

A CASE STUDY INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF A BLENDED INTERNATIONAL
PARTNERSHIP ON PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING AND GLOBAL MINDEDNESS IN A
NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL

by

Jennifer Ramey Ricks

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

Despite the ever-increasing popularity of international partnerships that blend study abroad and virtual learning, very little data exists to understand their impact on student attitudes and achievement. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the impact of a blended international school partnership on perceptions of learning and global mindedness in a North Carolina high school. Data was collected, in two phases, from stakeholder interviews, observations, an online Global Mindedness Scale survey, the NC School Report Card, and teacher lesson plans. Global mindedness was found to have increased as participants gained a multifaceted understanding of, and appreciation for, self and others. Findings supported enhanced perceptions of learning in three key ways (a) higher levels of engagement (b) a deeper understanding of academic content and (c) the utilization of 21st century skills.

Keywords: Global mindedness, international partnership, case study, perceptions of learning, virtual education, study abroad, 21st century skills, blended learning, technology, contact hypothesis theory

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Jeff Ritchey and Dr. John Fischetti, for their support during this process. Dr. Fischetti – you have been a role model for me since I first entered your class at UNCW over thirteen years ago. You always display the highest standards, both personally and professionally. Over the years, you have always been there for me, and so many others, as we navigated the field of education. You have invested so much in me. I only hope that I can make you proud as I continue my work in education. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Amanda Rockinson-Szapkiw and Dr. Lucinda Spaulding for their support and dedication. Without you two, I don't think I would have been able to stay the course. Your professionalism, dedication, and kindness kept me from quitting at several key junctures.

Of course, I could not have done this without the cooperation of the staff and students at the school featured in this study. All of my interactions over the years have been so positive – they truly welcomed me into their family. The partnership coordinator was always willing to go the extra mile to allow me to get a true picture of how this project has touched the lives of students and staff at his school. For that, I am eternally grateful. Teachers and students were always willing to sit down and talk with me or allow me to be a “fly on the wall” during their partnership activities. Many people have helped to make this study a reality. Dr. Darla Deardorff – your work on intercultural competence was integral to this study. You were great about checking in on my progress and providing guidance and encouragement throughout the process. Also - many thanks to Gary Pence, Matt Friedrich, Craig Courbron, and Dr. Melinda Bailey Fonteboa for your help and wisdom at various stages in this endeavor. A very special shout-out must go to Dr. Meghan Doyle and soon to be “Dr.” Michael Turner. You guys served as my cheerleaders/police! All of the phone calls, emails, and texts were invaluable. You

always put things in perspective and forced me to “git’r’done.” That made all of the difference in the world! Last, but not least, I appreciate my family understanding all of the weekends and holidays that I had to lock myself away and write. I couldn’t have made it through this without your continued encouragement and tolerance.

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List of Abbreviations

Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG)

End of Course (EOC)

Exceptional Children (EC)

Global Mindedness Scale (GMS)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD)

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)

School Improvement Plan (SIP)

United States (US)

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, many K-12 institutions have created international partnerships that allow students and teachers to interact with one another face-to-face and virtually. The focus of this study was to investigate the impact of a blended international partnership on global mindedness and perceptions of learning in a North Carolina high school. For the purposes of this study, a blended international partnership refers to one in which students and teachers from two different countries interact both face-to-face and virtually. In this study, global mindedness is defined as a “worldview in which one sees oneself as connected to the global community and feels a sense of responsibility to its members. This commitment can be reflected in the individual’s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors” (Hett, 1993, p.143). This study relied primarily on interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the partnership and its impact on perceptions of learning and global mindedness. Constructivist Learning Theory and the Contact Hypothesis Theory guided the study. Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978) places social interactions at the heart of the acquisition of new knowledge and behaviors while Contact Hypothesis Theory (Allport, 1954) delves deeper into the essence of those interactions. Both theories serve as a framework for the study.

Background

One of the gravest problems in the ever flattening world is preparing 21st century students to compete and excel in a world vastly different than the one in which even the youngest teachers grew up (Freidman, 2007). The authors of the National Educational Technology Plan (USED, 2010) asserted that,

Education is the key to America’s economic growth and prosperity and to our ability to compete in the global economy. It is the path to good jobs and higher earning power for

Americans....It fosters the cross-border, cross-cultural collaboration required to solve the most challenging problems of our time. (p. 7)

World View (an organization housed at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill since 1998) “helps K-12 schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges prepare students to succeed in an interconnected, diverse, and multicultural world” (World View, 2013). According to World View, “The future of the next generation relies heavily on its recognizing and being prepared for the challenges and opportunities of a restructured, more interconnected world” (World View, 2013). In their publication, *Why Go Global?* the authors stressed that in order to be successful “Students need to understand the interconnected world and acquire the skills and attitudes that will enable them to live and work effectively within it” (World View, 2013).

The once staggeringly vast globe could be said to have shrunk to the dimensions of a laptop, or an even more diminutive Smartphone. People operating within these new parameters require dramatically modified perspectives and resulting personal behaviors (Barker, 2000; Crawford & Kirby, 2008). Taranto et al. (2011) suggested that children as young as four years old utilize social networking sites and other Web 2.0 tools on a daily basis. And yet, while other cultures are merely a click away, young Americans still do not seem to know much about this “smaller” world. In a survey of over 500 18-24 year olds, National Geographic (2006) found that only a third could find Iraq on a map. Seventy five percent were unable to name the largest Muslim country in the world. The same number also thought that English, rather than Mandarin Chinese, was the most common language spoken. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests 15 year-olds around the world every three years in Reading, Mathematics and Science. While the U.S. spends well above the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) average on education, American students are consistently

outperformed by students in less developed countries – particularly in Science and Mathematics (OECD, 2012; PISA, 2009). Young Americans will require a different skillset for success in the 21st century (Prensky, 2001; Duncan, 2012). More and more jobs will involve working for multinational companies and interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds (Freidman, 2007; Jacobs, 2010; USED, 2010).

American students graduating in the last decade entered an increasingly challenging and altered world (Prensky, 2012; USED, 2010). In an effort to prepare them with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful, many schools instituted programs that centered on collaborative international partnerships. These programs provide students and teachers face-to-face and virtual interactions. Ideally, schools establishing these partnerships hope to provide their students with experiences that broaden their views, significantly deepen learning and ultimately leave them better prepared for success in our technology laden world. These partnerships vary in design, but often include hosting students for short term exchanges and collaborating virtually on curricular projects. Due to high costs and safety issues associated with foreign travel, virtual partnerships have become much more prevalent in the K-12 school setting.

Asia Society, a leading advocate for ensuring “that the next generation of K-12 students in the United States is prepared for the challenges and responsibilities of an increasingly interdependent world,” is a proponent of virtual international partnerships (Partnership for Global Learning, 2014, para. 7). One of the organization’s goals is to find “ways to harness technology and create new opportunities for international collaboration” (Partnership for Global Learning, 2014, para. 2). Virtual partnerships, paired with a globally themed curriculum, allow students in their *International Schools Network* to graduate “skilled for success in a global environment” (Partnership for Global Learning, 2014, para. 3). A student at the Denver Center

for International Studies described what it was like to work with students from another country: “I’ve gotten to learn different points of view from kids from countries that I had never heard of before. I never thought of the whole world until I came here” (Partnership for Global Learning, 2014, para. 1).

Problem Statement

Despite the ever-increasing popularity of blended international partnerships over the past decade, the problem is that very little data exists to understand their impact on student achievement and attitudes. Golay (2007) and Kehl (2006) described a connection between study abroad and increased global mindedness – one of the competencies, along with adaptability and fluency in multiple languages, that many experts agree is necessary for 21st century learners. Digital technology undeniably flattens the world and makes real-time virtual collaborations between students and teachers across the globe possible. Best practices for these types of virtual learning experiences include a mix of real world and theoretical scenarios and flexibility when dealing with logistics and cross cultural issues (Sharma, 2007; USED, 2010). However, few studies have tied all of the aforementioned factors together into the context of perceptions of learning. Thus, there is a need to investigate how these blended international partnerships can impact global mindedness and perceptions of learning.

There is a gap in the literature when it comes to a consideration of the comprehensive impact of all facets of a blended international partnership upon perceived student learning. As these programs continue to grow in popularity, and federal and local budgets continue drastic declines, a study to ascertain their impact on global mindedness and perceptions of learning is acutely important.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the impact of a blended international school partnership on perceptions of learning and global mindedness in a North Carolina high school. In this research, I also examined how involvement in the international partnership affected individual participants and their global mindedness. For the purposes of this study, a blended international school partnership was defined as a collaborative effort that allowed schools in different locations to utilize face-to-face contact (study abroad) and web 2.0 technology (e.g., blogs, chats, Elluminate, emails, GoogleDocs, Skype, wikis) for the attainment of common educational goals.

The Case

This research design was a bounded, single case study. The case was a large suburban high school in coastal North Carolina. I chose the school because it was in the fifth year of a partnership with a high school in Denmark. This partnership was launched by *The Center for International Understanding*, an “educational organization promoting global competence and awareness among current and future leaders in North Carolina” (The Center for International Understanding). The center has set up Danish partnerships with over 30 North Carolina middle and high schools.

This partnership began in 2007 when the American principal and two teachers traveled to Denmark with a team from *The Center for International Understanding*. Since then, American students and teachers have traveled back one more time and Danish students and teachers have traveled four times. In 2007, 19 Danish students and two teachers traveled to North Carolina for an 11-day exchange. They lived with host families from the school and attended high school classes all day. They immersed themselves in the local culture by visiting the beach and other

sites such as the historic downtown area, museums, and the USS North Carolina Battleship. During this visit, the students participated in a project in the United States History classes. In 2008, 13 American students and two teachers visited Denmark for a 10-day exchange. While there, they collaborated on a wind power project and participated in several Socratic seminars. During 2008, the students also completed a virtual project in their United States History classes. In 2009, no teachers or students traveled, but they participated in virtual projects in English and United States History classes. In 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 Danish students and teachers came to North Carolina and participated in the same types of activities as they did in 2007.

Situation to Self

As an educator, much of my experience has been with international education programs. I was motivated to do this research for several reasons. First, for three years, I served as coordinator for a partnership between a North Carolina high school and a K-12 school in Mexico. I saw how that partnership positively impacted students and staff and I wanted to investigate the impact of a similar partnership. Additionally, the partnership I coordinated was similar in many ways to the one featured in this explanatory case study. The size and demographics of both high schools were nearly identical. Also, the partnership was initiated by the same organization, the *North Carolina Center for International Understanding* (CIU). Second, I believe that these experiences with international education provided me with insights into nuances of the partnership experience that could be lost on an outsider.

At the onset of my partnership with a school in Mexico, I participated in several preparatory sessions facilitated by the CIU. During these sessions, a group of approximately 20 North Carolina teachers and administrators (one teacher and one administrator from each school involved) met to go over logistics and expectations for the partnerships. Two CIU directors

traveled with us to Mexico for 10 days. Half of our time was spent touring cultural sites, visiting schools, and meeting with education officials to get an overview of the country. During this portion of the experience, we were together as a whole group. At the end of the whole group tour, each of us was met by representatives from our partner school and taken to stay with our host families. The remaining days were spent at the partner school. While there, we each lived in the household of one of the teachers or administrators at the school. We went to work with them each day and participated in normal school activities: classroom visits, extra-curricular activities, staff meetings, etc. Before leaving, we signed an official partnership agreement detailing specific expectations. After returning to North Carolina, I maintained close contact with my Mexican colleagues as we developed the partnership for our students. This process involved many phone calls, emails, and video-conferencing sessions. Throughout the partnership, we worked together to schedule times for students to collaborate. This entire partnership process, facilitated by CIU, was very similar to the Danish partnership featured in this case study. As a former partnership coordinator, I am familiar with the challenges and benefits of an international partnership.

Another goal when conducting this study was to gain a richer understanding of the effectiveness of blended partnerships – those that include face- to- face and virtual collaborations. In North Carolina alone, there are dozens of these types of partnerships, but no measures of effectiveness or impact (Center for International Understanding). I identified best practices for these types of blended partnerships by conducting a thorough case study. A final goal for this research was to encourage skeptical administrators to implement programs like the one featured in this case study by determining if there is a link to perceptions of learning.

Even though the topics intermingled in this study (e.g., prejudice, culture, views of

outsiders, global mindedness), are quite value-laden, I took measures to guard against bias.

Axiological assumptions were bound to be present in a study such as this (Creswell, 1998). In defining axiological assumptions, Creswell (2009) stated that the “investigator admits the value-laden nature of the study and actively reports his or her values and biases as well as the value-laden nature of information gathered in the field” (p. 76).

I did have a pre-existing relationship with this school and have intimate knowledge of the partnership. This allowed me valuable insight as a researcher. However; it also created the need to safeguard against bias. Bracketing was one of the strategies used to combat this (Appendix A). I did visit the school during the Danish visits in 2010, 2011 and 2012. However, I did so to document the partnership in the capacity of my professional role, not as a doctoral candidate. During each of these visits, I took informal observational notes that contained no personal identifying information (Appendix B). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted me permission to use these observational notes as archival data. During all of my data collection procedures, I used journaling to bracket my own thoughts, feelings, and assumptions in an effort to guard against bias from my pre-existing relationship. This process minimized the tendency for me, as the researcher, to “inject hypotheses, questions, or personal experiences into the study” (Creswell, p. 33).

Research Questions

Creswell (2008) suggested that researchers develop open-ended “how” questions to steer their research. Creswell (2008) also cautioned that qualitative researchers should “expect the research questions to evolve and change during the study in a manner consistent with the assumptions of an emerging design” (p. 131). Throughout the course of my study, the three

questions changed slightly to reflect the nuances of the research. The following three questions guided this study:

Research Question 1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning?

Research Question 2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?

Research Question 3: How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face- to- face interactions?

Significance of the Study

From a practical standpoint, this study was significant because an understanding of the impact of international interactions on global mindedness can be used by educators to identify best practices for quality international partnerships and study abroad programs. Individual participants in this study may have benefited from increased understanding of their role in the world and the way that they viewed and interacted with people from cultures other than their own. Participants may have also gained further understanding and practical information that could be applicable to future comparable experiences. Increased self-awareness was a potential benefit, particularly in relation to dealing with diversity. Additionally, school administrators may continue to implement such programs after seeing positive links to perceptions of learning.

This study presents a cohesive view of major facets of the international partnership programs and their combined effect on the vital issues of perceptions of learning and global mindedness in this single North Carolina example. From a theoretical standpoint, it added to the research on the Contact Hypothesis Theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew; 1997) by providing

additional examples in the field of education. This explanatory case study also examined intercultural social interactions and focused on the quality and type of interactions outlined by Allport (1954) and Pettigrew (1997). The study argued for an extension of the Contact Hypothesis Theory to include virtual social interactions, rather than only face - to - face.

Yin (2013) defines case study research as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 13). The empirical significance of this study hinges on the in-depth description of the phenomenon provided within. Observations and interviews with thick descriptions provided a comprehensive view of the blended international partnership featured in this study.

Relevant Terminology

Asynchronous learning – Asynchronous learning “uses electronic materials to deliver information to learners at anytime and anywhere. Instructors and learners can engage in educational activities easily and flexibly” at their own pace (Yueh-Min Huang et al., 2008, p. 1205).

Blended learning – The *Glossary of Education Reform* defined blended learning as “the practice of using both online and in-person learning experiences when teaching students” (Blended Learning, 2013, para. 1). It is also sometimes referred to as hybrid learning.

Cross cultural competence - *New Challenges for International Leadership: Lessons from Organizations With Global Missions* (2003 RAND Corporation Report) defined cross-cultural competence as the ability to work well in different cultures with people of different origins. Intercultural competence includes knowing that there are cultural differences, what they are, and how to apply that knowledge.

Global mindedness – Global mindedness was defined by Hett (1993) as a “worldview in which one sees oneself as connected to the global community and feels a sense of responsibility to its members. This commitment is reflected in the individual’s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.” There are five dimensions that are associated with Hett’s construct of global mindedness: (a) responsibility, (b) cultural pluralism, (c) efficacy, (d) globalcentrism, and (e) interconnectedness.

Globalization – Globalization can be defined as a worldwide process that implies standardization across cultures that occurs as technology, migration, and education become dispersed around the globe. McGabe (2001) suggested that ultimately the world will evolve into greater levels of sameness or homogenization through the process of globalization. Held and McGrew (1999) defined globalization as “a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, generating transcontinental or interregional flows, and networks of activity, interaction, and power” (p. 3).

Intercultural competence – Deardorff (2004) acknowledged that many terms that are often used interchangeably to describe the same skill set: global competence, global citizenship, cross-cultural competence, intercultural effectiveness, intercultural sensitivity, etc. In her study of internationalization in higher education, the participants defined it as “knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or interact; valuing others’ values, beliefs, and behaviors; and realizing one’s self” (p. 14).

International education – Kehl (2006) defined international education as “a term used interchangeably with Global Education to describe the activity of teaching or studying about the differences and similarities between at least two different countries of the world in areas that may include, history, geography, political science, languages, cultures, and religions” (p. 11).

Synchronous learning – Huang et al. (2008) defined a synchronous online learning environment as one in which “teachers and students work together...at a specific time and focus on reconstructing the traditional classroom environment over the internet” (p. 1205). This environment “provides opportunities for group discussion, peer tutoring and brain storming” (p.1205) and often utilizes video platforms such as Skype or Elluminate.

Virtual learning – French, Hale, Johnson and Pharr (1999) defined virtual learning as “the educational process of learning over the internet without having face-to-face contact” (p. 2). The term “virtual education” is often used interchangeably with “distance education,” “distributed learning,” “open learning,” “networked learning,” “web-based education,” “online learning,” “cyber education,” “net education,” “computer learning,” and other similar terms (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2006, p. 3).

Virtual partnership/collaboration – Virtual partnerships can be defined as a collaborative effort that allows people in different locations to utilize web 2.0 technology (e.g., Skype, Elluminate, emails, chats, blogs) synchronously or asynchronously for a common goal.

Delimitations

While blended international partnerships exist all over the world, the study was confined to one American high school in North Carolina. The study was conducted over the course of one school year (2013-2014) but included data from the beginning of the partnership in 2007. Students who were participating in the partnership, as well as those who participated in previous years, were included in the study since the focus was perceived student learning and global mindedness.

Research Plan

I conducted a qualitative case study to investigate the impact of a blended international partnership on perceived student learning and global mindedness in a North Carolina high school. An explanatory case study was appropriate because the phenomenon of investigation was bound to a specific site, defined as a suburban high school in coastal North Carolina and there is a wide range of material available to allow for an all-encompassing picture of the site (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) offered several criteria for choosing the case study approach. When (a) “how” or “why” questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context” (p. 2). This study meets all of Yin’s (2009) criteria in that (a) all three research questions are “why” questions, (b) as investigator, I had no control over events at the site, and (c) blended international partnerships are “contemporary phenomena within a real-life context” (Yin, 2009, p. 2). Using data from multiple sources: stakeholder interviews (students, teachers, parents, members of the administration), observations, the North Carolina School Report Card, teacher lesson plans and pre and posttests in United States History classes, allowed me to gain an in-depth picture of phenomenon.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of a blended international school partnership on perceptions of learning and global mindedness in a North Carolina high school. In this chapter, research surrounding the following related themes is explored: global mindedness, cultural competence, virtual learning and 21st century skills, study abroad, and academic achievement and motivation. Each of these is developed, along with the role each plays within cross-cultural understanding and the development of knowledge. This chapter addresses the manner in which 21st century learners attain new forms of knowledge, embedded in the theoretical work of the past and the burgeoning forms of cultural identification and media that forms the socio-cultural context of today's classrooms.

Using Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978) and Contact Hypothesis Theory (Allport, 1954) as theoretical frameworks, this study explored a deeper understanding of the impact of an international school partnership on a suburban North Carolina high school. Both theories were appropriate for this explanatory case study because they provide a framework for social interaction. The implication of these theories also facilitated the inclusion of several of the most documented and significant educational theorists in this study, giving it a relevance to several, larger educational issues.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework provides this structure in a qualitative study (Yinn, 2009). A well-integrated theoretical framework can reduce the influence of social and cultural biases that every researcher maintains (Yinn, 2009). This is essential in a multi-cultural study that explores the diverse values and learning methodologies of two very different groups of learners. In this

case, Social Constructivism (Piaget, 1952) and Contact Hypothesis Theory (Allport, 1954) provided the lens through which an exploration of the value of this international partnership was analyzed. These two theories posit that learners are active participants in the accumulation of knowledge and are fitting for this case study.

The personal agency of the learners in this international partnership provided the launching point for the study's theoretical framework. According to Kukla (2000), learning is an active process because knowledge does not exist before it is experienced. An important facet of this framework is the notion that learners piece together knowledge with other learners, by sharing and exploring multiple perspectives (Kukla, 2000). This active process involves mutual development of shared understandings. Speech, role-playing, and interplay with subject matter across a variety of modalities also play a role in intellectual development. These social science theories provide a framework that limits the potential biases of the researcher and directs the emphasis toward a constructive understanding of the role that intercultural interaction plays in the development of knowledge. According to Creswell, "Social science theories provide an explanation, a prediction, and a generalization about how the world operates" (Creswell, 1998, p. 84). Theoretical frameworks provide a context for understanding how participants in qualitative case study behave.

Cognitive Developmental Theory or Constructivist Learning Theory

Lev Vygotsky (1962) believed that humans use tools that they develop from their culture to mediate their social environment. He argued that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. In Constructivist Learning Theory, the environment plays a big role in learning. Interactions with peers from a different culture change a student's environment and ultimately, in this study, led to deeper learning and enhanced global

mindedness. Most classrooms, whether virtual or face - to - face, require that students collaborate to master learning objectives. Therefore, social interaction is a required skill in most of the world's schools. It facilitates the socialization process and matches the cognitive needs of many learners. Finally, constructivists contend that social interaction is the foundation upon which learners build their own reality.

Constructivists maintained that people build, or construct, knowledge and meaning through their lived experiences and that these meanings are continually updated through a process of accommodation and/or assimilation of new experiences (Bruner, 1960; Dewey, 1916; Piaget, 1950/2001, 1952; von Glasersfeld, 1995; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). Accommodation refers to the act of reframing the current context with which one creates meaning from their experiences, while assimilation refers to incorporating new experiences into existing experiences (Piaget, 1952). Both of these come together to create new meaning or to strengthen previously held beliefs. Accommodation and assimilation imply that teaching new material requires a confluence of the interests of the instructor and the learner. This suggests that teaching is a social process in which both parties are active participants. The contrary perspective would be behaviorism, in which students receive information from a teacher. It would relate to the notion of a “data dump” of material in the confines of a traditional classroom setting. Constructivists see learning as a more interactive process.

Piaget (1952) argued that when people engage in any activity, they incorporate their experience into an already existing framework of knowledge and create new meaning. In his study of children's cognitive development, Piaget (1952) claimed that cognitive processes were scaffolded and each new experience added a new layer to earlier cognitive development. Based on this theory, interactions with peers from another culture would likely impact the cognitive

development of American students involved in international exchanges.

According to Piaget (1952), one way that students would likely be impacted is in their moral development. For Piaget, social relationships formed the basis for psychosocial development (Pass, 2004). Interactions with fellow students help children develop their moral education. Therefore, one could speculate that students participating in an international partnership would find benefit from the exposure to peers from another cultural background. For Piaget (1952), this interaction would have to be peer-centered and reciprocal. Equal social transmission of mores would have the greatest possible impact on learners taking part in such a dynamic.

Many students who are exposed to multi-cultural partnerships are at a social disadvantage, due to their age or experience level. Often, students who participate in educational experiences with members of another culture are exposed to teachers or adults only (Mahon & Cushner, 2002). This implies a one-way dissemination of moral and educational values in which adults are exercising a dominant or supervisory position over learners. The significance of this international partnership was in its reciprocal and mutually beneficial nature. For Piaget, cooperative interaction held the greatest benefit for learners because it afforded the opportunity to develop shared notions of knowledge and morals (Pass, 2004). These are more authentic examples of intellectual exchange, because they generate knowledge that is malleable and open. It is not fixed by the authority of a teacher or supervisor. Instead, it is flexible to the knowledge a student already has, and formed with the help of peers and through the freedom one has with his or her own thoughts.

Social relationships facilitate the active incorporation of personal beliefs and prior knowledge. In a classroom setting, where students are faced with curricular challenges and with

progress being systematically assessed, the active formulation of knowledge is the currency for success. The constraining influence of forced values and knowledge is inferior to the open, active process of developing one's own intellectual processes. Peer relationships are the best example of this. They provide the framework for intellectual development in the classroom. They also provide a theoretical framework for this study. A constructivist framework will shine a powerful spotlight on the value of multi-cultural partnerships.

Constructivist Learning Theory influenced Vygotsky (1978) and his zone of proximal development (ZPD). The ZPD is most often defined as the distance between the actual developmental level of a learner and the potential development (Vygotsky, 1962). He proposed that cognitive growth was based on the social interaction between students and their peers. This social interaction enabled students to construct an understanding of various concepts and, over time, they associated those concepts with their experience (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky patently rejected individualism and the notion of education as being reduced to the sheer transfer of knowledge (Kozulin, 2003). He also rejected the idea of the individual learner, capable of absorbing knowledge and values by the sheer will of his initiative. In Vygotsky's view, learners are intertwined with fellow learners and only capable of formulating higher taxonomic constructs through social interactions.

According to Kozulin (2003), Vygotsky's acolytes in his Russian homeland ascribed the term *Robinsonade* to educators who valued the notion of individualistic learners, after the famously independent Robinson Crusoe (Kozulin, 2003). To Vygotsky, educators who failed to recognize the value of social interaction to instruction were doomed to learn in the manner of Robinson Crusoe—alone, isolated, and primitive. Additionally, the *Robinsonade* failed to recognize the notion of scaffolding as an essential facet of education. As a puzzle-piecing

model, the Vygotskian lesson is that learning is maximized when it is built upon previous learning and influences instructional and moral development.

At its essence, a Vygotskian approach to collaborative learning pinpoints the role of the ZPD. This is a departure from the static biological nature of learning espoused by Piaget. Piaget outlined his various stages of development, which describe fixed, regimented stages from which a learner graduates into the next. Vygotsky's approach is more organic in nature because of the significance of prior learning. For Vygotsky, the most effective instruction leverages prior learning and lets students build from previous unit plans and instructional lessons. Through this method of assimilation, students collaborate actively to develop new understandings. Knowledge is inherently tied to context, and instructional tasks can be worked with, explored, and assessed across a variety of modalities (Pass, 2004).

The ZPD of students in an international partnership is particularly important because of its application to the relationships and collaborative opportunities it presented. According to Duffy and Jonassen (1992), knowledge that is embedded in a social context gives students the best opportunity to understand and employ new concepts. Alternatively, knowledge that lacks a specific context fails to identify the skills that should be used in applying or analyzing the knowledge. For this reason, decontextualized learning lacks practical value in today's classrooms. Instead, the most optimal conditions for learning take advantage of the complex relationships that are pervasive in the classroom environment. These relationships, in turn, mimic those that persist in most social contexts.

Many educators have grown to value contextualized assessment tools that vary from traditional assessments. These let students apply, work with, explore, or develop new materials or concepts to demonstrate mastery (Duffy & Jonassen, 1992). They also more effectively take

advantage of knowledge that is learned during the course of collaboration and social interaction. These alternative forms of assessment are important in the Vygotskyian construct of education. Examples of assessment tools that are embedded in a social context are those which are continuously administered and involve varying modalities, including kinesthetic, tactile, linguistic and audio-visual (Yin, 2009). These yield opportunities for continuous feedback and interaction between students and instructors. They facilitate education as an active and social process.

Deardorff's (2009) intercultural competence model fits well within a constructivist framework. Ideally, those who are more globally minded, or interculturally competent, should be able to recognize social boundaries and cultural norms and then effectively transcend them. Deardorff's (2009) model includes skills, attitudes and practices that can lead to the development of intercultural competence. This form of competency was touted by Busch (2009) as a determining factor in a student's employability upon graduation. Busch asserted that students' "understanding of concepts such as intercultural communication and intercultural competence will be very useful qualities when applying their knowledge to multiple situations and when dealing with numerous societal institutions – especially when interacting with employers as gatekeepers" (p. 435). Thus, their increased competence is a transferable skill. Busch stated, "They will be able to act as experts when it comes to issues of intercultural competence in a variety of contexts" rather than becoming "experts in one key qualification" (p. 435). Understanding the impact of social interactions on shaping one's attitudes and beliefs is integral to success as a student in the 21st century.

The *North Carolina Center for International Understanding*, a public service program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the organization who facilitated the

partnership featured in this study, compiled a list of global competencies for Future-Ready students. These competencies detailed the “skills, knowledge and perspectives that students need to be global citizens, workers and leaders.” The *Center for International Understanding* described a globally competent student as one who is “prepared to interact with the world, both inside and outside our borders.” These are the competencies: Culturally Aware, Aware of World Events and Global Dynamics, Effective at Communicating with People from Other Cultures, Effective at Being a Collaborative Member of Multicultural Teams. These competencies hinge on social interactions, the basis of Constructivist Learning Theory and Contact Hypothesis Theory, and serve as additional support for these frameworks.

The international partnership featured in this study depended on educators and students to collaborate effectively toward instructional goals. According to Slavin (1995), collaboration in small, heterogeneous groups improves motivation and develops the ability of students to excel within varying social dynamics. Collaborative learning gave the students participating in this study the best opportunity to increase their global mindedness and overall learning. It is the group dynamic that best promotes interdependence and collective learning. In collaborative learning, students are motivated to help each other in order to reach common objectives. Inhibitions, such as cultural differences, are put aside for the benefit of the group. Collaborative learning activities may include instances of peer tutoring, temporary assistance, feedback and encouragement (Slavin, 1995). Slavin’s foundational research in collaborative learning originally referred to smaller groups within a classroom setting. However, the benefits of collaboration to the larger educational environment have proven transferable. It is speculated here that these dynamics positively impacted the international partnership, which led to greater levels of scaffolding and assimilation.

Contact Hypothesis Theory

The Contact Hypothesis Theory (Allport, 1954) was popular in the 1940s and focused on group stereotypes. Allport's (1954) theory suggested that stereotypes result from ignorance and that as more people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds interact; their attitudes towards one another become more positive. However, simply interacting with people from a different culture or ethnic group is not enough to create tolerant attitudes or lessen prejudice. According to Allport (1954), the type of interaction makes a difference. Pettigrew (1997) and Allport (1954) proposed that there needed to be four conditions present before a change in attitude or perception is seen: (a) there must be equal status between the groups who meet; (b) they must be involved in a cooperative venture with common goals; (c) competition between the groups must be avoided; and (d) the contact must be given legitimacy by having institutional support.

Whether students are interacting with others through a study abroad experience or via the internet during a collaborative curriculum project, mere exposure does not automatically lead to increased global mindedness or intercultural development (Allport, 1954).

The ultimate value in a framework of Contact Hypothesis is the reduction of anxiety and the abolition of preconceptions involving members of other cultures. A lens that leverages the merits of Contact Hypothesis has larger-scale consequences; it affords the students involved the opportunity to view others as equals. This can occur through direct contact or indirectly through the internet. The internet can serve as a medium to filter out feelings of anxiety and prejudice. It has also been demonstrated to have the capacity to increase generalization, which is the tendency of group members to extrapolate contact with members of other cultures beyond the scope of the current project (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006).

The nature of this partnership – which included both virtual and face - to - face experiences – is ideally suited for examination through the Contact Hypothesis framework. The partnership provides opportunities for students and teachers to interact virtually at first. In those instances, the internet had the capacity to reduce social anxiety, eliminate borders, reduce costs, and help establish intimate forms of cooperation. During the face - to - face component of the partnership, this framework provided a way to examine the relationships between peers. Contact Hypothesis is an appropriate framework for this explanatory case study because it focused on an understanding of how people interact with those who they perceive to be different than them, i.e. students and teachers from another country.

Another advantage to using Allport's (1954) theory as a framework for examining the international partnership was the parameters it provided for examining misconceptions that students may have had about cultural "others." According to Allport (1954), interactions with "others" that do not fit his criteria can lead to misunderstandings that foster rivalry and even promote bullying – both of which are common problems in schools. Allport suggested bringing students together as a way to resolve conflict when bullying or excessive rivalry between groups occurred. This was not always successful because anxiety and inequality are difficult to avoid. However, intercultural group dynamics that emphasized teamwork and group objectives often led to transferable habits regarding cultural "others." Social interactions that exhibit the characteristics delineated in the Contact Hypothesis framework may help students develop empathy for, and sensitivity to, cultural differences within their school, and the world in general.

Ultimately, Constructivist Learning Theory, Contact Hypothesis Theory, and the Intercultural Competence Model were the most appropriate frameworks for this explanatory case study. All three deal with social interactions and how one's perception can be changed by

experiences. Piaget's (1952) supposition was that when people engage in any activity, it became a part of the way that they constructed knowledge about activities in the future. This goes hand in hand with Allport's (1954) assertions about social contact. When the right conditions were present, Allport argued that contact with people from another group created more positive attitudes about the group and lessened prejudice. These theories served as a suitable structure for understanding the impact of the social interactions present in the international school partnership and how they impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at the participating school.

Review of Literature

Global Mindedness

Hett (1993, p. 143) defined global mindedness as a "worldview in which one sees oneself as connected to the global community and feels a sense of responsibility to its members. This commitment can be reflected in the individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors." Wilson (1993) suggested that teacher preparation plays a significant role in global mindedness for students. While international learning experiences can expand students' global mindedness, so too can the experiences of their teachers. According to Wilson, teachers who saw the benefits of understanding concepts in a global context were more likely to impart that wisdom to their students (Wilson, 1993). Cushner and Mahon (as cited in Deardorff, 2009) asserted that,

Developing the intercultural competence of young people, both in the domestic context as well as in the international sphere, requires a core of teachers and teacher educators who have not only attained this sensitivity and skill themselves but are also able to transmit this to the young people in their charge. (p. 304)

Teachers who exhibited higher degrees of cultural competency were often the product of a preparation program that included an emphasis on multicultural perspectives, or had participated in a study abroad program (Deardorff, 2009).

High school students with enhanced levels of global mindedness are more prepared for post-secondary education. They are more likely to have goals that fit in with the mission statements of universities and are therefore more attractive undergraduate candidates (Busch, 2009). For example, the North Dakota College of Business (2012) stated that “A major focus is to help develop more globally minded students who can communicate effectively across cultures, who are more open to diversity, and who become more interculturally proficient. Likewise, Rend Lake College (2013) in Ina, Illinois described the values they hoped to equip all undergraduates with:

In an evolving global society, students will benefit from the ability to formulate their own values while remaining open-minded to the views of others. Degree-completing students will demonstrate an awareness of a wide range of perspectives as well as have opportunities to appreciate and understand the fine arts and to explore individual values in a multi-cultural world. (para. 7)

There are a variety of methods for evaluating the global mindedness of students. In 1993, Hett developed a scale to measure global mindedness. In her introduction, she expressed a “hope for global minded citizens who are free from the restraints of blind patriotism and who are knowledgeable about various cultural frameworks and value systems” (1993, p. 2). There are five dimensions that are associated with Hett’s construct of global mindedness: (a) responsibility, (b) cultural pluralism, (c) efficacy, (d) globalcentrism, and (e) interconnectedness.

Hett's (1993) Global Mindedness Scale (GMS) was designed to measure attitudes of students related to their sense of connection to, interest in, and responsibility for, the global community and the behaviors associated with this perspective. It was designed to be used to assess the affective change that might result from a global studies class, a study abroad experience, or significant contact with people outside one's own culture. (Hett, 1993, p. 4)

Hett (1993) described the role of education in helping students develop a global worldview: "Through educational experiences, students can come to feel a sense of global connection and concern, and most critically, to develop some competence in exercising influence within the context of a global society" (p. 159).

Deardorff (2004) acknowledged the many terms that are often used interchangeably to describe the same skill set: global competence, global citizenship, cross-cultural competence, intercultural effectiveness, intercultural sensitivity, etc. In her study of internationalization in higher education, the participants defined it as "knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and realizing one's self" (p. 14). For the purposes of this study, the terms above were used synonymously with global mindedness.

While study abroad programs are often seen as a way to enhance global mindedness (Golay, 2006), a number of resources exist for secondary programs wishing to generate culturally competent students without sending them overseas. Foreign language studies, intercultural exchanges, and international partnerships like the one in this study are examples. Students with heightened intercultural sensitivity were more likely to exhibit generalization as a result of these efforts. In other words, they were more likely to transfer notions of cultural

competence following participation in such programs, and have greater tolerance and appreciation for the values and beliefs of all cultures (Deardorff, 2009).

Ultimately, there are many rewards for students who participate in intercultural exchanges. Crawford and Kirby (2008) detailed the benefits of global awareness for students. It “enhances their ability to work collaboratively with persons of diverse backgrounds, to understand and seek solutions to global issues, and to acquire 21st century skills” (p. 57). When exposure to intercultural exchanges was long-term, each instance of learning was found to impact global mindedness (Kehl, 2007). These interactions fostered students who had a greater understanding of others, had fewer misperceptions regarding global events, and were more prepared to compete in the international marketplace. All of these skills are integral to a successful international school partnership.

Study Abroad

The value of global mindedness in today’s students can be measured in the number and size of study abroad programs that have proliferated in the previous decades across undergraduate campuses. According to a 2013 *US News & World Report* article, approximately 23% of 2011 American college graduates studied abroad at some point during their tenure. “Goucher College in Maryland and Soka University of America in California hold the experience in such high regard that they require every student to spend time abroad before they graduate” (Sheehy, 2013, paragraph 3). For the top ten schools with the highest participation in study abroad, an average of 83% traveled overseas during their undergraduate career (Sheehy, 2013). American students were not the only ones participating in study abroad. In 2010, “4.1 million tertiary students were enrolled outside their country of citizenship” (OECD, 2012, p.

360). Of those enrolled abroad, “83% of all foreign students were enrolled in G20 countries. . . [and] Asian students represented 52%” of all enrollees (OECD, 2012, p. 360).

As stated previously, many colleges and universities reference global mindedness in their mission statements. According to Hopkins (1999), these messages highlighted goals for gaining a greater understanding of members of other cultures. The value that study abroad programs bring to campuses is substantial and is a key component of competitive environments. In 2008, Clemson University sought to revamp their study abroad programs in an effort to help students translate what they gained from their experiences into marketable skills. Constancio Nakuma, a French professor in the College of Humanities, piloted a program called *Cultural Literacies Across Media* (Kowarski, 2010). The program was designed to “encourage study-abroad students to be more thoughtful about their time in other countries. The course, which is now officially part of the Clemson curriculum, teaches students how to understand their international experience and present it to the world using multimedia” (Kowarski, 2010, paragraph 3). Nakuma stated, “This program is an attempt to reveal what it is that people who did study abroad mean when they say, 'Oh, wow, that totally transformed me,'" (Kowarski, 2010, paragraph 4). Administrators at Clemson University, as well as those across the country and the globe, recognize that study abroad programs are essential in building graduates who are competitive job-seekers and who have the tools to place current events within a broader, global context. The OECD (2012) speculated that “the internationalization of labor markets for highly skilled individuals has also given people the incentive to gain international experience as part of their studies” (OECD, 2012, p. 362). Study abroad programs also generate a greater degree of on-campus diversity, which is attractive to many prospective students (Mitsakos, 1978; Open Doors, 2012).

Each year, thousands of Americans study in another country as a part of their college or university experience (Open Doors, 2012). During the 2010-2011 school year, 273,996 American college students studied abroad for academic credit (Open Doors, 2012). These study abroad programs range in length from two weeks to a full academic year. Of those studying abroad during 2010-2011, 3.9% were for an academic or calendar year, 38% were one quarter to one semester, and 58% were summer or eight weeks or less (Open Doors, 2012).

Hett (1993) maintained that someone with a positive worldview considers global challenges in the context of their relation to humanity, rather than individual subcultures. Students who participated in study abroad programs were more likely to have a constructive worldview that contributed to big-picture solutions and educational development (Hett, 1993). In recent years, short-term study abroad programs have grown more widespread in campuses across the country. Results regarding the global mindedness of participants were mixed. While Kehl (2007) and Golay (2006) found that longer exchanges were more beneficial, many short-term program participants reported gaining a substantially different perspective as a result of their time abroad (Mills, et al., 2010). The broad results of all studies examining the effects of study abroad programs indicated that participants gained a different, more culturally competent worldview from their time overseas. Studies by Kehl and Golay (both utilized Hett's Global Mindedness Scale to evaluate the effectiveness of study abroad programs. Each found that global mindedness increased after study abroad, regardless of length of stay.

It is important to remember that many students lack the resources or opportunities to participate in study abroad programs. It is also worth noting that there is a gap in the literature when it comes to the impact of study abroad programs on high school students. Traditional foreign exchange student programs have dissipated in recent years, and the budgetary challenges

faced by many school districts around the world have limited genuine opportunities for multi-cultural experiences. For these experiences to reap rewards in regards to enhanced global mindedness, it has to be a part of the program's stated goals and mission. Ultimately, the body of research relating cultural competence and/or global mindedness to study abroad programs is limited by several factors, including length of stay. However; the value of these programs with regards to enhancing the global mindedness of its participants is indisputable (Golay, 2006; Kehl, 2007).

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence can vary slightly from global mindedness by its examination of distinct cultures and the sensitivity of individuals to factors that distinguish them. Where global mindedness explores the capacity of learners to place items of learning in a global context (Deardorff, 2004, 2009), cultural competence explores the factors that make cultures unique (Deardorff, 2004, 2009). Cultural competence also describes the ability of an individual to be sensitive to his or her own cultural background, and how that frames awareness of other cultures.

The study of cultural competence is complicated by the varying definitions of culture among scholars. For Bandura (2001), the social environment of a learner informed behavior and cognition. Culture often refers to an interrelated set of knowledge, values, and beliefs as expressed by a distinct system of symbolic thoughts (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Regardless of the definition, culture plays a substantial role in the ability of students to learn and apply skills in the educational environment. Genuine cultural competence is measured across a variety of factors, including cultural sensitivity, communication skills, awareness of social norms and values, the ability to maintain socially accepted behavior, and the ability to negotiate institutional structures (LaFromboise et al., 1993).

A cumulative look at cultural competence models (Deardorff, 2009b, DeJaeghere, J. G., & Zhang, Y., 2008) suggested that it exists across a continuum of factors that stop short of pinpointing a threshold at which a learner has gained cultural competence. For example, it is possible to have high levels of cultural sensitivity without being able to directly communicate with members of other cultures (Deardorff, 2004). True acquisition of a second culture typically involves immersion, which was not the objective or process used in this study.

A fusion model of multiculturalism most accurately portrays the group objectives and dynamics found in this international partnership. In this case, two distinct cultures meet on common ground, often based on uniting goals and cultural common ground (Gleason, 1979). A shared experience between two cultures involving institutional structures can lead to respectful interaction and the formation of new subculture. In this model, there is no cultural superiority between the two groups. The blended international partnership featured in this study employed a peer dynamic in which interaction was not forced on any group member. This opposes traditional models of assimilation or acculturation, in which an individual or group from a minority culture adopts the cultural norms of another group.

In this American-Danish partnership, there was an opportunity to form a new, independent culture to which members from both groups identified. The nature of such a partnership, founded on virtual learning and cross-cultural shared objectives, limits the role of acculturation. This structure, focused on new experiences, is important for young learners, many of whom are still gaining a footing in the cultural morays of their own school and community.

Virtual Learning and 21st Century Skills

In 1999, virtual learning was defined as “The educational process of learning over the internet without having face-to-face contact” (French, Hale, Johnson & Pharr, 1999, p. 2).

Surprisingly, when the International Association of K-12 Online Learning defined it in 2011, the definition had not changed much: “Education in which instruction and content are delivered primarily over the internet” (p. 7). Since the late 1990s, easy access to technology made virtual learning a viable way for many schools to provide their students with international experiences. When describing virtual French classes that paired students in American and French high schools, Heidi Hayes Jacobs (2010) wrote, “Other than a plane trip and a visit abroad, there is simply nothing that will match the quality of this type of classroom virtual space for an authentic learning experience” (p. 67).

Students who grew up using 21st century technology are said to have digital wisdom (Prensky, 2012). These young adults have always used electronic media effortlessly and are comfortable creating websites, blogs and videos. Much of the way that they interact with their friends, even those that they see every day, occurs online through social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. These students are almost never “unplugged.” They spend hours a day texting, IMing, and interacting in other virtual ways (Delacruz, 2008). When Prensky (2001) coined the term “digital native,” he suggested that their brains were physically different than those raised in earlier generations because of the digital input. In an interview with CNN (Joy, 2012), Prensky predicted that,

By 2020 people across the globe will be plugged into the "AORTA," -- Always On Real Time Access -- a term coined by Mark Anderson, the chief of the Strategic News Service -- specializing in technology news. A future in which people are constantly able to access information and news from anywhere on the planet. (para. 28)

Billions of people use the internet each day to access information and facilitate relationships with friends and family (Delacruz, 2008). For mid-year 2012, there were an

estimated 2,405,510,175 internet users worldwide (World Usage Patterns & Demographics, 2012). According to World Usage Patterns & Demographics (2012), “This represented about 34.3% of the population worldwide and a 566.4% growth compared to 2000.” Almost every school in the United States has networked computers for teacher and student use (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2009). The National Forum on Education Statistics (2009) stated,

In 2009, 97 percent of teachers had one or more computers located in the classroom every day, while 54 percent could bring computers into the classroom. Internet access was available for 93 percent of the computers located in the classroom every day and for 96 percent of the computers that could be brought into the classroom. The ratio of students to computers in the classroom every day was 5.3 to 1. (para. 3)

In addition to use in the face-to-face classroom, many students are also utilizing the internet to take online classes. The number of online high school classes grew 96% in 2010 (Keeping Pace, 2010). The National Forum on Education Statistics (2009) described different modes of virtual education: virtual schools, virtual classes and virtual programs. In the case of a school, all of the instruction is delivered virtually and students do not attend classes in a traditional environment. However, students in virtual classes and virtual programs often attend traditional brick and mortar schools and their curriculum is supplemented virtually. State level virtual schools exist in thirty-nine states (Keeping Pace, 2010). Twenty-seven of those have multi-district full time, online schools (Keeping Pace, 2010). In an effort to provide more diverse course offerings and to prepare students with 21st century skills, many schools are requiring students to take at least one online class during their high school career. Beginning in 2016, Idaho will require that all students earn six online credits before they graduate (Students Come First, 2011). These virtual experiences may be offered synchronously or asynchronously.

However, students do not have to enroll in virtual classes to take advantage of this method of instruction (National Forum on Education Statistics, 2009). Many teachers are implementing virtual programs as a way to connect with other classrooms around the world.

Blended instruction occurs when educational content is delivered both virtually and face-to-face. One of the benefits to blended learning is higher levels of student engagement (Keeping Pace, 2010; PISA, 2009). When teachers effectively incorporate technology, they appeal to the way that digital natives are used to dealing with information. This could account for higher levels of engagement. In addition to the use of technology, blended learning also encourages students to develop other 21st century skills like the ability to “think critically, build collaborative relationships, to problem solve, and to communicate in a diverse global community” (Keeping Pace, 2010, p. 43). Simonson et al. (2006) also supported a focus on collaboration. This environment is an effective platform for teachers to form virtual partnerships with schools in other countries.

There have been limited studies on the effectiveness of virtual education. A meta-analysis (Cavanaugh, Gillan, Kromberg, Hess & Blomeyer) of K-12 web delivered programs in 2004 found that “as distance education is currently practiced, educators and other stakeholders can reasonably expect learning in a well-designed distance education program to be equivalent to learning in a well-designed classroom environment” (p. 20). The US Department of Education (2010) conducted a meta-analysis in 2009 and found blended programs to be most successful (ES = .50). While some studies (Torain, 2009) investigate the link between virtual learning and student achievement, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to an analysis of programs designed to provide students with international interactions.

Ultimately, the proliferation of virtual education is the product of several factors, including the globalization of families, the high demand for post-secondary educational programs, the mainstreaming of virtual organizations, and the rapid advancement of technology. According to Stonebraker and Hazeltine (2004), there are a variety of factors that contribute to positive outcomes in a virtual educational environment. These include cultural context, technological determinism, availability of resources and potential for collaboration. However, like students in traditional classrooms, students in virtual education environments can be exposed to pitfalls, such as low motivation, the presence of online distracters, and low levels of transferable learning.

Academic Achievement and Motivation

Motivation, or academic engagement, refers to “cognitive, emotional, and behavioral indicators of student investment in and attachment to education” (Tucker, Zayco, & Herman, 2002, p. 477). Students lacking motivation do not work hard to achieve success. Motivation has a direct effect on academic achievement (Tucker et al., 2002). There are multiple theories about motivation in academic settings – values theory (Berndt & Miller, 1990), goal theory (Meece & Holt, 1993), and self-efficacy theory (Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). However, there is a gap in the literature in terms of how collaborating with students from another country may impact motivation.

Berndt and Miller (1990) suggested that there is a significant correlation between the expectation for success that a student has and levels of achievement. Expectations have been found to have a stronger relationship to academic success than values, though both play a role in overall achievement (Berndt & Miller, 1990). Wolters et al. (2002), found that motivation was directly tied to self-regulated learning for students in secondary education programs. In the

international partnership featured in this study, the teachers and administrators had high expectations for student success and this trickled down to the students. Students expressed high levels of academic and social motivation and reaped the benefits of deeper learning when collaborating with their international peers.

Summary

In 2011, more than a quarter-million American students left the country for a study abroad experience (Open Doors, 2012). Clark et al. (2009), Donnelly-Smith (2009), Golay (2006), Gray et al. (2002), Kehl (2007), and Mills et al. (2010) supported a connection between these international exchanges and heightened global mindedness or global awareness. In a study that resulted in the creation of a tool to measure global mindedness, Hett (1993) defined it as “a worldview in which one sees oneself as connected to the global community and feels a sense of responsibility to its members. This commitment was reflected in the individual’s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors” (1993, p. 23). While there is bountiful data to support a link between face-to-face intercultural interactions and global mindedness, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to virtual interactions. *Curriculum 21* (2010) author Heidi Hayes Jacobs described virtual classrooms as “authentic learning experiences” and asserted that “other than a plane trip and visit abroad, there is simply nothing that will match the quality” (p. 67). Utilizing the internet for virtual learning experiences not only appeals to many students’ preferred learning styles (Prensky, 2001) but it also encourages the development of 21st century skills such as the ability to “think critically, build collaborative relationships, to problem solve, and to communicate in a diverse global community” (Keeping Pace, 2010, p. 43). Because of these reasons, many schools are implementing virtual partnerships with other countries (Center for

International Understanding). Unfortunately, unlike those for study abroad programs, few measures are in place to evaluate these programs.

Constructivist learning theorists argued that people build knowledge and meaning through their lived experiences and that these meanings are continually updated through a process of accommodation and/or assimilation of new experiences (e.g., Bruner, 1960; Dewey, 1916; Piaget, 1950, 2001, 1952; von Glasersfeld, 1995; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). Therefore, as students experience face-to-face or virtual interactions, their perceptions about the world are altered. This dynamic served as the foundation of the present international partnership, and therefore provided the appropriate lens through which the results could be properly analyzed.

Contact Hypothesis theorists also focused on social interactions, but argued that certain conditions must exist for perceptions to be altered (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1997). Evaluating the findings of this study through a framework that included the Contact Hypothesis Theory allowed the researcher to focus on students' changing views as they interacted with "cultural others" (Amichai-Hamburger & McKenna, 2006).

Ultimately, the combination of each of the factors indicated in this review of the literature fostered the appropriate framework for this study. Virtual learning leveraged the skills that young people around the world have developed from their earliest ages. Increased global mindedness yielded cultural competence and awareness, which will be transferable to future academic and social endeavors. Study abroad programs have proved to have innate value to schools and students that translate into long-term success (Hopkins, 1999). The case featured in this study filled a void in the literature and added to the body of research on both theories.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the impact of a blended international school partnership on perceptions of learning and global mindedness in a North Carolina high school. Chapter Three begins with a description of the study and the rationale for using an explanatory case study for the design. It also includes a description of the selection of the participants, the research setting and site and the researcher's role and biography. The chapter concludes with an explanation of how the data was collected and analyzed to ensure trustworthiness and other ethical considerations.

Research Design

The research design used for this study was an explanatory case study. Using data from multiple sources: stakeholder interviews (students, teachers, parents, members of the administration), observations, the North Carolina School Report Card, teacher lesson plans and pre and posttests in United States History classes allowed me, as the researcher, to gain an all-encompassing picture of the site. In qualitative studies, researchers are interested in understanding more than just a phenomenon; they are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed as a result of the phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Thus, Constructivism (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978) and Contact Hypothesis Theory (Allport, 1954) served as frameworks for this study. Interview questions were designed to investigate the aforementioned meaning constructed as a result of participation in a blended international partnership.

The purpose of this qualitative explanatory case study was to understand the impact of a blended international school partnership on perceptions of learning and global mindedness in a North Carolina high school. The research questions are as follows:

Research Question 1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning?

Data was collected from stakeholder interviews (students, teachers, members of the administration), observations, the North Carolina School Report Card, teacher lesson plans, School Improvement Plan and pre and posttests in United States History classes. Individual interview questions # 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, and 11 from Phase One and questions # 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 17 and 18 from Phase Two provided evidence for research question 1. Once the data was collected, all of it was entered into my case study database (Yin, 2009) and coded to identify patterns and/or themes.

Research Question 2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?

Data was collected from interviews with students and teachers and from the Global Mindedness Survey (Hett, 1994). The open-ended responses from the GMS were entered into the narrative database and coded along with the interview questions. Individual interview questions # 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 from Phase One and questions # 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14 and 15 from Phase Two, in addition to the Global Mindedness Scale Survey, provided evidence for research question 2. Once collected, all of the data was entered into my case study database (Yin, 2009) and coded to identify patterns and/or themes.

Research Question 3: How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face-to-face interactions?

Data was collected from stakeholder interviews (students, teachers, parents, members of the administration), observations, and Hett's Global Mindedness Scale Survey (1994).

Individual interview questions # 2, 5, and 6 from Phase One and questions # 2, 5, 6, 12, 13, 15 and 16 from Phase Two, in addition to observations and documents, provided evidence for research question 3. Once collected, all of the data was entered into the case study database (Yin, 2009) and coded to identify patterns and/or themes.

The Case

The site for this study was a large suburban high school in North Carolina. In 2012-2013, the school had 1,658 students in grades 9-12 and 98 teachers. The school had a principal and three assistant principals. One hundred percent of the teachers were classified as Highly Qualified, 36% had advanced degrees and 23 had achieved National Board certification. The students were 73% Caucasian, 18% African American, 3% Hispanic, and 3% Asian (NC School Report Card, 2012).

The school is located in a relatively affluent coastal community that is home to a major university. The town was founded in the early 1700s and has a large historic district. Because of its “southern charm” and close proximity to several beaches, tourism is a staple of the local economy. The 2010 census reported 74% of the population as White, 20% African American, and 6% Hispanic.

I chose this school because it was in its fifth year of a partnership with a high school in Denmark when I began my study. This partnership was launched by *The Center for International Understanding*, an “educational organization promoting global competence and awareness among current and future leaders in North Carolina” (The Center for International Understanding). The center has set up Danish partnerships with over 30 North Carolina middle and high schools. Matt Friedrich, the center’s Director of K-12 Global Education Programs, described their mission: “Our job is to increase global engagement with other parts of the

world....We work with a number of countries and we have been to 48 counties in the last 32 years and taken about 8,000 North Carolinians abroad” (NCIW interview, 2011).

Friedrick explained why these types of collaborations are important to the field of education and why Denmark is a key partner (NCIW interview, 2011).

Collaborating is a really important thing that students need to be doing. So with that in mind, we create partnerships between NC schools and schools in other countries. The three main countries we are working with are China, Denmark and Mexico. . . Denmark - because it is a part of the European Union. They have a really interesting, really entrepreneurial education system in Denmark and it is a place that we can learn a lot from and they can learn a lot from us...ideally having students collaborate between us and the European Union is really important.

This blended international partnership began in 2007. Since its inception, students and teachers have traveled to visit their counterparts and worked together virtually. During the visits, participants live with families and experience day to day life in the host country. Students attend school with their hosts and participate in instructional activities designed to give them a greater understanding of their host culture.

During the 2010 visit to North Carolina, the students collaborated on a project in the United States History classes. The project focused on the trial of John Scopes and the ongoing controversy involving the teaching of evolution and creationism. Before the visit, social studies classes from each school collaborated on a “Getting to Know You” project. This allowed students to form relationships with each other before the face-to-face visit. In 2008, 13 American students and two teachers visited Denmark for a 10-day exchange. While there, they collaborated on a wind power project and participated in several Socratic seminars. The wind

power project was an example of the types of “real world” work the *Center for International Understanding* hoped students would take part in as a part of their partnership work.

One of the things that we are trying to do with these programs, one of our hopes as we do these programs, is that students are becoming not only more engaged by the types of things that are happening in the classroom but they’re really mirroring the kinds of things that they going to be doing in the work world. We know that the way that people team up with people is very different. You could be working with somebody right down the street from you but you also could be working with someone who is on the other side of the world. There’s a whole new definition of teamwork. It’s much more global in nature. It is much more media based. So teaching students the skills of working across cultures is very important. Teaching them the skills to work in a technology rich, collaborative, media rich environment – those are crucial skills. Through these types of programs students can really practice and learn those types of skills. How do I work with somebody abroad? How do I work through technology to make that happen? Hopefully through that process, they’re also really becoming a lot more engaged in what they’re doing and taking more ownership of it because they have seen the connection to the real world. (NCIW Interview, 2011)

During 2008, the students utilized technology to complete a virtual project focusing on war. Teams of students (two Danes and two Americans) chose a war, researched key points and created a PowerPoint. All of the collaboration was done virtually. Once the projects were complete, each team presented its war to the rest of the group via Skype.

In 2010, 22 Danish students and two teachers came to the United States. In addition to academic pursuits, they also took advantage of the local culture. Before they reached North

Carolina, they spent three days in Washington, D.C. The group visited museums and attended an NFL football game. Upon arrival in North Carolina, they settled in with their host families for a week of American life. They went to school with their host students and participated in all of the “normal” high school activities. The Danish groups that visited North Carolina in 2011 and 2012 spent their time in a similar fashion.

These types of academic and cultural experiences are characteristic of those envisioned by the *Center for International Understanding* when designing K-12 partnerships. The focus is not simply learning *about* another culture, but deepening one’s own understanding while learning *with* someone from another culture.

For a long time we have focused on learning about people from other countries and all of a sudden with the way technology is changing, with the opening up of global markets and global education, all of a sudden instead of just learning about other people, students have a chance to learn with other people. So one of the things that we are hoping this type of program will do is - first of all - engage students in their own learning. Getting to know another person, another culture, another nation, from a very personal perspective and seeing why it is important not just for the field of social studies or language or whatever but from my own perspective as a student. Why is this important to me? Making it personal is one of the most important things that I think global education does for the entire field of education. (NCIW Interview, 2011)

Participants

Study participants included students, teachers, and administrators at the site, a suburban North Carolina high school. Convenience sampling procedures were utilized to identify participants meeting the study criteria (Seidman, 2006). Convenience sampling involves

“choosing a sample based on availability, time, location, or ease of access” (Ary et al., 2006, p. 474). The partnership coordinators assisted in the choice of participants by identifying those who were available and met the selection criteria.

Students

The following student groups participated in the study:

- American students who worked virtually with Danish students in their English or United States History class
- American students who worked face - to - face with Danish students
- American students who traveled to Denmark
- Danish students who traveled to America
- Danish students who worked virtually with American students

Students were 15-19 years old and in grades 9-12. Criterion sampling (Ary et al., 2006) and purposeful sampling (Seidman, 2006) was used to ensure accurate representation. A total of 21 students were interviewed (Table 3.1), and 24 students (Table 3.2) took the Global Mindfulness Scale (GMS) survey online. Of the 24 participants who began the GMS online survey, only 18 completed 100% of the questions. In order to select students for the interviews, the current American partnership coordinator created an initial list of possible participants in each category and then invited them to an informational meeting in his classroom. Thirty-six students attended the meeting and were given an Informational Letter (Appendix C). Those who expressed an interest in participation were asked to take the Informational Letter (Appendix C) home to their parents and have them complete the Informed Consent (Appendix D). While an effort was made to select participants who were representative of the overall student population in terms of ethnicity - 73% Caucasian, 18% African American, 3% Hispanic, and 3% Asian (NC

School Report Card, 2012) - it was impossible to achieve. A limitation of this study was that virtually all of the participants were Caucasian. Caucasian students represent an overwhelming majority at the school. Even so, the partnership coordinator was unable to pinpoint a specific reason why the partnership activities did not include more minority students (PC).

Table 3.1

Student Interview Participants' Demographics

Pseudonym	Category	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Grade	GMS Survey Participant	Focus Group Participant
Phase One							
F2FStudent1	Hosted Dane, participated in f2f collaborations	Female	Caucasian	16	10 th		
F2FStudent2	Hosted Dane, participated in f2f collaborations	Female	Caucasian	16	10 th		X
F2FStudent3	Hosted Dane, participated in f2f collaborations	Female	Caucasian	16	10 th		X
F2FStudent4	Hosted Dane	Male	Caucasian	15	10 th		X
F2FStudent5	Hosted Dane, participated in f2f collaborations	Female	Caucasian	16	10 th		
VStudent1	Participated in virtual collaborations	Male	Caucasian	15	10 th		X
VStudent2	Participated in virtual collaborations	Female	Caucasian	17	11 th	X	X
VStudent3	Participated in virtual collaborations	Female	Caucasian	17	11 th	X	
VStudent4	Participated in virtual collaborations	Male	Caucasian	16	10 th		X
TStudent1	Traveled to Denmark	Female	Caucasian	18	12 th	X	X

TStudent2	Traveled to Denmark	Female	Caucasian	18	12 th	X	
TStudent3	Traveled to Denmark	Male	Caucasian	17	12 th	X	X
TStudent4	Traveled to Denmark	Male	Caucasian	18	12 th		
TStudent5	Traveled to Denmark	Male	Caucasian	19	12 th	X	
TStudent6	Traveled to Denmark	Female	Caucasian	18	12 th		X
TStudent7	Traveled to Denmark	Female	Caucasian	18	12 th		
Phase Two							
F2FStudent6	Hosted Dane, participated in f2f collaborations	Female	Caucasian	18	12 th	X	
TStudent8	Traveled to Denmark	Male	Caucasian	20	College		
Dane1	Traveled to America	Male	Caucasian	18	11 th		
Dane2	Traveled to America	Female	Caucasian	18	11 th		
Dane3	Traveled to America	Male	Caucasian	18	11 th		

Table 3.2

Global Mindedness Scale Survey Participants' Demographics

Age	Number
16	10
17	9
18	4
19	1
Grade	Number
9 th	0
10 th	0
11 th	19
12 th	5
Ethnicity	Number
Caucasian	23
African American	1
Hispanic	0
Asian	0

Teachers and Administrators

Adults were purposefully selected to participate if they met the criteria listed below. The following people participated in the study:

- The American partnership coordinator
- The American principal who traveled to Denmark
- Three American teachers who participated in partnership activities
- The Danish partnership coordinator
- A Danish teacher who traveled to America

The American partnership coordinator provided me with the names and contact information of all of the people in each of the categories above. Each was sent an introductory email (Appendix E, F) and Informed Consent (Appendix G, H). I collected the Informed Consent for each adult participant when I visited the site for individual interviews.

Table 3.3

Adult Participants' Demographics

Pseudonym	Category	Gender	Ethnicity	Age
Phase One				
PC	Partnership Coordinator, Traveled to Denmark, participated as teacher in f2f and virtual collaborations	Male	Caucasian	35-40
Principal1	Principal, Traveled to Denmark	Male	Caucasian	45-50
Principal2	Principal	Male	Caucasian	40-45
Teacher1	Teacher, traveled to Denmark, participated in virtual collaborations	Female	Caucasian	30-35
Teacher2	Teacher, traveled to Denmark, participated in virtual and f2f collaborations	Female	Caucasian	30-35
Phase Two				
DPC	Partnership Coordinator, Traveled to America, participated as teacher in f2f and virtual collaborations	Male	Caucasian	35-40
Teacher3	Teacher, host, participated in virtual and f2f collaborations	Female	Caucasian	45-50
TeacherD	Teacher, traveled to America, participated in virtual and f2f collaborations	Male	Caucasian	35-40

Researcher's Role

The role of researcher in case studies is “as an observer in the setting that is being studied, either as an interviewer, or as the person who studies artifacts and documents” (McMillian, 2004, p. 258). The researcher attempts to gain an understanding of the case and explain “why” or “how” the phenomenon exists. Creswell (1998) maintained that “Qualitative

researchers approach their studies with a certain paradigm or worldview, a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guide their inquiries (p.74). As the human instrument in this qualitative study, a discussion of my background is relevant. I have been in the field of education for fourteen years. I currently serve as an Instructional Coach for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and have previous experience as a Middle Grades Social Studies Curriculum Consultant for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and as a high school teacher and administrator. I have worked in global education programs for many years as an International Baccalaureate Coordinator, Director of an International Studies Academy, and as a Global Partnership Coordinator. The *Center for International Understanding* facilitated the partnership that I oversaw. This allowed me insight into the logistics of the partnership experience and added to an in depth understanding of the case.

Although I served in no direct supervisory capacity with teachers at the site, several of those involved in the study were Social Studies teachers and I previously served as one of only four state-level Social Studies consultants. Additionally, twelve years ago, I went through my Masters program with the American Partnership Coordinator and another teacher from the school. I have visited the school numerous times in my previous roles as International Studies Academy Director, Partnership Coordinator, and Social Studies Curriculum Consultant. In the capacity of those roles, I made informal observations during the course of the partnership. In 2010, 2011 and 2012, I was at the school when the Danish group visited and talked informally with both students and teachers during those visits. These conversations and observations were not intended to be a part of this current case study, but instead were entered into as a result of the work I was doing with my position at the time of each visit. However, these experiences did allow me in-depth knowledge of the partnership. While guarding against bias through the use of

bracketing (see Appendix A), these previous experiences provided me an opportunity to describe this case in greater detail than a researcher with no outside knowledge of the program. Kawulich (2005) described this type of prolonged engagement as a way to strengthen a study's trustworthiness:

The findings are considered to be more trustworthy, when the researcher can show that he/she spent a considerable amount of time in the setting, as this prolonged interaction with the community enables the researcher to have more opportunities to observe and participate in a variety of activities over time. (p. 44)

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted me permission (Appendix I) to use observational notes from these visits as archival data for the current study.

As an observer; however, I was aware of my bias and employed measures (e.g., bracketing, member checks and peer review) to reduce the influence of bias on my study. The opportunity for bias was present because of my extensive work with students and teachers from many countries and cultures. As a result of those experiences, I have seen the benefits of these types of interactions first hand. In an effort to increase dependability, I utilized triangulation (Appendix J) and member checks (Creswell, 1998).

Data Collection

In a case study, the researcher gathers information from a wide variety of sources in order to paint a comprehensive picture of the case (Creswell, 1998). While primarily qualitative in design, this study made use of several pieces of quantitative data. Yin (2009) outlined the benefits of using both qualitative and quantitative data in a study. One of the major benefits of including quantitative data in an explanatory case study is that it can help to explain outcomes or relationships (Yin, 2009). For example, I utilized Hett's (1994) Global Mindedness Scale survey

(Appendix K) to explore the impact of interactions with students and teachers from another culture on the way that American students view the world. This added additional depth to my understanding of the impact of the international partnership.

Data was collected in two phases. Phase One included individual interviews, focus group interviews, archival evidence, and documents. Originally, this was all that the study entailed. However; once all of the data was collected, it was obvious that the interviews did not yield the desired results. While they were sufficient in number, the participants – especially the students – did not provide thick description that would allow for a thorough investigation of the site. After consultation with my committee, I decided to embark on a second phase of data collection. Phase Two included eight additional individual interviews. When combined, the data proved sufficient for in-depth analysis.

Phase One Data Collection

The first phase of data collection consisted of individual interviews, focus group interviews, archival evidence, and documents. After obtaining IRB approval (see Appendix I), I gained access to the site through formal gatekeepers – the principal of the school and the American Partnership Coordinator (Seidman, 2006). An introductory email (Appendix F) was sent to each person, followed by a phone call. A brief description of the study was included. Once permission was granted, the Informational Letter (Appendix B) and Informed Consent forms (Appendix D) were emailed to the partnership coordinator. He printed the forms, distributed them to the participants, collected the signed forms and kept them in a locked file cabinet until I arrived at the school to conduct the interviews. This information was disseminated during an in-school information session at the site. Only students eligible to participate in the study (those who worked virtually with Danish students in their English or

United States History class, those who worked face - to - face with Danes in their classes or hosted Danes in their homes, and those who traveled to Denmark) were a part of this meeting. Thirty-six students attended the meeting.

Archival Data

In my previous role as a consultant for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, I visited the site and conducted observations related to the international partnership. IRB granted me permission to use notes from those visits as archival data for this study. Direct observations were conducted on 15 separate occasions beginning in 2010 and continuing through 2013. For a sample schedule from one of these site visits, see Appendix L. In 2010, I visited the school for six days of the Danish visit. I observed English and History classes participating in virtual projects with the Danish students, teambuilding exercises, field trips, and other partnership activities. In 2011 (2 days) and 2012 (2 days), I also visited the school during the time that the Danish students and teachers were in town. Over the course of these visits, I observed various partnership activities: classes, social activities and field trips. During the observation process, I utilized an observational protocol (Appendix B) for recording descriptive and reflective notes (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 2009).

Document Analysis

I analyzed documents from various sources to support or refute information garnered from the interviews (Yin, 2009). Documents that were used included: teacher lesson plans, the School Improvement Plan and the North Carolina School Report Card. Yin (2009) provided multiple reasons for including documents as a source of evidence in case studies: (a) they are stable and can be reviewed repeatedly, (b) it is unobtrusive as the documents are not created as a result of the case study, (c) the documents contain exact names, references, and details of an

event, and (d) the use of documents can provide broad coverage over a long span of time, many events, and many settings (p. 102).

Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

While interviews (individual and focus group) were the primary qualitative measures used in this study, two quantitative measures were used to collect data, the Global Mindedness Scale survey (Appendix L) and a United States History pre and posttest (Appendix M).

Pre and posttests. The first measure, the pre and posttest in United States History, was given in 2011. The Americans and Danes worked together virtually and face-to-face for a month on a 20th Century Elections unit. The American students were given the pre - test before the unit began. A major component of the unit was a collaborative history project focusing on key elections from the 20th century. Before the face-to-face visit, Danish and American students communicated via Skype to discuss the details of the project. At their respective schools, the Danish teacher and the American teachers each taught an identical introductory lesson. Once in North Carolina, the Danish students and their teacher attended the United States History class for five days. During this time, the students worked in small collaborative groups (with a mix of Danish and American students) to create a PowerPoint presentation on one of the key elections of 20th century America. On the last day of the unit, each group presented their project to the class and took the posttest.

Aside from the pre-test, all parts of this activity were a part of the United States History class and not done specifically for the study. The partnership coordinator, who also served as these students' teacher, designed and administered this test and allowed me access to the data he collected and IRB approved its use as archival data. A control group of students, who worked only with their American peers, was also tested to ensure validity. Both classes had a similar

makeup in terms of the numbers of EC and AIG students. Additionally, the class average for the previous grading period was within two points of each other. The test was created from released versions of the New York Regents exam and the North Carolina End of Course test for Civics and Economics. This quantitative data provided additional information about how the international partnership impacted perceptions of learning.

Global mindedness scale survey. The second measure, the GMS Survey (Appendix K), was given to 24 students who participated in face - to - face and virtual activities with the Danes in their United States History classes. They completed the online survey in class on the day that I conducted the individual interviews. This quantitative data (Appendix N) provided additional information about how the international partnership impacted global mindedness among participants.

Interviews. All Phase One interviews (see Appendix O) were conducted at the school in a vacant classroom during the normal school day. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed at a later date by a student at a local university.

Individual interviews. According to Seidman (2006), the purpose of interviewing is to understand the experiences of another individual and how they interpret those experiences. This means of data collection was appropriate for this case study because it allowed me to understand how interactions with students and teachers from another culture impacted participants' global mindedness and ultimately, perceptions of learning. A set of semi-structured interview questions were used during all of the individual interviews, but I deviated from the structure in instances where a participant's response led me down a different path (Whiting, 2008). I conducted all of the interviews myself.

For the Phase One interviews, I worked with the partnership coordinator to set up an interview schedule that minimized the time students were out of class and involved in the interview process. Interviews were conducted over a three-day period (Appendix O). All interviews with adults were conducted on day one. The student interviews were conducted on days two and three. Interviews took place in the morning, in a vacant classroom. Conducting semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask all of the participants the same questions, yet still explore any additional, pertinent information that arose during the course of the interview. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed several days later by a local university student. To ensure confidentiality, the student stored all study-related recordings on a password protected computer during the transcription process and returned all documents to me at the completion of the project. He also signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix Q). See Appendix O for interview transcripts and the times allotted with each participant. The following questions were asked individually in Phase One.

Table 3.4

Phase One Individual Interview Questions

Interview Question	Target Group	Correlation to Research Question
1. What are the benefits of doing this project with the Danish students versus doing it with students from your own school?	Principal, partnership coordinator, student in face-to-face collaboration, student in virtual collaboration, teacher in face-to-face collaboration, teacher in virtual collaboration	1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning?
2. Was your level of engagement different because you worked with someone from	Partnership coordinator, student in face-to-face collaboration, student in virtual collaboration, teacher in face-to-face collaboration, teacher in	1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning? 3: How, if at all, do equal status,

another country?	virtual collaboration	common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face-to-face interactions? (Allport, 1954)
3. What role does technology play in the partnership? Could this partnership have been possible ten years ago?	Principal, partnership coordinator, student in face-to-face collaboration, student in virtual collaboration, teacher in face-to-face collaboration, teacher in virtual collaboration	1: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership enhance perceptions of learning? 2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?
4. How has working with a Danish student changed the way you view people from other cultures?	Student in face - to – face collaboration, student in virtual collaboration	2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?
5. Describe the customs and behaviors of the Danish students and teachers you interacted with.	Host student, principal, partnership coordinator, student in face-to-face collaboration, teacher in face-to-face collaboration	3: How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face- to-face interactions?
6. How would you describe the Danes' goals for the partnership in general? For specific partnership activities?	Principal, partnership coordinator, student in face-to-face collaboration, teacher in face-to-face collaboration	3: How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face- to-face interactions?
7. What did you learn when you were in Denmark?	Principal, partnership coordinator, American students who traveled to Denmark	1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning? 2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?

8. Over the course of the five year partnership, what changes have you seen in your students – both those who have participated in partnership activities and those who have not?	Principal, partnership coordinator, teacher in virtual collaboration	1: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership enhance perceptions of learning? 2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?
9. How does the partnership impact the way that students view the world?	Principal, partnership coordinator, teacher in face-to-face collaboration, teacher in virtual collaboration	2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?
10. How has the partnership impacted you as a professional educator?	Principal, partnership coordinator, teacher in face-to-face collaboration, teacher in virtual collaboration	2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?
11. What challenges did you face while working with someone from another country?	Principal, partnership coordinator, student in face-to-face collaboration, student in virtual collaboration, teacher in face-to-face collaboration, teacher in virtual collaboration	1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning? 2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?

Rationale for interview questions.

Interview Question #1. What are the benefits of doing this project with the Danish students versus doing it with students from your own school? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, partnership coordinator, students in face-to-face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations. This question was designed to get at academic motivation (Tucker et al., 2002). Students were more likely to be interested in the project if they were doing

it virtually with students around the world, rather than with their American peers (Delacruz, 2008; Prensky, 2001).

Interview Question #2. Was your level of engagement different because you worked with someone from another country? This question was a part of the individual interview for the partnership coordinator, students in face-to-face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations. This question was designed to get at academic motivation (Tucker et al., 2002). Students were more likely to be interested in the project if they were doing it virtually with students around the world, rather than with their American peers (Delacruz, 2008; Prensky, 2001). This question was also designed to ascertain the degree to which Allport's (1954) and Pettigrew's (1997) criteria utilized in the Contact Hypothesis Theory were evident in the social interactions that were a part of the international partnership.

Interview Question #3. What role does technology play in the partnership? Could this partnership have been possible ten years ago? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, partnership coordinator, students in face-to-face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations. This question was designed to explore the role of technology and 21st century skills in American classroom (National Forum on Educational Statistics, 2009).

Interview Question #4. How has working with a Danish/American student/teacher changed the way you view people from other cultures? This question was part of the individual interview for the principal, the partnership coordinators, students in face - to - face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face to face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations. This question was designed to explore the affective

components of global mindedness. There are five dimensions that are associated with Hett's (1993) construct of global mindedness: (a) responsibility, (b) cultural pluralism, (c) efficacy, (d) globalcentrism, and (e) interconnectedness. This question helped to identify which, if any, dimensions were involved when collaborating with a student from another culture.

Interview Question #5. Describe the customs and behaviors of the Danish/American students and teachers you interacted with. This question was a part of the individual interview for host students, the partnership coordinators, students in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in face-to-face collaborations. This question was designed to ascertain the degree to which Allport's (1954) and Pettigrew's (1997) criteria utilized in the Contact Hypothesis Theory were evident in the social interactions that were a part of the international partnership.

Interview Question #6. How would you describe the Danes'/Americans' goals for the partnership in general? For specific partnership activities? This question was a part of the individual interview for host students, the partnership coordinators, students in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in face-to-face collaborations. This question is designed to ascertain the degree to which Allport's (1954) and Pettigrew's (1997) criteria utilized in the Contact Hypothesis Theory were evident in the social interactions that were a part of the international partnership.

Interview Question #7. What did you learn when you were in Denmark/America? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, partnership coordinator, American students who traveled to Denmark, and the American teachers who traveled to Denmark. This question was designed to understand types of learning involved in study abroad experiences and their lasting impact (Dwyer, Golay, 2006; Kehl, 2007).

Interview Question #8. Over the course of the five year partnership, what changes have you seen in your students – both those who have participated in partnership activities and those who have not? This question was a part of the individual interview for principal and the partnership coordinator.

Interview Question #9. How does the partnership impact the way that students view the world? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, the partnership coordinators, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations. This question was designed to explore the affective components of global mindedness. There are five dimensions that are associated with Hett's (1993) construct of global mindedness: (a) responsibility, (b) cultural pluralism, (c) efficacy, (d) globalcentrism, and (e) interconnectedness. This question helped to identify which, if any, dimensions are involved when collaborating with people from another country. It also targeted the overall impact of the international partnership.

Interview Question #10. How has the partnership impacted you as a professional educator? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, the partnership coordinators, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations.

Interview Question #11. What challenges did you face while working with someone from another country? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, partnership coordinator, students in face-to-face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaboration. This question addressed social interactions (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1997) and how people dealt with those from another culture.

Focus group interviews. After all of the Phase One individual interviews were transcribed and analyzed, focus group interviews (Appendix R) were conducted in order to

triangulate emergent themes. I contacted the partnership coordinator to schedule the interviews. As with the individual interviews, convenience sampling was utilized to identify participants (Seidman, 2006). I asked the partnership coordinator to select three students from each of the following categories:

- American students who worked virtually with Danish students in their English or United States History class
- American students who worked face - to - face with Danish students
- American students who traveled to Denmark

Students were selected based on their availability and were interviewed in a vacant classroom during school hours. Five females and four males were interviewed. Participants selected for the focus groups had already been interviewed individually and had Informed Consent on file.

I followed the same procedures for the focus groups that I followed for the individual interviews. The partnership coordinator collected the students and brought them to the interview room. To ensure confidentiality, participants were referred to by the same pseudonyms they used during their individual interviews. Each focus group lasted 15 – 30 minutes (Appendix R). See Table 3.5 for the semi-structured interview questions. All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by a college student at a later date.

Table 3.5

Phase One Focus Group Interview Questions

Focus Group	Question
Students who traveled to Denmark	How, if at all, did your experience in Denmark change the way you view yourself? How, if at all, did your experience in Denmark change the way you view your country? Have been participated in any overseas travel since you visited Denmark? If so, where? If so, how was it similar or different from the Denmark experience?
Students who worked with Danes virtually in their Social Studies or English classes	What advice would you give to other students before participating in a study abroad experience? During your work with the Danes, did you feel like you were equals? Why or why not? How, if at all, did this experience change the way you view yourself? How, if at all, did this experience change the way you view your country? How does working with another student virtually compare to working with them face - to - face? How, if at all, do virtual relationships differ from face to face ones?
Students who interacted with Danes face - to - face – either by collaborating in their Social Studies class or by serving as a host family	During your work with the Danes, did you feel like you were equals? Why or why not? How, if at all, did this experience change the way you view yourself? How, if at all, did this experience change the way you view your country?

Phase One Data Analysis

Phase One data was analyzed within three weeks of collection. All data were placed in a spreadsheet and I began the open coding for themes. However, after consultation with my committee, we determined a need for additional data. Individual interviews did not yield the rich, thick description needed to provide for an in-depth investigation of the site. A second

interview protocol (see Table 3.6) was designed to garner more in depth description for Phase Two. This protocol was subject to peer review (committee members served in this role), submitted to the IRB for approval, and once gained; data collection began two months later. Analysis procedures for both phases are described in greater detail in the *Data Analysis* section found later in this chapter.

Phase Two Data Collection

The second phase of data collection took place several months after the first phase. The purpose of Phase Two was to collect rich, thick description that could be used, in conjunction with Phase One, to investigate the impact of a blended international partnership on perceptions of learning and global mindedness in a North Carolina high school.

Participants

Phase Two included in-depth individual interviews with eight additional participants – five Danes and three Americans. These participants were not a part of Phase One.

Danish participants. After obtaining IRB approval for Phase Two, I initiated contact with the two adults via email (Appendix F) to begin the process of participation in the study. Once they agreed to participate, the Informed Consent (Appendix H) was emailed to them. They signed it, scanned it and sent it back to me. The Danish partnership coordinator met with the three Danish students and provided them with the Parent Letter (Appendix S) and Informed Consent (Appendix T). Once signed, he collected the forms. These are the same procedures that were used by the American partnership coordinator in Phase One. The signed forms were scanned and emailed to me.

Once I secured Informed Consent for all of the Danish participants, I scheduled interviews with the two adults via email. The Danish partnership coordinator scheduled the three

student interviews and emailed me to confirm the times. All interviews were conducted via Skype. The partnership coordinator provided me with screen names for all Danish participants. Interviews were recorded so that I could transcribe them within five days.

American participants. After obtaining IRB approval, I initiated contact with the American teacher to begin the process of participation in the study. An introductory email (Appendix F) was sent to the teacher. Once she agreed to participate, the Informed Consent (Appendix G) was emailed to her. She signed it, scanned it and emailed it back to me. I scheduled her interview via email. The interview was conducted via Skype and recorded so that I could transcribe it within five days.

The American teacher provided me with the mailing addresses of the two American students. I sent the Parent Letter (Appendix C) and Informed Consent (Appendix D) to their homes via postal mail. Once signed, the Informed Consent was faxed to me. I scheduled interviews with them by email. The interviews were conducted via Skype and recorded so that I could transcribe them within five days.

Interviews

According to Seidman (2006), the purpose of interviewing is to understand the experiences of another individual and how they interpret those experiences. This means of data collection is appropriate for this case study because it allowed me to understand how interactions with students and teachers from another culture impacted participants' global mindedness and ultimately, perceptions of learning. Interviews for Phase Two were conducted virtually via Skype. Interviews ranged from 23 to 42 minutes in length. Every effort was made to probe the interviewees to elaborate and provide rich, thick descriptions of the partnership experience. I recorded the interviews and transcribed them within five days (Appendix U).

I conducted all of the interviews myself. I collaborated with the Danish partnership coordinator to set up an interview schedule that worked within the constraints of the time difference and met the needs of all participants. I contacted the American participants by email to schedule their interviews. Conducting semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask all of the participants the same questions, yet still explore any additional pertinent information that arose during the course of the interview. The following questions were asked individually.

Table 3.6

Phase Two Individual Interview Questions

Interview Question	Target Group	Correlation to Research Question
1. What are the benefits of doing this project with the Danish/American students versus doing it with students from your own school?	All	1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning?
(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)		
2. Was your level of engagement different because you worked with someone from another country?	All	1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning?
(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)		3: How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face-to-face interactions? (Allport, 1954)
3. What role does technology play in the partnership? Could this partnership have been possible ten years ago?	All	1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning?
(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more		2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?

about that?)		
4. How has working with a Danish/American student/teacher changed the way you view people from other cultures?	All	2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?
(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)		
5. Describe the customs and behaviors of the Danish/American students and teachers you interacted with.	All	3: How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face- to- face interactions?
(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)		
6. How would you describe the Danes'/Americans' goals for the partnership in general? For specific partnership activities?	All	3: How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face- to- face interactions?
(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)		
7. What did you learn when you were in Denmark/America?	Participants who traveled to the partner school	1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning? 2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?
(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)		
8. Over the course of the five year partnership, what changes have you seen in your students – both those who have participated in partnership activities and those who have not?	Danish teachers and American teacher	1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning? 2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?
(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more		

about that?)

9. How does the partnership impact the way that you view the world?

All

2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?

(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)

10. How has the partnership impacted you as a professional educator?

Danish teachers,
American teacher

2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?

(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)

11. What challenges did you face while working with someone from another country?

All

1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning?

(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)

12. During your work with the Danes/Americans, did you feel like you were equals? Why or why not?

All

2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?
3: How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face- to- face interactions?

(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)

13. How does working with another student/teacher virtually compare to working with them face - to - face?

All

3: How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face- to- face interactions?

(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)

14. What advice would you give to others before participating in a study abroad experience?

Participants who traveled to partner school

2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?

(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)	Participants who traveled to partner school	2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?
15. Have you participated in any overseas travel since you visited Denmark/America? If so, where? How was it similar or different from the partnership experience?		
(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)	All	3: How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face- to- face interactions?
16. How, if at all, do virtual relationships differ from face - to - face ones?		3: How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face- to- face interactions?
(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)	All	1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning?
17. What should teachers consider when designing instructional activities to be done virtually with students from another country?		
(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)	All	1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning?
18. What are the benefits of doing this project with the Danish/American students versus doing it with students from your own school?		
(Additional prompt if response is brief: Can you provide an example of that? Can you tell me more about that?)		

The rationale for each of the Phase Two interview questions is explained below. It includes the question, the basis in the literature, and the target group for each question.

Interview Question #1. What are the benefits of doing this project with the Danish students versus doing it with students from your own school? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, partnership coordinator, students in face-to-face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations. This question was designed to get at academic motivation (Tucker et al., 2002). Students were more likely to be interested in the project if they were doing it virtually with students around the world, rather than with their American peers (Delacruz, 2008; Prensky, 2001).

Interview Question #2. Was your level of engagement different because you worked with someone from another country? This question was a part of the individual interview for the partnership coordinator, students in face-to-face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations. This question was designed to get at academic motivation (Tucker et al., 2002). Students were more likely to be interested in the project if they were doing it virtually with students around the world, rather than with their American peers (Delacruz, 2008; Prensky, 2001).

Interview Question #3. What role does technology play in the partnership? Could this partnership have been possible ten years ago? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, partnership coordinator, students in face-to-face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations. This question was designed to explore the role of technology and 21st century skills in American classroom (National Forum on Educational Statistics, 2009). It was also used

to compare the impact of face-to-face vs. virtual interactions with those from another culture.

Interview Question #4. How has working with a Danish/American student/teacher changed the way you view people from other cultures? This question was part of the individual interview for the principal, the partnership coordinators, students in face - to - face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face to face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations. This question was designed to explore the affective components of global mindedness. There are five dimensions that are associated with Hett's (1993) construct of global mindedness: (a) responsibility, (b) cultural pluralism, (c) efficacy, (d) globalcentrism, and (e) interconnectedness. This question helped to identify which, if any, dimensions were involved when collaborating with a student from another culture.

Interview Question #5. Describe the customs and behaviors of the Danish/American students and teachers you interacted with. This question was a part of the individual interview for host students, the partnership coordinators, students in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in face-to-face collaborations. This question was designed to ascertain the degree to which Allport's (1954) and Pettigrew's (1997) criteria utilized in the Contact Hypothesis Theory were evident in the social interactions that were a part of the international partnership.

Interview Question #6. How would you describe the Danes'/Americans' goals for the partnership in general? For specific partnership activities? This question was a part of the individual interview for host students, the partnership coordinators, students in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in face-to-face collaborations. This question is designed to ascertain the degree to which Allport's (1954) and Pettigrew's (1997) criteria utilized in the Contact Hypothesis Theory were evident in the social interactions that were a part of the international partnership.

Interview Question #7. What did you learn when you were in Denmark/America? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, partnership coordinators, students who traveled to Denmark/America, and the teachers who traveled to Denmark/America. This question was designed to explore the affective components of global mindedness. There are five dimensions that are associated with Hett's (1993) construct of global mindedness: (a) responsibility, (b) cultural pluralism, (c) efficacy, (d) globalcentrism, and (e) interconnectedness. This question helped to identify which, if any, dimensions are involved when visiting another country. This question was also designed to understand types of learning involved in study abroad experiences and their lasting impact (Dwyer & Golay, 2006; Kehl, 2007).

Interview Question #8. Over the course of the five year partnership, what changes have you seen in your students – both those who have participated in partnership activities and those who have not? This question was a part of the individual interview for principal and the partnership coordinator. It was designed to examine the overall impact of the international partnership.

Interview Question #9. How does the partnership impact the way that students view the world? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, the partnership coordinators, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations. This question was designed to explore the affective components of global mindedness. There are five dimensions that are associated with Hett's (1993) construct of global mindedness: (a) responsibility, (b) cultural pluralism, (c) efficacy, (d) globalcentrism, and (e) interconnectedness. This question helped to identify which, if any, dimensions are involved when collaborating with people from another country. It also targeted the overall impact of the international partnership.

Interview Question #10. How has the partnership impacted you as a professional

educator? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, the partnership coordinators, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations.

Interview Question #11. What challenges did you face while working with someone from another country? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, partnership coordinator, students in face-to-face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaboration. This question addressed social interactions (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1997) and how people dealt with those from another culture in face – to – face or in virtual collaboration.

Interview Question #12. During your work with the Danes/Americans, did you feel like you were equals? Why or why not? This question was a part of the individual interview for host students, the partnership coordinators, students in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in face-to-face collaborations. This question is designed to ascertain the degree to which Allport's (1954) and Pettigrew's (1997) criteria utilized in the Contact Hypothesis Theory were evident in the social interactions that were a part of the international partnership.

Interview Question #13. How does working with another student/teacher virtually compare to working with them face - to - face? This question was a part of the individual interview for the partnership coordinators, students in face-to-face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations. This question is designed to ascertain the degree to which Allport's (1954) and Pettigrew's (1997) criteria utilized in the Contact Hypothesis Theory were evident in the social interactions that were a part of the international partnership.

Interview Question #14. What advice would you give to others before participating in a study abroad experience? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal,

partnership coordinator, students in face-to-face collaborations, students who traveled to Denmark/America, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers who traveled to Denmark/America. This question was designed to explore the affective components of global mindedness. There are five dimensions that are associated with Hett's (1993) construct of global mindedness: (a) responsibility, (b) cultural pluralism, (c) efficacy, (d) globalcentrism, and (e) interconnectedness. This question helped to identify which, if any, dimensions are involved when visiting another country.

Interview Question #15. Have you participated in any overseas travel since you visited Denmark/America? If so, where? How was it similar or different from the partnership experience? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, partnership coordinator, students in face-to-face collaborations, students who traveled to Denmark/America, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers who traveled to Denmark/America. This question was designed to explore the affective components of global mindedness. There are five dimensions that are associated with Hett's (1993) construct of global mindedness: (a) responsibility, (b) cultural pluralism, (c) efficacy, (d) globalcentrism, and (e) interconnectedness. This question helped to identify which, if any, dimensions are involved when visiting another country. This question was also designed to ascertain the degree to which Allport's (1954) and Pettigrew's (1997) criteria utilized in the Contact Hypothesis Theory were evident in the social interactions that were a part of the international partnership.

Interview Question #16. How, if at all, do virtual relationships differ from face - to - face ones? This question was a part of the individual interview for host students, the partnership coordinators, students in face-to-face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaborations. This question is designed to

ascertain the degree to which Allport's (1954) and Pettigrew's (1997) criteria utilized in the Contact Hypothesis Theory were evident in the social interactions that were a part of the international partnership.

Interview Question #17. What should teachers consider when designing instructional activities to be done virtually with students from another country? This question was a part of the individual interview for the principal, partnership coordinator, students in face-to-face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaboration. This question was designed to get at academic motivation (Tucker et al., 2002). Students were more likely to be interested in the project if they were doing it virtually with students around the world, rather than with their American peers (Delacruz, 2008; Prensky, 2001).

Interview Question #18. What are the benefits of doing this project with the Danish/American students versus doing it with students from your own school? This question was a part of the individual interview for the partnership coordinator, students in face-to-face collaborations, students in virtual collaborations, teachers in face-to-face collaborations and teachers in virtual collaboration. This question was designed to get at academic motivation (Tucker et al., 2002). Students were more likely to be interested in the project if they were doing it virtually with students around the world, rather than with their American peers (Delacruz, 2008; Prensky, 2001).

Phase Two Data Analysis

Case Study Database

Yin (2009) suggested the creation of case study database as a way to organize and document the evidence as well as increase reliability. There are four components to the database: notes, documents, tabular materials, and narratives (p. 119).

Notes. Case study *notes* should be organized and stored in a way that is useful to the researcher, as well as anyone else who may need to access them at a later date (Yin, 2009). Notes for this study (Appendix V) were organized by subject, such as perceptions of learning and engagement, virtual learning, global mindedness, etc.

Documents. Case study *documents* form the second part of Yin's (2009) database. Most of these files are digital and were stored on my computer, where they were organized in the same manner as the notes. Appendix W, a description of the American Government Project, is an example of this type of document.

Tabular Materials. The third part of the database is *tabular materials*. In this study, tabular evidence came from the Global Mindedness Scale survey (Appendix N) and United States History pre and posttests (Tables 4.4 and 4.5). These documents were stored digitally under password protection on my computer.

Narratives. The final types of evidence included in the database are *narratives*. Yin (2009) proposed that researchers use this section to “compose open ended answers to the questions in the case study protocol” as a way to see convergent facts from multiple sources of evidence (p. 121). I created a digital case study database to store and organize all of the data associated with this study.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Interviews were conducted in both phases of data collection. Both phases of analysis are described in this section. However, because of the limitations of the Phase One data, the final analysis draws more heavily on the interviews in Phase Two. Once the coding for phase two occurred, any data from Phase One that aligned with the emergent themes was added to the database.

Coding: Phase One. In order to ensure triangulation, a two-tiered coding process was utilized. Open coding was the first step of data analysis. I completed the process of open coding (Appendix X) by going through each transcript and highlighting key words, phrases or sentences. Ary et al. (2006) advised using as many codes as you need when completing this process. Using this method, twenty-six codes emerged. Each unit of analysis was highlighted and assigned a code in the right margin. The twenty-six codes are listed below.

1. Making friends
2. 21st century skills or tools
3. Understanding others
4. Engagement/ classroom engagement
5. Better understanding of content
6. We are the same
7. Perspective
8. Knowledge of self
9. Insecurities and worry
10. Interest in others
11. Benefits of collaborating
12. Collaborating
13. Benefits to students
14. Making academic experience richer
15. Real life connections
16. Better work produced
17. Benefits to adults
18. Open minded
19. Effect of program – wanting to visit again
20. Digital natives
21. Interactions with other cultures
22. Common goals

- 23. Point of view
- 24. Virtual Relationships
- 25. Types of assignments
- 26. Work ethic

Once each transcript had been analyzed using open coding, each unit of analysis was read again and assigned to one of the major categories of the study: perceptions of learning or global mindedness. These two categories became the Tier One codes. Tier One coding can be found in Appendix Y. The alignment of the open codes and Tier One codes is shown in Table 3.7.

During the third reading of the data and codes, I condensed the 26 codes that emerged in open coding into eight Tier Two codes. Table 3.8 shows the alignment of the open codes to the final Tier Two themes.

Table 3.7

Open Coding to Tier One Codes

Perceptions of Learning	Global Mindedness
Making academic experience richer	Point of view
21 st century skills or tools	Common goals
Real life connections	Interactions with other cultures
Engagement/ classroom engagement	Open minded
Better understanding of content	Effect of program – wanting to visit again
Better work produced	We are the same
Digital natives	Perspective
Benefits to students	Knowledge of self
Types of assignments	Insecurities and worry
Work ethic	Interest in others
Virtual relationships	Benefits of collaborating
	Collaborating
	Understanding others
	Making friends
	Benefits to adults

Table 3.8

Open Coding to Tier Two Codes

Open Coding	Tier Two Code
Making academic experience richer	1.1 Deeper Understanding of Academic Content
Better understanding of content	
Benefits to students	
Types of assignments	
Engagement/ classroom engagement	1.2 Higher Levels of Engagement
Real life connections	
Better work produced	
21 st century skills or tools	1.3 21 st Century Skills
Digital natives	
Virtual relationships	
Knowledge of self	
Benefits to adults	2.1 Increased Understanding of Self
Interest in others	
Open minded	
Interactions with other cultures	
Understanding others	2.2 Increased Understanding of Others
Effect of program – wanting to visit again	
Making friends	
Benefits of collaborating	
Insecurities and worry	2.3 Insecurities
Better work produced	
Work ethic	
Perspective	
Point of view	2.4 Perspective and Worldview
We are the same	
Common goals	

With the assistance of a colleague, I went back and re-read all of the data closely. We created a spreadsheet (Appendix Z) for Tier One codes. It included three columns: one for the code (1: Perceptions of Learning and 2: Global Mindedness), one for the descriptive data, and one for the data source. Next, we conducted a final close reading of all the first tier data, utilizing the constant comparative method (Ary et al., 2006), and scanning for themes. In doing so, three themes emerged for perceptions of learning. Deeper understanding of academic

content, higher levels of engagement, and the utilization of 21st Century Skills. Descriptions of global mindedness were dissected and organized into five themes: understanding of self, understanding of others, insecurities and worry, perspective and worldview, and universalities. Each of the eight themes was assigned a numerical code (Table 3.9). All codes associated with perceptions of learning begin with “1” and the codes for global mindedness begin with “2.”

Table 3.9

First and Second Tier Data Codes

First Tier Data	Second Tier Data
1 - Perceptions of Learning	1.1 Deeper Understanding of Academic Content 1.2 Higher Levels of Engagement 1.3 Utilization of 21 st Century Skills
2 - Global Mindedness	2.1 Increased Understanding of Self 2.2 Increased Understanding of Others 2.3 Insecurities 2.4 Perspective and Worldview 2.5 Universalities: We are the Same

Quasistatistical analysis was utilized as a means of data analysis. This method provided a more exact analysis of the data and helped to ensure triangulation. Becker (1970) argued that quasistatistics allows the researcher to quantify, and make more precise, qualitative terms like some, many, and often. Sandelowski et al., (2009) described quantizing as the “numerical translation, transformation, or conversion of qualitative data (p. 1)” as a way to “facilitate pattern recognition or otherwise extract meaning from qualitative data” (p.3).

Using quasistatistics and Yin’s (2009) explanation of descriptive frameworks, I designed a format for quantifying the second tier data. A third column, for tallying, was added to the second tier data spreadsheet (Appendix Z). Once each unit of analysis was assigned to one of the eight descriptive codes, each category was tallied. The three second tier codes for perceptions of learning (1.1, 1.2, 1.3) produced a total of 143 tally marks while the five second tier codes (2.1,

2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5) for global mindedness produced 532 (Table 3.10). This allowed me to distinguish which themes were most heavily represented in the findings.

Table 3.10

Quasistatistical Analysis of Two-Tiered Codes

First Tier Data	Second Tier Data	Quasistatistical Analysis
1 - Perceptions of Learning	1.1 Deeper Understanding of Academic Content	52
	1.2 Higher Levels of Engagement	36
	1.3 Utilization of 21 st Century Skills	55
	Total	143
2 - Global Mindedness	2.1 Increased Understanding of Self	86
	2.2 Increased Understanding of Others	266
	2.3 Insecurities	34
	2.4 Perspective and Worldview	77
	2.5 Universality: We are the Same	69
Total		532

The most dominant themes appeared in the global mindedness portion of the findings. Increased Understanding of Others (266), Increased Understanding of Self (86) and Perspective and Worldview (77) all figured heavily in the data. The quasistatistical method also allowed me, as the researcher, to check for triangulation. After tallying each theme, I also counted how many sources of information were represented. Even in a less dominant theme, like 1.2 Higher Levels of Engagement, six separate sources of data were included – individual interview responses from F2FStudent1, F2FStudent3, PC, Teacher1, Teacher2 and observational notes (Appendix B).

Coding: Phase Two. A five pass coding process (Appendices AA, BB) was used to analyze Phase Two data. The first step in the analysis process was reading and re-reading all of the data to “obtain an overall feeling for them” (Creswell, p. 207).

Pass one. In Pass one, each transcript was read thoroughly. Each participant response was summarized every 1-2 lines. Each of these 432 summary statements was given a source code that tied it back to the original transcript.

Pass two. In Pass two, a colleague and I read each of the pass one summary statements and aggregated them into broad categories (Creswell, p. 154). For example, “Without the technology, you couldn’t have formed relationships before the exchange. DPC.33” from pass one was chunked, with 12 other statements, into the pass two category, “Partnership wouldn’t have been possible without technology.” Pass two narrowed the data down into 53 codes.

Pass three. In pass three, all data was read again and reorganized into 15 manageable categories. For example, the pass three code “Participants offered recommendations for instructional best practices” represented 4 pass two categories (Appendix AA):

- Good virtual education should allot time for getting to know each other (12 pass one codes).
- Virtual instruction should use tools that students are already familiar with (4 pass one codes).
- Design instruction that allows different points of view to be explored (3 pass one codes).
- Design instruction that makes use of each group’s expertise (3 pass one codes).

Pass four. In Pass Four (Appendix BB), my chair and I re-read each of the pass three codes and identified patterns of emergent themes. Pass three codes were re-organized and grouped by pattern. Ten indicators were grouped into four new categories and following six indicators were determined to be stand-alone categories:

- Time zones were a challenge when scheduling virtual partnership activities.

- Participants made lasting friendships.
- Teachers and students enjoyed the partnership experience.
- Student engagement and motivation increased.
- Participants perceived differences in American and Danish schools.
- Students and teachers recognized commonalities.

Pass five. Pass five (Appendix BB) was the final step in the analysis process and represented further narrowing of the emergent themes identified in pass four. All data from passes 1-4 were re-read to ensure alignment. A colleague and I, with the assistance of my committee chairperson, conducted a close reading of the pass four themes and condensed them into four overarching categories (Creswell, p.154).

- Learning improved.
- Participants offered suggestions for best practices.
- Participants evidenced changed thinking and attitudes.
- Technology was used throughout the partnership and participants viewed virtual interactions as similar to face - to - face.

These, along with the six stand-alone categories, formed the final themes of analysis. Peer review was utilized after each pass. A fellow doctoral candidate and my committee chairperson examined each pass of analysis and provided feedback.

Archival Data

Observations. In my previous role as a consultant for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, I visited the site and conducted observations related to the international partnership. IRB granted me permission to use notes from those visits as archival data for this study. Direct observations were conducted on 15 separate occasions beginning in 2010 and

continuing through 2013. For a sample schedule from one of these site visits, see Appendix L. In 2010, I visited the school for six days of the Danish visit. I observed English and History classes participating in virtual projects with the Danish students, teambuilding exercises, field trips, and other partnership activities. In 2011 (2 days) and 2012 (2 days), I also visited the school during the time that the Danish students and teachers were in town. Over the course of these visits, I observed various partnership activities: classes, social activities and field trips. During the observation process, I utilized an observational protocol (Appendix B) for recording descriptive and reflective notes (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 2009).

For Research Question 1, the observations were focused on the partnership's impact on perceptions of learning. Tucker et al. (2002) argued that motivation has a direct effect on academic achievement. Utilizing 21st century technology for partnership activities may have impacted students' motivation. As young adults armed with digital wisdom, they (Delacruz, 2008; Prensky, 2012) already spend a great deal of their day interacting via various forms of social media. When teachers used these tools to allow the American and Danish students to work together, students exhibited higher levels of engagement and ultimately experienced deeper learning. Heidi Hayes Jacobs (2010) contended that virtual international experiences provided students with an authentic learning experience.

For Research Question 3, the observations were focused on the type and quality of interactions between American and Danish cultures. The specific criteria in this research question came from the Contact Hypothesis Theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1997). Allport and Pettigrew argued that mere interaction is not enough and that certain conditions must be present for the lessening of stereotypes and prejudices. They include the following: (a) there must be equal status between the groups who meet; (b) they must be involved in a cooperative

venture with common goals; (c) competition between the groups must be avoided; and (d) the contact must be given legitimacy by having institutional support. My observations centered on evidence of these criteria. Once data was gathered, it was entered into the case study database and coded (Yin, 2009).

Documents. Documents were collected and analyzed in order to gather data for Research Question 1. They included the North Carolina School Report Card, teacher lesson plans and the School Improvement Plan. The North Carolina School Report Card for each school in the state can be accessed online and provided a wealth of data on student performance and attendance, class size, school safety, teacher quality and classroom technology at the state, district and school levels. I accessed the Report Card for the years the partnership has been in existence (2007, 2008, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012) and looked for any changes in student performance as it related to Research Question 1.

Lesson plans from Dane1, PC and Teacher1 were collected and analyzed in an effort to investigate the impact of the blended international partnership on perceptions of learning. Primarily, lesson plans were used to triangulate comments from teachers and students during the individual interviews.

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) was on a three year cycle that lasted from 2008-2011 and 2012- 2015. Since the partnership began in 2007, the school has incorporated it into the SIP. In the first section of the SIP, Globally Competitive Students, the school identified the following goal: Raise awareness of globally competitive students through the Danish partnership. Supporting data was gathered each year as an update to the SIP. For Research Question 1, the SIP was analyzed to identify any links between the partnership and perceptions of enhanced learning.

Quantitative Analysis

Instrument A: US History Pre and Posttest. Students enrolled in United States History classes and who participated in the blended international partnership were pre and posttested on content specific questions from a field tested, released state exam. Students enrolled in another United States History course with the same teacher, but not participating in partnership activities, were used as a control group and also pre and posttested. A total of 59 students were tested – 32 in the class who worked with the Danes and 27 from the class who did not work with the Danes. The results from these tests were compared in terms of the number of correct responses per student on the pre and posttests. This instrument was analyzed as a part of Research Question 1 and used to assess if greater learning took place for students who participated in the blended international partnership.

Instrument B: GMS Scale Survey. A quantitative measure was used to gather evidence for Research Question 2. Hett's (1994) Global Mindedness Scale (GMS) was administered via Survey Monkey to students who participated in face-to-face and/or virtual collaborations with the Danes. See Appendix K for the GMS questions. Students completed the survey instrument online. It included thirty questions from the Global Mindedness Scale (Hett) as well as basic demographic data. Hett's GMS was validated and normed on college students. The internal reliability, using Cronbach's coefficient alpha was .90 for the overall tool and alphas for the subscales ranged from .70 - .79 (Hett, 1993). A content Validity Index (CVI) was established by a panel of four content judges with an overall CVI of .88 (Hett, 1993).

The students took the survey, on the same day as the individual interviews, in their United States History class after the Informed Consent forms (Appendix D) were collected by the partnership coordinator. He provided the students with a link to the survey, which they took

anonymously. Data was stored by Survey Monkey in a secure location protected by pass card and biometric recognition. The researcher also stored all research data and documentation on a password-protected computer database. Once the data was collected, it was entered into the case study database and coded (Yin, 2009). A letter permitting the use of Hett's Global Mindedness Scale for this study can be found in Appendix CC.

Within Case Synthesis of Data Across Sources

While focused primarily on interviews, this study utilized data from multiple sources: individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations, and documents. In Phase One, the data was collected, entered into my case study database (Yin, 2009) and then coded to identify patterns and/or themes. Phase One included a two-tiered coding process and quasistatistical analysis. In Phase Two, data from individual interviews was analyzed using a five pass open coding process. This yielded four themes that framed chapter four's findings. They are (a) learning improved, (b) participants offered suggestions for best practices, (c) participants evidenced changed thinking and attitudes, and (d) technology was used throughout the partnership and participants viewed virtual interactions as similar to face - to - face. Due to the limitations with the quantity of data produced in Phase One, the emergent themes from pass two formed the framework for the study's overall data analysis. Once Phase Two coding was complete, any data from Phase One that aligned to the four final themes was entered back into the study database.

Research Question 1: *What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning?* Data was collected from stakeholder interviews (students, teachers, members of the administration), observations, the North Carolina School Report Card, teacher lesson plans, School Improvement Plan and pre and posttests in

United States History classes. Interviews were conducted and analyzed in Phase One and Phase Two. However, the other data was collected only in Phase One and analyzed in the manner described above.

Research Question 2: *How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?* Data was collected from interviews with students and teachers and from the Global Mindedness Survey (Hett, 1994). Interviews were conducted and analyzed in Phase One and Two. The open-ended responses from the GMS were entered into the Phase One database and coded along with the interview questions in the manner described above.

Research Question 3: *How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face-to-face interactions?* Data was collected from stakeholder interviews (students, teachers, parents, members of the administration), observations, and Hett's Global Mindedness Scale Survey (1994). Interviews were conducted and analyzed in Phase One and Two. Observations and the GMS were added to the Phase One database and analyzed in the manner described above.

Trustworthiness

To increase the trustworthiness of the study findings, I utilized bracketing, transcription, triangulation, member checks, and peer review. The purpose of a qualitative study is to provide a detailed description of a phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1985). While it is difficult to replicate the exact phenomenon featured in the case study, every effort was made to provide enough information to allow for replication of the study. These efforts at reliability attempted to minimize errors and bias (Yin, 2009).

Bracketing

Bracketing was used as a validity measure in an effort to ensure my own biases or perceptions were not coloring my interpretation of the interviews and observations (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1985). Before each interview, I bracketed my thoughts. I wrote what I knew about the participant's partnership experience and how I expected him/her to respond during the interview. During the interview, I wrote down my thoughts. Immediately after each interview, I made additional memos – noting anything that surprised me about the participant's responses or any questions that were raised. Each interview transcript included bracketing before, during, and after the interview. For a sample of the bracketing used during individual interviews, see Appendix A.

Transcription

In order to ensure the accuracy of data collected from individual interviews, all interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed. All interviews were transcribed by the researcher or by a student at a local university. Before the transcription process began, I provided detailed instructions for the transcriptionist. I asked that he transcribe all words and attempt to include descriptions of non-syllabic utterances. Additionally, we transcribed one portion of an interview together to ensure calibration and that my expectations were clear. Verbal and non-verbal material was included in the transcripts. Seidman (2006) validated the benefits of recreating interviews very thoroughly to ensure that both verbal and nonverbal responses are recorded.

Triangulation

Case studies allow for multiple sources of data to be used to get a broader picture of the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2009). According to Patton (2002), researchers can utilize

different methods of triangulation. They can use (a) multiple sources of data, (b) different evaluators, or investigators, of data, (c) different theories or perspectives on the same data, and/or (d) different methods of data collection. A minimum of three collection methods (surveys, observations and interviews, and school data) were used to ensure that the information is accurate. The process of using multiple sources of data allowed for the development of what Yin (2009) calls “converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation and corroboration” (p. 115). See Appendix J for a graphic describing how multiple sources were used to triangulate facts in this study. Additionally, information from all sources was coded and compared for similarities by multiple evaluators. In addition to my committee members, two seasoned educators assisted in the analysis of data to ensure all findings were properly triangulated.

Member Checks

Member checks occurred two weeks after the individual interviews, after each interview was transcribed. This was used to ensure accuracy and to provide the participants with the opportunity to modify, clarify or to delete specific statements (Creswell, 1998; Seidman, 2006). Using member checks is a way to guard against researcher bias. Additionally, after the first draft of analysis was completed, I emailed it to the partnership coordinator for checking. He verified the accuracy of his own interview and provided feedback on my analysis of emergent themes.

Peer Review

Ary et al. (2006) suggested peer review as a way to ensure validity of a study. The authors described the process:

Colleagues or peers are provided with the raw data along with the researcher’s interpretation or explanation. Discussions then determine whether the review (s) considers the interpretation to be reasonable, given the evidence. Reviewers may identify

problems in the interpretation and stress the need for additional data...several human instruments working together are usually better than one. (p. 505)

I followed these steps and utilized the assistance of my committee members and three seasoned educators in the analysis of data to ensure all findings were properly coded and triangulated. Educator1 has over 20 years experience in education and has worked as an adjunct professor, superintendent, principal, and Nationally Board certified high school teacher. Since earning her Ed.D five years ago, she has served as a committee member for three doctoral candidates. Educator2 is a retired English teacher with experience as an editor for masters and doctoral candidates. Educator3 is currently a high school principal and has worked in education for 25 years. Additionally, he is currently a doctoral candidate completing a quantitative dissertation. All three educators have worked with international partnerships in some capacity in the last 10 years.

Thick Description

Thick description is critical to the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. Denzin (1989) argued that thick description,

Does more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (p. 83)

Ponterotto (2006) wrote that “A thickly described discussion section of a qualitative interview” (p. 547) allows the reader to be “able to digest the essential elements of the findings, and... to

discern whether she or he would have come to the same interpretive conclusions as the report's author” (p. 547). Frequent site visits over the course of several years allowed me to develop a familiarity with the blended international partnership featured in this study. Because of this familiarity, I was able to provide thick descriptions of the site and participants. The development of a two phase data collection process helped to ensure that the reader is provided with the thick descriptions required of a qualitative study. When Phase One did not produce the desired results, a second phase was designed to guarantee the requisite quality.

Ethical Issues

In its *Publication Manual*, the American Psychological Association (2010) stresses the importance of confidentiality in research. In consideration for the anonymity of participants, pseudonyms were used for the name of the school and all of the participants. The GMS surveys were located on SurveyMonkey.com. Data stored by Survey Monkey is in a secure location and was protected by password and biometric recognition. Additionally, I stored all research data and documentation in a password-protected computer database. In compliance with IRB, all other data will be stored for the duration of three years and then deleted. Hard copies of the data are being stored in a locked filing cabinet and will be shredded at the end of three years.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of a blended international partnership on perceptions of learning and global mindedness in a North Carolina high school. In an effort to understand this partnership, data was gathered from students, teachers, and program administrators via interviews, surveys, pre and posttests, observations, documents and archival data to generate data to answer the three research questions that framed the study:

Research Question 1: What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning?

Research Question 2: How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness?

Research Question 3: How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face- to- face interactions?

A five pass, open coding process (Appendices AA, BB) was used to analyze the study's data. In pass one, each piece of data was read thoroughly and summarized every 1-2 lines. Each of these 432 summary statements was given a source code that tied it back to the original data (Appendix AA). In pass two, these summary statements were read again and narrowed into 53 codes. Passes three, four and five utilized the same process until four dominant themes emerged from the data. They were (a) technology was used throughout the partnership, (b) learning improved, (c) participants evidenced changed thinking and attitudes, and (d) participants offered suggestions for best practices.

This chapter contains the study's findings. It begins with a description of the overall theme. Next, the supporting themes are presented; and finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the findings as they relate to the research questions.

Overall Theme: Technology Was Used Throughout the Partnership

The role of the internet cannot be understated in this international partnership. Technology was instrumental to the success of the partnership and employed in four key ways. Technology was used (a) for communication and the planning of activities, (b) for academic assignments, (c) to build and sustain relationships, and (d) to alleviate fears about hosting or study abroad.

Technology Was Used to Communicate and Plan Activities

Virtual tools were used repeatedly throughout the course of the partnership as a means of collaboration. The partnership coordinators and teachers from each school utilized email and Skype as a part of the planning process; while these, and other, virtual tools were used by students during the actual instructional activities (DPC, PC, Teacher1, Teacher3). When asked about the role of technology in the partnership, TeacherD said, "We used it for most parts of the partnership. For getting to know you, for setting up how to work, for planning and then for working on the school things. It was the basis of all that we did" (TeacherD). Skype was often used for the planning and implementation of partnership activities. "Skype is an integral part of this partnership. I talk to [PC] so often to plan different activities. And of course we use email. I do not know how we could do all of this without the ways we communicate now," said DPC. One of the American teachers described how the partnership coordinator used technology to manage the partnership. "It is a big part of everything that [PC] does. He has so many projects

for the classes to work on through email or Skype or wikis or other things like that. Plus, I think that is the way he plans most of the logistics” (Teacher3).

Technology Was Used for Academic Assignments

Students used web 2.0 (Email, Elluminate, GoogleDocs, Skype, wikis) tools to span the miles while collaborating in their Social Studies and English classes. “It is so easy. You would never know that we are working with people all across the world. I don’t know how anyone did anything before computers,” said F2FStudent3. The American principal described the ease by which this was possible when he said, “Having a wireless campus makes this partnership such an easy task to accomplish. It makes communication instantaneous” (Principal1). One of the English teachers also described how simple it was to work when using the tech tools that she had available to her. “It’s almost a little creepy how easy it’s been to work internationally. Like I did a lesson the other day, and used the Skype to talk to the Danish students” (Teacher2).

TeacherD detailed how students used technology to work with the Americans in their Social Studies classes.

Students were paired up into groups with 2 Danes and 2 Americans. They worked together by web conference and email. They chose a war and researched it together.

They gathered the research and created a PowerPoint as the final product. Once all the groups were finished, the classes did a web conference and each group presented theirs for both classes. (TeacherD)

During the individual interviews, students from both countries shared their perspectives on the aforementioned project. An American student enjoyed the collaboration with students from Denmark and said that, “When we were finished everybody presented theirs online. We got to see what every group had done together” (F2FStudent6). She went on to say, “It was fun to

work with the people from the other school” (F2FStudent6). One of the Danes described the ease with which the project was accomplished. He said, “We did the PowerPoint and other parts of the assignment by using Skype and other things to share screens and create items together. It made it quite simply actually” (Dane1).

Technology Was Used to Build and Sustain Relationships

Participants communicated via the internet before and after the travel component of the partnership and viewed these interactions as comparable to face - to - face. Dane3 described how modern technology allowed her to “have a friend far away” by saying “When you communicate by text or with Twitter or Facebook, it is talking the same. You have a part of someone’s life. You talk to your friends that way” (Dane3). She concluded by saying that these technology tools allowed her to “talk no matter the distance” (Dane3). Another student described how he was able to get to know his international peers virtually.

You can also know someone pretty well through text or chat or Twitter or something...those are ways to talk to someone that is mostly the same as being right there. I think that using things like that I got to know the Danes pretty well before my visit and it has definitely allowed me to maintain the friendships after the fact.

(TStudent8)

F2FStudent6, an American host, said that she “made friends with the Danes we were getting in our homes” and “looked forward to getting online to work with them” (F2FStudent6). Finally, one of the students talked about how she used social media to begin a friendship before the visit and how she hopes to maintain it afterwards.

We talked, kind of, through Facebook before she came so I kind of had an idea of how she was going to be like. She's awesome. I wish she didn't have to leave. I mean if we go visit them hopefully we'll stay in touch. (F2FStudent5)

Technology Was Used to Alleviate Fears

Virtual communication was also used to lessen fears about hosting and traveling abroad. One of the teachers described how the information she exchanged online eased her concerns about sending her son to another country.

Before I sent my son, I communicated with the family he was assigned to. I wanted to know as much as possible about where he would be staying. They were very nice and made every aspect of his stay so memorable. That's a big deal, sending your child far away so I felt comforted to know that I had already spoken to them, that I had seen pictures of them and their home, so that we both knew what to expect. I also knew that they were a phone call or email away during the time he was with them. (Teacher3)

A host student described how she prepared before the visit by saying, "We did a lot of stuff online before they came here" (F2FStudent6). She said that she "made friends with the Danes we were getting in our homes and talked on Facebook and Twitter" before the visit so that she "had an idea of what to expect. I knew what her personality was like and I knew what she liked to eat and what she liked to do" (F2FStudent6). She concluded by emphasizing how crucial the internet was to alleviating concerns before her hosting experience: "I don't know how I could have done that without technology" (F2FStudent6). Another student detailed how technology was used to prepare for the visit and said that he "got in touch with [my] host families like that, by email. We used that to communicate and to get details straight before we visited their home" (TStudent8).

In conclusion, technology was ever-present in all facets of the international partnership featured in this case study. It was used (a) for communication and the planning of activities (b) for academic assignments (c) to build and sustain relationships and (d) to alleviate fears about hosting or study abroad. Overwhelmingly, participants felt that technology was what made this partnership possible. One of the American students said, “I don’t know how I could have done that without technology. No, I do not think that it would be possible... [shaking head] no, I do not see how it would be possible to do it without technology” (F2FStudent6). Teacher1 questioned whether or not the partnership could have been possible without all the web 2.0 tools by saying, “I don't know if it would be as possible ten years ago. I think it would be extremely more difficult. I know there was web conferencing technology but I think without the digital age it's really discouraging to do so.” Finally, the Danish partnership coordinator summed up the role of technology in the success of the partnership:

I do think that some type of exchange could have been possible but it would have seemed more forced maybe since we would not have been able to make the connections ahead of time and build the relationships online. Sure, students and teachers might have exchanged letters and such but I do not think that type of thing would have been the same...the same feeling. We have so many tools now that make talking so easy – even across time zones and a big ocean. It is simple to do these days. Students and teachers can use online tools to do so many things together. (DPC)

Supporting Themes

In addition to the aforementioned overall theme, the five passes of analysis revealed three supporting themes. They were (a) learning improved (b) participants evidenced changed thinking and attitudes and (c) participants offered suggestions for best practices. The supporting

themes are closely connected to the overall theme. The first supporting theme, learning improved, was made possible through the use of technology. Because the study abroad component was only a small part of the international partnership, much of the learning took place via the internet. The second supporting theme, participants evidenced changed thinking and attitudes, was also due, in large part, to the use of technology throughout the partnership. Overwhelmingly, participants viewed virtual interactions as comparable to face - to - face. As participants grew in their understandings of self and others, much of it was accomplished through the use of web 2.0 tools. Finally, the third theme, participants offered suggestions for best practices, greatly substantiated the overall theme. Many of the suggestions for best practices included ways to utilize technology for relevant learning experiences and building and sustaining relationships. Each supporting theme contains sub-themes which serve as an organizational framework for the description of the study's results.

Supporting Theme 1: Learning Improved

Multiple sources of data provided evidence that students learned from all facets of their international experience – whether it was from instructional opportunities or social interactions with students and teachers from another country (DPC, Dane1, Dane3, PC, Socratic Seminar, Tables 3.8-3.12, Teacher 1, Teacher2). Students and teachers perceived the experience to enhance learning, with new learning indicated by students and teachers (F2FStudent6, TeacherD, Teacher1, TStudent8). An analysis of the data showed that participants perceived learning to be impacted in three areas: (a) deeper understanding of academic content (b) higher levels of engagement and (c) the utilization of 21st century skills.

Deeper understanding of academic content. An increase in perceptions of student learning was supported by all methods of data collection. However, it was most notably

supported by the interviews with students, teachers, and the partnership coordinator. This evidence reinforced the effectiveness of contextual learning, largely because instruction, and the overall philosophies of the instructors involved, was not significantly changed to accommodate the partnership activities. Because of the work with their international peers, students gained a deeper understanding of academic content (Dane1, DPC, TeacherD, Teacher3, TStudent8, VStudent1).

Collaborative projects. Throughout the course of the partnership, students worked together on projects in their English and Social Studies courses. The Danish teacher described the beneficial nature of these types of collaborative academic experiences:

One year we did a war project. Students were paired up into groups with 2 Danes and 2 Americans. They worked together by web conference and email. They chose a war and researched it together. They gathered the research and created a PowerPoint as the final product. Once all the groups were finished, the classes did a web conference and each group presented theirs for both classes. By working with other nationalities, they got different perspectives. For instance, with a war fought in Europe. It might have seemed very far away for American students but perhaps Danish students had seen some of the effects. (TeacherD)

Another project involved pairs of students examining the governments of both countries. An American student who worked on this project described how her understanding was deepened by teaching the content to her Danish peers.

I mean if I'm teaching civics to them [American peers] they pretty much know what I'm teaching already because U.S. History is just a more expanded thing of Civics, but teaching a Danish person is different because we have to tie our government to theirs to

help them understand what we're doing as well as understand their government so we kind of put it together. I think got more [out of it] because I now understand the difference of my government from their government. So I see actually what our government does now than we just learn about the same thing over and over again.

(F2FStudent2)

The student was forced to look at her own government in a different way in order to explain it to her Danish counterpart. Another student reported a similar experience when she said,

There were benefits from the learning point of view because you have to really know the information in order to tell it to someone else who doesn't know it. Because they may not understand it a certain way that you're explaining it so you have to think of other ways that you can explain it to them. (VStudent1)

Rather than learning from textbooks, Danish and American students worked together and taught each other about their own forms of government. Students of both nationalities reported gaining a deeper understanding of governmental systems as a result of the assignment.

- The work, I would say what we did was good. It allowed us to see things from a different point of view. I got to understand American form of government more by talking to someone who lives there. They could explain what it was really like to live it, not just in books. (Dane1)
- I got to understand his culture a little bit. Because I didn't know that they were run by a parliament and I didn't know that they had to get things approved by the queen and things like that. So it kind of showed me how our government was different from theirs. (F2FStudent1)

- The next year we did this government thing where we each did research and then got together and talked about it with the Danes. In that one, we didn't do what we were the expert on, we did the other country and then the person from Denmark helped to see if we got it right and I did the same for them. It was good to see if the information online and in textbooks was truly accurate or if the Danes had a different view. (TStudent8)

The partnership coordinator described the collaboration as “a learning experience on a whole other level” (PC). This was evident in the war project that students worked on in the American History classes. In his interview, one of the American students showed the knowledge he gained about Denmark and highlighted the value in terms of broader perspective and a deeper understanding of WWII:

Well we were both in the war, the United States and Denmark. But no fighting took place on American soil. Denmark was occupied by the Nazis for years. So the Danes, the Danes, they have a different take on the war. Yes, we think Hitler was bad and the Holocaust was bad. Denmark actually had it happen there so they maybe feel even worse about the war than the US. So in terms of working on the project together, we got to learn more than just what was in the textbooks. People might have stories from their town or their family about the war. Which is a point about the books and things. You know we don't even really think about Denmark when you talk about WWII. There is never really anything that we learn about them but of course to them it was a very big deal. That just shows the difference in relationship and perspective. (TStudent8)

Students in Social Studies classes were not the only ones who learned more as a result of the collaborations with their international peers. In the Literature classes, Danish and American

teachers taught a unit on Southern Gothic Literature. See Appendix DD for a PowerPoint used during the lessons. Teachers developed this PowerPoint together and then delivered it in class at their respective schools. Next, each class read the short story, *Good Country People*, by Flannery O'Connor. Students completed the Guiding Questions (Appendix DD) on their own and then participated in a collaborative activity. Using Skype, the students and teachers had a discussion of the piece of literature. One of the teachers stated how "rewarding it's been for the students" (Teacher2). She went on to add that she was "so amazed at what they'll accomplish just because they're talking to other people and they're getting different perspectives" (Teacher2). In addition to seeming very interested in talking to their Danish peers, the American students displayed a high level of understanding when discussing the short story (Observational Notes).

In another Literature class, students from both schools examined the works of TS Elliot. The American teacher described how working with Danes allowed her students to gain a completely different perspective on Elliott's writing.

Like I did a lesson on TS Elliot the other day and used Skype to talk to the Danish students...and it was really cool because TS Elliot is claimed by the Brits as being a British author and we claimed him as an American. To get the European perspective on his poetry was very different than the American perspective and it was clear to me that she was teaching it from the European perspective. And I think it was clear to her that I was teaching it from the American perspective. So having that collaboration gave a dimension to that lesson I was never able to achieve with my students. So we each pulled out different concepts that were underlined within the poem and that to me was just the coolest thing - getting that different perception and point of view. (Teacher2)

Test scores. During the course of the international partnership, standardized test scores at the American high school rose in several key areas. The school experienced an average of 8.7% increase among all students taking ABCs end-of-course tests (Algebra I, Biology, English I, US History, and Civics & Economics) from the time the partnership began in 2007 until 2012, the most recent year for which data is available (Table 4.1). The increase in the number of students who were proficient on the end-of-course test for United States History was particularly high, with a total of 11.5% in 2009-2010 (Table 4.2). In total, the percentage change for end-of-course tests in United States History was 6.3% during the five years since the collaborative program was initiated as compared with 5.05% for the district and 5.7% for the state. In Civics & Economics, there was a 3.2% increase during the course of the partnership, as compared with 3.9% for the district and 3.8% for the state during the same time period (Table 4.3). It should be noted partnership that activities took place in the United States History class all five years of the partnership, which yielded greater gains than the Civics & Economics classes who did not participate. This represents a positive impact on student learning from participation in this program. Per the North Carolina General Assembly, there were no EOCs given in United States History or Civics & Economics in 2011-2012.

Table 4.1

Percentage of Students Passing ABCs End of Course Tests, 2007-2012

Year	% of Students Passing the ABCs End of Course Tests	+/- from previous year
2007-2008	81.3	
2008-2009	81.2	- 0.10
2009-2010	87.8	+ 6.60
2010-2011	84.7	- 3.10
2011-2012	90.0	+ 5.30
Total % change since the international partnership began in 2007		+ 8.70

Table 4.2

Percentage of Students Passing End of Course Test for United States History

Year	% of Students Passing End of Course Test for US History	+/- from previous year
2007-2008	83.3	
2008-2009	80.2	- 3.10
2009-2010	91.7	+ 11.50
2010-2011	89.6	- 2.10
2011-2012	No test given in 2011-2012 per NC General Assembly	
Total % change since the international partnership began in 2007		+ 6.30

Table 4.3

Percentage of Students Passing End of Course Test for Civics & Economics

Year	% of Students Passing End of Course Test for Civics & Economics	+/- from previous year
2007-2008	80.8	
2008-2009	83.4	- 2.60
2009-2010	92.0	+ 8.60
2010-2011	89.2	- 2.80
2011-2012	No test given in 2011-2012 per NC General Assembly	
Total % change since the international partnership began in 2007		+ 3.20

Participants also demonstrated increased learning in results for the 2011 United States History pre- and posttest. Fifty-nine students answered 16 questions on the pre and posttests. The 32 students who collaborated with the Danes showed a 16.56% increase between tests, as opposed to only an 8.2% increase for the 27 students from the class that did not participate in the partnership (Tables 4.4 & 4.5). Both classes had a similar makeup in terms of the numbers of EC and AIG students. The increase in scores for those involved in partnership activities was twice that of those who did not – a demonstrable difference in student learning.

Table 4.4

United States History Pre and Posttest (Class that did not work with Danes)

Student Identifier	Pre Test # Correct	Posttest # Correct	+/-
P1-1	13	14	+ 1
P1-2	12	15	+ 3
P1-3	15	15	0
P1-4	11	11	0
P1-5	11	14	+ 3
P1-6	12	12	0
P1-7	10	10	0
P1-8	13	14	+ 1
P1-9	12	14	+ 2
P1-10	13	14	+ 1
P1-11	13	14	+ 1
P1-12	12	13	+ 1
P1-13	13	14	+ 1
P1-14	13	14	+ 1
P1-15	14	14	0
P1-16	9	10	+ 1
P1-17	13	13	0
P1-18	12	14	+ 2
P1-19	9	9	0
P1-20	7	10	+ 3
P1-21	14	15	+ 1
P1-22	13	14	+ 1
P1-23	15	15	0
P1-24	15	15	0
P1-25	15	15	0
P1-26	12	11	-1
P1-27	14	15	+ 1
Class Average	12.41	13.26	.85

Table 4.5

United States History Pre and Posttest (Class that worked with Danes)

Student Identifier	Pre Test # Correct	Posttest # Correct	+/-
P2-1	13	14	+ 1
P2-2	14	15	+ 1
P2-3	10	10	0
P2-4	10	13	+ 3
P2-5	8	14	+ 6
P2-6	10	14	+ 4
P2-7	9	14	+ 5
P2-8	15	15	0
P2-9	14	15	+ 1
P2-10	9	13	+ 4
P2-11	15	15	0
P2-12	7	9	+ 2
P2-13	14	14	0
P2-14	13	15	+ 2
P2-15	13	15	+ 2
P2-16	14	15	+ 1
P2-17	14	15	+ 1
P2-18	13	15	+ 2
P2-19	15	15	0
P2-20	14	15	+ 1
P2-21	15	15	0
P2-22	15	15	0
P2-23	14	15	+ 1
P2-24	10	14	+ 4
P2-25	12	14	+ 2
P2-26	9	11	+ 2
P2-27	14	15	+ 1
P2-28	14	15	+ 1
P2-29	13	14	+ 1
P2-30	13	14	+ 1
P2-31	9	15	+ 6
P2-32	10	14	+ 4
Class Average	12.25	14.09	1.84

Higher levels of engagement. The opportunity to work with students from another country resulted in perceived higher levels of engagement for students involved in partnership activities. In many cases, the higher levels of engagement were perceived to contribute to deeper learning (DPC, PC, Teacher3). Adults described the appeal for students, as well as the additional academic benefits. “We're taking the learning that we're doing and just adding another element to it to make it more interesting” (PC). “Of course it is interesting when you are going to meet new people and there is that appeal of working with Europeans. The novelty intrigues them” (Teacher3). “I think that they were interested to talk about how they understood it differently based on what they knew about the culture. But then again, I think they were interested just because they were talking to the other class” (DPC).

One of the teachers who collaborated virtually reported that students were excited about the opportunity to do something different. “My students were intrigued by the idea of doing actual classwork with students from another country. I noticed more interest as I described the work” (Teacher2). The partnership coordinator shared an almost identical sentiment when he said, “Using the international exchange, working with other countries, and just doing normal classwork with students in other countries adds an extra element of interest and motivation to get students involved in what's already going on in the classroom” (PC). He went on to say that students who were not even involved in the partnership were much more interested in the world, in general, as a result.

Students in my other classes, those who didn't do things with the Danes, often asked me questions about the partnership. They were very interested to know about the kids who were going to visit and what they were like. There was an increased curiosity about the world outside of our little beach town. (PC)

The Danish partnership coordinator noted how the collaborations piqued student interest and ultimately resulted in better performance. “They are more interested because they are working with Americans rather than just their friends that they see in class all the time. It adds another level to the experience” (TeacherD). “I say that they do slightly better on these collaborative projects because they find it relevant and they are interested” (DPC).

Students corroborated the adults’ observations. “Yes, it was way more interesting than just the same old thing” (F2FStudent1). “I think I was more into it because I learned more about another system of government and life” (F2FStudent3). One of the Danish students attributed her heightened curiosity about the world to the ability to work with others and make new friends.

If you are making new friends you will be most interested in the work. The work should also be a way to know about the other country’s ideas. You want to know what it is like in other places in the world and how it is different from your own.
(Dane2)

An American boy was interested in learning more about life in Europe and noticed that his fellow classmates, “seemed more engaged in learning and more excited about the work” (TStudent8).

It was just more interesting. I was psyched to get to meet some Europeans and to see what life was like for them and how they thought about the world. I was interested to see what my education was like in comparison to theirs. I think it was more interesting because of the opportunity to do something different. (TStudent8)

Teachers noticed that students were eager to engage with international peers and show off their knowledge.

Anytime you do something different with teenagers they get excited about it. So the fact that you're engaging a different culture, a different country... and they're having the opportunity to flaunt what they know and they learn gives them a huge sense of pride.

(Teacher1)

Teacher1 added that students were motivated to do their best because they did not want to embarrass themselves, their classmates, or their school, and that they “really put on a different ‘air’ and different attitude while they were working with the Danish students.” The opportunity to work with someone from another country heightened their interest, which resulted in better performance.

Students were not the only ones who showed increased interest in learning; teachers reported similar feelings.

It was reinvigorating to me to sit with their English teacher and to discuss literature and to remember the joy of discussing English. I feel like by working with the Danish teacher they have reinvigorated me and my excitement for my content area especially.

As I was speaking with their English teacher, I remembered why I went into studying literature [and] what I liked about studying literature. (Teacher1)

The Danish partnership coordinator described how the partnership affected the way he viewed his work as an educator: “It is something out of the ordinary. Yes, I would say that on days we are doing partner things I am even more interested and more excited about my job.”

21st century skills. The international partnership utilized 21st century skills such as the ability to “think critically, build collaborative relationships, to problem solve, and to communicate in a diverse global community” (Keeping Pace, 2010, p. 43). The partnership coordinator noted how the program prepared students with these much-needed skills.

As time goes on they are going to be forced to interact more with the outside world. So preparing them for that, giving them the skills to do that technologically, culturally...preparing them to live in a global workplace/ global community [is a benefit]. (PC)

Relevance and the building of collaborative relationships were two key ways that 21st century skills supported improved learning during the international partnership.

Relevance. The partnership utilized the prevalence of the internet and social media in the lives of most young learners as a hook to get students involved. “We do the partnership stuff the same way we do anything else in our life. We communicate digitally. Skype is just a way of life. It was nothing to do this” (VStudent1). “It is the way that we do things anyway in life. Not always seeing people face - to - face...texting and IMing and Facebook. Twitter. You do not see people to do that so working on school without seeing all the time was okay” (Dane1). Employing these tools made the learning experience more relevant for students (Dane1, DPC, PC, Teacher3)

Since the study abroad component was only a small portion of the international partnership, many of the learning activities took place virtually. When describing successful virtual instructional practices, Teacher3 said that you should, “Design things that fit into the way we live our lives anyway...updates using Twitter, online portals for homework, multiple modes of communication (Teacher3). The Danish teacher offered similar advice. “Use as many tools as possible that are already in use. If students Tweet or Facebook or Instagram or Snapchat, find ways to use that. Then it will seem more a part of everyday – just with different people” (TeacherD). The Danish partnership coordinator described how the technology tools already

used in everyday life were employed to build and maintain the relationships needed for the partnership. Using these tools, the miles were no longer a barrier.

You can still talk and get to know someone in many of the same ways. You can also do the school work, the partnership activities. In modern life, I think that is the way of the world. Information is available digitally and so are people. (DPC)

A student also described the relevance of the tools used throughout the partnership.

When you communicate by text or with Twitter or Facebook it is talking the same.

Students seemed to feel the same way. You talk the same. You have a part of someone's life. You talk to your friends that way. Yes, you talk no matter the distance. You can have friend far away. (Dane3)

Building collaborative relationships. All of the teachers involved in the partnership built in ways, albeit virtually, for students to get to know one another before they worked on academic projects. These personal relationships strengthened the learning experience.

They get to know each other by working together online before the visit. They learn about surface things...what they like, what music they listen to, what movies they like, how they dress...things like that. In many of those things, I think that they are surprised to find so many things in common. It seems like teenagers have many of the same interests in Denmark as they do in the states. Both groups are also excited to find out about one another and to get the opportunity to make a friend from another country.

(TeacherD)

Allowing time for these relationships to form was critical to creating the atmosphere needed for impactful academic collaboration.

The biggest thing is giving students an opportunity to make those personal connections . . . that elevates the level of accountability. When we see (hand motioning in quotations) people regularly, we want to do our best for them, we feel accountable. I think that is the same here. You have to explicitly design ways for students to make those personal connections. Begin with getting to know you types of things [and] allow time at the beginning and end for simple conversation. (Teacher3)

The personal connections with peers from another country, made possible through the use of virtual tools, allowed students to have a richer academic experience. Students were more interested in what they were doing and they were exposed to different perspectives. “The students seemed more engaged in learning and more excited about the work” (TeacherD).

Supporting Theme 2: Participants Evidenced Changed Thinking and Attitudes

Multiple sources of data provided evidence of participants’ changed thinking and attitudes (Dane1, Dane2, DPC, F2FStudent6, GMS Scale Survey, PC, Teacher1, Teacher2, TStudent8). These changes are a part of the global mindedness examined in Research Question #2. An analysis of the data showed five facets of global mindedness (a) understanding of self (b) insecurities (c) understanding of others (d) universality and (e) perspective and worldview. The findings will be presented in that order.

Understanding of self. Partnership activities thrust students and adults into situations that prompted self-reflection. As a result, many expressed a change in attitudes or beliefs. Students matured, appeared less self-centered, and expressed an interest in the culture of others. They described openness to new ideas and cultures after their international interactions (F2FStudent6, TStudent8, TStudent3, TStudent6, VStudent1, VStudent2). As one student put it, “Meeting new people can change your thoughts and ideas” (GMS Open Ended Q1). Another

said that the experience, “taught me a lot about other people, but also about myself” (GMS Open Ended Q2). Multiple students described a difference in the way that they thought:

- “I’m more interested in different cultures now” (GMS Open Ended Q1).
- “It makes me more open minded and tolerant of different cultures” (GMS Open Ended Q2).
- “I am more open than before and I think it’s easier to speak with strangers” (GMS Open Ended Q2).
- “I tend to be a very moderate person and now I tend to see things and situations from many views” (GMS Open Ended Q1).
- “I probably would have responded a little harsher [before the partnership], and would not have as much sympathy for the world around me” (GMS Open Ended Q1).
- “I think I am more understanding of people and try to see things from other points of view. Not just mine” (TStudent3).
- “I think it made me more open...more wanting to meet other people” (VStudent1).
- “I am shy but I still like to know new people and make friends. I think that this has made me be less shy and want to meet people more. This experience has shown me that it is worth it to get past that...to get past the...the ummm shyness to do new things and find out more” (Dane2).

One student went beyond beliefs and attitudes and reported a change in behavior after the international experience. “My experiences with students from other countries have allowed me to grow an interest in foreign affairs and ultimately become more politically active” (GMS Open

Ended Q2). A few students also reported a deeper understanding of their own culture. “It made me realize that maybe we aren’t so great” (TStudent6).

I am not close minded or really conservative in any way. I think that these interactions with the Danes just added to those qualities I already had. It did however; maybe...maybe make me think about the US slightly differently. Like I wonder if all countries are so egocentric or if it is just us? I know that is the reputation for the US in other parts of the world but maybe this Denmark thing is a good example of that. Denmark is significant in many ways and we don’t know anything about the place. (TStudent8)

The Global Mindedness Scale Survey (Appendix N) yielded additional findings in terms of students’ understanding of self. When asked to respond to statements on the Global Mindedness Scale survey (Appendix N), students showed introspection and expressed concern for others, and the world in general.

- 17 of 21 students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I often think about the kind of world we are creating for future generations.
- 14 of 21 students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I think of myself not only as a citizen of my county but also as a citizen of the world.
- 20 of 21 students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I enjoy trying to understand people’s behavior in the context of their culture.

These changes in student mindset were evident to the adults involved in the partnership. When asked to enumerate benefits for students, an American teacher described how her students were able to understand themselves more deeply.

It has been eye opening. I have enjoyed it myself and I have seen the students, my own children included, get so much out of it. They are able to learn what is important to them, what they want for their personal future and what they want for their country. (Teacher3)

The American and Danish partnership coordinators both shared similar responses. “They were different in a really good way, they grew as persons. They really did” (DPC).

I think it forces them to reflect on what it is to be American. On what it is to sort of live in the United States and look at how other people live, how other people think, how other people view education, and again the role of teenager. So just asking the American kids to think about who they are, why they do things, why we do things the way they're done, is really beneficial. (PC)

In addition to seeing changes in their students, the adults involved in the international partnership also described changes in their own attitudes and beliefs. Adults reported that collaborating with their international peers reinvigorated their love of teaching (DPC, PC, Teacher1, Teacher3) and allowed them to see the field of education from a wider lens (DPC, TeacherD, Teacher3, Principal, PC). The Danish partnership coordinator provided a description of the partnership’s impact on his way of thinking – about himself, and the field of education in general.

I have learned so much about myself on a personal level and so had many great experiences professionally. It has given me the opportunity to think about education as a profession through the eyes of my friends here, [PC] and [Teacher1]. When we talk about things with our students, they are very much the same. We want the same things for our students. We want the same things for our families, those who have children. I believe it

gives you that big picture. The picture of our world, of our future. How do we give the next generation what they need? (DPC)

Teacher3 said, “I learned so much myself and it broadened my own personal knowledge” while one of the Danes said, “I think I am more likely to think of many different perspectives as I think of the world” (TeacherD).

Teacher1 provided an in-depth description of the partnership’s impact on her way of thinking – about herself, her craft, and the field of education in general – that showed a deeper understanding of self.

Just being able to discuss that re-excited me about teaching. And then when we would also discuss our teaching philosophies and commonalities of problems we've had with students, or trying to discuss ways to get around students who lack motivation, it was helpful to have an outside perspective and I think that perspective is more helpful internationally to hear that these problems are worldwide. Because I think as American teachers we get so focused on 'well these problems only exist here' and we get so down on our American educational system that it frustrates us and makes us not want to make improvements. Because we don't have a sense that anything will ever get better. And so it was interesting for me to hear the common problems that they have with their students and that their system although is wonderful isn't perfect. And to see what they do that works that maybe I could try and implement. It just gave me a sense that there is hope to change things that aren't working here. And to look at other models to at least have a way to create a discourse amongst my colleagues and go about changing it. And I think that that brings in a sense of being able to understand diverse students that come into my classroom as well. (Teacher1)

Another American teacher's description of the collaboration confirmed her growth and deeper understanding of self. She said it, "gives me just more tools in my bag to play the education game with" and that "it's invaluable as a teacher to work with these other teachers and to broaden my horizons as an educator and as a human" (Teacher2). The principal explained how the experience led to an examination of his beliefs about education. "It really gave me a reason to think about education in general and what is truly best for kids. Is what we are doing in the US the best? Why are we falling behind other countries" (Principal1)? Finally, the partnership coordinator described how the partnership caused him to revisit his ideas about education.

I think bigger as an educator... It sort of caused me to reflect on why I teach the way I teach, how I teach, and the purpose of education...Again, it's one of those things where you're. . .when you're teaching day to day week to week year to year you kind of get in the rut of doing what you did the year before, piggybacking on what you did the day before. (PC)

Insecurities and worry. In some cases, changes in thinking were negative for participants. The self-reflection described in the previous section sometimes led to feelings of insecurity or worry. As students and teachers participated in partnership activities, some of them experienced uncertainty or anxiety. Overall, insecurities and worry seemed concentrated in two main areas: uncertainty about foreign travel and inadequacies in the classroom.

Uncertainty about foreign travel. Both Danes and Americans expressed feelings of uncertainty about foreign travel. "I mean you're new to the country. You're not comfortable in general if you go anywhere. It could be the safest place on earth but if you're new to the place you're still going to be uncomfortable" (American student, Socratic Seminar). Another student said, "It's kind of hard. You're shy and you're in a different country and you're scared you don't

fit in” (TStudent6). When describing the study abroad experience, one American student admitted,

I feel I'd want to know where things are and do things myself. That way I could do things on my own like getting myself a glass of water. I would make sure I had something to do so if I want to read I can go read. (F2FStudent3)

One of the Danish students echoed similar feelings.

I was really scared at first, even though I knew everything would be OK in the end. I am always scared to be new places. But it did not take me long to feel at home with my family I lived with. It was nice but sometimes I did not know what to expect. I would want the family to tell me what we are going to do each day so I would know. (Dane2)

Adults also expressed feelings of insecurity. One of the teachers who traveled to the partner school described her worries. “It was strange. Of course it’s a little nerve racking. When I had gone over there, I had met the teacher that was going to host me briefly here in America, but I really didn't know her at all” (Teacher1). She went on to explain how the language barrier affected her.

So I was really nervous and not speaking a lick of Danish was a little nerve racking. I've traveled to Spanish speaking countries but I speak Spanish so it was really interesting to feel like the outsider. I think as a result of that I can understand how the kids feel coming here. Their kids speak English and their teachers speak English but it’s still a second language and it’s still difficult. (Teacher1)

Visiting another country, where she did not speak the language, caused some anxiety for the teacher. In the end, it appeared that she overcame the insecurity and embraced the experience.

“It was really nerve racking but it was neat to step out of my comfort zone and to be able to have that opportunity” (Teacher1).

Another adult explained her fears as a parent. “That’s a big deal, sending your child far away,” she said, when talking about her child’s participation in the study abroad experience (Teacher3). Ultimately, it appeared that her child valued the experience. When describing his journey, he offered advice for future travelers, “My experience taught me to know how awkward it will be at first to go to a new place. You just have to accept that and embrace it” (TStudent8).

Inadequacy in the classroom. Other insecurities surfaced in the classroom. Students wanted to be perceived as academic equals, as evidenced by two American teachers’ comments.

- Sometimes I think that they were a little intimidated. Like I said, these kids have been in the same classes forever. They practically knew from 1st grade what their class rank was and it hasn’t changed much over the years. They are pretty secure in that area. But when the Danes are here...when they are here....things get shaken up a little. (Teacher3)
- They don't want to embarrass themselves and they don't want to embarrass my class and they don't want to embarrass [***] high school. So they really put on a different 'air' and different attitude while they're working with the Danish students. (Teacher1)

Students and teachers noted the Danes’ strong work ethic and focus on high grades. “Some of them are really, really into their homework and really into everything they're supposed to do and do more than they're supposed to do. It’s pretty different” (F2FStudent2). Another said, “When it comes to the work assignments, they are very serious. They want to do well, no

matter what” (VStudent2). “I mean they definitely worked hard and seemed like good grades were expected” (VStudent4). One of the Danish students described the push to do well.

I wanted to do very good because of the other class. Well I want to do good. Not just for myself but also because I want to be proud and want to be a good impression. Wanting to be seen as a good student....wanting to be seen as doing my part on the team and being good for the Americans and the teacher. (Dane2)

This Danish focus on excellence was sometimes the source of insecurities for American students.

It was hard sometimes being in the classes when they were here because they are all so smart. It almost seems like they have been in school longer than us and know more. I worried that I wasn’t going to know enough about the US History stuff. It seemed like they knew more about it than us and they don’t even live here! I bet that they do not ever cut up in class or waste time because they were all so smart and knew all the answers.

(F2FStudent6)

Observations like these seemed to highlight differences in the classroom and may have been the basis for anxiety.

Several American students felt that they were being perceived as lazy or not as smart as the Danes. “I think that some of them think we are lazy” (F2FStudent2). “In English class, though, I think maybe they were smarter than us” (VStudent4). “They all just seemed so smart so I was worried a lot about saying the right thing and being able to do good on the work with them. (F2FStudent6). When asked about misconceptions the Danish students may have had, one American student responded, “Not all of us are stupid and lazy, I work very hard in school and don't really consider myself ‘stupid,’ of course I'm not the smartest person but I'm sure not stupid either” (GMS Open Ended Q4).

Understanding of others. Another area where participants evidenced changed thinking and attitudes was in their understanding of others. The international partnership featured in this study hinged on social interactions, both face - to - face and virtual, between Danes and Americans. When developing relationships with others, it did not seem to matter if participants were five feet away or 5,000 miles away. Adults and students grew to understand, and appreciate, their international peers, and other cultures in general, as a result of participation. This understanding of others was expressed in four broad categories: (a) school is different over there (b) people have different values and behaviors (c) I can appreciate other cultures and (d) I made a friend and/or formed a personal relationship.

School is different over there. As they developed a greater understanding of others, students grappled with how differently schools in the other country operated (Dane1, Dane2, Dane3, DPC, F2FStudent1, PC, Principal). The partnership allowed students to explore different ideas about the role of education and the treatment of teenagers (DPC, PC). The American principal noted differences in school structures and described how it affected the Danes during their visit to his school.

Our big challenge when we get students here is having the Danish kids who are treated in many ways like adults and getting them used to American school where we have more rules than they do. More things that the students have to be aware of. (Principal1)

The Danes echoed the American principal's sentiments and felt that they were given more freedoms at their home school and generally treated like adults. When describing American schools, a Danish student said, "They treat students like elementary children, not respectful. Needing permission for everything" (Dane1). "People should not have to be told when to go and

come. People should know. The schools treat the students like babies. There are many rules. We just go in our classes. We don't like it" (Dane3).

During their stay in the partner school, Danish students reported being confused by all of the bells. "It was hard to get used to the way that school is in America. The bells and the school was so big and upstairs and downstairs" (Dane2). "The classes were told when to change and the school is big. The changing was stupid. There were these loud bells all the time. I do not know how people can concentrate" (Dane3). As they attempted to understand school life in another country, Danish students were surprised by the structure of American high schools.

The classes are longer. And we don't go around to...like to other places. To other classes. There is not one teacher to each room. The teachers change classes too.

The way the classes are going in America. There is lots of waste time. They don't use the whole class time to learn something. And in gym classes they just run around. That was shocking to me. We play a lot of sports at my school and go out of doors. They do not seem to do that at the school in America. (Dane2)

They were struck not just by the structure of the schools, but also by the formality of teacher-student interactions.

I think it's just different how we interact too. We don't call each other by last name or anything. We just talk. And we don't have to like...like hold up our hand or anything or put our hand in the hair to ask if we are permitted to go to the bathroom.

We just walk out of the class and do it so way less formal. (Dane2)

American students who traveled to Denmark observed many of the aforementioned things regarding interactions. "They were really fun especially the teachers. I liked them a lot. They were really easy to talk to...They treated us like we were people, not just kids. They talked to

use like equals,” said F2FStudent6. Another American student said the same things in terms of rules and school structure, but also noted that he felt their schools were nicer. “The teachers are kind of harder. There's a lot more rules here in the states though. And it's dirtier here. They have a cleaner school system. All their stuff is a lot nicer and newer” (TStudent2). One of his peers noted, “Taking care of things seemed to be a priority” (TStudent8).

The partnership coordinator described not just logistical differences, but a contrast in the overall educational approach. “The sorts of differences are in the actual schools themselves and how we're educating them” (PC). The Danish teacher and partnership coordinator displayed a good understanding of American schools, but did not note major differences in the way students were being educated. They did; however, remark on many of the same differences that the students pointed out.

- The rules, the structures, the bells to change classes. Those are the things that are different. The interactions between students and adults is different too. In the states, it is more formal. We are less formal with our students and speak to them more like equals. There is no Mr. or Mrs. Also, our students do not ask for permission for some things, more like in university here. If you need to leave the room for something, you would just go and take care of it. Whereas in the states, you must raise your hand and be acknowledged by the teacher to get permission to go to the bathroom or to get a drink or to visit another instructor. Our students are confused by the class change bells that ring in the American school. They are not used to that. (TeacherD)
- School is very different at [***]. At our school, we do not have bells to tell students when to move. That is difficult to adjust to...the structure of the bells.

Our students always remark on how much more structured it is in American schools. The environment is more formal in some ways and less formal in others. More formal in the way of...of how the adults and students interact. Calling the teachers Mr., Mrs., or Doctor. Needing permission to go into the halls, to go to the bathroom...things like that. More rules about dress. About how the students dress. I think that the American students sometimes just expect to be told what to do. They are not treated as equals. Our students call us by name. By first name. They come and go and take care of their needs as they have to. Those are more formal here. But other things about classes are less formal. (DPC)

Overall, the recognition of differences in educational systems and institutions showed one of the ways that participants deepened their understanding of others.

People have different values and behaviors. Another way that participants indicated a greater understanding of others was by acknowledging that people have different values and behaviors. Reflecting on his interactions with Danes, one American participant noted, “They take life a lot more differently” (TStudent1). When describing the study abroad experience, one of the students said, “People may act different or not be as nice or not be what you are used to. They may have different customs” (TStudent3). Later, the same student recognized these differences as part of the international experience. “Yeah I think you just have to expect that things are going to be different. Otherwise, why would you go” (TStudent3)? Another participant described how he was intrigued to learn more about his Danish counterparts, “I liked learning what they thought and seeing if it was the same as me.” (F2FStudent6). When describing the Danes and his experience in Denmark, one of the American students said,

The weather and climate is crazy there. It never occurred to me that it is almost like Alaska. It has...it has periods when it is dark almost constantly. It was quite dark and dreary when we were there. And it rained a whole lot. But the people...the people...they just accepted it and were happy no matter what. They seem less emotional. I mean at both ends of the spectrum. Like they don't get real upset and angry and stressed but they also don't get all excited and overjoyed either. (TStudent8)

Students who interacted face - to - face with the Danes observed different values and behaviors in their international peers. Some differences were noted in the classroom, while others were noted during the host family experience. One of the American students described the differences he observed.

Well of course they had a strong accent since English was not their first language. But they really liked practicing with us and using their language skills. And they bike pretty much everywhere unlike us. We drive most places even if it is just down the street. The teachers were cool...very Zen. Just that taking care of things seemed to be a priority...taking care of the environment, taking care of themselves with exercise and good food...stuff like that. (TStudent8)

Another student described the grasp of other cultures and languages displayed by the Dane she hosted.

One of my Danes spoke a lot of languages. Her parents are from different countries so she knows those languages and she knows English and she knows Spanish. She was really smart. In some cases, she knew English better than me, especially spelling and using more formal words. (F2FStudent6)

One American host student noticed a difference in values and behaviors with regards to dinner time conversation.

It was different, because mine is three years older than me. So it was like having an older sibling. And then someone that doesn't go by the same rules and beliefs. They like to use profanity a lot. And I have a little sister so we try to keep things G-rated. So it was definitely awkward at the dinner table when cuss words would slip out. (F2FStudent1)

Another student described how a conversation with the Dane she hosted revealed that her initial instinct about a different set of values and behaviors proved to be wrong.

We both like to do the same things and we were talking about their alcohol consumption versus our alcohol consumption. She's like “yeah some people go partying every weekend and get completely wasted and stuff” but she only goes out once every 3 months. I actually told that we were going to a party and I was warning that at my parties we don't drink or anything. And she was like “I really hope that you don't think that every Danish person drinks because we don't.” So it was really different because that's what I did think from all the pictures of all the empty bottles and what not.

(F2FStudent2)

Study abroad participants noticed different behaviors among the foreigners with whom they interacted. American students were struck by cultural differences when it came to interactions among strangers.

- I learned something about how open people here in America are. Every time you walk into a store or something they're asking “how you're doing?”. They don't do that in Denmark. They just look at you and maybe smile. It's not the same.

(TStudent3)

- Probably that people aren't so polite [in Denmark]. I think American people are really nice to each other. Compared to Denmark where they're not really thinking about others but more about themselves. And some people can seem rude compared to home where everyone seems so nice. (TStudent6)

After the initial culture shock wore off, students seemed to move towards a level of understanding of, and appreciation for, the cultural differences that they observed. "I learn[ed] about what their behavioral atmospheres are like and their different cultures" (GMS Open Ended Q2). "I have learnt a lot about the culture, and understand more about their way to act and their life values" (GMS Open Ended Q2).

I can appreciate other cultures. Several participants described a greater appreciation for other cultures after the international interactions. "It makes me more open minded and tolerant of different cultures" (GMS Open Ended Q2). "I got to understand his culture a little bit" (F2FStudent1). "It has been great to learn new culture and the school culture" (Dane2). After participation, one of the students described a change in attitude. "I probably would have responded a little harsher, and would not have as much sympathy for the world around me [before the partnership]" (GMS Open Ended Q1). "I am a pretty open minded guy and this made me even more so" (TStudent8).

One of the teachers noticed a change in her child after participation in the partnership. "My own child has always been mature seeming but he certainly came back with more of an open mind about the world in general" (Teacher3). The principal also noticed a change in students after participation in the partnership. "I think that it opens their eyes to a whole new world and makes them more accepting of others" (Principal1). According to the partnership

coordinator, this newfound appreciation for others did not extend only to those from other countries.

I have also seen kids come back and be nicer to their American peers. Because of the partnership, some of my kids have hung out with kids that they normally would not associate with, and that is definitely a good thing. (PC)

Students were not the only ones who gained a greater appreciation for others as a result of the partnership – two of the teachers described how they had a bigger view of education after interacting with the Danes. “I just find that it’s invaluable as a teacher to work with these other teachers and to broaden my horizons as an educator and as a human understanding other cultures” (Teacher1).

I enjoyed talking to the Danish educators. It was interesting to find out about the education required to teach there, how they are paid, what problems they face in their classrooms. The men, [DPC] and [TeacherD] are very easy going and easy to be around. They get along great with [PC]. They are so positive and caring with their students and that carries over to our students here. (Teacher3)

Finally, the Danish partnership coordinator explained how the experience has impacted the way that he views others.

I think that any kind of contact with people different from yourself will make you more open to new ideas. I always like to see how other people do things. Just everyday things like how they work, what their daily schedule is like, what they eat and things like that. Our students have these stereotypes about Americans based on what they see on TV and in movies and I guess to some extent I had that too. But after these years of working with the students and teachers, America feels like home to me too. When I am back in

Denmark, I am able to talk to others who have not been or do not know any Americans. I can tell them what it is really like... I think working with [PC] and [Teacher1] has helped me to be...to think a little more maybe about generalizing. Not everyone is the same in a country. People vary. Just like any place. And just because you see something in the movies about a country does not mean that everyone in the county is that way. (DPC)

I made a friend or formed a personal relationship. One of the experiences that many students indicated as valuable with regards to their own global mindedness was the simple opportunity to make a new friend (Dane1, F2FStudent6, VStudent1). During the interviews, students mentioned the new friends they had made and how they planned to keep in touch with them after the program ended. One of the students described this experience as the impetus for making more international friends online. “I have other friends from different countries... like I have a person from Germany and a person from Thailand. So I'm definitely more open to different cultures now [after the partnership]” (VStudent1). Another student described a similar desire when she said, “I hope that I will have more experience to go to other countries soon and I will be able to make friends and learn more about how they view things and see if it is the same as me” (Dane2). An American student described the ease with which he befriended the student he hosted by “realizing how different the other countries are and how we can meet someone over just a week and feel like we already know them for a long time and become friends” (F2FStudent4). Other students formed bonds and utilized tools like Facebook to maintain the relationship even two years after the visit. “I am still in contact with several of my Danish friends from when I visited and when they came here” (TStudent8).

I really liked that one of the students I worked with wanted to connect via Facebook to stay in touch after her visit here. I thought it was pretty cool that she cared enough to

even think of that. The way they acted around each other was very similar to the way we act here around our friends, which I expected considering that they were teenagers like myself. (GMS Open Ended Q5)

The Danish partnership coordinator said that these social contacts were a major incentive for students. “Both groups are also excited to find out about one another and to get the opportunity to make a friend from another country” (DPC). “I like making new friends,” said one a student when describing the partnership (Dane2). A female student described the best thing about working virtually with students from another country, “I mean definitely making a new friend, and she’s awesome. Just learning their culture was really cool. We had a whole two hour long talk just about how they are there and what’s different” (VStudent3). The teacher who facilitated the virtual learning observed these personal relationships being formed as a result of the academic projects. “So they’ve actually kind of created friendships through our classes working together” (Teacher1). One of the girls who traveled to Denmark has maintained a relationship with her host family and hopes to visit again when she participates in study abroad during college. “I cannot wait to see them. With study abroad, I should have a lot of free time so I will probably spend a lot of time with them” (TStudent6). Again, personal interactions made possible through social media made it possible for students to form and maintain bonds with their international peers.

Universality: “We are the same.” As they deepened their understanding of others, many students were surprised by how similar they were to their international peers, saying that they were both concerned with homework, friends, and activities (Dane2, VStudent1, VStudent2, VStudent4). While the partnership experience highlighted that there are substantial cultural

differences that exist around the world, it also helped students recognize that people everywhere have many of the same interests.

Students were quick to note the similarities. “I had a lot in common with foreign students. We liked some of the same foods, music, books, games, and ultimately I believe it was a great learning experience that every student should have a chance to participate in” (GMS Open Ended Q5). Another student described comparable attitudes about friendship and communication.

I really liked that one of the students I worked with wanted to connect via Facebook to stay in touch after her visit here. The way they acted around each other were very similar to the way we act here around our friends, which I expected considering that they were teenagers like myself. (GMS Open Ended Q5)

These similarities were echoed by other students in their responses to Open Ended Question #5 on the Global Mindedness Scale Survey: What did you have in common with students from another country?

- “We have the same interests.”
- “What we like to do for fun.”
- “We are a lot like each other when it comes to teenager problems, and we had some of the same dreams and values.”
- “We were both teenagers and we loved to do the same things in our spare time.”
- “A lot of things. Taste in music, humor, and some other things.”
- “We are all teenagers and like to do a lot of the same things in our free time.”

- “I had a lot in common with foreign students. We liked some of the same foods, music, books, games, and ultimately I believe it was a great learning experience that every student should have a chance to participate in.”

Individual interviews also yielded a large number of comments regarding similarities.

- “I think that...I guess we are all...all people I mean, are mostly alike no matter what country. I think that we students were the same” (Dane2).
- “We are the same. We are students. We are doing the work and having friends so we are the same. We act the same about it” (Dane3).
- “I find that we are very much same about school. We think about work much the same and know much the same. In lots of ways we are the same...not mattering where we live. I believe I would just think of other people as more like me than not” (Dane1).

Study abroad participants were not the only ones to notice similarities. Students who collaborated virtually also found many things in common. “I felt just like I was working with one of my buddies. Everything was exactly the same” (VStudent4). “We do have a lot in common. We both play sports so we can talk about that. The way we are, like our personalities, are the same so that worked out well” (VStudent1). “We are students and we wanted to make good grades so we had the same goals” (VStudent2). For teachers, forming collegial relationships with educators from another country had many of the same impacts as the relationships that students formed with their peers. Common goals seemed to be at the root of many of these relationships. The principal described his work with the Danish principal. “I think that we have similar goals in lots of ways, we want to expose our students to something else” (Principal1). Other adults described these common goals.

- We want the same things for our students. We want the same things for our families, those who have children. We want our students to grow up and be successful. To go to university and to be good members of society. I think every society, every country, wants that. (DPC)
- Goals are similar. To give students an opportunity for something different. To have them see the world. To see it first-hand. We all want students to be successful in the larger world. To have the skills to make them do well after gymnasium or university. (TeacherD)
- I do think that both schools have similar goals. We want what is best for our students and we want them to be successful in the world...We all want to make a difference in the world and to make the world a better place for our kids. (Teacher3)

These common partnership goals also seemed evident to the students.

I think that the teachers have the goal of wanting the students to learn and they want the students to be interested. I think American and Danish teachers want the same. They made this good opportunity for us to travel and to learn more about the world. I think that [TeacherD] wants us to be successful and want us to know English better and to do well. [PC] too. He wants his students to do well and be successful and he wants them to know the world more and be around Europeans to know more of the world. (Dane2)

Overwhelmingly, students and adults noted many more similarities than differences.

Only one student described a difference in values. “Though we both came from middleclass to

rich families and were from the 'western' world, our values were totally different, and we didn't really have anything in common” (GMS Open Ended Q5).

Perspective and worldview. Finally, collaborating internationally impacted participant's perceptions and worldview. This sub-theme of changed attitudes and behaviors is featured last because it seemed to represent a culmination of several of the other sub-themes – most specifically, understanding of self and understanding of others. After participating in the partnership, both teens and adults reported that misconceptions were dispelled; that they had a curiosity about, and openness to, other cultures; and that they had a revised view of the world and their place in it (Dane1, DPC, PC, TeacherD, Teacher3, TStudent8).

Misconceptions were dispelled. As participants engaged in the international partnership, their misconceptions about others were revealed and ultimately dispelled. Many participants admitted that they held inaccurate beliefs about other cultures, often rooted in the media (DPC, TStudent8, Dane1). These misconceptions came to light throughout the partnership and many dissipated as participants interacted with one another. In the end, participants evidenced greater understanding of, and appreciation for, others and reported being less likely to make generalizations in the future (DPC, F2FStudent6, Teacher1, TStudent8).

As they interacted with their American peers, the Danish students acknowledged some of the misconceptions they held about American culture. “I did enjoy meeting American teens and seeing if their life was like what I had seen on television. Once I was here I saw that we had some mistruths about what it really is,” (Dane1) said one student. He went on to discuss how generalizations he made about Americans before his visit did not always seem to hold true.

We have this conception that everyone in America is fat and lazy. I do see that some of that is true but some of it is not. I think that a lot of it is a difference in lifestyle...But to

the mistruths I also saw students who play sports and are fit. Like the football game we played in. There were many who were athletic and played well and there were cheerleaders. (Dane1)

Another Danish student made a similar assumption about obesity in America, and later realized his mistake.

I was pretty surprised about the fatness. Because you hear a lot of things that in America everyone is fat. When you look at the street or something there are more thin people than fat people. It wasn't like every American is fat or something. I guess that was a stereotype. (Dane2)

As students worked together and got to know one another, the Danes realized that everyone in America was not what they expected from the media. "I learned that everything is not like in the movies. People were not really as I expected. They were better I would say. Mostly people were about the same as at home" (Dane2). "I guess everything is not just what you see on internet and in movies" (Dane3) said another. "We see a lot of American movies and I guess we think that is life. But it was not just like that. I see things a bit more like normal" (Dane3). The Danish partnership coordinator admitted that, "Our students have these stereotypes about Americans based on what they see on TV and in movies and I guess to some extent I had that too" (DPC). He went on to explain how his thoughts changed, "Not everyone is the same in a country. People vary. Just like any place. And just because you see something in the movies about a country does not mean that everyone in the country is that way" (DPC).

Recognizing that misconceptions existed, the partnership coordinators designed ways for participants to interact that would expose and counteract stereotypes. One of these assignments

was the *Getting to Know You* project. It allowed students to share an overview of their lives with their international peers.

Students in both classes worked in small groups with students from their own school to create a PowerPoint that described their everyday life. They included pictures of their school, their families, home and friends. Some even included videos. They talked about what an average day was like – things like how long they were in school, what their classes were like, when they did homework, sports, hobbies. After all of the projects were completed, they were shared electronically with the other class. This project happened first, before the other academic projects and before the exchange experience. I think that the students enjoyed this one very much. It dispelled many misconceptions and helped them get to know one another before working together in class and visiting each other. (TeacherD)

By experiencing life in another country first-hand, participants were able to recognize the fallacies they held about others and replace them with accurate information.

The academic assignments completed during the partnership were also designed to give participants an opportunity to examine their beliefs about others and determine how accurate they were. This goal was evident to students. TStudent8 said the government project forced him to “get that first person view of what it was really like. To see if our perception, which is based on what we see in the media, is really accurate.” A Danish student made a similar observation after completing one of the class assignments. “Like I said, I guess I am more aware that everything in the media might not be entirely accurate and I should not always take it as it is...take it the way it is represented” (Dane1).

The study abroad experience was a powerful component of the partnership, especially when it came to perceptions of others. Participants were given opportunities to experience local culture and to understand what everyday life was like in another country.

They do research and they prepare for the visit. They work with the students from [PC] class to get a more personal perspective on the states and I think that helps to dispel misconceptions. They have other assignments while there are on the exchange too, not just having fun and being in the culture. They have assignments related to their American Studies class. They have to find out things, to do research, to really examine what it is like for the American. (TeacherD)

Curiosity and openness to other cultures. PC maintained that participation in the partnership helped by “preparing them to live in a global workplace and global community” and led to “increased curiosity about the world outside of our little beach town” (PC). Students experienced a change in perspective and/or expanded worldview after participation in the program. One student said, “I wouldn’t have been as aware of world events and politics in other countries” (GMS Open Ended Q1). Another said that the experience “opened a new perspective to new cultures and new ways of life” (GMS Open Ended Q2). After going to Denmark, one of the students remarked, “I think I am more understanding of people and try to see things from other points of view” (TStudent3). Lastly, one of the students who collaborated virtually said that the experience made her, “think of myself as more wanting to see the world” (VStudent2).

Evidence of heightened global mindedness, as seen in changed perspectives, can be found in student responses to Hett’s Global Mindedness Scale survey (Appendix N). This broadly suggests increased curiosity and awareness of other cultures. When asked to respond to

statements on the Global Mindedness Scale survey (Appendix N), students overwhelmingly expressed interest and concern for others, and the world in general.

- 21 of 21 students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: Americans can learn something of value from all different cultures.
- 14 of 21 students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I think of myself not only as a citizen of my country but also as a citizen of the world.
- 20 of 21 students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I enjoy trying to understand people's behavior in the context of their culture.
- 18 of 21 students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: It is important that American universities and colleges provide programs designed to promote understanding among students of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- 15 of 21 students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement: American values are probably the best.

The survey indicated that there was a relationship between enhanced global mindedness and participation in the program. Several students acknowledged that they had little or no international experience prior to participating, and that they were more interested in other cultures as a result of participation. These findings support a change in perspective and/or worldview.

Revised view of the world and your place in it. The adults who took part in the partnership thought differently about themselves, the world, and their place in it, after participation. This often transferred to their philosophy about teaching. The American partnership coordinator explained the impact of the program on his overall perspective on education.

It sort of caused me to reflect on why I teach the way I teach, how I teach, and the purpose of education. Again, it's one of those things where you're. . . when you're teaching day to day week to week year to year you kind of get in the rut of doing what you did the year before, piggybacking on what you did the day before. And when you do something bigger like this it again really makes you think about what you're doing and why you're doing it. So that's been nice. (PC)

The Danish coordinator described a similar impact and how the experience gave him a broader view of education.

It has given me the opportunity to think about education as a profession through the eyes of my friends here, [PC] and [Teacher1]. When we talk about things with our students, they are very much the same. We want the same things for our students. We want the same things for our families, those who have children. I believe it gives you that big picture. The picture of our world, of our future. How do we give the next generation what they need? (DPC)

The principal was able to make a connection on an even larger scale when he described how the experience affected his views on American educational practices. “It really gave me a reason to think about education in general and what is truly best for kids. Is what we are doing in the US the best? Why are we falling behind other countries (Principal1)?”

In addition to their own changed perspectives, the adults involved also noted changes in the way their students viewed the world after participating in partnership activities.

During the experience they learn so much more about culture in the states and about themselves as persons. I believe that they learn more about where they fit in the world and the similarities and differences of people around the world. (TeacherD)

“It has made my students more aware of themselves and how small the world is” (Teacher1), said one teacher. Her colleague noticed not just a difference in the way students viewed the world, but also in how they viewed their place in it.

Teenagers can be all caught up in their own world. Nothing matters except things that directly impact them. Being with people from another country forces them out of their own little bubble. They are forced to see a much broader perspective and view the world differently. I think it also forces them to view their own country differently too. As a country, we tend to have that same approach – that we are the center of the world.

Interacting with Danes gives them a reason to look in the mirror in a different way and consider the way the rest of the world views Americans...Again, it is that perspective thing. Students get to see what things are like in other places...outside of our red white and blue borders. They are able to hear how other students think and learn what is important to them, what they want for their personal future and what they want for their country... I think any time we interact with someone else, we are forced to reevaluate our beliefs and how we see ourselves and to some degree how we see our country. (Teacher3)

Finally, the American partnership coordinator described the benefits of the program in relation to students’ understanding of their place in the world.

I think the big benefit for our students and what's really good about the program is that they get exposed to other cultures because American students tend to sort of be in an American bubble. They watch American television, they speak their own language...I think it forces them to reflect on what it is to be American. On what it is to sort of live in the United States and look at how other people live, how other people think, how other people view education, and again the role of teenager. So just asking the American kids

to think about who they are, why they do things, why we do things the way they're done, is really beneficial. (PC)

Supporting Theme 3: Participant Suggestions for Best Practices

By taking part in the international partnership, participants were able to recognize what worked well and offer suggestions for replication. These suggestions fell into two categories: those for best practices in instruction and those for best practices in study abroad.

Best instructional practices. Overwhelmingly, participants said that getting to know the people who they were working with was important to the learning process. One of the American students offered advice to teachers who participate in international partnerships.

Let students get to know each other and talk and then get to work. I think we want to be social and find out about each other since we are from different countries. It is probably best to get some of that taken care of first so then we can concentrate on work. Plus it is just more fun when you know someone as a person! (F2FStudent6)

Danish students expressed similar sentiments, “[you should] have the discussions. To do the talking parts to have the students get to know who they are working with before the work” (Dane3). Dane2 also stressed the connection between social interactions and a successful academic experience.

Just being sure to be able to talk to each other. I don’t think I would want to just work with a student and not really know them. It would not be as fun. I would want to be sure to make friends too. For me, that is what would be the best...the best...the best at getting to know them. If you are making new friends you will be most interested in the work. (Dane2)

Teachers made sure that there was time allotted for this crucial aspect of the partnership. “I think the biggest thing is giving students an opportunity to make those personal connections” (Teacher3). Both partnership coordinators recognized the importance of allowing time for students to forge personal bonds, in addition to completing the academic work. “I would say to allow the time to get to know each other, to socialize” (DPC). This type of bonding is one of the reasons for the *Getting to Know You* project. “[it is why I] do things like the getting to know you project initially. Allow those social bonds to develop... and then...then use as many tools as possible that are already in use” are ways to make the educational experience successful, said TeacherD.

Using tools that are already a part of everyday life is another best practice that was mentioned frequently. When describing what worked about the academic tasks, Dane3 said, “[We should] use the things we use already, the online tools. Not to learn some new thing that would just be for this. Use things that makes sense.” Teachers made similar observations. “If students Tweet or Facebook or Instagram or Snapchat, find ways to use that. Then it will seem more a part of everyday – just with different people” (TeacherD).

Finally, participants felt that it was an instructional best practice to design assignments that were relevant and allowed students to explore the viewpoints of their international peers. They wanted to learn from experts (Dane3, F2FStudent6, TStudent8). When asked how teachers should choose topics, a student said, “I guess that should be about something related or something you can only find out more from that group. Like about Denmark or something, so you can get the real person’s perspective who lives there or who is an expert” (F2FStudent6). Another student stressed the importance of relevance when designing successful educational opportunities:

And to do relevant things. Like when we were in Denmark, we did this thing with wind power. That was really new to us because we don't really have anything like that in our area of the United States. We went and visited some wind power parks and saw how they make the wind turbines. That was something that we could not have gotten as much knowledge about at home or from an American. (TStudent8)

Another student said, "The work should also be a way to know about the other country's ideas. You want to know what it is like in other places in the world and how it is different from your own. That is what I think would be best for teachers" (Dane2). Teachers chose topics purposefully to achieve this goal. "I think that teachers should think about making the assignments a way so that they can find out what the others are thinking. So find a way to have rich discussions so that similarities or differences can really come out and be examined" (DPC).

Best practices in study abroad/international partnerships. Participants who traveled as a part of the international partnership also offered suggestions for best practices. Students and adults encouraged people to step outside of their comfort zone in order to maximize an international experience (DPC, Dane3, TStudent8). "Know that the food will be different. But just be open minded and ready to have fun. You have to be open to a different schedule and different experiences when you visit another place. It is hard to tell someone what exactly to expect" (Dane1). The Danish partnership coordinator offered similar advice, "Take all of it in and take advantage of every experience. That may mean trying new things, things you would not have done at home. You should try them" (DPC).

Participants also suggested interacting with the locals and immersing yourself in the culture. "Even though we were doing mostly tourist things, I made a point to try and interact with the locals when I could. I know how important that is and I wanted to experience what I

could” (TStudent8). The Danish partnership coordinator suggested that you, “be outgoing and friendly and try to learn as much as you can about the culture and about the everyday life” (DPC). One of the students expressed the importance of living like the locals for a successful study abroad experience.

Just go with it man. Do everything and see everything. Get yourself out there. Eat all the foods even if they look or smell weird. See all the places. Definitely go to the famous places and what the place is known for but also go to the normal places. See what life is like for the locals. Do the things that they do. And oh my god, don’t go to McDonalds! I mean, who does that? You are in another country, try something new! (TStudent8)

In conclusion, throughout the partnership experience, participants were able to recognize components that yielded the greatest impact for the success of the program. For academic assignments, it was the ability to get to know your international peers and work on relevant projects. When it came to study abroad, stepping out of your comfort zone and immersing yourself in the local culture were the two most often recommended best practices.

Summary of Findings by Research Question

Research Question 1

What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning? Based on data collected from stakeholder interviews, observations, test data, and teacher lesson plans, this study found that the opportunity to work collaboratively with students and teachers from another country enhanced perceptions of student learning in three key ways (a) higher levels of engagement (b) a deeper understanding of academic content and (c) the utilization of 21st century skills. These findings were featured most prominently in the overall theme: technology was used throughout the partnership and the first supporting

theme: learning improved.

Higher levels of engagement. Aghaei et al. (2012) classified web 2.0 as “people connections” (p. 1). This is precisely the role it served in the partnership activities. Facebook, Skype and Twitter allowed students to get to know one another before the face - to - face visit and to maintain those relationships long after they had returned to their respective homes. Skype, wikispaces, and GoogleDocs and other collaborative workspaces provided platforms for students and teachers to connect effectively and quickly. Students were more interested in the lessons because they were working with someone new, which was made possible through web 2.0 tools. “It was fun because we don't know them. It was just a new experience” (VStudent1).

For students armed with digital wisdom, the opportunity to utilize web 2.0 tools in the classroom environment increased student interest and engagement. One of the students said “I think it was just more fun, more interesting” (F2FStudent6). “It was way more interesting than just the same old thing,” said another (F2FStudent1). Embedding 21st century tools in academic activities added relevance as well as increased student interest, as evidenced by student and teacher interviews. Dane2 described the digital tools used for class by saying, “We used the varied programs to work. For the government project, we used wikis” (Dane2). When she was supposed to research American governmental systems, she said that she “was not sure which sites would be good to use because I wanted to have the most accurate information” (Dane2). Access to the internet allowed her to quickly, “email my American group members to ask questions” (Dane2). After students conducted their research, they had a class discussion via Skype. Dane2 was interested in the discussion because it involved talking to someone from another country. She said, “I am a little shy so I did not talk much but I got much from the discussion. It was amazing to think we were talking to others who

were so far away” (Dane2).

Teachers noticed higher levels of engagement during partnership activities (DPC, TeacherD, Teacher1). Teacher1 summarized the combined benefits of technology and collaboration evident in the international collaborations by saying,

Anytime you do something different with teenagers they get excited about it. So the fact that you're engaging a different culture, a different country, you're utilizing technology, and they're having the opportunity to flaunt what they know and they learn – that gives them a huge sense of pride. (Teacher1)

The American partnership coordinator provided further support for the increased levels of engagement in his classes during partnership activities. He said, “using the international exchange, working with other countries, and just doing normal classwork with students in other countries adds an extra element of interest and motivation to get students involved in what's already going on in the classroom” (PC). He summed up the benefits by saying, “We're taking the learning that we're doing and just adding another element to it to make it more interesting” (PC).

Deeper understanding of academic content. Student and teacher responses during the interviews supported a perceived deeper understanding of academic content. When asked what made partnership assignments different than traditional ones, VStudent1 described the richer learning experience:

You have to really know the information in order to tell it to someone else who doesn't know it because they may not understand it a certain way that you're explaining it so you have to think of other ways that you can explain it to them. (VStudent1)

Another student described the experience in similar terms. “Teaching a Danish person is

different because we have to tie our government to theirs to help them understand what we're doing as well as understand their government so we kind of put it together” (F2FStudent1). He added, “I think got more [out of it] because I now understand the difference of my government from their government. So I see actually what our government does now” (F2FStudent1).

Teachers noticed better results, in terms of motivation and understanding of academic content, when students worked with their international peers. According to Teacher1, collaboration with the Danes provided both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for her students. She said, “I think it gives them a level of work that might be a little bit better than if they were just earning an A or a B. And it gives them that personal pride and self-satisfaction” (Teacher1). PC said that working with “students in other countries adds an extra element of interest and motivation” and DPC said that “students are more interested ...because they know they will be learning things that will assist them.”

Higher levels of engagement and motivation, combined with a deeper understanding of academic content, yielded positive results when it came to test data. According to Tucker et al. (2002) motivation has a direct effect on academic achievement and that indeed proved to be the case at this school. Over the course of the five year partnership, test scores for classes involved in the international activities showed more growth than the school as a whole. Most of the collaborative work with the Danes took place in the United States History classes. The percentage change for end-of-course tests in United States History was 6.3% during the five years the program has been in place as compared with 5.05% for the district and 5.7% for the state. In Civics & Economics, a Social Studies class where there were no partnership activities, there was a 3.2% increase during the course of the partnership, as compared with 3.9% for the district and 3.8% for the state during the same time period (Table 4.3). Partnership activities

took place in the United States History classes all five years of the partnership, and yielded greater gains than the Civics & Economics classes, who did not participate. This suggests a positive impact on student learning from participation in this program although I was unable to determine if the differences were statistically significant.

Utilization of 21st century skills. The Danish – American partnership utilized 21st century skills such as the ability to “think critically, build collaborative relationships, to problem solve, and to communicate in a diverse global community” (Keeping Pace, 2010, p. 43). The infrastructure of the school – being fully wireless – provided a platform for students and teachers to use web 2.0 tools for collaboration. “I think...technology helps it a lot. You get that instant quickness, the kids can see the kids they're talking to” (Teacher1), said one of the teachers when describing the use of web-conferencing in her classroom. Simonson et al. (2006) suggested that blended instruction, that incorporates technology to connect to other classrooms around the world, can provide widespread benefits, and this study has contributed to these findings. The authors (Simonson et al., 2006) also indicated that technological collaboration, like the kind featured in this study, can create rich opportunities to form partnerships with schools in other countries. However, few studies have provided the wealth of feedback from students, who nearly unanimously indicated that they enjoyed the chance to learn from their international peers, both face - to - face and virtually (Dane1, F2FStudent1, F2FStudent2, F2FStudent3, TStudent8, VStudent1). This is evident in F2FStudent3’s interview when describing the role of technology in the partnership: “It is so easy. You would never know that we are working with people all across the world. I don’t know how anyone did anything before computers.”

Technology-based learning goes hand in hand with the increasingly interconnected nature of our world. Multinational corporations are able to span the globe with a click of the

mouse. The American partnership coordinator acknowledged the changing nature of business in the 21st century and recognized how valuable the international collaborations present in the partnership will prove for his students as they prepare to enter the workforce.

As time goes on they are going to be forced to interact more with the outside world. So preparing them for that, giving them the skills to do that technologically, culturally...preparing them to live in a global workplace and global community [is a benefit]. (PC)

DPC described the ease with which partnership activities were accomplished using technology. “We have so many tools now that make talking so easy – even across time zones and a big ocean. It is simple to do these days. Students and teachers can use online tools to do so many things together” (DPC).

In most cases, students regarded virtual collaborations as comparable to face - to - face. They enjoyed learning from their other students – whether they were across the room or across an ocean. Dane3 said that it “was good to learn about another country and government from someone who lives there.” Another Danish student echoed this sentiment when describing the online assignments completed before the visit to America:

It allowed us to see things from a different point of view. I got to understand American form of government more by talking to someone who lives there. They could explain what it was really like to live it, not just in books. (Dane1)

The findings herein suggest that the international partnership impacted perceptions of student learning by leading to higher levels of engagement, a deeper understanding of academic content, and the opportunity to utilize 21st century skills.

Research Question 2

How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness? Based on data collected from interviews and the Global Mindedness Scale survey (Hett, 1994), this study found that participation in a blended international partnership enhanced global mindedness. Specifically, students and teachers gained a multifaceted understanding for, and appreciation of, self and others. Hett's Scale (1994) was designed to "assess the affective change that might result from a global studies class, a study abroad experience, or significant contact with people outside one's own culture" (Hett, 1993, p. 4). For the purposes of this study, the general definition of global mindedness was used interchangeably with other terms that often describe the same skill set: global competence, global citizenship, cross-cultural competence, intercultural effectiveness, intercultural sensitivity, etc. In Deardorff's (2004) study of internationalization in higher education, the participants defined it as "knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and realizing one's self" (p. 14). Based on this definition, findings supported enhanced global mindedness among participants (Dane1, Dane3, DPC, GMS Scale, TeacherD, Teacher1, Teacher3, PC). These findings are displayed most prominently in supporting theme two: participants evidenced changed thinking and attitudes.

Understanding of self. Participation in the international partnership afforded students and teachers the opportunity to examine themselves – their values, beliefs, and behaviors. The partnership coordinator described this introspective component as a byproduct of the partnership. He said that it "forces them to reflect on what it is to be American, on what it is to sort of live in the United States and look at how other people live, how other people think, how other people view education, and the role of teenager" (PC). He went on to say that it "is really beneficial"

for the “American kids to think about who they are, why they do things, why we do things the way they're done” (PC). The principal observed a similar phenomenon after his students returned from Denmark. “They had an understanding of American culture which they never had” (Principal1).

Through face - to - face and virtual interactions with their international peers, students were compelled to examine how they were representing themselves. One of the teachers described this introspection by saying, “It has made my students more aware of themselves and how small the world is” (Teacher1). She elaborated on the impacts of the self-reflection by saying, “I think that in some cases it also made them hypersensitive to our faults as a country and they did not want to fall into those stereotypes of Americans as being lazy and fat” (Teacher1). The same teacher went on to describe the effects on her own understandings of self. “When you do something bigger like this it again really makes you think about what you're doing and why you're doing it” (Teacher1). The Danish partnership coordinator echoed her thoughts by saying, “I have learned so much about myself on a personal level and so had many great experiences professionally” (DPC). When describing the study abroad component, a student described the effect on their understanding of self and others. “It had taught me a lot about other people, but also about myself” (GMS Open Ended Q2).

Students realized that they had become more open minded as a result of the international partnership. “So I'm definitely more open to different cultures now,” said VStudent1. Another student described changes in the way he thought after the study abroad experience by saying, “I think I am more understanding of people and try to see things from other points of view. Not just mine” (TStudent3). Several students were forced to examine how they allowed the media to influence the way that they view others. “I guess everything is not just what you see on Internet

and in movies. I guess I would try to think more open about how it might be somewhere else if I had not been there before,” said Dane3 after his visit to America. One of his classmates acknowledged that her perceptions had also been colored greatly by the media.

I guess it made me think about what I see on television and movies about other places... I guess I am more aware that everything in the media might not be entirely accurate and I should not always take it as it is...take it at the way it is represented. (Dane1)

Participants, both teenagers and adults, gained a more thorough understanding of themselves, and where they fit in the world, as a result of participation in the partnership.

Understanding of others. Participants’ deeper understanding was not limited just to self, but extended to the world around them. “I have learnt a lot about the culture, and understand more about their way to act and their life values,” said one student (GMS Open Ended Q2). Over and over again, participants expressed greater understanding of, and appreciation for, others. “I’m definitely more open to different cultures now” (VStudent1). “It makes me more open minded and tolerant of different cultures” (GMS Open Ended Q2). “It’s opened a new perspective to new cultures and new ways of life” (GMS Open Ended Q2).

The partnership coordinator described far-reaching benefits for students in terms of “exposing them to other cultures and having them aware that there is another world outside the city they live, the state they live, the country they live in there is a world” (PC). He went on describe the impact for students who did not even participate in the partnership.

Students in my other classes, those who didn’t do things with the Danes, often asked me questions about the partnership. They were very interested to know about the kids who were going to visit and what they were like. There was an increased curiosity about the world outside of our little beach town. (PC)

Academic assignments undertaken as a part of the partnership provided opportunities for greater understanding. During the “What is Happiness?” Socratic Seminar at the American high school, students attempted to gain insight into the nuances of one another’s culture. The discussion centered on an article that maintained Denmark had the happiest people on earth. The partnership coordinators, English teacher, two Danish teachers, and approximately 40 students (20 American and 20 Danish) took part in the 90 minute seminar. Students were seated in two circles – one inner and one outer. Even those seated in the outer circle seemed totally engaged and interested in what was being said (Observational Notes). Many parts of the discussion were difficult, but all students participated in the seminar. During the seminar, students had to speak about their values and the essence of their country. One of the Danish girls acknowledged her feelings about both countries and said,

I mean there was a bunch [of information] against America but I kind of approve, not approve, but it’s true though. There is a lot more violence [in the US] than in Denmark. But then again they're two different countries and it’s going to be different. (Socratic Seminar)

An American girl shared her interpretation of the article and attempted to understand more about what was important to the average Dane. She summarized, “In the article it had something about the American dream being about having bigger houses, fancy cars, and nicer clothes” and then asked, “Is there some type of ideal in Denmark that you are supposed to reach for” (Socratic Seminar)? Again, even though she was talking about topics that were value-laden and perhaps uncomfortable, she was willing to participate in the learning experience in an attempt to understand more about the Danish way of life. She went on to acknowledge cultural differences about the aim of higher education by saying,

Maybe it's because we have to pay so much to go to college. I would want to get something out of it. I don't want to pay a bunch to go to college and still have three jobs that have nothing to do with what I'm majoring in. I want to be rich if I pay that much for college. (Socratic Seminar)

The adults involved in this study – the principal, the partnership coordinators, and the teachers – all recounted myriad ways their views about the world transformed as a result of participation (DPC, Principal, PC, TeacherD, Teacher1, Teacher3). The English teacher vocalized the impact on her ability to understand others:

I just find that it's invaluable as a teacher to work with these other teachers and to broaden my horizons as an educator and as a human understanding other cultures. If I've learned to work with a diverse range of teachers and understand more cultures around the world I can apply that to when I have maybe a new students that has immigrated into the country or a new students that comes from a different cultural background it gives me just more tools in my bag to play the education game with. (Teacher2)

The Danish partnership coordinator said that, “Any kind of contact with people different from yourself will make you more open to new ideas” (DPC). When describing the partnership, Teacher3 said, “It has been eye opening. I have enjoyed it myself and I have seen the students, my own children included, get so much out of it.”

In summary, the global mindedness of participants, both students and teachers, expanded as a result of interactions with their international peers. This occurred with respect to participants' own values, beliefs and behaviors, as well as their understanding of, and appreciation for, the values, beliefs and behaviors of others. The principal's description of the

partnership can be seen an example of these findings. “I think that it opens their eyes to a whole new world and makes them more accepting of others” (Principal1).

Research Question Three

How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face- to- face interactions?

Based on data collected from stakeholder interviews, observations, and Hett’s Global Mindedness Scale Survey (1994), the findings in this study showed that Allport’s (1954) criteria present in the international partnership impacted face- to- face interactions by enhancing perceptions of learning, dispelling stereotypes and increasing global mindedness. The presence of Allport’s criteria provided the foundation for the partnership and the results yielded by the study. Findings related to this question were evident all four themes.

All aspects of Allport’s (1954) theory were evident in the interpersonal interactions involved in this international partnership (DPC, Dane1, PC, Principal1, TeacherD, Teacher1). Contact Hypothesis Theory had the effect of reducing the anxiety of participants by abolishing preconceptions through one-on-one encounters and close contact with members of a different culture. An American student described how open communication improved the hosting experience and helped to alleviate her anxiety.

So it was more than I expected. I wasn't sure how we were going to get along or what I would need to do. But it was actually good each time. I think you just need to talk to your person you will be staying with, or will be staying with you, ahead of time and get to know them so you can know more what to expect. It was fun to learn about new culture so you should on the lookout for that. To see what is different and what is the same. (F2FStudent6)

While Allport's (1954) theory focused on face - to - face interactions, it is easy to extrapolate that to the social interactions afforded through the use of modern technology. In this case, contact was both in person and over the internet. It is likely that the widespread use of the internet by students prior to this program – both at home and in class – removed international barriers that would have plagued people in Allport's time. In the half century since his theory was generated, virtual interactions have become widespread and in many cases, the primary means of social interactions – especially with teens. In this study, Allport's criteria have been applied to both face - to - face and virtual experiences.

Respect for the customs of others. Respect for the customs, beliefs and behavior of others was essential for the partnership's common goals to be achieved. The American principal reported that he and the Danish principal had similar aspirations for their students. "I think that we have similar goals in lots of ways, we want to expose our students to something else" (Principal1). To achieve these goals, students and teachers were required to acknowledge differences before moving forward. "It was different [hosting] someone that doesn't go by the same rules and beliefs," said one of the students. (F2FStudent1). Overall, students seemed comfortable recognizing differences and discussing them. "I don't think [we] had any big problems, of course there were some difference between our cultures, but there weren't any misconceptions. If there were, I explained it, and we had a conversation about it," said one of the Danes when asked about any complications during the study abroad experience (GMS Open Ended Q4).

One area where respect for the customs and culture of others came into play was the school setting. While students were prepared to be overwhelmed by cultural differences, or had heard about the differences in social norms and school standards, many were still unsettled by

the differences between Danish schools and American schools. According to both teachers and students, Danish schools were generally more informal than American schools, yet Danish students seemed to have a stronger work ethic (DPC, Dane1, Dane2, Dane3, PC, Principal, Teacher3). The Danish school had a less formal classroom environment in which students were allowed to come and go whenever they want to, without obtaining permission from teachers. Danish students indicated that American schools seemed like jails by comparison (Dane1, F2FStudent6). Many American students had already spoken with their Danish counterparts, and were prepared for these differences but still had some difficulty adjusting to them. “We have a lot of rules here and over there they don't really have that many” (F2FStudent1), said one of the American students when describing her experience in the Danish school.

The Danes’ greater level of seriousness with respect to schoolwork was observed by American students. “When it comes to the work assignments, they are very serious. They want to do well, no matter what,” said VStudent2. While students noted the differences, they respected them and tried to adhere to the same standard when collaborating. One of the American students admitted, “I did not want to embarrass myself in front of people from somewhere else and have them think I was dumb” (VStudent3). The partnership coordinator also observed both similarities and differences in the schools and teachers. “They [Danish teachers] are much like me – very laid back. School there is a different atmosphere though. Teachers there are much more educated than here and they make more money” (PC). Both students and teachers recognized differences in customs and values, but respected them in an effort to achieve the common goals of the partnership.

Respect for the customs and values of others was apparent in the post-program interviews. Students talked about more than just school activities - they talked about friends,

parties, extra-curricular activities, and hobbies (Dane1, Dane2, Dane3, F2FStudent1, F2FStudent2, F2FStudent6, TStudent8). Their participation in the program led each to understand more about the other, and this in turn led to greater levels of understanding about the cultural values and beliefs of the other country. One of the girls described her hosting experience. "It was different, because mine [Danish student] is three years older than me. So it was like having an older sibling. . . [but] someone that doesn't go by the same rules and beliefs" (F2FStudent1). She acknowledged the differences, but respected them. Amichai-Hamburger and McKenna (2006) described the capacity of one-on-one multicultural interaction to lead to increased generalization, in which group members extrapolate contact with members to other cultures beyond the scope of the current project. Interview and survey responses certainly corroborated this point. "I think that they just want to see how we are, to satisfy their curiosity about Americans" (VStudent2), said one of the American students.

Common goals. Gleason (1979) stated that the opportunity provided by two distinct cultures meeting on common ground, based on unified goals, could have the potential to create cultural similarities. This was certainly true for American and Danish students, many of whom learned more about each other and about themselves (Dane1, Dane2, F2FStudent6, TStudent8). This fusion model of multiculturalism mirrors the experiences of participants. In this model, there was no cultural superiority between the two groups. "We are a lot alike each other when it comes to teenager problems and we had the same dreams and values" (GMS5). Group members quickly had to set aside preconceptions and concerns in order to fit in and achieve the tasks at hand.

Common bonds and objectives of members of both groups created a certain level of empathy and mutual understanding that permeated most interactions. One of the teachers characterized commonalities that came with those in the teaching profession.

The teachers were very gracious and very low key. We got along great. I think in a way it is because teachers are the same mindset anywhere in the world – we want to make the world better and want what is best for the next generation. (Teacher1)

TeacherD and the American principal expressed common goals for the partnership.

Goals are similar. To give students an opportunity for something different. To have them see the world. To see it first-hand. We all want students to be successful in the larger world. To have the skills to make them do well after gymnasium or university. (TeacherD)

“I think that we have similar goals in lots of ways, we want to expose our students to something else” (Principal1). Teacher3 concurred by saying, “I do think that both schools have similar goals. We want what is best for our students and we want them to be successful in the world.”

The common goals expressed by adults were evident to students. Dane2 said, “I think American and Danish teachers want the same. They made this good opportunity for us to travel and to learn more about the world.” One of the students who collaborated virtually felt that she and her international peers had similar aims. “We are students and we wanted to make good grades so we had the same goals” (VStudent1). Finally, DPC described the common goals – not just for their students, but for their families, as well. “When we talk about things with our students, they are very much the same. We want the same things for our students. We want the same things for our families, those who have children” (DPC).

One of these minor barriers to achieving common goals was language. Most Danish students and teachers spoke English, but none of the Americans spoke Danish (DPC, PC, Teacher1). Even though many of the Danes were multilingual, their English was influenced by an accent. This led to subtle misunderstandings, but most of the time students quickly overcame them (TStudent8, VStudent2). Overall, the Danes were much more flexible when it came to language and were able to make things work when it came to the partnership (DPC, TeacherD). One of the American girls described the Dane she hosted, which highlights the multilingualism that many of her peers possessed.

Well her dad is Danish and her mom is Yugoslavian. So he speaks Danish and she speaks Yugoslavian so she knows both of those. And then, they couldn't speak to each other so they spoke in German. So that's how she knows another language...and she knows English and Spanish. (VStudent2)

Equal status. Equal status, another of Allport's (1954) criteria, seemed evident in the findings (DPC, PC, TeacherD, Teacher1, Teacher3). Teachers were able to find common ground as they worked together. "I think in a way it is because teachers are the same mindset anywhere in the world – we want to make the world better and want what is best for the next generation" (Teacher1). When describing the relationship between him and the Danish teachers, PC said, "The Danish guys and I were pretty much on the same page." The American English teacher also described a sense of equality with regards to her Danish peers. "I just been really fortunate that the teachers that I've worked with there have a very similar philosophy to teaching that I do" (Teacher2).

Students also felt that they were on par with their international peers. When asked to describe the interactions between him and the American students, Dane1 said, "I believe we

treated each other as equals.” Dane2 made a similar observation when he said, “we were students so we were equal.” When asked about the other participants, one student stated, “We are a lot like each other when it comes to teenager problems, and we had some of the same dreams and values” (GMS Open Ended Q5). Finally, in some cases, interactions with their international peers may have caused the American students to put their best foot forward in order to be viewed as equals. “I did not want to embarrass myself in front of people from somewhere else and have them think I was dumb” (VStudent3). Overall, adults and students described feelings of equal status.

Intergroup cooperation. Intergroup cooperation is inherent in a partnership, and this was no exception. Americans and Danes worked together in all aspects of the partnership (DPC, PC, TeacherD, Teacher1, Teacher3). Teachers planned lessons together, the principals and partnership coordinators at both schools joined forces to gain institutional support and implement activities, and the students collaborated to meet academic goals (Dane1, Dane2, DPC, PC, Principall1, Teacher1, Teacher2). It was also clear that the intergroup cooperation demonstrated throughout this program allowed students to hone skills that they will likely be able to rely on in future multicultural encounters (DPC, PC, TStudent8).

Cultural competence is a growing concern in a variety of professional fields, and has been incorporated into many undergraduate and graduate programs as a result. Deardorff, one of the foremost experts on intercultural competence, has worked with educational institutions and organizations in over 25 countries around the world. The closing of Deardorff’s article, *Assessing Intercultural Competence* (2011) asked educators to consider the following, “How well prepared are our students for this global world in which we live and work?” As previously

noted by the partnership coordinator, partnership activities exposed students to collaborative experiences that left them better prepared for their futures (PC).

Crawford and Kirby (2008) detailed the benefits of cooperation and heightened global awareness for students. It “enhances their...ability to work collaboratively with persons of diverse backgrounds, to understand and seek solutions to global issues, and to acquire 21st century skills” (p. 57). Certainly, participants in this study enhanced their ability to work collaboratively with others and to acquire and use 21st century skills (DPC, PC, TeacherD, Teacher1). Teacher3 described partnership activities as a way for “for people to communicate and to work together.” When asked about the benefits of online collaboration with the American students, Dane2 said that they “worked together and helped each other.”

Summary

In the end, Allport’s (1954) criteria of equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of others appeared to be cornerstones of the international partnership. Common goals served as a foundation for students and teachers (DPC, PC). As they worked on projects in their English and Social Studies classes, students showed higher levels of engagement in the classes that involved partnering with the Danes (TeacherD, DPC). The typical learning objectives were embedded within a context that married personal experience with cross-cultural opportunities. This new context engendered a sense of personal curiosity and growth that enhanced learning. This learning occurred in a variety of ways, including one-on-one interactions, group discussions, and virtual educational opportunities. Students and teachers from both countries entered into the partnership with equal status and conducted the program with common goals (DPC, TeacherD, Teacher3). Allport’s other two

indicators – intergroup cooperation and respect for the customs of others – became embedded in the partnership activities – whether conducted virtually or face - to - face.

CHAPER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative explanatory case study was to understand the impact of a blended international partnership on perceptions of learning and global mindedness in a North Carolina high school. This chapter provides a summary and discussion of the findings in relation to the empirical and theoretical literature, recommendations for best practices in similar programs, connections, and concludes with suggestions for further study.

Summary of the Findings

Based on the data collected and analyzed in this study, the following findings, arranged by research question, emerged:

Research Question 1

What impact, if at all, did participants perceive a blended international partnership to have on student learning? An analysis of the data suggested that participants' perceptions of learning was impacted in three areas (a) deeper understanding of academic content (b) higher levels of engagement and (c) utilization of 21st century skills.

Confirmation of a deeper understanding of academic content was provided in the way of increased test scores (Tables 4.1 – 4.4) and descriptions of collaborative projects (DPC, PC, Teacher D, Teacher1, Teacher3). Teachers' observations and comments substantiated students' descriptions of heightened levels of engagement while participating in collaborative international projects (TeacherD, Teacher1, Teacher2, Teacher3). The partnership relied on technology to bridge the geographic barriers inherent to international collaborations. This capitalized on students' affinity for social media and other web 2.0 tools to collaborate, communicate, and think

critically - the skills identified by the Partnership for 21st Century Skill as crucial for all students (P21).

Research Question 2

How, if at all, does participation in a blended international partnership impact global mindedness? An analysis of the data showed five facets of global mindedness: (a) understanding of self, (b) insecurities and worry, (c) understanding of others, (d) universality, and (e) perspective and worldview.

Global mindedness is often used interchangeably with global competence (Deardorff, 2009, 2011). The organization that facilitated this partnership, the *Center for International Understanding* described a globally competent student as one who is “prepared to interact with the world, both inside and outside our borders.” These are the competencies: Culturally Aware, Aware of World Events and Global Dynamics, Effective at Communicating with People from Other Cultures, Effective at Being a Collaborative Member of Multicultural Teams.

Findings suggest that participants grew towards competence in each of these areas (GMS Scale Survey). Even though they experienced some insecurities along the way, students gained a heightened sense of awareness – of themselves, the world, and of their place in the world (DPC, F2FStudent6, PC, TeacherD, Teacher1, Teacher3, TStudent8). Both students and teachers expanded their own horizons and acquired a deeper understanding of life in another country. This, in turn, transferred to the way that they understood their own country and their place in the world (F2FStudent6, TStudent8). Students gained experience collaborating, both in person and virtually, with peers from another culture. The contact initiated by the partnership spilled over into personal relationships and both students and teachers formed lasting friendships that transcended continental barriers (Dane1, Dane2, DPC, TeacherD, Teacher1, TStudent8). In the

end, the wealth of exposures and learning opportunities created by the partnership led to enhanced global mindedness in students and teachers.

Research Question 3

How, if at all, do equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country impact face-to-face interactions?

This question focused on criteria in Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis Theory. Multiple sources of data provided evidence that global mindedness was enhanced by participation in the blended international partnership with regards to Allport's categories (DPC, GMS Scale Survey, PC, Teacher3).

An analysis of the data showed five facets of global mindedness (a) understanding of self (b) insecurities (c) understanding of others (d) universality and (e) perspective and worldview. These connected to Allport (1954) in the following ways. Findings related to understanding of self, insecurities, and understanding of others all supported equal status among participants. Findings related to understanding of self, understanding of others, and universality provided evidence of common goals. Data that emerged within the categories of understanding of others and universality aligned with intergroup cooperation. Finally, findings within the themes of understanding of others, and perspective and worldview supported the presence of respect for the customs of students and teachers from another country.

Discussion

This section contains a discussion of the findings in relation to the theoretical and empirical literature on the topic. It begins with a discussion of the findings central to Constructivism; followed by study abroad; and finally, the Contact Hypothesis Theory.

Constructivism

This study utilized Constructivist Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1962) and Contact Hypothesis Theory (Allport, 1954) as theoretical frameworks to explore a deeper understanding of the impact of an international school partnership on a suburban North Carolina high school. Both theories were appropriate for this explanatory case study because they provided a framework for social interaction, which is essential to a blended international partnership.

Multiculturalism is at the heart of the constructivist framework. Deardorff's (2009) intercultural model pinpointed the boundaries of intercultural competence, signifying those who recognize cultural norms and values are capable of transcending them as a result. Busch (2009) associated multiculturalism with expertise in a variety of contexts, largely because students developed the capacity for transferring knowledge to various perspectives. This transferability was demonstrated repeatedly by students in test data, interviews, and surveys (F2FStudent6, TStudent8, Dane1, Dane2, Dane3). This body of evidence strongly suggests a higher level of global mindedness by students as a result of this multicultural contextual learning (Dane1, DPC, F2FStudent1, F2FStudent2, F2FStudent2, TeacherD, Teacher1, TStudent8, VStudent1).

As stated in Chapter 2, a constructivist perspective is particularly apt for framing the findings of a study on the impact of an international partnership, largely because of the focus on the socio-cultural experiences of the learner. Study findings suggest that perceptions of deeper student learning and increased global mindedness occurred on the part of participants as a result of their international collaboration (Dane1, Dane2, Dane3, DPC, F2FStudent6, PC, TeacherD, Teacher1, Teacher3). A constructivist perspective is uniquely poised to help understand these findings, and will likely continue to be employed by researchers in the future as educational opportunities like this one remain viable. Constructivism allowed the opportunity to examine the

worldview of students in an effort to analyze how learners arrived at new understandings (Piaget, 1952).

Building new knowledge. The perception that new learning was the result of participation in the partnership warrants an analysis of how a multicultural learning experience can influence the ways that students build new knowledge. Specifically, how did interactions with Danish students, teachers, and schools impact perceptions of student learning for American high school students, and vice-versa? Kukla (2000) explained that learning is an active process insofar as knowledge does not exist before it is experienced. In this case, the interactions between students and teachers formed the basis for that new knowledge. For example, American students described an adjustment when attending Danish schools, which were generally less rigid and gave students greater freedom (F2FStudent6, TStudent8). The partnership coordinator explained, “We have dress codes, we have bells, we have things that they don’t have in their school. And then we bring them here and [they] assimilated to that” (DPC). Teachers corroborated this point (TeacherD, Teacher1). Students’ experiences with school in another country built on their prior knowledge, and as a result of their international experiences, they were able to come to new, broader understandings of the concept of “school.”

New learning was made possible by experiencing information in a novel context. This was evident in the English class. The teacher described a lesson on T.S. Elliot, who is claimed by both the British and Americans as one of their own. “To get the European perspective on his poetry was very different than the American perspective...and so having that collaboration gave a dimension to that lesson I was never able to achieve with my students” (Teacher2). Students were exposed to new perspectives, which magnified their learning experience and allowed them to discern new meaning in the works of Elliot. This example illustrates the role of

constructivism inherent in the partnership (Piaget, 1952). Participants perceived new, and deeper, learning to have resulted from the partnership experiences.

Social interactions. The social nature of learning was an integral facet of the constructivist perspective utilized in this study. Kukla (2000) explained that learning is an active process, in which students piece together knowledge along with other learners. An active process implies mutual and simultaneous development that is supported by shared understandings (Kukla, 2000). This might include group activities, role-playing, and interaction with the subject matter across multiple modalities, as was the case in many partnership activities. The multicultural aspect of these learning opportunities enriched the educational experience of the learners, as supported in numerous ways by the findings of this study (DPC, PC, Principal, Teacher1). One of the American students said, “I liked learning what they thought and seeing if it was the same as me. It was different than just working with people I have known my whole life” (F2FStudent6).

Anecdotal evidence taken from specific instructional activities, such as the Socratic seminar, depicted a robust exchange of ideas as a result of the interactive nature of the assignment. American students were clearly intrigued by the notion of higher levels of government intervention in domestic programs such as Social Security and public education programs (Tucker et al., 2002). Students were asked about their perceptions of happiness, which led to a deeper understanding of the priorities for both cultures. This, in turn, prompted many students to examine their own concepts of happiness (i.e., culturally embedded ideas that are profoundly social constructs). Interactions like these led to new learning for participants, supporting Vygotsky’s (1962) theory on the role of social interactions in the acquisition of knowledge.

The implications of these findings are central to understanding of study abroad programs, virtual learning, and global mindedness. Vygotsky's (1962) social constructivism frames these findings by helping evaluate the quality of the cultural tools used to strengthen perceptions of learning. Vygotsky's (1962) theories are well suited for understanding the role of interactions with people from another country in constructing new knowledge. Vygotsky (1962) stated that humans use tools that they develop from their culture to mediate their social environment. In this way, social environment plays a critical role in cognitive development. The 21st century classroom, with its burgeoning technological capabilities and expanding social network, provides such a framework. Communicating via web 2.0 tools is common practice in the 21st century. Participants were able to assimilate interactions with their international peers into this framework, thus eliminating one barrier to learning from someone in another country.

The findings of this study solidify the expanding role of social interaction in creating new learning (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978). Constructivists (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978) have long understood that social skills help facilitate new learning, either through group interactions, effective communication skills, or the interplay of culture (i.e. understanding values, transacting cultural norms). It is into this framework of understanding that these findings interject new learning. Students perceived deeper levels of learning and understanding as a result of their interactions with their international peers (TStudent8, Dane 1, Dane2, Dane3, F2FStudent6). For students, this learning was not limited to just their understanding of another culture – it often provided a deeper understanding of their own environment. Students were compelled to examine and explain how their government and schools operated (Dane1, Dane2, Dane3, F2FStudent6, TStudent8). In this case, the self-examination took place both formally and informally - in group settings, virtual environments, and in person.

Study Abroad

Study abroad programs have been in place for decades in an effort to enhance, among other things, student learning and global mindedness. Dwyer (2006) found that the longer the exposure to multicultural learning, the better the results would be, and that a full academic year tended to impact personal and intercultural development. The proliferation of study abroad programs, more recently paired with a virtual component, has led researchers to examine variations in terms of length and extent of immersion in order to arrive at the optimal characteristics of a multicultural learning program. Kehl (2007), Golay (2006) and Mills et al. (2010) all found that international programs that included lengthy study abroad opportunities substantially improved student learning.

While the purpose of this study was not to ascertain the most effective combination of face - to - face and virtual interactions needed to yield the greatest impact on perceived learning and global mindedness, the findings do support the idea that students who participated virtually reaped many of the same benefits as those who experienced total immersion (DPC, VStudent1, VStudent2, PC, Teacher3). A partnership, like the one featured in this study, with various types of multicultural interactions – virtual collaborations, study abroad, and face to face interactions while hosting - can offer profound opportunities to enhance student learning and global mindedness. It is important to note that most of the research on study abroad programs has focused on university students who were able to travel for a semester or academic year (Golay 2006, Kehl, 2007). Lengthy immersion programs like this are not generally possible in public K-12 schools in America. Thus, partnerships such as the one featured in this study have attempted to circumvent this by adding a virtual component.

For many high school students living with digital wisdom, a blended partnership experience may prove to be as effective as study abroad. Opportunities for students to formulate their own social contexts and interactions promote individual development within a cultural framework. It is speculated here that the dynamics of this program are most closely associated with the social constructivist framework that Vygotsky (1954) developed, in part because of the age and educational level of the students participating, and in part because of the platforms for social interaction described herein. In short, students viewed virtual interactions as comparable to face - to - face (Dane1, DPC, TeacherD, TStudent8) as evidenced by VStudent1's comment: "We do the partnership stuff the same way we do anything else in our life. We communicate digitally."

Hett (1993) worked to create a metric that would measure global mindedness as a worldview "in which one sees oneself as connected to the global community and feels a sense of responsibility to its members" (p. 143). Incorporating virtual learning into the study abroad framework, a facet that was not really feasible when Hett did her research, would seem to be a natural extension of the effort to build global mindedness. A great deal of research has gone into developing the model virtual classroom since the turn of the 21st century. Hayes-Jacobs (2010) concluded that they are authentic learning experiences that can only be surpassed by travelling abroad. In the case of this program, a virtual classroom setting was combined with study abroad opportunities over the course of multiple years, and yielded positive outcomes (DPC, PC, Principal1, TeacherD, Teacher1, Teacher3).

The focus of this study was to ascertain the impact of a blended international partnership on students. An unexpected outcome; however, was the impact of the program on the adult participants. Teachers and administrators who traveled abroad provided rich descriptions of the

transformative nature of the experience (DPC, PC, TeacherD, Teacher1). These changes in attitudes and behaviors can have far-reaching effects. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 2001) posits that teacher attitudes can be transmitted to students. Therefore, one can extrapolate that teachers' enhanced global mindedness from international experiences can impact their students, whether or not they participated in the program themselves.

Contact Hypothesis Theory

The study findings dovetail with efforts by researchers to expand upon Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis Theory. The group dynamics of this theory parallel the four conditions by which multicultural attitudes are changed, including (a) the premise of equal status among cultural groups, (b) the presence of a cooperative venture with common goals, (c) the lack of competition between groups, and (d) the presence of institutional support. Amichai-Hamburger and McKenna (2006) added that Contact Hypothesis Theory improves the ability of participants to produce generalizations; or the tendency of group members to extrapolate contact with members of other cultures beyond the scope of the current project. This was supported by an example of students treating those at their own school differently after participation in the partnership.

I have also seen kids come back and be nicer to their American peers. Because of the partnership, some of my kids have hung out with kids that they normally would not associate with, and that is definitely a good thing. (PC)

The principal observed, "I think that it [the partnership] opens their eyes to a whole new world and makes them more accepting of others" (Principal1). Seeing results like this on the greater school community added to the overall level of institutional support for the partnership (Principal1, PC).

Responses from Hett's (1993) Global Mindedness Scale survey are particularly supportive of the value of this study vis-à-vis Contact Hypothesis. For example, 20 out of 21 survey respondents indicated that they found it stimulating to spend an evening with people from another culture after participating in this program. In addition, 18 out of 21 students agreed with the notion that the United States was enriched by the fact that it was comprised of people from many different cultures. Finally, 17 out of 23 respondents agreed with the statement "I often think about the kind of world we are creating for future generations," while 16 out of 21 respondents agreed with the statement that "Americans can learn something of value from all different cultures." These findings support Pettigrew's (1971) assertions that positive interactions with others are likely to reduce stereotypes and encourage further contact with those perceived as "others."

One of the American principals described his expanded worldview after traveling to Denmark. "It really gave me a reason to think about education in general and what is truly best for kids. Is what we are doing in the US the best? Why are we falling behind other countries" (Principal1)? Not only was he able to learn about the Danish system, but as a result, he examined his own philosophy of education. A teacher said that the program made students more aware of themselves and described how the interactions present in the partnership, regardless of locale, allowed them to be "close to those who are far away" (Teacher1). Improved cultural understanding was emphasized by students in a variety of ways (Dane1, Dane2, Dane3, TStudent8). Several participants recognized differences during the international experience – especially when it came to school (Dane1, TeacherD, Teacher1, Teacher3, TStudent8). However, these differences and the ability to communicate them effectively with others, tended to help build mutual understandings. These understandings, combined with uniform goals and

institutional support, (Allport, 1954) allowed participants to enhance their global mindedness and develop a deeper understanding of the academic content covered in partnership activities.

Because so little research exists for the assessment of these types of international partnerships at the high school level, there is hope that this study serves as an impetus for such investigation.

There has been little cumulative research on the connection between Contact Hypothesis Theory and contextual learning. The findings here emphasized the extent to which the current study fills a gap in the literature. At the same time, they point in the direction of future research by illuminating the impact that virtual learning through cross-cultural programs can have. The significant learning, as witnessed through interview feedback, achieved instructional goals, and improved test scores, indicate the substantial possibilities of multicultural partnerships in a high school setting. The room for future researchers to further explore these possibilities is endless.

Implications and Recommendations

In an effort to prepare K-12 students with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in a globally competitive world, many schools have instituted programs that center on collaborative international partnerships. Some of these partnerships include student and teacher travel, some are exclusively technology based, and others are a hybrid of face - to - face and virtual interactions. Despite the ever-increasing popularity of these partnerships, very little data exists in the way of program evaluation. This study demonstrated potential benefits for students and teachers who participate in an international partnership. As such, the following best practices emerged:

- Secure institutional support for the partnership.
- Incorporate both face - to - face and virtual interactions between students and teachers.

- Design lessons that require students to collaborate in way that incorporates diverse points of view.
- Utilize social media and other web 2.0 tools for relationship building and achieving academic goals.
- Insitute an ongoing, measurable evaluation process for all stages of the program.

In order to maximize the benefits of international partnerships in K-12 schools, much can be done at the state, building, and classroom level. The recommendations are as follows:

State Level Officials

- Create opportunities to gather input from business leaders and elected officials as reform efforts are envisioned and implemented. North Carolina's Public School Forum is an example of one such strategic partnership. They have convened a study group each year since 1985 in an effort to improve the quality of schools.
- Ensure equitable access to a high quality K-12 education for all students and work to lessen the achievement gap for minorities and economically disadvantaged students.
- Encourage an international experience for candidates in teacher preparation programs at state universities.

Building Level and District Administrators

- Incorporate 21st century skills into School Improvement Plans and create measurable goals that are continuously monitored.
- Allow flexibility when it comes to blocking websites or online tools. For example, many districts block Skype and FaceTime – free, valuable tools that can be used

responsibly to facilitate partnerships. Granting teachers permission to use video conferencing tools like these makes anyone in the world a click away.

- Recruit teachers from VIF (Visiting International Faculty). Diversifying the teaching staff can provide opportunities for enhancing the global mindedness of students and teachers. VIF teachers often have connections to schools in their country of origin and are able to facilitate partnerships for their American classrooms. VIF has a rigorous selection process and provides candidates for US schools on three-year cultural exchange visas. VIF looks for,

a supportive school environment with leadership committed to international education and cultural exchange. [They] carefully select district partners committed to international education and 21st century student preparation. This approach ensures the success of our teachers and promotes the advancement of global awareness and world language education in the United States. (para. 2)

Classroom Teachers

- Find opportunities to expand your own horizons.
- Travel to another country. There are numerous organizations that offer free, or inexpensive, study tours for educators. Examples include the Goethe Transatlantic Outreach Program, the China Institute, the National Consortium for Teaching About Asia and the Toyota International Teacher Program.
- Host a foreign exchange student or teacher.
- Learn a second language. Not only will you expand your skillset, but you may also reap rewards with your students. At a high school where I worked, I facilitated a year-long professional development series called, *Globalizing Your Curriculum*. At

the request of staff, we incorporated conversational Spanish into each session. The weekly sessions were held in the library during planning periods and students were often present. Time and time again, students commented positively about seeing their teachers attempting to learn a new language. As the sessions continued, Spanish-speaking students at the school began to converse with teachers in their native language, and several even tutored the teachers. By the end of the year, most teachers had mastered the basics of conversational Spanish, and many had formed stronger bonds with their students.

- Take a class on intercultural competency or global awareness.
- Stay current with the latest technology and make an effort to incorporate it into your classroom. TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) provides an effective framework (Harris & Hofer, 2011).
- Create international experiences for their students, even if your school does not have a formal partnership.
 - Check with the international programs office at your local university. They may be able to pair your class with a study abroad student. While the student is overseas, he/she can Skype with your students and possibly visit your school upon return. The university may also be able to connect you with a foreign student who could visit your class.
 - There are many free websites, like iEARN and ePals, that partner classrooms around the world for academic collaboration.

Limitations

While this study provided a rich understanding of many facets of a blended international school partnership, it was limited to one North Carolina high school. Even though the Danish partnership was a part of the school improvement plan, participants only made up a small percentage of the study sample. As a part of the study, I gathered quantitative data, but was unable to conduct any statistical analyses to determine if there was statistical significance supporting actual increased learning. Therefore, my findings refer only to perceptions of learning. These limitations could be addressed in future research by using larger samples and control groups. A further limitation of the study that could present a barrier to future studies is that "most writers suggest that qualitative research should be judged as credible and confirmable as opposed to valid and reliable" (Merriam, 1985, p. 14). Merriam claims that "rather than transplanting statistical, quantitative notions of generalizability and thus finding qualitative research inadequate, it makes more sense to develop an understanding of generalization that is congruent with the basic characteristics of qualitative inquiry" (p. 15). In an effort to increase transferability, I strived to provide thick, rich descriptions of the participants and the findings. Although there were limitations with regards to the number and type of participants in relation to the total student body, the results of this study can be judged as "credible and confirmable" (Merriam, 1985, p. 14) because all data was triangulated.

An added limitation to the study was my close familiarity with the partnership from its onset. Because of this, I needed to take measures against researcher bias. Triangulation, member checks, bracketing and peer review (Ary et al., 2006) were strategies that I utilized to address this limitation. Bracketing was used during each of the interview sessions; member checks were done within three weeks of each interview; and triangulation and peer review was

used during each round of analysis. Additionally, information from all sources was coded and compared for similarities by multiple evaluators. This system of peer review (Ary et al., 2006) utilized colleagues and my committee chairperson during the analysis phase to help ensure “the interpretation to be reasonable, given the evidence” (p. 505). In addition to my committee members, three seasoned educators assisted in the analysis of data to ensure all findings were triangulated.

A final limitation of the study was the total amount of data generated in Phase One of the face - to - face student interviews. While there were a sufficient number of participants (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 2009) the data produced was limited. Sixteen students participated in individual interviews and nine participated in the focus groups. While most of them answered the interview questions, their responses were brief and they did not elaborate a great deal. Several factors could have contributed to this limitation. First, several months had passed since the Danish visit so some things might not have been as fresh in their minds. Next, the interviews took place at the end of the semester as they were preparing for exams. Additionally, they are teenagers and not apt to talk in great detail with an adult about anything related to school. Finally, I am a novice researcher. Through this process, I realized my own limitations due to inexperience and recognized the need to gather more in depth data and incorporate more techniques (prompts, probes, etc.).

Suggestions for Further Research

While this explanatory study provided an in-depth view of the case, it also revealed four key areas where further research is warranted. These include (a) the generalizability of Allport (1954) to virtual interactions, (b) a longitudinal study focused on the waning interest in technology, (c) the lasting impacts of global mindedness, and (d) authentic measures of learning

in blended international partnerships.

Generalizability of Allport (1954) to Virtual Interactions

This case study explored only one high school, so a larger study could be beneficial in testing the generalizability of the results. I used Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis Theory as a conceptual framework for this study. When he conducted his research a half century ago, virtual interactions were not possible. While results of this study supported the idea that they were equivalent, further research is warranted to determine if social interactions via the internet can be generalized the same way as face - to - face interactions. Amichai – Hamburger (2008) argued for an extension of Contact Hypothesis Theory to the online environment. He suggested that the internet offers a level playing where “many of the cues individuals typically rely on to gauge the internal and external status of others are not in evidence” (Amichai-Hamburger, 2008, p. 212). An important future study could examine two types of partnerships – those where students interacted only via the internet and those where students interacted only face- to –face. By conducting a study with common academic goals, but utilizing strictly different modes of interaction, the researcher would be able to more accurately ascertain if Allport's Contact Hypothesis Theory can be generalized to include virtual interactions.

Longitudinal Study: Waning Interest in Technology

Technology to enable learning is another area that could be explored in greater depth as virtual interactions become more present in the educational realm. Prensky (2012) suggested that the brains of digital natives are physically different than those raised in earlier generations. Educators in this study reported that their utilization of web 2.0 tools led to higher levels of student engagement (DPC, PC, TeacherD, Teacher1, Teacher3). This confirms the findings of PISA (2009) and the USED (2010) with regards to web 2.0 and student engagement. As time

passes, and the segment of the population characterized as digital natives increases, this will necessitate further study to determine if lower levels of engagement emerge when digital technology is incorporated in the educational setting.

A study that examined the use of the same digital tool over an extended period of time, with the same group of students, would yield helpful data and expand on Prensky's (2012) body of work. For example, if students routinely used wikis to collaborate and accomplish academic tasks over the course of their high school career, would it reach a point of diminishing returns? A longitudinal study that investigated student attitudes about the use of certain web 2.0 tools in the classroom would also extend the body of research on student engagement. For instance, this case study found that students enjoyed using Skype to collaborate with their international peers (DPC, Teacher1, VStudent1). It would be helpful to see if they felt the same way about using Skype two years from now. After all, millennials with digital wisdom are the ones who drive the popularity of most social media platforms. In two years, Skype might be virtually obsolete. MySpace is a good example of the changing nature of social networking. This platform was first introduced in 2003 and remained popular for about five years (Curtis, 2013). Today's middle-schoolers have likely never used this web 2.0 tool. They grew up in the world of Facebook. In 2012; however, Facebook began losing popularity with teenagers. Instagram began in 2012 and a year later, Tech Crunch (Etherington, 2013) reported that it had 90 million monthly users, 40 million pictures posted each day and 9,500 likes posted per second. Which leads to the question: if educators do not respond to the most current, and rapidly changing, technology trends, will students continue to exhibit high levels of engagement?

Lasting Impacts of Global Mindedness

Further research is warranted with regards to the lasting impacts of enhanced global mindedness. Deardorff (2009) argued that, “Intercultural competence is a lifelong process - one doesn’t just magically become interculturally competent after completing one course or going on an education abroad experience in another country” (p. 13). While Donnelly-Smith (2009), Golay (2007), Grey et al. (2002), Hopkins (1999), and Kehl (2006) examined the impact of length of stay on students’ attitudes and beliefs after a study abroad experience, little focus has been given to lasting impact. A longitudinal study is needed to determine if enhanced global mindedness becomes a permanent part of one’s beliefs and values or if it fades one year, five years, or ten years after an international experience.

Authentic Measures of Learning in Blended International Partnerships

As noted in Chapter One, there is very little in the way of program evaluation when it comes to K-12 international partnerships. As technology continues to play an increasingly important role in education and in our day to day lives, it is likely that blended partnerships like the one featured in this study will multiply at an ever-increasing pace.

Additional research to identify authentic measures of learning in blended international partnerships is of critical importance. What is learning in an international context in the 21st century? Is it simply the mastery of content or are more affective components involved? P21 touts the 4Cs (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication) as necessary for college and career readiness but admits that “there are no assessments of 21st century skills in widespread use today” (P21, 2014, p.3). A study that builds on Deardorff’s (2011) intercultural competency model and identifies ways to measure both skill-based and affective components is necessary for a clear understanding of the effectiveness of blended international partnerships.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that perceptions of learning and global mindedness were positively impacted by participation in the international partnership. Student learning was perceived to be enhanced through higher levels of engagement and a deeper understanding of academic content. Global mindedness was shown to have increased as participants gained a multifaceted understanding of, and appreciation for, self and others. Overwhelmingly, students and teachers spoke of the transformative nature of the partnership. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2008) described a paradigm shift in education. Rather than the 3Rs that served as the foundation of education in the 20th century, they tout the 4Cs - communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. Partnerships like the one featured in this study provide students the opportunity to master these 21st century skills.

As American students continue to fall behind their peers in other countries with regard to Math and Science proficiency (OECD, 2012), educational leaders must provide them with opportunities to catch up and ultimately excel (OECD, 2012; PISA, 2009). Schools across the country must create learning environments where students – regardless of location, gender or socioeconomic status - are able to master the 4Cs (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity). In a school district adjacent to the site, the mission is: “The [District A] school community will collaborate to graduate all students ready to achieve success in a rapidly changing world.” This is a rural, economically disadvantaged school district. In 2013, with 85% of its’ students receiving free or reduced lunch, [District A] ranked 112th out of 115 school districts in the state. That same year, less than 22% of the district’s students were proficient in reading (ABCs, 2013). The vast majority of these students have never been to the beach that is located 40 miles away or the state capital that is 65 miles away. And yet, while

each of the 14 schools is wireless, there was not a single virtual partnership in this district.

Technology, as a part of a pedagogically sound course of study, can provide these students with a window to the larger world, and ultimately to reach their stated mission of achieving “success in a rapidly changing world.” Technology provides tools that can be leveraged to ensure students are prepared to be successful in the 21st century.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that teachers and students perceived the blended international partnership to enhance learning. This supports the connection that constructivists (Piaget, 1978; Vygotsky, 1954) make between social interactions and new learning. Global mindedness was enhanced as participants gained a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, self and others. These findings are supported by the four themes that emerged from the data (a) technology was used throughout the partnership (b) learning improved, (c) participants evidenced changed thinking and attitudes and (d) participants offered suggestions for best practices.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: BRACKETING (sample)

Interview: Danish Partnership Coordinator [DPC]

[I hope that DPC will be talkative and elaborate with his responses to questions. It will be interesting to see if his responses vary much from those of the American partnership coordinator. I wonder if he will be 100% candid if there are issues about the partnership that he sees as a negative and won't want to bring them up because I am American or because he would see it as a betrayal or "bad-talking" the Americans.]

Ricks: It is so nice to see you again. Thank you so much for all of your help with the interviews and sharing information about the partnership.

DPC: No problem.

Ricks: As I mentioned before, I am going to record this so that I can transcribe it later.

DPC: (nodding)

Ricks: Do you have questions before we start?

DPC: No

Ricks: Wonderful. Let's go ahead and start then.

Ricks: Tell me what it was like for you to participate in the partnership.

DPC: Oh wow. It has been so many years we have been doing this now. It has added so much to our program and so much to our school in general. We are one of only 12 global colleges in Denmark and this exchange program and partnership is a big part of our success. It is something that sets us apart as an institution. For me, it has been wonderful. I have made lifelong friends with [PC] and [Teacher1]. **[I really wonder if there partnership would have been as**

successful over the years if the main people involved, PC, DPC, Teacher1 and TeacherD, had different personality styles. For instance, I am much more Type A than all of them. I am not sure if we would have had the same relationship. They are all very relaxed about times and expectations.] I have learned so much about myself on a personal level and so had many great experiences professionally.

Ricks: Thank you so much. I have some questions about the impact on your professionally. Do you mind if I come back to those in a few minutes?

DPC: No, not at all.

Ricks: Since you mentioned some of the benefits for you personally, can you talk a little about the benefits for students? What are the benefits of doing these types of academic projects with the American students versus having your students do it with peers from your own school?

DPC: Well, ummm. Wow there are so many benefits. At [...] we have an entire class centered around the States so the class teaches American culture, History, American Identity. So we try to make this group of kids a group that knows a lot about the States. So it's actually an American curriculum with a trip to the United States that allows the kids to be immersed in American culture. Obviously, interacting with Americans adds so much to this curriculum. The get relevant firsthand knowledge about what they are studying...not just from book, from experiences. They get to use methodology they learned in political science to examine American society. So they are suppose to interview their hosts, to maybe make questionnaires, to be anthropologists so they can view how Americans live compared to Danes in the subject they are focusing on. We have been working with the creation of the American Identity and the History. So they have to come here to examine some of this subject. We went to D.C. to see different museums so they are to use that in a project when they go home. Also, they are to talk to their

hosts as well about how they have experience American culture and history. This is not something that could be done with Danish students. It provides a much deeper knowledge of the States. Students are more interested beforehand because they know that they will be learning things that will assist them during their visit. For example...ummm..for example, when we visited the United States capital they already knew so much information about the buildings that housed the government. **[This is so much a part of the curriculum of their course. I see why they want to do it and to do the visit. It definitely is not the same thing with the American school. Even after the partnership stuff, I do not think that most of the students know very much about Denmark. I think that they know surface things, cultural things, but not on the level that the Danish kids do about American history and government.]**

Ricks: It sounds like the courses that your students take at [...] really help to prepare them for the exchange and give them a much deeper understanding of what happens in the US. You mentioned a lot about benefits for the students, can you talk a little bit more about the specific ways that the academic projects you did with the Americans were different for your students? Different than if they only did them with Danish kids?

DPC: Oh yes, ok...yes. Well the projects that we did with the History and English classes were done somewhat online and before and after the exchange visit. Is that what you would like to talk about? What you mean?

Ricks: Yes, please. More about the differences there.

DPC: Our students are very interested in the states. They see so many movies and music and things that is American. Culturally, it is very much interesting to them. So from that standpoint, from that point....perspective....they are already interested. They are excited to know more about it and to work with students that they do not know and see on an everyday basis. Once we

began the History projects with [PC] it was easy for the students to work with one another and they were excited to do it. They enjoyed not just working with them but also getting to know them. Especially I think....especially the girls. They are very social and enjoyed the aspect of making friends and finding out more. So yes, there are benefits in relation to student interest.

[Everyone seems to be saying this. The social aspect of the partnership seems to be a big one. I wonder if the comment about the girls would have come out if DPC was female.]

Ricks: Other benefits? How about the quality of the work?

DPC: Our students are very hard working and good scholars. I think that they do well no matter what. They have a good work ethic. (long pause) But if I had to say...I would say...I say that they do slightly better on these collaborative projects because they find it relevant and they are interested.

Ricks: Can you tell me more about that?

DPC: (pause) No. Not really. Just that they were more interested.

Ricks: Ok, thank you. It sounds like the students had a higher level of engagement during the partnership activities. How about you? Was your level of engagement different because you worked with someone from another country?

DPC: Yes, certainly I think so. It is a lot of work to coordinate this type of large scale endeavor but it is rewarding on so many levels. Also, it has been so many years working and staying with [PC] and [Teacher1] that I look forward to it. We have formed good relationships and I enjoy...myself, I enjoy the exchange very much. I like to come to [...] High School and to visit [...] town. It is something out of the ordinary. Yes, I would say that on days we are doing partner things I am even more interested and more excited about my job.

Ricks: I am glad to hear that the partnership is such a positive for you. Thinking about the many ways you are able to make it happen, what role does technology play in the partnership? Could this partnership have been possible ten years ago?

DPC: No, not in the same sense. I do think that some type of exchange could have been possible but it would have seemed more forced maybe since we would not have been able to make the connections ahead of time and build the relationships online. Sure, students and teachers might have exchanged letters and such but I do not think that type of thing would have been the same...the same feeling. We have so many tools now that make talking so easy – even across time zones and a big ocean. It is simple to do these days. Students and teachers can use online tools to do so many things together. Plus we can use them...we as teachers can use them...to plan things for the partnership. Skype... Skype is an integral part of this partnership. I talk to [PC] so often to plan different activities. And of course we use email. I do not know how we could do all of this without the ways we communicate now. I guess [PC] and I could have used the mail and telephone. But yeah...yeah...think about the cost of long distance international calls. That would make it much more complicated. Where now you just have all of these free tools that allow you to talk and work together. I think too, I think that the students are used to just using Google Docs and Skype and Oovoo and Snapchat and Facebook. (pause) They...They use these as a part of their everyday life and so to use them to work with and...and... to talk to other students....regardless of where they live...it is just so very normal to them. So, in answer to the question, yes I think it would have been possible but not as good. The type of interactions would not be as rich as they are with the use of modern technology.

[I wonder if a much younger teacher would have responded differently to this question. PC, DPC, Teacher1, TeacherD and I are all around the same age. We have lived in a world with

all of the instant digital communication and in a world without all of it. Would a teacher in their mid 20s respond the same way? It would be much harder to imagine a world where you couldn't just reach out to anyone in the world within seconds.]

Ricks: Speaking of the use of technology...How, if at all, do virtual relationships differ from face - to - face ones?

DPC: Hmmm. (pause) I would say not much. You can still talk and get to know someone in many of the same ways. You can also do the school work, the partnership activities. In modern life, I think that is the way of the world. Information is available digitally and so are people.

Ricks: How does working with another student or teacher virtually compare to working with them face - to - face?

DPC: About the same I guess. Really it is the same.

Ricks: What should teachers consider when designing instructional activities to be done virtually with students from another country?

DPC: I would say to allow the time to get to know each other, to socialize. And you should plan ahead and have a second plan in case something does not work. Think about time differences and other such things as that. But for the students, I think that teachers should think about making the assignments a way so that they can find out what the others are thinking. So find a way to have rich discussions so that similarities or differences can really come out and be examined.

Ricks: Ok, thank you. (pause) Oh sorry. So the next question is: How has working with American students and teachers changed the way you view people from other cultures?

DPC: Yes, I believe it has. Although, you know, being in the EU and where we are located, we have contact with many nationalities. I think that any kind of contact with people different from yourself will make you more open to new ideas and broaden your perspective. I always like to

see how other people do things. Just everyday things like how they work, what their daily schedule is like, what they eat and things like that. Our students have these stereotypes about Americans based on what they see on tv and in movies and I guess to some extent I had that too. But after these years of working with the students and teachers, America feels like home to me too. When I am back in Denmark, I am able to talk to others who have not been or do not know any Americans. I can tell them what it is really like. We are an IB school and have partnerships with schools in many different nations. But the students seem most interested in the one with [***] in the states. I am not sure if that is a pop culture thing or because many of their parents have visited the states but that is where most interest lies. **[My partnership was also with an IB school. They place a great deal of focus on all things global. I wonder if partnerships with schools that have less of a focus would be the same. Are we sort of picking the cream of the crop when we partner with IB schools? IB schools tend to have more money and to really push partnerships as a way to make themselves competitive. Does this skew the view of those who set up the partnerships?]**

Ricks: So you specifically have different attitudes towards others based on the partnership experience?

DPC: Well yes. I mean I think I am a pretty accepting guy naturally. Ummm but yes, yes I think working with [PC] and [Teacher1] has helped me to be....to think a little more maybe about generalizing. Not everyone is the same in a country. People vary. Just like any place. And just because you see something in the movies about a country does not mean that everyone in the county is that way. I guess we...people...we are more the same than different. Especially teachers. I think teachers are similar personality types in most places. **[Again back to my concern before – would this be different if someone else were the partnership coordinator. I**

can definitely see that all of these folks are very much alike, very laid back. If he interacted with every one of the teachers at that school, would he still feel the same way?]

Ricks: Ok, thank you. So....next. This fits in a bit with what you were just saying. Can you please describe the customs and behaviors of the American students and teachers you interacted with?

DPC: Sure, yes. So like I said, we have stayed with [Teacher1] each year. She is just so easy going. She opens up her home to us and makes sure that we feel comfortable and at ease. She is very athletic and likes to do outdoors type of things. She is very similar to me and [TeacherD]. She bikes to work sometimes and sometimes she will let one of us borrow the bike. She takes us to the beach and we surf. We really do like a lot of the same things. She is dedicated to her teaching too.

Ricks: Tell me more about that.

DPC: She set up many activities for the students to do together. She used the Skype for the literature classes to work together. I think that she liked talking to...liked working with [*literature teacher from Denmark*]. She can talk about books for a long time. You can tell that she enjoys it. I saw. I noticed that she had personal relationships with the students. They talked to each other. They cared about one another's thoughts. I think that helped to have the American students interested in what our students thought about the books. They saw that [Teacher1] cared and they cared too.

Ricks: Can you tell me more about that project? They way that the kids worked together?

DPC: Well I can tell you what I know from hearing about it.

Ricks: Ok, yes that would be fine.

DPC: The teachers planned together and selected things to read. For the classes to read. So the classes read the same short stories or poetries. I do not remember what they read exactly.

Ricks: Umm I think it was American lit. Something from the South, I believe.

DPC: Yes, that sounds right.

Ricks: So have you talked to [*literature teacher from Denmark*] or any of the students about it? About that project?

DPC: Yes, at the time. Yes, I remember that they had a class discussion. They both read the pieces. Read the stuff. And then they used Skype to talk about it and did it seem different to them. Did it seem different based on your background...based on were you Danish or were you American. I think it was a good activity to see if it mattered. If your perspective on the reading changed based on your background.

Ricks: And did it?

DPC: I think it did. I think that they were interested to talk about how they understood it differently based on what they knew about the culture. But then again, I think they were interested just because they were talking to the other class.

Ricks: Yes, yes. I have heard them say that a lot. Especially the girls. They seemed to be very excited about the social aspect of the partnership. About just getting to talk to new people.

[Another comments about the girls. Is he being sexist? Or am I just picking up on it because I am a woman? Maybe I am more sensitive to it because it makes me feel as if he is saying the girls didn't take it as seriously and that bothers me because I am a woman.]

DPC: (laughing) Yes, I do think that they like the talking part. The getting to know you part.

Ricks: So did they do that? [Teacher1] and [*literature teacher from Denmark*]? Did they spend some time with the students getting to know one another? I think I remember [Teacher1] telling me about that.

DPC: Yes, they did. They spent some time with introductions and such things.

Ricks: So...back to the customs and behaviors of Americans. Can you speak a little more about that? About what you observed? Either in the school or in town or when you visited Washington, DC.

DPC: Ok, yes.

Ricks: Thanks.

DPC: School is very different at [***]. At our school, we do not have bells to tell students when to move. That is difficult to adjust to...the structure of the bells. Our students always remark on how much more structured it is in American schools.

Ricks: Yeah, every single one of them has mentioned that to me! It must be a huge shock. All of the kids mentioned the bells and the difference in foods. What other things did you notice?

DPC: More people have cars here. We usually rent a car when we are here so that we can drive. At home, the expenses with a car are just too high. Very few teachers have them. The economy is very different. It is really a luxury to have a car. **[I remember this from my visits and discussion with them. I remember being struck by how big a deal it was to have a car and having a discussion about the differences in teaching qualifications and salaries in Denmark. I wish I would have thought to ask him about that again here.]**

Ricks: How about the classes here? What did you notice about behaviors?

DPC: The environment is more formal in some ways and less formal in others.

Ricks: How so?

DPC: More formal in the way of...of how the adults and students interact. Calling the teachers Mr., Mrs., or Doctor. Needing permission to go into the halls, to go to the bathroom...things like that. More rules about dress. About how the students dress. I think that the American students sometimes just expect to be told what to do. They are not treated as equals. Our students call us by name. By first name. They come and go and take care of their needs as they have to. Those are more formal here. But other things about classes are less formal. There is more relaxed time. More free time. Sometimes in class maybe the students are not as serious. **[I get the impression from his body language that he does not want to say more here. I think that he would probably say similar things to what the kids said – that the Danish students took schoolwork much more seriously. I won't ask more because he appears uncomfortable.]**

Ricks: Ok, thanks. So, how about the goals for the partnership. How would you describe the Americans' goals for the partnership in general? And for specific partnership activities?

DPC: I think that there are to give their students something extra, an edge. To give them something more interesting than the day to day and to help them to be more successful. I think that [PC] also has the goal of exposing the students to something bigger. Something beyond this school and this town. It is unfortunate that they have not been able to come visit us as often as we have been to see them, but I think that the interactions is a goal too. To get to know people – students and teachers- from another country.

Ricks: How does that compare to your goals for the partnership?

DPC: The same. I think that they are similar. We want to provide our students with something that will help them be successful. To help them to do better...to success at university. And just to know more about the world. Obviously the visit to the states helps with the history class and makes it more relevant too.

Ricks: So how about for you. For you personally. What did you learn when you were in America on your different visits?

DPC: Many things. I think I learned more in the beginning. After so many visits, as I said, it begins to feel like a home to me now. Most of it I have mentioned already. That things are not always like what the media portrays, that day to day life is a little different and the structures of school are different. But...really I think....I think that often people are very much the same no matter where they live. **[I bet that he would have had much more to say here in the first year of the partnership. At this point, he has been so many times that he is used to everything. I guess that can be viewed as a good thing, that he is much accustomed to life in the states. But it doesn't help when I need to know about his impressions and things that he has noticed or learned.]**

Ricks: OK, thank you. So, think about your students now. Over the course of the multiyear partnership, what changes have you seen in your students?

DPC: The last time, when we came home we came back with a totally different group of children. They were more mature and they had an experience of a lifetime. They had an understanding of American culture which they never had, having only seen American culture from movies. They were different in a really good way, they grew as persons. They really did. **[This is very much the same thing that PC and Principal1 said. They also described the transformative nature of the partnership and the travel abroad part. It is so unfortunate that the Board of Education will no longer let the American students travel to Denmark. They are really robbing them of such a valuable experience.]**

Ricks: How does the partnership impact the way that you view the world?

DPC: As I said before, it had brought more openness in my thinking. I believe I tend to see more similarities in people.

Ricks: Can you tell me more about that?

DPC: That is pretty much it. **[I really wish he would say more, but I feel like we are repeating many things at this point.]**

Ricks: Ok. So, how about you as a teacher? How has the partnership impacted you as a professional educator?

DPC: It has given me the opportunity to think about education as a profession through the eyes of my friends here, [PC] and [Teacher1]. When we talk about things with are students, they are very much the same. We want the same things for our students. We want the same things for our families, those who have children. I believe it gives you that big picture. The picture of our world, of our future. How do we give the next generation what they need?

Ricks: Do you think that looks different in the states than it does in Denmark?

DPC: No, absolutely not. No. We want our students to grow up and be successful. To go to university and to be good members of society. I think every society, every country, wants that.

Ricks: I agree. I do think that is universal. I certainly have seen the same thing when I have visited educators in other countries – whether it was in Asia or South America – educators, and parents, want the next generation to have more than they had and to have a good worlds and to have a good place in it.

DPC: Yes.

Ricks: So what about challenges? What challenges did you face while working with someone from another country?

DPC: Not much. I think it is always a hassle planning something as big as thing for so many people. So sometimes the logistics were a challenge. But in terms of working with [PC] there was no real challenge other than the time zones. He is very agreeable and helpful and we were able to make things happen as needed.

Ricks: Super. So, during your work with the people here, did you feel like you were equals?

DPC: Sure, yes. We were doing the same things. They treated me like a family. They even made us teacher badges, name tags, to use at the school.

Ricks: (laughing) Yes, yes, I remember that.

Ricks: What advice would you give to others before participating in a study abroad experience?

DPS: Just to be open and to be yourself. Be prepared to do different things and to meet people.

Be outgoing and friendly and try to learn as much as you can about the culture and about the everyday life. Take all of it in and take advantage of every experience. That may mean trying new things, things you would not have done at home. You should try them. **[DPC is very outgoing and comfortable with himself. I wonder if another person who was more inward and less adventurous would have the same type of advice. I wonder if he does many of the same things on each visit since he has been so many times or if he tries to do something new each time. I wish I would have thought to ask that of him.]**

Ricks: That sounds like good advice. I believe that is all of my questions. I want to thank you again for all of your help with this. Is there anything else that you would like to add before we get off here?

DPC: I am happy to help. No, nothing more really to add except that it is a good experience and valuable.

[I wish that this talk would have gone a bit longer but I think it was valuable. I think that DPC has internalized so many things about the partnership because he has been doing it for so long. His English is virtually perfect and he doesn't really stick out physically so I wonder if that makes his experience in the states any easier for him.]

APPENDIX B: OBSERVATIONAL PROTOCOL TEMPLATE (sample)

Location: [***] High School	
Date: October 12, 2010	
Time and length of observation: 12:45 – 2:15	
Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
<p>In the media center, the American English teacher is facilitating a Socratic seminar. The topic is, “What is happiness?” and centers around an article that says Denmark has the happiest people on earth.</p> <p>The partnership coordinator, English teacher, two Danish teachers, and approximately 40 students (20 American and 20 Danish) took part in the 90 minute seminar.</p> <p>Students were seated in two circles – one inner and one outer. Even those in the outer seem totally engaged and interested in what is being said. Only those in the inner circle are able to speak and they take turns “tapping” each other out and swapping places. American students seem intrigued the ideas of socialism that the Danes talked about</p>	<p>I wonder how the American students will respond to the idea that everyone in Denmark is so happy. Do the American kids think of themselves as happy?</p> <p>I wonder if this seminar should have taken place later in the visit when everyone is more comfortable with each other. Even though they have been working together for a month or so using Skype, they have not been around each other physically but a day or so. Will this matter?</p> <p>The partnership between the Danish teacher and the American English teacher is a good one. They are very similar in demeanor – both are very low key and laid back. They are both casually sitting on top of the tables in the library with their legs crossed. Is this one of the reasons that the partnership works well? I am much more detail oriented and time focused. I think it was a limitation in my Mexican partnership. Do these collaborations work best when both educators have the same personality type? This informality might make me a little crazy.</p>

APPENDIX C: LETTER TO STUDENTS

Jennifer Ramey Ricks
Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University
[e] jricks2@liberty.edu
[c] 910.934.0444

Dear Student,

I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. I am a former high school Social Studies teacher and International Partnership Coordinator for a neighboring school district. For my dissertation, I am doing a qualitative case study of your school's partnership with [***] Gymnasium in Denmark. I would like to invite you to be a part of this research study. It will examine how the Danish partnership has impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at [***] High School since 2007.

You were selected as a possible participant because you took part in a virtual collaboration via Skype, participated in face - to - face collaborations with the Danes during one of their visits, or traveled to Denmark to visit the partner school. If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to do one or more of the following things: complete an anonymous online survey about your global mindedness (the survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete), be interviewed individually for 15 minutes, or be a part of a 45 minute long focus group interview.

I ask that you read the accompanying consent form, share it with your parents, and ask any questions you may both have before agreeing participate in the study. Please submit the signed form to Mr. [***]. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participants will not be compensated.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ramey Ricks

APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (STUDENTS)

PARENT CONSENT FORM

Qualitative Case Study

HOW AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP IMPACTED PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING AND GLOBAL MINDEDNESS IN A NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL

Jennifer Ramey Ricks

Liberty University
School of Education

Parents: Your child is invited to be in a research study that will examine how the Danish partnership has impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at [***] High School. Your child was selected as a possible participant because they participated in a virtual collaboration via Skype, participated in face - to - face collaborations with the Danes during one of their visits, or traveled to Denmark to visit the partner school. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow your child to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Jennifer Ramey Ricks, Liberty University School of Education.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to determine how the Danish partnership, in existence since 2007, has impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at [***] High School.

Procedures:

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, he/she may be asked to do one or more of the following things: complete an anonymous online survey about your global mindedness (the survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete), be interviewed individually for 15 minutes, or be a part of a 45 minute long focus group interview.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

The study has limited risks: The risks are minimal, and are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life.

The benefits to participation are: There are no direct benefits to the participant. However, there is an anticipated benefit to the educational community. The study will produce recommendations for best practices in international education programs.

Compensation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants will not be compensated.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Paper documents related to the study will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Digital copies of interviews, surveys, and other study instruments will be password protected and accessible only to the researchers.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your own educational institution. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is: Jennifer Ramey Ricks. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at 910-934-0444 or jricks2@liberty.edu. You may also contact her dissertation chair, Dr. Donna Joy at djoy@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 2400, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent allow my child to participate in the study.

Signature of parent or guardian: _____ Date: _____

[] I agree to allow my child to have his/her voice recorded during the interview portion of this research. If a participant withdraws from the study, he/she will be deleted from any portions of video or audiotape.

Statement of Assent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers.

I consent to participate in the study.

Signature of minor: _____ Date: _____

☐ I agree to have my voice recorded during the interview portion of this research. If a participant withdraws from the study, he/she will be deleted from any portions of video or audiotape.

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E: INTRODUCTORY EMAIL (FACE - TO - FACE)

Dear Educator,

I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. I am a former high school Social Studies teacher and International Partnership Coordinator for a neighboring school district. For my dissertation, I am doing a qualitative case study of your school's partnership with [***] Gymnasium in Denmark. I would like to invite you to be a part of this research study. It will examine how the Danish partnership has impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at [***] High School since 2007.

You were selected as a possible participant because you took part in a virtual collaboration via Skype, participated in face - to - face collaborations with the Danes during one of their visits, or traveled to Denmark to visit the partner school. If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to do one or more of the following things: complete an anonymous online survey about your global mindedness (the survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete), be interviewed individually for 45 minutes, and/or provide copies of your lesson plans from partnership activities.

I ask that you read the accompanying consent form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing participate in the study. Please submit the signed form to Mr. [***]. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participants will not be compensated.

Jennifer Ramey Ricks
Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University
[e] jricks2@liberty.edu
[c] 910.934.0444

APPENDIX F: INTRODUCTORY EMAIL (VIRTUAL)

Dear Educator,

I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. I am a former high school Social Studies teacher and International Partnership Coordinator for a neighboring school district. For my dissertation, I am doing a qualitative case study of the partnership between [***] Gymnasium in Denmark and [***] in North Carolina. I would like to invite you to be a part of this research study. It will examine how the international partnership has impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at [***] High School since 2007.

You were selected as a possible participant because you took part in a virtual collaboration via Skype, participated in face - to - face collaborations with the Danes during one of their visits, or traveled to Denmark to visit the partner school. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to be interviewed individually for 30-60 minutes via Skype, Facetime or other video-conferencing software.

I ask that you read the accompanying consent form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing participate in the study. Please submit the signed form to me via email. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participants will not be compensated.

Jennifer Ramey Ricks
Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University
[e] jricks2@liberty.edu
[c] 910.934.0444

APPENDIX G: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (FACE - TO - FACE ADULTS)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Qualitative Case Study

HOW AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP IMPACTED PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING AND GLOBAL MINDEDNESS IN A NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL

Jennifer Ramey Ricks

Liberty University

School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study that will examine how the Danish partnership has impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at [***] High School. You were selected as a possible participant because you participated in a virtual collaboration via Skype, participated in face - to - face collaborations with the Danes during one of their visits, or traveled to Denmark to visit the partner school. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Jennifer Ramey Ricks, Liberty University School of Education.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to determine how the Danish partnership, in existence since 2007, has impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at [***] High School.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to do one or more of the following things: complete an anonymous online survey about your global mindedness (the survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete), be interviewed individually for approximately 45 minutes, and/or provide copies of lesson plans for partnership activities.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

The study has limited risks: The risks are minimal, and are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life.

The benefits to participation are: There are no direct benefits to the participant. However, there is an anticipated benefit to the educational community. The study will produce recommendations for best practices in international education programs.

Compensation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants will not be compensated.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Paper documents related to the study will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Digital copies of interviews, surveys, and other study instruments will be password protected and accessible only to the researchers.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your own educational institution. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is: Jennifer Ramey Ricks. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at 910-934-0444 or jricks2@liberty.edu. You may also contact her dissertation chair, Dr. Donna Joy at djoy@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 2400, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature of participant: _____ Date: _____

[] I agree to have my voice recorded during the interview portion of this research. If a participant withdraws from the study, he/she will be deleted from any portions of video or audiotape.

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX H: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (VIRTUAL ADULTS)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Qualitative Case Study

HOW AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP IMPACTED PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING AND GLOBAL MINDEDNESS IN A NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL

Jennifer Ramey Ricks

Liberty University

School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study that will examine how the Danish partnership has impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at [***] High School. You were selected as a possible participant because you participated in a virtual collaboration via Skype, participated in face - to - face collaborations during one of their visits, or traveled to visit the partner school. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Jennifer Ramey Ricks, Liberty University School of Education.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to determine how the Danish partnership, in existence since 2007, has impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at [***] High School.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to be interviewed individually for 30-60 minutes via Skype, Facetime or other video-conferencing software.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

The study has limited risks: The risks are minimal, and are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life.

The benefits to participation are: There are no direct benefits to the participant. However, there is an anticipated benefit to the educational community. The study will produce recommendations for best practices in international education programs.

Compensation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants will not be compensated.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Paper documents related to the study will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Digital copies of interviews, surveys, and other study instruments will be password protected and accessible only to the researchers.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your own educational institution. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is: Jennifer Ramey Ricks. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at 910-934-0444 or jricks2@liberty.edu. You may also contact her dissertation chair, Dr. Donna Joy at djoy@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 2400, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature of participant: _____ Date: _____

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Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX I: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



The Graduate School at Liberty University

January 16, 2013

Jennifer Ramey Ricks

IRB Approval 1348.011613: How an International Partnership Impacted Student Learning and Global Mindedness in a North Carolina High School

Dear Jennifer,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,



Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

(434) 592-4054



Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971

APPENDIX J: CONVERGENCE OF EVIDENCE TEMPLATE (Sample)
(Adapted from Yin, 2009, p. 117)

Blocked for Copyright Purposes

APPENDIX K: GLOBAL MINDEDNESS SURVEY

Global Mindedness Scale (Hett, 1993)

(Reproduced here with the permission of Dallas Boggs)

On the following pages you will find a series of statements. Please read each statement and decide whether or not you agree with it. Click the response that most recently reflects your opinion. There are no correct answers.

Strongly Disagree = 1

Disagree = 2

Unsure = 3

Agree = 4

Strongly Agree = 5

1. I generally find it stimulating to spend an evening talking with people from another culture.
2. I feel an obligation to speak out when I see our government doing something I consider wrong internationally.
3. The United States is enriched by the fact that it is comprised of many people from different cultures and countries.
4. Really, there is nothing I can do about the problems of the world.
5. The needs of the United States must continue to be our highest priority in negotiating with other countries.
6. I often think about the kind of world we are creating for future generations.
7. When I hear that thousands of people are starving in an African country, I feel very frustrated.
8. Americans can learn something of value from all different cultures.
9. Generally, an individual's actions are too small to have a significant effect on the global ecosystem.
10. Americans should be permitted to pursue the standard of living they can afford if it only has a slight negative impact on the environment.
11. I think of myself, not only as a citizen of my county but also as a citizen of the world.

12. When I see the conditions some people in the world live under, I feel a responsibility to do something about it.
13. I enjoy trying to understand people's behavior in the context of their culture.
14. My opinions about national policies are based on how those policies might affect the rest of the world as well as the United States.
15. It is very important to me to choose a career in which I can have a positive effect on the quality of life for future generations.
16. American values are probably the best.
17. In the long run, America will probably benefit from the fact that the world is becoming more interconnected.
18. The fact that a flood can kill 50,000 people in Bangladesh is very depressing to me.
19. It is important that American universities and colleges provide programs designed to promote understanding among students of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
20. I think my behavior can impact people in other countries.
21. The present distribution of the world's wealth and resources should be maintained because it promotes survival of the fittest.
22. I feel a strong kinship with the worldwide human family.
23. I feel very concerned about the lives of people who live in politically repressive regimes.
24. It is important that we educate people to understand the impact that current policies might have on future generations.
25. It is not really important to me to consider myself as a member of the global community.
26. I sometimes try to imagine how a person who is always hungry must feel.
27. I have very little in common with people in underdeveloped nations.
28. I am able to affect what happens on a global level by what I do in my own community.
29. I sometimes feel irritated with people from other countries because they don't understand how we do things here.
30. Americans have a moral obligation to share their wealth with the less fortunate peoples of the world.

Open Ended Questions:

1. How might your responses to the survey questions have differed before your interaction with students from another country?
2. How has your experience with students from another country changed your perceptions, beliefs and/or attitudes?
3. What was the biggest misconception that you had about students from another country?
4. What misconceptions did the students from another country seem to have about you?
5. What did you have in common with students from another country?

APPENDIX L: SITE VISIT SCHEDULE (sample)

Schedule: Danish Visit Observation [***] High School

October 12, 2010		
Time	Location	Activity
9:00 – 10:30	US History Classroom	Observe Danish and American students working on their project: students are in small groups with laptops
10:30 – 12:00	English Classroom	Observe lesson on Southern literature: students are prepping to work with the Danes
12:00 – 12:35	Courtyard	Lunch with Danish teachers and Journalism (American) teacher: Discuss what it is like for the adults who travel with students each year
12:45 – 2:15	Media Center	Observe Socratic Seminar facilitated by American English teacher and Danish teacher – Danes and Americans participated in the seminar titled, “What is Happiness?”
2:30 – 3:00	Teacher’s Lounge	Debrief with PC and discuss tomorrow’s schedule

APPENDIX M: US HISTORY PRE AND POSTTEST QUESTIONS

Interpretation of the US Constitution

NY Regents Exam Released Form

- 1) *Federalism* is best defined as a principle of government that
 - A) divides power between the central government and state governments
 - B) includes a system of checks and balances
 - C) allows the states to nullify national laws
 - D) places the most power in the hands of the legislative branch
- 2) The term *supreme law of the land* refers to which US document?
 - A) Fundamental Orders of Connecticut
 - B) Constitution of the United States
 - C) Articles of Confederation
 - D) Declaration of Independence
- 3) “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”

— United States Constitution, 10th amendment

This part of the Bill of Rights was intended to...

 - A) give the people the right to vote on important issues
 - B) reduce the rights of citizens
 - C) limit the powers of the federal government
 - D) assure federal control over the states
- 4) One goal of Alexander Hamilton’s financial plan was the establishment of a
 - A) stock exchange
 - B) national sales tax
 - C) federal income tax
 - D) national bank
- 5) The necessary and proper clause, the amendment process, and the unwritten constitution are evidence that our constitutional system of government provides for
 - A) popular sovereignty
 - B) equal representation
 - C) flexibility
 - D) ratification
- 6) Which idea did the Founding Fathers include in the Constitution that allows Congress to meet the needs of a changing society?
 - A) federalism
 - B) separation of powers
 - C) the elastic clause
 - D) States rights

7) Thomas Jefferson opposed Alexander Hamilton's plan to create a national bank primarily because the plan would

- A) weaken the nation's currency
- B) increase the national debt
- C) promote the interests of farmers
- D) depend on a loose interpretation of the Constitution

NC Released Form of US Exam 2009

8) Why did the U.S. Congress pass the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798?

- A) to prevent immigrants from joining the Federalist Party
- B) to prevent a war with France
- C) to prevent government opposition
- D) to prevent immigration from Canada

9) The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions were based on which principle?

- A) the states' right to nullify acts of the federal government
- B) the Supreme Court's right to nullify acts of Congress
- C) Congress' right to nullify acts of the states the president's right to nullify rulings of the Supreme

10) During Thomas Jefferson's presidency, which event challenged his strict constructionist philosophy?

- A) the Judiciary Act of 1801
- B) the Embargo Act of 1807
- C) the Louisiana Purchase
- D) the Lewis and Clark Expedition

1988 AP Exam

11) The Election of 1800 has been referred to as constituting "another revolution" because

- A) the House of Representatives decided the election
- B) a Supreme Court decision was required to dislodge the Federalists
- C) voter turnout increased dramatically
- D) the party in power stepped down after losing the election
- E) force was required to get John Adams to leave the white house

2001 AP Exam

12) Which of the following is true of the case of Marbury v. Madison?

- A) It established that Congress had the sole right to formulate national legislation.
- B) It supported Thomas Jefferson in his claim to have "executive review"
- C) It backed William Marbury's in his request for a bank charter
- D) It affirmed the principle of judicial review
- E) It determined the Senate's right to "advise and consent"

13) The Kentucky and Virginia resolutions, the Hartford Convention, and the *South Carolina Exposition and Protest* were similar in that all involved a defense of

- A) freedom of the seas

- B) freedom of speech
- C) the institution of slavery
- D) states' rights
- E) presidential power in foreign affairs

14) The Louisiana Purchase initially presented a dilemma for President Thomas Jefferson because he believed it would

- A) lead to war with Great Britain
- B) bankrupt the new nation
- C) force Native American Indians off their lands
- D) violate his strict constructionist view of the Constitution

15. Which of John C. Calhoun's beliefs most isolated his region from other parts of the nation?

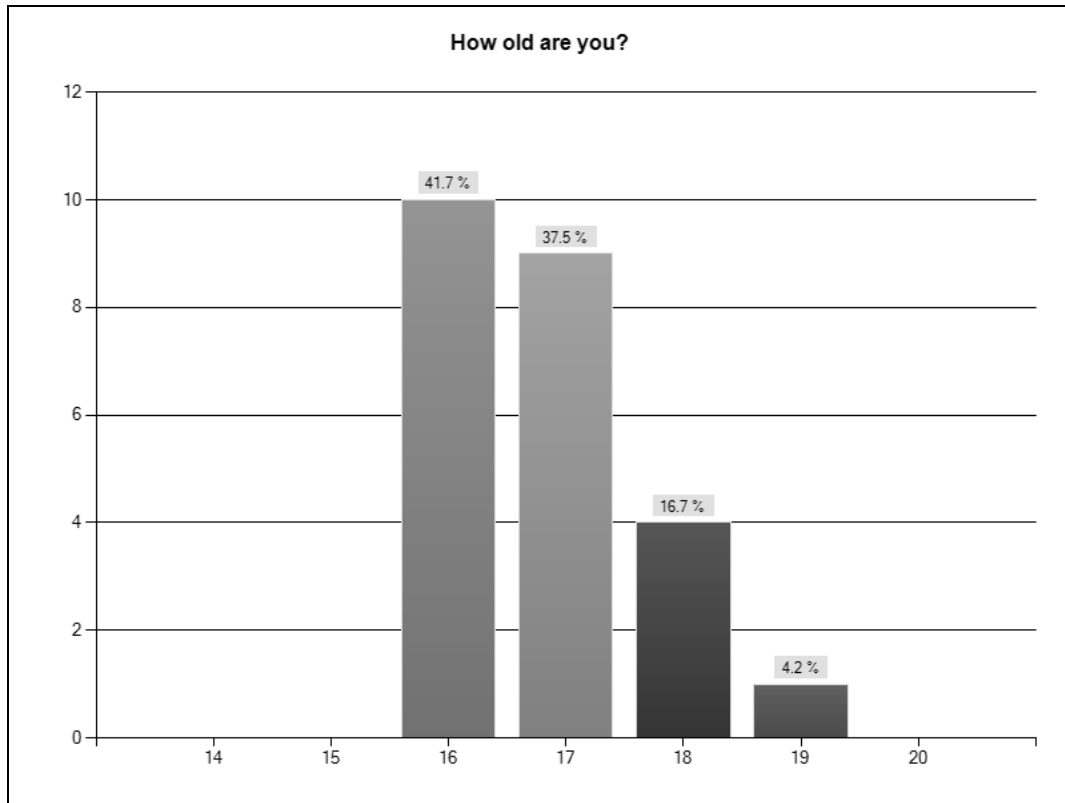
- A) support for the War of 1812
- B) the theory of nullification
- C) Support for protective tariffs
- D) the theory of natural rights

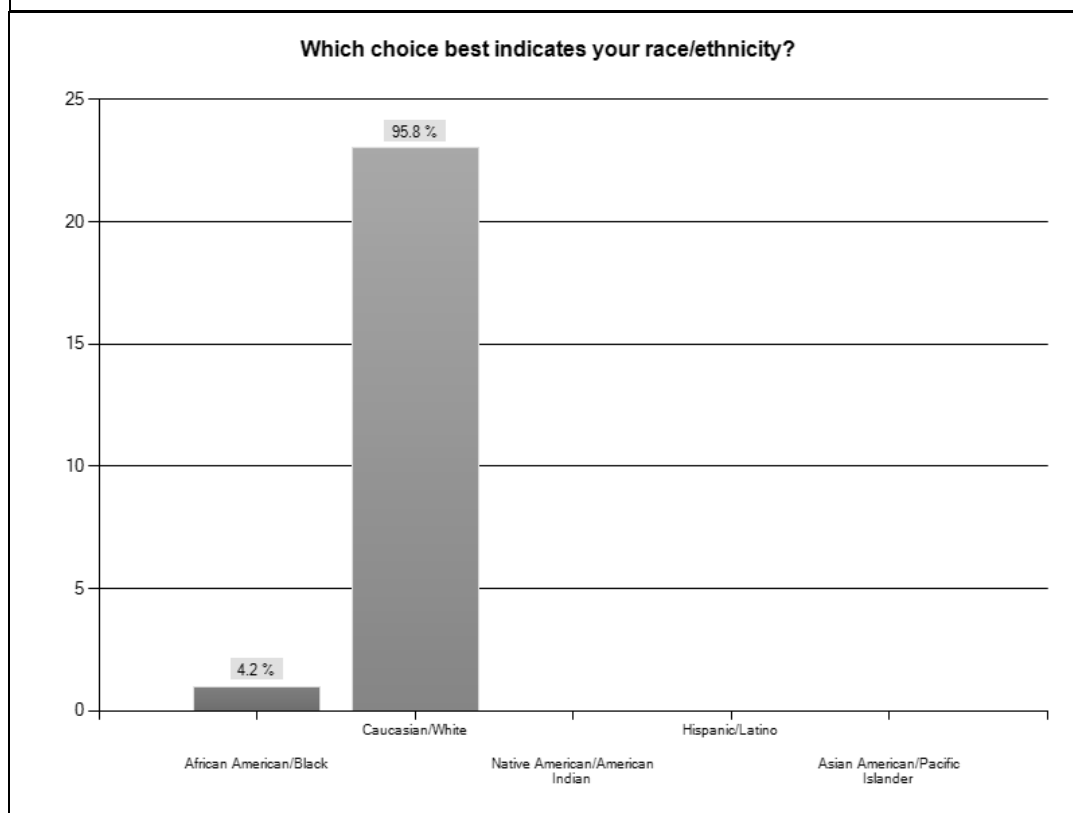
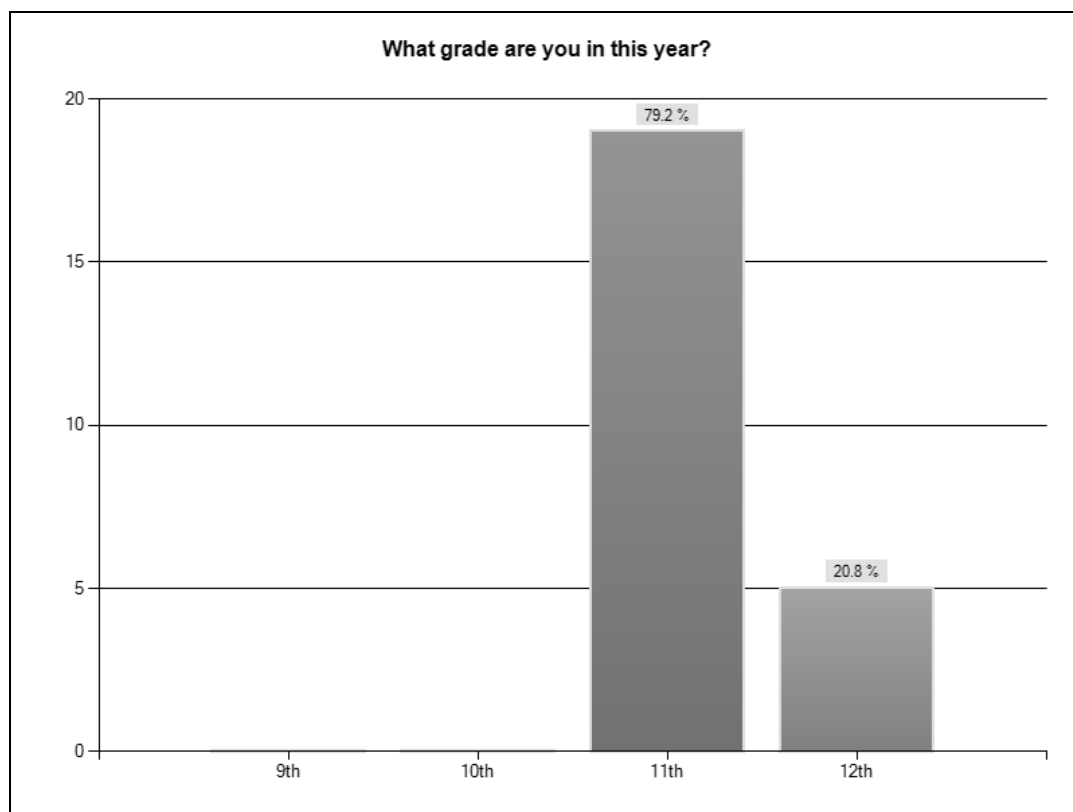
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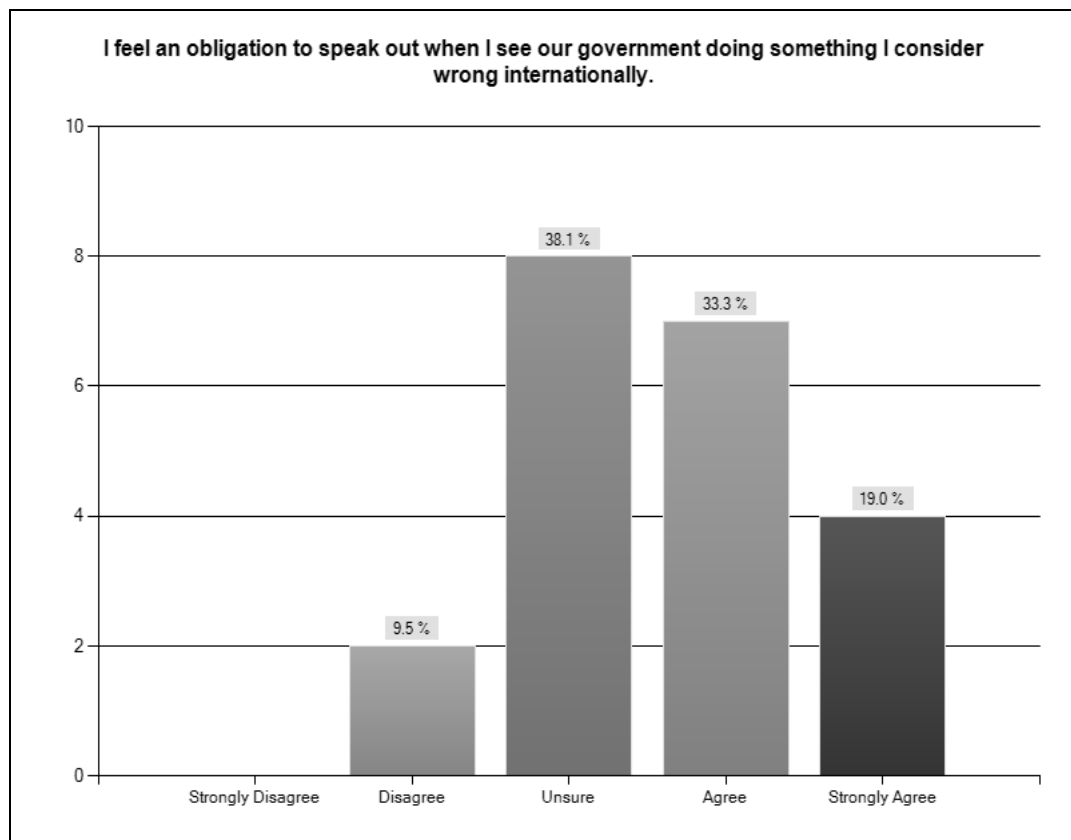
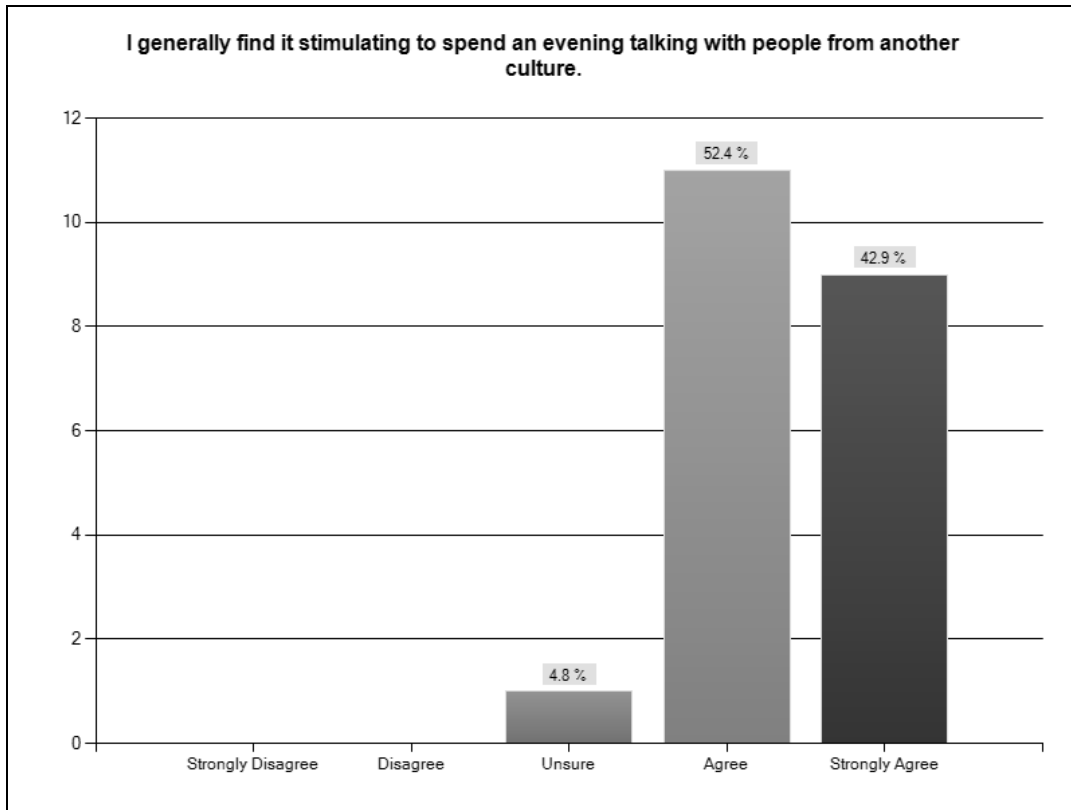
16. What kind of powers are defined by the Necessary and Proper Clause?

- A) enumerated
- B) reserved
- C) implied
- D) expressed

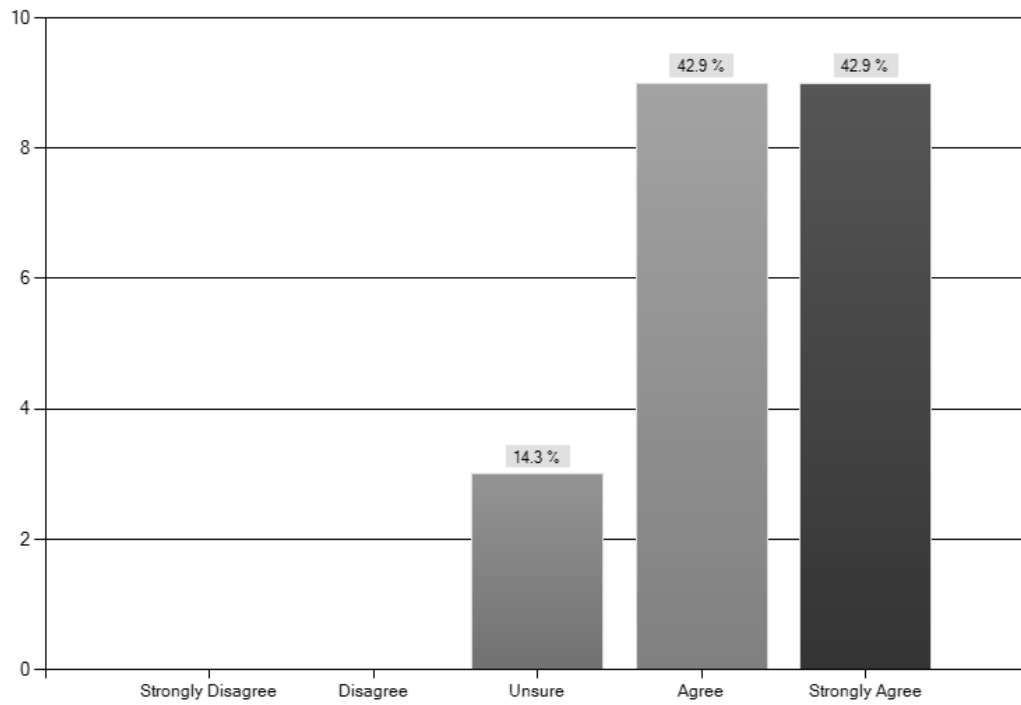
APPENDIX N: GMS SURVEY RESULTS (Raw Data)



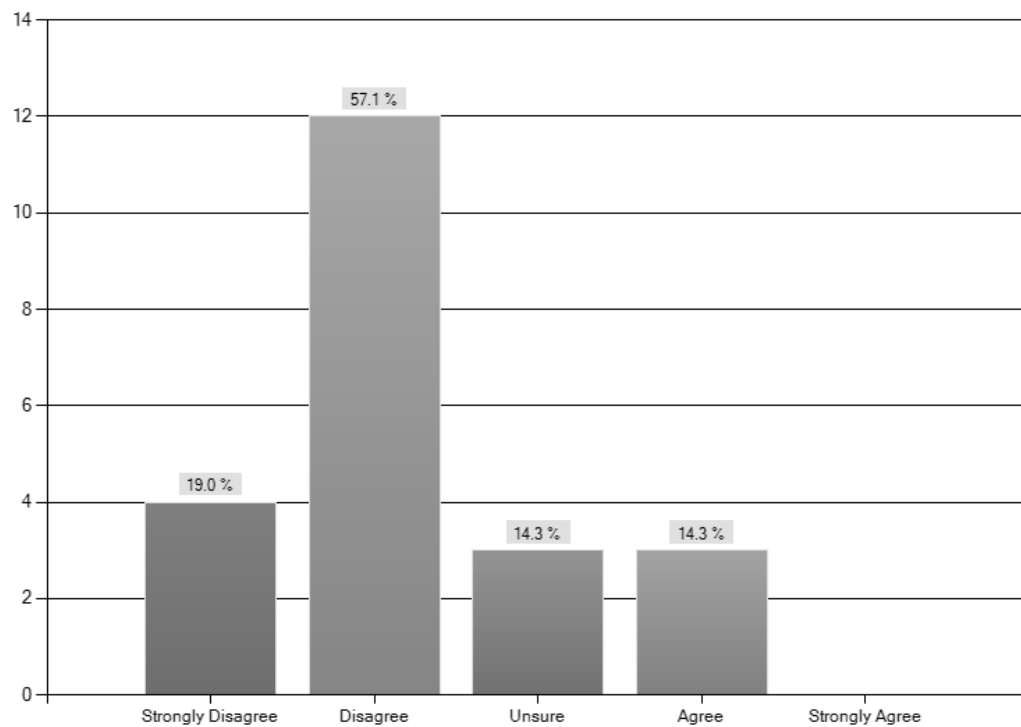




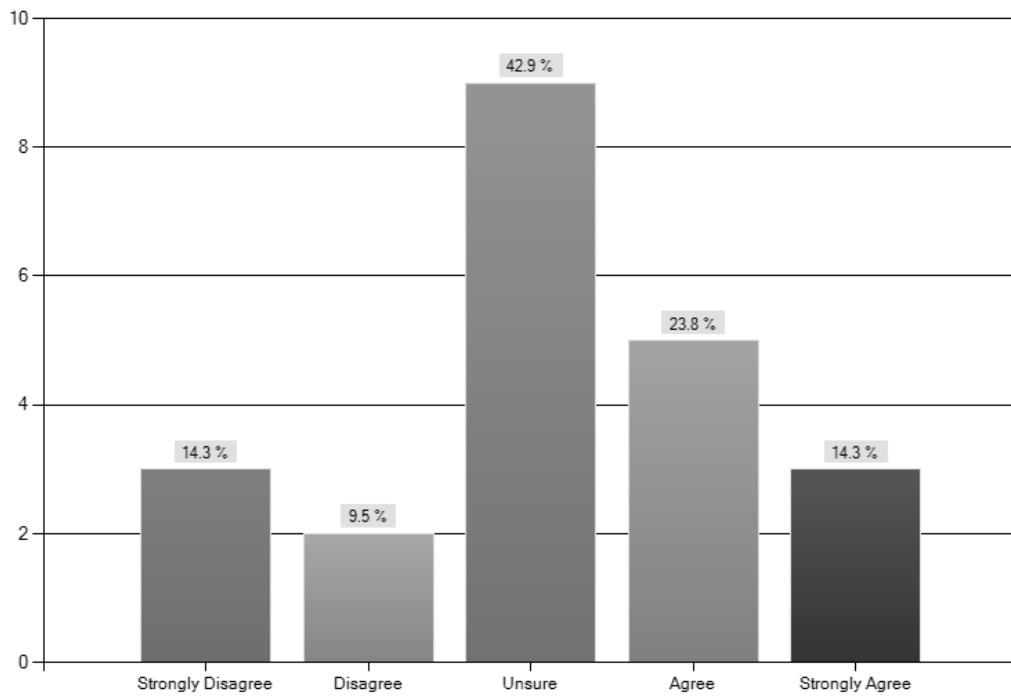
The United States is enriched by the fact that it is comprised of many people from different cultures and countries.



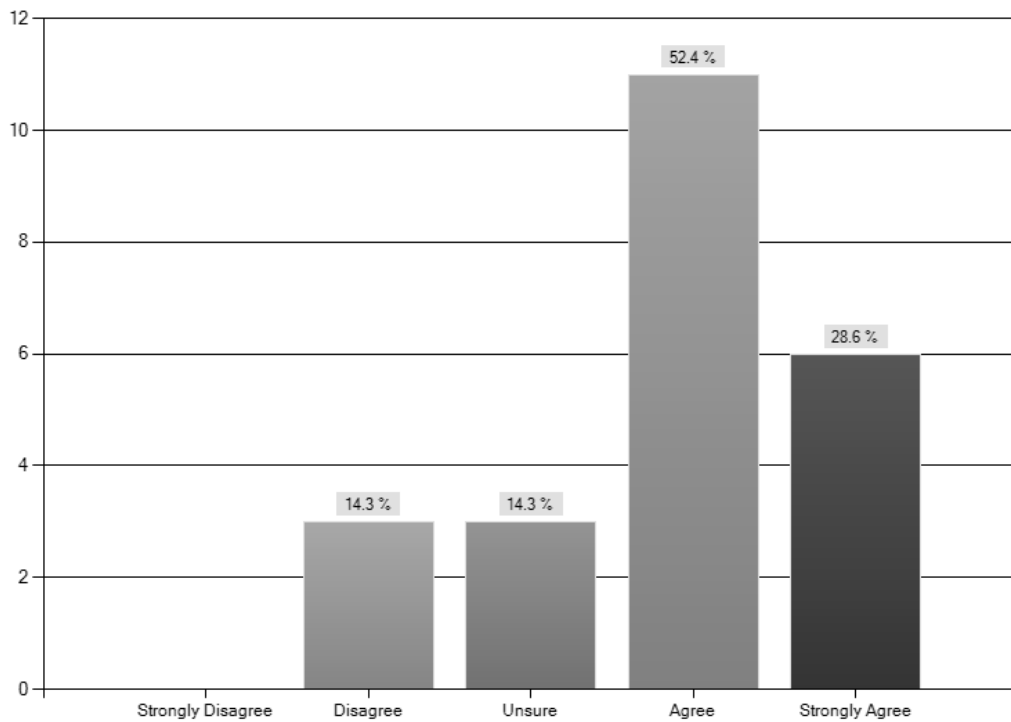
Really, there is nothing I can do about the problems of the world.

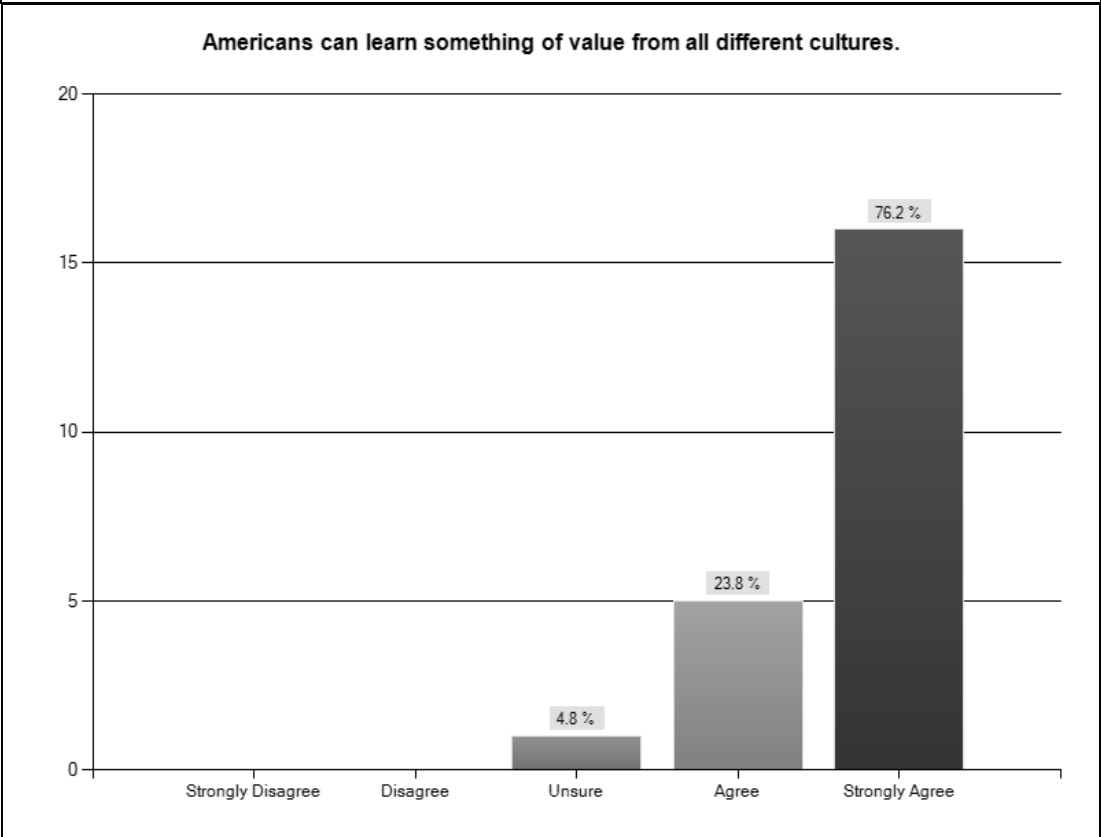
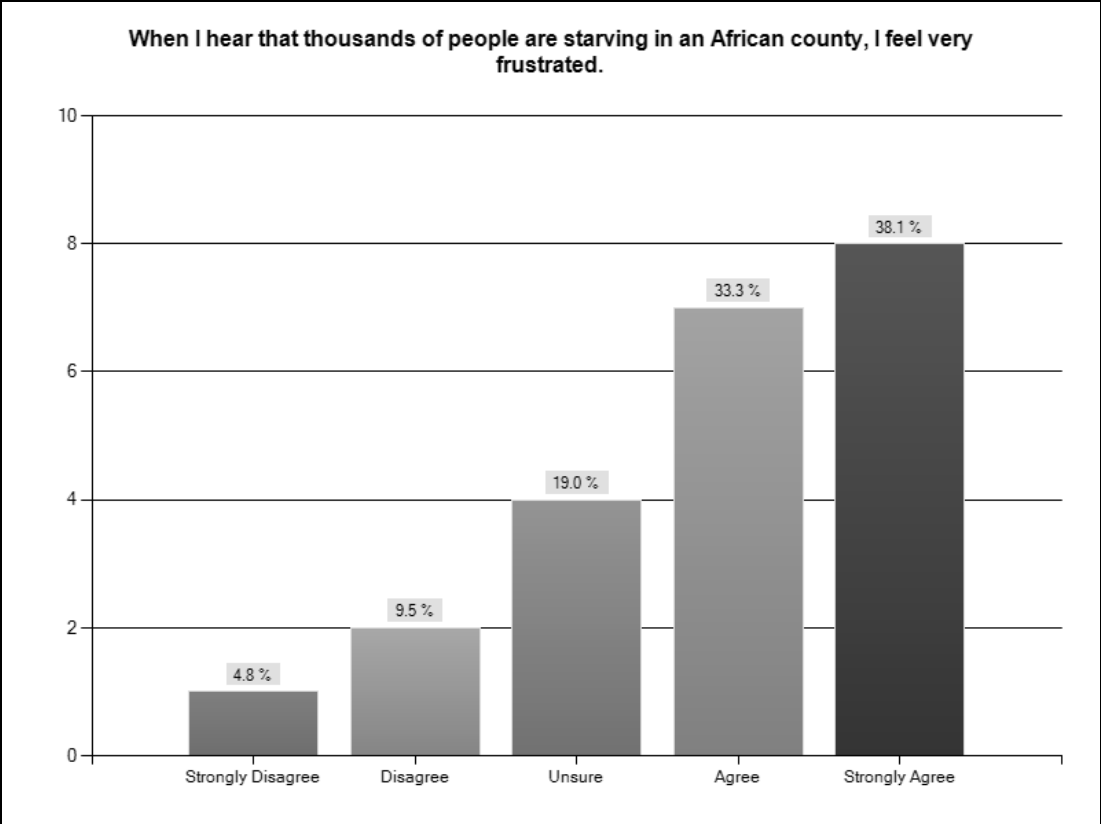


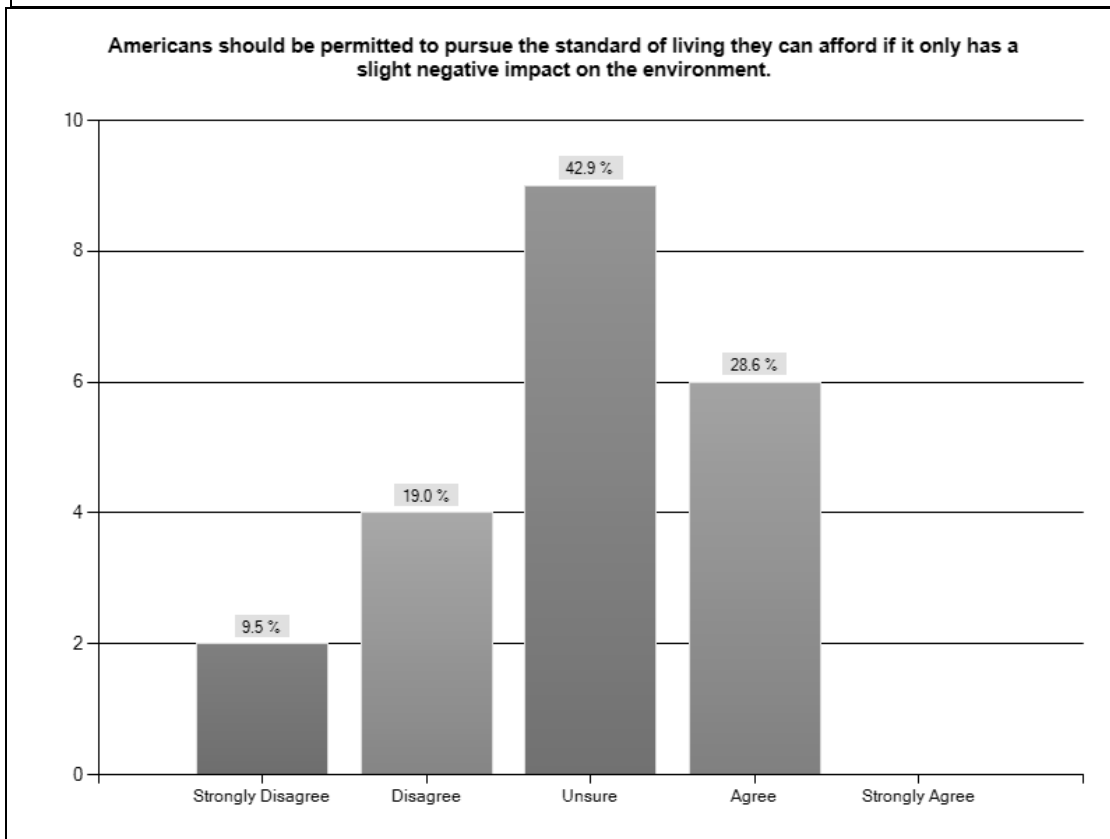
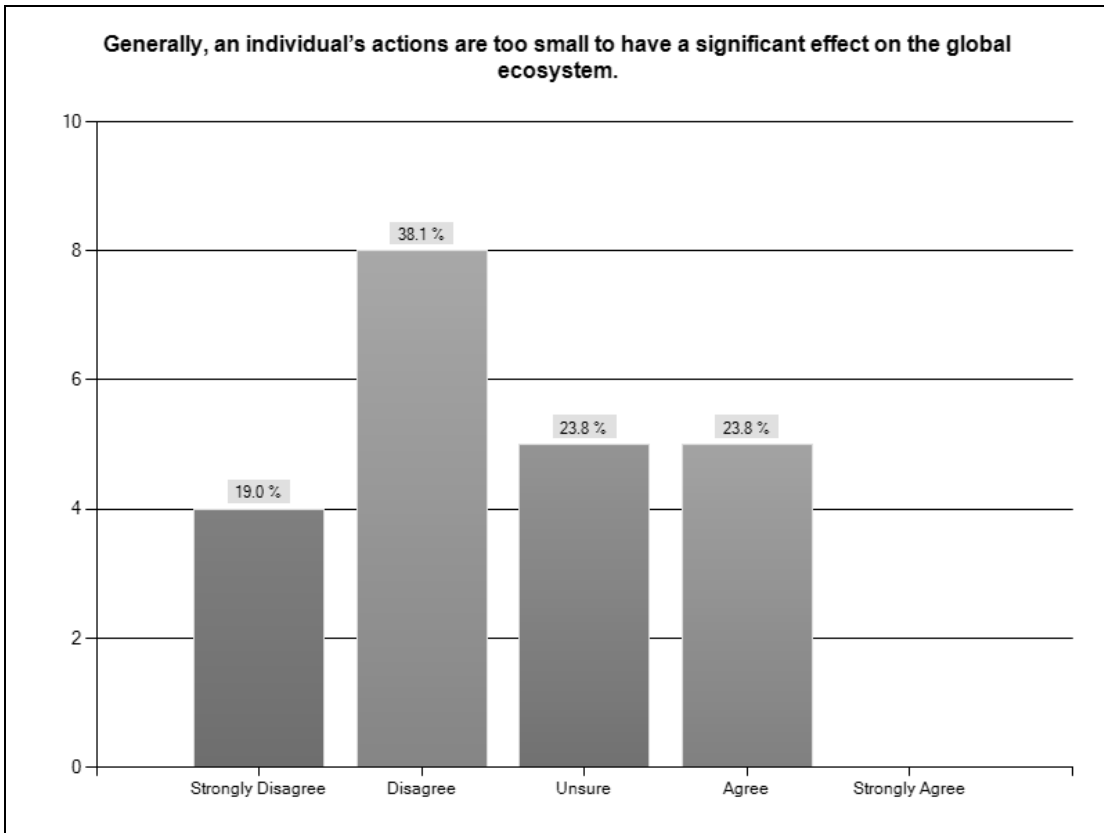
The needs of the United States must continue to be our highest priority in negotiating with other countries.

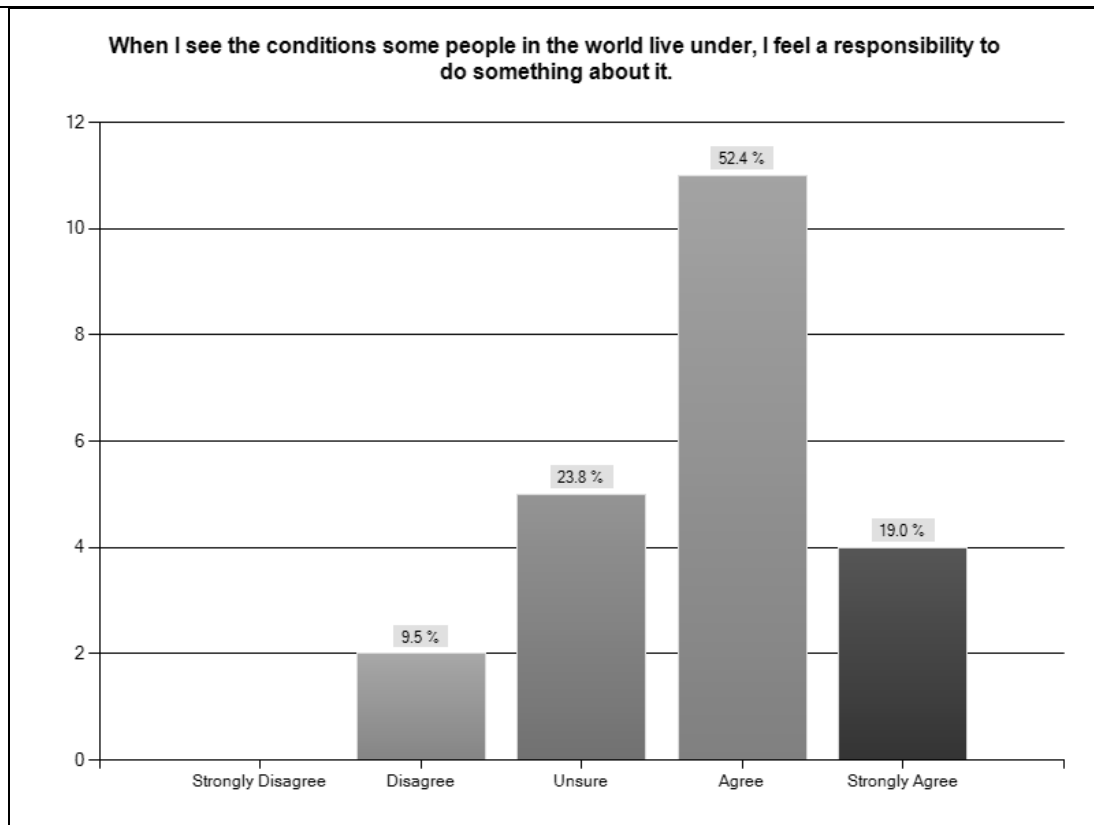
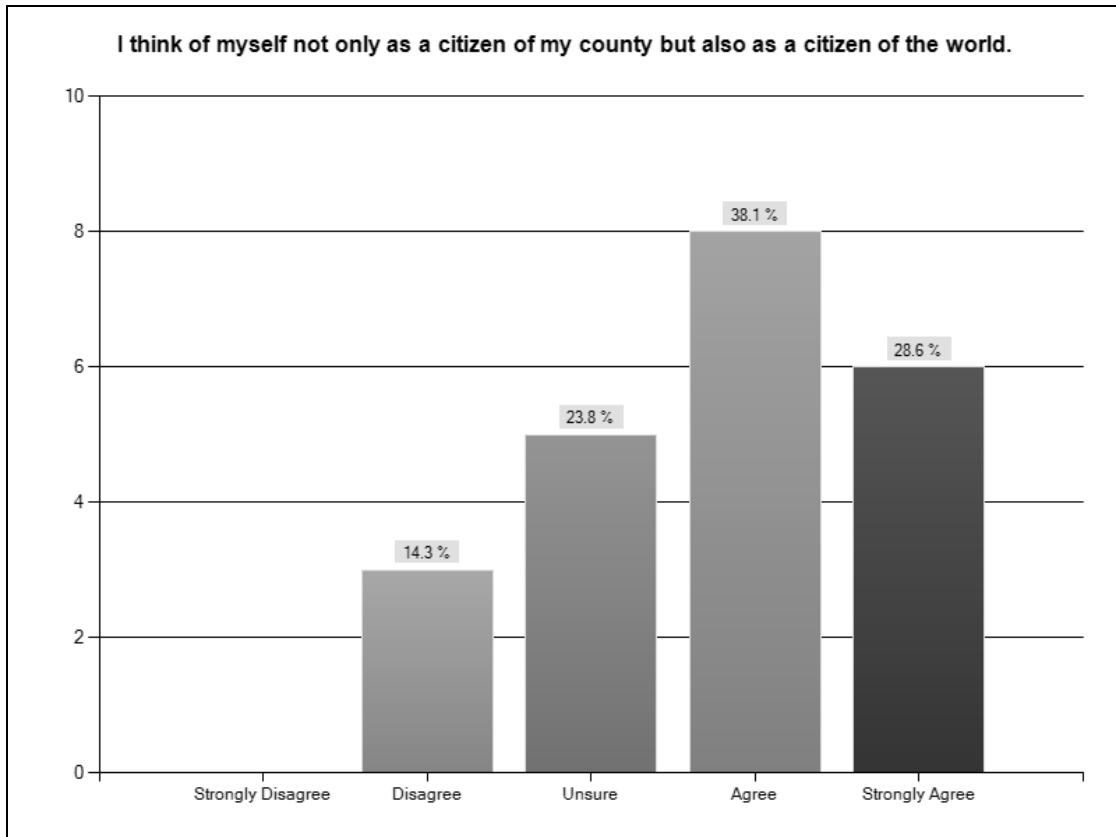


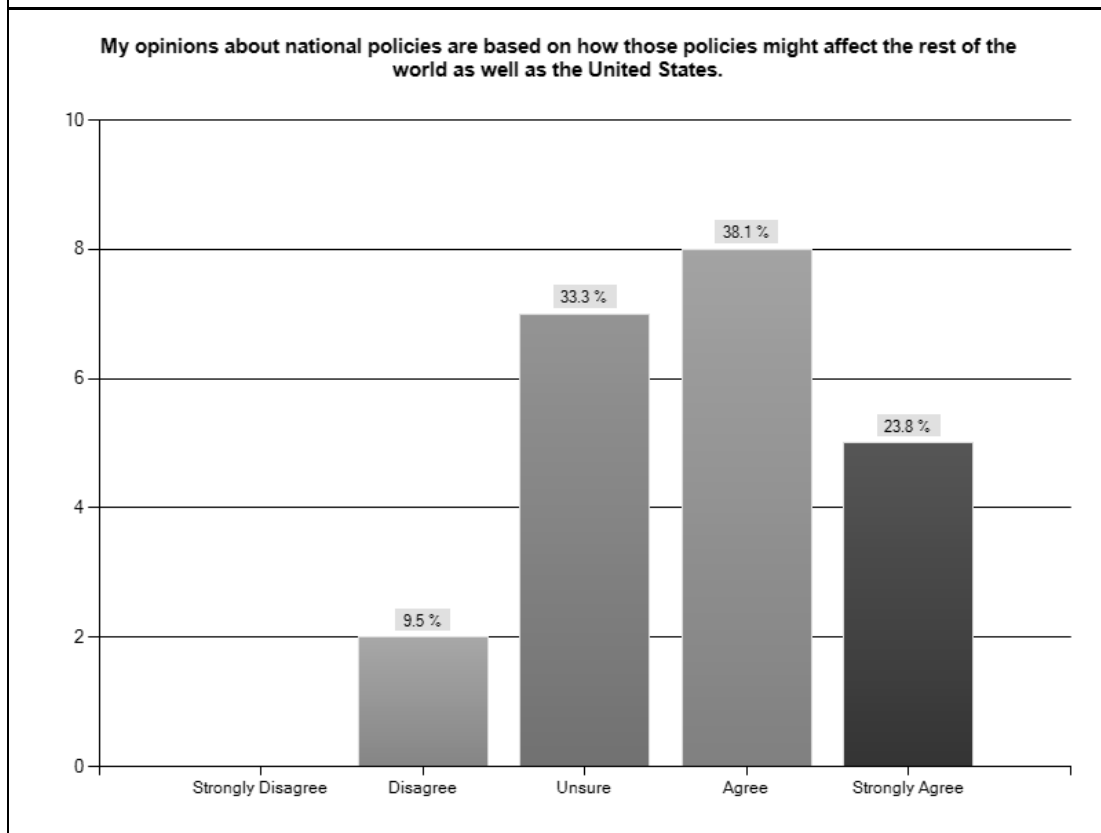
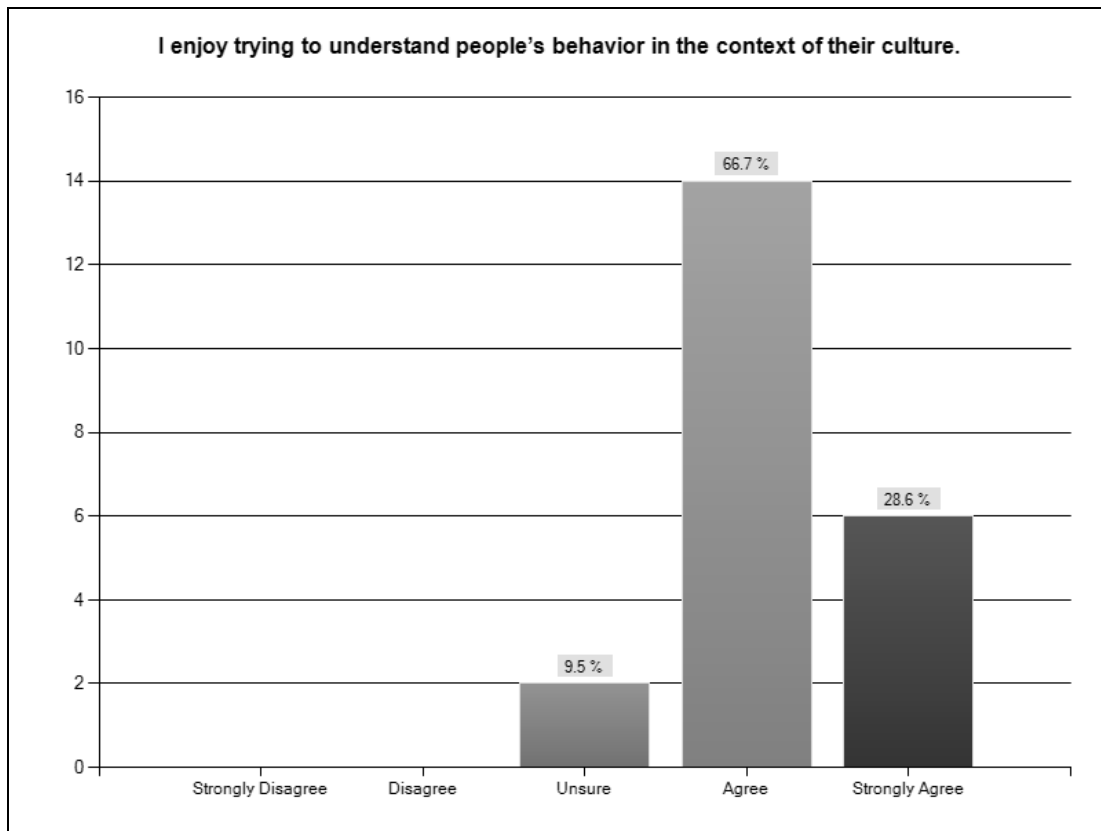
I often think about the kind of world we are creating for future generations.

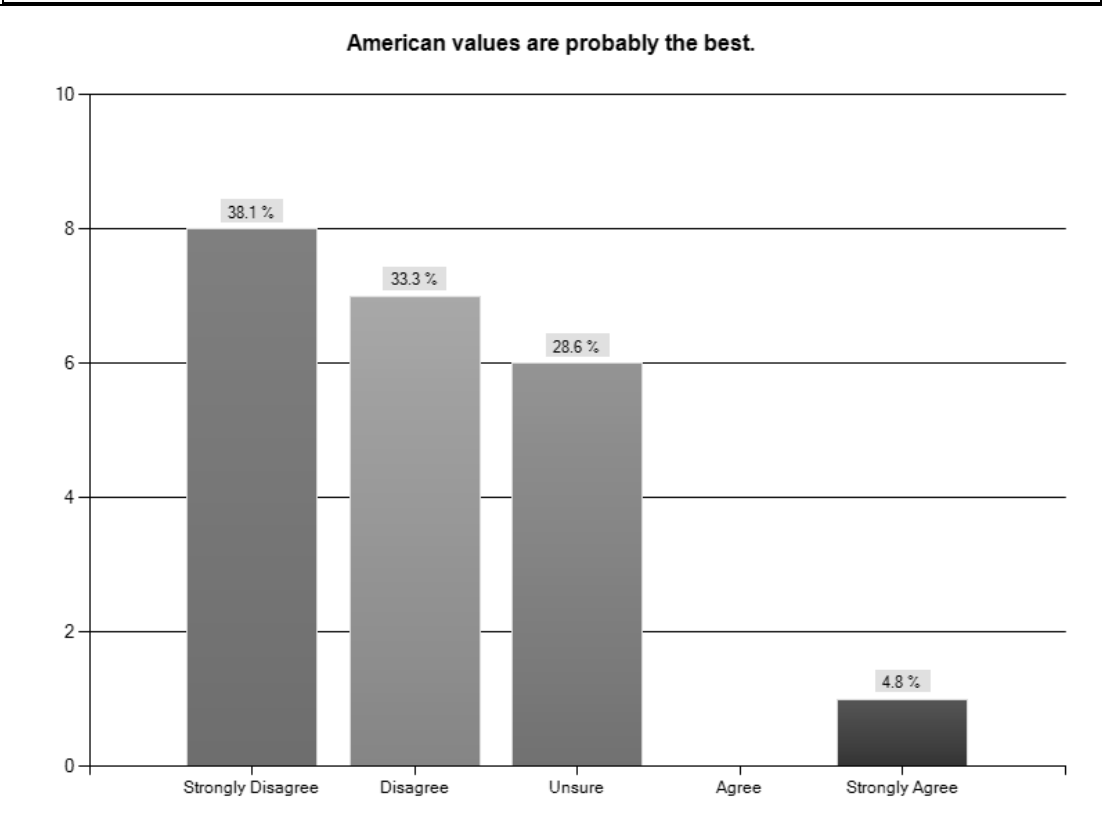
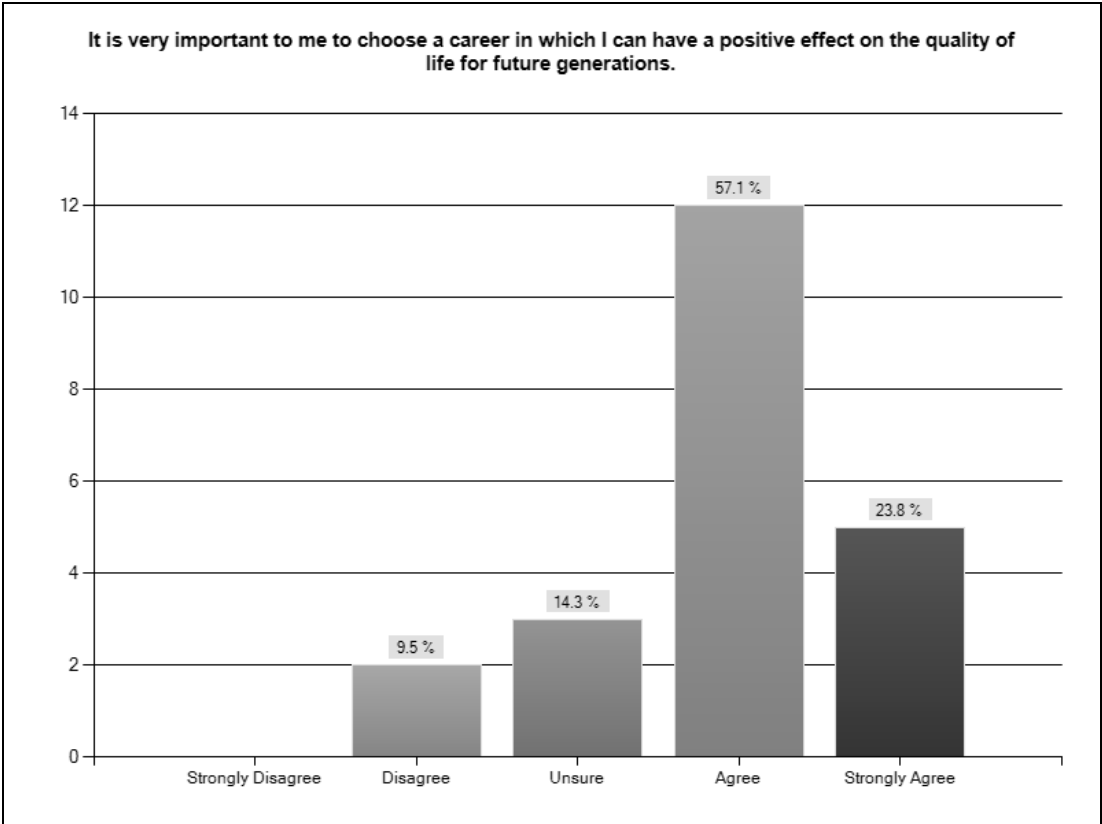


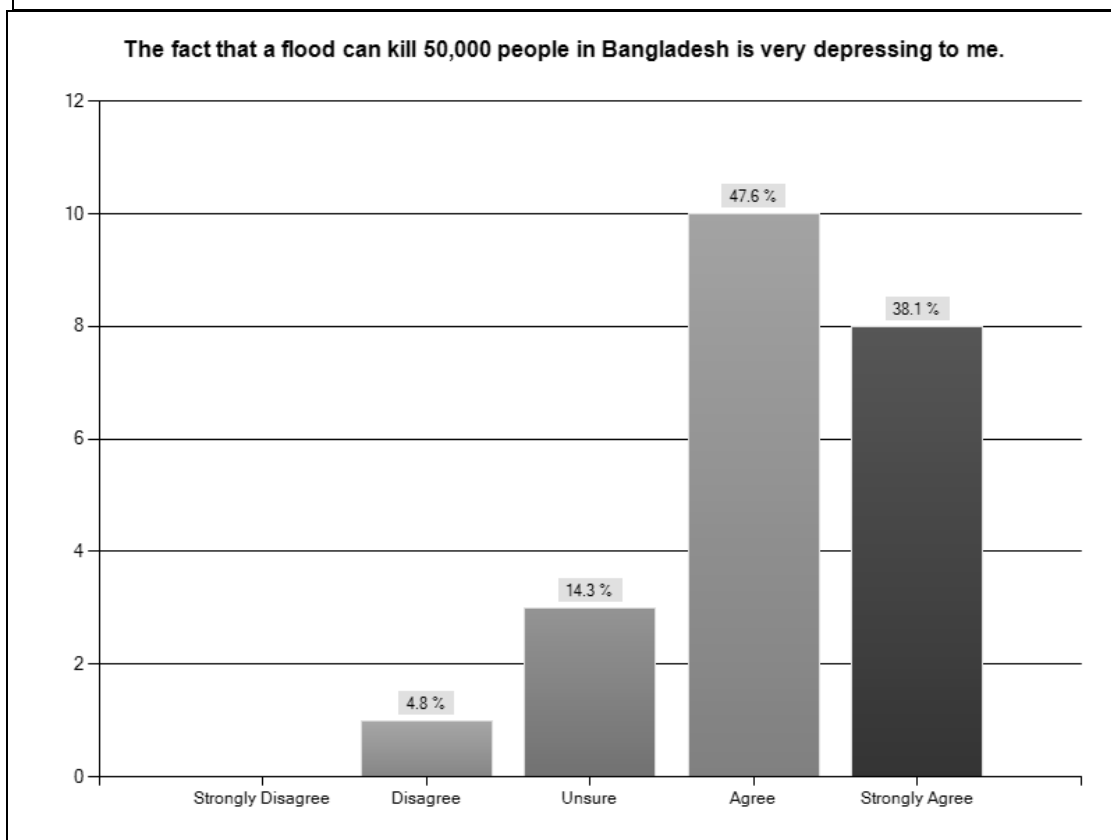
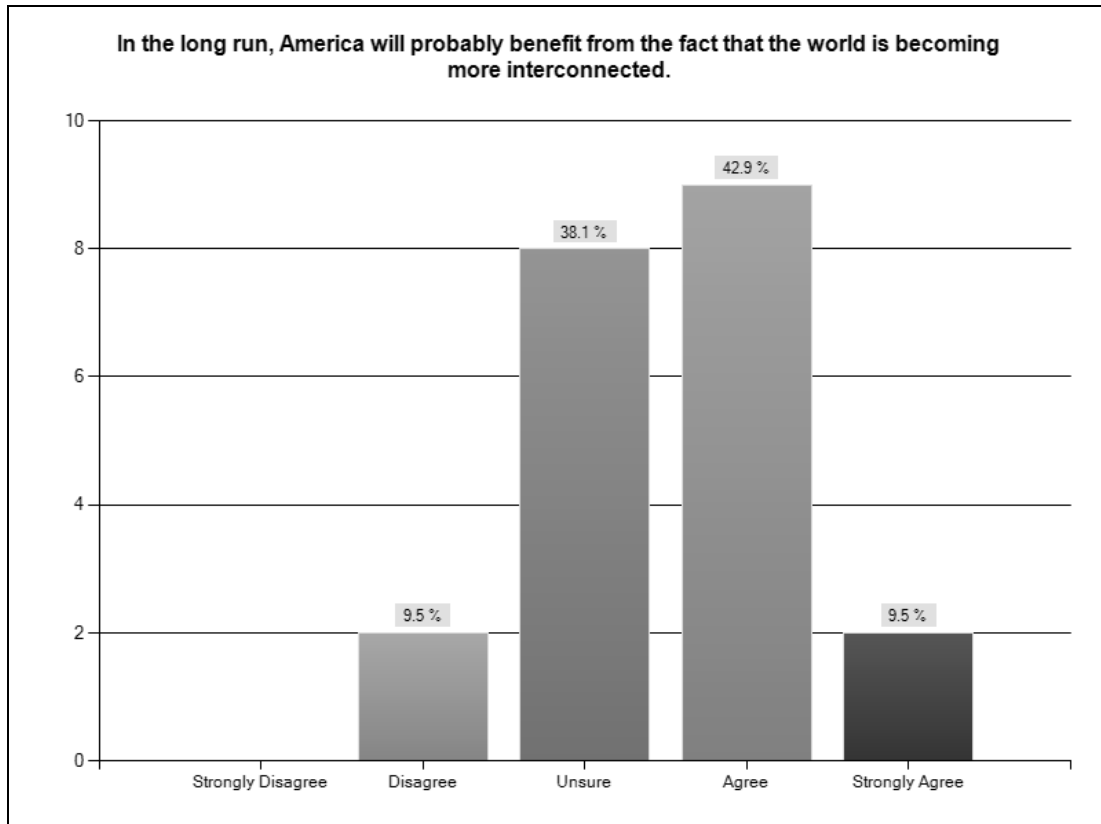


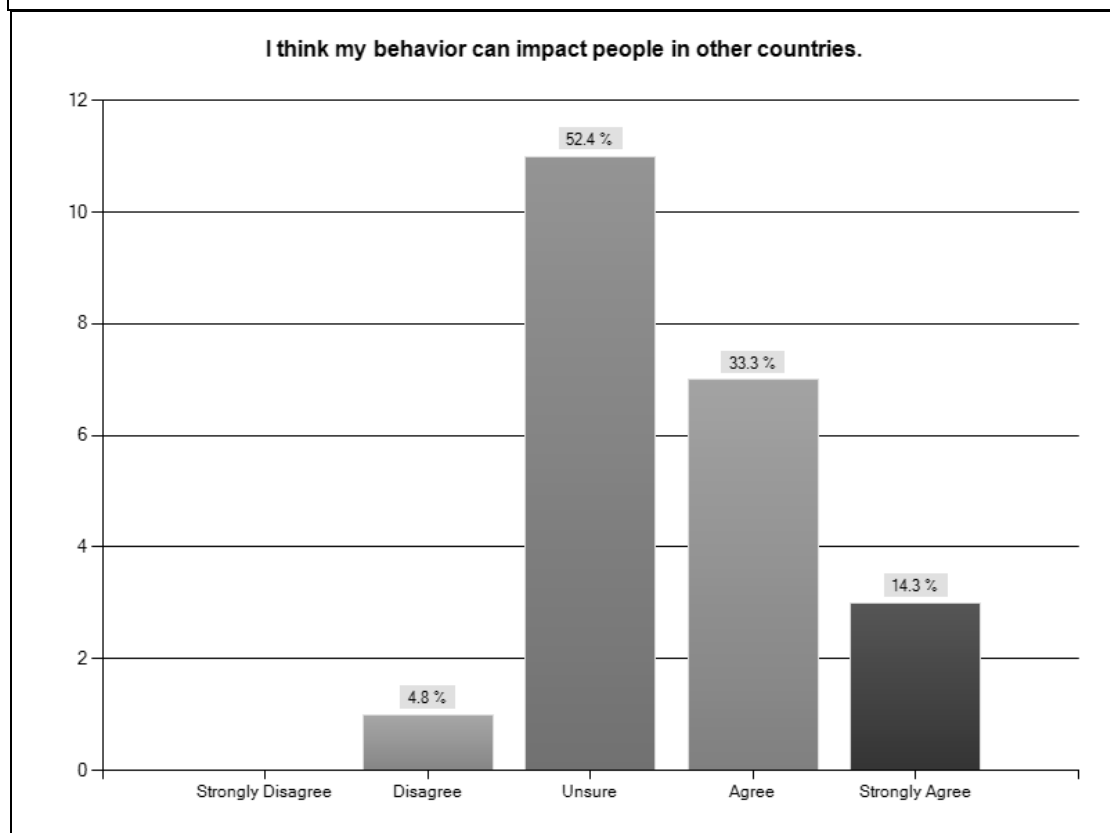
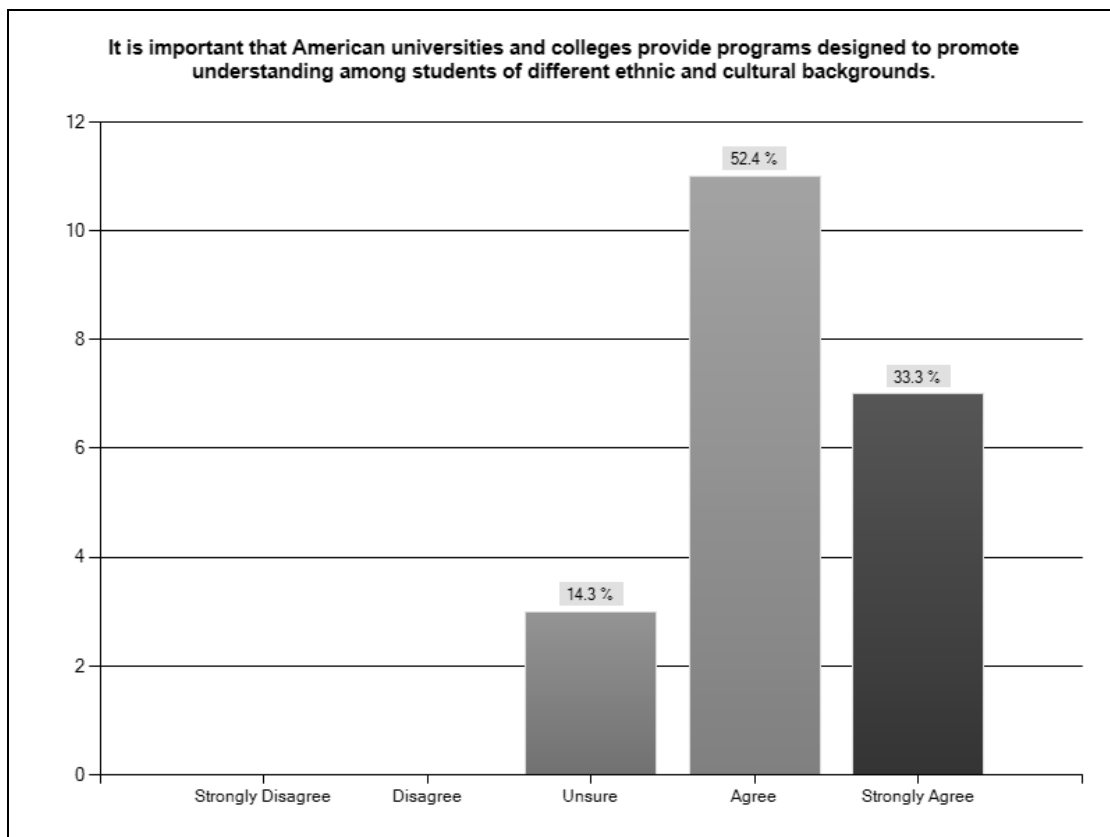


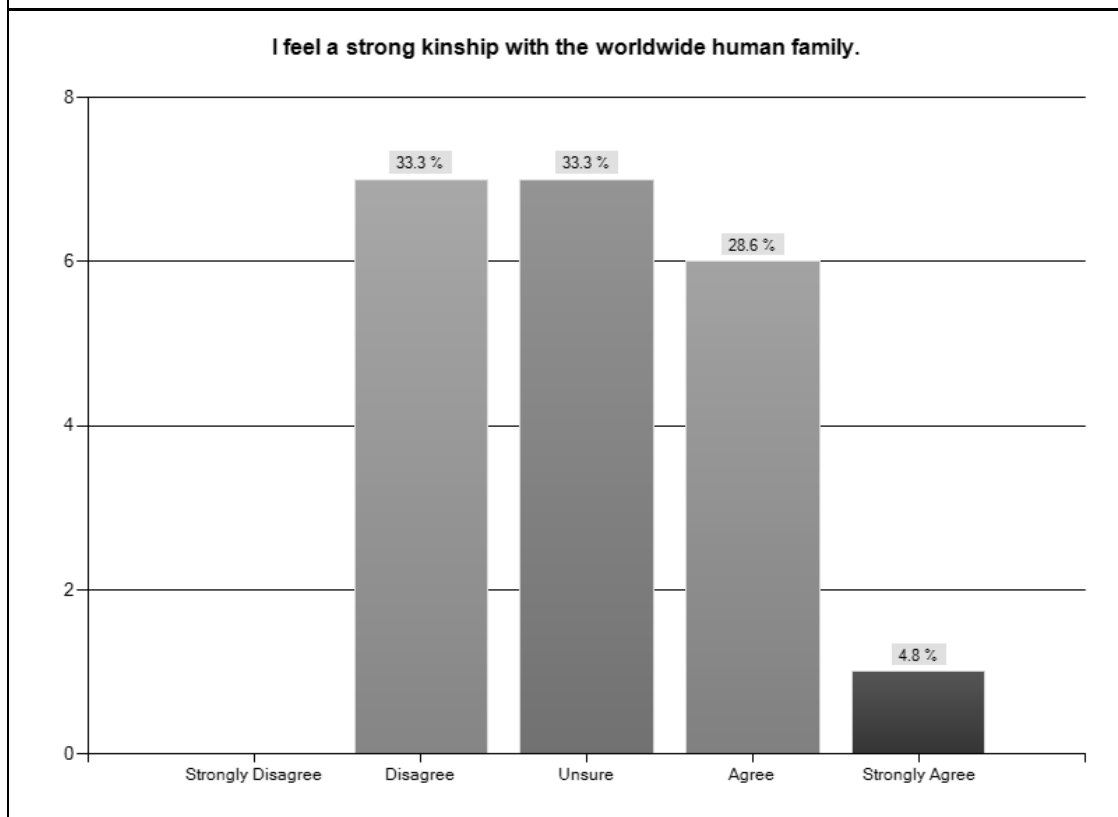
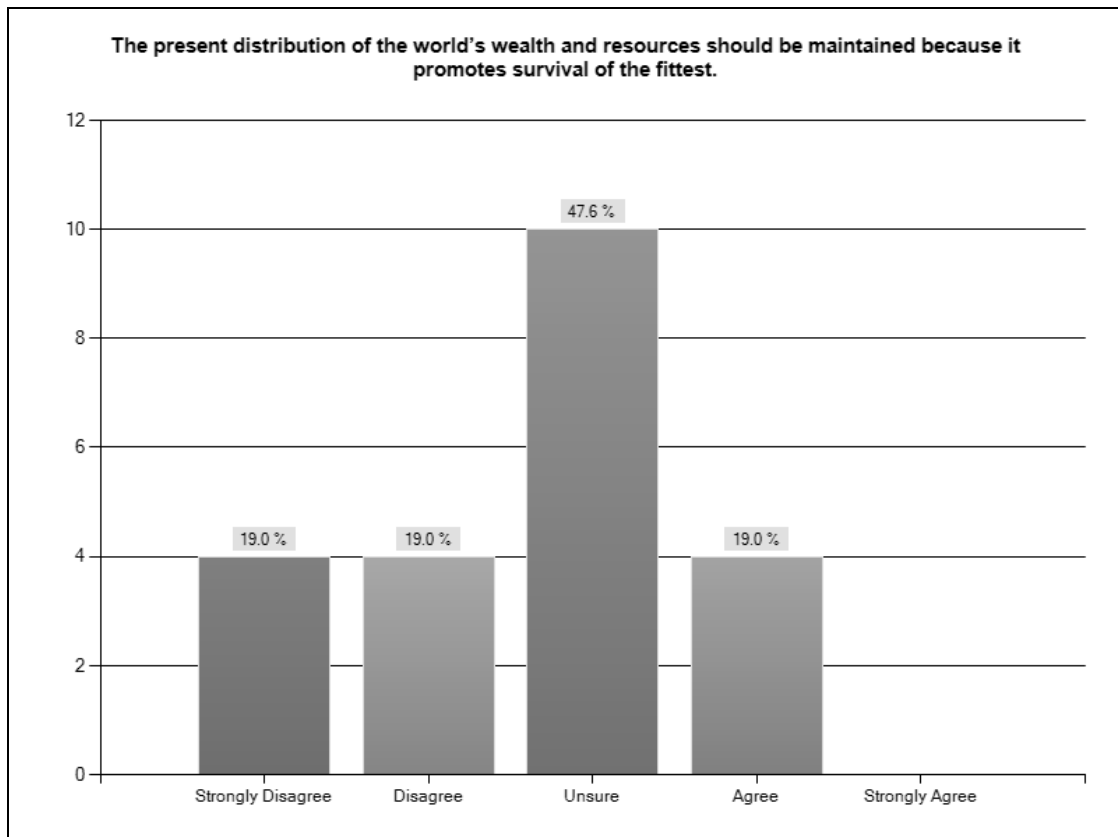


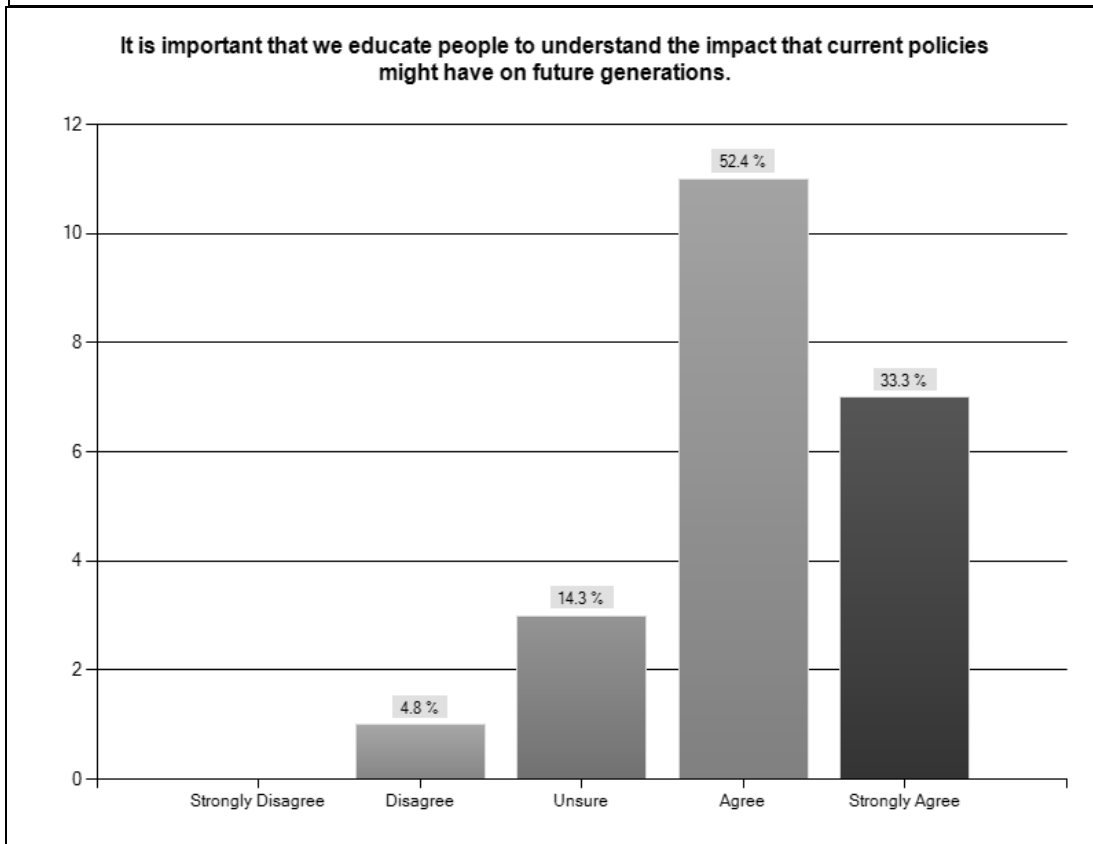
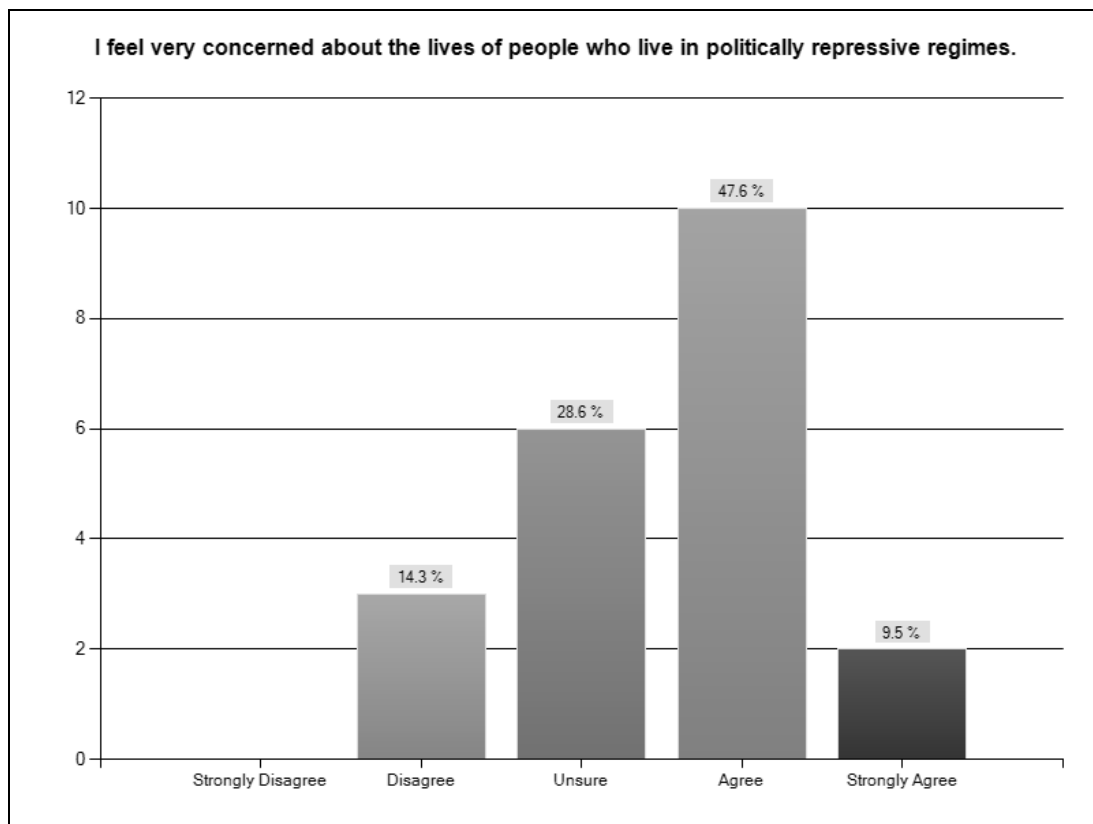


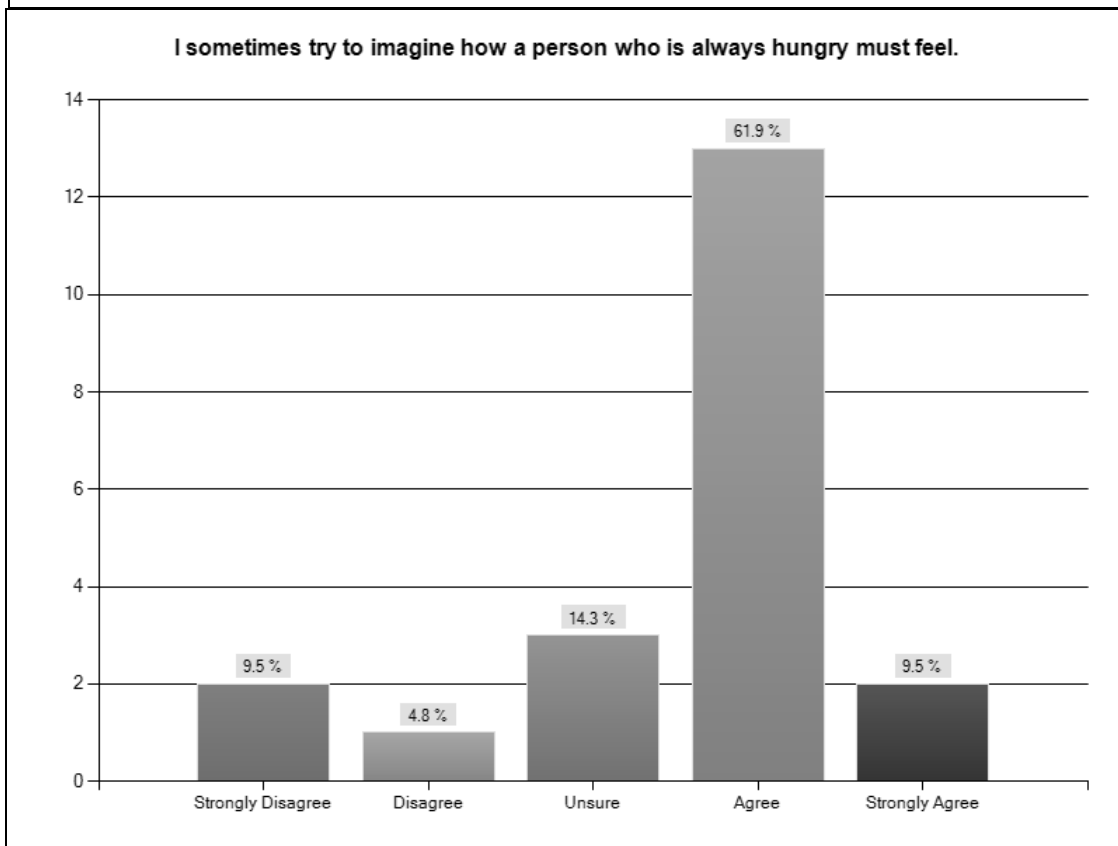
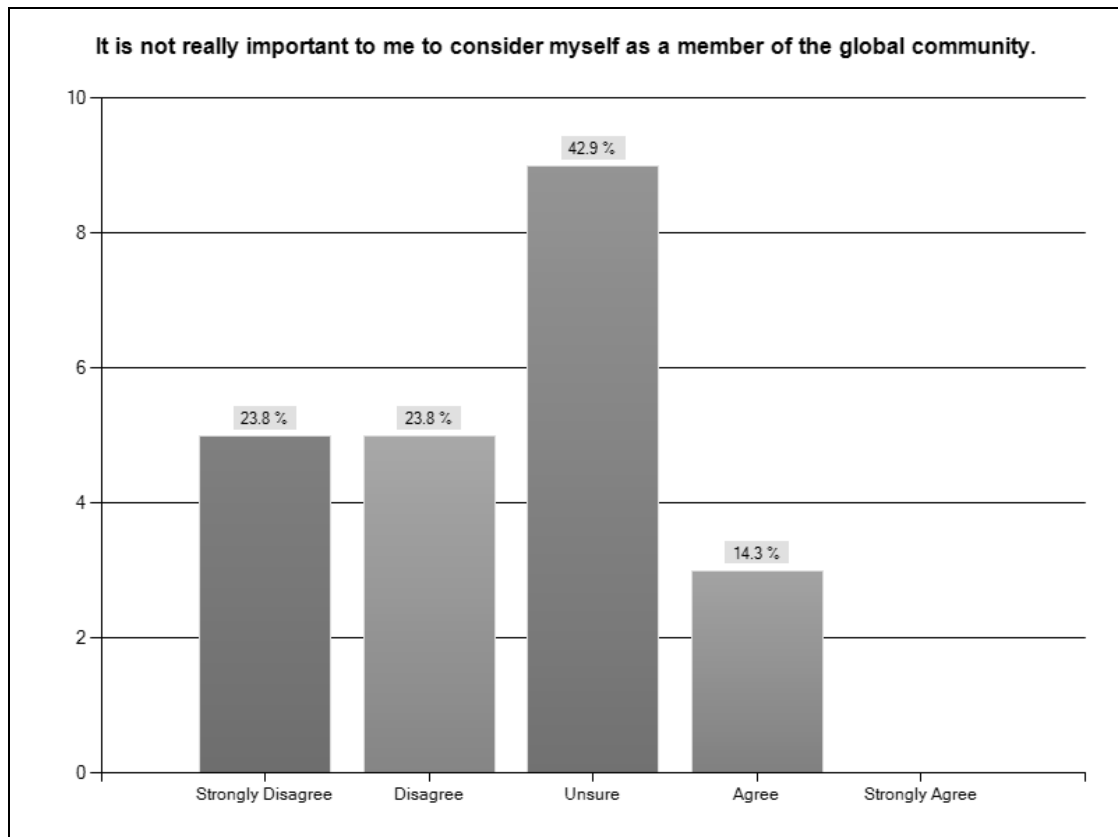


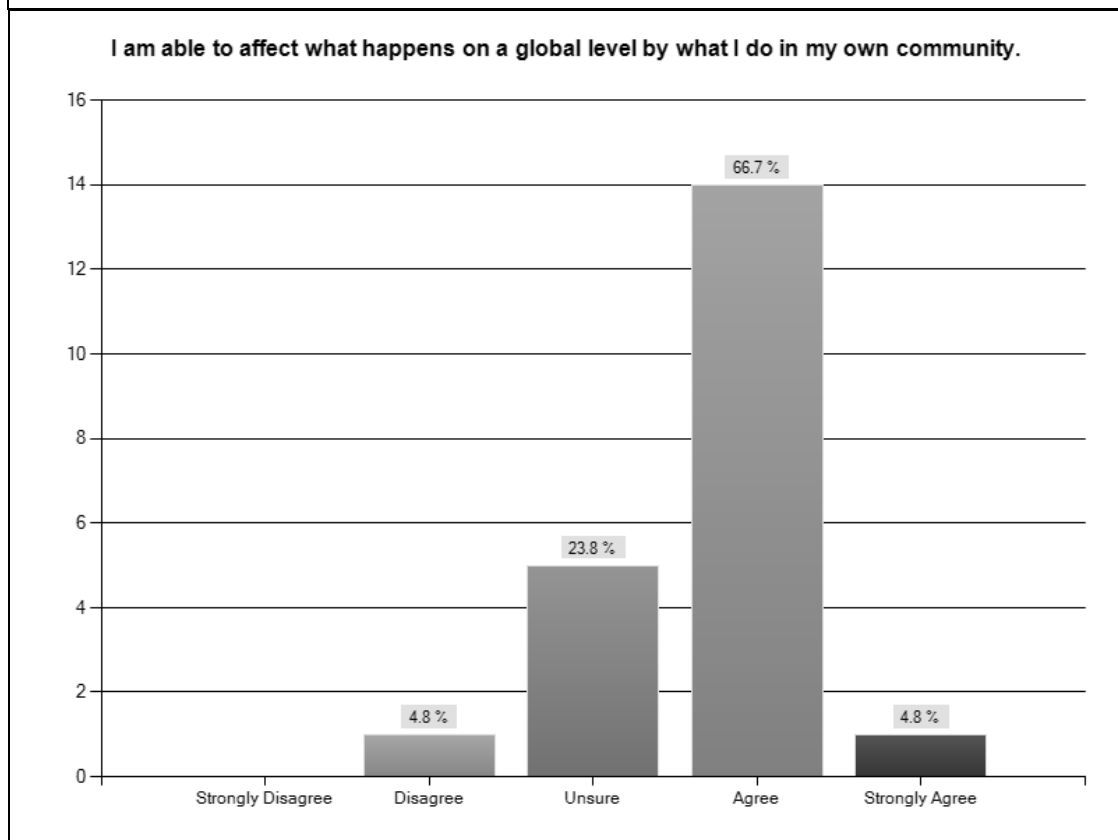
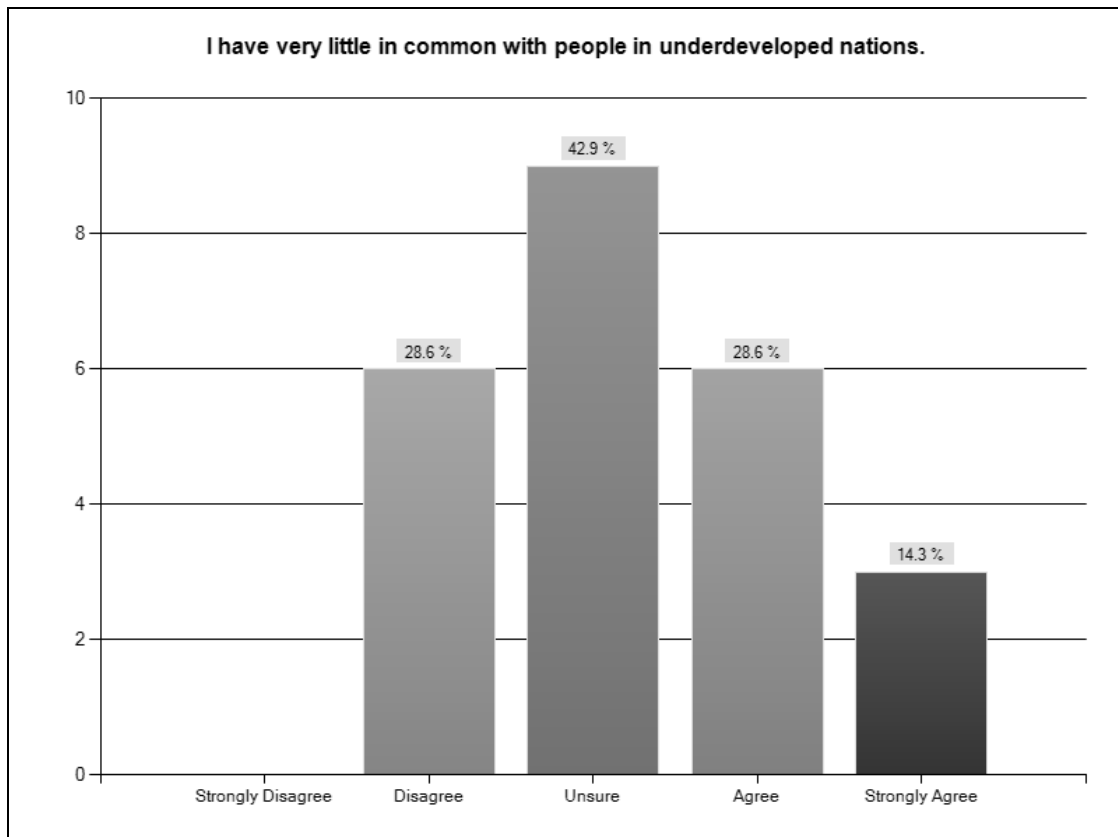


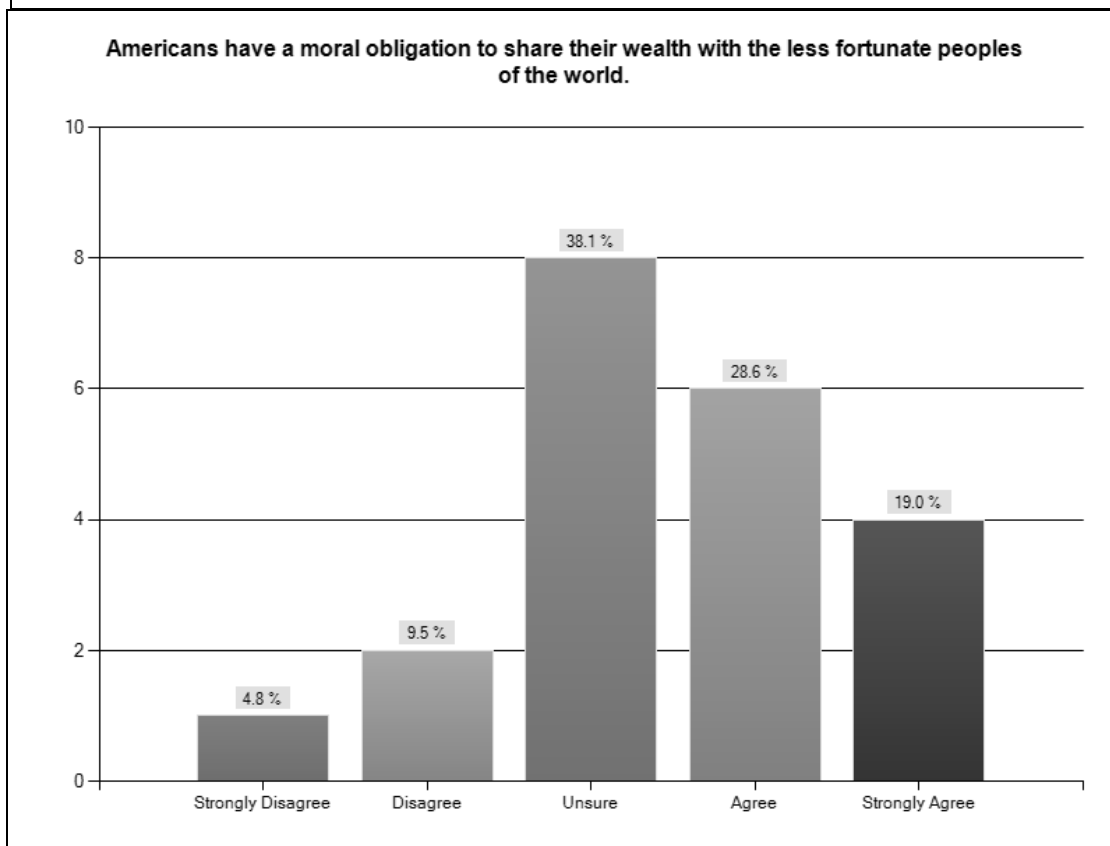
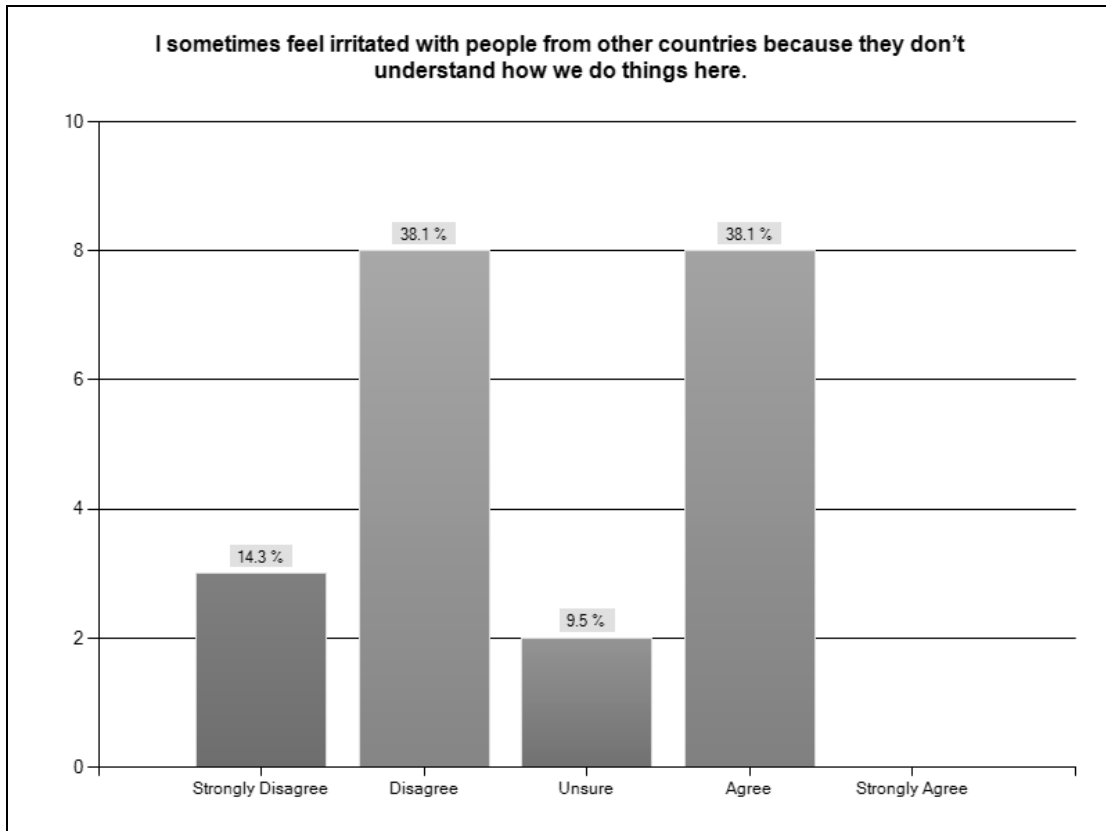












Open – Ended survey questions taken on SurveyMonkey as a part of the Global Mindedness Scale survey

How might your responses to the survey questions have differed before your interaction with students from another country?
Before, I had never talked or connected with anyone who didn't live in America and share our culture. Now I have a better understanding of it.
I probably would have responded a little harsher, and would not have as much sympathy for the world around me.
I wouldn't have been as aware of world events and politics in other countries
Not much, I tend to be a very moderate person and I try to see things and situations from many views.
I don't know.
Meeting new people can change your thoughts and ideas
They wouldn't have differed.
I don't know
Some might not understand why I picked those things.
I don't think so
I'm more interested in different cultures now.
Don't know the same I guess. . .
Same as before
How has your experience with students from another country changed your perceptions, beliefs and/or attitudes?
I got to learn about the culture of people from Denmark. I learned it's very different but pretty similar to America.
My experiences with students from other countries have allowed me to grow an interest in foreign affairs and ultimately become more politically active.
it makes me more open minded and tolerant of different cultures
Again not much, I always try to understand how other people live and how different we must seem to them and them to us.
I feel as if we should all interact more (with other countries) in order to be all united as one.
It's opened a new perspective to new cultures and new ways of life
It has made me realize how little the idea of globalism is stressed through education in this country.
i don't really know
I learn about what their behavioral atmospheres are like and their different cultures.
in a good way
I have learnt a lot about the culture, and understand more about their way to act and their life values. It had taught me a lot about other people, but also about myself.
i don't know
I am more open than before and I think it's easier to speak with strangers.
it hasn't really changed anything.
They haven't

What was the biggest misconception that you had about students from another country?
I didn't know they spoke English well.
My biggest misconception that I had about students from another country was that they would be nothing like me at all.
them being able to travel around Europe on a regular basis
I didn't really have any misconceptions.
I thought that they were going to be awkward.
That they are completely different than us
That they would be frustrated with American politics more than their own.
they all spoke some weird language
That most people would be courteous to each other. For example, apologizing to the one you bumped into.
Fatness
I don't think I had one; there were some difference between our way to think and act, but not any big ones.
I don't know
I thought they ate more.
I didn't really have any, so. . .
Nothing
What misconceptions did the students from another country seem to have about you?
I didn't personally work with them so I'm not sure.
They also seemed to fear that we would be extremely different and that they would not fit in.
Assuming the typical American fatty food stereotype in all US households
I have a small problem with the fact that people from other countries think that Americans are stupid. Yeah, I have no problem stating the truth: that Americans aren't the smartest people. But not all of us are stupid and lazy, I work very hard in school and don't really consider myself "stupid," of course I'm not the smartest person but I'm sure not stupid either.
That we were all rich and prissy.
That we are completely different from them
That we wouldn't complain as much as we do about our government.
we all act like the people off the show Jersey Shore
I'm not sure exactly. I didn't get a chance to talk to them.
I don't think the student had any big problems, off course there were some difference between our cultures, but there wasn't any misconceptions. If there where I explained it, and we had a conversation about it.
I don't know
They thought that I would have a really weird accent. I don't remember anything else.
don't know

What did you have in common with students from another country?
We are all teenagers and like to do a lot of the same things in our free time.
I had a lot in common with foreign students. We liked some of the same foods, music, books, games, and ultimately I believe it was a great learning experience that every student should have a chance to participate in.
Sports and the love for travel
I really liked that one of the students I worked with wanted to connect via Facebook to stay in touch after her visit here. I thought it was pretty cool that she cared enough to even think of that. The way they acted around each other was very similar to the way we act here around our friends, which I expected considering that they were teenagers like myself.
We have the same interests.
What we like to do for fun
That's a stupid question. (be more vague)
I'm an average teenager
We are a lot like each other when it comes to teenager problems, and we had some of the same dreams and values.
We were both teenagers and we loved to do the same things in our spare time.
A lot of things. Taste in music, humor, and some other things.
Not that much. Though we both came from middleclass to rich families/ and were from the 'western' world, our values were totally different, and we didn't really have anything in common. . .
A lot of things.

APPENDIX O: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT (Phase One)

Day One: Principal, Partnership Coordinator, Teachers

Day One, Interview One: Partnership Coordinator 11:45 – 12:45

Ricks: What changes have you seen in your students over the years who have participated in this?

[PC]: What's really good about this program is that American students very often live in an American bubble. They're doing American stuff all the time. . . .

[PC]: I think the big benefit for our students and what's really good about the program is that they get exposed to other cultures because American students tend to sort of be in an American bubble. They watch American television, they speak their own language. Americans generally are resistive to learning other languages even if thought they may be taking Spanish, or German, or Latin that's not a language they are actually going to use. So when we bring the Danish students in we are sort of forcing them to interact with the rest of the world. So when we have students in the classrooms, when we have students staying in the homes with their host families they're learning about another culture again we are sort of forcing them to interact with the rest of the world.

Ricks: What did you learn when you were in Denmark?

[PC]: In Denmark I learned that we have. . . that's going to be negative. When we were in Denmark I learned that American students and Danish students are really very similar. Probably more similar than they are different. They're concerned with homework, they're concerned with grades, they're concerned with their extracurricular activities. There's probably more similarities in our students than I think there are differences. The sort of differences are in the actual schools themselves and how we're educating them but you'll hear about that from the

Danish students. As far as students go, they're really all just the same. They're teenagers.

Danish teenagers are just like American teenagers in a lot of ways.

Ricks: How do you think it changes the way students view the world?

[PC]: I think it forces them to reflect on what it is to be American. On what it is to sort of live in the United States and look at how other people live, how other people think, how other people view education, and again the role of teenager. So just asking the American kids to think about who they are, why they do things, why we do things the way they're done, is really beneficial.

Ricks: What do you notice about the engagement of students when they are working with the Danes on a collaborative project versus with their own peers?

[PC]: Definitely more engaged. I almost feel like I'm tricking them into learning. Because they're interested enough in. . . if we were just doing the academic part that we'd already be doing in class they'd participate but when we add in that sort of extra element of 'hey we're gonna do this through skype, and we're gonna do it with kids in another country who are 3 ½ thousand miles away' that just adds another level of motivation to it that they really seem to get into. I don't have to work as hard to get them interested in the subject matter when we're doing it with the Danish students.

Ricks: How has this changed you as an Educator?

[PC]: I think bigger as an educator, like it just kind of like the students it forces them to reflect on what they're doing. It sort of caused me to reflect on why I teach the way I teach, how I teach, the purpose of education. Again, its one of those things where you're. . . when you're teaching day to day week to week year to year you kind of get in the rut of doing what you did the year before, piggybacking on what you did the day before. And when you do something

bigger like this it again really makes you think about what you're doing and why you're doing it. So that's been nice.

Ricks: What about you on a personal level collaborating with a person from a another country?

[PC]: If I'm working with someone from California it would still be the same sort of stretch.

It would be a stretch technologically to do this with a school in California. You know lining of time zones and that sort of thing. But when you through in language and cultural barriers that's a whole other level.

Ricks: Whats a specific challenge?

[PC]: Our big challenge when we get students here is having the Danish kids who are treated in many ways like adults and getting them use to American school where we have more rules than they do. More things that the students have to be aware of. We have dress codes, we have bells, we have things that they don't have in their school. And then we bring them here it sort of assimilated to that. When we go the other direction and take American students to Denmark that's a whole other adjustment for the school. Cause they're 'hey where's the bell' 'how do you know where to go?' and when the students are treated more like adults that's an adjustment as well.

Ricks: Why should other schools do this?

[PC]: Other schools should do this because two levels: One level is exposing them to other cultures and having them aware that there is another world outside the city they live, the state they live, the country they live in there is a world. As time goes on they are going to be forced to interact more with the outside world. So preparing them for that, giving them the skills to do that technologically, culturally. Preparing them to live in a global workplace/ global community. Another level though is just sort of the everyday academic part of it. Using the international

exchange, working with other countries, and just doing normal classwork with students in other countries adds an extra element of interest and motivation to get students involved in what's already going on in the classroom. We're taking the learning that we're doing and just adding another element to it to make it more interesting.

APPENDIX P: PHASE ONE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Phase One Individual Interviews		
Participant	Date	Time
PC	1/18/13	11:45 – 12:45
Principal1	1/18/13	1:00 – 1:20
Teacher1	1/18/13	2:00 – 2:45
F2FStudent1	1/23/13	9:15 – 9:25
F2FStudent2	1/23/13	9:30 – 9:45
F2FStudent3	1/23/13	9:45 – 10:00
F2FStudent4	1/23/13	10:00 – 10:10
F2FStudent5	1/23/13	10:10 – 10:20
TStudent1	1/24/13	9:15 – 9:20
TStudent2	1/24/13	9:25 – 9:30
TStudent3	1/24/13	9:35 – 9:40
TStudent4	1/24/13	9:45 – 9:50
TStudent5	1/24/13	9:55 – 10:00
TStudent6	1/24/13	12:05 – 12:10
TStudent7	1/24/13	12:15 – 12:20
VStudent1	1/24/13	12:25 – 12:35
VStudent2	1/24/13	12:35 – 12:45
VStudent3	1/24/13	12:50 – 12:55
VStudent4	1/24/13	12:55 – 1:00
Focus Group 1	4/8/13	8:45 – 9:00
TStudent1, TStudent3, TStudent6		
Focus Group 2	4/8/13	9:10 – 9:25
VStudent1, VStudent2, VStudent4		
Focus Group 3	4/8/13	9:40 – 9:55
F2FStudent2, F2FStudent3, F2FStudent4		

APPENDIX Q: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Transcription Services

<p>The Impact of an International Partnership on Perceptions of learning and Global Mindedness in a North Carolina High School</p>
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I, _____, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audiotapes and documentation received from Jennifer Ricks related her doctoral study on *The Impact of an International Partnership on Perceptions of learning and Global Mindedness in a North Carolina High School*. Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents;
2. To not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Jennifer Ricks;
3. To store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;
4. To return all audiotapes and study-related documents to Jennifer Ricks in a complete and timely manner.
5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed) _____

Transcriber's signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX R: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT

Focus Group 1	Participant	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Grade
Students who traveled to Denmark	TStudent1	Female	White	18	12th
	TStudent3	Male	White	17	12th
	TStudent6	Female	White	18	12th

Note: All focus group interviews took place at the school, on the same day, in a vacant classroom.

Focus Group 1 took place from 8:45 – 9:00.

Ricks: It is nice to see all of you again. Thank you so much for meeting with me on such short notice. I just have a few questions that I would like to ask you guys as a follow up to our individual interviews. Please remember that what we say here is confidential and your name won't be associated with any of your responses. Feel free to take turns or speak up whenever you have something to add. It isn't necessary for each person to answer each question. I will record the interview, like I did last time. Before we begin, do you have any questions?

TStudent1: No

TStudent3: Nope

Ricks: Ok great. First question, how, if at all, did your experience in Denmark change the way you view yourself?

TStudent6: I am a part of DISCO. Danish International Student Cultural Organization. It is a club here. I am really interested in it. [PC] started it. I like finding out about other places and other people.

TStudent3: I think I am more understanding of people and try to see things from other points of view. Not just mine.

Ricks: How, if at all, did your experience in Denmark change the way you view your country?

TStudent6: It made me realize that maybe we aren't so great.

TStudent3: A lot of people other places do not like Americans, but some do. I think they just think we are like Hollywood.

Ricks: Have been participated in any overseas travel since you visited Denmark?

TStudent6: Not yet, but I am going to Denmark again in college.

Ricks: Really? Tell me about that.

TStudent6: I applied to colleges and saw that my college offered an exchange program to Denmark. Oh my gosh, I was so excited. I told all my Danish friends, Oh my gosh I am coming to Denmark!

Ricks: So did that effect you wanting to go to that school?

TStudent6: Yes, that is one of the reasons I am going to UNCG

Ricks: So are you doing it for sure?

TStudent6: Yes, definitely.

Ricks: So will you try to see your people you met before?

TStudent6: Oh yes, I cannot wait to see them. With study abroad, I should have a lot of free time so I will probably spend a lot of time with them.

Ricks: What about you two? Have you been anywhere else?

TStudent3: Well I want on a cruise to the Bahamas. But that doesn't really count. It didn't really seem like another country since everybody spoke English.

Ricks: True, True. I felt the same way when I cruised to Nassau. It was fun though!

TStudent1: I hope I can study abroad in college too.

Ricks: I hope you can. I studied in Ecuador when I was a junior and it was a super experience for me. Do you think that the Danish experience made you more inclined to want to do that?

TStudent1: Yes, for sure. I want to go back to Europe. It was so pretty.

Ricks: What advice would you give to other students before participating in a study abroad experience?

TStudent6: My experience taught me to know how awkward it will be at first to go to a new place. You just have to accept that and embrace it.

Ricks: That's good advice. Going somewhere new is always a little stressful, isn't it?

TStudent6: Yes.

TStudent3: Yeah I think you just have to expect that things are going to be different. Otherwise, why would you go?

Ricks: Different how?

TStudent3: People may act different or not be as nice or not be what you are used to. They may have different customs.

TStudent1: I would say just go with it and have fun. Do everything! You do not know when you might get to go somewhere again, so take advantage of everything. Don't just go to McDonalds and American things. Live the life there.

APPENDIX S: LETTER TO DANISH STUDENTS

Jennifer Ramey Ricks
Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University
[e] jricks2@liberty.edu
[c] 910.934.0444

Dear Student,

I am a doctoral candidate at Liberty University. I am a former high school Social Studies teacher and International Partnership Coordinator for a neighboring school district. For my dissertation, I am doing a qualitative case study of your school's partnership with [***] High School in North Carolina. I would like to invite you to be a part of this research study. It will examine how the Danish partnership has impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at [***] High School since 2007.

You were selected as a possible participant because you took part in a virtual collaboration via Skype or traveled to North Carolina to visit the partner school. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to be interviewed individually for 30-60 minutes via Skype, Facetime, or other video-conferencing software.

I ask that you read the accompanying consent form, share it with your parents, and ask any questions you may both have before agreeing participate in the study. Please submit the signed form to Mr. [***]. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and participants will not be compensated.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ramey Ricks

APPENDIX T: INFORMED CONSENT FORM (DANISH STUDENTS)

PARENT CONSENT FORM (DANES)

Qualitative Case Study

HOW AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP IMPACTED PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING AND GLOBAL MINDEDNESS IN A NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL

Jennifer Ramey Ricks

Liberty University
School of Education

Parents: Your child is invited to be in a research study that will examine how the Danish partnership has impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at [***] High School. Your child was selected as a possible participant because they participated in a virtual collaboration via Skype and/or traveled to North Carolina to visit the partner school. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow your child to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Jennifer Ramey Ricks, Liberty University School of Education.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to determine how the Danish partnership, in existence since 2007, has impacted perceptions of learning and global mindedness at [***] High School.

Procedures:

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this study, he/she will be interviewed individually for 30-60 minutes via Sykpe, Facetime, or other video-conferencing software.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study

The study has limited risks: The risks are minimal, and are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life.

The benefits to participation are: There are no direct benefits to the participant. However, there is an anticipated benefit to the educational community. The study will produce recommendations for best practices in international education programs.

Compensation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants will not be compensated.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Paper documents related to the study will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Digital copies of interviews, surveys, and other study instruments will be password protected and accessible only to the researchers.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your own educational institution. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is: Jennifer Ramey Ricks. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at 910-934-0444 or jricks2@liberty.edu. You may also contact her dissertation chair, Dr. Donna Joy at djoy@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Fernando Garzon, Chair, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 2400, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at fgarzon@liberty.edu.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent allow my child to participate in the study.

Signature of parent or guardian: _____ Date: _____

[] I agree to allow my child to have his/her voice recorded during the interview portion of this research. If a participant withdraws from the study, he/she will be deleted from any portions of video or audiotape.

Statement of Assent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature of minor: _____ Date: _____

[] I agree to have my voice recorded during the interview portion of this research. If a participant withdraws from the study, he/she will be deleted from any portions of video or audiotape.

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX U: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SAMPLE TRANSCRIPTS (Phase Two)

Interview: Danish Partnership Coordinator [DPC]

This interview was conducted using Skype and lasted for 42 minutes. The researcher logged on and did a sound check before the interview officially began.

Ricks: It is so nice to see you again. Thank you so much for all of your help with the interviews and sharing information about the partnership.

DPC: No problem.

Ricks: As I mentioned before, I am going to record this so that I can transcribe it later.

DPC: (nodding)

Ricks: Do you have questions before we start?

DPC: No

Ricks: Wonderful. Let's go ahead and start then.

Ricks: Tell me what it was like for you to participate in the partnership.

DPC: Oh wow. It has been so many years we have been doing this now. It has added so much to our program and so much to our school in general. We are one of only 12 global colleges in Denmark and this exchange program and partnership is a big part of our success. It is something that sets us apart as an institution. For me, it has been wonderful. I have made lifelong friends with [PC] and [Teacher1]. I have learned so much about myself on a personal level and so had many great experiences professionally.

Ricks: Thank you so much. I have some questions about the impact on your professionally. Do you mind if I come back to those in a few minutes?

DPC: No, not at all.

Ricks: Since you mentioned some of the benefits for you personally, can you talk a little about the benefits for students? What are the benefits of doing these types of academic projects with the American students versus having your students do it with peers from your own school?

DPC: Well, ummm. Wow there are so many benefits. At [...] we have an entire class centered around the States so the class teaches American culture, History, American Identity. So we try to make this group of kids a group that knows a lot about the States. So it's actually an American curriculum with a trip to the United States that allows the kids to be immersed in American culture. Obviously, interacting with Americans adds so much to this curriculum. They get relevant firsthand knowledge about what they are studying...not just from book, from experiences. They get to use methodology they learned in political science to examine American society. So they are supposed to interview their hosts, to maybe make questionnaires, to be anthropologists so they can view how Americans live compared to Danes in the subject they are focusing on. We have been working with the creation of the American Identity and the History. So they have to come here to examine some of this subject. We went to D.C. to see different museums so they are to use that in a project when they go home. Also, they are to talk to their hosts as well about how they have experienced American culture and history. This is not something that could be done with Danish students. It provides a much deeper knowledge of the States. Students are more interested beforehand because they know that they will be learning things that will assist them during their visit. For example...ummm..for example, when we visited the United States capital they already knew so much information about the buildings that housed the government.

Ricks: It sounds like the courses that your students take at [...] really help to prepare them for the exchange and give them a much deeper understanding of what happens in the US. You

mentioned a lot about benefits for the students, can you talk a little bit more about the specific ways that the academic projects you did with the Americans were different for your students?

Different than if the only did them with Danish kids?

DPC: Oh yes, ok...yes. Well the projects that we did with the History and English classes were done somewhat online and before and after the exchange visit. Is that what you would like to talk about? What you mean?

Ricks: Yes, please. More about the differences there.

DPC: Our students are very interested in the states. They see so many movies and music and things that is American. Culturally, it is very much interesting to them. So from that standpoint, from that point....perspective....they are already interested. They are excited to know more about it and to work with students that they do not know and see on an everyday basis. Once we began the History projects with [PC] it was easy for the students to work with one another and they were excited to do it. They enjoyed not just working with them but also getting to know them. Especially I think....especially the girls. They are very social and enjoyed the aspect of making friends and finding out more. So yes, there are benefits in relation to student interest.

Ricks: Other benefits? How about the quality of the work?

DPC: Our students are very hard working and good scholars. I think that they do well no matter what. They have a good work ethic. (long pause) But if I had to say...I would say...I say that they do slightly better on these collaborative projects because they find it relevant and they are interested.

Ricks: Can you tell me more about that?

DPC: (pause) No. Not really. Just that they were more interested.

Ricks: Ok, thank you. It sounds like the students had a higher level of engagement during the partnership activities. How about you? Was your level of engagement different because you worked with someone from another country?

DPC: Yes, certainly I think so. It is a lot of work to coordinate this type of large scale endeavor but it is rewarding on so many levels. Also, it has been so many years working and staying with [PC] and [Teacher1] that I look forward to it. We have formed good relationships and I enjoy...myself, I enjoy the exchange very much. I like to come to [...] High School and to visit [...] town. It is something out of the ordinary. Yes, I would say that on days we are doing partner things I am even more interested and more excited about my job.

Ricks: I am glad to hear that the partnership is such a positive for you. Thinking about the many ways you are able to make it happen, what role does technology play in the partnership? Could this partnership have been possible ten years ago?

DPC: No, not in the same sense. I do think that some type of exchange could have been possible but it would have seemed more forced maybe since we would not have been able to make the connections ahead of time and build the relationships online. Sure, students and teachers might have exchanged letters and such but I do not think that type of thing would have been the same...the same feeling. We have so many tools now that make talking so easy – even across time zones and a big ocean. It is simple to do these days. Students and teachers can use online tools to do so many things together. Plus we can use them...we as teachers can use them...to plan things for the partnership. Skype... Skype is an integral part of this partnership. I talk to [PC] so often to plan different activities. And of course we use email. I do not know how we could do all of this without the ways we communicate now. I guess [PC] and I could have used the mail and telephone. But yeah...yeah...think about the cost of long distance international

calls. That would make it much more complicated. Where now you just have all of these free tools that allow you to talk and work together. I think too, I think that the students are used to just using Google Docs and Skype and Oovoo and Snapchat and Facebook. (pause) They...They use these as a part of their everyday life and so to use them to work with and...and... to talk to other students....regardless of where they live...it is just so very normal to them. So, in answer to the question, yes I think it would have been possible but not as good. The type of interactions would not be as rich as they are with the use of modern technology.

Ricks: Speaking of the use of technology...How, if at all, do virtual relationships differ from face - to - face ones?

DPC: Hmmm. (pause) I would say not much. You can still talk and get to know someone in many of the same ways. You can also do the school work, the partnership activities. In modern life, I think that is the way of the world. Information is available digitally and so are people.

Ricks: How does working with another student or teacher virtually compare to working with them face - to - face?

DPC: About the same I guess. Really it is the same.

Ricks: What should teachers consider when designing instructional activities to be done virtually with students from another country?

DPC: I would say to allow the time to get to know each other, to socialize. And you should plan ahead and have a second plan in case something does not work. Think about time differences and other such things as that. But for the students, I think that teachers should think about making the assignments a way so that they can find out what the others are thinking. So find a way to have rich discussions so that similarities or differences can really come out and be examined.

Ricks: Ok, thank you. (pause) Oh sorry. So the next question is: How has working with American students and teachers changed the way you view people from other cultures?

DPC: Yes, I believe it has. Although, you know, being in the EU and where we are located, we have contact with many nationalities. I think that any kind of contact with people different from yourself will make you more open to new ideas and broaden your perspective. I always like to see how other people do things. Just everyday things like how they work, what their daily schedule is like, what they eat and things like that. Our students have these stereotypes about Americans based on what they see on tv and in movies and I guess to some extent I had that too. But after these years of working with the students and teachers, America feels like home to me too. When I am back in Denmark, I am able to talk to others who have not been or do not know any Americans. I can tell them what it is really like. We are an IB school and have partnerships with schools in many different nations. But the students seem most interested in the one with [***] in the states. I am not sure if that is a pop culture thing or because many of their parents have visited the states but that is where most interest lies.

Ricks: So you specifically have different attitudes towards others based on the partnership experience?

DPC: Well yes. I mean I think I am a pretty accepting guy naturally. Ummm but yes, yes I think working with [PC] and [Teacher1] has helped me to be....to think a little more maybe about generalizing. Not everyone is the same in a country. People vary. Just like any place. And just because you see something in the movies about a country does not mean that everyone in the county is that way. I guess we...people...we are more the same than different. Especially teachers. I think teachers are similar personality types in most places.

Ricks: Ok, thank you. So....next. This fits in a bit with what you were just saying. Can you please describe the customs and behaviors of the American students and teachers you interacted with?

DPC: Sure, yes. So like I said, we have stayed with [Teacher1] each year. She is just so easy going. She opens up her home to us and makes sure that we feel comfortable and at ease. She is very athletic and likes to do outdoors type of things. She is very similar to me and [TeacherD]. She bikes to work sometimes and sometimes she will let one of us borrow the bike. She takes us to the beach and we surf. We really do like a lot of the same things. She is dedicated to her teaching too.

Ricks: Tell me more about that.

DPC: She set up many activities for the students to do together. She used the Skype for the literature classes to work together. I think that she liked talking to...liked working with [*literature teacher from Denmark*]. She can talk about books for a long time. You can tell that she enjoys it. I saw. I noticed that she had personal relationships with the students. They talked to each other. They cared about one another's thoughts. I think that helped to have the American students interested in what our students thought about the books. They saw that [Teacher1] cared and they cared too.

Ricks: Can you tell me more about that project? They way that the kids worked together?

DPC: Well I can tell you what I know from hearing about it.

Ricks: Ok, yes that would be fine.

DPC: The teachers planned together and selected things to read. For the classes to read. So the classes read the same short stories or poetries. I do not remember what they read exactly.

Ricks: Umm I think it was American lit. Something from the South, I believe.

DPC: Yes, that sounds right.

Ricks: So have you talked to [*literature teacher from Denmark*] or any of the students about it? About that project?

DPC: Yes, at the time. Yes, I remember that they had a class discussion. They both read the pieces. Read the stuff. And then they used Skype to talk about it and did it seem different to them. Did it seem different based on your background...based on were you Danish or were you American. I think it was a good activity to see if it mattered. If your perspective on the reading changed based on your background.

Ricks: And did it?

DPC: I think it did. I think that they were interested to talk about how they understood it differently based on what they knew about the culture. But then again, I think they were interested just because they were talking to the other class.

Ricks: Yes, yes. I have heard them say that a lot. Especially the girls. They seemed to be very excited about the social aspect of the partnership. About just getting to talk to new people.

DPC: (laughing) Yes, I do think that they like the talking part. The getting to know you part.

Ricks: So did they do that? [Teacher1] and [*literature teacher from Denmark*]? Did they spend some time with the students getting to know one another? I think I remember [Teacher1] telling me about that.

DPC: Yes, they did. They spent some time with introductions and such things.

Ricks: So...back to the customs and behaviors of Americans. Can you speak a little more about that? About what you observed? Either in the school or in town or when you visited Washington, DC.

DPC: Ok, yes.

Ricks: Thanks.

DPC: School is very different at [***]. At our school, we do not have bells to tell students when to move. That is difficult to adjust to...the structure of the bells. Our students always remark on how much more structured it is in American schools.

Ricks: Yeah, every single one of them has mentioned that to me! It must be a huge shock. All of the kids mentioned the bells and the difference in foods. What other things did you notice?

DPC: More people have cars here. We usually rent a car when we are here so that we can drive. At home, the expenses with a car are just too high. Very few teachers have them. The economy is very different. It is really a luxury to have a car.

Ricks: How about the classes here? What did you notice about behaviors?

DPC: The environment is more formal in some ways and less formal in others.

Ricks: How so?

DPC: More formal in the way of...of how the adults and students interact. Calling the teachers Mr., Mrs., or Doctor. Needing permission to go into the halls, to go to the bathroom...things like that. More rules about dress. About how the students dress. I think that the American students sometimes just expect to be told what to do. They are not treated as equals. Our students call us by name. By first name. They come and go and take care of their needs as they have to. Those are more formal here. But other things about classes are less formal. There is more relaxed time. More free time. Sometimes in class maybe the students are not as serious.

Ricks: Ok, thanks. So, how about the goals for the partnership. How would you describe the Americans' goals for the partnership in general? And for specific partnership activities?

DPC: I think that there are to give their students something extra, an edge. To give them something more interesting than the day to day and to help them to be more successful. I think

that [PC] also has the goal of exposing the students to something bigger. Something beyond this school and this town. It is unfortunate that they have not been able to come visit us as often as we have been to see them, but I think that the interactions is a goal too. To get to know people – students and teachers- from another country.

Ricks: How does that compare to your goals for the partnership?

DPC: The same. I think that they are similar. We want to provide our students with something that will help them be successful. To help them to do better...to succeed at university. And just to know more about the world. Obviously the visit to the states helps with the history class and makes it more relevant too.

Ricks: So how about for you. For you personally. What did you learn when you were in America on your different visits?

DPC: Many things. I think I learned more in the beginning. After so many visits, as I said, it begins to feel like a home to me now. Most of it I have mentioned already. That things are not always like what the media portrays, that day to day life is a little different and the structures of school are different. But...really I think...I think that often people are very much the same no matter where they live.

Ricks: OK, thank you. So, think about your students now. Over the course of the multiyear partnership, what changes have you seen in your students?

DPC: The last time, when we came home we came back with a totally different group of children. They were more mature and they had an experience of a lifetime. They had an understanding of American culture which they never had, having only seen American culture from movies. They were different in a really good way, they grew as persons. They really did.

Ricks: How does the partnership impact the way that you view the world?

DPC: As I said before, it had brought more openness in my thinking. I believe I tend to see more similarities in people.

Ricks: Can you tell me more about that?

DPC: That is pretty much it.

Ricks: Ok. So, how about you as a teacher? How has the partnership impacted you as a professional educator?

DPC: It has given me the opportunity to think about education as a profession through the eyes of my friends here, [PC] and [Teacher1]. When we talk about things with are students, they are very much the same. We want the same things for our students. We want the same things for our families, those who have children. I believe it gives you that big picture. The picture of our world, of our future. How do we give the next generation what they need?

Ricks: Do you think that looks different in the states than it does in Denmark?

DPC: No, absolutely not. No. We want our students to grow up and be successful. To go to university and to be good members of society. I think every society, every country, wants that.

Ricks: I agree. I do think that is universal. I certainly have seen the same thing when I have visited educators in other countries – whether it was in Asia or South America – educators, and parents, want the next generation to have more than they had and to have a good worlds and to have a good place in it.

DPC: Yes.

Ricks: So what about challenges? What challenges did you face while working with someone from another country?

DPC: Not much. I think it is always a hassle planning something as big as thing for so many people. So sometimes the logistics were a challenge. But in terms of working with [PC] there

was no real challenge other than the time zones. He is very agreeable and helpful and we were able to make things happen as needed.

Ricks: Super. So, during your work with the people here, did you feel like you were equals?

DPC: Sure, yes. We were doing the same things. They treated me like a family. They even made us teacher badges, name tags, to use at the school.

Ricks: (laughing) Yes, yes, I remember that.

Ricks: What advice would you give to others before participating in a study abroad experience?

DPS: Just to be open and to be yourself. Be prepared to do different things and to meet people. Be outgoing and friendly and try to learn as much as you can about the culture and about the everyday life. Take all of it in and take advantage of every experience. That may mean trying new things, things you would not have done at home. You should try them.

Ricks: That sounds like good advice. I believe that is all of my questions. I want to thank you again for all of your help with this. Is there anything else that you would like to add before we get off here?

DPC: I am happy to help. No, nothing more really to add except that it is a good experience and valuable.

APPENDIX V: NOTES ORGANIZED BY SUBJECT (Sample)

1.1 Deeper Understanding of Academic Content

Data Source: Who said it?	What was said?	Tally
F2FStudent1	I got to understand his culture a little bit. Because I didn't know that they were run by a parliament and I didn't know that they had to get things approved by the queen and things like that. So it kind of showed me how our government was different from theirs.	1
F2FStudent2	I mean if I'm teaching civics to them they pretty much know what I'm teaching already because U.S. History is just a more expanded thing of Civics, but teaching a Danish person is different because we have to tie our government to theirs to help them understand what we're doing as well as understand their government so we kind of put it together	2
F2FStudent2	I think got more because I now understand the difference of my government from their government. So I see actually what our government does now than we just learn about the same thing over and over again than we just know what our government is compared to someone else's reaction.	3
PC	But when you get through the language and cultural barriers that's a learning experience on a whole other level.	4
Teacher1	But the way that the Danish students have been taught to think and have been raised to attack literature and what not is different than we have. And that point of view to me that they bring to the table, and its different for them as well that we bring to the table. It just makes such an incredible collaboration that the students are able to dig a lot more out of the texts.	5
Teacher1	And I think that holds true with your social sciences as well. The students being able to compare and contrast governments. It makes what they're doing real instead of making it seem like we only do this in [***], NC at [***] High School and it's just such a bore to us. It make it real that all students. . . that this is a worldwide thing that you're engaging in. So to me that point of view is just the number one aspect.	6
Teacher1	And they don't want to embarrass themselves and they don't want to embarrass my class and they don't what to embarrass [***] high school. So they really put on a different 'air' and different attitude while they're working with the Danish students.	7
Teacher1	So I think that newness is really important and it gives them a level of work that might be a little bit better than if they were	8

	just earning an A or a B. And it gives them that personal pride and self satisfaction.	
Teacher2	But how rewarding it's been for the students I've been so amazed at what they'll accomplish just because they're talking to other people and they're getting different perspectives.	9
Teacher2	And it was really cool because TS Elliot is claimed by the Brits as being a British author and we claimed him as an American. To get the European perspective on his poetry was very different than American perspective and it was clear to me that she was teaching it from the European perspective. And I think it was clear to her that I was teaching it from the American perspective and so having that collaboration gave a dimension to that lesson I was never able to achieve with my students. So we each pulled out different concepts that were underlined within the poem and that to me was just the coolest thing is getting that different perception and point of view.	10
VStudent1	There were benefits from the learning point of view because you have to really know the information in order to tell it to someone else who doesn't know it. Because they may not understand it a certain way that you're explaining it so you have to think of other ways that you can explain it to them.	11
VStudent1	We just come up with a basic lesson plan of what we were going to do and how we were going to speak. We said we were going to introduce and talk for the first 10 minutes or so to get use to each other. First we had to create a wiki page, like our own website. We learned about Danish government and they learned about American government. And then we collaborated and did similarities and differences.	12
VStudent3	I did not want to embarrass myself in front of people from somewhere else and have them think I was dumb.	13
PC	Another level though is just sort of the everyday academic part of it. Using the international exchange, working with other countries, and just doing normal classwork with students in other countries adds an extra element of interest and motivation to get students involved in what's already going on in the classroom. We're taking the learning that we're doing and just adding another element to it to make it more interesting.	14
DPC	Wow there are so many benefits. At [...] we have an entire class centered around the States so the class teaches American culture, History, American Identity. So we try to make this group of kids a group that knows a lot about the States. So it's actually an American curriculum with a trip to the United States that allows the kids to be immersed in American culture.	15
DPC	Obviously, interacting with Americans adds so much to this curriculum. The get relevant firsthand knowledge about what they are studying...not just from book, from experiences.	16

DPC	They get to use methodology they learned in political science to examine American society. So they are suppose to interview their hosts, to maybe make questionnaires, to be anthropologists so they can view how Americans live compared to Danes in the subject they are focusing on.	17
DPC	We have been working with the creation of the American Identity and the History. So they have to come here to examine some of this subject. We went to D.C. to see different museums so they are to use that in a project when they go home.	18
DPC	Also, they are to talk to their hosts as well about how they have experience American culture and history. This is not something that could be done with Danish students.	19
DPC	It provides a much deeper knowledge of the States.	20
DPC	For example...ummm..for example, when we visited the United States capital they already knew so much information about the buildings that housed the government.	21
DPC	Our students are very hard working and good scholars. I think that they do well no matter what. They have a good work ethic. (long pause) But if I had to say...I would say...I say that they do slightly better on these collaborative projects because they find it relevant and they are interested.	22
DPC	The teachers planned together and selected things to read. For the classes to read. So the classes read the same short stories or poetries. I remember that they had a class discussion. They both read the pieces. Read the stuff. And then they used Skype to talk about it and did it seem different to them. Did it seem different based on your background...based on were you Danish or were you American. I think it was a good activity to see if it mattered. If your perspective on the reading changed based on your background.	23
DPC	I think that they were interested to talk about how they understood it differently based on what they knew about the culture. But then again, I think they were interested just because they were talking to the other class.	24

DPC	I think that there are to give their students something extra, an edge. To give them something more interesting than the day to day and to help them to be more successful.	25
DPC	I think that they are similar. We want to provide our students with something that will help them be successful. To help them to do better...to success at university. And just to know more about the world.	26
DPC	Obviously the visit to the states helps with the history class and makes it more relevant too.	27
Teacher3	Capitalize on what each group has to offer. If it is an economic class, then by all means you should be examining the economies of the two countries involved. Get the point of view of the person actually living it. Danes' income is taxed at over 50%. To us that seems massive and a huge negative. Allow students the opportunity to see if that is really the case. The Danes may tell you that the country's healthcare system, education system and welfare program far outweighs the amount of taxes they pay each year. You need to take advantage of those types of things. When designing the lessons themselves, allow for collaboration in multiple ways and allow time for the sharing of work.	28
TeacherD	For our school, I enjoy it and it makes the American history class so much more important for the students, to give them that real experience as a researcher, as a historian, as someone interested in other cultures, to go and to do things hands on as an expert.	29
TeacherD	In my class, it is centered around the research aspect, the aspect of going to the states and finding out more is a critical part of the class. The students learn so much about American politics, about the history, what it means to be an American. They learn this from study beforehand in books and class and from working with their American peers both online and once they visit the school. The whole thing is about the states, that is our focus. In my class, we act as historians as we study the past. They do	30

	research and they prepare for the visit.	
TeacherD	They work with the students from [PC] class to get a more personal perspective on the states and I think that helps to dispel misconceptions. They have other assignments while there are on the exchange too, not just having fun and being in the culture. They have assignments related to their American Studies class. They have to find out things, to do research, to really examine what it is like for the American.	31
TeacherD	They are more interested because they are working with Americans rather than just their friends that they see in class all the time. It adds another level to the experience. They learn a lot from the conversations and see how things really work rather than just reading about them in books.	32
TeacherD	Well of course they learn the things about the history of the United States and the foundations in Washington DC and they learn about the politics in class beforehand. During the experience though they learn so much more about culture in the states and about themselves as persons. I believe that they learn more about where they fit in the world and the similarities and differences of people around the world.	33
TeacherD	One of the things was the getting to know you project. Students in both classes worked in small groups with students from their own school to create a PowerPoint that described their everyday life. They included pictures of their school, their families, home and friends. Some even included videos. They talked about what an average day was like – things like how long they were in school, what their classes were like, when they did homework, sports, hobbies. After all of the projects were completed, they were shared electronically with the other class. This project	34

	<p>happened first, before the other academic projects and before the exchange experience. I think that the students enjoyed this one very much. It dispelled many misconceptions and helped them get to know one another before working together in class and visiting each other.</p>	
TeacherD	<p>One year we did a war project. Students were paired up into groups with 2 Danes and 2 Americans. They worked together by web conference and email. They chose a war and researched it together. They gathered the research and created a PowerPoint as the final product. Once all the groups were finished, the classes did a web conference and each group presented theirs for both classes. By working with other nationalities, they got different perspectives. For instance, with a war fought in Europe. It might have seemed very far away for American students but perhaps Danish students had seen some of the effects.</p>	35
TeacherD	<p>When we were in the states [DPC] and I had the classes together and they researched the John Scopes trial. The subject of evolution is controversial and this type of exercise is interesting to do with people from different countries to see how the subject is treated. Like the war project, students did the research in groups from both countries. After the research, there was a class discussion.</p>	36

TeacherD	In that one, students worked with their own peers but there was a twist. They researched the opposite country. Danish students researched the American government and political system and vice versa. They created wikis and entered the information there. Then they consulted with students from the other county to fact check. At the end, they presented their projects. I think it was more interesting because of the opportunity to do something different. For all of us. The students seemed more engaged in learning and more excited about the work.	37
TeacherD	I think he wants to do something more for his classes. To make them more interesting and more useful to students. And to have them have an experience more and different than they could just get in their own school.	38
F2FStudent6	We did a thing on governments this year and the year before we did a thing on war. With the governments, I had to learn about Denmark politics and government and history. I had to make a wiki page and to put all the information on there and stuff. And then after I was done, I got to talk to a Dane about it and she checked mine to make sure that everything was right since she knew more about it than me. I did pretty good. I got most of it right. I didn't know about all the taxes that they pay. That was different for me. But they use the taxes to have free school and healthcare and retirement.	39
F2FStudent6	We worked in teams and we got to choose any war we wanted and then we did research. We did that together, the research part. We made a PowerPoint on our war. We did the Vietnam War. And then when we were finished everybody presented theirs online. We got to see what every group had done together. It was fun to work with the people from the other school. I liked	40

	<p>learning what they thought and seeing if it was the same as me.</p> <p>It was different than just working with people I have known my whole life.</p>	
TStudent8	<p>The things that we did before we visited the country really set the stage for the visit so it was helpful to do that. We wanted to meet the people we would be visiting and learn about life there. American students couldn't tell us that. It was critical to work with the Danes. So that was a benefit.</p>	41
TStudent8	<p>The war thing was something that we worked on before we visited. We were in groups with people from both schools and we picked a war. First, just to work with someone new is nice. I was pumped to see how that would be. Also too it was interesting to deal with a war that both countries were affected by and to get the perspective in the history books and a citizen's perspective.</p>	42
TStudent8	<p>Well we were both in the war, the United States and Denmark. But no fighting took place on American soil. Denmark was occupied by the Nazis for years. So the Danes, the Danes, they have a different take on the war. Yes, we think Hitler was bad and the Holocaust was bad. Denmark actually had it happen there so they maybe feel every worse about the war than the US.</p>	43
TStudent8	<p>So in terms of working on the project together, we got to learn more than just what was in the textbooks. People might have stories from their town or their family about the war. Which is a point about the books and things. You know we don't even really think about Denmark when you talk about WWII. There is never really anything that we learn about them but of course to them it was a very big deal. That just shows the difference in</p>	44

	relationship and perspective.	
TStudent8	The next year we did this government thing where we each did research and then got together and talked about it with the Danes. In that one, we didn't do what we were the expert on, we did the other country and then the person from Denmark helped to see if we got it right and I did the same for them. It was good to see if the information online and in textbooks was truly accurate or if the Danes had a different view.	45
Dane1	It worked to have some time to get to know one another before and after each time we chatted. All of us were interested in that so that was a positive. And the work, I would say what we did was good. It allowed us to see things from a different point of view. I got to understand American form of government more by talking to someone who live there. They could explain what it was really like to live it, not just in books.	46
Dane2	Well I want to do good. Not just for myself but also because I want to be proud and want to be a good impression. Wanting to be seen as a good student....wanting to be seen as doing my part on the team and being good for the Americans and the teacher.	47
Dane2	For the government project, we used wikis. We made wikis. We got in groups that [TeacherD] and [PC] assigned. I was	48

	<p>in a group with one of my classmates and three Americans.</p> <p>We each had a part to do. I had to research American government system and then write those parts on our wiki.</p> <p>We did these parts on our own. I was not sure which sites would be good to use because I wanted to have the most accurate information. I did email my American group members to ask questions though. (pause) They had similar uh..uh..concerns but we worked together and helped each other.</p>	
Dane2	<p>After we created the wiki, then we had a discussion between both classes. We did that using Skype. There was a camera and speakers at the front of the classroom. [TeacherD] set it up with [PC] and we all talked. They sort of led the discussion and called on students to take part. We talked about the similarities and differences in government systems in America and Denmark. It was a little harder to hear than when you just skype with one person since we had a whole class but it was good. I liked hearing the other people talk. I am a little shy so I did not talk much but I got much from the discussion.</p>	49
Dane2	<p>The work should also be a way to know about the other country's ideas. You want to know what it is like in other places in the world and how it is different from your own.</p> <p>That is what I think would be best for teachers. The teachers we have, [TeacherD] and [PC] are great. You know that they care about this and want us all to learn about each other. I think that the teachers make a big difference because they learn about things and they like knowing about us. If you</p>	50

	have good teachers you will want to do the learning.	
Dane3	<p>It was good to work with others. At the school we went to the History classes that we had did the project with. The government project. We knew everyone from working before we came there. We had done the stuff online, the project. I learned from talking to the students in the states. So they...they...they had a knowledge...firsthand of the stuff. The material. I like to have talked to them and to work with someone different.</p>	51
Dane3	<p>I do think it was good to learn about another country and government from someone who live there. That was a good idea. And to use the things we use already, the online tools. Not to learn some new thing that would just be for this. Use things that makes sense. But most I guess would be to do something that you can get different view of like the politics or history or culture.</p>	52

APPENDIX W: DANISH AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENT PROJECT (2010)

Danish & American Governments Project (Oct 12 -15, 2010)

Working in groups of five (3 Americans & 2 Danes)

- **Part One:** American & Danish Government Wiki-Pages
 - American students will research Danish Government and provide an overview on the group wiki page
 - Danish students will research American Government and provide an overview on the group wiki page
 - Provide the following information for each government:
 - What type of government does your assigned country have?
 - What are the basic principles of government in your assigned country?
 - Explain the structure of your assigned country's government
 - Directions for editing the wiki are built into the wiki
- **Part Two:** Group Discussion
 - Discuss similarities and differences between the governments of the United States and Denmark
 - How are our governments different? How are they similar?
 - Compare:
 - Types of government
 - Basic principles of government
 - Structure of government
- **Part Three:** Comparative Government Wiki-Page
 - As a group (Americans & Danes) complete the comparative government page of your wiki
 - Provide an overview of similarities and differences between American & Danish government

Conflicts over Strict/Loose Interpretation Project Directions

Working in groups of five (3 Americans & 2 Danes)

- Each group of American students will have already prepared a lesson explaining the ongoing American debate over how to interpret the US Constitution
- After the Constitutional Interpretation lesson, discuss the idea in context of Danish government
 - Does this conflict exist in Danish government?
 - What are some examples of ongoing conflicts in Danish politics/government
 -

Conflicts over Strict/Loose Interpretation

Broad Topics:

- Strict Interpretation of the US Constitution
- Loose Interpretation of the US Constitution

Important Ideas:

- Federalism
- The Constitution as the "Supreme Law of the Land"
- The purpose of the Bill of Rights

Early Examples of Conflicts over Strict/Loose Interpretation:

- Alexander Hamilton's Financial Plan

- Alien & Sedition Acts of 1798/ Virginia & Kentucky Resolutions
- Election of 1800
- The Louisiana Purchase
- Nullification Crisis of 1832

American Student Project Preparation Assignment

- Create a lesson that will explain the ongoing American debate over interpretation of the US Constitution
- Incorporate the following into your lesson:
 - What is the Constitutional basis for both arguments (Strict/Loose Interpretation)
 - How do federalism, the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution's status as the "Supreme Law of the Land" contribute to confusion/conflict over Constitutional interpretation
 - Explanations of the five specific examples of Conflicts over Strict/Loose Interpretation (listed above)
- Things to include in your lesson:
 - At least two visual aids
 - Written "lesson plan" explaining each group member's role in teaching the lesson

APPENDIX X: OPEN CODING SAMPLE (Phase One)

Open Coding	Tier Two Code
Making academic experience richer Better understanding of content Benefits to students	1.1 Deeper Understanding of Academic Content
Engagement/ classroom engagement Real life connections Better work produced	1.2 Higher Levels of Engagement
21 st century skills or tools Digital natives	1.3 21 st Century Skills
Knowledge of self Benefits to adults	2.1 Increased Understanding of Self
Interest in others Open minded Interactions with other cultures Understanding others Effect of program – wanting to visit again Making friends Benefits of collaborating	2.2 Increased Understanding of Others
Insecurities and worry Better work produced	2.3 Insecurities
Perspective Point of view	2.4 Perspective and Worldview
We are the same Common goals	2.5 We are the Same

Transcript	Coding
Focus Group One	
<i>Ricks: It is nice to see all of you again. Thank you so much for meeting with me on such short notice. I just have a few questions that I would like to ask you guys as a follow up to our individual interviews. Please remember that what we say here is confidential and your name won't be associated with any of your</i>	

<p><i>responses. Feel free to take turns or speak up whenever you have something to add. It isn't necessary for each person to answer each question. I will record the interview, like I did last time. Before we begin, do you have any questions?</i></p> <p>TStudent1: No</p> <p>TStudent3: Nope</p> <p><i>Ricks: Ok great. First question, how, if at all, did your experience in Denmark change the way you view yourself?</i></p> <p>TStudent6: I am a part of DISCO. Danish International Student Cultural Organization. It is a club here. I am really interested in it. [PC] started it. I like finding out about other places and other people.</p> <p>TStudent3: I think I am more understanding of people and try to see things from other points of view. Not just mine.</p> <p><i>Ricks: How, if at all, did your experience in Denmark change the way you view your country?</i></p> <p>TStudent6: It made me realize that maybe we aren't so great.</p> <p>TStudent3: A lot of people other places do not like Americans, but some do. I think they just think we are</p>	<p>Knowledge of self</p> <p>Interest in others</p> <p>Knowledge of self</p> <p>Open minded</p> <p>Knowledge of self</p> <p>Perspective</p> <p>Understanding of others</p>
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<p>like Hollywood.</p> <p><i>Ricks: Have been participated in any overseas travel since you visited Denmark?</i></p> <p>TStudent6: Not yet, but I am going to Denmark again in college.</p> <p><i>Ricks: Really? Tell me about that.</i></p> <p>TStudent6: I applied to colleges and saw that my college offered an exchange program to Denmark. Oh my gosh, I was so excited. I told all my Danish friends, Oh my gosh I am coming to Denmark!</p> <p><i>Ricks: So did that effect you wanting to go to that school?</i></p> <p>TStudent6: Yes, that is one of the reasons I am going to UNCG</p> <p><i>Ricks: So are you doing it for sure?</i></p> <p>TStudent6: Yes, definitely.</p> <p><i>Ricks: So will you try to see your people you met before?</i></p> <p>TStudent6: Oh yes, I cannot wait to see them. With study abroad, I should have a lot of free time so I will probably spend a lot of time with them.</p> <p><i>Ricks: What about you two? Have you been anywhere else?</i></p>	<p>Effect of program – wanting to travel again</p> <p>Interest in others</p> <p>Effect of program – wanting to travel again</p>
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<p>TStudent3: Well I want on a cruise to the Bahamas. But that doesn't really count. It didn't really seem like another country since everybody spoke English.</p> <p><i>Ricks: True, True. I felt the same way when I cruised to Nassau. It was fun though!</i></p> <p>TStudent1: I hope I can study abroad in college too.</p> <p><i>Ricks: I hope you can. I studied in Ecuador when I was a junior and it was a super experience for me. Do you think that the Danish experience made you more inclined to want to do that?</i></p> <p>TStudent1: Yes, for sure. I want to go back to Europe. It was so pretty.</p> <p><i>Ricks: What advice would you give to other students before participating in a study abroad experience?</i></p> <p>TStudent6: My experience taught me to know how awkward it will be at first to go to a new place. You just have to accept that and embrace it.</p> <p><i>Ricks: That's good advice. Going somewhere new is always a little stressful, isn't it?</i></p> <p>TStudent6: Yes.</p> <p>TStudent3: Yeah I think you just have to expect that things are going to be different. Otherwise, why would you go?</p>	<p>Effect of program – wanting to travel again</p> <p>Effect of program – wanting to travel again</p> <p>Knowledge of self</p> <p>Insecurities; uncertainty</p> <p>Understanding of others</p> <p>Perspective</p>
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<p><i>Ricks: Different how?</i></p> <p>TStudent3: People may act different or not be as nice or not be what you are used to. They may have different customs.</p> <p>TStudent1: I would say just go with it and have fun. Do everything! You do not know when you might get to go somewhere again, so take advantage of everything.</p> <p>Don't just go to McDonalds and American things. Live the life there.</p>	<p>Understanding of others</p> <p>Interest in others</p> <p>Knowledge of self</p> <p>Interest in others</p>
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APPENDIX Y: PASS ONE (Sample)

Transcript	Pass 1 Coding
<p><i>Ricks: It is so nice to see you again. Thank you so much for all of your help with the interviews and sharing information about the partnership.</i></p> <p>DPC: No problem.</p> <p><i>Ricks: As I mentioned before, I am going to record this so that I can transcribe it later.</i></p> <p>DPC: (nodding)</p> <p><i>Ricks: Do you have questions before we start?</i></p> <p>DPC: No</p> <p><i>Ricks: Wonderful. Let's go ahead and start then.</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><i>Ricks: Tell me what it was like for you to participate in the partnership.</i></p> <p>DPC: Oh wow. It has been so many years we have been doing this now. It has added so much to our program and so much to our school in general. We are one of only 12 global colleges in Denmark and this exchange program and partnership is a big part of our success. It is something that sets us apart as an institution. For me, it has been wonderful. I have made lifelong friends with [PC] and [Teacher1]. I have learned so much about myself on a personal level and so had many great experiences professionally.</p>	<p>DPC.1 Partnership has added a lot to the school.</p> <p>DPC.2 Partnership is a big part of school's success.</p> <p>DPC.3 Partnership sets the school apart.</p> <p>DPC.4 Partnership has been wonderful.</p> <p>DPC.5 Made lifelong friends.</p>

APPENDIX Z: SAMPLE SPREADSHEET FOR FIRST TIER CODES (Phase One)

Descriptive Data: First Tier Codes

Code 1: Perceptions of learning

First Tier Code	Data Source: Who said it?	What was said?
1	F2FStudent1	I got to understand his culture a little bit. Because I didn't know that they were run by a parliament and I didn't know that they had to get things approved by the queen and things like that. So it kind of showed me how our government was different from theirs.
1	F2FStudent1	Yes, it was way more interesting than just the same old thing.
1	F2FStudent2	I mean if I'm teaching civics to them they pretty much know what I'm teaching already because U.S. History is just a more expanded thing of Civics, but teaching a Danish person is different because we have to tie our government to theirs to help them understand what we're doing as well as understand their government so we kind of put it together
1	F2FStudent2	I think got more because I now understand the difference of my government from their government. So I see actually what our government does now than we just learn about the same thing over and over again than we just know what our government is compared to someone else's reaction.
1	Observational Notes (October 2011)	In the media center, the American English teacher is facilitating a Socratic seminar. The topic is, "What is happiness?" and centers around an article that says Denmark has the happiest people on earth. The partnership coordinator, English teacher, two Danish teachers, and approximately 40 students (20 American and 20 Danish) took part in the 90 minute seminar. Students were seated in two circles – one inner and one outer. Even those in the outer seem totally engaged and interested in what is being said. Only those in the inner circle are able to speak and they take turns "tapping" each other out and swapping places. American students seem intrigued the ideas of socialism that the Danes talked about.
1	PC	So when we have students in the classrooms, when we have students staying in the homes with their host families they're learning about another culture
1	PC	Students in my other classes, those who didn't do things with the Danes, often asked me questions about the partnership. They were very interested to know about the kids who were going to visit and what they were like. There was an increased curiosity about the world outside of our little beach town.
1	PC	As time goes on they are going to be forced to interact more with the outside world. So preparing them for that, giving them the skills to do that technologically, culturally. Preparing them to live in a global workplace/global community.
1	PC	Another level though is just sort of the everyday academic part of it. Using the international exchange, working with other countries, and just doing

		normal classwork with students in other countries adds an extra element of interest and motivation to get students involved in what's already going on in the classroom.
1	PC	We're taking the learning that we're doing and just adding another element to it to make it more interesting.
1	PC	Kids don't want to look dumb and they love anything with technology, so yeah, it is definitely different with another country.
1	PC	But when you get through the language and cultural barriers that's a learning experience on a whole other level.
1	Principal1	Having a wireless campus makes this partnership such an easy task to accomplish. It makes communication instantaneous.
1	Socratic Seminar (October 2011)	Danish Boy2: I agree, I like their system more. And I think that the United States would be a lot better if they were more united. If everyone.... equal money....Everyone is all about themselves. Its not everyone but... But I think if you divided it equal between every household I think that would be good if it was even. Its kind of weird because people that work really hard and have really well paying jobs are just not happy. Even though they can live comfortably.
2	Socratic Seminar (October 2011)	English Teacher: How do you feel the Danish school system affects your happiness? Danish Girl4: Our classes in Denmark aren't as long as they are here. And that's a lot to take in. And we have breaks between every class that's an advantage too. You can always drop out and get a part time job in Denmark. But not a lot of people do. Most people want to finish their school and want to be something to make the most of it.
1	Teacher1	I see that American kids tend to think like other American kids. A lot of times you'll get some that are skewed and a little different. But the way that the Danish students have been taught to think and have been raised to attack literature and what not is different than we have. And that point of view to me that they bring to the table, and its different for them as well that we bring to the table. It just makes such an incredible collaboration that the students are able to dig a lot more out of the texts.
1	Teacher1	And I think that holds true with your social sciences as well. The students being able to compare and contrast governments. It makes what they're doing real instead of making it seem like we only do this in [***], NC at [***] High School and it's just such a bore to us. It make it real that all students... that this is a worldwide thing that you're engaging in. So to me that point of view is just the number one aspect.
1	Teacher1	Number two of it, anytime you do something different with teenagers they get excited about it. So the fact that you're engaging a different culture, a different country, you're utilizing technology, and they're having the

		opportunity to flaunt what they know and they learn gives them a huge sense of pride.
1	Teacher1	And they don't want to embarrass themselves and they don't want to embarrass my class and they don't want to embarrass [***] high school. So they really put on a different 'air' and different attitude while they're working with the Danish students.
1	Teacher1	So I think that newness is really important and it gives them a level of work that might be a little bit better than if they were just earning an A or a B. And it gives them that personal pride and self satisfaction.
1	Teacher1	I think it would be more difficult and it would take a lot more planning. Of course it would take a lot longer if you're talking about snail mailing questions and answers across the ocean it would be extremely difficult to do. But I think that it would also be really interesting to do that. And to allow a larger project to go on for the duration of the semester.
1	Teacher1	I think it opens it up and the technology helps it a lot. You get that instant quickness, the kids can see the kids they're talking to.
1	Teacher1	So I don't know if it would be as possible ten years ago I think it would be extremely more difficult. I know there was web conferencing technology but I think without the digital age it's really discouraging to do so. Unless you're moving bodies back and forth.
1	Teacher1	It was reinvigorating to me to sit with their English teacher and to discuss literature and to remember the joy of discussing English. I feel like by working with the Danish teacher they have reinvigorated me and my excitement for my content area especially. As I was speaking with their English teacher I remembered why I went into studying literature. What I liked about studying literature.
1	Teacher1	I feel like by working with the Danish teacher they have reinvigorated me and my excitement for my content area especially. As I was speaking with their English teacher I remembered why I went into studying literature. What I liked about studying literature.
1	Teacher1	Just being able to discuss that re-excited me about teaching. And then when we would also discuss our teaching philosophies and commonalities of problems we've had with students, or trying to discuss ways to get around students who lack motivation, it was helpful to have an outside perspective and I think that perspective is more helpful internationally to hear that these problems are worldwide.
1	Teacher1	Because I think as American teachers we get so focused on 'well these problems only exist here' and we get so down on our American educational system that it frustrates us and makes us not want to make improvements. Because we don't have a sense that anything will ever get better. And so it was interesting for me to hear the common problems that they have with their students and that their system although is wonderful isn't perfect. And to see what they do that works that maybe I could try and implement.
1	Teacher1	It just gave me a sense that there is hope to change things that aren't working here. And to look at other models to at least have a way to create a discourse amongst my colleagues and go about changing it. And I think that that brings in a sense of being able to understand diverse students that come into my classroom as well.

1	Teacher2	I think at first I kind of expected some of that but when push comes to shove I think the profession of teaching and the occupation of learning in international. And I was really surprised to see how well their lesson plans fit into my lesson plans. And how similar our approaches to education were.
1	Teacher2	I just been really fortunate that the teachers that I've worked with there have a very similar philosophy to teaching that I do. I haven't had any negative experiences professionally with that. Everything has really seemed to move on, it's almost a little creepy how easy it's been to work internationally.
1	Teacher2	But how rewarding it's been for the students I've been so amazed at what they'll accomplish just because they're talking to other people and they're getting different perspectives.
1	Teacher2	Like I did a lesson on TS Elliot the other day, used the skype to talk to the Danish students and we did this with the teacher that came last year with Lisa. And it was really cool because TS Elliot is claimed by the Brits as being a British author and we claimed him as an American. To get the European perspective on his poetry was very different than American perspective and it was clear to me that she was teaching it from the European perspective. And I think it was clear to her that I was teaching it from the American perspective and so having that collaboration gave a dimension to that lesson I was never able to achieve with my students. So we each pulled out different concepts that were underlined within the poem and that to me was just the coolest thing is getting that different perception and point of view.
1	Teacher2	I just find that it's invaluable as a teacher to work with these other teachers and to broaden my horizons as an educator and as a human understanding other cultures.
1	Teacher2	If I've learned to work with a diverse range of teachers and understand more cultures around the world I can apply that to when I have maybe a new students that has immigrated into the country or a new students that comes from a different cultural background it gives me just more tools in my bag to play the education game with.
1	Teacher2	My students were intrigued by the idea of doing actual classwork with students from another country.
1	Teacher2	I noticed more interest as I described the work. I had assigned the same work in previous years, without the option of doing it virtually, and did not have the same degree of interest.
1	VStudent1	There were benefits from the learning point of view because you have to really know the information in order to tell it to someone else who doesn't know it. Because they may not understand it a certain way that you're explaining it so you have to think of other ways that you can explain it to them.
1	VStudent1	We just come up with a basic lesson plan of what we were going to do and how we were going to speak. We said we were going to introduce and talk for the first 10 minutes or so to get use to each other. First we had to create

		a wiki page, like our own website. We learned about Danish government and they learned about American government. And then we collaborated and did similarities and differences.
1	VStudent1	We do the partnership stuff the same way we do anything else in our life. We communicate digitally. Skype is just a way of life. It was nothing to do this.
1	VStudent2	But when it comes to the work assignments, they are very serious. They want to do well, no matter what.
1	VStudent3	Yes because I did not want to embarrass myself in front of people from somewhere else and have them think I was dumb.

APPENDIX AA: SAMPLE CODING (PASSES 1-3)

Pass 1	Pass 2	Pass 3
Letters would not have been the same. DPC.34	Partnership wouldn't have been possible without technology	Technology played a key role in the partnership
Not sure if the partnership could have been possible before technology. Dane1.17		
Partnership could have been possible before technology but it wouldn't have been the same. TStudent8.34		
Partnership could have been possible before technology but wouldn't have been the same without actually hearing people's voices. Dane2.24		
Without technology, it would seem less personal. TeacherD.63		
Without the technology, you couldn't have formed relationships before the exchange.DPC.33		
Before 21 st technology tools were available, partnership could have been possible, but not the same. DPC.32		
It would be too hard to do the project without technology. Dane3.13		
Tech tools make it simple.DPC.36		
Technology made it easy to work together. Dane1.60		
Technology tools allow you to talk, no matter the distance.DPC.35		
21 st century tools make the partnership better. DPC.43	Technology is instrumental to partnership	
Technology made the partnership happen. Dane1.11		
Technology plays a big part in the partnership. Teacher3.24		
Technology was a big part of the project. TStudent8.33		
Technology was the basis of everything they did. TeacherD.62		
Technology was used for everything. Dane1.13		
Technology was used for most of the partnership. TeacherD.61		
We used technology for class discussions. Dane2.21	Ways that technology was used	
We used technology to share information. Dane2.20		
We used technology to talk and do classwork. Dane3.11		
Students used 21 st century tools to collaborate on the project. TeacherD.58		
Tech tools are used by students and teachers in the partnership.DPC.37		
Technology was used for academic projects. Dane2.17		
Technology was used to talk to each other and for academic collaboration. Dane1.14		

APPENDIX BB: CODING (PASSES 4-5)

Pass 4	Pass 5
Learning improved	Learning improved.
The partnership was beneficial to learning	
Participants learned about another culture	
Participants learned about themselves during the partnership	
Participants offered recommendations for instructional best practices	Participants offered suggestions for best practices.
Participants offered recommendations for best practices in Partnerships and/or Study Abroad	
Interactions with others resulted in changed thinking	Participants evidenced changed thinking and attitudes.
Students matured, appeared less self-centered, and expressed an interest in the culture of others	
Technology played a key role in the partnership	Technology was used throughout the partnership and participants viewed virtual interactions as similar to face - to - face.
Virtual interactions were basically the same as face - to - face	
Time zones were a challenge when scheduling virtual partnership activities	Time zones were a challenge when scheduling virtual partnership activities.
Participants made lasting friendships	Participants made lasting friendships.
Teachers and students enjoyed the partnership experience	Teachers and students enjoyed the partnership experience.
Student engagement and motivation increased	Student engagement and motivation increased
Participants perceived differences in American and Danish schools	Participants perceived differences in American and Danish schools.
Students and teachers recognized commonalities	Students and teachers recognized commonalities.

APPENDIX CC: PERMISSION TO USE HETT'S SURVEY



University of San Diego

School of Leadership and Education Sciences

28 September 1993

MEMORANDUM

For: Dr. Mary Scherr

From: Dallas Boggs

Subject: Doctoral Dissertation of Dr. E. Jane Hett

It is my pleasure to authorize you to share any or all portions of subject dissertation for educational and/or research purposes, as you deem appropriate.



September 30, 1993

The above authorization is signed by Dallas Boggs, the husband of E. Jane Hett, who is now deceased.

Mary Woods Scherr, Ph.D.
Dissertation Director

APPENDIX DD: SOUTHERN GOTHIC LITERATURE PPT AND GUIDED QUESTIONS

Good Country People – Guided Questions

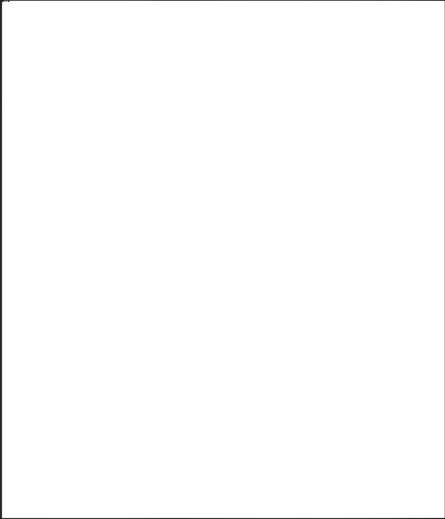
1. What are Mrs. Hopewell's reasons for describing the Freemans as "good country people"?
2. Why does Joy change her name to Hulga?
3. How does Joy's name change relate to her personal beliefs?
4. In what way is Hulga still like a child?
5. What is the significance of Manly Pointer posing as a Bible salesman? How does this show irony?
6. How does the Bible salesman steal Hulga's wooden leg?
7. What did the young man gain from stealing Hulga's leg?
8. How is O'Connor using Hulga to suggest how one should live his or her life?
9. How do you suppose Hulga got home? How would you have liked for the story to end?
10. In Southern Gothic literature, grotesque characters are characters with bizarre obsessions and exaggerated traits. Describe the attributes that make each of the following characters grotesque in some way:
 - Hulga
 - Mrs. Hopewell
 - Mrs. Freeman
 - Manly Pointer
11. In what other ways does the story present themes of Southern Gothic literature?
12. Irony presents itself several times throughout the story. What is the main irony of the plot?

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Southern Gothic Literature

Southern Gothic literature is a subgenre of Gothic literature. Like its parent genre, it relies on supernatural, ironic, or unusual events to guide the plot. It uses these tools not for suspense, but to explore social issues and reveal the cultural character of the American South.



"A sense, an intuition, of an underlying dreadfulness in modern experience is the particular something in the region, something in the blood and culture of the southern states."

—Tennessee Williams



Southern Gothic writers avoided clichés such as Southern belles or righteous preachers. Instead, they took classic Gothic archetypes, such as the damsel in distress or the heroic knight, and portrayed them in a more modern and realistic manner—such as a reclusive, spiteful spinster or a lawyer with ulterior motives.

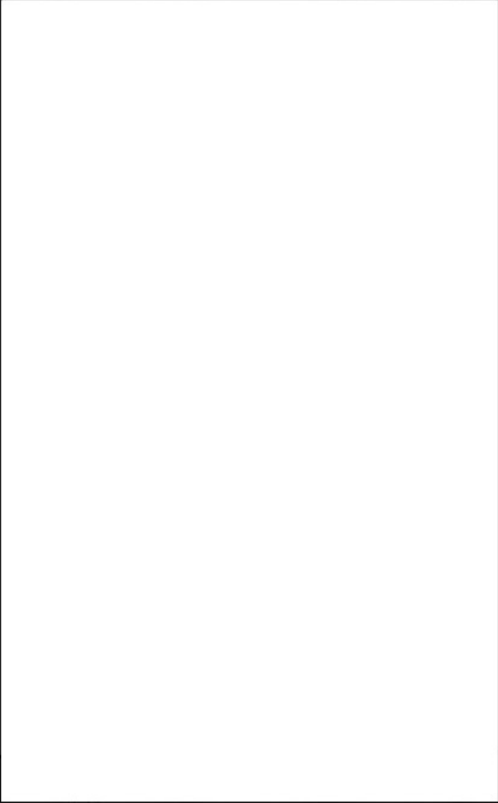
Southern Gothic is also exemplified by its use of grotesque characters. In literature, *grotesque* does not mean “ugly” or “disgusting.” Instead, it refers to a character who has become bizarre or twisted, usually through some kind of obsession. Grotesque traits can be expressed in either physical appearance or hidden emotions

“Anything that comes from the South is going to be called grotesque by the northern reader, unless it is grotesque, in which case it is going to be called realistic.”

—Flannery O’Connor

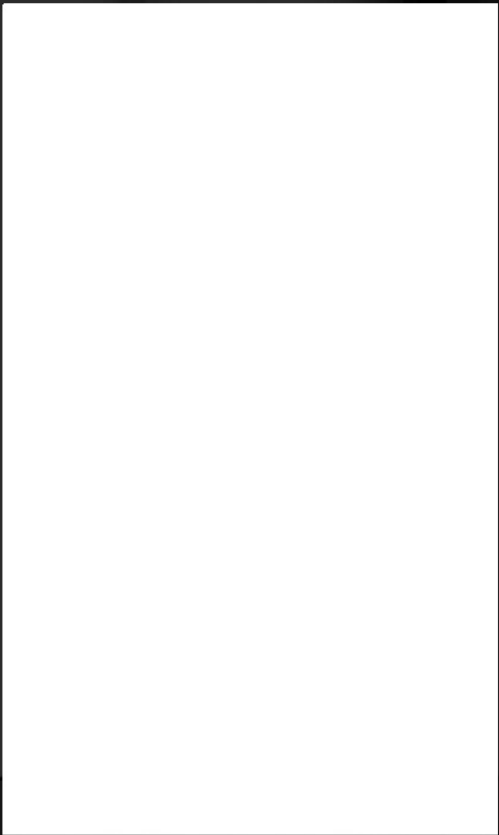
William Faulkner

(1897-1962). Faulkner was a prominent writer from Oxford, Mississippi, which became the basis for the fictional Yoknapatawpha County, the setting for many of his novels and stories. Faulkner wrote a series of novels about the decay of traditional values as small communities became swept up in the changes of the modern age.



The novel that first earned Faulkner critical acclaim was *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), which explored the downfall of an old southern family as seen through the eyes of three brothers. A year later, he published *As I Lay Dying*, the story of a poor family's six-day journey to bury their mother. Told from fifteen different points of view and exploring people's varying perspectives of death, the novel was a masterpiece of narrative experimentation.

Despite the critical success of his fiction, Faulkner did not earn widespread public recognition until 1946, when *The Portable Faulkner* was published. Four years later, he was awarded the Nobel Prize following the publication of *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), a novel in which he confronted the issue of racism. The narrative techniques he pioneered continue to challenge and inspire writers today.




Flannery O'Connor

(1925-1964). O'Connor's fiction reflects her intense commitment to her personal beliefs. In her exaggerated, tragic, and at times shockingly violent tales, she forces readers to confront such human faults as hypocrisy, insensitivity, self-centeredness, and prejudice. Many of her stories revolve around death and exhibit a dark sense of humor.

O'Connor was born in Savannah, Georgia and raised in the small Georgia town of Milledgeville. She attended the celebrated University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she published her first short story, "Geranium." In 1950, O'Connor became ill with lupus, a serious disease that restricted her independence. She moved back to the family farm in Milledgeville, where she lived with her mother. Despite her illness, O'Connor committed herself to her writing, and published her first novel, *Wise Blood*, in 1952 at the age of 27.

"I have never been anywhere but sick. In a sense, sickness is a place more instructive than a trip to Europe."

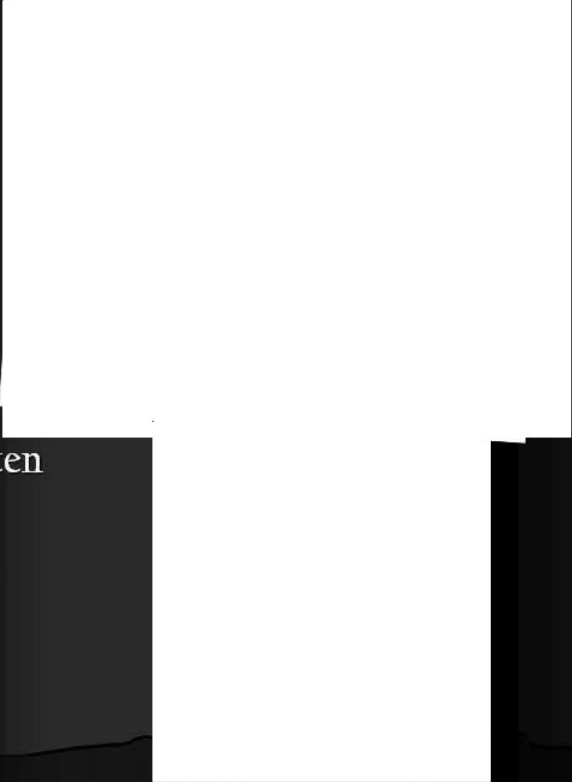
—Flannery O'Connor



O'Connor's disease often set her apart from other people, and she felt a deep sense of kinship with eccentrics and outsiders. In her fiction, she often portrays those who are outcast or suffering.

Many of her characters are social misfits or people who are physically or mentally challenged. O'Connor brings to their stories an underlying sense of sympathy, which reflects her own physical problems and her strong Catholic faith.

Flannery O'Connor was raised a devout Catholic in a region of the American South that was mostly Protestant. She considered herself a religious writer in a world that had abandoned true religious values. O'Connor often highlights characters with powerfully stated convictions but dubious moral and intellectual capabilities.



Eudora Welty

(1909-2001). Eudora Welty's stories and novels capture life in the deep South, creating images of the landscape and conveying the shared attitudes of the people. She often confronts hardships of life in poor rural areas. Despite her awareness of people's suffering, her writing remains optimistic.

In "A Worn Path," she paints a sympathetic portrait of an old woman whose feelings of love and sense of duty motivate her to make a long, painful journey through the woods. Welty published numerous collections of short stories and novels. In 1973, her novel *The Optimist's Daughter* won the Pulitzer Prize.

Welty was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1929. She eventually moved back to Jackson and traveled around Mississippi, taking photographs and interviewing people. Her experiences inspired her to write. Her fiction displays an acute sense of detail and a deep sense of compassion toward her characters.

Objectives

Over the course of this unit, students should be able to identify various aspects of Southern Gothic literature. These include:

Grotesque Characters. Characters with bizarre or exaggerated traits, usually twisted through some kind of obsession.

Irony. A literary device where the surface meaning and the underlying meaning are not the same. Irony is incongruity between what might be expected and what actually occurs. Irony often happens when words or actions contain significance that the audience understands, but the characters of the story do not.

Southern Stereotypes

Southern Gothic literature also includes several Southern stereotypes:

Southern Dialect. A dialect (also commonly known as an *accent*) is the way a certain set of people talk, often times based on region. A Southern dialect in Southern Gothic literature is a representation of how people in the South talk.

Religion. The dominant religion in the South is Protestant Christianity. Southern literature often explores the burdens or rewards that religion often brings.

Southern Stereotypes

Family and Community. Southern literature often focuses on the importance of family and the significance of community and one's role within it. Southern Gothic Lit, will often play upon this stereotype to create irony.

Racial Tension. The South has a history of slavery and racism towards African Americans and other minority groups. These racial tensions are often visible in Southern Gothic literature. The authors usually accent this to bring about social change, not because they have these values.

Southern Stereotypes

Education. Because of its agricultural background, the South is usually seen as less-educated, and people from the South are often stereotyped as less intelligent in a traditional sense (some examples include derogatory terms such as “country bumpkin” or “hick”).

As we go through this unit on Southern Gothic literature, students should pay attention to what Southern stereotypes are used, and how the authors use them to create irony or enact social change.