Castellano 375: Conversación y Cultura.

Voy a explicar mi sílabus y luego ustedes van a presentarse a la clase."

I think I got it. I'm in the right class, I have the syllabus out, and I'll need to say,

"Hola, me llamo Nick, y soy de Evansville, Indiana." He begins rapidly talking about the

syllabus, and now my high school Spanish that made me "proficient in the classroom" is

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[1] When referring to the names of others, I use pseudonyms. Exceptions only include individuals who granted me permission to use their real names.

losing its foundation; this land seems even more foreign. I sit, nodding my head along with him as if I get it all, and others too are trying to play the game. A whisper comes from behind me,

"He is such a hard teacher. I worked every night in his grammar class last semester and he gave me a D."

Uh oh.

I still continue nodding my head while I grasp his peculiar Chilean accent through understanding almost every other sentence. "Cuando ustedes presentar en esta clase, tienen que hacer un Powerpoint.

Powerpoint, what the hell is Powerpoint?

"Hay tres examenes."

Okay, three exams.

And then he stops. His explanation of the syllabus commences and in an extremely assertive voice he points to the young woman sitting in front of me and rapidly, almost incoherently, asks,

"¿Quien eres tú?"

She says, "Lo siento…no entie…no entiendo."

He rolls his eyes. And more clearly articulates, "¿Qui-en-er-es-tú?"

"Oh…Me llamo Kristen y soy de Louisville." After catching on, Kristen describes a bit more about herself by stating anything she can remember to coherently say. In her defense, I had never heard anyone ask "¿Quien eres tú?" to me in all of my years of Spanish and am just happy that I figure out the question through her mistake.   I am next.

"¿Quien eres tú?"

I confidently state my overly-rehearsed answer that includes my name (me llamo Nick), where I am from (soy de Evansville, Indiana), and my interest in having Spanish as my major (mi especialidad es castellano). He seems neither impressed nor irritated and my on par response moves his commanding index finger to the woman behind me.

"¿Quien eres tú?"

"…"

Of course, we all must turn to stare at the woman who is holding her head down and says, "no sé," in an accent that is difficult to understand because it is coming from someone who, based upon her pronunciation of two syllables, I immediately assume does not speak Spanish nor English as her first language.

Dr. Palmero-Luz throws his head back and gives an evil cartoonish laugh. He says again, "¿Quien eres tú?"

The silence lasts longer. The dissatisfied finger then points to the person next to her who immediately and confidently responds by telling us that his name is Mario and he grew up with missionary parents in Mexico and travelled back and forth between there and the United States.

Class is now a minute or two away from ending. Dr. Palmero-Luz stops us and says his only English-driven thought of the entire period. "If you had trouble following me today or introducing yourself to the class you will not be able to make through this semester. I suggest you drop the course and try to retake it again." Even though this statement makes me wonder if I can make it through an upper-level Spanish course, the professor's suggestion did not call my first day "performance" into question.

Two days later, I re-enter this foreign land and am thumbing through my Spanish dictionary to teach myself new words for class. Kristen is sitting in front of me with her notepad and tape recorder and is ready to keep up with the demanding instructor. Mario slouches diagonally behind me and to the left with no materials because he is extremely confident in his ability to succeed, and the seat of the quiet woman with the thick accent who sat directly behind me in silence some forty-eight hours ago is taken up by emptiness; she would never make her way to class again.

Mario cockily says to us, "I guess she isn't coming back. But if you cannot introduce yourself…" Kristen turns around immediately in defense. "Her name is Yuri and she is really smart. She speaks Japanese and English and came here to major in International Business and Spanish. We had our intro class together two years ago and she's a really good student."

Before Mario could retort with a pithy cynical line, the waft of expensive cologne enters the door to my immediate right and we all go back to our preparation modes. Kristen had named her, identified her, and even defended her ability. But at that moment the emptiness of Yuri was gone and we became immersed in our own worries of whether or not each of us individually would succeed in this course. It was as if she had never been there, nor had a chance to try, because she, unlike the rest of us, thought she would not survive the class.

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Four years later, I am sitting in a new foreign land that is still within the boundaries and borders of the United States. I haven't packed appropriately for this trip because I am confident that I can tour this realm with minimal belongings. The college and

university environment is no longer new for me, especially with the prospects of playing the same role as a student that I have for most of my life. The only change in the nearby region of graduate school includes the responsibility of acting as a tour guide for a diverse body of seventy-two students divided between three groups to navigate a path which, for many of them, will be a new experience in a foreign land. I wish to make this journey most meaningful for my students but have yet to understand how I will do this. I am not teaching a course that has a long list of prerequisites such as Spanish Culture and Conversation, but have been reminded by mentors of the past and future that during my times of teaching introductory public speaking courses, I will lead many travelers who are worried that they are not ready for the journey.

I equip myself to be the best guide for many of the students who will be new to university life through lessons dispersed over a one week period from a wise sage who has taught the course for more than forty years. He reminds us,
"You are communication people and are here to teach and go to graduate school. You're here because you love it. Remember, however, not everyone is like you. Many of your students who are in your classes have tried before and dropped the course. Some wish nothing more than to not have to take a Public Speaking course. The content that you will teach the students is not what is grueling for them to manage, it is the experience that is."
These words construct my new reality and identity.

I was hired because I had succeeded in courses in college and it was assumed that I would be prepared to teach courses because I had dedicated most of the past decade of my life to training for speech and debate competitions. My application got me this

position, but now the symbolic exaggeration of my identity listed in bullet points on stapled pages of printer paper has less relevance as I start to think about how I will educate many students; some of whom will view my assignments, my book, my class, and me as obstacles in their journeys.

The sage continues:

"While you may not be able to relate to the students who have a strong fear of public speaking, I am sure that there is someone in your life who is close to you who has a strong aversion to Communication classes. I want you to think about how you would teach the people who you love if they were the students in your sections."

My mind immediately drifts away to multiple conversations I have had with my parents over my lifetime about their experiences in Public Speaking courses. These stories are always in a joking spirit and include one or more of the following statements,

"Where did you come from?"

"You didn't get that speech background from us."

"Maybe there was a mix-up at the hospital."

In the days before I leave home to go on my new journey, my parents are sure to tell me about their experiences in public speaking again for around the twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth time. They just need to make sure that I understand that every college student does not love sitting in a Communication course. I nod my head as if I have never heard their accounts before. I am feeling an eye-roll coming but stop myself out of courtesy.

My dad's story always goes something like this:

It was the early 1970's and I walked into my first day of public speaking. I would have chosen to take any other class but my accidental decision to major in business left me no choice but to overcome my fear of public speaking. The teacher was a nice older woman who was friendly and energetic. Although it was the first day, all of us were still asked to stand up and give a short speech to the class about what we did last summer. As she went around the room asking for volunteers, I did not enthusiastically raise my hand. Instead, I waited to be called on at the very end. All of the students stood up and gave their speeches and I listened as the teacher made comments after each student talked.

She said a few things you needed to do to improve and then said a few things that you could work on.

It was my turn to stand up and tell the class about my summer. I don't remember much about what I said. I said something about just having gotten out of the Marines and how I started college for the first time. After I sat down, she didn't say anything to me. Nothing nice, nothing bad. I was confused.

My dad never attended another class that semester again. He also never took the course again.

Back at this time to drop a class you had to call the teacher and get permission to withdraw. I called and asked to drop and she asked me why I wanted to leave. I didn't tell her the real reason.

If Mom is nearby when Dad is recounting she will add an extra layer.

I attended college immediately after high school in the fall of 1971 with the intent of becoming a registered nurse. The school's large campus allowed me to get lost in the crowd amongst thousands of other students as I took classes in large lecture halls and

became used to the idea of teachers not knowing my name. However, my Public Speaking course was a required class and I didn't want to take it either. I took public speaking before in a small high school where all of the students knew each other and all of the students in our class were women. That experience didn't seem so bad.

However now, she was no longer a student, but an identification number that walked long distances to enter buildings far away from her dormitory and cafeteria. To her, the concept of a graduate student teaching a public speaking course (and many of her science labs) had become undoubtedly familiar.

The second speech we had to give was an informative speech and I didn't look up once. I got up in front of everybody, read my speech, and sat down. All I wanted to do was get a passing grade. I didn't care about anything else. When I got my score back sometime later it just said, "Try to look up more. B-." Oh, I was so happy. That graduate student was so nice and friendly and was a really good teacher. Nick, you're not going to fail someone who can't look up enough will you?

My relationship with my parents has always been close and I have always looked to them for all types of advice. Now with a grandfather-like figure reminding me of how important it is to look to loved ones who have had bad public speaking experiences, I am prepared to teach my mothers and fathers who are listed on my roll sheet.

On the first day of class, I have the students do an extremely short "schpiel" that includes their name, where they are from, and what they hope to get out of a public speaking course. Unknowingly, I am paying homage to my first college experience by asking, "¿Quien eres tú?" to my students.

I see my father. He stands up and has a baseball cap with the bill covering his eyes.

He talks for around twenty seconds.

"Hi may name is Jason. Uh, I just got back from Iraq and now I'm back in school…and uh…I hate speaking in front of people so I just want to pass this class."

A few students later my mother stands up. She looks directly down at the desk the entire time.

"I'm Sue. I'm study nursing. And I have put off taking this class for four years."

Through an eerie alignment of the stars, I have found my parents in my courses, the people who I will help guide through the class so that they can move on to achieve their goals in life.

The guy who just got back from military service and is now in school.

The nursing major.

And neither of them have any interest in taking public speaking!

Jason is probably open to expanding his knowledge about global issues and has a scintillating sense of humor. Sue is likely a very dedicated student and easily retains any information that comes her way. Bring on more moms, dads, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. I'm ready.

The last student to speak stands up as the circle in the room comes back to its 360th degree. I ask her to introduce herself. She shakes her head "no." I am a bit bewildered. I politely ask again and she begrudgingly gets out of her seat. "Hello everyone. My name is Komi and I am from Bangldesh. I do not like talking in English in front of people because I am not very good. I do not want to fail the class."

As she ends her short introduction, I see no one I know.

After the session is in its last moments, a few people stay behind to ask about the textbook and assignments. Jason and Sue were out the door when I said "See you

next…" Komi stays in her seat and once other students leave I ask, "Do you have a question for me?" She does not look up and sorrowfully responds "no." I pack my belongings, throw my bag over my shoulder, and walk out the door leaving behind a trail of my own moderately priced cologne I bought to wear for my first day of teaching.

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Justification

Investigating the experience of international students in the United States is an essential topic to further understand the cultural politics of U.S.-American higher education. This subject however, has been relatively understudied considering that international students have had a large growth in population in recent years and that they continue to make significant contributions to U.S. higher education. Bevis and Lucas (2007) directly address the problem of the lack of literature concerning international students in American higher education:

> The broad topic of foreign students in American colleges and universities has generated remarkably few book-length works over the past three-quarters of a century, despite the fact that foreigners studying in the United States currently number more than a half-million. They contribute—literally—billions of dollars to the American economy, and account for approximately 4 percent of all students enrolled in U.S. higher education. (p. xiii)

The authors' summary acts as a justification for their own investigation into the topic of foreign students in the United States, but also functions as a call for more research concerning the relationship between international students and U.S.-American colleges and universities. The sheer number of students who travel from places outside the U.S. borders to earn an American higher education degree is not the only justification for further investigations. Pedersen's (1991) claim that numerous international students

experience unique difficulties in transitioning to the college or university setting with minimal resources of assistance, also advances a need for further study.

The literature within the area of international education experiences is widely available, but many of the resources and past research concern a narrow area of topics. Most academic writings tend to be specialized within the context of a discipline or the works are meant for an audience at a particular institution. These research works do not produce knowledge of the broader issues faced by international students in colleges and universities across the nation (Bevis & Lucas, 2007). Because of the growing presence and visibility of international students in the United States, and the lack of significant comprehensive investigations concerning the needs of these individuals, I will investigate the relationship between international students, U.S.-American college and university culture, and the con/textual productions of discourse that shape educational experiences.

Inquiry into the relationship between international students and U.S.-American colleges and universities, and the factors that are controlled in part by the higher education system's relationship to social and political structures, will further contribute to the current lack of research on this relevant topic in contemporary issues in communication, culture, and education studies. In this investigation of the relationship between the current context of U.S. higher education and international student navigation, the methods of critical discourse analysis and layered autoethnographic introspection pair well together to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how colleges and universities assist international student navigation through the United States' higher education system. I will consider the following questions:

Research Question 1: What discursive outcomes might colleges and universities produce by assisting international students' navigation through the U.S. system of higher education?

RQ 2: What experiences do U.S. colleges and universities wish international students to have as members of the U.S.-American culture of higher education?

RQ 3: How do my own experiences as an educator and student resonate with suggestions offered by college and universities?

RQ 4: What experiences in my interactions with international students and the higher education environment are absent from college and university assistance guides?

Dissertation Outline

Chapter Two, The International Student Experience, will review salient literature concerning the historical contexts of U.S. higher education, the experiences of international students in U.S. colleges and universities, and higher education's intervention strategies for assisting non-citizen students in navigating their paths toward graduation.

Chapter Three, Sociopolitical Productions of Higher Education, will include further investigation into literature concerning the association between U.S. cultural politics and higher education. The chapter will specifically review important literature concerning the foundations and history of U.S. higher education, the impact of neoliberal policies in the contemporary era, and the evolving purpose of colleges and universities in cultural and political landscapes. Also, this chapter will investigate educational approaches to understanding the impacts on student achievement due to factors exterior to immediate educational environments.

Chapter Four, Methods, will discuss the purpose and process of using discourse analysis and a layered autoethnographic introspection to investigate questions regarding the relationship between U.S. higher education institutions and international student navigation. This chapter will justify a combined methodological approach to investigate the previously posed research questions.

Chapter Five, Autoethnographic Analysis of Discourse, will investigate advisory statements in texts produced by colleges and universities and will also examine the thematic connections between institutions' suggestions and social and political productions of education. Autoethnography, as an omnipresent method, will further expand upon the suggestions for student navigation I have experienced in the role of a student and instructor/authority figure in the higher education system. This section will also explore the international student experience through a self-reflexive style that is grounded in performative writing techniques.

Chapter Six, Discussion, will explore a critical understanding of the connection between institutions' advice and political and social productions of higher education by answering four research questions.

Chapter Seven, Conclusion, will discuss limitations, recommendations for future inquiry, and provide some final reflections.

CHAPTER TWO- THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The amount of literature available on the international student experience in U.S. colleges and universities is relatively minimal when compared to the growing presence of non-U.S. citizens who cross borders to study at a college or university (Bevis & Lucas, 2007). Bevis and Lucas' (2007) claim has been previously used to articulate why conducting a study of substantial length has merit in the fields of communication and education. This argument should not be interpreted to signify that studies concerning the experiences and needs of international students are absent from scholarly inquiry. Over past decades, there have been numerous works that have contributed to understanding the international student experience in the United States.

This review of literature investigates those writings which have concerned the international student experience at numerous U.S. colleges and universities. Inquiry into the historical relationship between international students and U.S. colleges and universities, the difficulties international students encounter in the post-secondary experience, and the strategies that higher education institutions have used to assist students in navigating a successful journey, are important topics to further understand the contemporary state of U.S. higher education for non-citizens. Considering these topics will also help situate an understanding of the experiences international students may face in the present era.

Historical Foundations

The concept of studying outside one's homeland to gain new cultural understandings dates back to 301 B.C.E. in Greece when Zeno the Stoic started a school in Athens to bring nationals and outsiders together in one place to learn (Gore, 2005). Zeno the Stoic

as quoted in Gore (2005) states, "The idea of cosmopolitanism, transcending patriotism; of the whole world, as a man's true fatherland, of a community embracing rational beings, without regard to the distinction of Greek and barbarian or of freeman and slave" (p. i). The educational value of studying outside national borders of such educational endeavors met skepticism in a post-Enlightenment society of the West because were experiences abroad primarily included elite students who took "grand tours." The meaning of grand tour holds its origins in the mid-1600's and originally denoted education experiences for young men in Europe who were of higher classes. These men would visit several European countries to immerse themselves in the culture and gain an understanding of life in other nations (Gore, 2005). Grand tours grew rapidly in the United States in the early 1920's when the possibility of efficient trans-Atlantic travel emerged.

The University of Delaware's Raymond W. Kirkbride conducted one of the first U.S. study abroad programs directly connected to the curriculum. Kirkbride, a former veteran of World War I, took eight male students of Junior status to study in France because he believed in the need to understand strategies to help create resolutions for international disputes between nations (Kochanek, 1998). His justification did not spawn a movement of educationally related experiences. In the years that followed, grand tours infiltrated the U.S higher education system. Some American men had gone abroad for education reasons following the University of Delaware's excursion, however these trips had been organized by universities (Gore, 2005). In the years following before World War II, educational trips were available only to the wealthiest of young men and young women. The purposes of study abroad education varied greatly for reasons related to the gender of

students who participated in the excursions. Men studied abroad to gain professional

development, but as the prospect of war onset in late-1920's and 1930's, most study

abroad programs were limited to women. The original intent of opening doors for

education in international affairs were significantly altered when study abroad programs

primarily recruited women.

> Males stayed at home for serious education and professional training, while wealthy
> women, most often from private institutions, it was believed went abroad for cultural
> acquisition. All of these factors reinforced the dominant belief that study in Europe, heir
> to the Grand Tour tradition, was pursued for personal rewards (p. 40).

In the post-1945 era, colleges and universities opened up more doors to students

because of programs such as the G.I Bill (Nasaw, 1979), more working class women also

entered higher education, and the experiences of studying abroad evolved to include more

pragmatic objectives. The U.S. took interest in sending students abroad in the early

twentieth century, however institutions had hosted many students from other countries

long before this time.

The idea of hosting students in the United States from other countries to earn an

education at an American university did not fully become realized until the mid-1800's,

when U.S.-American universities were gradually becoming more competitive with

respected universities in Western Europe (Bevis & Lucas, 2007). Since the times of the

earliest recorded experiences in international education in Greece, there has always been

a number of students who have studied abroad, yet it was not until the mid-nineteenth

century that the United States began to invest in the international student market.

The amount of students that were in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century

was quite minimal because the country had yet to reach an era of progressivism and

heightened immigration. When the industrial revolution and large waves of international populations began to move to the U.S. to seek work in factories, the bourgeois populations of foreign students who hoped to learn in the United States' growing industrial economy also crossed the ocean. However, the United States would not have as large of a percentage of foreign students at that time as compared to today. Bevis & Lucas (2007) discuss the number of reasons that the United States did not have a large number of international students even after the turn of the twentieth century. The prevailing force limiting opportunities for international students included those educators who were uninterested in the idea of teaching non-U.S. citizens.

Nothing seemed to change the proportion of international students who studied in the United States more than post-World War II politics and culture. In the late 1940's, the Fulbright program and other international exchange plans became realities that were supported by both the federal government and colleges and universities (Bevis & Lucas, 2007). Nonetheless, admissions from students in certain countries would be restricted during the years of McCarthyism that would shortly follow. Once tensions eased following the 1950's, the United States universities' desires to have more international students began to win out. Since this time, there has been an exceptional amount international exchange between U.S. colleges and universities and other nations (Gore, 2005). Thus, there has been a tradition of hosting foreign students in the United States since the mid-nineteenth century, but the greater impact of the international student study on U.S. campuses has happened in the post-McCarthyism era. The desire on the part of higher education institutions to recruit and train the brightest minds outside the United

States to make the nation and its relationship with allying countries stronger has prevailed in recent years.

Petersen et. al. (1999) cite Davis (1997) to explain that as of the mid-1990's there had been a "…1,200 percent increase since 1954" (p. 67) in international student attendance at U.S. higher education institutions.   The number of students that were enrolled in the United States in 1997 according to Davis was 457,984 and as of 2010 that number had increased to 690,923 (Open Doors, 2010). This 2010 data on international students also includes a statement from Ann Stock, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, which summarizes the most recent understandings of the reasons for a notable increase in international student attendance.

> American colleges and universities have attracted a record number of international students for the 2009-2010 academic year. The State Department, through partnerships with U.S. colleges and universities, has made it a priority to reach out to talented international students, particularly students from disadvantaged backgrounds. A global education prepares them to become leaders in their own countries and societies. (para. 5)

To justify the need to host international students in the United States, U.S. proponents use pragmatic reasons similar to the origins of Greek traditions. Peterson et. al. (1999) assert that having international students is becoming increasingly vital to help an institution's economic development, reputation, and instruction of rarely-studied subject material. Although a main purpose of having international students has evolved into doing so out of necessity for higher education institutions' reputations, there still remains a "need to articulate the benefits of international students to many publics" (p. 68). More attention in research has concerned the topic of international students in recent years, but the concept of non-citizens who have come to the U.S. to study has a long and rich

national history that also helps develop an understanding as to how the present experience for international students has evolved during higher education's history in the United States.

The hosting of international students in the United States for educational purposes has had various shifts in policies, numbers, and attitudes since the early beginnings of U.S. higher education. However, in the most recent decades, the greatest political and educational shift toward a desire to have more non-citizens journey to the United States for a college/university education has largely increased due to the nation's desire to attract more students from outside the country's borders. Also, the cultural myth that a U.S. degree holds more clout than ones from most other nations persists.

Difficulties That International Students May Face

As the interest in attracting more students outside the United States has steadily increased since the 1950's, so has attention toward investigating the experiences that international students have in their educational and cultural experiences while away from their home countries. Although a wide body of literature explores the successes of international students in their journeys, much of the literature over the past thirty years has focused heavily on topics concerning hurdles that international students face while attending schools in the United States. Social isolation, instructional difficulties, and discrimination are not the only hurdles that international students may encounter, but existing literature has given much attention to understanding the potential effects of these issues.

Mental health.

Of all the topics that will be discussed in this literature review, the studies concerning mental health issues, such as how stress and social isolation create difficulties for international students, are among the most significant in quantity (Olaniran, 1996; Owie, 1982; Schram & Lauver, 1988; Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992; Manese, Seclaceck, & Leong, 1988; Sandhu, 1994; Bradley, 2000). Many scholars have recognized that education in the United States can be a difficult transition because of culture shock or adjustment difficulties (Olaniran, 1996;Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005), fear of failure (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002; Pedersen, 1991), and isolation (Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005; Olaniran, 1996; Owie, 1982; Mori, 2000; Pedersen, 1991). The implications of these issues may lead to a negative experience and perception of U.S. higher education and therefore qualify a need for further investigation.

Olaniran (1996) finds that foreign graduate students and undergraduate students who are new to the acquisition period in the university experience various levels of social difficulties that are different amongst degree levels. College students in the United States are expected to be self-sufficient, but particularly at the graduate level, students must have less dependency on teachers and administrators at the host university to help them reach their educational goals. Olaniran asserts that language, age, academic classification, and friendships/networking all pose unique sets of problems for international students in the process of socialization in higher education. Owie (1982) also articulates that more international students report feelings of loneliness than U.S. students because the process of making friends at U.S.-American universities is more difficult. Developing friendships is also difficult for international students because the

ways that individuals in the United States develop friendships and define the term

"friend" differ greatly from many other cultures and countries throughout the world

(Gareis, 1995). All of these factors can lead to the problem and feelings of isolation

within a college or university community. Such concerns are generally accepted as

negative aspects of the U.S. educational journey for many students who are non-citizens.

Hanassab & Tidwell (2002) summarize why mental health concerns are suppressed

and/or tolerated by students who come from other nations to the United States to study:

> In the United States, international students encounter a different educational system, which requires mastery of different study skills and learning styles. In addition, these students usually desire to meet the expectations of family and friends back home. International students are often under immense internal and external pressure to succeed. Returning to one's home country with a poor degree or failure to get a degree would result in shame for the individual and family. (p. 315)

The authors' claim concerning pressures which most learners subside for the purpose of

achievement includes influences from outside the United States. Each student has

various pressures and influences, and therefore understanding the how these factors affect

international students is essential. Hanassab & Tidwell (2002) make a specific request

for an intervention from colleges and universities by asking the schools to assist students

from various international backgrounds. Similar calls to provide more intervention are

also made by several other authors (Hayes & Heng-Rue, 1994; Sandhu, 1994; Tilhan,

1990; Mori, 2000). As mental health issues have been considered one of the most

significant hurdles that international students may face, there has been an important

emphasis on developing a sound argument that colleges and universities should intervene

in the problem.

Language and instructional difficulties.

Grasping the educational experience in the United States within the bounds of Western cultural contexts of instruction is difficult enough, but for students who do not speak English as a primary language there may be even stronger barriers to succeeding in U.S. higher education classrooms (Mori, 2000). If students who are non-citizens are among the large non-native English speaking population, there are a host of unique barriers that are present in instructional contexts which may make speaking, listening, and learning significantly more difficult. For example, students who speak English as another language may have trouble making full sense of basic rules of diction and syntax when a lecturer does not always follow the formalities of structure and word choice used in Standard English teachings. Concerning the subject of comprehension, Rost (1994), cited in Yook (2002), found some concrete examples of the difficulties that a non-native English speaker may face in the college classroom.

> ESL students had difficulty in understanding the words 'in-group bias' and they understood them to be such various things as in group vias/group vice/group decides/group by decide/in group best/group base/group boast/non-group bias. By viewing the text they would have been able to better grasp the meaning. (p. 11)

Depending on the instructor's level of reflection upon his or her pedagogical methods, students who are non-native speakers of English may encounter a heightened level of difficulty because instructors cannot or do not understand how to accommodate students of varying proficiency levels.

Furthermore, the ways to measure and predict international student success based upon proficiency is unreliable because several scholars have concluded that the Test of English as a Foreign Language, or TOEFL, is not a trustworthy indicator of how a non-

native English speaker will perform in the college or university environment (Light, Xu, & Mossop, 1987; Graham, 1987). The previously cited example of Rost's (1994) study demonstrates that international students who are non-native speakers may have difficulties understanding the pronunciation or meaning of new words or phrases. This claim supports the argument that the TOEFL has lacked effective measurement and predictive qualities since students may not fully understand nor be comfortable using words and phrases from the lexicon of a discipline.

Confusing terminology is a large obstacle, but the cultural contexts of speaking, listening, and appropriately performing the role of student in the U.S. college/university classroom pose a greater risk for some international students, and in particular ones who speak English as another language, to avoid asking for assistance. Yook (2002) illuminates the apprehension of some international students' communication discomfort when citing (1998) research with Albert about Korean students' responses to power distance.

> When Korean students were asked whether they would talk to their instructor about a grade that had been miscalculated by the professor, they responded that they would not, even if it meant they would receive a lower grade for the course. U.S. students responded in exactly the opposite manner; they would definitely talk to the instructor. (p. 19)

A student's level of proficiency in English is possibly less-relevant to understanding the international student experience because such proficiency does not indicate whether a student will feel comfortable expressing her or himself in English. Understanding grammatical rules also does not indicate if he or she will be able to apply the use of English in the context of Western educational norms. Burroughs (2008) indicates that both language and cultural competency must be understood together in order to predict

whether or not non-native speakers of English will have apprehension when expressing themselves.

Xenophobia and discrimination.

The concept of a national identity in the United States is continuously evolving and so are U.S. residents' attitudes toward visitors from other nations. As Theiss-Morse (2009) articulates, the political and social attitudes toward citizenship status are embedded in the political and social contexts of the era. In current times, non-U.S. and even U.S. citizens of certain national origins fear facing discrimination. The risk of discrimination toward individuals who have roots or a birth certificate from certain nations is not unique to the post-September 11th environment; however, the differences in time periods are separated by racial, ethnic, and linguistic identities that are the political and social scapegoats of U.S. culture. Attitudes toward the economic impacts of immigration, terrorism, English-only movements, and international trade relations are only some of the many issues which influence who may become a target of discrimination and xenophobia. Doty (2010) reiterates that national security has always been a political issue that has at various historical times caused the government to influence the social attitudes toward issues such as immigration by gaining support for restrictive policies. In the current era, immigrants who may try to cross the border are a particular group that is targeted as a national threat to security and economic development. Other non-U.S. citizens of particular national backgrounds in countries and regions where U.S. relations are quite unstable, such as the Middle East and Africa, compose another target group which is subject to heightened xenophobia and discrimination (Hanassab, 2006).

The aforementioned contentions construct a scene where international students, and specifically ones of particular national backgrounds, are faced with a challenging experience in both U.S. society and its educational system. When discussing all of the major factors which may cause stress in the lives of international students, the fear of experiencing discrimination tops the list (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994). Such fear is not unfounded because actual cases of discrimination against international students are well-documented. Pedersen (1991) articulates that international students experience significant stereotypes that have lasting impacts upon their educational success as students. Furthermore, such stereotypes that are negative or benign can lead to discriminatory practices that compromise the international student experience. Although international students may experience stereotyping and discrimination in the university setting, the surrounding community is a chief contributor to bigotry and intolerance of international student populations (Hanassab, 2006). Therefore, faculty, students, and staff at colleges and universities may contribute international students' discomfort in adjusting to social attitudes, but the surrounding community which highly influences college and university life has been substantially ignored. The solution to this problem calls for colleges and universities to intervene through educational practices.

> To reduce discrimination faced by international students, there is a need to promote cross-cultural communication and efforts toward tolerance among people of different customs and values. This can advance learning across cultures, build respect among different peoples, and encourage construction of a global community. (p. 170)

The literature available identifies fears of experiencing xenophobia and discrimination by international students as a realistic and unfortunate circumstance that is part of contemporary culture. Student fears about experiencing such treatment in both

schools and the surrounding community are not unfounded. A growing number of students who come to the U.S. during a period when the country is at war in several parts of the world and politically wishes to limit immigration under the guise of stopping terrorism, illegal drug trade, and loss of job opportunities help situate the difficulties international students may experience.

Summary of Difficulties Faced by International Students

The literature on the topics of mental health, language and instructional difficulties, and xenophobia and discrimination helps inform a greater understanding that international students at U.S. colleges and universities could face a unique set of difficulties that their citizen counterparts may not. However, the arguments made by past studies on international student experiences do not indicate that any of the previously discussed issues or hurdles are necessarily problematic for all students who are non-citizens. A student's age (Mori, 2000; Andrade, 2006) gender (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002; Manese, Sedlaceck, & Leong, 1988), and national background (Trice, 2004; Sodowsky & Placke, 1992) coupled with his or her non-citizen status, also provide further indication that the international student experience is an individualized journey that holds separate obstacles and advantages for each student. Although it is impossible to generalize that a vast majority of international students face challenges with mental health, language, and discrimination, the literature on these topics helps inform what issues are problematic for a significant number of students from other nations. Many of the previously referenced works indicate a need for intervention from instructors and administrators at colleges and universities. Exploring how higher education institutions have intervened to make the international student's journey most meaningful will also

expand an understanding of the educational experience international students in the United States.

College and University Intervention Strategies

I have previously summarized that there have been multiple calls for intervention strategies that consider making the transition for international students at U.S. colleges and universities more helpful. In the case of mental health, Mori (2000) asserts, **"**Despite the constant expansion of the international student population in the U.S., such students have always remained one of the most quiet, invisible, underserved groups on the American campus" (p. 143). She is helpful in *not* asserting, however, that colleges and universities are intentionally to blame, but rather notes there is a problem of creating outreach in the context of Western norms that is often at odds with the backgrounds of students. Mori's previous statement from a decade ago that international students do not receive enough assistance to adjust to U.S. life, is quite compelling. It is important to recognize that in recent years, colleges and universities have increased positive attitudes toward intervention strategies by focusing on reducing the possibility of international students facing isolation, language difficulties, discrimination, and other issues that may create serious barriers. Such strategies that higher education institutions have used include: fostering student community building, developing training and cultural literacy for international students, and promoting a curriculum for training university faculty.

Building student community.

Two of the most successful intervention strategies that have been used by colleges and universities to make the transition for international students easier, are the fostering of community building amongst international students and integrating this population

with the larger college/university community. Al-Sharideh & Goe (1998) note that in the wake of numerous problems international students can face, participating in "ethnic communities" can allow students to maintain a connection to their native cultures while working to integrate into the U.S. higher education community. However, in their conclusions, the authors also articulate that while solely participating in a community comprised of students from similar backgrounds increases self-esteem, such a strategy does not necessarily contribute to stronger relationships between international and native U.S. students. When international students of similar backgrounds participate in communities comprised of individuals who share their nationality, the students will likely experience less loneliness but "one recognizes that language and cultural barriers, as well as discrimination, are not easily removed" (Trice, 2004, p. 685). Regardless of the drawbacks of any strategy, Al-Sharideh & Goe (1998) provide a strong justification that the benefits of participating in some social community while away from one's homeland holds significant benefits and overwhelmingly makes the transitions to U.S. colleges and universities a smoother process.

Colleges and universities have attempted to make more integrated socialization in hopes of providing a most meaningful higher education experience for international visitors. Another development in recent years includes peer programs which are intended to join international and U.S.-American students together and foster meetings for socialization (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998). The authors also note that these programs, which have been praised by other studies (Westwood & Barker, 1990; Quintrell & Westwood, 1994), can help international students in academic achievement and involvement in campus life. The broader research on peer-assistance programs

makes general assertions that such intervention strategies are undoubtedly helpful. One study also concludes that peer programs on college campuses are not yet equipped to guarantee increases in academic achievement, as there must be more focus on how students from different nations, particularly students from Asian countries, adjust to U.S. life and culture (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998). However, based upon the compelling claims that these programs have achieved numerous successes, U.S. colleges and universities show tremendous potential to more effectively integrate international students into campus life.

Finally, Peterson et al. (1999) summarize the wide variety of campus resources and programs that have reported success at various institutions. Orientation programs, promoting integrated experiences, and requiring community and cultural service are some of the strategies that provide assistance to international students in the process of acquisition to university and community. From the research of previously cited works, there is evidence that numerous universities are attempting to effectively meet the call to make the social integration process for international students most beneficial to their academic careers and cultural experiences. As not all colleges and universities have implemented a full host of programs that work to make the integration into campus life easier, Peterson et. al. argue that there is a significant detriment to only examining international students as tuition dollars. "American higher education institutions that take international students for granted, as 'cash cows,' do so at their peril" (p. 69). By implementing strategies that build a stronger community amongst international students and bridge an integration with other institutions' members, the benefits are reciprocal for both the students and the college/university community.

Developing training for the campus community.

Building community and providing resources on the behalf of international students help to reduce issues concerning mental health and socialization. Colleges and universities have worked to reduce discrimination by educating native students and instructors. Peterson et. al (1999) report that students and faculty who are encouraged to study or work outside the United States at some point will likely have a positive change in their perceptions of non-citizens who are in the United States. "The most powerful intercultural learning often takes place overseas, when Americans experience other cultures around the clock, which profoundly affects their attitudes and knowledge of other countries" (p. 74). This claim has not necessarily been ignored as support for campus community members to have international educational experiences is growing (Ogden, 2006; Vande Berg, et al. 2004; Rhodes, 1997). Promoting study abroad programs may not be solely for the purpose of hoping that faculty and students will more effectively interact with international students on their own campuses, but this encouragement nonetheless can help produce this likely outcome.

Beyond how a heightened promotion of study abroad may have unintended positive consequences for international students who study in the United States, many colleges and universities also have found that promoting cultural training on campuses helps reduce negative experiences for international students. McCauley, Wright, & Harris (2000) note that diversity training for both faculty and students reduces prejudices. As of a decade ago, these programs were offered at an estimated 70% of college campuses. The authors also argue that such programs are continuing to grow at a rapid rate with participants who overwhelmingly report positive learning experiences in these training

sessions. Colleges that have also responded by requiring a general education credit in cultural diversity help reduce racial tensions and prejudices (Hogan & Mallott, 2005; Chang, 2002). Peer assistance-programs which have been used to help international students better adjust to U.S. college and university life give native college students a deeper awareness about cultures outside the United States (Shigaki & Smith, 1997). Having a more informed body of students and faculty who are aware of the diverse and unique needs of many students who are of international status is essential to maintaining the growth of non-citizens. Such training and promotion can assist international students in their educational journey by reducing a variety of obstacles. The programs' successes justify why colleges and universities have recently implemented more training to improve intercultural interactions on the part of both U.S. faculty and students.

Summary of Intervention Strategies

Building stronger student communities on campuses and educating U.S. citizens at colleges and universities about international students are two broad ways that institutions have attempted to make transitions easier. These very strategies also directly answer the calls of past studies that have asked for more intervention to reduce tensions such as mental health issues, instructional difficulties, and discrimination. Colleges and universities which foster community development amongst international students and attempt to find ways to integrate this population into the larger university community can reduce feelings such as isolation, a lack of confidence to approach instructors, and tensions amongst all members of higher education. Training and development for U.S. faculty and students can also equip citizens to reduce the previously discussed barriers for international students who study in the United States.

The literature that is available on the international student experience over the past few decades understands the types of experiences international students have in their higher education endeavors in the United States. Many of the earlier works included calls to colleges and universities to increase their outreach to international students. Several of these works also called for educating native students and faculty about a broad range of issues in diversity. A few calls specified a need to have a body of U.S. students and faculty who are more informed about diversity issues. Both directly and indirectly, many higher education institutions have made an attempt to provide outreach to international students and educate native faculty and students on cultural awareness issues. While the literature on the international student experience is not necessarily broad in range, there is an extensive knowledge about the issues that may cause difficulties for international students. Additionally, a stronger development in investigating the success of college and university intervention strategies has emerged in recent years.

Problem

One area of inquiry that lacks investigation concerns the role of resources that do not include direct interpersonal interaction to assist international students in their educational endeavors. In the current era when students look for assistance beyond meeting with peers or faculty, it is imperative to deeply understand resources that are available to international students which do not necessarily include direct communication with other individuals. This study will further explore the role that international student guides and handbooks perform in providing assistance through mediated discourse. By further exploring the experiences these texts indicate that colleges and universities wish

international students to have, this study will broaden an understanding of assistance

strategies that higher education institutions use to help international students adjust to

U.S. college and university life.

CHAPTER THREE- SOCIOPOLITICAL PRODUCTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In this chapter, I will discuss three areas that are pertinent to understanding the relationships between international students and colleges and universities including: the historical foundations of higher education in the United States, the neoliberal turn in the relationships between educational institutions and the state, and intervention in the classroom. I aim to establish a theoretical framework for examining the experiences of international students in contemporary higher education. In addition, I change the tone and style of this writing from an expository approach to a personally invested exploration of the historical, political, and theoretical concepts which have influenced me to explore previously posed research questions. Writing in this style about theoretical foundations is essential to enhance understandings of my critical-interpretivist lens that is pervasive throughout this study. Finally, my voice will illuminate my reading of the historical and contemporary sociopolitical productions of higher education as argued by revisionist and critical education historians and theorists.

Historical Foundations of Higher Education

An examination of the historical purposes of higher education highlights numerous traditional views in our history which have invested a purpose in touting the post-secondary educational institution as an ideal place where learners are liberated through processes of critical thinking and enlightenment. In their earliest period, U.S-American theorists and historians have claimed that universities were originally meant to promote democratic participation (Checkoway, 2001), learning for the purpose of expanding knowledge (Newman, 2001), and until 1945 were separated from the populace of

America because the university was "still restricted primarily to those who could afford it" (Nasaw, 1979, p.166). The historical philosophy and purpose of higher education before the mid-twentieth century has left the remnants of a legacy which have caused some to still consider colleges and universities as places that operate as an oasis away from the difficulties which exist outside their borders. The majority of writings before and after the mid-twentieth century reflect that the traditional view of all public educational institutions in historical literature has been overwhelmingly positive. Veysey (1965) articulates that the predominant view on education from the historian's standpoint until the late 1950's was largely invested in examining the positive impacts that education has had on U.S. society. He also contends that that most historical knowledge of all aspects of the U.S.-American educational system are part of a limited and romanticized view which glorifies the creation of an informed public but does not explore beyond the ideal beliefs of what education produces.

Revisionist view of the origins of U.S.-American schooling

In the 1960's, several scholars in the history discipline, began to question assumptions concerning historical writings in a growing decade of revolution. In the context of the times, the purity of the philosophy known as *revisionism* became wrapped up in conflicts between scholars and other prominent figures of the early decade. Such views on historical studies are in contention and leave the term revisionism with a negative connotation in the mainstream public (Shepard, 2010). Revisionist scholars opted to re-explore history to understand how previous interpretations of historical data and accounts may have been inaccurately understood and articulated. While many political participants did not buy into a revised view of history, neither did all scholars of

education**.** Former Assistant Secretary of Education under George H.W. Bush and educational historian, Diane Ravitch (2005), recalls writing during the times when revisionist scholars were emerging. She reflects upon her arguments against the foundational assumptions of the liberal-elites who began ushering in an age of progressivism in educational theory and history. When referring to these scholars, Ravitch considers her motives by stating, "Together they had nothing good to say about our national history, our consumer culture, our free market economy, or about self-interest as a political motive" (p.10). Issues concerning whether schools intend to produce positive or negative outcomes for the U.S.-American society is a singular idea which has caused a significant division in revisiting the historical foundations of U.S.-American education and at all levels. Do schools promote equality or reproduce existing inequities? Since the 1960's and 1970's several strong voices on the revisionist side continue to provide compelling arguments to support the latter assertion. It is important to note however, that few, if any, historians are invested in arguing that the higher education institution and its members are inherently bad; rather it is the institution's role as an extension of sociopolitical influences that leads to troubling questions of inequity.

David Nasaw (1979) argues that the intention of education in the United States has never been in the interest of the student, but rather has always maintained the interest of the state. He is not an educational psychologist nor is he a philosopher of pedagogy, but his work in the field of education history illuminates that since the formation of schools in the 1820's, their major function has always been to preserve social stability. "The common schools, the high schools, the colleges and universities—all in their own times—were expanded so that they might better maintain social order and increase

material productivity" (p. 4). As a scholar who writes from a revisionist perspective, Nasaw questions the myth that education is structurally designed to promote equal opportunity or social justice. His work indicates that issues such as tracking and maintaining the structure of the class gap in society were implemented in the common schools, the high schools, and even in the development of the community colleges in the twentieth century. Because of cost, the structure of U.S.-American higher education has never given an equal opportunity to all individuals; rather it has been a large force in reproducing the social inequities of the status quo of U.S.-American cultural politics. This issue further supports critical pedagogy scholars' contextualization of the practices of education in the political and social power structure, and their claim that "schools are the very institutions that replicate the existing cultural values and privileges of the dominant class" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009, p.12). Therefore, schooling, according to historical revisionists and critical education scholars, has become an extension of hegemonic forces that is used to reinforce the current state of political ideology and social inequity.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is the economic philosophy that has had a pervasive presence in U.S.-American life since the Reagan era. The term signifies a re-emergence of a strong appreciation for capitalism and "freeing" the U.S. economy by moving much of the public sector into the private sector. Current applications in the United States outside of schools are evident in the government's outsourcing of industry, the major cuts in public assistance, and the lowering of state and federal taxes (Giroux & Giroux, 2006). This

increasingly popular philosophy continues to garner praise from legislators and government officials and is also largely appreciated by many members of the public.

Current examples of how neoliberal philosophies have invaded the structure of the education system are plentiful. The for-profit sector has a strong presence in the charter school system as more and more states hand over the responsibility of running educational institutions to management corporations (Spring, 2006). Funds are increasingly being cut from schools, leaving teachers and the student body to have to conduct fundraising activities (Giroux & Giroux, 2006). At colleges and universities, the privatization of dining choices, residence halls, and campus staff has risen immensely in recent years. Giroux and Giroux (2004) further assert that the purpose of higher education has been to meet the demands of the private sector and produce economic growth. Institutions have slowly lost any purpose to promote missions of critical thinking and social justice. While some parts of institutions will continue to be contracted out to the private sector, the purpose of the curriculum of higher education is also being metaphorically outsourced to meet the missions of a neoliberal culture. Such a curriculum attempts to turn places that promote freedom of thought and self-exploration into the future factories that "turn out" students who are fit to participate in the culture that is characterized by private economic control.

Given that hard times have continued to push the state to relieve itself of the responsibility of education oversight, critical pedagogy scholars have significantly critiqued this practice. By warning about how education's foundation in the democratic tradition loses precedence in the era of neoliberal thought, Giroux & Giroux (2006) articulate,

39

If the right-wing reforms in public education continue unchallenged, the consequences will reflect a society in which high-trained, largely White elite will command the techno-information revolution while a vast, low-skilled majority of poor and minority workers will be relegated to filling the McJobs proliferating in the service sector. (p. 188)

Giroux and Giroux are seconded by McLaren (2005) who explains that as the private sector continues to control education, an increasingly widening gap between the rich and the poor develops. Both arguments echo how the for-profit sector continues to reproduce inequalities by tracking students to become the next generation of lower class laborers for a small sect of the upper class. The major critique from these scholars is that neoliberal economic policies are among the greatest reasons that U.S.-American education does not promote equal opportunity, but rather reproduces and widens existing inequalities. Nasaw (1979) reaffirms that community colleges were created to handle the mass influx of soldiers looking to enter higher education under the new GI bill that was passed in the 1940's. The purpose of using schooling to maintain the status quo of class gaps while increasing material productivity of the whole nation has remained at the forefront of policymaking for decades.

An outside perspective on some problems in the structural aspects of U.S. higher education comes from Bartram (2007) who notes that in an exchange program between universities in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, participants in the program began to reflect the consumer culture of the United States where students are expected to rely more and more upon staff members for their success. He quotes Bok (2005) to further elucidate the implications of consumer-culture by stating,

> Universities now operate within a management culture where people feel there have to be more and more systems. If a student challenges something, universities get worried about losing them and we see more and more new systems evolving to avoid possible dissatisfaction. (p. 210)

The impacts of neoliberalism and structural factors pervade the experience not only of international students who have to figure out how to navigate the system, but also affect the ways administrators, faculty, and native students also understand their education. The dynamics of the neoliberal and consumer culture are extensive because international students who must deal with the cultural barriers of gaining an education away from their home nations are placed into the recent trend of U.S. higher education which wishes to help the students adjust, albeit possibly for the interest of student retention. An international student interprets the U.S.-American culture of higher education differently than other members of the college and university community. It is imperative that everyone involved understands the need to respond to greater systemic influences to continue the relationship between students, the community, and the state to make education most meaningful and beneficial.

Bok (2005) further articulates that the commercialization of higher education has created a divide in universities where many faculty members from the left wish to resist the commercialization, while administrators have no choice but to encourage corporate sponsorship and the production of profit-driven research to maintain viable funds. Students are caught somewhere in between trying to figure out where they belong. Holistically, the culture of higher education I explore in this study has roots in neoliberal economic policies, the changing nature of college and universities in the United States, and the debate between a desire and/or resistance to meet students' individual needs. As

the marketplace and state continue to significantly influence the higher education system,

colleges and universities will be forced to appropriately respond to keep the doors of

buildings open. Some faculty will resist by not giving in to this system. Students will

figure out what professors are too easy and which are unhelpful. They will likely make a

decision on what classes to take with influence from an era where the Bachelor's degree

is deemed essential for maintaining even a lower-middle class status. It is the very

messy, confusing, and fragmented new college/university culture to which international

students must come to understand and adjust. As there is no uniform philosophy which

guides the attitudes of the partisan driven policymakers who fund higher education, the

members of the administration who must maintain appropriate relationships with donors

and the state, and the various faculty members who have individualized approaches to

teaching, international students cannot follow a guide to figure out how to adjust to a

system which contains an infinite amount of influences and hurdles, both of which may

be often undetectable.

U.S. Education History, Neoliberalism, & International Students

    Giroux & Giroux, McLaren, and Nasaw are only a few of the many major voices that

are inherently relevant to understanding and critiquing the structure of U.S. education that

continues to reproduce inequities for its citizens. These scholars, and the others who are

included in this chapter, will still fail to intervene upon how the U.S. education structure

negotiates the purpose of international students. Because previously cited statistics argue

that nearly 4% of students in American institutions of higher education are not U.S.

citizens (Bevis & Lucas, 2007), questions of what these students do for the "system" and

what education does for these students are necessary to explore through a more

comprehensive view of study. Particularly, it is important to explore how U.S.-American culture embedded in the sociopolitical reproductions of inequity further complicates the ways in which international students can "fit in" with the rest of the assumptions made by critical education scholars.

Systemic Inequities and Embracing Full Personhood

Understanding historical foundations, the influences of neoliberal economic policies, and a production of higher education culture in the contemporary era help lay the groundwork for understanding some aspects of international student experiences in U.S. higher education institutions. The critical, and arguably, radical voices of scholars who frame these perspectives are effective in pointing out the structural influences which make the U.S. higher education experience unique. Also, in the specific case of international students, literature from the previous chapter has effectively argued that the U.S. government's interest in educating international students is grounded in seeking out students who will economically benefit the state. These criticisms of the current structure are necessary to understand why colleges and universities, including their educators and administrators, have been moved to intervene to assist all students, but most importantly, students who are at a risk of suffering from hurdles posed by the higher education experience in the United States. The encouragement of forming student sub-cultures in higher education institutions, establishing more effective mentoring strategies at the departmental and administrative levels, and producing material intended to assist students in navigating the higher education experience in the United States are all examples of actions that show how institutions are concerned about the welfare of their international students.

Those important structural critiques lay the foundation and motivation for why colleges and universities are in/directly intervening to make the higher education experience a more meaningful journey. Again however, the current voices that point out the flaws of the structure do so at the risk of leaving a populace that is confused and defeated. However, a deeper examination into bell hooks' philosophies which help guide many contemporary voices in critical pedagogy, adds an additional perspective. Her understandings contribute to discussion on the current state of international students through a critical lens by providing an epistemological guide for intervention on the part of educators.

Teacher Intervention from Hooks

The wide range of structural factors which can affect a student's ability to either fail or succeed in the U.S. system of higher education were widely explained by previous scholars in this chapter. However, bell hooks best explains the relevance of how structural and social factors affect students directly in the classroom. Her works are helpful in reminding educators that there are aspects which affect student achievement in the classroom that are not limited solely to a student's dedication or cognitive ability. In the case of her own experiences as a student and educator, hooks reminds teachers and education scholars that marginalized social standings have a significant influence on a student's ability to succeed (Foss, Foss, & Trapp, 2001). It is her position however, that educators have a direct point of intervention. Hooks' interest in a variety of marginalized statuses are helpful in showing how race, gender, class, sexual identity, and other forms of marginalization can significantly affect the process of education for students who face problems in these areas. She also notes that marginality gives certain individuals a

perspective outside of a dominant group which acts as a place for opposition. "It offers

one the possibility a radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine

alternatives, new worlds" (1990, p. 150). Therefore, although there are struggles in

marginalized communities, there is also opportunity for members to understand and

interpret their environments in different ways.

In the case of understanding pedagogy, hooks (1994) asks educators to consider the

whole student when educating in the classroom.

> Throughout my years as student and professor, I have been most inspired by those
> teachers who have had the courage to transgress those boundaries that would confine
> each pupil to a rote, assembly-line approach to learning. Such teachers approach
> students with the will and desire to respond to our unique beings, even if the situation
> does not allow the full emergence of a relationship based on mutual recognition. Yet
> the possibility of such recognition is always present. (p. 13)

The example of hooks' reminder about how to consider students is helpful to educators

by asking them to know students beyond their identification numbers or where they may

sit in a classroom. Students who experience discrimination—or at least a marginalized

status such as class—in other aspects of everyday life are subject to carry these

experiences into their classroom journeys (hooks, 1994). These examples remind

teachers that no matter how much they view classrooms as sites of freedom and

empowerment, students may not have the same perception. Therefore, it is important to

remember that teachers understand students beyond their surface roles in the education

system to help them succeed.

Hooks contributes ideas to help enhance understandings of student experiences, and

her works demonstrate the importance of considering a student as more than a categorical

status. She further highlights education's role in the context of each student's individual

experiences. By pointing these characteristics out, she also helps educators to recognize

that they (we) can never wholly understand a student's full identity (as identity itself is

multi-faceted and fluid). Teachers may not be able to fully understand whether or not

students are in certain marginalized categories. Therefore educators also cannot fully

understand all aspects of an individual's life which could detract from his or her ability to

succeed in the classroom. However, building relationships with students which are

meaningful and grounded in a philosophy of love can help educators contribute to more

substantive experiences. Also, a philosophy of love and compassion for students allows

members of the university community to have a stronger investment in motivating

students toward success.

Bell hooks is not the only scholarly voice who reminds educators of the importance of

love. One scholar who has inspired many of her writings, Paulo Freire (2000), is a major

advocate for understanding how love can help students succeed in education. His

description of a pedagogical philosophy called dialogue considers how teachers relate to

students through practices of equity. First, a dialogic form of education is one where love

is an architectonic component of the process.

> Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and
> for people. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is
> not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of
> dialogue and dialogue itself. It is thus necessarily the task of responsible Subjects
> and cannot exist in a relation of domination (Freire, 2000, p. 89).

The meaning of Freire's understanding of love for people and the world also relates to

people's understandings of oppression. If one truly loves others, then he or she will

attempt to create a bond with those individuals rather than construct a relationship of

authority. For Freire, dialogue and education grounded in meaningful equality cannot exist without love from educators for students.

By understanding the importance of not just the structural, but also social factors which can affect a student's ability to succeed, hooks gives excellent reasons why it is important to consider the individual aspects of experiences that can affect a student's ability to succeed in the context of education. Also, Freire's reminder of the need to use love to build student-teacher relationships which are grounded in equity also supplements a further intervention strategy. There are numerous structural and social barriers that affect individual students in all aspects of college classrooms. Previously cited literature pointed out several factors that may be unique to certain international students' experiences. These factors are applicable to both arguments from Freire and hooks, because understanding students' individual needs can provide a meaningful point of intervention. By considering the various factors which may affect a student's ability to succeed, international or otherwise, educators still do not have the power to immediately eradicate social and structural barriers to student success. However, individualized approaches to education can help mediate between students, structural barriers, and social inequities.

Summary

All of the previous literature discussed in Chapters Two and Three supports the leading questions of inquiry in this research project. The literature that is available on the international student experience has a strong investment in the difficulties experienced by international students such as isolation and xenophobia. Critical pedagogy scholars such as Henry Giroux, Susan Searles Giroux, Peter McLaren, and David Nasaw have

extensively discussed how political and economic policies of the U.S. that are grounded in a neoliberal philosophy of productivity and individualism contribute to a fragmented society of individuals who are directed on paths to solely contribute to the nation's capital. Bell hooks and Paulo Freire reminded educators of the importance of building meaningful relationships with individual students. In the specific case of international students, it is imperative to further understand the advisory role that higher education systems have by examining a series of public texts which are intended to assist international students in their U.S. educational journey. To further enhance understanding of these claims, it is also essential to embed these claims with my own experiences to gain a greater awareness of how an educator may or may not embody a college or university's suggestions.

Finally, I must articulate that the combination of these perspectives does not effectively summarize the wide array of assumptions made by critical education and pedagogy scholars. I choose these perspectives with the intent of illustrating the assumptions that I hold as I work toward answering questions that are only substantiated by reflective and interpretive methods. I elect to include these perspectives because as a critical-interpretivist, I wish to be transparent in explaining the affective assumptions which will guide the outcome of this study. I hold strongly to the beliefs that there are significant inequities for many international students because of the historical underpinnings of the higher education system. I am moved by the belief that neoliberal economic policies that have been implemented in the past decades continue to widen this gap. I value a number of perspectives which I piece together to argue that the current state of U.S. culture and student experiences at colleges and universities is pervaded by a

complex system which all students must understand how to navigate. These assumptions

are the perspectives that most affect me as a scholar. However, it is the inclusion of

considering the individual needs of my students and a foundation of love which guide my

work as an educator and advocate. The subsequent parts of this project use my

interpretation of the concepts which I believe guide an understanding of higher education

institution reactions and responses to the international students who must adapt to the

difficulties in the current era of Western society.

CHAPTER FOUR- METHODS

Autoethnography

Giving a solid definition of autoethnography is difficult, as the term has significantly evolved since its first use by sociologists in the late 1970's. "Like many terms used by social scientists, the meanings and applications have evolved in a manner that makes precise definition and application difficult" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). To further illustrate their point, Ellis and Bochner list a multitude of terms which have been defined as a type of autoethnography. Personal narratives, socioautobiography, reflexive ethnography, and experiential texts are just four of the many terms that are representative of autoethnographic practices according to the authors; however, I choose to utilize the common term "autoethnography" that encompasses each of these forms of methodological inquiry.

Autoethnography encounters questions about how the author, reader, and text matter in the conducting of research. The method also addresses acknowledgment of bias and is gaining relevance to applied communication research. First, the method focuses greatly on the relationship between writer, reader, and text as a primary goal of the research. The writer considers how writing styles and techniques can be used to more effectively reach audiences in ways that traditional writing styles may not always be able to do.

> Look at any handbook on your shelf and what you'll find is that most chapters are written in third person, passive voice. The conventions militate against personal and passionate writing. These books are filled with dry, distant, abstract, propositional essays. (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 734)

Writing in a first person narrative voice allows the reader to connect to the text by emotionally experiencing an author's description of a lived event or events rather than

only extracting information from a supposedly objective read. This is why Pollock's (1998) claim that performative writing should evoke emotions is a crucial foundation for creating good autoethnographic scholarship. Autoethnography places the reader in a position to feel the emotional content constructed by the author. The expectation is not that each reader will connect to a text in a uniform way, but rather he or she will apply his or her own experiences and emotions to gain the most personally fulfilling interpretation. By focusing on the importance of the relationship between readers, writers, and texts, there is a greater chance for a reader to understand how his or her own experiences fit in with another's research. If a writer is successful in his or her attempt to develop a meaningful connection, readers will have more personal investment in the content of argument made by the author.

Because developing a relationship between the reader, writer, and text is shared by many scholars, a second aspect of autoethnography includes that the method does not attempt to avoid bias, but rather acknowledges it (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The post-positivist form of research asks for a most scientific and objective approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Autoethnography takes a dichotomous turn by immersing its goals in the interpretive, and often critical, paradigms. For this reason, autoethnographers accept that the writer's perspective is biased, and accept that multiple perspectives have a place in a paradigm that assumes knowledge to be subjective. Bochner & Ellis (2006) argue that autoethnography should attempt to illuminate the meaning of events rather than accurately describe a lived experience. Because autoethnography acknowledges bias, it does not attempt to argue that the author's perspective is necessarily good nor bad, but instead accepts that the author's depiction of

experiences will not be under the guise of objectivity. The manner in which a reader interprets the meaning or relevance of this bias is entirely up to him or her.

To practice autoethnography, researchers can embark upon the method in a variety of ways. As previously cited by Ellis & Bochner (2000), there are multiple forms of personally invested writing which reflect autoethnographic practices. In several cases, authors reflect upon their own experiences as data to understand a question or subject and use reflection and writing to create meaning. Many writings that use other methodologies limit epistemological productions of knowledge to the units of data that a researcher objectively analyzes. Autoethnography bridges the data with the experiences of the researcher in context, and thereby understands a holistic knowledge that has more meaning than singular pieces of information. By using a passionate and emotive style, the author's performative diction and syntax become the very data that he or she is analyzing. In this process, autoethnographers explore deep inside their past experiences to create data for readers. It is not just the words, but rather the style and emotion of such narratives which are also part of the data of analysis (Bochner & Ellis, 2006). The message of the narrative, its style, and emotional productions work together to form connections between writers and readers and also create new meanings. Pollock (1998) explains that in addition to evoking emotions, performative writing also should be nervous, metonymic, subjective, and citational. Doing autoethnography includes more than telling a story because the content and techniques must work harmoniously to produce meaningful understandings for readers.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Deciding what constitutes the process of discourse analysis is at times difficult because the written and spoken forms of text blend together when researchers use these phenomena for study (Alba-Juez, 2009; Brown & Yule, 1983). Traditionally, the process of discourse analysis has taken on a form of qualitatively examining and extracting meaning from written or transcribed works to conclude how language functions. However, discourse analysis has evolved since its early inception into the academy nearly a century ago and has separated itself as a methodology by focusing on the relationship between written and/or spoken texts, and the context of the discourse. In contrast, textual analysis is a separate method that is only invested in the process of analyzing the scribed or spoken word for its internal linguistic merit (Alba-Juez, 2009). In the current era, discourse analysis is a broad methodology and can be practiced in differing ways. Especially in varying disciplines, discourse analysis takes on different forms through the application of different types of texts and contexts. Content analysis, which looks to isolate the productions through repeated measures; rhetorical analysis/criticism, which applies philosophical theories as guiding lenses for examining texts in context; and even traditional qualitative methodologies such as interviewing and ethnography are interested in discourse analysis and its possibilities in varying forms.

The methodological types of discourse analysis are broad, but using any form of this method for study goes back to the roots of early traditions in communication studies, sociology, and written rhetoric. The first recorded discourse analysis is Spitzer's (1928) *Style Studies* that was translated into English by Michel Foucault. Foucault was one of many scholars who helped extensively discuss discourse processes, especially in *The*

Archaeology of Knowledge (1969). He showed the relevance of spoken and written texts in contemporary society but also added that the analysis of texts/contexts was not enough for understanding epistemological productions. He argued that it was important to understand the process of discourse invention. As a scholar, Foucault has contributed greatly to the field of discourse analysis, but also has inspired critical discourse analysis, a method which searches for broader contextual influences (Luke, 1995-1996).

Although Foucault's philosophy gives strong foundations for conducting works in the field of critical discourse analysis, Norman Fairclough is often credited for being the founding producer of critical discourse analysis and has extensively researched ways to fully conduct the method (Locke, 2004). There are many similarities between discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. Both methodologies attempt to understand the ways that language, symbols, and texts are influenced by contexts. However, critical discourse analysis takes a strong turn away from traditional discourse analysis because it is interested in the ways that language and texts are produced by social structures and the social order (Fairclough, 1995). Another purpose of critical discourse analysis includes understanding how the productions of both texts and contexts relate to social and political productions of power (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001).

Van Dijk (1993) outlines some major components that could be included in a critical discourse analysis. Power, dominance, and a marginalized group's ability to participate in discursive practice are only a few of some of the major elements that could assist in the process of conducting such a study. Van Dijk further asserts that these aspects help with certain types of discourse analyses; however, when summarizing the ways a researcher can conduct studies he writes, **"There are many ways to do 'critical' discourse analysis"**

(p. 279). The method of discourse analysis has many facets and there are numerous ways to interpret the meaning of the word critical.

An Autoethnographic Analysis of Discourse

A recent turn in scholarship allows studies which include methods such as discourse analysis, textual analysis, or rhetorical criticism to combine with other qualitative methods such as ethnography or autoethnography. Hess (2011) claims a researcher can study rhetoric by visiting and observing the rhetorical acts firsthand. Following the observations, he or she can understand these acts in the context of researcher observations. Hess' approach is not the only attempt to understand rhetoric or discourse in combination with ethnographic studies as other scholars have used similar methods as well. In one example of studying environmental movements and protest rhetoric, scholarship has explored the importance of examining such discourse in real-time observations (Endres, Sprain, & Peterson, 2008). In the case of autoethnography, Modesti (2011) analyzed a series of pageant titleholder speeches in the context of her own speaking experiences as Miss North Dakota. In embarking upon her approach to a rhetorical autoethnography, she noted that autoethnographic scholars need to understand their data in connection between other texts for analysis.

> I am engaging in the science and art of ethnography available only through the reflexive lens that a critic can have when one is also the creator of the text. However, the result lends itself to broader understanding not only for the audience for whom I write/speak, but for me as well. (p. 227)

Various methodological approaches to studying texts and discourse in relation to auto/ethnographic methods help solidify the importance of what this endeavor is meant to

do. The data analysis helps not just readers, but also authors, better understand their

research.

In the case of using discourse analysis and autoethnography, Adams (2008)

understood how the metaphor of the closet affected the identity of gay men. One portion

of his many methodological approaches used his own experiences to explore a series of

cultural phenomena that he claims gay men uniquely experience. While he could have

solely used his own experiences to prove that the metaphor of the closet restricted gay

male identities in numerous ways, he also would have fallen victim to only using his own

accounts to prove assumptions about a large group's collective identity. However, by

using his experiences in combination with an analysis of interviews conducted with other

gay men, Adams could make larger generalizations that "gay identity is a contentious

identity" (p. 21) or "coming out can be a dangerous act" (p. 22). These statements are two

examples of significant claims made in his project, and an analysis of discourse of the

interviews of others certainly expanded the claims beyond the author's experiences.

Reciprocally, however, by including his own experiences, Adams allowed his own

perspective to become an important part of the research project which other

methodological approaches ask authors to remove.

Since it is impossible to remove personal presumptions and experiences from any

claims an author makes, autoethnographers do not attempt to limit their biases but rather

embrace them (Ellis, 2004). Regardless of the qualitative questions an author is

interested in investigating, there is substantial backing to warrant the merit of studying

discourses or texts in the midst of author experiences.

Justification of Methods

There are many approaches to use one or more of these methods. Methodological

considerations depend upon what a researcher is interested in knowing or learning

through the process of investigation. In this project, I am interested in understanding the

type of experience that colleges and universities want international students to have by

examining textual assistance guides that higher education institutions produce. I am also

interested in understanding if I, as an instructor/authority figure of the university body,

embody the common suggestions of textual assistance, if my friendships and

relationships with international students and colleagues relate to advice, and/or if my role

as a student has relevance to this discourse analysis. By combining these experiences, I

do not aspire to make claims about how international students understand their own

identities in this project, but rather will attempt to understand the context that constructs

international student experiences through examining mediated assistance guides and in

pedagogical contexts. I will also further understand my interpretation of this data with

inspiration from Modesti (2011), to help situate a greater understanding of the

relationship between international students, colleges/universities, and me.

Process

I have previously cited van Dijk (1993) to assert that critical discourse analyses take

multiple forms. Therefore, attempting to illustrate a prototype of a critical discourse

analysis is difficult because there is not strict protocol or a series of steps in using the

methodology. An interpretive analysis of the suggestions from student survival guides

would only be discourse analysis; however, creating connections between the texts and

social/political productions of higher education make this study a critical discourse

analysis. To further clarify what this critical autoethnographic analysis of discourse will accomplish, I will first examine a series of web-based assistance guides from colleges and universities designed to assist international students in navigating the higher education system in the United States. I will categorize each piece of advice into thematic groups which compose different aspects of higher education experiences for students. Within each larger category, I will also include a smaller set of sub-categories to assist in the ease of reading and understanding international student handbooks. While showing the presence of each theme's recurrence across the body of these texts, I will explore my own experiences and interactions with international students to further understand if the assistance offered by colleges and universities reflects my experiences inside and outside the classroom in various roles. After reporting on each individual theme and applying these findings to my own experiences, I will have a meaningful set of data to answer the following previously posed questions:

Research Question 1: What discursive outcomes might colleges and universities produce by assisting international students' navigation through the U.S. system of higher education?

RQ 2: What experiences do U.S. colleges and universities wish international students to have as members of the U.S.-American culture of higher education?

RQ 3: How do my own experiences as an educator and student resonate with suggestions offered by college and universities?

RQ 4: What experiences in my interactions with international students and the higher education environment are absent from college and university assistance guides?

Because the method is highly interpretive and I will make assertions about the meaning

of these texts in relation to my own experiences in the classroom, outside coders will not

be used.

By using critical discourse analysis as methodology for this study, I will attempt to

understand the connections that texts concerning international students have in

relationship to the sociopolitical productions of higher education from within the body of

the college/university and larger society. Also, through conducting a critical discourse

analysis, I will be more fully able to uncover how the international student voice is

affected by the discursive outcomes of social and political hierarchies in the United

States. Educational institutions' authored texts are excellent foci for examining the

relationship between socio-political forces and higher education institutions.

Data Collection

Numerous colleges and universities have institution sponsored web pages that are

also intended to help international students navigate a course through their new education

experience. The data that will show U.S higher education institutions' have an

investment in using the guides to help international students adapt to colleges and

universities. These guides and handbooks are readily available to students in the

mediated discourse of web-pages that are owned and created by U.S. colleges and

universities. These data are not specific to a certain type of school, but rather are used by

public and private institutions to help students acclimate to a specific educational

environment. This collection of texts will include both private and public institutions that

have web-based documents concerning advice to assist with college and university

experiences. As community colleges are grouped differently from the four year public

and private system, often preparing students to enter into other degree granting institutions, this analysis will not include schools that do not grant four year (or higher) degrees. Two-year institutions will not be included in this study because advice concerning adjustment to academics, campus life, and residence differ significantly from four year college and universities.

Using mediated discourse is restricted for the purpose of this study in terms of its availability and public promotions to students. Thus, web-based discourse that is used in the study will be limited to downloadable texts that are included on web pages of college and university admissions offices or offices of international affairs. Documents that are available from colleges and universities on the web-pages that are available online to students of the institution will be used in this study, and will comprise the mediated discourse that is most relevant because of their public availability. This collection process argues that these documents, which are accessible via the Internet, are not exclusive or hidden away from students. The likelihood of a student encountering these documents online in the contemporary era would be higher than having to gain these texts in their paper form because of convenience. Also, the accessibility means that the documents construct the possibility for not only current, but also future, students to encounter these pages.

In collecting these data, I have chosen to analyze the web-based discourse of ten institutions of higher education to understand a comprehensive view of how universities and colleges in the United States advise and guide new international students toward success. I have selected ten guidebooks which are substantial in size and include various categories of information for international students. These ten texts represent various

regions, sizes, and types (public and private) of colleges and universities. To select these handbooks, I searched through several search engines and university homepages to first find them. Based upon the quantity and categories of information available, I chose to eliminate seventeen handbooks from this study which either did not have multiple categories of advice for international students or were not easily accessible in a single published document. Although the final count includes ten handbooks, more than 600 pages of text are included for analysis in this study.

By using critical discourse analysis as one of two methods to analyze the types of advice that are available to students at certain higher education institutions, I analyzed these texts and their metaphorical representation to more fully elucidate the relationships between sociopolitical factors, higher education institutions, and international students. As I analyze and report on the data from colleges and universities, I will include autoethnographic data which relies upon my experiences as a student and teacher as dictated by the advice available in international student handbooks. It is through these experiences in combination with concrete archives of college/university student guides that I will be able to explore how I, as a researcher, work as a member of the college/university community and embody a need for the very suggestions discussed in institutions' handbooks. The data that will include both my experiences and college/university handbooks combine to increase understandings of the experiences that "we" (U.S. culture, higher education institutions, instructors, students, and community members) want international students to have.

CHAPTER FIVE- AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE

The end of the first day of the Winter 2010 semester is near. Malia, who introduced herself to the class some twenty minutes ago, has stayed after to ask a question. She enthusiastically approaches me and asks, "Hello Professor. I am new to the country and I am not registered for the class. How do I get in?" This seems like an easy fix. I have spots open for registration because of the one or two people who dropped the class minutes before this meeting. However, in the past hours other students could have taken those spots. Malia, though, had been present for the first day of the class meeting. I am happy to help her register, even if that means that I would have one more student enrolled in the course. I hand her a drop/add form and explain to her what information is necessary to write on the paper. I then tell her where she needs to go to hand in the form. Malia is on the roster for the next class. She always comes to class and is polite, respectful, and enthusiastic. She does all of the assigned readings. She never turns in anything late. This is a rare instance where filling out the drop/add form for the student at the beginning of the semester results in a very high A at the end.

Why do I remember this? What is it about that meeting that makes me reflect upon something so mundane? This account matters to me because it is full of multiple anomalies:

**The international student who came to class and wanted to take speech.

**Her immediate enthusiasm to walk up and talk to me after class in her first semester in a U.S.-American university rather than avoid me as an elusive figure of authority.

**The fact that a student who registered late for the course became one of the best in the class, and quite frankly, ever in my career.

A blank registration for carried so much weight for me to remember and reflect upon the moments in teaching that often seem so trivial and forgetful.

Also, Malia emerges from my memory as I have begun to read and analyze multiple university survival guides and handbooks for international students. Malia's decision to ask me about what she needed to do in order to register for my course reflects upon the vast content which is invested in giving students direction in how to navigate the process of the U.S.-American college or university. Several examples concerning reminders of mandatory procedures for enrolling and living in the United States are evident in all of the international student guides I have analyzed. Some specific examples include:

> You must always have a valid visa in your passport when you enter the US. It is not required that the visa be valid while you are in the US. It is only when traveling outside the US that you must have a valid visa for re-entry. (University of Maine-Fort Kent, 2011, p. 33)[2]

> U.S. government regulations require that you have sufficient health insurance coverage for yourself and your dependents while in the United States. All UNCG international students are required by university policy to purchase the medical insurance policy selected by the university. (University of North Carolina-Greensboro, 2011, p. 19)

> Federal regulations require undergraduate students generally to take the equivalent of 12 credit hours per semester at the undergraduate level (Chatham University, 2011, p. 15).

These statements summarize the content available in international student guides and highlight what students must do in order to enter and maintain status in the country

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[2] For an in-text citation when a handbook is first introduced, I cite the full name of the school as the author (e.g. University of Maine at Fort Kent). For subsequent citations from the same handbook I abbreviate the name of the school by using the first letters of its title in capitals (e.g. UMFK).

and/or university. This advice continually reflects a series of "how-to" statements that are available in international student handbooks. As exampled by Malia's interaction with me, one university handbook gives a "how-to" statement concerning dropping or adding a class.

> Beginning on the first day of classes each semester, there is a five-day period in which an addition of course, a change in the division of a course, a change in credit status, or a drop of a course can be made. The procedure below should be followed. a. Secure add-drop form from your advisor. b. Fill out instruction(s) on the form. c. Obtain signatures from your advisor and the teacher you're adding or dropping the course from. d. Return the form to the Registrar's Office in Cyr Hall. (UMFK, 2011, p. 26)[3]

Malia could have easily followed this procedure if this information was available to her at the time. However, because she didn't understand the procedure of dropping and adding a course, she was able to get this information in a way that reflects another type of advice for international students from colleges and universities. While handbooks give helpful information on *how-to* complete mandatory tasks to maintain status in the country and university, these guides also give many forms of advice which tell students what they *should* do at the university to have a *successful* experience.

> Most faculty hold office hours during which they are available to discuss course topics or assignments. Invite your professor to join you for lunch in the dining hall or for coffee in the Student Union… Seek your professors' advice before your difficulties become too large to address. (Denison University, 2011, p. 11)

> Except in emergencies, it is best not to call anyone off-campus (i.e. a professor, host family, or employment supervisor) before 9:00 a.m. and after 9:30 p.m. On-campus, the rules are more relaxed since students tend to stay up late. *This is only a generalization.* (Macalester College, 2011, p. 35)

> Do not carry large sums of cash. The safest and most convenient way to carry money is in the form of traveler's checks. (MC, 2011, p. 19)

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[3] To maintain consistency and for purposes of analysis, the original fonts, colors, spacing, and visual choices have been changed to keep the formatting in this document accessible.

Examples of statements that advise international students on what they ought to do in various situations are available in several student handbooks. The first example explains the importance of talking with faculty to help solve problems; Malia would have been given good advice to approach me if she would have read this. However, in the context of some university settings, asking a professor to join him or her for lunch in the dining hall would be considered crossing a line for a student. I would probably be a bit thrown off by such a request, but I recognize that there are various cultural and social norms at different college campuses.

Most interactions in teaching rarely reflect my moments with Malia. Certain courses of action we have follow a particular organizational structure dictated by Western norms. Sometimes our classes are full of university policies that dictate what kind of education will take place. At times, we as educators have to sift through our minds to understand how our philosophy of pedagogy is applied in the context of certain structural aspects of the college experience. Balancing our abstract thought with concrete rules and deciding whether or not individual cases meet exceptions is difficult. It can be so difficult at times that we aren't sure what to do. We ask for advice, we think about it, we make decisions. Once we have made a decision we rarely look back except to reflect and continue our journey to be the best educators we can be.

I am in the midst of working through grading the first assignment I ever given in my career. The task is simple: Give a demonstration speech in the timeframe of three to five minutes. I want students to show their fellow classmates and me how to do or make something. Ryan has showed us how to put on a pair of skis. Alexandria has demonstrated how to make your own silly putty. There are various speeches on some

basic ideas, but the point of the assignment is to break the ice and familiarize students with organizing their thoughts in an outline format. For many students who have taken speech before, or who are comfortable engaging with others in a public setting, this assignment sets them up for success. I scribe evaluation sheets with comments of praise. "Excellent clarity in organizing your main points." "You have a great sense of humor. I loved your joke that you included in your first transition." "You are truly a gifted speaker." 100% A+, 94% A, 95% A.

There are some students who "struggle" with this first assignment. "Be more explicit with your preview and review statements." "Try not to end with 'that's it' for your conclusion." "You were stuck to your notes a bit too much." 84% B, 82% B-, 80% B-. The next student to present has been somewhat quiet during the first weeks of the course. Her name is Christine and she decides to show the class how to make a traditional Filipino meal. I talked with her earlier in the week to discuss the complexity of her topic. I wanted to let her know that her speech needed to be in time. At this point, I negotiate the advice of my wise teaching advisor who wanted to make sure that his graduate assistants will not fall victim to being taken advantage of by students. "Make some ground rules early in the semester and stick by them. If you don't, you'll have everyone miss class and asking if they can make-up all of their work at the end of the semester." We needed to have a clear attendance policy, a strict policy for making-up work, and a penalty for students who go overtime in their speeches. I remember his saying to us, "If everyone in the class goes overtime, you will lose a significant amount of class days" Again, I am learning to balance a teaching philosophy which is warm and welcoming with a set of standards that students should follow to make the class run smoothly.

Christine begins speaking. She is somewhat nervous after her first two sentences because she messes up some of her words. She asks if she can start over. No big deal. She begins again.

She begins by talking about making some barbecue sauce and does a lengthy demonstration to show everyone how to do this. Nearly two minutes have gone by. There is not a thesis statement. There is not an introduction. Full points for visual aids. She begins to make a salad. I write good things on the sheet knowing that she seems nervous. Two more minutes pass and I put my hand in the air to signal that she has one minute left before she reaches her time limit. With fifteen seconds left she starts to pull a crock pot out of the bag below her and begins to make another side dish. Two more minutes go by. I am wondering if she knows that going overtime on this speech will negatively affect her grade. I pull out my syllabus from my briefcase to see exactly what the penalty is for overtime speeches.

Speakers will be given time signals so there should be no excessive amounts of people going under or over a time requirement. For every thirty seconds you are over or under a time requirement, a five-percent penalty will be subtracted from the final grade for that speech. Don't let a brilliant presentation be ruined by a lack of preparation.

Two more minutes go by. I make quick eye-contact with her and move my hand in a circular fashion indicating her need to finish soon. She stops immediately in the middle of making dessert. We clap. She takes her time to put all of her items in her bags and sits down two chairs away from me with a scared expression on her face. I continue writing on her speech evaluation. I am searching for nice things to say about her energy, hand gestures, and facial expressions. I look down at my stopwatch and see a time of

11:23. After all of the structural mistakes in the preparation of the speech, even if it was in time, I would be prepared to write down a grade of C- in hopes that she would learn from this experience. I also have my time policy to consider. I put the grade sheet to the side and decide to think about how to handle this later. Class has ended and the eight students who gave speeches that day eagerly stay after to discuss their grades. When Christine approaches me with her same scared expression from nearly ten minutes ago, I tell her, "I haven't graded your assignment yet. You'll have to wait until the next class." She politely nods her head and leaves.

The statements which tell international students how to perform the everyday behaviors of a successful U.S.-American college student have a strong presence in international student handbooks and survival guides. Because these types of statements differ significantly from the mandatory policy advice for students that discusses maintenance of one's legal standing in the United States, it is my focus to understand what handbooks say international students should or ought to do rather than have to do. The types of advice that colleges and universities give international students concerning their ability to be successful compose the following thematic categories: Academic, social, cultural, economic, and safety.

Academic Advice

Multiple forms of advice abound in international student handbooks. Suggestions are for all students of various backgrounds but are uniquely for those who are new to the U.S. education culture. These handbooks emphasize that the U.S. education culture will be significantly different from the educational systems that international students have experienced in their home countries. The handbooks give various types of advice

concerning the unique nuances of the U.S.-American culture of higher education. These forms of advice at times are specific to the culture of a school; in other instances these handbooks many include statements which are adapted from a classroom text concerning cultural diversity and/or may be adapted from another college or university's handbook.[4]

Regardless of origin, the handbooks address several issues concerning the culture of academics in the United States. I will first address some general statements which the handbooks have concerning U.S.-American academics and thereafter will discuss several specific sub-categories including: Classroom culture, instructional styles, relationships with instructors, assessment, class preparation, course selection, academic honesty, gaining assistance, and motivation for success.

U.S.-American classroom culture.

Most handbooks which address the interesting nuances of the U.S.-American academic structure of higher education summarize a series of unique characteristics which are intended to help non-native students prepare for their educational experiences away from home. These statements attempt to expose readers to the idea that there are a variety of differences between the education system in the United States and other nations.

> [P]rofessors will often provide an outline of the course, known as a syllabus. This guide is designed to help you understand the goals, format, and grading system of the course. If you have questions about the syllabus, what the course will cover, or the evaluation system in the class, ask the instructor. (University of Alabama, 2007, p. 27)

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[4] In most cases these handbooks acknowledge their borrowing of another's work. In some cases however, there are questionable instances of not acknowledging the origin of all sources. I have made my best attempt to search out these statements to understand the origin of each.

"Normal" classroom behavior in another country might include students' absolute silence and obedience, whereas in the U.S., students are expected to comment, ask questions, and even challenge or contradict the professor's lecture. (CU, 2011, p. 23)

To succeed in it [the U.S. academic system], you will need to learn how it is organized and how it works. You should also try to understand some of the fundamental values that underlie the education system. (MC, 2011, p. 57; UMFK, 2011, p.22)

These are small statements which attempt to summarize some of the differences between U.S. higher education culture and other nations. These introductory statements also represent a rhetorical strategy that generalizes U.S.-American education instructional approaches whereby placing less emphasis upon acknowledgment of the differences across disciplines and instructional styles. One handbook gives a large summary of short statements developed by Paige & Smith (1988) and revised by Stuck (1993) to more thoroughly summarize the diverse characteristics of academics in the United States.

The U.S. cultural values listed in the previous section shape the academic environment in the following ways: 1. Active classroom participation is expected. 2. Time pressure is high - often there are many small assignments due each week - and time management is an important skill to develop. 3. Critical thinking must be developed. 4. Independent thinking is highly valued. 5. Presenting ideas concisely in class is expected. 6. Assignments (reading, writing, homework, tests) are numerous. (University of Minnesota, 2011, p. 24)

This short list offered by the University of Minnesota (2011) shows some components of Western education in hopes to expose students who are new to the system to a variety of concepts and ideas which comparatively are different from other nations. This list contains several concepts which many college and university handbooks have to help international students adjust to U.S. higher education culture.

Instructional style.

Beyond briefing international students about the multiple characteristics of U.S.

higher education, international student handbooks further specify strategies for adapting

to these differences. An important aspect discussed in several handbooks concerns the

structure of U.S.-American courses. The handbooks make several generalizations

concerning the ways U.S. instructors may approach the dynamics of teaching. In almost

all instances, international student handbooks are invested in acknowledging that the

U.S.-American college classroom is often more relaxed than others and is not solely

grounded in the teacher lecturing and the students listening. Because this characteristic is

acknowledged, handbooks also give several pieces of advice directing international

students to adapt to styles of pedagogy which they may have not experienced in their

home countries.

> University classes are set up on lecture or interactive formats, but most use a
> combination of the two. The lecture format stresses learning and applying
> information, whereas the interactive format stresses communication and adapting
> information to changing contexts. What this means is that you are evaluated not just
> on your knowledge of the material, but how well you use it. You must actively
> participate in your education; it will not be given to you. (UA, 2007, p. 28)

> The teaching style of the professor can determine the amount of student participation
> in each class. Some instructors prefer a more formal style of lecture with a possible
> question and answer period at the end; others prefer a more conversational style and
> encourage interaction throughout the class. In general, instructors who are confident
> and experienced are comfortable with students who disagree. When expressing your
> views in class, be ready to defend your ideas. (CU, 2011, p. 23) Source: Beyond
> Language: Cross Cultural Communication, Levine, Deena R. and Adelman, Mara B.,
> Prentice Hall, 1993. (p. 24)

> When the class is too large to permit questions and discussion, or if for some reason
> you do not have the opportunity to raise questions, you may see your teacher
> privately during his/her office hours or make an appointment for another convenient
> hour, to discuss any questions you may have. (MC, 2011, p. 55)

Handbooks from both large public and small private institutions acknowledge that international students should do more than passively listen in a course. In the case of any class whether it is large or small, the advice remains the same: In order to succeed in the U.S.-American college or university, a student must take on an active role in his or her own education both inside and outside a classroom where instruction takes place. In the first statement, there is an acknowledgment that most classrooms will require such participation while the two statements that follow emphasize the undoubted importance to become actively self-involved in the educational process. Rather than ask students to adapt to each classroom, handbooks characterize a student's need to be an active member of each course.

I go back to my office after class has ended and talk with a few graduate assistants who have taught before. I explain my situation and guidance is excitedly expressed in loud voices. "You absolutely have to take points off of her speech. You said she wasn't ready and that she went almost six minutes overtime. I think she didn't practice." Another voice from two desks away shouts "It wouldn't be fair to everyone else in the class if you didn't deduct from her grade." "You don't want people to take advantage of you." The advice I hear drives me to think about more than having a student see me as a nice instructor. I stare at the spreadsheet for several minutes before typing in a failing score. I decide not to write the letter grade "E." I write a note on her score-sheet which explains that there are many other assignments in the course that are worth more points in the future and if she works hard, this one bad score will not matter that much. I turn back to the graduate assistants for one final suggestion. "Do I talk to her about this?" "Nick, if she has questions that is her responsibility to talk to you. If you got an E on an

assignment wouldn't you talk to the instructor?" "Yeah, of course. I'd talk to them if I got anything below an A!" "Exactly." I put the grade sheet in my folder and click "save" on the computer.

Relationships with instructors.

Beyond describing how teachers will teach, handbooks also stress the importance of building relationships with instructors and advisors. In accordance with previous statements concerning how U.S. teachers expect students to take more direction with their own education, these guides also articulate the importance of taking initiative to build meaningful relationships with faculty. Also, because some handbooks are quick to acknowledge that the student/teacher relationship may be separated by a large power distance in other nations, handbooks highlight that in the U.S., students and teachers have closer interactions.

> Equality is a value in the U.S., and although students are subordinate to professors in the U.S., it may not be readily apparent… Some instructors are very relaxed in their behavior - walking around the classroom, sitting next to the students, drinking coffee, or sitting on the table are common manifestations of this egalitarian American attitude. (CU, 2011, p. 23) Source: Beyond Language: Cross Cultural Communication, Levine, Deena R. and Adelman, Mara B., Prentice Hall, 1993. (p. 24)

> The First Year Office will assign an academic advisor to you based on your interests. Your advisor will assist you with course selection, registration and guidance on academic issues. Feel free to drop in and meet your advisor as frequently as you wish. They would really appreciate it if you email/call them beforehand and set up an appointment. (DU, 2011, p. 10)

> Do you call a professor by a title such as "Professor Brown," or do you call her by first name, "Judith," as you may hear other students do? Sometimes it's one way, and sometimes it's another, so how can you tell when each is appropriate?
> It is best when dealing with professors and TAs to err on the side of politeness and use their titles — Professor, Doctor, Mr., or Ms. (UM, 2011, p. 11) Adapted from American Ways by Gary Althen, University of Iowa. (p. 12)

The next class comes around and I hand Christine her paper. I wait to see if she will talk to me after class. She does not. However, she continues to show up in the next few class meetings. Great! She has read my comments and is committed to improving her grade on the remaining assignments. This is all working out really well.

The second round of speeches begin and Christine is scheduled to speak on the first day. Things should go okay this time. She wants to give an informative speech on a national park in the Philippines. That should be an interesting topic for all of us because likely no one in the class knows much about it. I write six numbers on the board and tell the students to sign up for the order in which they will speak that day. Number six is left blank. It is left blank for the third, fourth, and fifth speeches. Oddly, even though she stops coming to my class, Christine takes all of the examinations in the lecture portion of the course taught by a full-time faculty member. Even with her B average on all of those examinations, her final grade is just not adding up. I type an E into the computer and click "submit" with hesitation. I pack my bag and print off my plane ticket to fly home for the holiday break.

Handbooks acknowledge that it is important for students to have relationships with instructors by highlighting the relevance of having friendly interactions with them outside of classes. They also acknowledge that these friendly interactions must be negotiated with a respect for the instructor in the classroom. Furthermore, the generalization that U.S.-American teachers tend to be less formal with students is juxtaposed against a series of statements which acknowledge the need to address teachers with more formal language. Regardless of the multiple complexities which are included in handbooks to help international students understand the nature of relationships with instructors, these

books are helpful in pointing out that there are several unique aspects which may characterize these relationships in the United States.

Assessment.

Several handbooks also pay attention to describing the ways learning is assessed and evaluated in many classes in the United States. Several of these guides acknowledge that there are multiple types of assessment for students who study in the United States to consider. Participation, testing, and writing assignments are among types of assessment included.

These handbooks' descriptions elucidate that the expectations of learning in the classroom and relationship with instructors necessitate students to take more direction in their educational endeavors. The handbooks also materialize that such active involvement is a crucial part of assessment and evaluation. There are several examples of statements which note the relevance of actively participating in the U.S.-American classroom.

> Passively receiving information and repeating it is not good enough…[Y]our active participation in the learning process will greatly enhance your education. Once again, when teachers see you are putting forth an effort, they are much more likely to help you out if you get behind in their classes. (UA, 2007, p. 28)

> Sit in the front of the class. It will help you focus on the lecture, and it sends a non-verbal message to the instructor that you are motivated and interested in the class. (CU, 2011, p. 25) Adapted from: University of Iowa's Handbook for Foreign Students and Scholars 1997-1998, pgs. 84 -85. (p. 25)

> Class attendance policies are up to the instructor's discretion, but never assume a lack of policy means it is acceptable to skip class. Consistent class attendance and participation are key factors in succeeding on the college level. (DU, 2011, p. 7)

The advisory statements supplement the previous three categories of classroom culture, instructional styles, and relationships with instructors by noting that being an

active participant will lead to success in the U.S. classroom. One particular justification

for this advice focuses on how being an active student who regularly attends class and is

visible will likely result in instructors who will like the student more. Although not

directly stated, such advice concludes that an instructor's liking toward a student is an

essential part of the evaluation process.

Testing.

The concept of large tests is acknowledged in sections which concern assessment.

Handbooks point out that classes may have more tests than one final exam and that these

tests could be constructed in various ways.

> A typical U.S. course will have three tests (including a mid-term and final) and at least one paper. This can be good and bad; it gives you more chances at increasing your grade in the class. However, it also means that you may have more day-to-day studying for your classes. (UNCG, 2011, p. 7)

> Almost every class has a "final examination" at the end of each semester. These tests can be cumulative, which means they cover material from the entire course, or non-cumulative, which means they only cover material since the previous test. (UA, 2007, p. 32)

> You are usually given a deadline by which to complete a take-home exam outside of the classroom. Often, you can use your books and notes, but you cannot get help from other people. (MC, 2011, p. 55)

The notion of testing is described in various ways by several college and university

handbooks. In the case of all included in this analysis, the guides are concerned with

exposing students who are new to the U.S. culture of higher education to the various

types of testing which may differ significantly from other approaches of assessment that

may rely solely on one exam at the end of a course. Also, the description of these

statements shows an interest in not only describing the various types of exams, but also

acknowledging that any test should be taken seriously. However, such statements lead

students to understand testing assessment in traditional senses. To avoid any problems such as cheating, one guide emphasized that students cannot work with each other on take home exams. In every classroom this may not be necessarily true, but rather could be encouraged.

I often think about the ways that I assess my students' learning. I have had traditional objective exams, essay exams, writing assignments, presentations, and even oral examinations. I think about how I can effectively assess what each student learns on an individual level. I struggle with trying to figure out if I should grade student solely on a case-by-case basis or if I should look at the class statistics on an assignment and consider a universal standard of achievement. I think about how to assess students who come from schools that may not have prepared them for the college atmosphere. I sometimes look to see who in the class earns what grades by asking: Do my male students do better in my evaluations than my female students? Do I type higher grades into my spreadsheets for white students? If I am picky about mechanical errors, how do I negotiate grading a native speaker's writing versus a non-native speaker's? These questions guide my teaching, and thinking about them all at once is an overwhelming feeling. Sometimes I wish I could just give a midterm and a final full of multiple choice questions and then let the computer do the work. But alas, the questions still would keep me up at night.

What is the problem with several questions on your objective examinations?

A) Sometimes it is difficult to write questions which go beyond rote memorization of definitions.
B) The questions which have been chosen and written from my perspective likely reflect my identity.
C) Students may complain that there could be more than one answer for many of the questions. In all likelihood, they are correct.
D) All of the above.

Written assignments.

Finally, handbooks acknowledge that written assignments may contribute to a

student's assessment and evaluation in a course.

Both in preparation of term papers and in doing class assignments, you are likely to use the library more than you have in the past. It is important, therefore, to learn how the library is organized. (MC, 2011, p. 55)

Many instructors will require written papers which can vary in length and citation requirements. Your professor or a member of the Writing Center staff will be happy to discuss the different types of writing assignments with you. (DU, 2011, p. 7)

Term papers usually constitute a significant portion of your course grade. It is a good idea to write your paper well in advance of the due date so that you can take the paper to the English Writing Center and have it edited. Most teachers require their papers to be typed on a computer. (UA, 2007, p. 32)

In the case of these examples, the handbooks tend to highlight that written

assignments (or "term papers") will likely have a research requirement and that it is

imperative that students familiarize themselves with research practices and citation

procedures. The handbooks also acknowledge that students can gain assistance when

writing these papers. In other forms of assessment, guides ask students to take a solely

individualized approach and when writing papers these guides emphasize the importance

of using outside resources for help. Students are guided to the understanding that gaining

help from others is acceptable when writing papers and are encouraged to use these resources because their work will need to be edited.

Even when grading essays, I believe that I grade on individual levels of improvement or one's ability to effectively make an argument. I wonder how often these grades always will reflect those norms.

Essay #1
Describe the correlation between subjective forms of grading and the relationships you have with individual students.

Essay #2
Discuss the difficulties students may have in "effectively making an argument" when there is a more concrete answer that you have in your mind.

Educational Psychology has taught me how to teach students through stimulus and response learning. Communication Education courses have helped me to understand the assessment methods for grading oral presentations and assignments. Critical Communication Pedagogy has helped me question why I use all of these forms of assessment. When it gets too overwhelming to think about, I usually can rely on assessing student participation in class. This is where I feel most at ease. Asking students "Why?" and "What do you mean by that?" to help them learn to effectively provide evidence for their claims. I include my sense of humor and passion for teaching Communication courses while students are being assessed. Still, there are moments here which are difficult to manage.

It is the first day of an introductory Public Speaking course of any semester. I am better dressed this day than I will be for many of the others of the term. My bottle of diet soda accompanies my energetic smile and I walk to the front of the room to introduce myself and welcome the students to the class. I always ask the question: "Now be

honest…If you weren't required to take public speaking, how many of you would choose to take this course as an elective? Don't worry, I won't be offended." Usually two or three students raise their hands and everyone else grins with guilt. I make a joke about how I would have avoided Math if possible, but note that they should be glad that I passed it because I will be calculating their grades. Some chuckles emerge. I move onto why Public Speaking is so great because of how excellent of an opportunity it is to have one's voice heard. I discuss the importance of sharing thoughts in a way that other forms of communication cannot accomplish. I talk about the importance of U.S. values and the importance of exercising one's right to freedom of speech. I articulate the vitality of learning to become an active participant in a democratic society which needs to hear voices. My soapbox is almost always a crowd pleaser. Students nod their heads and make sincere eye contact. Discussion begins about why our freedom of speech is fundamental to our civic engagement. One student will say, "If you don't share your opinion and don't get your way, then you can't complain." Another might add, "We need to be able to speak and also understand listening to others. People vote for politicians all the time without thinking about what candidates say."

In some part of the room may sit a quiet student who will watch along and wonder how this discussion applies to him or her. The student might think about post-graduation plans that include flying away across some body of water.

"*Class, here is a question for discussion: How do we address a lack of student interest when a topic is not necessarily relevant to a certain individual's future plans? I'll be assessing participation on this discussion, so be sure to both speak and listen.*"

Studying and preparation.

Handbooks invest discussion in the strategies students should employ in the United

States when preparing for courses. Multiple aspects of time management, reading, and

reviewing notes are included.

> Read in advance… Review… (CU, 2011, p. 24) Develop good note-taking skills…
> Plan your study time…Avoid Procrastination…(p. 25)

> The study habits that were for the educational system in your country may not be
> appropriate here. You may have to learn to approach your studies in a different way
> while you are studying at the U.S. institution. (UMFK, 2011, p. 23)

> Undergraduate students are expected to spend two hours in preparation for every one
> hour of class time. So, if you are taking twelve hours, be prepared to spend 24 hours a
> week studying. (UNCG, 2011, p. 7)

As with the previous acknowledgment concerning how assessment takes place on a

daily basis, international student guides thoroughly describe the importance of

consistently studying and preparing for courses. This advice includes a need to remind

students that because they are being assessed constantly, it is important to manage time

effectively to always keep up with classes. In the case of the sections which qualified for

inclusion in this portion, none acknowledge that it is ever okay to fall behind in courses.

All three examples demonstrate that there is a particular way one is supposed to study in

the United States, although these suggestions may not be concrete.

Academic honesty.

Academic honesty advice has a large presence in multiple handbooks for

international students. Because violations of academic honesty policies could lead to

serious repercussions including expulsion, these handbooks include detailed descriptions

of different types of academic dishonesty to expose readers to the importance and

complexity of this aspect of U.S. higher education.

Academic standards and practices are influenced by culture. What is considered appropriate academic behavior in your home country might be different from what is appropriate in the United States. Therefore, it is important that you understand U.S. standards and practices. Not meeting these standards can result in charges of academic dishonesty and possible expulsion. (UM, 2011, p. 24; MC, 2011, p. 56)

This statement, used in two handbooks but created by the University of

Minnesota (2011), gives a very detailed description to expose students to the

philosophical reasons for avoiding academic dishonesty. Furthermore, these handbooks

highlight that such policies are grounded in a U.S. culture which privileges individualism

rather than collective accomplishment. The handbooks not only give comprehensive

descriptions of these concepts, but also specify advice toward avoiding plagiarism and

cheating.

Plagiarism.

Plagiarism is submitting other people's work as your own. If you use words written by others, it is important to include a proper *citation* of the source. If you are planning to publish an article or a book, sometimes you may have to get permission to use the materials. Make sure you are familiar with the correct way to cite sources. Always check with your academic advisor or professor if you are unsure about how and what to cite. Source: Beyond Language: Cross Cultural Communication, Levine, Deena R. and Adelman, Mara B., Prentice Hall, 1993. (CU, 2011, p. 25)

Not all cultures consider it cheating to use someone else's writings or ideas—but this is a very serious form of cheating in the U.S. Plagiarism is the practice of copying from a publication, a lecture, or web site without proper acknowledgment of the source of that information. It is vital that students understand Denison University's expectations regarding academic honesty. Talk with your instructors about what constitutes plagiarism. Request advice on the preferred method(s) of citation. If you are still unclear on what constitutes plagiarism, visit the Writing Center… (DU, 2011, p. 10)

In general, Americans prize independence and individual effort. In [the] academic world they value independent thought. The most serious offense in the academic world is that of representing another person's work as one's own. Copying another person's work without acknowledging that the other person is responsible for it is

called plagiarism. Plagiarizing the work of another scholar can result in expulsion from the university. (UMFK, 2011, p. 29)

Handbooks advise that students must always consult with faculty or a research guide when writing to avoid plagiarism. Just as with a general desire to expose students to the U.S. culture of individualism, attitudes toward plagiarism advise students to remember to credit another person for his or her work. Although such policies concerning plagiarism are stressed to all college/university students, international student guides are careful to advise students about these policies knowing that cultural differences and ignorance of U.S.-American approaches to plagiarism are not acceptable reasons for committing such offenses.

Cheating.

Just as these handbooks address plagiarism, the works also give significant attention toward understanding cheating with other students.

> Cheating is when you have someone else write your papers or take-home exams, or you get answers from others during exams. In more collective cultures, students will often work together on homework assignments or papers, where in the U.S. it is expected that each student will do her own work. It is also important not to supply another student with work or answers when she should be doing her own work. Source: Beyond Language: Cross Cultural Communication, Levine, Deena R. and Adelman, Mara B., Prentice Hall, 1993. (CU, 2011, p. 25)

> It is common in many countries for students to study and work together to prepare for exams. This is customary in the United States as well. However, once in the classroom, students are on their own for exams. Students cannot copy or discuss answers with each other during an exam. (UM, 2011, p. 24)

> It should be remembered that you are to never look at another student's paper during an examination. This is called "cheating", and may result in a "zero" on a specific grade, an "F" in the course, or suspension or expulsion from school. (UA, 2007, p. 33)

In the case of cheating, students are reminded that such practices could lead to

severe consequences. The advice exposes students to U.S. attitudes toward assessment that are individualistic unlike many other cultures. Students are told to accept this attitude and balance the acceptability of studying with others while also producing work based upon their individual efforts.

I want to think the best about people and I try to think that my students are always honest and sincere. I rarely have run into blatant cases of cheating or plagiarism, but when I do, I confront the issues with a very serious mindset. Plagiarizing or cheating is insulting to me because I feel that a student who attempts to do this thinks that I would not check or care. Alex is an "E" student who is trying to pass public speaking. He shows little to no interest in class discussions but also has no problem texting through most sessions. His frequent absences and missed assignments make me wonder why he has even registered for the course in the first place. Even the few speeches he gives are short, lack research, and include an outline full of careless typos. For the final speech, he walks to the front of the room and begins to speak on the topic of recycling. The topic lacks creativity, but it seems as though Alex is prepared more this time than before. He hands me a preparation outline which is adequate in construction. As he continues to read his notes aloud with little eye contact, I begin to wonder why all of his sources in the speech are several years old and why he is mispronouncing several words. When Alex finishes, I ask him to hand me his speaking notes, something I normally do not do. His face turns a deep shade of crimson and at the top of each note card is another student's name. After class, I too turn a deep shade of red for a different emotion. I have no hesitation in clicking "E" in my online grade book for the semester. This is the first case

I have encountered of cheating or plagiarism and I learn that I am not okay with students who do it.

A year later, I am teaching another course and I have several students who come from various national backgrounds. Vanni, who sits in the front of my class, has expressed her fear of public speaking but shows interest in wanting to succeed in the course. At this point, her written work and first speech have been on par with the standards of the class. Everything is going okay. She hands me her outline for her informative speech. Various sentences are in varying fonts and visually the outline troubles me. I ask her to stay after class and question if the words on the outline are her own. She looks confused and I explain to her that I think that much of her speech has been plagiarized. Vanni's eyes begin to fill with tears because she understands that there were serious implications to my claim.

Asking for help.

Though there are many pieces of advice which international student handbooks address, the guides acknowledge that students may have various questions at times and advise them appropriate ways to ask for assistance.

> If you find yourself feeling too pressured by assignments and you are unable to keep up, you should discuss your problem with your professor, academic advisor or the OIP. The PACE Center will also be able to help you. Don't wait to talk to someone if you are having academic problems. (CU, 2011, p. 25)

> Get to know the students in your classes as oftentimes they will organize study sessions for a class. These can be good opportunities to get missed class notes, and the American students will know more about what to expect on the exams. (UNCG, 2011, p. 8)

Advice about asking for help reminds students to take control of their educational destinies by acknowledging that needing assistance is okay and that it is their responsibility to ask for it. Advice concerning asking for assistance broadly covers a wide range of topics, but attempts to inform international students that it is important to communicate with college and university members. The second statement directs students to talk with native students on the campus if assistance with courses is needed thereby broadening the resources available to help students. However, the statement also illuminates that U.S. students are more likely to know what will be on an examination and draws a line between native and non-native campus members.

"I read the book and looked over my notes from the research day. I tried not to plagiarize but I didn't understand. Can I please try the speech again?" To me, this problem seems pretty clear and I go back to my office and gain advice from a colleague from the same national background. "Plagiarism in the United States is so confusing. She probably did not understand." I respond by asking, "What is difficult to understand? Not taking other's words and ideas and claiming them as your own seem pretty clear to me." My colleague responds, "Nick, the idea of owning another's words or ideas is not the same in other countries and cultures. Have her talk with me and I can explain how plagiarism in the U.S. differs from our country." I talk with Vanni in my office the next day and tell her that she can give the speech again with a point deduction if she meets with another instructor and me to prepare her outline. She happily accepts my offer and in the following week she gives an excellent speech. Her later assignments which include outside research are also perfectly constructed. This is a teachable moment with a very positive outcome. I am relieved that Vanni learns to understand plagiarism in my course

instead of encountering it in a large lecture hall where an instructor might not be as

helpful. There are exceptions to the rule.

   Motivational tips.

   A final category of academic advice includes various motivational tips which are

intended to help international students stay focused on their schooling. These

motivational tips broadly acknowledge one or more of the previous categories discussed

in the types of academic advice included in international student handbooks.

> It is expected that you will attend every class and be self-motivated. A professor will
> not look favorably upon a student who only attends class on the last day to take the
> final exam. (CU, 2011, p. 23) Source: Beyond Language: Cross Cultural
> Communication, Levine, Deena R. and Adelman, Mara B., Prentice Hall, 1993. (p.
> 24)

> Have Your Priorities Straight: No one expects you to feel like your classes are your
> life, but all professors look favorably on students who are open-minded about the
> material and are willing to look further into it. (UA, 2007, p. 28)

> Evaluate Your Expectations. In general, international students earn lower grades
> during their first semester in this country. Then, as they become accustomed to the
> system and as their English improve, their grades improve. (UMFK, 2011, p.22**)**

> Open your mind to values of the system…[I]n order for you to be academically
> successful, you will have to adjust your thinking. Whether or not you personally
> accept the values of the system here, you will have to work in accordance with them
> while you are here. (MC, 2011, p. 58; UMFK, 2011, p. 24)

   Motivational tips are used to remind students to consider the various aspects of U.S-

American higher education culture and advise the students to adapt accordingly.

Adjusting not only certain behaviors, but also thoughts and attitudes about the system,

underscore the types of motivational tips which are used to keep international students on

track to finish their degrees. In all of these examples, students are directed to take

initiative to use various strategies to succeed and such motivation emphasizes the importance of individual accountability.

In the case of the various categories of advice which make up the academic suggestions available in international student handbooks, all show a strong interest in helping international students adapt to the culture of higher education in the United States. Many of the statements that are given to students which advise them on what they should do in order to succeed are grounded in acknowledging that all elements of the U.S. higher education system differ significantly from other cultures. Furthermore, the thematic analysis in several categories demonstrates a crucial message concerning U.S. cultural values. Individualism is pervasive in both U.S. culture and education and persists the belief that it is the student's responsibility to succeed.

A few weeks later I receive an e-mail with the subject heading "grade." Great, another student who wonders why he or she got an A- instead of an A. I open it up.

Dear Professor,

I write to apologize for failing your class. I want to let you now that I liked your class very much and I did not mean to waste your time.

Thank you,

Christine

I now feel guilt that Christine feels shame for having not passed the class. I wanted to write back to her and say, "No big deal. There were other students who failed because they didn't show up at all." I begin scribing an e-mail to tell her that she was a bright student who can easily succeed in this class if she puts her mind to it. I also tell her that it

would be okay if she signs up for my course again. We never see each other thereafter and I also never see her name on another roster for the large speech lecture.

Social Advice

During my time in graduate school, I have learned more things about understanding some social adaptations of international students through meeting a dear friend, Anke. We have known each other since we were undergraduate students and competed against each other at forensics tournaments for separate universities. At that time, I knew Anke as someone who stood out because she was very successful in competitions, as she was consistently winning awards in Informative speaking, Persuasive speaking, and Rhetorical Criticism. After we earned our undergraduate degrees, we found ourselves working together at the same university on assistantships which included teaching classes and coaching forensics. Our desks were always nearby one another. Our office hours focused more on social endeavors (i.e., having conversations) than professional endeavors (i.e., getting our work done). These conversations however, helped me grow and learn from someone who has experienced the U.S. educational system from an outsider's perspective. Often, people may think that my interest in studying international students stems from my undergraduate experiences in study abroad or my degree in Spanish. While those aspects motivate many of my interests in international topics, my attentiveness to topics in international studies stems from my friendship with Anke. We gained our Master's degrees together, we entered our Ph.D. programs at the same institution in the same year, we both have studied rhetoric and communication education, we both work with forensics teams, and we also have collaborated on several research

projects together. Over the past five years I have seen Anke more than most of my family members.

The second category of analysis which is included in several of the international student handbooks in this study concerns social advice. Components of social advice concern the ways which students will adapt to life on a college or university campus and the surrounding community. This category of advice differs from cultural types because suggestions concern the appropriate ways to interact and build relationships with others. The following sub-categories of social advice are included in this study: Etiquette of interaction, meanings of friendships, meeting others, sharing with others, living with roommates, dating, and sexual relationships.

Etiquette of interaction.

Handbooks give specific tips on appropriate behaviors of interaction in various social situations. Discussions on addressing others, giving gifts, and understanding the meaning of ritual greetings are just a few types of advice included in etiquette strategies.

> If you wish to bring a gift, a bouquet of flowers or a box of candy, it is usually appropriate. Also, a bottle of wine is a nice gift to bring to a dinner invitation, if you know your host drinks alcohol. If you are only invited to dinner, the choice is yours as to whether or not to bring a gift. If, however, you are invited somewhere for the weekend, always bring a gift, even if it is small. (UA, 2007, p. 42)

> "Informal" often describes social and even professional life in the U.S. First names are often used. However, initial introductions, and in formal or business situations, it is better to address someone as Dr., Mr., Mrs., or Ms., then by first name if invited to do so. (Vanderbilt University, 2011, p. 33)

> Even when someone has offered to take you someplace without you asking, you may still be expected to contribute to gas expenses…You should make it clear from the beginning of the trip that you are willing to contribute to these expenses… The

drivers are probably not going to accept money from you for every ride, but it is always polite to make the offer. (UNCG, 2011, p. 8)

A student could shake hands with a professor or staff person who is introduced, but it is not a social requirement. In general, if someone extends a hand, it is polite to shake hands with him or her. (UA, 2007, p. 38)

It is very common in America to have someone ask you "How are you?" or something very similar. This is a trick!!! The answer is "I'm fine", no matter what! Unless you know the person very well, this question is only a formality, not a true request on your state of being. It is an American[']s way of just being "polite." (UA, 2007, p. 41)

Introductions to rules for appropriate etiquette in interaction, provide information on various social situations. One example includes a discussion that the rules of shaking hands are socially arbitrary. Several others note the importance of understanding the meaning of phrases when greeting. While handbooks could not possibly discuss all, or even most of the U.S.-American social customs when interacting with others, the advice reflects a desire to expose international students to adapt to customary rules for meeting others. By doing so, these handbooks help guide students to further adapt to the social norms of U.S. life while working toward their educational journeys. However, because there are various rules for different social contexts, statements include directives that could limit the contextual possibilities which would guide various social situations.

Meanings of friendships.

Advice concerning U.S.-American attitudes toward friendships is included to help international students interpret the ways native students understand the status of relationships with others.

It often appears to some international students that U.S. students are too busy to take the time to get to know other people well. Upon closer examination, visitors may notice that North Americans tend to be private, keeping their personal thoughts and

feelings to themselves. …*This is only a generalization…[A]dapted from *American Ways* by Gary Althen, Intercultural Press, 1988. (MC, 2011, p. 35)

Casual acquaintances are easily made and easily lost. Closer friendships result from repeated interaction between people and the sharing of mutual interests and activities. The key is to participate in informal conversations, without letting insecurities of language ability prevent an attempt at friendship. (VU, 2011, p. 33)

The most prevalent piece of advice concerning the meanings of friendships hopes to expose international students to the idea that making close friends with U.S.-Americans may be difficult because of cultural attitudes toward friendships. As a result, advice directs international students to understand this cultural attitude and accept that the closeness of friendships with other students may not meet their expectations. One handbook acknowledges that such an attitude toward a friendship is a generalization while the second example reports that international students should understand the cultural attitude toward casual acquaintances. In either case, schools prophesize that making close friends in the United States is a difficult process.

Meeting others.

Anke's decision to strike up conversations and friendships with others is part of the reason that we, and so many of her other friends, have a strong relationship. Especially during her first few semesters teaching, she always was very willing to engage in discussions about the education system in the United States. Her energetic personality and natural intelligence led her to eventually leave her role on an NCAA athletic team to join forensics and study communication. "When I go home to Germany I have a hard time describing to my friends and family what I teach and research. We don't have Communication departments there. Only media production is similar." I think a lot

about how Anke's interest in communication has led her to use her social skills to make

meaningful friendships. At the same time, she has chosen a path which widens the

distance in the Atlantic Ocean between her and her family. In a sense, if students meet

people here in the United States and become closer with others, decide to stay longer,

find a partner, and build a life, they will risk losing another part of themselves thousands

of miles away. Meeting people will always make an experience more enjoyable but there

is the consequence of losing one's identity. In a recent piece of scholarship we wrote

together, Anke described that she is worried about being viewed as a "Tante in Amerika,"

which is a German phrase that means, "Aunt in America," or a distant and elusive

relative.

Along with giving advice on understanding the ways cultural rules control

interaction etiquette and the meaning of friendships, handbooks promote many

ways that international students can meet other students on campus.

> Get involved with student organizations, sports or any group that you want to learn more about or that interests you in some way. If you are invited for lunch or to a group activity, go! Or, take the first step and ask someone out to lunch. (DU, 2011, p. 41)

> Most Americans are friendly and up for conversation, so don't be shy. (UNCG, 2011, p. 11)

> Because U.S. Americans are "doers," it is helpful when trying to make friends to ask someone to do something with you: go out for coffee, to a movie, shopping, bowling, etc. Another approach is to join a club or activity on the campus or in your community. (UM, 2011, p. 10)

> A friend could be one of those 'typical Americans'. You will also get to know international students from other countries, or students from your own country. Or maybe you will meet an American-born person who is unlike any American person you have ever met, imagined, or seen in films or on T.V. Friends come in all flavors. (CU, 2011, p. 21)

Advice for making friends addresses obstacles and strategies in this process, because the handbooks have acknowledged that there may be barriers to developing friendships with U.S.-American students, the advice strongly encourages international students to become involved in campus life and go out and meet others. The responsibility of meeting others relies solely upon the international student and is also grounded in the belief that U.S. natives will not take the initiative to meet international students. The final piece of advice also asks international students to open their minds to the different friends available and not solely seek out the "typical" U.S. student. While this suggestion expands the options for making more friends, it is in slight contrast to making a fully integrative transition possible by giving outlets to meet students from one's own country.

Just as handbooks ask international students to take control of their own educational destinies, these guides also ask them to take the initiative to get to know others. Such advice further reflects how U.S.-American students may be private and already have meaningful friendships. Such statements are intended to place the responsibility of having a meaningful social life on the students who are new to the U.S. culture of higher education.

Sharing oneself.

Another suggestion given to international students in various handbooks includes the importance of sharing their experiences and identities with others.

> It is very important to bring your background and culture to your new home and to be willing to share your knowledge about your home country as well as your cultural traditions. Hopefully you have brought items from home to share such as photos, mementos, artwork and music. (DU, 2011, p. 41)

Macalester students are curious people. They will ask a lot of questions. Some of their questions may appear ridiculous, uninformed and elementary, but try to be patient in answering them. You may be the first foreign national of a particular country whom they have met, and they will probably have very little understanding of life in your culture. *This is only a generalization . Excerpted and adapted from ―Social Relations in the United States, Margaret D. Pusch, University of Pittsburgh, The Asian Student Orientation Handbook, 1977-78. (MC, 2011, p. 37)

As in the case of meeting other students, handbooks note the importance of the

international student's willingness to take initiative to get to know others. Also, when

handbooks acknowledge that U.S. students do not open up easily to others, the advice

asks international students to share themselves with other students so as to make the first

step. The first statement addresses how international students should be willing to share

their identity and experiences. The second statement notes that international students

must be prepared to deal with ignorance and asks them to take the primary responsibility

in being patient with such situations. In both examples, international students are

directed to overcome vulnerabilities in order to build meaningful relationships..

Dating.

Just as there are many complexities described with understanding the multiple

nuances of U.S. students' attitudes toward friendships, advice in handbooks also reflects

upon the complexities of dating in U.S. culture.

Some international students and scholars have difficulty adjusting to situations in which a woman is in a position of authority because of their experiences in their own countries. American women may appear too assertive or aggressive if judged in another cultural context. (CU, 2011, p. 44)

The dating jargon is usually pretty difficult for non-native English speakers to get used to. "Going out", "going together", "seeing each other" and "dating" all have different meanings which change depending on the situation and vocal inflection. If it sounds confusing, it is. It confuses us, too! (UNCG, 2011, p. 13)

Generally, dating among students is very casual due to the expense of going out. There are no set rules in terms of who asks for the date or who pays. In many cases the person who asks for the date will pay, but one should be prepared to cover their share of the expenses. Volunteering to cover some of the costs would be a nice gesture and probably appreciated by your date. Adapted from American Ways by Gary Althen, University of Iowa. (UM, 2011 p. 11)

Statements concerning a need to understand that there is an acceptance toward gender equality are in several of the handbooks. The advice on dating not only exposes international students to the various cultural attitudes which may guide romantic meetings, but in all cases each acknowledges that the culture of dating is both complex and confusing. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (2011) points out that rules of dating are also confusing to U.S. citizens, thereby advising students to have an open mind about dating others. In the first example, the handbook notes that international students sometimes have a difficult time adjusting to the roles of women in U.S., however this observation does not include advice for adjustment. Dating advice reflects that international students should have no concrete expectations of dating rules and cultural practices in the United States.

Sexual relationships.

While discussion on dating attempts to expose international students to various cultural complexities, advice regarding sex takes a different tone.

Sexual harassment and violence are not only violations of individual rights and dignity, but erode the values that are important to the College community, and thus will not be tolerated at Macalester. The College attempts to create and maintain a positive living, working and learning environment in which community members are aware of and respect the rights of others and in which individuals take[n] responsibility for their actions. (MC, 2011, p. 38)

Contrary to our international reputation, Americans treat sexual relationships very seriously. Before entering a sexual relationship, you need to keep a few things in mind. AIDS is rather more widespread in North America than in many other countries. Protect yourself from AIDS and all other sexually transmitted diseases. Also, Date Rape laws are very strict in the U.S.

Date Rape is defined as rape that is committed in a social setting (party, date, etc.) when the victim knows the rapist. If a person says "no" to sexual contact, it is sufficient, and any subsequent sexual interaction can be considered rape (whether or not the people know each other.) The law states that if a person is physically or mentally incapacitated, then they are incapable of making a decision about sex. (UNCG, 2011, p. 13)

If you or someone you know is a victim of sexual assault contact the Student Health Center, the Counseling Center and /or the Police. Contacting the police does not mean you must press criminal charges; it simply places you in contact with people who can help you understand your legal options and assure you get appropriate medical attention. (UNCG, 2011, p. 14)

Sexual harassment can be verbal or physical. As a result of sexual harassment laws, many U.S. Americans now avoid physical contact with acquaintances; an exception to this is the hand shake, which is a recognized form of greeting. It is also illegal to "stalk" an individual by following the person, continually making unwanted phone calls or other unwelcome attempts to contact another person. (UM, 2011, p. 13)

Advice for dating is abstract and in the case of a few statements, humorously cynical. However, advice concerning sexual relationships reflects institutions' investment in making sure students understand that the complex nature of sexual relationships is important to understand. Because these pieces of advice are grounded in legal concerns, international student handbooks change their language to highlight the importance of legal consequences. Statements regarding the appropriateness of sexual relationships move away from an advisory style and toward a demanding style by using obligatory language. Furthermore, statements concerning dating acknowledge cultural differences between the U.S. and other cultures while statements concerning sexual relationships are primarily interested in informing students solely of U.S. legal policy.

I understand more about social rules and interactions because of my close friendship with Anke. Granted, my ability to apply my knowledge is extremely limited because I do not have any experience with socially interacting with individuals from other countries in the context of dating or sexual relationships. Also, I recognize that my friendship with Anke is an individual case of a student from a particular country, and therefore, my understanding of interacting with her does not shed light on understanding all of the advice given to international students from various backgrounds. Anke's fluency in English (she corrects my papers), her study of human communication, and her network of friends are unique characteristics which describe her. Furthermore, as university guides advise students on how to interact with U.S. natives, the social advice asks them to adapt to us. In other words, the guides unconsciously push students to become the "Tante in Amerika."

Summary.

In the sub-categories of meeting others, making friends, and dating, handbooks acknowledge that there are cultural differences between the U.S and other nations. Advice also reflects upon the complex nature of the social rules. In the case of sexual relationships, handbooks take a more direct approach by limiting discussion on cultural comparison and complexity. Because this type of aspect of social life may have serious consequences, handbooks do not promote that international students should have an open mind toward these rules. In all cases, international students are given responsibility to adapt to U.S. social norms.

Cultural Advice

The previous category of social advice contained examples of guidance statements intended to help international students acclimate to the U.S. norms of interacting with others. Advice on a broader scale concerns cultural advice which advises students on how to understand and adapt to Western cultural norms, and in particular ones in the United States. Often such advice asks students to broadly consider such norms to better transition to the college/university. Categories of cultural advice include: dress/appearance, hygiene, dining, drugs/alcohol, and cultural values.

We're meeting before a summer study abroad in Spain. At our meeting, we receive a guide to help us understand the cultural values of the nation where we will be staying for almost seven weeks. There are some explicit ground rules to help us acclimate to our new experience. I read sentences telling us that we should not wear "printed tees" and that we should be conscientious about living with a host family. Admittedly, I am excited about studying abroad for the purpose of improving my Spanish and touring Western Europe, but also I have some excitement that there will be many social outings. There is a lot to consider, but our trip is guided by a U.S. program with U.S. instructors. The village we will stay in will be filled with other students from different university programs and therefore our "blending in" seems less important. However, the context of our surroundings are filled by the natives use of the phrase "el once de Marzo," or March 11th. The ways teachers and families use this phase is strikingly similar to the frequency of my own country's "since 9/11." Just months before this trip, in the capital city of Madrid, a terrible train bombing near the Atocha station made headlines across the world. Pictures of the rubble were surrounded with captions reading "191 dead." Days after the

attack, Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the bombing. The group pointed directly to Spain's support for the U.S. in the Iraq war. Before we left, our trip leader assured us that most people in Spain will be friendly but we should be aware that our U.S. identities could lead to moments of tension with certain individuals. We were encouraged never to talk about politics, the war, or other controversial matters. I begin to develop my Canadian accent.

Dress and appearance.

One cultural norm international student handbooks address asks students to consider the importance placed on dress and appearance. Advice concerning such norms in various contexts is also addressed.

> Dressing up for work may not be necessary. However, it is important to be well groomed and dressed in appropriate attire. (DU, 2011, p. 23)

> In the United States one's way of dressing is expected to suit the circumstance. As students, dressing casually (jeans, shorts, shirt, t[-]shirt) is acceptable. In the workplace or other professional settings, follow the norms of that particular place. Adapted from American Ways by Gary Althen, University of Iowa (UM, 2011, p. 12).

> Generally, the way an individual looks is important in the United States of America, and good-looking people are believed to be more successful in business that plain looking people…Everywhere in the United States of America, clean, shiny hair for both sexes is considered a sign of good grooming. Hair need not be stylishly set or as they say in the South "fixed" at all times, but should be clean. (UA, 2007, p. 40)

The previous three examples emphasize the importance of dress and appearance. Reminders about understanding the difference between casual and more formal contexts are also addressed. In the case of each, students are reminded that dress and appearance, whether casual or formal, are important parts of adapting to U.S.-American life. In the case of the second example, international students are encouraged to observe how others

dress in order to be able to fit in. Such advice is available to international students in hopes of helping them blend in with other individuals in the campus and communities.

Even though I pay attention to some of the rules concerning how to not stand out amongst everyone else in the crowd, I recognize that there are things about me that seem so utterly *americano*. Although my genetics derive mostly from German ancestry, my blonde hair, blue eyes, and height are not the only parts of my appearance which make me visually stand out. The baggy shorts I wear, my leather sandals, and the shell necklace I love to sport are all parts of my U.S. appearance. My house mother Cata points to me in jest of my baggy "cortes" and comments on how so many of the U.S. students love to wear clothes that fall off of their bodies. I put the shorts, the necklace, and the sandals back in the suitcase. I trade them in for skinny jeans and white linen trousers, an Hala Madrid soccer jersey, and black boots. The pants are giving me a stomachache, but I think that maybe people will look at me and consider me to be if not Madridian, maybe from Seville or Barcelona, or at least Berlin or Frankfurt, or maybe Toronto. I want to be someone different and so I begin to try to blend in.

Hygiene.

Several texts pay close attention to the subject of hygiene. As there is a strong emphasis in U.S. culture on certain practices of hygiene, and this cultural value is important to help non-native students transition easily, suggestions consider various hygienic practices.

Caring for one's body is based on deeply held personal and cultural ideas. People in the U.S. generally believe it important to control the odors a body naturally produces. Additionally, Americans are uncomfortable talking about issues of hygiene, though they may believe that their perceptions of appropriate hygiene are understood. It is important, whether you are interacting with Americans, or with other international students, to consider how you react and are being reacted to with regard to differing perspectives on hygiene. *This is only a generalization...* adapted from *American Ways* by Gary Althen, Intercultural Press, 1988 (MC, 2011, p. 35)

U.S. Americans place a strong emphasis on cleanliness. Daily bathing, use of a deodorant, and brushing one's teeth twice a day is recommended. Many people in the United States become uncomfortable when they are in close contact with someone who has noticeable body or mouth odor. (UM, 2011, p. 14)

The American idea of personal hygiene may seem strange to some newcomers as it differs substantially from the standards of personal hygiene in many other countries… Unlike some places in the world, the odor of perspiration is not considered appealing or sexy in the United States of America, so use an antiperspirant or deodorant. This will be a single product and can be found in any drug store or grocery store, usually in the pharmacy section. (UA, 2007, p. 39)

Emphasis on hygiene and practices of personal cleanliness take several forms.

Suggestions for how to use a restroom appropriately, when to engage in hygienic

practices, and a description of U.S. products are included. These suggestions are present

in handbooks because there are varying practices on hygiene in different parts of the

world. The first example points out that most U.S. citizens are uncomfortable discussing

the subject of hygiene. The second and fourth examples remind students that such

practices are crucial to assist them in being perceived as attractive. The books emphasize

the topic of hygiene by providing suggestions on the subject, but do not suggest that

students talk to others about any concerns.

Alcohol.

Suggestions concerning both cultural and legal consequences of alcohol consumption are available in international student handbooks. These suggestions differ significantly from cultural rules of dining because the cultural norms of alcohol hold the possibility for more serious problems to arise.

> It is important to behave responsibly should you choose to consume alcoholic beverages. Never drink more than you can handle, and do not allow your guests to become overly intoxicated. A good rule is, 'Everything in moderation'. Recent statistics show that the higher the average number of drinks per week, the lower the G.P.A. (grade point average). (CU, 2011, p. 16)

> If you are 21 years or older and want to visit bars, be aware that drinking and driving is illegal and treated seriously by the [p]olice. So be careful and give yourself plenty of time to recover from the effects of alcohol before driving home. It is a good idea to have a designated driver (someone who agrees not to drink) or to call a taxi if you have been drinking and need to go home. If you are arrested for Driving [U]nder the Influence (DUI), you will have to go before a judge and probably need an attorney, which can be very expensive. The police are always on alert for drunk drivers. Drunk driving is a very serious offense in this country. (UNCG, 2011, p. 14)

> By law, establishments require legal proof of age, by a Minnesota ID card or another country's passport, in order to serve alcoholic beverages. These laws may vary greatly from your accustomed practices or home country laws. Yet, as an international student, you should know the laws and their consequences, as you will be held responsible for them. (MC, 2011, p. 38)

Because alcohol consumption and misuse of the substance could lead to negative consequences on or off campuses, international student guides take a more stern approach to the subject. The last two suggestions emphasize legal consequences as a crux of these suggestions, while the first advisory piece addresses the relationship between alcohol consumption and academic success. Whereas other cultural suggestions ask to students to become aware of norms, the topic of alcohol emphasizes that international students need to understand U.S. laws and also understand the implications of drinking.

Understanding cultural values.

To the extent of understanding rules for other cultures, I know that these aspects of more abstract forms of life were not included in my own experience when studying in another country. Because my international experience was sponsored by a university program, I could get by with handling more concrete cultural values. We were reminded to always be on time for meals and let our hosts know if we would be missing because our absence would be perceived as extremely rude. It was noted that we should not tip too much money when eating out at a restaurant or getting a drink from a bar because this could also be insulting. We were given lessons on understanding the historical and cultural appreciation for bullfighting. However, even with such a structured education abroad, certain abstract values would not be discussed. From that moment a kind of trial and error learning began.

I try to understand the difficulty of reading and applying general cultural values in the context of my own experiences. However, I am limited in my ability to understand what it is like for a student who is not coming to the United States with a group of native peers. My experience in studying in another country has more differences than similarities when compared to the U.S. college experience for many international students. They are required to figure more out on their own than those of us who studied abroad.

A large portion of several handbooks broadly address U.S. cultural values. Personal space, time, and work ethic/individualism are among the topics included**.**

Personal space.

International student handbooks explore many cultural values which are common

in the United States and Western society. Some specifically explore an interest in the importance of personal space and interaction distances. Handbooks give examples concerning various situations when certain distances are appropriate.

> In America, when talking with someone, how close you stand to him/her is determined by the degree of familiarity in your relationship…Also, while most Americans will look each other in the eye when they are talking, they would rather do this from a distance of 2 or 3 feet. If you get much closer, they will feel crowded and uncomfortable unless you are very familiar with them. For example, it is acceptable to stand close to a friend while talking, but it would not be appropriate to stand very close to a professor or school official. (UA, 2007, p. 40)

> In the U.S., people lend considerable space between themselves and others. If a person backs away during a close conversation, the person is likely trying to reestablish a comfortable personal distance. (VU, 2011, p.33)

> When North Americans are not acquainted with each other or when they are in public settings, they tend to stand or sit apart. For example, in an elevator, Americans will keep their distance unless crowding forces them together. The same is true in a bus where people sit one per seat until additional passengers force them to double up. In both of these examples, North Americans ―hold themselves in, having been taught from early childhood to avoid bodily contact with strangers. *This is only a generalization. (MC, 2011, p. 34)

The handbooks comparatively introduce international students to the idea that North Americans or U.S. citizens tend to have larger distances when individuals know each other less. The examples concerning everyday public interactions hope to acclimate international students to U.S. culture so awkward situations do not arise. The books also note that close distances with friends or people with whom a student has a closer relationship may be appropriate contexts for sharing closer spaces. In any case, handbooks highlight that this value is unique to U.S. culture and hope to help international students fit in with the ways that U.S. citizens understand personal space and distance.

Punctuality.

Another cultural value discussed by handbooks concerns the value of punctuality.

Suggestions are offered to alert students to the need to be on time for college and

university classes and functions, but the texts also largely discuss examples and contexts

outside of classroom punctuality.

> In the United States, time is treated like a tangible asset and is used carefully and productively. Being "on time" (arriving at the stated time) for class or meeting with advisers, instructors, or even with friends is often very important. (UM, 2011, p. 10)

> Despite an emphasis on informality, punctuality is valued. Meetings, social functions, classes, and other organized activities start within minutes of the established time. This applies to professional appointments as well as dinner with friends. (VU, 2011, p. 33)

> If you have an appointment with your advisor at 10:30 a.m., for example, you should arrive at 10:30 a.m. or a little before. If a bus is scheduled to stop at 10:20 a.m., be at the bus stop five minutes early because the bus may arrive a few minutes early or late. Life in the U.S. may seem rushed at first to the international student. *This is only a generalization. (MC, 2011, p. 37)

> Punctuality is essential, especially if you have been invited for a meal or for a cocktail party. You may be thought inconsiderate and impolite if you do not arrive at the appointed hour. Again, it is a very good idea to notify your hostess if you will be more than 15 minutes late. On the other hand, don't show up more than 15 minutes early, as your host will probably not be ready for you then. (UA, p. 42)

Suggestions emphasize that punctuality is important, though the texts do not dwell on

the reasons why U.S.-American culture values timeliness. Nonetheless, because

handbooks wish to make the transition easier, rather than reasoning why punctuality is

valued, like other concepts, the advice simply emphasizes that U.S. culture values

punctuality and not following this norm could lead to severe consequences.

Achievement and work ethic.

Explanations of achievement and hard work introduce students broadly to the

importance that U.S. culture places upon the relationship between hard

work/achievements and individualism. Several examples highlight college and

universities' hope to have international students understand these values.

> Like people in many countries, U.S. Americans place a high value on hard work.
> However, they tend to feel personally responsible for their accomplishments and take
> personal credit for what they've done. It is believed that people achieve results on the
> basis of how hard they work, so they often judge others by how hard they work and
> how task-oriented they are. (UM, 2011, p. 10)

> U.S. Americans tend to view themselves first and foremost as individuals with both
> freedom and responsibility to manage their own lives, make their own decisions and
> accomplish their own goals. Families and friends are important, but individuals are
> expected to consider their own needs, desires, and values. People are also held
> individually accountable for things they have promised to do, and international
> students may find that they are expected to do more of their work independently than
> they are accustomed to at home. (UM, 2011, p. 13)

> Most Americans see themselves as separate individuals, and only secondly as
> representatives of a family, community, or other group. They dislike being dependent
> on other people, or having others depend on them…Some people from other countries
> may view this attitude as selfish or self-centered. Others may view it as a healthy
> freedom from the constraints of ties to family, social class, or clan. (UA, 2007, p. 37)

Explanations involve various issues regarding the ways U.S. citizens tend to value

work ethic and achievement. In the case of the first example, a comparison is made

which highlights that this value is shared by many other nations and culture outside the

U.S. borders; however the concept of individualism is what makes U.S. achievement

different. This value is emphasized in several handbooks because it is important for

students to understand the relationship between individualism and achievements. After

all, this combination of values pervades academic attitudes and/or social rules and

grounds many other pieces of advice in a U.S. interest in the work of the individual and not the collective.

Guides expose students broadly to several cultural values to help them become accustomed to U.S. culture. The suggestions direct students to comprehend these values because of varying cultural attitudes toward these concepts. Most guides include an explanation of why these ideas are part of the U.S.-American value system. Little to no emphasis is placed upon how to adjust to such values or that international students should or have to follow these norms. Rather, students are exposed to the values that are practiced in the country and given the suggestion that understanding the concepts will help them adjust.

"Have you always known?" Yes. Since adolescence. "Wow, that must have been really tough." At times, but I managed it. "Did anyone ever suspect?" Sure, some did. But after I went to college I mostly acted like I wasn't interested in anyone. That just really confused most people.

That's usually a common conversation people wish to have with me when the topic of my understanding of my own sexuality emerges. If I discuss my experiences in coming to terms with being gay in my college years with a new acquaintance, the questions and answers are almost scripted. I rarely expand on my answers anymore, but occasionally I find myself giving a more complex explanation to those who ask when I knew it was the time to come out.

I had studied Spanish since the seventh grade and declared a major in the subject in college because I had succeeded in it before. As I worked to learn more in the classroom, I began to apply my language skills outside the classroom in a very unique way. There

were times when I used Spanish to assist others in the community, but the instances were quite rare. Mostly, I used Spanish for myself. I kept a journal dictating my thoughts about my college experiences and my thoughts in my head. Rather than keep the document locked somewhere, I used a school notebook to write paragraphs in Spanish to express my feelings and ideas. If my roommates or close friends found the notebook, they would just assume that it was for class. None of them knew Spanish, so my secret was safely locked by a *llave de Castellano* (Spanish key). I had never told anyone that I was gay before coming to college. Once I said it to Lucky, my Boston Terrier, when I was sixteen years old, but he was old and died before I bought my compact size dorm refrigerator. Lucky kept the secret buried underground and I was able to write about coming to terms with my sexuality in secret. Nights of writing in that notebook kept my sanity and made the rest of my life manageable.

I left my journal at home when I went on my summer abroad. The reasons were practical, because a roommate or house mother would be able to decode the document in seconds. My culture shock was not largely guided by trying to manage everything shutting down from four to six o'clock for siesta or the expectations that we should not bathe as frequently because water was costly. My culture shock came in trying to figure out how to manage myself with a group of U.S. students, teachers, house families, and a community of people whom I had never met before. This was the first instance in my life where I would spend a significant amount of time with a group of people who had never met me. For me, my culture shock was trying to figure out how to manage myself in a new environment without my "blankie" pen, paper, and secret code to help me through life.

I kissed a girl, and I did not like it. She did not either. It was three days into the trip and I just began to get to know some people who travelled with me. We were out at a discoteca one night and I was in the process of making my new identity. We are dancing and smiling and getting close. I lean in, we touch lips, and I hear shocked responses in the background. We stop dancing and sit down. I sit with my former dance partner in silence. A short time later we decide we should go home to get some sleep before our museum trip the next day.

Weeks pass and I become close friends with two women on this trip. We spend most of our evenings together enjoying the nightlife of Madrid and Segovia. We go shopping and walking together in our free time. Shelly and Jan help make my study abroad experience a great time. A few weeks into the trip, we have a free weekend together and decide to take a speed train south to one of the hottest cities in Spain, Seville. It is almost 120 degrees and we arrive to our hotel. At the check-in we are informed that most of the city is experiencing a brown out and that there is no aire condicionado. There is also only one king-sized bed. Nonetheless, Shelly, Jan, and I have become close friends and decide that this is going to be an adventure. Because of the heat, we spend our nights in the room in our underwear sharing the bed. On the last night of the vacation, we bond about how much fun we are having together and Jan says, "Nick, I'm glad you're gay because my boyfriend back home would think it was weird that I was sharing a bed with another guy in my underwear." "Uh… I'm not gay." "Really, we thought you were the whole time we have been here. I just want to let you know that it is cool if you are. I had to tell my boyfriend that you are so he won't think this hotel situation is weird." In that instance, I experience one of the biggest moments of culture shock I have ever had in my

life. I had a friend who only knew me for a few weeks tell me that she wishes I was the person who I wished to be but I wouldn't take the bait. From that point, I recognized that coming out would be okay. I wasn't ready to confess at that exact moment, but I began to devise a plan on when I would make a life changing move.

A short time before we are getting ready to leave for home, I am with a group of people in Madrid. We are walking through the city and doing some last minute touring and shopping. As we come into a main part of the city center, there are crowds of people on the sidewalks and in the streets. Jan asks a local what is going on and he responds with enthusiasm that it is Pride week. Jan's eyes light up and she tells all of us that we have to attend. "This is awesome. Come on, look how many people are over there." Shelly excitedly agrees. A few other people in the group sport frowns and even one person says that they don't want to support something so "immoral." Jan fires back and calls her opinion unacceptable and repulsive. The groups immediately split into two and it is back to Jan, Shelly, and me. "Nick, you're coming with us, right?" "Oh yeah, of course." We find a spot on the sidewalk and watch vibrant floats pass by. "This is so amazing," Jan states. As some time passes and I am beginning to relax; I say that I need to go to the restroom and I will be back. I go and walk down the sidewalk past the crowds of people and the energy is electrifying. I stop at certain points and am making eye contact with people around me and I am thinking, "They might think that I am gay." My break to find the restroom lasts for almost an hour because I do not want to leave the location where I am feeling comfortable in my own skin.

After flying back home, I get back to my house and continue writing in my journal in English. I hope someone will find the notebook and read it.

Culture shock.

A final cultural concept which is included in international student handbooks

pertains to the subject of culture shock. Stages, symptoms, and strategies for coping are

included in these texts. Although several texts include a discussion on understanding

culture shock/adjustment, for the purposes of length, I include one summary of these

stages from a single institution's guide.

> Adapting to a new culture is a continual process that lasts throughout one's stay. It is
> important to hold on to one's basic values, while inevitably assimilating to some new
> cultural values as well. Understanding the adjustment process helps both international
> students and U.S. citizens accept cultural differences and the occasional feelings of
> alienation and frustration that come with it. Common adjustment stages are outlined
> below:
> Honeymoon: Exhilaration and anticipation characterize the "Honeymoon Stage"
> when individuals are generally fascinated with all that is new and are open to meeting
> new people. However, in an enthusiasm to please, they may nod or smile to indicate
> understanding when in fact, they may not truly understand what is being said or done.
> When misunderstandings build, they are likely to experience the second stage of
> cultural adjustment.
> Hostility: Frustration, anger, anxiety, and sometimes depression take over during the
> "Hostility Stage". The initial excitement is replaced by frustration with bureaucracy
> and the weariness of speaking and listening in English. At this point, people may
> display hostility toward people of the new culture and minor frustrations may
> manifest into fear, mistrust, and lack of interest in the new culture.
> Humor: The "Humor Stage" follows when the individual begins to relax in the new
> culture and to laugh at the minor mistakes and misunderstandings that previously
> caused headaches. This often occurs after the individual has gained friends and is able
> to manage the new environment.
> Home: The "Home Stage" occurs when the individual "feels at home" in the new
> culture yet retains allegiance to his or her home culture - gaining the ability to live
> successfully in two cultures. (VU, 2011, p. 32)

Suggestions concerning cultural values broadly suggest that students should observe

others' behavior. However, sections on culture shock which have a meaningful presence

in international student guides emphasize a series of stages and feelings students may

experience when coming to the United States. The stages are also presented in a linear

rhetoric as if to note that it is inevitable that students will experience each stage when coming to a new country. By emphasizing a model of culture shock, handbooks place students into prophesying that such stages will occur, and most guides give advice for adjusting during each phase. Suggestions for dealing with new experiences in U.S. culture remind students that what they may encounter is a normal part of coming to the United States to live for the first time. Some suggestions for coping and dealing with new cultural encounters are also included, such as improving English proficiency and establishing a routine. These sections are significant parts of helping students survive the higher education experience in the United States because suggestions concerning culture shock emphasize not only what a student will observe, but also what he or she may feel.

Cultural advice takes various forms in international student handbooks. Regarding many of the categories of cultural advice, students are presented with an emphasis on understanding what life is like in the United States. Concerning cultural norms toward alcohol, international students are given more direct advice on their need to understand practices of a cultural value which could have harmful consequences. Finally, students are given suggestions for dealing with their reactions to U.S. culture. In the case of all of the concepts, students are asked to adapt to U.S. life in various ways.

Economic Advice

I arrive to my undergraduate campus the week before classes start. In the midst of finding my buildings, going to social functions, and attending sessions on how to succeed in college, I also meet with financial aid counselors. After receiving an e-mail which tells me that I need to pay a balance of $700 for student fees, I think something must be wrong. In the meeting, the counselors explain to me that my scholarship I earned to

attend the university covered my tuition and housing but that it didn't cover all student fees and meal expenses. Rather than screaming in the middle of the administration building, I call home to my parents and let them know that I have a "tiny money problem." Because they are so ecstatic that I had earned some scholarship money to pay for college, they do not get angry or worried. The check was sent and the balance was paid.

Growing up in a home where I was always told that going to college was not desired, but expected, my parents had economically prepared for the bumps in the road. Both of them attended higher education institutions and recognized that there were several aspects of going to a college or university that would include some new surprises. Expensive books, student fees, parking passes, meal plans, travel expenses, recreation expenses, parking tickets, library fees, and studying abroad were all things that we had prepared to handle.   If there was a problem with a particular issue, I had two parents who had experienced college before and understood that there would be various obstacles in my path. Nonetheless, I could call home and get financial or strategic assistance. "Oh yeah, your brother had those student fees a few years ago." "I remember books weren't cheap in the 1970's and they're not cheap now." My parents' knowledge of college and university life helped me understand that "going to college" meant more than walking onto the campus and showing up for class. We were prepared to adapt as necessary.

On the first day of class of several semesters, I have numerous students come to me after class and talk to me regarding their worries about buying the textbooks for the course. I suggest looking on the Internet for cheaper options or seeing if the bookstore has used copies of the required materials. These suggestions do not solve the problem for

my students. When I make such suggestions (which students may have already considered), I get defeated looks. I even hear, "I already checked and those books aren't much cheaper." I discuss that the books are available in the library but that they can only be checked out for a few hours. It has taken years for me to begin to understand my students and know that some of their experiences are not similar to my college experiences. There may not be a lifeline with a blank check on the other end of the telephone. Some students may have dependents and need to contribute to their households. Still, negotiating how to help students adapt beyond alternatives of buying used books or checking texts out from the library escapes me. In one instance with an international student who was enrolled in my class, she asks about the cost of books. "The problem is that I can't get financial aid. I won't be able to pay for the books for a few weeks. Is that okay?" I respond by noting that it is essential that she get the books before the first midterm examination. I cannot make exceptions for this because I want my evaluation of my students' performances to be fair. Considering whether their financial circumstances are fair often is much too overwhelming to confront.

The fourth category, economic advice, takes a more pragmatic turn than much of the advice mentioned in the previous three sections. Tips on buying a car, banking, using credit/debit cards, and saving money are included.

Buying a car.

Since many handbooks emphasize the lack of public transit available in most areas of the United States, several handbooks give suggestions on buying or renting a vehicle. Because there are many complexities to the process of obtaining personal transportation, various aspects of buying or renting a car are emphasized.

You may want to purchase a car during your stay. International students who choose to live off campus may find it necessary. If you are considering this option, talk to other international students and see if two or three of you would like to purchase one together. This will greatly reduce the total cost to each person. (UNCG, 2011, p. 9)

If you have decided on a new vehicle, then you can contact Columbia's auto dealers. If you have decided on a used vehicle, then the "Missouri Auto Guide" and "Central Missouri's Wheels & Deals" are excellent free publications where both dealer's and private parties advertise used vehicles for sale. (University of Missouri-Columbia, 2009, p. 20)

Once you have your car and driver's license you must get insurance!!! This is very important, as there are heavy fines if you drive without insurance. Also, if you are at fault in an accident you are responsible to pay for the other car's damages if you don't have insurance. You do not need Full Coverage, only liability (covers the other car in case of an accident). If your car is worth $4,000 or more, I would suggest getting full coverage. Contact your insurance company for more information. (WSU, 2009, p. 9)

You should search for rebates offered by manufacturers to find the best price on a new vehicle. You can find rebate information by either searching manufacturers' websites or by visiting the dealership in person. Typically you will have the greatest bargaining power over the price of a new vehicle at a dealership during the last week, particularly the last few days of any given month. (UMC, 2009, p. 21)

Renting a car is a fairly inexpensive way to travel particularly if there is a number of students to share the cost. In order to rent a car, you must have a valid driver's license. Many rental companies have a minimum age requirement. (DU, 2011, p. 17)

As several handbooks note, transportation without a car may be difficult in the United States, and so detailed suggestions for obtaining a vehicle are included. Suggestions on how to find an appropriate vehicle, inspecting a vehicle for reliability, getting a deal on an automobile, buying insurance, and renting a car are included. The process of purchasing or obtaining a vehicle for personal transportation is one with many steps and international student handbooks attempt to illuminate many of these aspects. Although not every step of purchasing a car can be covered, guidebooks have a strong investment in providing advice on how to obtain a personal vehicle rather than use other forms of

transportation. Students are therefore guided that a personal vehicle may be necessary

and are directed on the best ways to obtain one.

Banking.

Advice on opening and maintaining a bank account is included in international

student handbooks. This advice is grounded in the notion that carrying cash is not

advised and therefore it is imperative that students open a bank account.

> You will need a checking account to be able to pay bills, rent, deposits for housing
> etc. Typically, to open a bank account you will need a social security number, but
> since you will not receive one for at least a month most banks will allow you to use
> your student ID number. (VU, 2011, p. 12)

> If you did not open a bank account before arriving in Pittsburgh, you will want to do
> so as soon as you arrive. It is not advisable to carry large sums of money or to keep
> large sums of money in your apartment or dorm room. (CU, 2011, p.10)

> It is recommended that you have a checking account for the duration of your stay.
> The University recommends Wachovia because it offers a College Account with no
> monthly fee checking, and no minimum balance requirement. In addition, there is free
> use of Wachovia ATMs and a free check card to make purchases everywhere Visa is
> accepted. You are also allowed free access to your account information over the
> internet through Wachovia PC Access. (UNCG, 2011, p. 10)

In the case of banking, students are not only directed that they should have a bank

account, but also that there may be certain institutions where such banking is best. In the

first example that stated students can use an identification number to open an account, the

university directed readers to a banking institution which had a partnership with the

university. In the second statement, a reason given to open a bank account concerns that

students should not carry large amounts of money. In the third example, the name of a

particular banking institution is included. Students are not given multiple options for

banking, but rather are advised to open accounts at a particular location. This set of

advice emphasizes the need for students to utilize a bank while enrolled at an institution

in the United States.

Tips for saving money.

A final area which is addressed by multiple handbooks concerns various tips on how

to save money.

> In the United States, as in most countries, live by the rule *Buyer beware!* Compare
> prices—the same items are often sold at different prices in different stores. Ask your
> friends where to buy at bargain prices. Watch for sales advertised in the newspapers
> and for items "on sale." "Want ads" in the newspapers list sales of used household
> goods and furnishings. Prices in stores are normally fixed, and the customer does not
> bargain with the sales clerk. It is common, however, to bargain when you buy from a
> private individual. (UM, 2011, p. 34)

> Buy used textbooks online (www.amazon.com), at the College Store, the University
> Book Store, or on Wings. See movies in the dollar theaters instead of at regular
> theaters, rent movies, or borrow them for free from the University libraries or a public
> library. Buy food in bulk at Save-A-Lot or at Sam's Club; buy Meijer or Kroger
> brands instead of more expensive brands. Pack your lunch from home instead of
> buying food. Purchase used computers and furniture from Excess and Surplus
> Property Management in the basement of Allyn Hall (WSU, 2009, p. 9)

Ways to save money while enrolled in a college or university are endless; handbooks

cannot give advice for every single money transaction. However, advice on common or

day-to-day purchases is included in the handbooks. Students are given the names of

particular stores or locations on where they should buy certain items. In many cases,

students are directed on a particular path with suggestions that will save them money.

Moreover, because international students do not qualify for the same types of financial

aid as their U.S.-American counterparts, colleges and universities recognize that

providing money saving strategies is crucial to help non-citizens have a comfortable

experience in the U.S.

Many previous forms of advice—with a few exceptions—have asked international students to think more broadly about certain concepts to help them adjust to U.S. college and university life. Economic advice however, takes a more direct and pragmatic turn by directing students to certain locations and suggesting specific tips for handling money. The advice that students are given in terms of managing money asks them not to generally consider cultural differences, but rather, to follow certain guidelines. These suggestions are then more directive than other areas discussed in previous sections.

Safety Advice

A final area of advice available to international students in handbooks concerns issues of safety. There are multiple considerations that institutions make concerning safety and these take the forms of advice in the areas of personal safety, identity theft, and police communication.

I think of college as an extremely safe place. I am comfortable here. College has included the roles of teacher and student, but over the past decade it has also become another house. I like living near campuses and spending late hours in my office or the library. My offices on campus have more books, materials, and supplies than my desk in my apartment. My interactions with police officers on college campuses have included their assistance to help me get into my office when the building is closed or attending a seminar on when to call them during class disruptions. Even with that advice, I have yet to run into any issues which have made me feel unsafe here. I continue to get degrees here not only because I am interested in my subject area, but because I don't want to leave "home."

Personal safety.

In the case of personal safety, colleges and universities acknowledge that instances where students may fall victims to serious crimes are rare. However, several tips are given to help international students best avoid becoming a victim of a minor or serious crime.

> Walk or jog in groups of three or more. Be aware of your surroundings. Be aware of crimes on campus. Avoid isolated or dark areas. Travel with confidence and a purpose. Do not wear earphones while walking or jogging. (VU, 2011, p. 22)

> Life in the U.S. is not as scary as the media would like you to believe. You will probably never experience a crime during your stay. But, play it safe and don't take any unnecessary risks. Most importantly, be aware at all times! Always report to the police any situation in which you have been frightened or threatened. (UNCG, 2011, p. 15)

> As a large urban area, the Twin Cities is not free from crime. However, you can take some simple precautions to keep yourself and your belongings safe while you are living here. Trust your instincts regarding people and places, and don't be afraid to ask for help. If you feel you are in danger, notify the police by calling 911. (UM, 2011, p. 13)

> One of the more pleasant aspects of living in Pittsburgh is that it often feels like a small town. However, it is really a fairly sizeable city, which means that it is important to take the safety precautions you would take in a big city. "Better safe than sorry," is an expression that means you should follow your instincts about staying safe. (CU, 2011, p. 13)

> Greensboro is one of the safest medium-sized cities in North America. However, it is always important to be on your guard. It is important to know your surroundings and be alert at all times. The rules for living safely in the U.S. are pretty much universal. Take all normal precautions such as keeping your valuables locked up and not keeping large amounts of cash on hand. Avoid walking or cycling alone after dark. When in public parks keep to the paths and stay around large groups of people. You should never walk alone at night, even across campus. (UNCG, 2011, p. 14)

The types of advice available in these sections are often not uniquely for international students, but rather for all members of the campus community. In the case of one handbook, a line is quick to acknowledge that there is a stereotype that the United States

is quite dangerous. Several handbooks in this analysis also acknowledge that their

campuses and communities are among the safest in the country.   This rhetorical strategy

is also not uniquely for international students as schools have an interest in highlighting

that campuses are safe an secure   These particular suggestions do not address that crime

is an omnipresent problem, but still point out various suggestions for how to prevent

criminal acts. Handbooks wish to make students feel secure while giving them tips on

how to avoid becoming a *rare* victim of crime.

Talking with police.

An important area of safety tips concerns how international students should interact

with police. Such suggestions concern both preventative strategies for talking with law

enforcement and also considerations for knowing particular rights.

> For most international students, police encounters are related to alcohol or traffic
> violations. Please note the following advice: When dealing with police and other law
> enforcement officials, it is important to be as polite as possible. Be sure to address
> them with respect even if you are in a stressful situation. If you are asked to stand still
> or place your hands somewhere, be sure to comply. Do not argue your case and
> answer only when asked to do so. There are several unwritten rules that U.S. citizens
> follow. 1. Never put your driver's license in the dashboard (glove compartment) of
> your vehicle. 2. Please keep your hands on the steering wheel if stopped while
> driving. 3. Do not step out of the car unless you are asked to do so. 4. Do not argue
> with an officer nor bargain your case. 5. Never ever offer a bribe. If a police officer
> feels threatened by your behavior, you will be handcuffed, and/or arrested. (UNCG,
> 2011, p. 15)

> Think carefully about your words, movement, body language, and emotions. Don't
> get into an argument with the police. Remember, anything you say or do can be used
> against you. Keep your hands where the police can see them. Don't run. Don't touch
> any police officer. Don't resist even if you believe you are innocent. Don't complain
> on the scene or tell the police they're wrong or that you're going to file a complaint.
> (VU, 2011, p. 25)

It is very important when shopping in U.S. stores, especially very large stores, to use a cart or basket provided by the store. Never put a piece of merchandise in your pocket, your purse, or a fold of your clothing. If you do, it may appear to a store employee that you intend to take it without paying for it. In the past, such misunderstandings have led to international students' arrests by the police on charges of "shoplifting." Stores often have devices attached to items to prevent shoplifting, and you may sometimes find you are being watched by an employee or a hidden camera. Shoplifting is a crime, and you can be taken to court, even over a misunderstanding. (UM, 2011, p. 13)

Unlike suggestions which concern personal safety and identity theft, advice on talking with law enforcement is specifically directed toward international students. The first example lets international students know the unwritten rules that U.S. citizens follow. In the second example, there is a clear explanation about Miranda rights. Both examples contain suggestions that are intended to expose international students to understanding the relationship between U.S. culture and the legal system. Some of these suggestions indicate that colleges and universities give importance to making international students aware of these issues because unlike their U.S. citizen counterparts, they may not know unwritten traditions.

Mental health.

A final area concerning safety issues includes the area of mental health. Handbooks provide suggestions concerning how to recognize and cope with various mental health concerns.

We all can experience personal problems that lead us to feel confused, anxious, overwhelmed, sad, and/or depressed. Counseling and Wellness Services is here to help. We offer a warm, relaxed and confidential place to talk things out. Often you may find that there are not simple answers to your problems, however talking to a therapist can result in finding new ways to look at problems as well as identifying suggestions and possible solutions. (WSU, 2009, p. 15)

Recognize the signs of depression; lack of sleep, sleeping too much, changes in appetite and/or a general lack of interest in your usual activities. Talk with a trusted friend or faculty member. Consider making an appointment with a health professional in the counseling center. Their services are free of charge. (DU, 2011, p. 41)

It is normal and expected for a person who has just entered a new culture or community to feel overwhelmed, excited, nervous, sad, frustrated, happy etc. all at once. Moving away from friends, family, and the familiarity of home is both positively and negatively challenging. Do not be alarmed or surprised if you find yourself feeling confused or frustrated as you make the big move and adjustment to life in the United States. Remember that you are not alone. There are several places on campus where you can seek help and support if you are feeling overwhelmed. (VU, 2011, p. 32)

In all examples but one, the advice for international students concerning mental health issues is not specific to a certain body of students. Only in the case of one example from Vanderbilt University (2011) does a handbook articulate that international students may experience some mental health concerns due to their distance from home and issues concerning culture adjustment. In all examples however, handbooks are helpful in providing information on what services are available and when it is appropriate to ask for assistance.

Safety advice includes strategies for preventing personal crimes and identity theft, strategies for talking with police, and understanding mental health concerns. Handbooks make a clear between acknowledging cultural differences or simply providing commanding statements depending upon a particular issue. In the categories on avoiding personal or identity crimes, suggestions do not seem to be specifically for international students. Colleges and universities use all-encompassing suggestions for international students because awareness of crimes is not explicitly described as being culturally

unique. Also, because mental health issues concern a wide area of topics which could affect many students, there is also less emphasis placed upon recognizing that certain mental health issues are more prevalent amongst international students.   However, handbooks give more attention to international students when the texts consider the issues of talking with law enforcement. Because the legal system and power dynamics are culturally different, international student guides deem it necessary to acknowledge these differences.

Since I see college as home, I want everyone to feel welcome to my hospitality on campus. My friendliness in the classroom and relationships with students are all genuine parts of my desire to want students not only to succeed here, but also enjoy their experience as much as I do. If college students see college as a home, then they will feel a sense of ownership in the classroom and campus involvement. I enthusiastically encourage students who have fears about what to do after graduation to attend graduate school and help inform them about the multiple fellowships and assistantships available at the next level. My passion for the university stems from my hope that this is a place where students will find themselves. They will be challenged by material, learn to effectively support their voices, and will pass on their love for the college and university to others. I hope that international students revel in the opportunities uniquely offered on college and university campuses.

As I recognize that I have a strong interest in hoping that students I encounter enjoy their college experiences, I tend to focus on the idealistic experiences of what I think a university ought to be. When crimes are reported on my campus or large tragedies happen at other universities, I think to myself, "How horrible."

Andy is a student in my first semester of teaching. The class he is in is the only class I have ever taught that is difficult to build relationships with the students as a group. More students skip class than other sections I teach; my interest in caring about them is waning. I have trouble getting them to effectively participate and I am not reaching my pedagogical potential. In the back right corner sit three students, including Andy, who save me from the chaos. They raise their hands to question concepts in the book. Their writing and speaking abilities are excellent. Because these three students are helping me get through my first semester of teaching, I like them even more than other students who are excellent. Nonetheless, when the last day of class ends my first semester of teaching, their class does not get the same heartfelt words I give to the other two groups I have previously in the day. I am looking forward to starting a new semester and hope that all of my courses will include students like Andy.

We turn in our final papers for our graduate courses and our grades for our speech courses. My working relationship with other graduate assistants is growing into a friendship. We plan to meet that night for karaoke in celebration of the end of a semester with many highlights and challenges. The graduate assistant who sits nearby me, Evan, had let me know in the middle of the semester that Andy was a friend of his, and in fact one of his roommates. He waited to tell me because he didn't want that to affect my teaching of the course. He asked if it would be okay to invite Andy and his other roommates to karaoke. I said that it was fine and talked with my teaching advisor to make sure this didn't cross any lines. Since the grades for my students had been entered, I was given the blessing to attend karaoke in the presence of a "former" student. While there, we were having fun with a large group. Andy came into the restaurant with

another roommate and began to socialize with all of the teaching assistants. He and

Evan's other roommates knew several of the other teaching assistants from past social

gatherings. I did not attend those because I maintained professionalism in my capacity as

a teacher and authority figure.

Some twenty minutes into the gathering, Andy came by to chat with me and introduce

another roommate of his. We shook hands and made eye-contact and discussed how

great Andy's final presentation in the course was. Eventually the night ended and I

prepared to go home for the holiday break. After recharging over the course of two

weeks to prepare for another set of classes and graduate seminars, I came back to school

to find an interesting e-mail in my inbox. The e-mail was from Evan and Andy's

roommate, Coy, who I had met at karaoke a few weeks earlier. Although the meeting

was brief, Coy had heard nice things from Evan, Andy, and other graduate assistants

about me and asked me to meet him for a date. After processing the complexity of dating

a roommate of a colleague and former student, I pondered the idea and eventually

accepted. January 12th of that year marked our first date and we have had many since.

Over the course of the next years, I would come to know Andy better because he was

a close childhood friend of my partner. I would see Andy at Halloween parties, camping

trips, and social gatherings amongst my partner's circle of friends. Over these years, the

awkwardness of knowing each other from having had Andy in class would diminish. He

graduated the semester after taking my course and he would become a former student

turned-good friend. Andy is the only student who I have had at this point in my career

with whom I developed a friendship outside the context of the walls of a classroom.

It is the middle of the week before we will begin teaching our first set of classes. The wise sage who continues to give so much advice from his decades of teaching experience discusses some subjects of a serious nature. "If you work at the university for the rest of your life, you will build an excellent relationship with many of your students and your colleagues. In these years, you will see thousands of faces and some will leave their mark. I have students with whom I keep in contact from the 1970's. However, there will be moments of hardship. There have been semesters where I am teaching a large lecture and a student who was amongst the hundreds in the auditorium will have died in a car accident, alcohol poisoning, or suicide. These are the realities of your work and it doesn't get easier." His statement is emotionally charged and interesting. It touches me, but only for a brief moment before we move on to deciding how to write a syllabus for the course.

Early this year, I am with my partner and his family. We are spending the day together and are celebrating the purchasing of Coy's new car. We are minutes from leaving to go back home and Coy decides to take his mother out for a ride in his new pride and joy. I stay back to talk with his dad, brother, and other relatives. Ten minutes later Coy returns and he and his mother get out of the car. Their expressions do not reflect two people who enjoyed a ride in a new automobile. Coy's mother asks, "Did you know Andy?"

I don't cry for days. I am too worried about how Coy is handling himself. I focus on writing the literature review for my dissertation.

As we drive away from the cemetery, I immediately break down because I've stopped thinking about my partner's feelings and I have processed what has happened over the

past days. My guilt for thinking what I could have done as a friend is dripping down the sides of my face. My thoughts turn to the fact that I knew him as a student and never knew the hardships he suffered. I believe that I didn't *really* know him as a student or a friend and am negotiating what I could have done not as his friend, but as his former teacher.

Although Andy was a student in my class who was from the United States, I have come to recognize that there are differences between international and native students and also, many similarities. Certain problems are unique and others may be relatively common and shared. Although recognizing similarities and differences is helpful for me to better understand my students, I also find this troubling, too. Even the students who may seem most relatable to me through our shared citizenship status are ones who we will not necessarily know everything about. Writing Andy's story has helped me understand that international students and U.S. students are especially similar because no matter a student's national background, he or she will always have clandestine information and experiences. All students must take their experiences and adapt to a new education experience in different ways. New academic rules, the desire to make friends, a new "culture" that is different from hometowns and the surrounding community, saving money, and trying to stay safe are parts of experiencing and adapting to college and university life that most any student will experience. How we cope with new circumstances may further distance us. After researching the difficulties that international students may experience, looking at and analyzing handbooks, I include the story of my former student and friend Andy because I wonder: How different are our students? Does the invisible line of citizenship separate us so much that we *believe* that

we have little in common? Conversely, if citizenship is a uniting characteristic, then how far removed am I from my students who have a different color Passport than me?

If I want to respond to unique individuals like hooks (1994) asks me to do, then should I see one's citizenship status as a characteristic or do I overlook it?

It can be so difficult at times that we aren't sure what to do. We ask for advice, we think about it, we make decisions. Once we have made a decision we rarely look back except to reflect and continue our journey to be the best educators we can be.

CHAPTER SIX- DISCUSSION

After including a descriptive analysis of ten international handbooks with a layered autoethnographic introspection, I will re-examine four research questions posed in the introduction of this study and also explore limitations and recommendations for future inquiry. The analysis in Chapter Five reported the content from a series of international student handbooks and a reflection of my own experiences. In this chapter, I will further explore implications for educators and students with a series of prompts that ask for critical reflection upon structural and pedagogical views on U.S.-American education.

Reflections on RQ 1: What discursive outcomes might colleges and universities produce by assisting international students' navigation through the U.S. system of higher education?

This research question is invested primarily in the material used in the analysis of the discourse of international student handbooks. Contextual factors which unite and/or separate different colleges and universities, intent for international students to integrate and succeed, and a rhetorical divide between native and non-native students are amongst the most important discursive productions from handbooks.

In several cases, handbooks shared similar or identical content concerning information deemed necessary to provide to international students with intent to help them succeed in the general U.S. college/university environment. This explains why several institutions in this study shared lines, paragraphs, and concepts with each other and/or adapted parts from textbooks and scholarly sources. In every category of advice, institutions included parts of texts which were adapted or taken from other sources when the content would be more universally relevant. The category of cultural advice which

contained an adapted model of culture shock is one example of a concept which institutions do not view as being unique to their schools. Other handbooks also included similar culture shock models (though these were deleted in this dissertation to keep the analysis concise), because any student at any institution could experience one or more of these stages. The analysis revealed that broader concepts that were invested in how to adapt to a new environment or Western life in general, tended to have more consistency amongst institutions than sub-categories which were guided by the local environment.

Certain handbooks were inclined to emphasize information from a particular area more than others to help students adapt to a particular school or community. In the case of the University of Alabama's advice concerning the importance of appearance, statements directly refer to the values of the South. Also, one piece of academic advice from a private institution suggested that if an international student had questions or concerns about a course, he or she could set up an informal meeting with the teacher. "Invite your professor to join you for lunch in the dining hall or for coffee…" (Denison, 2011, p. 11). Such advice would be appropriate at small colleges or universities where outside interactions are commonplace or appropriate. However, at other institutions, that invitation could be perceived as crossing a boundary. Therefore, handbooks contain both discursive outcomes that attempt to transition students to both the broader and more universal aspects of U.S.-American education and culture and also to the unique characteristics of a particular school.

Categorical advice which is more or less present in a particular guide does not show that such absence is intentional, nor necessarily problematic. Because whether or not schools emphasize more suggestions in one area over another, statements are made with

the hope to help international students transition to colleges and universities. In each of

these guides, where explanations of advice seem to be absent, contact information was

also provided to guide students to an individual who can specifically answer certain

questions. This analysis is not meant to criticize or critique a particular handbook's

investment in understanding international student advice so as to say that a certain

institution's guide is necessarily better nor worse than another's. The type of advice that

was available in each individual guidebook contained statements which addressed both

the international student's transition to the U.S. college and university in general and also

concepts which are specific to a particular institution. In the circumstance of content

included to help students transition to a particular kind of college or university

community, schools describe the ways that their institutions' courses function, which

may be different in size and type from other schools'. The similarities and differences

help demonstrate the role that both universal and local context have in the advice that

each institutions offered.

    Second, each college or university provided helpful information in one or more of the

categories because these guides intended to assist international students in reaching goals

and success. Statements in the handbooks included responses to several claims of

existing literature from Chapter Two that concerned unique obstacles for international

students. In the example of mental health, multiple student guides included sections with

information on how and when to get help. In Vanderbilt University's (2011) addressing

of these issues, one part concerning mental health advice was introduced by stating,

It is normal and expected for a person who has just entered a new culture or community to feel overwhelmed, excited, nervous, sad, frustrated, happy etc. all at once. Moving away from friends, family, and the familiarity of home is both positively and negatively challenging. (p. 32)

This statement contextualized the unique experiences of moving to the United States and attempted to normalize certain mental health concerns by pointing out their lack of rarity for international students. Other schools, which did not necessarily point out these concerns as directly related to international students, still included caveats which made such experiences seem commonplace. The introductory line from Wright State University's (2009) handbook stated, "We all can experience personal problems that lead us to feel confused, anxious, overwhelmed, sad, and/or depressed" (p. 15). In this example, the handbook reflected that all U.S. college and university students may experience mental health barriers. In the case of either approach, handbooks addressed mental health advice by attempting to point out that such issues were not unusual and that students may experience some of these issues while attending colleges and universities. This advice attempted to not only make these concerns seem ordinary, but also unifying, because mental health concerns are issues that both non-native and native U.S.-American college and university students may face.

Another difficulty that international students may face that was discussed in Chapter Two concerned isolation. The advice in handbooks addressed isolation topics by asking international students to take initiative in meeting and building relationships with other members of the institution. "Any time you feel unsure of what is expected of you in a class, or of some aspect of the material being presented, ask the professor and some of your fellow students about it" (UMFK, 2011, p. 23), "Getting to know and making

friends with Americans is a fun way to learn about American life and to improve your English if you are not a native speaker" (UNCG, 2011, p. 23), and "Casual acquaintances are easily made and easily lost. Closer friendships result from repeated interaction between people and the sharing of mutual interests and activities" (VU, 2011, p. 33) were three examples which show that schools are interested in giving advice to help new students avoid issues in isolation. To help students avoid isolation, such suggestions included an incentive for meeting others such as gaining help in a course or improving English skills.

    In both the categories of social and cultural advice, handbooks addressed the unique nuances of U.S-American friendships and a fast-paced culture which asks students to not take a lack of close friendships with others too personally. Rather, handbooks attempted to demonstrate that surface social relationships are a common part of U.S. culture while attempting to avoid making isolation seem inevitable. In this instance, students were asked to meet others and also recognize that most meetings will not result in deep friendships. Advice concerning isolation therefore asked students to take initiative to avoid it while also providing information for coping with inevitable times when friendships may not be made.

    Additionally, handbooks positively addressed issues concerning language barriers. Advice was invested in helping students understand academic, social, and cultural meanings in context rather than language itself. Just as students were asked to take initiative to avoid isolation, students are given directives to get help when a language barrier causes confusion. Gaining help with writing, not understanding material in a course, and avoiding academic dishonesty are three areas of consideration where students

were asked to gain help from students and/or faculty to understand and address these matters. Although such advice did not concern ways to improve one's language comprehension skills, the result of interacting and asking questions was intended to lead students to reduce uncertainties through taking the initiative to ask questions and find answers.

The language of the documents also help students adapt to new culture by requiring students to obtain and understand this advice through reading suggestions in U.S.-American English. This dialect and language may not be part of many international students' upbringing, and so this advice did not ask students to take initiative to use English, but reading the documents would require them to do so. These handbooks contain suggestions which are both concrete and abstract. Several handbooks which address scholarly theories or concepts, such as cultural values or stages of culture shock, introduce students an elevated lexicon of terms. At times, this advice used words and phrases that are difficult or rare, and would require international students to have a high level of language proficiency when learning to adjust to new concepts in U.S. life and culture. Furthermore, the length of the documents which contained so much information and complex concepts could be overwhelming, especially with directives that were intended to help students avoid aberration from a path to success in higher education.

Rather than having to directly address barriers to understanding English in the context of college and university life, handbooks symbolically previewed what life may be like as a college or university student in the United States. If statements to help students succeed seem too difficult to overcome, then certain helpful information could be lost. This is not a call to ask that such guides be made in multiple languages, because

doing so would not fully prepare new students for the U.S. higher education experience. Teachers, financial aid, and most new U.S.-American friends will interact with students in English and therefore these handbooks attempted to help international students adjust to a culture which will likely not adapt to their proficiency levels.

The advice that colleges and universities produced reflects several issues which hope to help international students succeed. These handbooks showed a desire to empower international students to take their own initiative to succeed in the U.S.-American culture of higher education. In the cases of answering previous barriers to issues that might affect international student success, advice in handbooks asked students to take control of their own experiences. It was the student's responsibility to meet others, ask for help, use English, understand cultural values, and take initiative to succeed. One line from the University of Alabama's (2007) handbook that addressed student initiative in the classroom states, "You must actively participate in your education; it will not be given to you" (p. 28). This statement was written in the context of understanding the culture of the U.S.-American classroom; however, such a statement is representative of the pervasive advice to students who are new to the U.S. college and university environment. Therefore, the advice in international student handbooks was largely invested in empowering students to primarily take individual responsibility for their successes and failures.

Finally, while aspects of the advice that colleges and universities gave international students may show similarities between all students in certain cases, certain pieces of advice inevitably created a rhetorical division between international and native students. Macalester College's (2011) adapted statement, "Life in the U.S. may seem rushed at first

to the international student" (p. 37), Chatham University's (2011) assertion, "Some international students and scholars have difficulty adjusting to situations in which a woman is in a position of authority because of their experiences in their own countries" (p. 44), and the University of North Carolina-Greensboro's (2011) discussion that "the American students will know more about what to expect on the exams" (p. 8), are examples which labeled the international student as separate from his or her native peers. These statements and several others pointed out how international students may not think or act like U.S.-American students and these books drew an invisible division of rhetorical differences. Whereas, much information directed students to take individual responsibility, the suggestions which worked to rhetorically divide students through suggestions that were not integrative, go against the notion which declared that U.S.-American citizens primarily see themselves as individuals and only secondarily identify as members of larger cultural categories. Statements which declared "many international students think, believe, or do," inevitably would move the reader into subjectification of a *rhetorical* non-citizen status. Conversely, more expository advice could allow readers to feel more integrated.

Because of the nature of certain issues that could cause serious problems, it is not surprising that colleges and universities would want to include certain statements which are unique for all international students. Serious issues such as sexual rules, plagiarism, or talking with police are types of advice that institutions invested more imperative statements to highlight those categories of advice that could have serious consequences. However, because handbooks gave advice on both serious and lighter matters through various statements of division, these guides may have worked to restrict a student's

experiences. I cannot make claims about how international students understand their identities nor can I understand how students take these pieces of advice. From a purely textual standpoint however, the statements which divided instead of integrated international students, persisted a rhetorical separation between native and non-native students. Although their intent may have been to assist international students in avoiding a waterloo, inevitably such suggestions rhetorically construct what life in the United States would be for an international student and also would restrict the type of experiences he or she may have.

Reflections on RQ 2: What experiences do U.S. colleges and universities wish international students to have as members of the U.S.-American culture of higher education?

In the previous question concerning the kinds of discursive outcomes that were produced to help international students succeed in U.S. colleges and universities, handbooks showed an interest in giving types of advice which asked international students to take initiative and responsibility in their educational journeys. This advice also addressed many of the areas which previous scholarship has argued are unique obstacles for international students in colleges and universities. Handbooks acted as another form of an intervention strategy for success because the texts included comprehensive suggestions for dealing with various kinds of issues both inside and outside the college/university classroom. In addition, a set of unique structural barriers that I discussed in Chapter Three also pose obstacles that are not necessarily unique to the international student experience. The previous analysis revealed that suggestions were primarily pragmatic to help students adapt to U.S. culture. Assistance strategies to help

navigate structural barriers emerged through several types of advice available in these handbooks, but did not directly expose students to these pervasive obstructions. I argue that handbooks attempted to help international students efficiently navigate through structural barriers and therefore wanted students to have an educational experience in which they are not overwhelmed by larger social, political, and economic concerns. I also contend that handbooks wished international students to have a meaningful and positive educational experience through subliminally addressing questions related to the purposes of a U.S. education and the influences from a neoliberal culture.

First, any philosophy of a U.S.-American education was not directly included in handbooks. Because there is a large debate on whether U.S. education is intended to promote equality or reproduce existing inequities, handbooks did not directly confront the question of what a U.S. education should produce because articulating a philosophy could negatively impact a student's experience. General educational, social, and cultural values/directives were included to help students appreciate, understand, and adapt to a U.S.-American way of life. Handbooks did not address large philosophical debates that undergird U.S.-American education. Instead, in hopes of giving the most practical advice, handbooks attempted to discuss inequities which may exist within the borders of the institutions. Suggestions emerged to help students overcome more concrete and immediate barriers to success.

Advice to help students understand why they wish to study or earn a degree in a particular area was also not a part of advice in handbooks because such questions are related to structural questions outside the perimeter of campus grounds. Life after the U.S.-American college/university experience considered one topic for adjusting to culture

shock when returning home, but most directives concerned suggestions to help students navigate a path to earn a degree. However, when revisiting a (2002) claim from Hanassab and Tidwell, some advice showed important reasons to guide students' journeys after they have their diplomas in hand. "International students are often under immense internal and external pressure to succeed. Returning to one's home country with a poor degree or failure to get a degree would result in shame for the individual and family" (p. 315). This statement helped illuminate many different influences which will affect international students long after they have left a school. Because such concerns would rest with each individual students' unique situations, international student handbooks maintained an interest in helping students overcome concrete barriers while attending higher education institutions in the United States. The handbooks also helped familiarize students with some culturally abstract ideas and values to make their transitions easier.

Giroux & Giroux and McLaren's philosophy concerning the nature of how a neoliberal economic culture affects education, unlike other structural barriers, was indirectly addressed by international student handbooks. The guides addressed several aspects of U.S. educational life which reflected strategies to navigate a path through difficult situations. One issue of particular relevance concerned economic advice intended to help students best fit in with the college and university culture. These forms of advice also helped circumvent some structural economic barriers. Telling students to save money by shopping at grocery stores, buying certain kinds of cars, buying used books, etc. were suggestions that resisted influences of the neoliberal culture that affects higher education. At the same time, the guides asked students to use a bank which has a

particular partnership with an institution. However, these suggestions were grounded in helping students save money on particular ATM fees and finding a bank that is convenient. International student handbooks did not show an allegiance to the sociopolitical culture which guides U.S.-American education, nor in all cases fully resisted it. Rather, these guidebooks continued their mission to help students navigate a path influenced by exterior sociopolitical and economic factors. Such advice showed a strong interest in giving students tips and hints to decrease problems created by larger barriers.

A second general production influenced by neoliberal policies was evident in a series of suggestions which asked international students to take primary responsibility for their choices. Tuition, housing, student fees, transportation, meals, books, and other expenses are all natural parts of the educational process in U.S.-American institutions. Furthermore, these aspects of the U.S. system of higher education vary significantly from other nations' sociopolitical attitudes toward higher education which may not include large tuition bills nor ask as much individual responsibility on the parts of students who attend. The handbooks' emphases toward individual responsibility directly reflected not only neoliberal economic policies, but rather a neoliberal culture that persists and expands cultural values of individualism and achievement.

Handbooks and guides mediated between the systemic/structural barriers to student success by providing international students with strategies to either navigate through or circumvent these obstacles without addressing larger philosophical questions and concerns. The handbooks were not a direct production from sociopolitical influences on higher education nor are they necessarily in direct response to a neoliberal culture in all

cases. Rather, the handbooks identified the immediate and often concrete barriers to student success and provided suggestions for how to overcome these hurdles while navigating through U.S. colleges and universities. The aspects which schools did not address, such as paths of study and life after graduation, were not included because these issues did not reflect immediate obstacles such as studying for exams, avoiding academic dishonesty, meeting others, awareness of cultural norms, banking, or precautions for safety. The handbooks were significantly helpful in giving strategies and also addressing the most immediate concerns that international students may encounter while enrolled at an institution.

Reflections on RQ 3: How do my own experiences as an educator and student resonate with suggestions offered by college and universities?

This question prompts a particular interest in a relationship between these guides and my own experiences. I am not now an international student, nor have I experienced schooling in the United States from the perspective of having a background in another nation's cultural upbringing. Therefore, as a reader and analyzer of these guides, I encountered suggestions with a different perspective than individuals who composed their target audience. I now reflect upon my experiences as a peer and mentor to international students and wonder how my influences shape student experiences. How do inequities and a neoliberal culture influence my decisions? Through my experiences with international students, native students, and as a student who studied in and outside the United States, I can revisit several of my roles as a higher education community member to understand the relationship between international students, my decisions, and advice for success.

First, because my primary interactions with international students have occurred in the classroom, the experiences which reflected academic advice for non-native students had the most pertinent connections. I have not had as many interactions with international students outside of an academic context, and so the advice offered to such students by the guides may be less salient. However, as our identities are co-constructed in relationships with others, rather than being fixed qualities external to our interactions, my experiences as a teacher of international students surely informs who each of us are, and our relationships to one another, both in and out of the classroom. Several narratives from my short five years of teaching showed that academic advice for international students is pertinent due to structural barriers to success within the system of U.S. education. By reflecting upon my relationship with Christine, my student from the Philippines, I learned that there are several unique barriers which may be of significant concern for success. In this reflective example, Christine, who earned a low grade because of a time deduction, may not have understood the importance of the policies in the syllabus which so many instructors and university officials view as contractual. She may also have had a difficult time adapting to a Western style of speaking and organizational patterns which required her to include a clear thesis statement and main points with a short introduction. However, the minimal time that I was able to interact with her in the classroom placed emphasis on her need to take control of her own education. Also, because she did not ask any questions before her presentation, I assumed that she was prepared to adapt. This experience related to one statement from Macalester College (2011) which was included in the area of instructional style that prompted students to make an appointment with an instructor during office hours if there

were any questions. Also, such a statement also connected to The University of Maine at Fort Kent's (2011) suggestion that if students do not ask questions, then teachers might assume that they are adequately knowledgeable about information.

As I considered this experience, my writing was expressed with a tone of guilt because I wondered what I could have done differently to help a student who should have succeeded in my course. Our last interaction was via e-mail and contained her apology for flunking; I still feel a large amount of responsibility in having not helped her succeed. International student handbooks are pervaded by suggestions which ask international students to take control of their own educational destinies; I also have learned through reflecting upon my experiences in teaching that such suggestions are helpful because many educators who are willing to build meaningful relationships with students are still looking for initiative from those individuals. Malia, who I permitted to register for my course, became one of my favorite students in my career. She was a student who took initiative. Malia, Christine, and several other international students who were included in my reflections have experiences and feelings that carry far beyond their non-citizen student statuses. When returning to a need from bell hooks to consider a more individualized an engaged approach to pedagogy (1994), it is imperative to remember that we as educators must negotiate between generalized assumptions of master statuses and individual needs. Many international students may have difficulties adjusting to issues concerning U.S. higher education concepts, but not all of them will. Therefore our engaged pedagogy approaches must recognize the barriers posed by race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, class, religion, citizenship status, linguistic ability, and other categories and also further move beyond general assumptions concerning students who

fall into these categories. Recent research on international student experiences generalized assumptions concerning categorical identities. Conclusions from this research were reflected in suggestions to help them adjust, but must not be the crux of an educator's relationship with each individual student. Not considering an engaged pedagogy would persist the inevitable rhetorical divide between students of different citizenship statuses.

Alongside implications from the analysis of texts in Research Question #1, my personal reflections reinforced the reminder that international students have more in common with U.S. students than not. In the case of my reflection upon my international experience in another country, I am reminded of how this journey reflects upon this assumption. I experienced culture shock and differences in social norms like any student who travelled to another country would. However, this journey was also guided by something outside of the scope of any generalization concerning my gaze as an international student. This experience was in part directed by my coming to terms with a part of my identity, such a layer should be of utmost consideration when interacting with non-native students in the United States. While language barriers and culture shock may be part of their lens of viewing their experiences, all students will have unique parts of their identities which they will negotiate because they are away from their families, friends, and countries. International students may start over, create a new identity in a new environment, or at least continue to develop one. It is therefore important to recognizing that students' international statuses will not be the only formation of their gaze of experiences.

Understanding U.S. college and university life through the process of maturing and creating a new identity for oneself is not unique to the international student experience. Coming to the U.S. college or university holds a series of rules concerning the academic, social, cultural, economic, and safety advice which applies to all students. Many students who come to attend a university may leave home but will not cross an international border; nonetheless, they will experience a new life which has a series of pressures associated with this branch of educational endeavors. All students will need to adjust to large classrooms and lecture halls, create meaningful relationships with instructors, figure out what titles to call whom, avoid isolation by engaging with others, understand the importance of individualism in the higher education atmosphere, live on a budget, and stay safe. Although these categories were included for international students in handbooks, such information is also relevant to all students who are new to the university. My final reflection concerned my former student and friend Andy, who was born and raised in the United States. However, as an educator who came to know him outside of the context of the classroom, our shared national upbringing did not bring us close enough together for me to understand his life experiences. As with all students, educators will not always be able to understand or help every student no matter how strong of a relationship is formed. Theiss-Morse (2009) gives an example of how citizenship can bond two people together by explaining how if two U.S. citizens meet in a bar in Brazil, there is an immediate connection that is formed. However, when reflecting upon the citizenship that was shared between Andy and me, such an immediate connection now seems less connective, or at least consciously so.

Analyzing the idea of citizenship status in the context of my own educational experiences has helped show the abstract ways such a category makes international students' experiences both different from and similar to U.S. students. We can never truly know the thoughts and feelings of what each individual student is experiencing inside and outside our classrooms. As Freire (2000) stated concerning the nature of love when building a dialogic relationship with students grounded in equality, "Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people" (p. 89). This love transcends our students' social and cultural identities on the surface and reminds educators to think beyond our *students* and instead to consider our *student*.

Reflections on RQ 4: What experiences in my interactions with international students and the higher education environment are absent from college and university assistance guides?

In the initial responses to the first three research questions, I concluded that international student handbooks address several immediate issues concerning mental health, isolation, and language and instructional difficulties. The handbooks, however, failed to substantially address concerns related to xenophobia and discrimination. While I addressed that colleges and universities' interest in developing training for faculty and students to help with issues related to xenophobia and discrimination is growing in Chapter Two, guides for international students did not effectively address this area of concern. These topics were barely addressed in two examples that were included in this study. In the category of social advice, international students were asked to try to understand a roommate's ignorance of his or her national background. Safety advice gave directives on how to prevent problems with law enforcement officials and abstractly

addressed how to handle discrimination. These suggestions began to scratch the surface of the topics of racism and xenophobia, but did not give enough meaningful attention on the topic.

Hanassab's (2006) claim that communities contribute to issues such as bigotry and xenophobia were reflected in the two examples that I encountered in this analysis. The concepts of xenophobia and discrimination were less in the students' control of the students and rather were directed by the faculty, staff, and surrounding community. Handbooks did not address the topic of xenophobia in the same way as with other advice because strategies for dealing with it concern larger structural issues. Because this topic is not addressed by international student handbooks, it leaves some important concerns about the barriers that international students may face. Previously cited research by Sandhu & Asrabadi, (1994) articulates that fear of discrimination is a major cause of stress for international students. More contemporarily, Hanassab & Tidwell (2004) note that students from certain national or ethnic backgrounds may be at a higher risk of experiencing such discrimination. Prejudice toward international students of different racial, national, ethnic, religious, or linguistic backgrounds is a realistic occurrence in the contemporary era. Also, no matter what training campus faculty and staff have concerning the subject, international students will also interact with people in the surrounding community who are not associated with the college or university. Handbooks cannot nor should not address that international students should take primary responsibility for preventing or dealing with such situations. However, more suggestions could be given on how to handle or cope with such problems.

Also, racism and xenophobia are caused by structural and cultural factors. Similar to other large philosophical debates and critiques, these topics were unaddressed because they seemed too large to handle. However, if handbooks provide information on how to deal with experiencing these issues (e.g. talking with someone to reduce tensions, meeting with a faculty member or university official for consultation, etc.), then international students could at least be given some direction on how to cope with and solve one concern that could be a major barrier to their success.

In the context of my own experiences, I could not address this issue in the previous chapter because my experiences did not directly relate to the few examples that concerned xenophobia and discrimination in international student handbooks. However, to demonstrate this need and relevance of the topic, I include one final narrative account to show the realistic need to implement these topics.

We are working on persuasive speeches in my class. This semester I have a great group of students who love to participate in class and debate topics. My speech that I give on the first day concerning exercising one's right to freedom of speech and having voices heard is well-received by the students. Up to this point in class, students have had to introduce themselves, give a demonstration speech, and an informative speech, so there has been relatively no reason to have any issues which would spark concern or controversy. However now, because I believe so much in their abilities to express their opinions effectively, I begin to discuss with them about how I want them to speak on topics which truly matter to them. I will come to hear a diverse array of perspectives because this course includes several students from international backgrounds.

"I would like to have everyone get into groups of three or four and I want you discuss your topic ideas with your classmates. Use this time to see if there is a difference of opinions amongst each other and how well others know the subject area. You can use this information to better understand your audience when you give this speech next week." Everyone gets up to move their desks and Alan, who is late for class, walks in the door. I explain what we are doing and I ask if there is a group of three who has room for a fourth person. In the back of the class, several hands go up and I point to the group I see first. Alan joins them.

Alan is a student who is outspoken and wants to participate. He has said some slightly questionable remarks in the past and is still learning that he needs to limit his use of "the f-word" in class discussions. A few days ago, he stayed after to tell me that he was offended by my example concerning persuasive strategies to use if I was trying to get someone to buy a Toyota. I explained to him that there is a Toyota plant near where I grew up, and I that tend to know a lot about those automobiles because many people have them back home. He begrudgingly accepted my explanation.

I walk around to the groups in class and I find myself responding to students' topic ideas in similar ways to classes that I have taught in the past.

"A speech which considers the topic of abortion may be so controversial that I would want you to consider if you can really persuade us to your position in a seven minute speech."

"I think that you might want to try to make our interest in recycling more contemporary. Have you heard of incentive programs that some cities use to give gift certificates to people who recycle a certain amount of waste each year?"

"Are you sure that there is enough research for you to have effective reasoning on that topic?"

This is a typical session in the classroom. I walk up to Alan and his group that includes three of my students who have shared with us in previous speeches that they are from Saudi Arabia. My large smile is overshadowed by Alan's lecture to his group members that most Muslims are trying to destroy the United States. Uh oh. Ali, Bashir, and Sandal are as bewildered as I am. I ignore Alan's comment and I ask for the other three students' topic ideas so I can give feedback. After class, I ask Alan to stay after to discuss his topic idea.

"I want to do a speech on why Muslim cashiers should have to ring up pork products in the check-out line at a grocery store. I just heard on the news that at some grocery stores, there are Muslim cahiers who refuse to ring up people's pork products. That is part of their job."

Rather than directly confront his attitude that I find to be ignorant and borderline hateful, I ask him several questions that I would ask any student who chooses a topic for their persuasive speeches.

"Is this a topic on which you have the authority to speak?"

"Is there really enough credible research to back up your position?"

"Can you relate this to all members of the audience? Your grade depends on it."

I hope that my questions prompting some critical thought and the possibility of a grade reduction will persuade Alan to choose another topic. The next week speeches begin and Alan has infected my egalitarian free speech classroom and idea marketplace with his grocery store speech. When all students complete their speeches, I discuss the

importance of understanding that there are various perspectives in our society which we may or may not agree with and could find offensive. "Speech number five is next week. We will begin discussing it in our next class session."

I don't remember what grade he got or much of what he said. I was too busy thinking about the expressions on several students faces who were kindly practicing civility.

I know that I didn't make the best decision. I tried to tell Alan not to say it. I could have stopped him, but I would have violated my freedom of speech philosophy that I had professed to my students earlier in the semester. All I know is that I had students experience an ignorant and rude message and I sat idly by with a pen and a stopwatch in my hand. Thank goodness the class ended two weeks later.

CHAPTER SEVEN- CONCLUSION

Limitations

An autoethnographic analysis of discourse allowed for discussion and reflection concerning an understanding of international student experiences. From the use of mediated textual discourse and the context of my own experiences in education, I discovered several conclusions under the guise of previously posed research questions. However, the theoretical foundations and methodological process of this dissertation also inherently held several limitations.

First, the theoretical lens of this study used a selective perspective on the historical foundations of U.S. education and also contemporary voices which were socially and politically narrow. The historical perspectives and these voices that guided this study were intended to be the lens of analysis so as to understand the relationship between international student navigation and historical, social, and political influences on education. By using the guiding voices of scholars in critical education studies and pedagogical methods, I am limited to understanding international student experiences in the context of certain beliefs concerning education. On the contrary, had I used pedagogical perspectives which focused on the needs of the whole rather than the individual, and/or beliefs that praised rather than critiqued neoliberal economic policies concerning higher education, the conclusions to this study would have been very different. Likely, less emphasis would have been used to understand the inherent barriers to international student success and rather would have solely focused on the achievements of international students.

Second, the texts used for the critical discourse analysis in this study make for a limited set of conclusions due to type and quantity. Having chosen ten texts for analysis, I embarked on this study to understand what some or several universities' handbooks reveal about the kind of college experience they want international students to have. These handbooks represented public and private colleges and universities, large and small, from different areas of the country. The guides gave a flavor of what some institutions deem necessary for international students to know before embarking on their educational journeys. However, while many of these handbooks shared opinions and ideas, several also emphasized certain areas over others and/or admitted specific categories of advice. I could not conclude that the choices to do this are necessarily problematic because each college and university is invested in retaining their international students and helping them have a successful educational experience. When content differed significantly, colleges and universities chose to include or omit certain information based upon the mission and values of their particular institutions. Although only ten institutions' handbooks were included in this study for the purpose of a in-depth analysis of individual pieces of advice, the conclusions are limited to these handbooks and cannot be applied across all colleges and universities in the United States.

Third, contextualizing the content of the handbooks in my own experiences as a student, educator, and member of the university community, assisted my analysis of international student handbooks and experiences. Furthermore, because these experiences did not supplement, but also composed the data for analysis, this method appropriately fit with the aims of this study. The use of my experiences revealed my confidences, vulnerabilities, successes, and failures in multiple roles I have played during

my time as a member of the university community. The variety of examples included my interactions with international students as an instructor, a peer, and witness helped formulate my understanding of advice available for international students and its applicability to my interactions with their academic experiences. However, because my direct experiences with international students were most relevant to academic suggestions, other categories of analysis showed that in order to understand the whole student experience, I have not had enough interaction with international students to make more direct conclusions concerning some other types of advice. While I am able to relate to topics outside of academic advice because of my friendships with international colleagues, my own educational experiences abroad, and experiences I have had as a student which transcend the boundaries of national identity, my experiences as a teacher, student, and university community member could not enhance or explain every sub-category or piece of advice for non-U.S. citizens.

Finally, I advanced understanding of international student experiences by answering Bevis & Lucas' (2008) call for more research of substantial length on international students. In addition, my analysis of a series of texts and personal reflections that have not been included in previous studies are innovative contributions to the field of communication and education research. However, limiting the data to mediated texts and my own experiences also limits the conclusions that I was able to write. In the context of these research questions and my role as a university community member, I am left to understand what kind of experiences colleges and universities desire international students to have rather than understand the experiences that international students report. Many previous research endeavors which have interviewed or surveyed international

students helped form the basis of literature of what researchers know about international student experiences. Because my study was not invested in these questions or approaches to inquiry, the data could only be used to understand questions related to an institution's strategies or my experiences rather than understanding the current state of international students' opinions on higher education experiences.

Future Research

As stated in the previous paragraph, a minimal amount of works of substantial length helped contextualize the need for large research projects which focus on international student issues and experiences. Interests in international student experiences and the number of students who come from outside the United States to study is also growing, and a need to continue to study various aspects of international student concerns, experiences, and identities is warranted. Also, due to contemporary tensions between the United States and other nations, developing more research concerning international students can also assist in building bridges between U.S. natives and non-citizens.

There is a contemporary need to study any topic concerning international students to better understand educational, social, and political relationships. My analysis illuminated specific topics which would fill a gap where certain areas of inquiry are absent. Primarily, it is important to continue to research topics concerning the roles of higher educational institutions' assistance for international student experiences. This study examined my experiences and a series of texts which are available to help international students succeed. Neither approach has had a large presence in the contemporary research concerning international students. While it is important to interview and directly study international students to continue to understand their perceptions to barriers in their

journeys, scholars must also study the discourse which impacts the international student from a variety of perspectives. More research concerning educators' pedagogical strategies and institutions' intervention approaches will help complete the puzzle for understanding international students in the context of college and university communities.

Second, this study reminds researchers to also consider research concerning international student similarities rather than only examining differences from other students. There were a series of unique barriers which international students may face that I discussed in Chapter Five, but also there are several barriers and successes which international students shared with other native college students. Students who are completely new to the collegiate experience and come from communities which have not prepared them for all aspects of university life also will experience several moments of academic and culture shock. Experiencing higher education for the first time can be overwhelming for anyone, and issues of isolation and mental health concerns could affect a variety of college students. Likely, most students who are completely new to life at a higher education institution, U.S. and otherwise, may also be new to a more casual instructional style in small classes, large lecture halls filled with hundreds of students, and adjustments to taking personal responsibility for social, economic, and safety choices. While I focused on international students as the crux of inquiry, my conclusions also briefly illuminated that there are similarities between native and non-native students. If research continues to broadly focus on the differences between U.S. and international students, then an invisible division between all students who make up higher education communities will persist.

Finally, it is important to remember that topics in education and international student experiences must be contextualized in contemporary issues of politics, economics, as well as historical concerns. Understanding questions related to the whole student is important, but researchers must also remember the issues of relevance in the era which we are studying. Recognizing the effects of history, politics, and economics on social attitudes toward non-citizens and education practices will further enhance the relevance of research outside the walls of a specific college or university.

My analysis has illuminated many findings regarding higher education institutions' advice and my experiences as a student, educator, and university member. These issues were contextualized in previous studies' claims concerning international student needs and critical education perspectives. Conclusions concerning the relationships between higher education institutions and international students, the relevance of my role as a U.S. native in the higher education system, limitations of the analysis, and calls for future research were also included.

As international students continue to come to the United States in large numbers, it is imperative for not just researchers, but all higher education and surrounding community members, to understand issues of how to make the transition to U.S. colleges and universities most meaningful for individuals who are new to all aspects of cultural change. If researchers and educators continue to examine the unique needs of international students and also understand the barriers and successes which unify all students rather than divide them, schools will better adapt to educating both the individual student and collective community of students, faculty, staff, and community members.

I haven't reflected often on my first day of my college experience often in recent years. Buying my first set of books, getting my first parking pass, and meeting new friends are memories that have faded away. However, I vividly remember my first moment in a university classroom which scared me into success. I had a quick realization of what it felt like to be in a foreign land for the first time. I spoke the language; my parents had prepared me well to understand the process of filling out forms, studying for classes, and told me that it was important to get to know my professors and instructors. I am unsure of what happened to Yuri because I continued to register for Spanish courses in the semesters that followed and we never crossed paths again. She was not the only student that semester who dropped the course. The question, "¿Quien eres tú?" was a difficult obstacle for most of us to manage.

"¿Quien soy yo?"

I am still finding out…

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ABSTRACT

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT NAVIGATION THROUGH
U.S.-AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES:
AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE**
by

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As the population of international students continues to rise at U.S. colleges and universities, the difficulties that international students may face becomes more present and apparent. Intervention strategies used to assist international students in the past have shown remarkable success; however, these strategies have primarily included face-to-face interactions. I explore the role that mediated discourse plays in supporting international students with navigating paths through U.S. college and universities by examining ten institutions' assistance handbooks. From inspiration from autoethnography, discourse analysis, and critical education perspectives, I also use an autoethnographic analysis of discourse to understand the types of experiences colleges and universities wish international students to have. Textual strategies and my reflections and experiences form the data of academic, social, cultural, economic, and safety advice.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

I am the Director of Individual Events for Eastern Michigan University's forensic team and am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication, Media, and Theatre Arts. I earned my B.A. in Communication Studies from Western Kentucky University in 2006, my M.A. in Communication from Eastern Michigan University in 2008, and my Ph. D. in Communication with an emphasis in Communication Education from Wayne State University in 2011. I have previously taught multiple sections of Fundamentals of Speech, Persuasion, and Argumentation and Debate. My research interests include: International student experiences, Latino/a studies, autoethnography, critical communication pedagogy, and forensics.