The Impact of

TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

on the Development of Young Peoples'

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES

TOMM STEWART

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Academic dissertation to be publicly defended
with the permission of the Faculty of Education at the University of Lapland
in lecture hall 2 (LS2) on 1 April 2022 at 12 noon.

LAPIN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF LAPLAND

Rovaniemi 2022

University of Lapland
Faculty of Education

Supervised by

Professor, dean Tuija Turunen, Faculty of Education, University of Lapland

Secondary supervisor

Professor Arthur Ellis
Director, Global Studies Institute School of Education Seattle Pacific
University Seattle, Washington, USA

Reviewed by

Professor Emerita Pirkko Pitkänen, Tampere University

Professor Meeri Hellstén, Stockholm University

Opponent

Professor Elina Lehtomäki, University of Oulu

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Abbreviations

CASQ   Cultural Assessment Survey Questionnaire
SPU   Shuya Pedagogical University
DV   Dependent Variable
IV   Independent Variable

University of Lapland, School of Education
Tomm Stewart

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Abstract

This doctoral dissertation is a mixed-methods research study designed to investigate the effects of intercultural experiences and transformative learning opportunities on the development of intercultural competencies in young people between 18 and 23 years of age. The intervention was participation in language and culture seminars. The intervention group (N=47) actively participated in language and culture seminars at Shuya University, Russia, from spring 2015 through fall of 2019. The comparison group (N=51) was not involved in the intervention and acted as the control. The periods of data collection were spring of 2015 through winter of 2020.

The descriptive study involved qualitative ethnographic data as an inductive process of organizing data from descriptive narration and analysis into themes that emerged from the data. The quantitative aspect was the use of a pretest and posttest for both the intervention and comparison groups. Inferential statistical analyses were used to determine effects of the intervention empirically. The subject population was student informants at Shuya Pedagogical University in provincial Russia, a unique cultural setting for the study. Participation in the seminars acted as the independent variable in the study with results on the construct-specific, posttest self-report questionnaire, as the dependent variable. Descriptive statistics provided the demographic profiles of the samples. Repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) and paired samples *t*-tests were used for comparison of mean scores and determination of statistical significance. The repeated measures were the pretest and posttest.

Data analysis revealed statistically significant differences in mean scores for within and between-group comparisons. There was a positive main effect indicating increases in positive perceptions of others for the intervention group members themselves and compared to the comparison group as measured by a Cultural Assessment Survey Questionnaire (*CASQ*). Qualitative data was crucial, corroborated the qualitative findings, and vice-versa . The reader will notice that the terms informants, intervention group, participants, and students are sometimes used interchangeably depending on the intention of a particular statement or situation.

Key words: intercultural competencies, transformative learning, *others*, mixed-methods, intervention group, comparison group.

Acknowledgements

This PhD dissertation was conducted through the University of Lapland School of Education in Rovaniemi between 2016 and 2020, in the Finnish Doctoral Program for Foreigners at the invitation of Dr. Mauri Ylä-Kotola. It has been my good fortune and great pleasure to work under the supervision of Tuija Turunen. To her goes my warmest gratitude for support, encouragement, recommendations and comments, friendship, and such a positive and pleasant demeanor throughout all stages of this process. During my research investigation, I have benefited significantly from the support, inspiration, advice, and suggestions from my former professor and long-time friend Arthur Ellis. Dr. Ellis' assistance during project initiation, data collection, and writing has been beyond value. I am truly grateful to have had such outstanding mentors as Tuija Turunen and Arthur Ellis. Words escape me to thank them enough. I would also like to thank the University of Lapland for providing an excellent working environment and an encouraging atmosphere. Special thanks to Erika Sarivaara and Lauri Lantela for their helpful input and willingness to serve as internal opponents. Much appreciation to Taina Saarenpää, Anne Auti, and Leena Inkeröinen for guidance in preparing for the public defense and publication of this dissertation. My best wishes to doctoral cohort friends and to all with whom I have had contact each of the many times I was in Rovaniemi.

Sincere appreciation for the contributions of Hillamaria Seauve-Rantajääskö and her husband Rafael. Hilla has been my colleague since 2013 and helped organize, serve at, and co-direct 5 language and culture seminars and camps. She was also my administrative assistant on an educational and medical mission to Togo, West Africa. Hilla has been an objective, thoughtful, and invaluable consultant prior to and during the present study. She is also the partner and co-designer of the *Process Model for the Development of Intercultural Competencies* included in this dissertation. Also acknowledged are seminar teachers, each of whom had major roles in working with student informants: Hillamaria Seauve, Harry Cornwell, Päivi Lee, Sydney Anne Saban, Willow Kosbab, and Veikka Tolonen. Heikki Kontiosalo initially introduced me to the then University of Lapland president, Mauri Ylä-Kotola. My appreciation goes to both gentlemen and to Ooti Snellman for her supportive role. Additional recipients of gratitude include Mariya Burlakova, Vladimir Kuritsyn, Nakita Prohorov, Alexey Mikhailov, and student informants from Shuya Pedagogical University, Russia. The university was the setting for this investigation and provided access to the informants and the opportunities to work with their students to conduct this research investigation. Daria Sukhova from Shuya often worked as

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1   Introduction

One does not discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.

André Gide

Transformative learning is a process of discovery through which a person changes or transforms their thinking, frames of reference, mindset, mind habits, meaning-making perspectives, and aspects of their worldview; allegorically, finding new lands: thus a focus centered on accessibility and quality of education to achieve the goals of the development of learners (Sahlberg, Hasak, & Rodriguez, 2017). This includes broadening and deepening one's thinking and *transforming* to a less exclusive and more open-minded, reflective, and critical thinker who analyzes their own worldview, assumptions, and expectations. In our world and within society today, the presence, identification, and stereotyping of intercultural differences increase entitlement, divisiveness, tension, and conflict presenting a challenge to educators, students, policymakers, government agencies, and the general public in all walks of life. Entitlement gives the dominant group the power to establish, define, and differentiate *others* as outsiders (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009).

Intercultural competence is for this study defined as actions and behaviors that an individual exhibits and practices when living in another culture or interacting with *others* in ways that indicate the ability to successfully navigate, accept, and appreciate the cultural differences and *get along* with others. It may also be, in some cases, referred to intercultural proficiencies and intercultural capital. For this investigation, culture, as defined by Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell (2009), is accepted: they define culture "as everything you believe and everything you do that enables you to identify with people who are like you and that distinguishes from people who differ from you. Culture is about groupness." This definition of culture is consistent with mainstream thought (Dolan & Kawamura, 2015).

Transformation and change are natural to life. Educators, in particular, have been advised that an overall aim in teaching and learning is to help students become changemakers (Sahlberg, Hasak, & Rodriguez, 2017). In my opinion, the potential impact of transformative learning and intercultural experiences on the perceptions of young people toward others, is seeking a more harmonious and equitable world. However, until the last decade or so these phenomena were somewhat under-examined and this limited attention has been significant. Thus, the increase in attention has been positive. With this in mind, education should seek to provide

students with the tools, competencies, and skills to lead productive and fulfilling lives and develop programs and schools to become purveyors of equity and social justice (Hunter, 2008).

This happens when we enable young people to be directly involved in their development and growth (Sahlberg, Hasak, & Rodriguez, 2017). The experiences are holistic and comprehensive and do raise one's level of *positive stress* which helps to initiate and inspire positive change (Dolan & Kawamura, 2015). This includes:

1) Intentionally and purposefully developing relationships with *others,*
2) Visiting culturally different places either at home or abroad,
3) Reflecting on one's own cultural awareness and *place* in the world.

These kinds of experiences provide opportunities for actively practicing and developing intercultural awareness, skills, and competencies (Dolan & Kawamura, 2015). For the purpose of this study, *others* is defined as members of any *group* different from one's own in terms of social, cultural, or ethnic identity; typically indicated by ethnic background, creed, color, or self-identification.

This research considered epistemological, theoretical, and philosophical frameworks. The prevailing worldview involved gaining knowledge of the relationship between the researcher's hypothesis about transformative learning and intercultural competencies, and the practical approach to addressing the research questions. The overall process of research captures the procedures and steps utilized to introduce a problem to be studied and then focusing on the problem with purposeful statements, research questions, and a hypothesis or hypotheses (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

This is followed by a carefully planned research design, collecting and analyzing data to inform the research questions and hypotheses. The style and structure of writing is germane to the problem studied and the methods to best elucidate and communicate the findings. Both the qualitative and quantitative research components align with specific procedures for the processes of research and inquiry. A researcher may proceed with the investigation along different pathways, depending on the type of research: qualitative, quantitative, or both. This led to determining that a mixed-methods approach was best suited to address the research question(s).

Cultural factors also have a role in achievement in education. For example, research at the University of Jyväskylä concluded that Finland's high achievement seems to be attributable to a wide network of interrelated factors. Student's own areas of interest and leisure activities, learning opportunities provided by schools, parental support and involvement, as well as, social and cultural contexts of learning within the entire education system combine synergistically with each other (Välijärvi, 2002). Active investigation of the success of the Finnish school system during the PISA era has confirmed that social, cultural, and historical factors have contributed to the pedagogical success of the system (Sahlberg, & Walker, 2021). Clearly, culture matters; therefore, cultural and intercultural competencies are

worth examining. Culture is a complex concept; through integration of quantitative and qualitative methods a researcher may penetrate more deeply and clearly into the participants' cultural beliefs. This facilitates the recognition of multiple worldviews than typically associated with nonparadigmatic research methods (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018).

1.1   Research Background and Purpose of the Study

Perceived and/or real cultural differences and resultant perceptions, or attitudes, are potentially sensitive issues. The degree of intercultural competence improves with increasing awareness and levels of intercultural sensitivity (Hammer et. al., 2003). In order to address, assess, and discuss the matter more concretely, two different categories were identified, each consistent with the research theme: one's own ethnic group, and the *other*. These categories are part of an ongoing societal public debate and are often referenced in popular form in the media and through disciplined inquiry on this topic. The main focus centers on increased knowledge and awareness of the impact of transformative learning and intercultural experiences and the possible influence on perspectives of young people that enhances the likelihood of meaningful discussions and dialog about intercultural and multicultural issues.

The study took place at Shuya Pedagogical University in Russia. Within the context and set of surrounding circumstances, the conditions for this study emerged as a lens to examine transformative learning and its impact on the development of intercultural competencies. I had already been involved in language and culture seminars, so the transition from planning and directing these events was a natural and seamless evolution to developing this study. The progression pathway was straightforward. This included sequencing the seminars as vehicles for transformative learning experiences, Paideian education, active participation, experiential learning, cultural sharing, and developing intercultural competencies. This, in the context of quantitatively and qualitatively collecting and analyzing data to evaluate the research findings.

These efforts appear to be of increasing importance in today's pluralistic and multicultural society. In the context of this research, pluralism relates to many aspects of parts of society; whereas multicultural refers to many components of intercultural; in some contexts, multicultural and intercultural have been seen situationally as subsets of one and other. Cross-cultural is an oft used term in congruent discussions and is certainly related and relevant to the discussion, yet has a more pronounced aspect of exchange; perhaps particularly, in what seems to be the current environment of growing nationalism and intolerance. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, already in 2011, stated at the Christian Democratic Union conference the belief that multiculturalism had failed in Germany (Orme,

2014). The importance of integrating intercultural education and transformative learning experiences within nations, communities, social and recreational groups, religions, and school systems worldwide seems evident and necessary. Given the conditions of conflict, misunderstanding, and violence, it could be argued that this type of education and awareness offers a viable and much-needed opportunity. Intercultural experiences may serve as an approach to possibly avoid rejection and dehumanization of the *other*; even considering the type of demonization that may lead to violent conflict. (Adler, 2015).

Societies in general, have in great part been shaped by globalization over the past several decades. However, the impact this will have on our world is yet to be seen. Clearly, there is an increasing interconnectedness of issues involving climate change, war and conflict, gender and social inequality, poverty, unemployment, and forced migration. For many countries and societies, these have all become consequential. In this movement of people traveling as refugees, migrants, or travelers, they carry their cultures, religions, heritage, world views, and languages along with them. With a variety of models addressing the mixing of cultures, developing intercultural competencies has emerged as a backbone of promoting the knowledge, attitudes, and skills for successful interaction and integration (Deardorff, 2009; Lourenco, 2018).

As a powerful dynamic, education is a continually evolving process hand in hand with the continual parade of change in the world and its societies. Both expected and unexpected changes give rise to new challenges (Sahlberg, Hasak, & Rodriguez, 2017). Worldwide conflicts appear to accelerate migration and growth of minority populations in more and more countries, with challenges arising from issues related to ethnic background, equity, and the *other* (Sahlberg, Hasak, & Rodriguez, 2017). Rather, we seek to replace destructive interactions with active forms of understanding, communication, and respect. Managing productive and constructive intercultural dialog involves learning enough to recognize, respect, and act civilly with those culturally different and then, based on the diversity, build a better world (Dolan & Kawamura, 2015).

Approaches to intercultural and multicultural education appear to vary widely throughout the international community**.** International sources were consulted and original research was conducted in Finland and Russia. The literature indicates that increasing opportunities for intercultural interactions and acquiring tools for cultural proficiency have some correlation to transformative learning and the development of intercultural competencies. These are manifest in interpersonal, community, national, and international efforts to transform internal frames of reference and affect external behaviors to promote understanding (Deardorff, 2006). Cultural proficiency may be described as a mindset and worldview influencing the way an individual or an organization makes assumptions for the effective description, response, and plans to deal with issues that arise in diverse environments

(Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell, 2009). They suggest that for some people, focused efforts may lead to a paradigm shift, transformations in thinking and from looking at cultural differences as a problem to a culturally proficient view of learning effective interaction with other cultures as a solution.

Variables related to culture, language, demographics, and socioeconomic status may even have an effect on emotional intelligence. A group of international researchers collaborated on the development of an instrument to measure this effect and determined significant differences in emotional intelligence across these variables in different countries when considering civil status, occupation, education level, and age (Pérez-Diaz, Perazzo, Chiesi, Marunic, Granville-Garcia, Paiva, Petrides, 2021). This is impacted by intercultural competencies, or the lack thereof.

Culture may also be seen as a defining construct that shapes behaviors, values, and institutions and has recognizable attributes as expressed in the arts, literature, organizations, and other reflections of belief systems and behaviors. Culture also plays a major role in *how we are with each other* (Owens, 1996). Culture may also be considered as a group of people identified by their shared history, values, and patterns of behavior; culture also defines who are the *others*. The culturally related domains or functional factors of this study, later displayed in Figure 4.2 include: 1) communication and reserved judgment, 2) tolerance, curiosity, and discovery, 3) openness and adaptability, 4) accepting diversity and positive interaction with people from other cultures.

Objectifying *others* creates and maintains a distance between the dominant society and *others* (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009). Typically, this may lead to entitlement and privilege for some, marginalization of *others*, and culturally related misunderstandings of yet *others*. In the extreme, serious conflict, violence, and even wars may result (Adler, 2015). It appears to be an important and valid societal goal to find and apply ways to promote increased understanding between and among cultures and sub-cultures and ways that positively effect and invigorate positive and productive contact between young people from all over the world.

In terms of the roles of transformative and cultural learning experiences to be effective interculturally, one must fully understand that cultural realities are sets of lived, learned experiences and people may treat one another differently because of lack of shared experiences. The need to develop a broadening of intercultural learning and experiences for all people to increase intercultural competencies and transformations remains an ongoing challenge in our society and has acute ramifications and consequences, and benefits. The expanding breadth of academic disciplines is examining the nature of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006). In reviewing Deardorff's article she expresses that there seems to be an emerging consensus that intercultural competence is most often viewed as a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that provide a framework for effective actions and involvement in different cultural situations (Bennett, 2008).

Thus, recognition of the importance of awareness and vigilance is necessary to maintain focus on inevitable questions and issues that alter demographics, politics, economics, and the environment (Sahlberg, Hasak, & Rodriguez, 2017). This also means keeping focus on the need for transformational learning opportunities and experiences and the development of intercultural competencies as global trends continue to shift. In this regard, opportunity represents a favorable setting or suitable time for many experiences. Eleanor Roosevelt eloquently put it this way, "If you prepare yourself at every point as well as you can, with whatever means you may have, however meager they may seem, you will be able to grasp opportunity for broader experience when it appears. Without preparation you cannot do it. There is no more precious experience in life than friendship."

Consistent with this line of thought and the objectives of this research; opportunities exist by being present, and experience provides active participation in activities or events that promote gaining knowledge or skill. Competencies and proficiencies accumulate through constructive experiences. These experiences, as will be seen in the study results, lead to the development of competencies.

Transformative Learning Theory is the main theory to be applied to the culture-learning process according to Mezirow (1991). Language also plays a prominent role in cultural learning. Another proposed theory supporting the relationship between learning language and learning culture was introduced by Schieffelin & Ochs (1986). The thrust of these theories is directed on reflection as an effective tool to transform or change one's perspective (Hoff, 2008). Thus, there seems to be a co-dependence between language and intercultural learning. This apparent correlation will be discussed in chapter two.

1.2   Objectives and Scope

The main foci of this study were two-fold. The first was to determine the impact of transformative learning opportunities on young people and the development of their intercultural competencies. In doing so, this study examined whether or not involvement in transformative learning experiences through language and culture seminars by members of an intervention group showed statistically significant differences on the main effect; positive responses toward *others,* as measured by the Cultural Assessment Survey Questionnaire (CASQ). This is relative to a comparison group not involved in transformative learning opportunities through language and culture seminars. Ethnographic action research was essential in explaining and supporting results from the quantitative questionnaire. Second, and equally important, was to determine if a mixed-methods study would provide insights from both quantitative and qualitative research to complement and support the overall findings. The study examined existing literature, theory, relevant research,

and original research on transformative learning and the impact of certain planned and incidental intercultural experiences with young people and their apparent perceptions of others. These concepts and the approach to the research process formed an overarching inquiry from which the actual research questions were derived.

Research, as indicated, was conducted at Shuya Pedagogical University (SPU). This site is located approximately 350 km northeast of Moscow in the provincial area, the Ivanovo region. SPU is currently a branch campus of Ivanovo State University, Ivanovo, Russia. University students in the linguistics program provided a convenience informant sample for the intervention group and students from other departments provided informants for the comparison group. The heterogeneous groups were based on gender, ethnicity, and academic level and were mainly intact during the seminars with minor variation due to individual schedules. Each group was demographically similar to the overall university population (Burlakova, 2019). Regarding socioeconomic status (SES) of the intervention and comparison groups, approximately 80% to 85% were in the middle to lower-middle SES and 15% to 20% were lower SES students on scholarships or stipends. There was a gender difference within both the intervention and comparison groups with approximately 85% and 80% females in the intervention and comparison groups, respectively. It was not an objective of this probe to compare differences in perceptions or perceived attitudes based on gender.

Cultural sharing is a foundational focus of the seminar educational experiences, and cultural *bridge-building* is a key element. Language is an essential element as communication is vital in sharing experiences. Culture, in addition to the earlier definition, may also be looked at as a defining construct that shapes behaviors, values, and institutions and has recognizable attributes as expressed in the arts, literature, organizations, and other reflections of belief systems and behaviors (Schiefflin and Ochs, 1986). This concurs with views of Owens indicated earlier. An interesting dynamic created in these programs occurs in learning about the cultures of the heterogeneous mix of student informants at seminars and learning from cultures as a part of the curriculum. Adding to the richness was the emergence of a unique seminar *microculture* all of its own, based on mutual, shared experiences.

The core of research on this topic has over the past decade been the focus of an increasing number of studies and workshops. Given many divisive issues throughout the strata of local and global communities, all may benefit by increasing attention to studies and practices relevant to transformative learning and the development of intercultural competencies. Until approximately within the past decade, research in the fields of transformative learning and intercultural experiences and the development of intercultural competencies had focused regularly on study abroad programs and cultural proficiency. To some extent, programs had surged ahead of the research, creating the need for focused study on the efficacy of efforts to

further determine the values of intercultural experiences. The process or journey of developing cultural awareness and intercultural competencies doesn't happen at the snap of our fingers, it emerges and evolves over time, setting, and experience (Dolan & Kawamura, 2015).

This mixed-methods study was designed to add to the body of research in the area of intercultural development through transformative learning and the development of cultural competencies and positive perceptions of others. Research has been conducted and analyzed on the concepts of cultural proficiency, developing intercultural competence, and transformations related to theory, research, and application in international education and study abroad programs (Lindsey, Robins,& Terrell, 2009; Terrell & Lindsey, 2009; Savicki, 2008). For example, in studying cultural proficiency, there seems to be a necessary paradigm shift in attitudes from a perspective of *tolerating diversity* to a value of *transformational commitment to equity* (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009). This is illustrated by considering comments that indicate an attitude of *tolerance* and acceptance as the level of proficiency or lack thereof.

Instances of this tolerance perspective may be represented by statements such as: "culturally, their group does not place much value on education" or, "they simply need to learn to be more diligent workers" or, "they need to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps" or, "this isn't racist it's only about socioeconomic status". These statements may very well indicate current or prevailing attitudes of the culturally dominant group which sees the *other* demographically different cultural group(s) as underperformers and problematic. On the other hand, acceptance and cultural proficiency espouses practices and beliefs in transformational shifts of attitudes in which they reflect upon how their work and interactions impact the experiences of culturally different *others*. Transformational thinkers may experience the same conditions as those indicated above but approach them from an entirely different point of view. The transitional thinker may likely seek clarification regarding: "What can we learn to be more effective in our interactions?" Also, "what might be the best practices in this setting and with these people?" Or, they may ask, "What ways and methods will result in providing the most effective focus for centering on solutions." That is to say, there is strong advocacy in solving, rather than blaming or rationalizing, from an effective educational perspective. Relatively few studies have focused on measuring the effects and impact directly related to student perspectives toward others in terms of transformative learning and intercultural competencies. Particularly, when conducting a mixed-methods study, the objective is to determine if a specifically focus-based and strategic program would find possible correlational positioning.

Cultural competencies, understanding, and transformations depend greatly on the mutuality of shared experiences. The need to develop a broadening of intercultural experiences for all people and to increase intercultural competencies

and transformations is an ongoing challenge in our society and seems to have possibilities of affecting positive outcomes. *A Process model of intercultural competence* (Figure 2.1) is illustrated in Deardorff's Transformative Learning Theory. She ascribes this as a predominant theory to be applied to the cultural learning process. The focus of this theory relies on reflection as an effective tool of growth in changes and transformations of one's perspectives as it focuses on attitudes, knowledge, comprehension, and skills to achieve desired outcomes.

By examining constructs of transformative learning and intercultural competencies, one of the goals of this study was to help fill a gap in the research literature and to stimulate further inquiry and study toward answering the difficult questions concerning the role of transformative learning and intercultural competencies in positive attitudinal outcomes. These goals further focus on the need to gain a greater understanding of the impact that cooperation and interaction with others via participation in intercultural programs, learning activities, and shared experiences has on transformative learning and intercultural competencies. These seem to impact perceptions, attitudes, stereotyping, and prejudice.

Organizations, agencies, government programs, and a host of other entities are developing programs designed to address issues related to diversity and the nature and quality of relationship competencies. These relate directly to transformative learning and intracultural and intercultural competencies. Already, a 2006 study found that many universities and colleges are including in their mission statements and curricular objectives and outcomes, specific language indicating the importance of intercultural competencies (Meecham & Graf, 2006). These desired outcomes include accepting diversity, building community with *others*, respecting differences, acknowledging the relevance of *others'* worldviews, and global and international understanding. In light of current events, especially evident in the USA, government agencies, particularly law enforcement and criminal justice, business and industry, entertainment, recreation, sports, and civic organizations have mobilized campaigns to increase intercultural competencies, sensitivities, and eliminate ethnic, and culturally related inequities (The Wall Street Journal, June 24, 2020). Intercultural contact coupled with optimal program designs that include an international component seems to reduce stereotyping and prejudice. This was determined through a meta-analysis of 50 years of research on stereotyping (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000). Purposeful and strategic interventions are necessary to achieve the desired outcomes from these kinds of programs (Ward, 2001). Thus, the indicator arrow points to the valuable role of transformative learning opportunities and the development of intercultural competencies.

1.3   Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: Do informants who participated in intercultural language and culture sharing seminars exhibit evidence of transformative learning, increased intercultural competencies, and statistically significant positive perceptions of others compared to the perceptions of comparison group informants who did not experience such seminars, as measured by the CASQ and qualitative findings? In response to this research question, the following alternative (A) and null (N) hypotheses were developed.

Hypothesis A1: Informants in the intervention group engaged in transformative learning and intercultural experiences through language and culture seminars will show a statistically significant difference in their perceptions of others, as measured by the Cultural Attitude Survey Questionnaire (CASQ) and supported by qualitative findings, compared to participants in a comparison group receiving no intervention, measured by the same questionnaire.

Hypothesis N1: There will be no statistically significant difference in perceptions toward others between informants receiving the intervention compared to informants receiving no intervention, as measured by the CASQ.

RQ2: *How has an intervention of cultural sharing and language seminars, accentuating transformative learning and cultural exchange, impacted intercultural competencies, perceptions of others, accepting diversity, and overall findings for intervention and comparison groups of university students involved in the study, as determined by mutually supportive qualitative and quantitative data?*

This research was conducted as a mixed-methods study. Qualitative research methods are particularly suited to investigate social and cultural phenomena and the intervention group's inner experiences. The quantitative component of the study provides empirical evidence upon which an ethnographic approach uncovers the deeper meaning-making of the Likert-scaled self-report questionnaire, the *CASQ,* administered as a pretest and posttest for both intervention and comparison groups. The basis for the ethnographic questions and observations was to focus on a *down-to-earth* or common sense understanding of the personal perceptions and social life of the informants. In the process, and my methods of making sense of the situations, observation, and question responses became objects of the investigation in an ethnomethodological approach.

In a methodological sense, the questions provided a foundation for gathering data to describe aspects of the social and cultural life of the informants based on direct and systematic questions and observations. This was achieved by becoming a *pseudo*-participant of active ethnography within the social system and as an accepted member of the academic environment. Disclosure of the intervention group's views of *others* relative to intercultural, educational, and social experiences, informal

interactions, and general awareness of elements of other cultures seems to indicate attitudinal perspectives (Godkin & Savageau, 2003).

For the intervention group, the intervention or independent variable, IV, was participation in language and culture seminars over a period of 5 years, 2015 - 2019. The comparison group simply responded to the pretest and posttest questionnaires with no intervention, only basic instructions for completion of the questionnaire. Therefore, the practical thrust of this study was to examine any positive main effect on changes in intercultural competencies and perceptions or attitudes as a possible impact of the intervention in this mixed-methods descriptive research study. The CASQ provided a potential indication of perceptions and data for the formulation of questions for the qualitative component of the study.

Depending on the length of the seminar, two to five days, formal contact hours ranged between 10 and 24 hours for various lessons, workshops, activities, and program events. Seminars were also designed to provide opportunities for informal interaction with and among informants outside the structured instructional day. Concomitant to the study was the development of intercultural programs to facilitate *sharing* cultures and engaging in *shared experiences* representing transformative learning opportunities. This promoted learning about *others* through intentional interaction with members of other cultures to facilitate greater opportunities for transformative thinking and the development of intercultural competencies. The study also provided results from both quantitative and qualitative research to mutually support the findings and further the development and application of intercultural programs for participants.

The design for the collection of qualitative data is a major factor in a pure qualitative or mixed-methods study. Thus, it is worthwhile to elaborate more directly and specifically on qualitative design. The qualitative data collection plan included defining the accessible target population and a clear description of the population. As indicated, the plan was bound to a convenience sample because that is what was accessible and available. An effective plan also clearly indicates the sample size and the geographic area from which the sample is derived, as well as, the general demographic information shown in the *sample* section: age, gender, academic level, and socioeconomic status. Clearly, a convenience sample suits the purpose of the study because it is suitable and accessible with compatible factors such as location, administrative approval, and familiarity of setting. The results of this research study are not intended to be generalizable as university students are not representative of the total population. However, there may be some degree of correlation with young people fitting this particular demographic.

2 Theoretical Foundation: Literature Review

Study without reflection is a waste of time; reflection without study is dangerous.

Confucius

Reflection is a tool of transformative learning. Transformative learning is a process through which one reflects upon and changes or transforms frames of reference that form one's mindset, mind habits, and perspectives of *meaning-making* (Mezirow, 1977). This includes a broadening and deepening of one's thinking to become a more inclusive, open-minded, reflective, and critical thinker. In this way, one is cognitively and emotionally able to examine their own worldview and sets of assumptions and expectations. The concept of transformative learning begins as an exogenic process but through the construction of learning, the learner is enabled to cognize and reevaluate the scaffolding of their own assumptions and expectations about the world; then the process becomes endogenic. The structures of *meaning-making* form a perspective or frame of reference and a *ladder of inference* on how one sees the world or composes a worldview, initially influenced from the outside. These typically involve observation, active participation, various experiences, reading, communication, formal education, and informal interaction. That influence which has initially framed one's thinking, feelings, and actions, changes from exogenic to endogenic, undergoing transformation both emotionally and cognitively. This develops metacognitively internally through reflective thinking, self-actualization, new and shared experiences, and ultimately the development of new intercultural competencies.

2.1 Transformative Learning

Transformative and experiential learning opportunities and attention to affective outcomes increase the likelihood that students studying in and about different cultures will attain life-changing experiences (Savicki, 2008). In this sense, Savicki has indicated the effect of transformative learning. He noted that experience in global and intercultural learning provides growth experiences for the present and also leads to life-long patterns of awareness and understanding that will manifest in students' development of purposeful and important introspection about themselves and *others* in the future, from a global viewpoint. This statement may be viewed as a powerful impetus that adds credence to the argument for intercultural education

and experiences. These support the development of this valuable discipline and its importance in today's society. With his emphasis on transformative learning and intercultural competencies, Savicki's statement eloquently conforms with the visualization encouraged by Bennett (2008). She posits that *being global souls* is a way of self-visualization as members of the world community. It encompasses the knowledge that a future in this mutual context, with requisites of intercultural experiences with willingness and abilities, enhances the capacity to engage in transformative learning experiences. When one learns *by* experience, growth and change don't actually occur, there is simply a repetition of the same mentality or the ability *to do*. But a person who learns *from* experience is a changed person (Ellis 2020). This may be in small ways and sometimes in larger ways but change, to be sure, has occurred. This indicates actual transformation. Thus, the value and importance of transformative learning through intercultural experiences cannot be understated.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities Greater Expectations Project on Accreditation and Assessment identified global knowledge and engagement with intercultural knowledge and competence as essential learning outcomes for all fields of concentration and all majors; these capabilities arise from transformative learning (McTighe & Musil, 2006). In a 2003 Affirmative Action case at the University of Michigan, the U.S. Supreme Court rendered its opinion on the importance of being educated in an environment exposed to diverse ideas, perspectives, and interactions and increasing diversity demands for intercultural experience and understanding gained from education. Such statements echo the emphasis intercultural researchers place on the value of such experiences for both the individual and society. Transformative learning opportunities provide an environment for intercultural competencies to develop within a loose framework of purposeful interactions, meaningful, dialog, and *meaning-making*, with members of other cultures; this is, in its purest sense, transformational. This is neither a short-lived or superficial engagement, rather a delving to deeper levels that include accepting personal and social involvement, openness, building trust, and the willingness and capacity to take reasonable and calculated risks; very often the experiences are transformational. This represents an attempt to sincerely relate to another's perspective in grasping the essentials which leads to increased understanding of the *other*.

Meaningful communication fosters a genuine exchange of ideas supporting transformative learning. Consistent with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2006), a standards focus is on five defining "C" terms: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities. Culturally appropriate interactions, consistent with these standards, indicate that two individuals may enjoin in a mutually interchangeable *back and forth* conversation with attitudes of open-mindedness and reciprocity (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). The goal of this kind of interaction is to support transformation such that learners gain

experience in becoming positive and active members of a society that is increasingly diverse in regard to language and culture.

A study to measure the transformational effects of medical students' international experience on attitudes toward serving underserved multicultural populations examined the occurrence and effects of transformative learning through experience (Godkin and Sauvageau, 2003). Their work was an evaluation of the changes in attitudes of first-year preclinical and third-year clinical medical students providing care to underserved multicultural populations. Their method was the use of pretest and posttest self-report questionnaires among 146 students before and after their international experience of serving multicultural patients. Eighty-seven percent of the preclinical students traveled abroad and 96% of the clinical students participated in international travel and completed the pretest and posttest surveys. The control or comparison group included 81 students, of whom 62 students completed both pretest and posttest surveys. Their findings indicate such experiences can facilitate transformation and be conducive to the development of values and perceptions supporting interest in serving underserved, multicultural populations. Thus, the study supports the idea and hypothesis that international experiences help develop characteristics that may enhance interest and benefit underserved multicultural populations. Study informants were University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) students participating in international electives during 1997 to 2003. The group traveled abroad for clinical and preclinical training. Out of 700 students from the classes 1997 – 2003, 175 participated in international elective travel as a component of their medical school education. Altogether they spent time in 47 countries; 55% of all students traveled to Latin America, 15% to Asia, 15% to western Europe, and 7% to Africa. The comparison group of participating medical students, also from UMMS did not participate in international travel. A self-report and administered pretest and posttest questionnaire developed by the authors was used to collect data. The questionnaire examined four domains with 20 items designed to evaluate attitudes of doctors providing care to underserved multicultural populations. The results supported positive changes for the study group.

Of considerable importance in intercultural experiences is maintaining culturally competent attitudes as one continues to acquire and develop new knowledge and skills while building new relationships (Okayama, Furuto, & Edmondson, 2001). A respectful attitude, recognizing the value of all cultures, and the willingness to make changes are the underlying attitudes that support the awareness of the aspects of culture that can be taught and learned. In addition to the importance of attitude, is the dedication to analyze the role of cognitive competencies (Ward, 2001). Ward emphasized an active mindset focused on general and specific cultural knowledge. This is a requisite skill rooted in critical thinking and recognition of patterns and adaptation processes concurrent with the first priority of cultural self-awareness. This supports strategies to achieve the desired outcomes of successfully navigating

and understanding the foundations of other cultures. There is strong sentiment for encouraging collecting culturally relevant information and experiences from differently situated sources (Stoddard & Cromwell, 2003). Ultimately, this approach helps to build a *toolkit* for learning about and functioning within other cultures and for a target culture, in particular. In this way, one learns and develops capacities to recognize various disciplines and the respective origins, perspectives, and practices as culturally influenced; an approach consistent with that advocated by Paige (2004).

Although previously not often noted in international literature, domestic concerns about cultural and ethnic identity and privilege are also essential constructs in the international arena (McTighe & Musil, 2006). Fortunately, this is changing. The cultural implications here are clear and may often present conundrums as certain behaviors and practices could be inconsistent with our own paradigms and values. This necessitates examining privilege, power, democratic opportunity, and patterned societal stratifications. There are inherent risks imbedded in approaching domestic issues, as involvement may engender resentment, exclusion, alienation, and even violence. It has been recommended that in multicultural environments, great care should be given to cultural sensitivity and continual attention to avoid ethnocentric thinking and values (Ahonen, Kurtakko, & Sohlman, 2006). Their studies of the unique historical tradition and practice among indigenous peoples and exchange across borders suggest that the Barents region may possibly profit from this phenomenon. The article reports that the intermarrying of Sámis, Russians, Norwegians, Finns, and Swedes, has led to generational family connections resulting in cultural and economic ties. They maintain that these experiences may have an observable positive impact on current immigration and intercultural relations. Apparently, there are increasing numbers of young people in the region who identify ethnically with existing and constructed cultures. Constructed cultures arise from the practices of interchange across borders. Linguistic barriers have decreased as a common language may be used between those who have acquired a second language, english for example, or have learned enough of the others language to communicate effectively.

For example, the indigenous Sámi people living across the northernmost part of the Nordic have their own language and culture. The Sámi inhabit Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. The language used by the teachers was Swedish until 1962 when education began, where possible, in the Sámi language. Presently, there are Sámi schools across the region. With preservation of language there is also preservation of culture (Ahonen, Kurtakko, & Sohlman, 2006).

Behavioral competencies appear to prepare one to cross boundaries between *us and them* (Osland & Bird, 2000). This encourages a skillset that adopts the ability to empathize, gather information by listening, perception, adaptation, initiating contact and communication as appropriate, maintaining relationships, resolving conflict, and managing social interaction and anxieties. They also promote the

value of finding *cultural mentors*. I have often observed the benefit of such mentors. Mentors may themselves be members of the *host* culture or someone who has already navigated within a different culture with positive results and acceptance. Strategies based on behavioral competencies seek constructive engagement and empathetic connection with *others* (Daloz, 2000). Accordingly, one recognizes different world views, alternative ways of being, and an ability to open ears and heart to hear *other voices*. With a clear goal being transformative learning, personal reflection and seeking opportunities for reflective interaction and discourse are tools for facilitating the growth of intercultural competencies.

Transformation to get at the heart of developing intercultural competencies in which one attempts to make sense of an intercultural experience, is considered what may be referred to as a *heartset* (Gregersen, Morrison, & Black, 1998). This addresses competencies of the affective domain and an approach that infuses curiosity, initiative, risk-taking, suspending judgment, cognitive flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, cultural humility, and resourcefulness to enrich intercultural experiences. The importance of the characteristic of *wonder* as a component that has been expressed as *heartset* and meeting differences is an endeavor of discovery (Opdal, 2001). Building bridges between cultures and achieving cultural competencies leading to transformations and changes in thinking and behavior have supportive structures built upon a foundation of knowing one's own culture, self-learning, cultural humility, and global learning. Other competencies have been recognized in intercultural awareness, development, and growth. The benefit of reconceptualizing identities and settings, and finding new ways to recognize and follow relationships between geographical territories and human populations, form a merger of intercultural and international contexts (Guskin, 1991). Cultural humility is the ability and willingness to accept and enjoy creative tension while holding and honoring multiple perspectives.

In order to understand diverse cultures and understand cultures as diverse, one must set aside and reject judgments and cultural competitiveness (Stoddard and Cornwell, 2003). This entails both local and global citizenship. There exists a need to develop a framework for moving from stages of ethnocentrism to greater intercultural competence and ethno-relativism (Bennett, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2008). This means that the value of multiple cultures is recognized and honored as one develops the capacity to move beyond the boundaries and orbit of one's own culture. A prerequisite, as cited earlier, emphasizes curiosity as a guide to the development and acquisition of intercultural competence. Constructive engagement with *otherness* to discover, identify, and navigate intercultural competence at its intersection with engagement, is like meeting at their crossroads. Then, transition to a world lived in common with the *other*, may be realized (Bennett, Bennett, & Allen, 1999).

Learning strategies leading to transformation and transformative thinking resonate with a deep structural shift in the basic premises of thoughts, actions,

and feelings as this effectively represents a permanent evolution of the way one views, filters, engages, and interprets the world (Mezirow, 1991). The value of this constructional framework supports meaning-making which is characterized by a distinction between schemes and perspectives. A shift in specific beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and value judgments is a basic level exercise in reorganizing existing schema. This becomes integrated into a normative development coincident with broadening perspectives in an overarching worldview: thus the postulate, *learning does not occur in a* vacuum (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Therefore, challenges to considerations of existing notions of the way the world works can inspire entire changes or shifts in perspective and worldview. This, they maintain, is transformative learning. It is an antecedent condition to an objective reconsideration of the way the world works and can precipitate an entire change in perspective (Hunter, 2008., Mezirow 1991).

Learning of this nature is said to be transformative. This supports other literature, for example, the afore-mentioned proposal by Mezirow indicating the importance of a deep structural shift in the ways one engages, interprets, and filters the world. This upholds the importance of respect for other cultural perspectives as essential to transformative learning and thinking, worldview, and ultimately intercultural competencies, as discussed in section 2.3. Supporting transformative learning is a personal reflection of one's own culture and other cultures. This is important in applying critical thinking and in the formation of fresh and original mental models that employ cognitive capacities for awareness of relationships, analysis, and synthesis in transformative engagement as it relates, in this study, to other cultures.

This perspective on transformative learning involves developing original insights from analysis and purposeful involvement in the complex construct of culture with engagement, curiosity, and exploration of another culture out of personal interest (Hunter, 2008). Such engagement concerns adapting to and appreciating elements of another culture to overcome barriers and embrace the results of transformative, constructive learning and critical thinking. Barriers and hurdles may be overcome and allow for valuing and interacting with *others* to *fit in* with another culture. This also helps to uncover emerging preferences for new ways of doing things, a form of transformation, and looking at another culture with new *lenses* while accepting an expanded and perhaps reconstructed worldview. Considering the development of transformative thinking, there may be particular traits that suggest consistency with its formative assessment. They include being curious to learn about other cultures and seeking opportunities to meet with *others*. Someone becoming a transformative thinker engages in conversations, develops multiple friends from other cultures, and accepts without judgment - externals, habits, and different characteristics of *otherness*.

This type of thinking has a very practical application. A democratic society, for example, must provide citizens with opportunities to gain social and cultural capital; basically skills in order to work together, to reflect, think about and understand

problems, and to create solutions. Culture is not only the arts and sciences but also the structures associated with living in a community and society (Bruner, 1996). Bruner maintains that education requires participation in culture. The seminars conducted created experiences and an atmosphere and environment for the growth of cultural awareness and active engagement in the developmental processes of such growth through embedded transformative learning experiences. The intervention group and staff not only learn the cultures of one and other, but also experience culture through active involvement in music, the arts, literature, civic responsibility, and dialog.

Education is often associated with formal schooling and learning may be considered to be the result of schooling. However, education is far more that than schooling. Much of what we learn, including many of life's lessons, for better or worse, is learned outside the walls of the schoolroom, through the broader elements of society. Schools cannot be expected to fully educate people. Family, culture, play, community, and society have a great impact on the development and education of children, in addition to formal schooling. Yet, it can be reasonably argued that the education establishment, and its governance, clearly have a vital role in promoting a holistic education.

The main aspects and strategies of the intercultural seminars and associated teaching and learning experiences were foundational to this study as an interdisciplinary and flexible curriculum that fostered transformative learning. With interdisciplinary studies, the transformative learning opportunities are typically centered around combined themes and projects, a myriad of interactions and active student participation and presentations. An interdisciplinary curriculum is far more than just combining and merging members of the intervention group but rather is philosophically student-centered and typically socially relevant (Ellis & Fouts, 1997). The learner, or student informant, becomes the focus for projects, activities, and discussions rather than the subject matter or the facilitator.

The setting is site-based where the environment is a contributing component. Teachers and facilitators generally collaborate with students in planning, and developing themes and concepts for study. The lessons, classes, or workshops often begin with an invitational session of sharing and *brainstorming* ideas and interests for the development of some sort of concept map or strategy and a theme for the seminar. This process is quite important as it seems to draw learners in with a sense of ownership thought by interdisciplinary studies advocates to provide a motivating factor and a discovery, social, and educational experience.

John Dewey (1913) expressed the insight that the rising and falling of education coincides with the ability to create schools as interesting places for students to engage in stimulating learning and social experiences. Dewey further advocated the importance of recognizing learners' interests, strengths, and capabilities, and thereby determining compatible and appropriate lessons and activities. Contemporarily, a

theoretical approach to interdisciplinary learning may be constructivism, in which each learner constructs his or her reality from the learning per observation and application of the principle relating to the compatibility of cons*truction preceding analysis* (Post, et al., 1992). This is similar to the natural axion found in the working of a living organism, that is; the compatibility of structure and function. An organ, for example, the heart, has a structure that fits its function: it pumps blood. Knowledge is constructed through learning experiences and is best facilitated by analyzing the learning needs such that there is compatibility of construction and analysis and the constructed learning fits the analysis. The lesson thus does what it is intended to do: it helps the students learn, and in many intended cases; transformationally. Experience is key to learning and, clearly, this does not relate to another's experience, idealized and reduced into textbook form, but directly from one's own experience (Ellis & Fouts, 1997).

Learning about, from, and for *others* is a discovery experience and often transformational. In order to learn, one must communicate. Listening is an essential skill required for communication with *others* and certainly in transformative intercultural dialogs and interaction. The ancient proverb written by Greek Stoic philosopher and teacher Epictetus (50AD – 135AD) advised in this way; "We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen the more and speak the less" (Epictetus, n.d.). Within any culture, listening and *presence* is an essential skill; exceptions, of course, being the deaf. All cultures and sub-cultures or groups may rely more heavily than another on hand signals, body language, and other forms of non-verbal communication. It is important when navigating a different culture to gain awareness of verbal, as well as, non-verbal communications. Intercultural communication skills are requisite and essential capacities that do not simply emerge as useful to function in diverse cultural settings. Rather, they are essential transformative skills that help one to construct strategies to determine what is going on and what is important to do in a given situation (Stoddard & Cornwell, 2003). In terms of listening as an essential skill, the impact of good listening is the effects it has on making and keeping healthy relationships. Purposeful listening requires a commitment on behalf of the listener and is affirmative and complementary.

Being fully present as a listener, one commits to understand how the *other* feels and the nature of their worldview. This presence and purpose compel the listener to set aside their own self-interests and their biases, beliefs, prejudices, and anxieties to try to see through the *lens* of the *other* and acknowledge their perspectives. The presence and intentionality of a skilled listener help the *other* to realize someone cares about them and their life. The experiences of the *other* are seen as important to the listener and the other recognizes and appreciates this: their response typically is affinity with, and affection for, the effective listener (McKay, Davis, & Fanning, 1983).

Research was conducted to determine any statistically significant differences in student scores (pretest and posttest scores) following an intervention that was a scientific approach to the implementation of the discovery learning methods combined with strategic listening techniques (Hanifi, 2016). The findings indicated an improvement in students' listening and attitude scores

Overall, in Hanifi's work, the indication seems to be a significant improvement on the listening aspects of the discovery learning outcomes. The informants for the study consisted of 10th-grade students at Public High School # 2, Jember, Java. This study took place during the second semester of the academic year 2015/2016. These results indicate that the target for the success of this study was reached where 85% of students exceeded the minimum criteria of success which was the median value of 80 on the pretest.

Each person would do well by assessing his or her own listening skills and considering what may be obstacles to real listening for *them,* particularly when involved in conversations with those from another culture (McKay, Davis, & Fanning, 1983). Do obstacles to good listening arise more frequently or equally so, at schools, in homes, in public places, at work, among friends, with same of different gender, age, in general conversations, or under other conditions? If one is able to determine their most common obstacles, it may be possible also to determine why, who, or what *triggers* these barriers. A person may discover the kinds of feelings that initiate obstacles to good listening: perhaps anxiety, boredom, criticism, excitement, fatigue, frustration, imagination, irritation, jealousy, preoccupation, rushing, sense of being attacked, sensitivity, or other emotion or condition. An awareness of the possible obstacles may help one to overcome them and improve listening skills.

Transformative learning and the concept of culture is a foundational focus of language and culture, and seminar educational experiences and intercultural *bridge-building* are key elements of this study and its complementary programs. Listening is a key skill. A basic conversational, but not fluent, level of language competency is needed as open communication is fundamental to sharing. The common language for our programs was English. Cultural competencies have been matched with levels of language proficiency and with pedagogy for limited proficiency at the earliest stages, progressing to more complicated cultural interventions when language sophistication permits (Bennett, Bennett, & Allen,1999).

2.2   Paideian Education

A teaching and learning emphasis on culture forms an interdependent and cyclical relationship with culture impacting education and education impacting culture. An interesting dynamic has been observed tangential to this study. Learning about cultures in heterogeneous groups and learning from other members of different

cultures results in the unique *internal* shared culture during seminars such that these *microcultures* seem to indeed positively impact informants' attitudes toward *others*.

Paideian education includes exposure to culture as an educational resource and part of the curriculum. It is argued that this strategy, through cultural sharing, provides a holistic approach to a classical education and contributes to the goal for students' growth of critical thinking skills. This is intentionally connected to cultural sharing and participation in transformative learning experiences where the focus is on the development of intercultural competencies. The holistic elements of the language and culture program encompass intellectual, academic, artistic, and social development. Paideian influence also includes training of physical and mental faculties to produce understanding and enlightenment through various types of cultural exposure and development (Adler 1982). For the language and culture programs germane to this study, lessons, classes, and workshops conducted at seminars engaged learners in discussions and dialog of short stories, articles, poetry, current events, and issues from students' interests notably consistent with *The Paideia Program, An Educational Syllabus, (*1984). Seminar activities also provide opportunities for mutual participation in music, drama, literature, and the arts, recreational sports and games common to students or staff from a particular country or region and taught to the rest of the group with mutual participation.

Some classes revolved around didactic lectures and instruction prior to active participation and involvement in other learning opportunities associated with active participation. For example, the program has used short stories such as *The Most Dangerous Game*, by Richard Connell (Connell, R., 1924). This introduces and examines literary skills such as imagery and descriptiveness, creating suspense, theme development (good versus evil), and values (sanctity of life, empathy) and utilizes guided lectures to introduce and explain certain concepts. Socratic seminars facilitate discussion and involve young people in expressing their views, listening to the viewpoints of *others*, and examining different ideas. The Socratic seminar is a pedagogy of classical Greek origin and is foundational within the Paideian approach, most currently based on the work of Mortimer Adler and Dennis Gray. Socratic seminars focus on the discussion of a topic or short piece of writing (Paul & Elder, 2007). For the programs associated with this research, a Paideian approach has been taken in developing an integral portion of the instruction and activities at the seminars to include the Socratic method as a key component of teaching and learning.

Facilitating student learning through the use of the Socratic method provides an interactive and inquiry-based approach that encourages critical thinking (Peterson, 2009). It is one of the predominant teaching processes utilized in most American law schools, but clearly has multiple applications in education outside the law school setting. In the Socratic model method of teaching, the students actively engage in the learning process through pre-planned guided questions in order to channel the

thinking process of the student along a course guided by the instructor yet flexible to individual perceptions.

The Socratic method is initiated by posing an introductory question, then asking additional questions in response to student answers. The objective is to generate a back and forth process between proposals and counter-proposals to draw out more complete definitions from students to help them discover a universal concept. If student comments or answers are debatable or artificial, the Socratic line of questioning is designed to provide the instructor opportunity to ask guided questions so that students can correct their own mistakes or more completely grasp the concepts and main ideas. In addition, it may facilitate expanding students' insights and integration of ideas into the discussion, propel a stalled discussion forward, and help clarify confusing and/or conflicting issues or concepts.

The curriculum for the language and culture seminars connected to this study is influenced by Paideian education. Greek philosophers used the Paideian method of education and facilitated learning through didactic instruction, coaching, critical thinking, and the previously noted Socratic seminars. Convening Socratic seminars with other strategies, researched and affirmed, is recommended for assessing and fostering the development of critical thinking skills (Kenney, 2013).

There is a purposeful intent to connect culture and education during the seminars utilizing Paideian approaches. There is intentionality in instituting the interdependent and cyclical relationship of the effect of culture on education and vice-versa. Twentieth century interpretation of Paideian education, as compared with classical Socratic education has been articulated by Adler (1984).

The leader of a Socratic seminar should be a good conversationalist who facilitates discussion by proposing leading questions and guiding students to seek answers by asking more questions. The seminar facilitator maintains the flow of the discussion and serves as the moderator. In this way, he or she helps keep the discussion on track and progressing. Educated citizens will contribute to a rich culture and therefore the main purpose of education is to produce student-citizens for duties related to self-government, responsibilities and privileges of citizenship, and to enjoy the things of the human mind and spirit that are essentials for a good life (Adler, 1982). Students are prepared to live an active life with spirit and mind, engaged in culture, theirs and *others*.

Paideian educators agree that education is more than the mere gathering of cognitive understandings and abilities; rather, it obligates the individual to live and participate according to the understood meaning of society and culture, in other words, the ideal Greek citizen. As such, education within a cultural and societal context and not by content alone, has an influential impact on thinking skills and on social, political, and cultural evolution. There is considerable evidence that just teaching content with the hope that students will learn to think, is not enough (Costa, 1991). Thinking skills is a general term that tends to connect the requisite

component skills of problem solving, critical thinking, *higher-order* thinking, as well as, thinking creatively, divergently, and innovatively.

Paideian teaching and learning is centered on ideas and values, therefore relevant to cultural studies. This often may lead to student-informant productions or performances that demonstrate aspects of cultural sharing and intercultural competencies. Throughout this cooperative engagement, students practice skills and deepen their understanding of, in the case of this study, culturally related concepts. As defined by the Paideia Project, three fundamental strategies are designed to support specific aspects of learning in a fully integrated and complementary way. The strategies are: didactic instruction, intellectual coaching leading to skill development, and seminar dialogue and discussions leading to conceptual understanding and ideological sharing. Informants engage in interactive participation by sharing and learning information, practicing skills, and deepening their understanding of concepts. This connects informant work with learning priorities and real-world issues or problems. Therefore, informants seem to form a sense of action that appears to emerge out of reflection and discussion. The most successful Paideian learning typically results from several years of planning, implementation, and revision and the effort that grows directly out of the Paideian strategies is a natural result of that work on the part of teachers and student-informants. Thus, in this research, the opportunity to work with the informants over the timeline of the study was both fortuitous and essential. This facilitated an engaged and rigorous dialogue for informants and researchers throughout the study (The National Paideia Center, 2021).

A facilitated, thoughtful, and collaborative intraculture involves both students and adults engaged in transformative learning and intercultural sharing. This featured a focus on learning and an active environment of interest and involvement and flexible scheduling to foster creative teaching and learning. Practically, the active and experiential learning was comprised of a series of multiple readings of a chosen text prior to discussion, formal speaking and listening during the seminar itself, reflection and the post-seminar writing process and a free-flowing discussion. Thus, ideas are exchanged and core literacy skills were practiced consistently and synergistically (Paideia Classical School, 2021). At the same time, emphasis was on critical thinking, ideas, and authentic communication with much less emphasis on the conventions of language; *grammar, spelling, pronunciation, etc.* Informant awareness of this factor raised the comfort levels and reduced the stress levels of the informants. While explaining this early on in our first group meeting, I spoke to them in Russian and encouraged them to feel free to laugh at my lack of skill; this *loosened* them up. However, I assured them we would not laugh at them.

2.3   Intercultural Competencies

Intercultural competence is defined in different ways. For this investigation, intercultural competence is related to intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993). However, it is important to discern the difference between the terms intercultural competence and intercultural sensitivity. Intercultural competence refers to the external behaviors that an individual exhibits and practices when living in their culture, or interacting with *others*. Whereas, intercultural sensitivity relates to the ability to develop methods and processes that determine and guide the degree to which a person has the cognitive and emotional ability to deal with cultural differences and phenomena (Hammer, Bennett & Wiseman, 2003). A term of more recent use is *intercultural capital* (Pitkanen, 2021).

The degree of intercultural competence improves with increasing awareness and levels of intercultural sensitivity (Hammer et. al., 2003). This appears to be a significant correlation. The expression *intercultural sensitivity* is also connected to the linguistic aspects of intercultural communication competence as this is necessary for an interaction to occur during the process of acquiring and developing intercultural sensitivity. To this effect, it may be asserted that the development of intercultural sensitivity requires purposeful attention to subjective experiences of individual learners (Bennett, 1986, 2008). Further, "foundational principles of intercultural experiences and processes are activated in acquiring cultural knowledge and developing cultural competencies and sensitivities" (Bennett & Salonen, 2007, p. 46). These principles include the concept that cultural *knowledge* is not equivalent to cultural *competence,* and cultural contact does not necessarily lead to cultural competence. Thus, navigating successfully within a culture requires attention to subjective culturally learned and shared values, as well as, appropriate behaviors.

Actual cultural learning may arise from culture shock which may proceed to cultural learning as it emerges from a capacity to reconstruct events and reconstrue them transformative ways (Bennett & Salonen, 2007). These principles seem to fit in like hand in glove with the proposal that relative to intercultural experience, disequilibrium and confusion do not necessarily lead to, or need to be synonymous with, dissatisfaction (Otten, 2003). Day-to-day cultural differences may cause cognitive irritation and an emotional imbalance but this kind of experience may, in fact, precipitate a change in worldview.

In an effort to help develop an agreed-upon consensus for defining intercultural competence, a panel of 23 internationally recognized intercultural studies scholars was arranged to participate in a Delphi Study (Deardorff (2004). Although in over thirty years of research, no consensus on a clear definition of intercultural competence had been fully agreed upon**,** some key points did present high levels of agreement. In the iterative Delphi Study, informants were asked, through email, to generate definitions of intercultural competence, to share definitions of intercultural

competence, hone and clarify their definitions, and determine some appropriate measures to assess intercultural competence conceptually (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). The data generated from the study was consolidated by Deardorff (2006). She related that the first phase of the collaborative study, using Linstone and Turoff's data, was to simply answer this question: 'what is intercultural competence?' Ranked first as an indication of intercultural competence was *the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes* (in Savicki, 2008). There was 100% acceptance of the description put forward by Fong & Furuto (2001) who posited the idea that intercultural competency is an understanding of the *other's* worldviews and upholding respect for multiple cultural perspectives. Worldview is defined as one's basic understandings and perceptions of the world, or "a person's fundamental perspective on social and metaphysical reality" (Gutierrez & Park (2015, p. 85).

Thus, the basis for Deardorff's statement is that despite three decades of scholarly work and research on the meaning of intercultural competence, no consensus had been reached on a definition. To that end, the goal of developing consensus on a definition, the 23 internationally known scholars who participated in the Delphi study addressed three rounds of questions (Deardorff 2004). She also reported that a positive attitude towards *others* is central to intercultural competence.

Outcomes of her use of the Delphi study data confirmed 80% to nearly 100% consensus on a number of major points of emphasis among the group of scholars considered to be experts in intercultural competencies (Deardorff, 2004). These leading scholars were primarily concerned with what could connect with Bruner's assertion of the value of the process of truly getting to know what is on, and in, each other's minds.

The Lincoln Commission in 2005 proposed that what nations and people don't know can actually hurt them. Thus, the stakes, risks, benefits, and rewards involved in intercultural experiences are simple, straightforward, and important. For their future and the future of a nation, people must be internationally and interculturally competent. The need for intercultural competence and experiences can be transformative as seen by describing some necessary applications of learned competencies (Paige 2004). These involve sets of cognitive skills that propel a learner to explore alternative and sometimes contradictory theories, as well as, perceiving various disciplines and their origins, perspectives, and practices as influenced by culture. It should be pointed out that being deeply immersed in another language and culture can be very stressful, which is not necessarily a bad thing (Paige, 1993). In fact, it often has a positive result in that the learner develops understandings of the origins of stresses and devises coping skills to navigate through novel intercultural situations and experiences.

Intercultural studies, education, and awareness include a critical examination of past culture. This involves a process-driven examination of current culture;

essentially a way of looking at and thinking about culture dichotomously and bilaterally. Effectively, this means considering one's own culture and one's place within that culture, as well as, thinking about one's role in the *other* culture. Basically, this manifests as grasping and practicing cultural awareness and demonstrating the capacity for self-awareness while understanding *others'* worldviews. Therefore, intercultural competency includes awareness and knowledge of both past and present aspects of culture. In the same pursuit of defining intercultural competency, the ability to shift one's own frame of reference appropriately, and the ability to behave appropriately and effectively in intercultural situations were recognized as key competencies. In the first phase of the Delphi study, these competencies garnered 85% acceptance among the 23 intercultural academicians. Most definitions focused on communication skills and behavioral competence. It was determined with strong agreement by the international experts participating in this Delphi study that one component alone is not enough to accurately and fully define intercultural competence (Bennett, 1983). This understanding is compatible with current views (Pitkanen, 2021)

Additionally, no conclusive agreement among the experts was reached on the role of language, as one may be fluent in a language and effectively utilize language skills amidst another culture but not be culturally competent. However, sociolinguistic competence; the awareness of the relation between language and meaning in social context, clearly enhances the intercultural experience. These sentiments are echoed in the consensual characteristics introduced in the Delphi Study. The focus of the study points to important characteristics in the quest for intercultural competency and transformation (Deardorff, 2006). The results of the Delphi Study can be useful *tools* in intercultural learning and adaptation. Among these tools is adaptability for adjustment to new cultural environments. This is enhanced by listening and observation skills, genuine openness, accepting vulnerability as a positive attribute to *opening up,* flexibility, and not only tolerating ambiguity but actually engaging and accepting it. As indicated earlier, it is paramount that one possesses deep knowledge and understanding of one's own culture and then the *other*, with respect for other cultures.

It has been proposed that a significant contribution to one's identity develops from awareness (Dolan & Kawamura, 2015). An intentional cultural cognizance and ideas within one's consciousness lead to greater cultural awareness of ourselves. This, in turn, may effect a more positive impact on our interactions with *others*. To learn about *others* requires a willingness to learn and an openness to become adaptable. In this context, adaptability is a positive trait connected with willingness, receptiveness, and susceptibility to the ideas and worldviews of *others*. An interesting paradox describes that the condition which allows us to come to know *others* may originate from an actual distrust in our capacity to know them (Wineburg, 2001). This skepticism about the extraordinary meaning-making ability allows one to

construct meaning in their world. In discussing intercultural competencies, attitude is a fundamental place to start (Byrum, 1997).

When engaging one's self with another culture, understanding is often found in the value of cultural diversity and intercultural empathy while withholding judgment and recognition of the roles and impacts of culture in the situational, social, historical, and interpersonal contexts involved. These contexts seem to amplify the importance of going beyond basic and even advanced knowledge acquisition to processing, evaluating, and application of critical thinking skills. These are in harmony with Bennett's views related to ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism and contemporary views.

Consistent with, but not identical to, intercultural competence is global competence (NASULGC, 2004). This is the ability to contribute knowledge, comprehend, analyze, and evaluate meaning in the context of an increasingly globalized world (Hellstèn, 2021). General cultural learning as the development of generic skills for developing intercultural competence vs. cultural specific skills may support learning perceptions and behaviors that are unique to specific cultures (Lustig & Koester, 1993). Intercultural competence may be seen as the ability to relate and communicate effectively when individuals are involved in, or engaged with, but do not share the same culture, ethnicity, language, and other relevant variables (Santos & Reese, 1999).

Proposals for intercultural training are not new. Providing functional awareness of the cultural dynamic present in intercultural relations to assist individuals in becoming more effective in intercultural situations was suggested by Paige (1993). Paige developed purposeful goals or objectives relative to developmental readiness. These goals were carefully aligned with Bennett's *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity or* DMIS (Bennett, 1993). The set of Paige's objectives involved the measurement of affective, behavioral, and cognitive competencies based on developmental readiness. To highlight and enhance intercultural awareness, ethnocentricity, a worldview where one's own culture is central to all reality was contrasted with an ethnorelative perspective that originates from perceptions in which cultures can only be understood relative to one another and those particular behaviors can only be comprehended within a cultural context (Bennett, 1983). Hence, ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism were viewed in the context of the Bennett model.

There are developmental models of intercultural competence in this field. One commonly referenced model was developed by Bennett (1993). Bennett created this model as a framework to explain the experience of students he observed over the course of months and sometimes years in intercultural workshops, classes, exchanges, and graduate programs. Employing concepts from cognitive psychology and constructivism, he organized these observations into a continuum of six stages of increasing sensitivity to cultural differences. The underlying assumption of the

model is that as an individual experiences cultural differences, he or she would become more competent in intercultural relations. Bennett assumed that each stage was indicative of a particular cognitive structure and that certain kinds of attitudes and behavior would typically be associated with each configuration of a worldview. Bennett also promoted intercultural sensitivity, the construction of which may constitute a new reality accommodating cultural differences.

The six stages, as a continuum, moving from 'ethnocentrism, 'an individual's own culture is experienced as central to reality, to *ethnorelativism,* where an individual's culture is experienced in the context of other cultures. This model, as is the case with most models, is valuable in that it provides a springboard for discussion. The ethnocentric stages are Denial, Defense, and Minimization. The ethnorelative stages are Acceptance, Adaptation, and Integration. It is also important to note that individuals and organizations may be at different points on a continuum based on the diversity dimension in reference. For example, individuals may be at the Acceptance stage with reference to ethnic background, and the Defense stage with reference to sexual orientation.

Denial occurs when a person either refuses to or is unable to recognize or accept cultural differences and denies their existence. This belief may manifest itself in insulating one either physically or socially from people of different cultural backgrounds. A person who acknowledges that certain cultural differences exist but finds them threatening to his or her own reality or sense of self, then finds strategies to build obstructions of separation as a defensive stance against the cultural differences. To recognize and acknowledge cultural differences and yet look at them frivolously or as insignificant and trivial, minimizes the reality of cultural differences. Minimization arises from an attitude of believing that human similarities are much more significant than differences. One should exercise caution in making assumptions as the supposed similarity may, in fact, be totally inaccurate. This generally infers, marginalized and/or oppressed populations are cautious of the liberal assumption of common humanity. Unfortunately, with regular frequency, the assumption has implied, covertly or overtly: *be like me*. This *be like me* form of minimization was an unintended but overall negative consequence of the boarding and residential schools for Indigenous students in both Canada and America during the later 19th and early 20th centuries. According to the Smithsonian Institute, the impact was destructive to Native American and First Nations languages and cultures. Native American is the common term for indigenous Americans and First Nation for indigenous Canadians.

Acceptance is manifest in individual recognition and valuation of cultural differences without analysis or determination of those differences as positive or negative. This stage moves an individual from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. First comes respect for cultural differences in behavior, and then deeper respect for cultural differences in values. Adaptation occurs when individuals develop and

improve skills for interacting and communicating with people of other cultures. The key skill at this stage is perspective-shifting, the ability to look at the world through different *lenses*. The final stage of Bennett's model is Integration. Individuals in this stage not only value a variety of cultures, but are constantly defining their own identity and evaluating behavior and values in contrast to, and in concert with, a multitude of cultures. Rising above the limitations of living in one cultural context, these individuals integrate aspects of their own original cultural perspectives with those of other cultures.

In her *Process Model of Intercultural Competence,* attitude is a point of emphasis (Deardorff 2004). This model indicates interactive steps and process learning to help and guide one toward the goal and condition of intercultural competencies, starting with attitude and returning to attitude. Along the way, knowledge, skills, and awareness develop to the point of paving the way for transformations in a person's thinking about *others* and other cultures, with the desired outcome, a shift in worldview. To interpret and utilize the model and its implications, Deardorff stresses that the development of intercultural competencies is central to advancing multicultural educational experiences. The following model is from the identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalism at institutions of higher education in the United States. To interpret this model, one starts with attitudes and travels from the individual level to the interaction levels of internal and external outcomes. Ultimately, with this model, the degree of intercultural competence attained and practiced, genuine assimilation, is dependent upon attained strength of attitudes, knowledge, comprehension, and skills. In practical terms (please see Figure 2.1) this relates to the nature of interest and serious desire to achieve intercultural competencies (Deardorff, 2004).
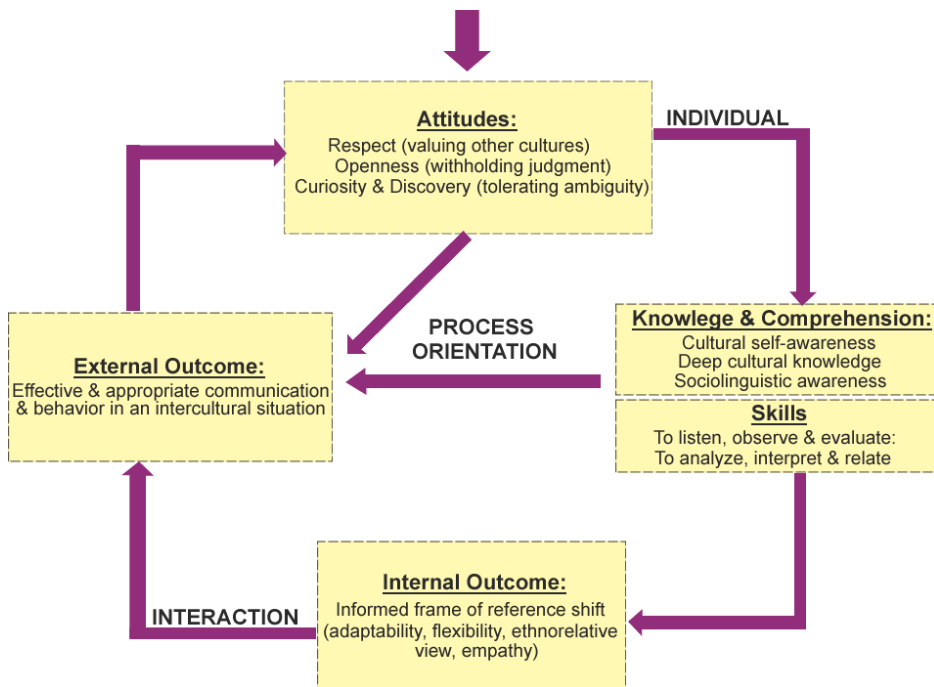
Figure 2.1: Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2004).

This model proposes that one should not underemphasize the importance of attitude relative to the learning that follows (Deardorff, 2004). She maintains that openness, withholding judgment, respect, valuing all cultures, curiosity, discovery, and tolerating ambiguity are viewed as fundamental to the acquisition of knowledge and skills. These guide both the conceptual shifts and behavioral changes that lead to an increase in intercultural competence. She writes that as respect, openness, and cultural curiosity increase – so does capacity and willingness to acquire cultural knowledge and proposes these factors as foundational to the model (Deardorff, 2004) .

The model focuses on these factors relative to *knowledge*. It is important for one to know their own cultural norms and possess sensitivity to those of other cultures. Thus, cultural self-awareness may be the essence of intercultural knowledge and is essential for individuals to become aware of how they view the world. This elucidates self-awareness as difficult to attain without moving beyond one's own culture and that cultural self-awareness is key because experiences of *others* are often measured against one's own cultural conditioning. Global knowledge is requisite for intercultural competence and reaches a deeper understanding of other cultures, other worldviews, relative actions, and behaviors (Hellstèn, 2021). It is a determining factor in cultural development and a functional influence of specific cultures in the world. Underlying culturally specific

values and communication styles are both necessary components for understanding behaviors. As earlier stated, sociolinguistic knowledge helps; the use of the common language within societal and social contexts. Language may be an opening of sorts to understand another's worldview. So, language skill persists as a key component.

Cognitive *skills* such as compare and contrast, analytical skills, critical thinking, evaluation, synthesis, and process skills are valuable tools in processing knowledge acquired in learning about other cultures. Hand in hand with this is the development and use of key academic skills: reading, research, observation, and communication. Intercultural perspectives and intellectual competencies are both essential components in developing intercultural competencies (DeJeagbere & Mestenhauser, 2000). Observation skills tend to open one's eyes and ears to cultural knowledge that may be gained through key communicative and cognitive skills including listening, watching, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, and relating; these skills seem to establish a condition and position of readiness to navigate successfully within another culture. Knowledge alone is not enough for the acquisition and development of intercultural competence, as already indicated. The use of cognitive skills to acquire and apply cultural knowledge on an ongoing basis is fundamental to becoming culturally competent. Additional cognitive skills of reflection and awareness are necessary tools for continual use in the process of acquiring intercultural competencies and using them. This relates to the importance of being fully present, or *engaged,* and aware in intercultural situations.

Internal outcomes relate to skills and attitudes which lead to a frame of reference shift, or the ability to look at the world through the aforementioned different *lenses* that are enhanced or focused through adaptability and flexibility. These characteristics play an essential role and refer to the ability to adapt to different cultural environments and switching between communication styles. Flexibility involves abilities to use different behavior styles in various intercultural contexts and the ability to acknowledge and recognize various worldviews when interacting with those from different cultural backgrounds. From attitude, empathy steps past the *Golden Rule – do unto others as you would have others do unto you*; to what is sometimes referred to as the *Platinum Rule – do unto others as they would have done unto themselves*. This takes deep cultural knowledge, skills, and sensitivity to see from another's perspective.

External outcomes are manifest in cognitive and purposeful alterations seen in observable, effective, and appropriate communication and behavior in intercultural situations. The role of appropriateness and effectiveness may be perceived in this way: appropriateness means avoiding violating valued rules and traditions of a culture. In order to be effective, valued objectives of intercultural interactions must be achieved, including components of intercultural competence (Spitzberg & Changnon,2009). This underpins a functionality that intercultural competencies allow one to *fit in* more or less seamlessly.

Behavior and communication form the backbone of intercultural competence and meaningful interactions and are greatly impacted by attitudes, knowledge, and skills one brings to the *table* of interactions. The Deardorff model indicates an observable recurrent phenomenon: attitudes lead to the acquisition of knowledge and skills and these reshape one's internal frame of reference. This, in turn, influences internal components of how one thinks and the external behaviors of how one acts. Each component of the model can directly influence any other part and a *short-cut* may occur. The non-linear and rotational nature of the model represents an ongoing action of processes and supports a continual effort to improve and increase intercultural competence. Each experience or series of experiences may build upon each other. In terms of desired *external outcomes*, the result is in increasingly appropriate and effective communication and suitable relevant behaviors. Additionally, other models have been proposed to indicate possibilities for determining levels of Intercultural competencies and sensitivities (Spitzberg, 1989; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009).

These coalesce to promote openness, respect, healthy attitudes, and actions that feed into the process, thus enhancing the continual revolution of the cycle and ongoing development of intercultural competencies. Therefore, under the right conditions, the development of intercultural competencies could be looked at as a natural human process. As such, the development of intercultural competencies should be a lifelong endeavor.

There are definite strengths to this model. It is structured in such a way as to support a consensual definition of intercultural competencies. This sheds light on the complexity of this construct which clearly and, paradoxically, simply emphasizes necessary attitudes, knowledge, skills and their resultant outcomes, as well as, internal and external manifestations of intercultural competencies. An acknowledged and recognized limitation of this model is the inherent Western bias, typical reliance on expert opinion, and accepted compliance to the Delphi technique. Deardorff's Model provides a systematic and observable approach to the process of developing intercultural competencies. The emphasis on attitude permeates a spectrum and continuum of human endeavors and leanings. The role of a positive attitude is widely accepted and its respected characteristic and power are requisites. There is no one perfect model or *silver bullet*, or the ideal pathway for developing intercultural competence (Burstein, 2006). Yet, Deardorff's model seems to be a tangible asset in providing a functional and *grassroots* scaffolding for a comprehensive framework for the development and evaluation of intercultural competencies.

To evaluate the effectiveness of a program or model, provisions need to be made for assessment(s) and of the positive impact of challenging underlying assumptions and attitudes. An effective method employed in assessment is the OSEE tool, a method for skill development; these include observation, analysis, and evaluation. An item upon which almost all intercultural experts agreed is the capacity to see from another's perspective. For this transformation to occur, the transpiration

of challenging attitudes and their underlying assumptions must come about (Deardorff & Deardorff, 2000). This addresses assumptions and challenges one to curiously and open-mindedly examine other perspectives consistent with the scientific method through stating purpose, observation, analysis, and conclusions as a fluid and dynamic process. O is simply <u>observing</u> what is happening, listening, and investigating various explanations. S refers to <u>stating objectively</u> what was seen. The first E is an <u>exploration</u> of different interpretations for what has happened and the second E is an <u>evaluative process</u> to determine the most likely interpretation or explanation of the observed phenomenon. Regardless of the cultural context or educational setting, this approach seems to address essential concepts and can serve as scaffolding for more current studies with clearly defined objectives focused on meaningful, purposeful, mindful, and intentional goals. These objectives serve as key elements in the assessment of intercultural competencies. Such assessments are most effective when the assessment is ongoing throughout the experience or study and is multi-dimensional and multi-perspective in nature, is integrated, and multi-methodical; hence, a legitimate indication of a role for mixed-methods research. The OSEE tool supports students and informants to initiate a comprehension process to grasp rationales precipitating behaviors they meet in intercultural encounters, thereby improving their intercultural competencies (Deardorff &Deardorff, 2000).

It should be recalled that specifically measuring attitudes was not a primary objective of this study. Intercultural seminars and similar active learning and active participation experiences would do well to address these questions as a guide for the assessment of intercultural competence. The following set of questions is based on Deardorff's research findings from *The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalism at institutions of higher education in the United States* (Deardorff, 2004). This series of questions includes a possible approach that may direct the access to, or analysis of, an intercultural program.

Table 2.1: Outcome-Based Questions. The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as student outcomes of internationalism at institutions of higher education in the United States (Deardorff, 2004).

#	QUESTIONS
1	HAS INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE BEEN DEFINED USING EXISTING DEFINITIONS IN LITERATURE?
2	FROM WHOSE PERSPECTIVE IS INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IS BEING ASSESSED?
3	WHAT ARE THE CULTURAL BIASES OF THE EVALUATOR?
4	WHAT IS LOCUS OF EVALUATION?
5	WHAT IS CONTEXT OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT?
6	WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT?
7	HOW WILL THE ASSESSMENT RESULTS BE USED?
8	WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THE ASSESSMENT?
9	WHAT IS THE TIME FRAME OF THE ASSESSMENT: SNAPSHOT OR ONGOING?
10	WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF ABSTRACTION; WILL THE ASSESSMENT BE: A) MORE GENERAL OR, B) ASSESS SPECIFIC COMPONENTS OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE?
11	DO ASSESSMENT METHODS MATCH: A) THE WORKING DEFINITION AND, B) STATED OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES BEING STUDIED?
12	HAVE SPECIFIC INDICATORS BEEN DEVELOPED FOR INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT?
13	IS MORE THAN ONE METHOD BEING USED?
14	DO METHODS INVOLVE MORE THAN ONE EVALUATOR'S PERSPECTIVE?
15	ARE DEGREES OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE BEING ASSESSED? IS THERE THE NECESSITY OF ANY PLAN FOR THOSE NOT MEETING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE?
16	DOES THE ASSESSMENT ACCOUNT FOR MULTIPLE COMPETENCIES AND MULTIPLE CULTURAL IDENTITIES?
17	HAS THE IMPACT OF SITUATIONAL, SOCIAL, AND HISTORICAL CONTEXTS BEEN ANALYZED IN ASSESSMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE?
18	HOW DO ASSESSMENT METHODS IMPACT MEASUREMENT OUTCOMES?
19	HAVE THE LIMITS OF THE INSTRUMENT/MEASURES BEEN ACCOUNTED FOR?
20	HAVE PARTICIPANT GOALS BEEN CONSIDERED WHEN ASSESSING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE?

In evaluating assessment, specific learning outcomes, academics, knowledge acquisition, skill development, and acquiring *tools* are considered. Thus, in considering non-academic learnings to be affective and attitudinal, the resulting outcome may be manifest in increased personal development and awareness (Rubin & Sutton, 2001). Their findings indicate that study abroad experiences influence students' cultural awareness with impacts clearly beyond progress in their academic major studies. Other influencing variables address the duration of involvement with earlier and historical exposure to culture and/or another society (Engle & Engle, 2002).

Additional variables may arise from the impact and role of language skills, the context of any academic work, including faculty backgrounds as a variable, and the nature and regularity of classes, seminars, and workshops. Also considered are past and present participation in culturally experiential programs, mentoring, and reflection on learning. Internal and external variables seem to be contributory factors (Lopez-Portillo, 2004). She discussed internal variables to include one's background, characteristics and personality, personal circumstances, intercultural sensitivity levels, and exposure to cultural differences. External factors address intercultural program length and location, program content, student choices, and contact with instructors. I have added additional *X-factors*; the nature and quality of the relationships between the seminar facilitators and intervention group members, with the university faculty, and the student-student relationships.

Language skill clearly plays a prominent role in cultural learning, as indicated in the Sámi situation. We recall; learning a foreign language has significant benefits in an intercultural experience, language learning in and of itself does not equate, correspond, or correlate with intercultural competencies. However, language competency is necessary but not sufficient for understanding another culture or society and for fully developing intercultural competencies (Wilkinson, 2007).

Intercultural competencies may also be considered as a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that successfully enable effective and appropriate interactions in a diversity of cultural contexts (Bennett (2008). Therefore, learned behaviors and acquired skills are part of the intercultural educational experience. Accepted best practices for transformative learning and integration of culture, to be most effective in language learning as a combination of intercultural experiences, include observation, reflection, and practice (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2002). In acquiring intercultural competencies, one develops an appreciation for diversity and the capability of contributing to building communities that acknowledge and respect differences (Meacham & Gaff, 2006). This is significant in today's increasingly diverse and complex world and intercultural competency and proficiency seem preconditional for people to successfully interact interculturally (Pitkanen, 2021).

Intercultural competence equilibrates with global competence and a global mindset, and when appropriately approached; global learning corresponds with

cultural learning (Bird & Osland, 2004; Hovland, 2006; & Paige, et al., 2002). Some earlier researchers found several decades ago that unfortunately, cultural contact does not necessarily result in any significant reduction in stereotyping (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969). Intercultural capability, intercultural competence, or intercultural communicative ability is not specifically about knowledge of a particular culture but about navigating with effectiveness across cultures (Byram, 1997). This may create tension with our own values, traditions, assumptions, and stereotypes. The tension does not necessarily hinder the growth of intercultural competencies. Rather this tension, like stretching a rubber band, may be a transformational precursor to questioning and confusion over one's own worldview. However, such experiences may provide teaching and learning opportunities when appropriately understood and facilitated to stimulate the development of intercultural competencies and reduction of stereotyping (Otten, 2003).

Language study encourages one to deconstruct one's known linguistic world to accommodate ambiguity, and to incorporate cultural *otherness* (Jones, 2021). She also posits that language study is not a prerequisite for internationalism although she acknowledges that those with language proficiency have clearly been shown to demonstrate a kind of cultural competence and global perspectives in intercultural experiences that are the focus of many contemporary international initiatives. In other words, language proficiency within the *other* culture is beneficial. A body of work in intercultural competencies and transformations is found in research relating to study abroad programs. Many different languages are used and heard in numerous schools around the world. In Finnish schools, for example, the number of students who speak different languages has grown and will continue to grow in the future. It is important that schools adapt to dealing with language issues in positive ways (Roiha, Post, &, Absalom, 2021).

A study investigated a strategy for cultural learning through cultural studies and language learning and was designed to measure the impact on study abroad students and to maximize their learning experience relative to the use of the Maximizing Abroad Student's (MSA) Guide (Paige, Cohen, et al., 2002; Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004). The guide was designed to teach cultural-learning and language-learning strategies as an asset to their learning while living and studying in another culture. Two groups participated in the study: a comparison group that did not use the guide while studying abroad and an experimental group that used the guide. Quantitative results gained from several different instruments for both the comparison and experimental groups showed a general increase in intercultural sensitivity. However, the language learning and cultural learning outcomes were mixed. For both groups, two of the measures showed no statistically significant differences, another revealed statistically significant differences for the means on some items, and two other instruments indicated statistically significant higher and lower mean differences: thus, the overall results were inconclusive. The particular study conducted was one

of the initial studies to examine the effect of curricular MSA Guide on nonacademic outcomes, in essence, culture and language learning (Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004). Their research provided a foundation for future investigations on the impact of an approach that involves teaching skills on the results and outcomes of nonacademic learning (Hoff, et al., 2002).

Based on experiences from the programs in which I have been involved, especially as relates to the qualitative components of this inquiry, including music and song in intercultural education there has been a major impact. Not only from the research outcomes for this study, but consistent with that of other researchers who looked extensively at developing and creating multicultural music opportunities in teacher education by the awareness, acceptance, and sharing of diversity through songs and music (Joseph, Nethsinghe, & Cabedo, 2018).

Their work, mainly in Australia, focused on training teaching interns for work with multicultural classes and use intercultural music as a *transnational* experience for their young learners, and for the teachers themselves. They posited that in teacher education programs, intercultural music education may contribute to enhancing positive attitudes as an effective way to introduce and examine the diversity of cultures. Today's schools in the *modern* world seek to develop teachers that combine comprehensive high-quality teaching and learning while meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (Bahr, 2016). Globalization, emigration, and refugee crises require schools to respond to ever-burgeoning multicultural and multilingual student needs. In the mix, society and schools are becoming increasingly multicultural and multilingual as globalization contributes to diverse classrooms.

The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) ensure that teacher education program standards are met and relate to the Professional Standards for Teachers (Bahr, 2016). This involves providing teachers with tools to effectively handle the diversity of multiethnic and multicultural students, parents, and communities; an effective response has been to include culturally relevant music units into multicultural classrooms. A clearly described and apparently inalterable objective of teacher education will be shared classroom experiences where students become aware of, and sensitive to, the cultures of other students as an increasingly multicultural society is more and more common, especially in the cases of significant migration.

In teacher education courses, music education may be used as a cultural practice surpassing the mere esthetical dimensions of societies and includes multicultural and intercultural understandings for both teacher and student (Mohd, Maasuma, et al., 2014; Joseph, Nethsinghe, & Cabedo, 2018). These authors from diverse cultural backgrounds, attempted a collaborative project, guiding teacher interns and they, themselves, enjoined the effort to create multicultural music opportunities by sharing diversity in their teacher education programs (Joseph, Nethsinghe, & Cabedo, 2018).

Awareness of multiculturalism and the importance of intercultural education have been the focus of study for a significant period of time; thus the body of empirical research is considerable. The term multiculturalism personifies respect for diversity and acceptance of differences (Henry, & Kurzak, 2013). Interculturalism is indispensable in quality teacher education and a number of universities have developed this as a core requirement course within the College of Education (Banks, & Banks, 2002). It seems essential that teacher education programs include coursework that *raises the bar* toward awareness of discrimination while fostering acceptance of differences and diversity.

The *great equalizer*, unencumbered education, through effective programs, promotes and supports the means, volition, and capacity to accept awareness of differences and strengthen the core values of increasing tolerance, reducing violence, eliminating discrimination, and learning to live respectfully with one another (UNESCO, 2017). Music may be *heard* as its own language and a cultural expression for contributing and increasing interpersonal and social understandings (Joseph, Nethsinghe, Cabedo-Mas, & Urbain,2008).

Music has been seen to contribute toward intercultural understanding in education settings (Joseph, 2012; Cabedo-Mas, 2015; Cabedo-Mas, Nethsinghe & Forrest, 2017). One of the major roles for music and arts education is the need to provide support and enhancement for arts and music education by promoting and furthering the causes of social responsibility, social cohesion, cultural diversity, and intercultural dialogue and understanding (UNESCO, 2010). Music has from antiquity been seen as an expression of spiritual, religious, societal, and cultural notions and beliefs. Learning music with its cultural context from various countries may increase the cultural understandings of learners (Chen-Hafteck, 2016). Chen-Hafteck also recommends integrating music of diverse cultures in the curriculum will help prepare students to be productive, positive citizens of the world with appreciation and understanding of culturally diverse peoples. Music is a form of cultural expression and learning music with its cultural context from other countries may help to improve learners' cultural understandings (Clauss-Ehlers, 2010).

It is hoped that teacher education programs guide teacher trainees and interns to become increasingly sensitive to students from other cultures (Mohd, Maasuma, et al., 2014; Joseph, 2012; Chen-Hafteck, 2016). In addition to using music and an intercultural learning strategy, the value of journaling as a means to reflect in action, *doing something*, and on action, *after it is done*, has gained prominence in music workshops (Joseph, 2012). She found that through listening, music-making, reading, and researching about the music and culture of other peoples, students' attitudes and perceptions changed. A student indicated that they were thankful for the opportunity to read and learn about black people suffering in South Africa and why they composed and sang protest songs.

In efforts to promote intercultural awareness and development within schools, universities, and communities, research has shown the value of music in intercultural education. (Campbell, 2004; Boshkoff & Gault, 2010; Nethsinghe 2012; 2013; 2015; Joseph & Southcott, 2013; Joseph, 2014; Grant, 2014; Lum & Chua, 2016). A wider project investigated how music education can be seen as a means of cultural and social appreciation by integrating musical experiences in the classroom (Joseph, Nethsinghe, & Cabedo, 2018). The primary aims of the wider study were as indicated in the table below and also have been documented in the present study.

Table 2.2: Goals for Cultural and Social Appreciation through Music Education]

#	Goals
1	Explore national and international curricula to reflect on how music can be used to improve intercultural understanding.
2	Promote shared experiences to include music for culturally positive engagement
3	Share ideas, values, and beliefs about music as a cultural practice and for the exchange of teaching and learning experiences.
4	Gather student feedback on how music enhances intercultural understanding.

Although I find significant merit and agreement with the work of Joseph, Nethsinghe, and Cabedo, they acknowledge the limitation of their study due to the relatively small sample size; therefore, they propose that neither statistical inferences or generalizations can be made. A significant volume of qualitative data was collected during the present research study with a large sample size. A probabilistic positive relationship of music to the development of positive perceptions toward other cultures and traditions, and the consistent connection and ubiquitous presence of music in the seminars connected to this study, all seem to strongly support the research of Joseph, Nethsinghe, and Cabedo. It would be well to consider future studies on quantitative aspects of this subject.

2.4 Summary

This literature review was conducted to provide a context for the research questions under consideration, both quantitative and qualitative. Germane to this study are the concepts of transformative learning and intercultural competencies. The literature review brings to attention the roles of transformative learning, Paideian education and learning from culture, listening skills, music and culture, interdisciplinary education, and assessment and the development of intercultural competencies. Each is impacted by the acquisition of new knowledge and skills in conjunction with language skills. Thus, this study will show the links between transformative

learning experiences, the importance of the role of culture in education in general and specifically Paideian education, and ultimately the development of intercultural competencies.

Research Question 1 framed the analysis of whether informants participating in intercultural seminars exhibit evidence of transformative learning and the development of intercultural competencies and statistically significant positive changes in perceptions of *others* compared to informants who did not experience such seminars. In other words, do the intervention group informants demonstrate increases in the development of intercultural competencies through transformative learning opportunities and experiences as measured by the CASQ and supported by qualitative data?

Research Question 2 framed the analysis of the degree to which qualitative ethnographic action research and the collection of qualitative data would provide deeper insights into the thinking of intervention group members, indicate the nature and quality of the data, and add meaning to support and enhance the significance of the quantitative data and the overall research findings. This investigation in intercultural studies has been fruitful, as has been the exploration and application of mixed-methods research. The literature has been rich in providing background information. The quasi-experimental design of this descriptive study and analysis of the impact of transformative learning opportunities and intercultural experiences on the potential developmental positive changes in perceptions of young people toward *others* could potentially be a valuable contribution to the field of research on intercultural studies, transformative learning, and the development of intercultural competencies. The literature review relied heavily on existing, grounded, and long accepted theory. The methodology, results, and conclusion chapters introduce more recent research.

3   A Mixed-Methods Study

Plan your dive and dive your plan ... but be prepared for the unexpected.
        National Association of Underwater Instructors SCUBA Diving Guidebook.

The context or conditions relevant for this research to occur included the opportunity to conduct the events and research in a natural setting within another culture. Fortunately, I had close contacts and cooperation with Shuya Pedagogical University in provincial Russia. This provided longitudinal access to students to form intervention and comparison groups as this study involved five years of data collection. For this research, it was determined the most appropriate methodological orientation was a mixed-methods convergent design. This included a quantitative component to gather empirical data and qualitative methods to observe, interview, and collect verbatim statements from intervention group members to help explain, support, and add meaning to the quantitative results.

At the beginning, values were discussed openly with the researcher and seminar team with the study group. The nature and quality of relationships was paramount in discussions of freedom of expression and responsibility to one and other. An objective was to tap the inner motivations of the study group participants by seeking their interests and personal goals, hopes, and dreams. Realistic expectations are prerequisite to trust and responsible actions. Collaboratively, the seminar team and study groups processed *village values* for our time together. This exercise promotes ownership and strengthens the importance of shared experiences and expectations (Sahlberg & Walker, 2021).

This process involved rigorous and purposeful collection and analysis of data directly correlated to the research questions and hypotheses thus facilitating the integration of both types of data and their results. The rationale for my research was to analyze the quantitative and qualitative results for comparison and evaluation to form a deeper and more complete understanding of the research questions and to validate each set of data with the other. During the study, an expected outcome was finding coherence between intervention group members' responses from the scaled quantitative data and responses to the open-ended questions and additional data from the qualitative data. The goals of this descriptive study included measuring the impact of intercultural experiences of young people on their perceptions of *others* and uncovering any possible correlations between the intervention, transformative experiences, and the development of intercultural competencies.

3.1 Mixed-Methods

Through existing relationships with faculty members of the linguistics department at Shuya Pedagogical University, the process used was relatively simple and straightforward. As an advocate of the old proverb *asking costs little.* I simply contacted my colleagues in Shuya and asked if they would be interested in me and my team coming to the university to conduct language and culture seminars. The response was resoundingly positive and our program soon became a regular and very popular element of the linguistics department's offerings. Students flocked to the opportunity to join the language and culture seminars. After two years of two to four seminars annually, the department informed me that freshman enrollment had doubled. Based on input from the incoming freshmen, the reason for the increase was the opportunity for them to participate in the international language and culture seminars with a team of foreign teachers. I recruited staff members with whom I had previously worked and in whom I had confidence in their abilities to practically and philosophically fit into the program. However, their personal worldviews, independent thoughts, actual educational philosophies, and teaching skills were important but did not need to be *carbon copies* of mine. In fact, diversity was and is important and necessary in running these educational programs and conducting this research. This approach was intentional and predetermined; the research results and practical outcomes appear to support the strategy.

The process, philosophy, methods, and programs used are thoroughly outlined throughout this study, including very specific details in the appendix H. The objective was to develop interactive lessons, workshops, and both formal and informal experiences that provided opportunities for me and the seminar team and the informants to *gain entry and access* to other cultures. The outcomes of these endeavors have resulted in official university recognition of our program and my status as a visiting professor and adjunct faculty member of the university.

In an eloquent and comprehensive article on mixed-methods research, Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) describe mixed-methods research as a type of research by which the researcher mixes and combines both qualitative and quantitative research techniques including; methods, approaches, concepts, and/or language into a single research study, often with superior results.

With the goal of conducting more effective research, pragmatism becomes a philosophical partner to mixed-method research. Although Johnson and Onwuegbuzi acknowledge that mixed-methods research is not presently aligned to result in perfect solutions, they assert that mixed-methods research currently offers methods and philosophies to join or arrange the *puzzle pieces* of a research study to provide insights derived from both quantitative and qualitative research into feasible clarifications. Pragmatism and balanced or pluralist positions may facilitate communication among researchers from different paradigms, sharing findings and

adding to existing bodies of knowledge (Maxcy, 2003; & Watson, 1990). Ultimately, the outcome should be answering pertinent research questions. Depending on the nature of the research and the research question(s), the research approach may be a mixed-methods study that will offer the best opportunities for answering important research questions (Johnson and Onwuegbuzi, 2004).

The majority of mixed-methods research designs may be based on either of two basic research models. One is the mixed model combining or mixing quantitative and qualitative processes within or across the stages of the research approach; the other is a mixed method which includes quantitative and qualitative components throughout the entire research study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004). A number of designs exist, but for this review, the focus will be on the two indicated. A mixed-methods design may begin when the researcher makes an initial decision between working mainly within one paradigm or directing qualitative and quantitative phases simultaneously. If a mixed-model design is selected, the researcher conducts both qualitative and quantitative component studies in one overarching research study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004). Mixed-methods research seeks to validate using multiple approaches in answering research questions, and it does not limit researchers' choices or become entrenched in a particular research *camp* or dogmatically follow a specific research method. Mixed-methods research, therefore, pushes the boundaries of traditional research dogmas and morphologically creates an eclectic type of research. Innovation, pluralism, creativity, and complementarity of structure and function guide the decisions and selection for conducting research. A clear research question is basic and the research methods should follow research questions in a way that provides for the optimal chance and opportunity to reach meaningful and useful results and answers (Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004).

There are some similarities and common practices between qualitative and quantitative research paradigms in which both access empirical data and observations to examine research questions and objects of study. Both methodologies engage in practices and procedures that allow them to collect descriptive data, explain their arguments and findings, and conjecturally consider reasons the outcomes they observed developed as they did (Sechrest & Sidani, 1995). Some researchers contend that they may be able to conduct and manage research more effectively by using epistemological and methodological pluralism, mixed-methods research, as the ultimate outcome desired may likely be superior and more effective research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004).

For this mixed-methods study the title mirrors the actual type of the mixed-methods design; hence the introductory section was structured to underpin the research questions and the purpose of the study. The significance of the study has been reflected in the appropriate description of the type of mixed-methods elements and the research questions are aligned with this type of design. The research questions helped determine the methodology which helped uncover research strategies and

data that resulted in determining the ultimate wording and description of the research questions during the study or ex post facto. Philosophically, and almost by default, choosing a mixed-methods research strategy pragmatically favors flexibility.

This research followed a methodology dependent primarily on worldview, philosophical underpinnings, and my basic assumptions. Thus, the impetus was from a western point of view. These factors influenced the scope of the study. Worldview was considered, in this context, as a set of beliefs, assumptions, and values. Worldview and assumptions contributed to the decision of a mixed-methods research plan (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Prior to designing and conducting a mixed-methods study, they suggest three basic criteria: 1) determining the preferred worldview to use with mixed-methods research; 2) engage different worldviews and ably respect each; 3) worldviews and the kind of mixed-methods design form a philosophical and close relationship.

A reasonable consideration is: does the research question justify and require mixed-methods research? Thus, the Creswell and Plano Clark hierarchy of levels in developing a research study took on special significance for this research. Level one, as may be expected, takes into account worldview, beliefs, and epistemology. The second level views a theory relative to the research; in the case of this research, education and social sciences. Their explanation consists of three methods of mixing qualitative and quantitative data. One method is referred to as mixing data which basically means that two sets of data become one and are evaluated as such: qualitative --- results ---quantitative. Another method is connecting data where two sets of data build upon each other: qualitative + quantitative --- results. The third method involves using one set of combined data to support the other in evaluating the overall findings as the mixed-methods plan and research design shown in Figure 3.1. This is in conjunction with an overarching research question addressing: *how and in what ways do transformative learning experiences influence intercultural competencies?* Put in what we could call *plain English*; in a learning environment with structured and purposeful interactions and active participation with *others*, can our thinking and perception of *others* change in positive ways?

As members of the research team we gained entry and access as individuals and seminar team members at a personal and also at an educational institution level. Such research projects are of a sensitive nature and require careful and purposeful planning as indicated in the research plan, timeline, and design shown in Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1.
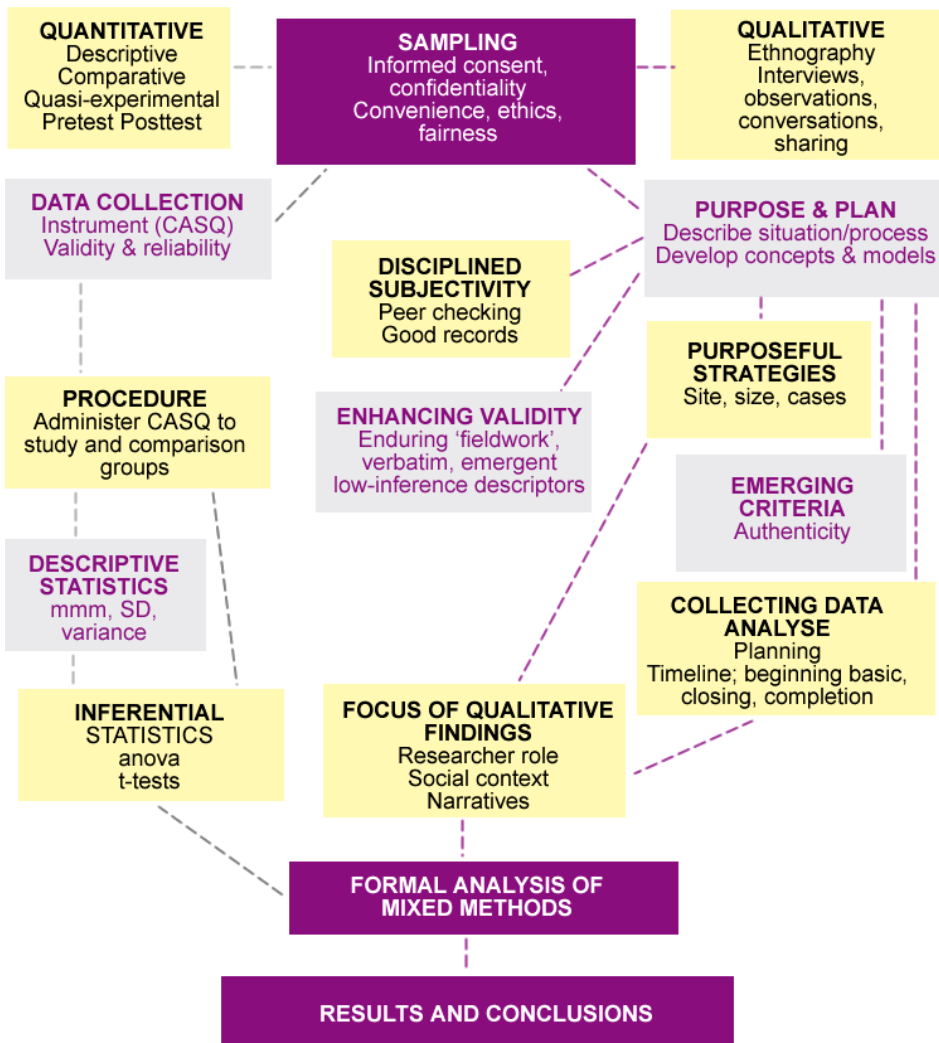
Figure 3.1 Mixed-Methods Design

Stewart: The Impact of Transformative Learning on the Development
of Young Peoples' Intercultural Competencies

Table 3.1: Research Plan and Timeline

STEP 1 APRIL 2014	PLANNING	Identify site Identify participants Target sample: size and suitability Strategy for purposeful sampling Secure institutional permissions and approvals Determine potential data collection issues: ethics, logistics, personal
STEP 2 APRIL 2014	DATA COLLECTION	Recruit informants Identify data sources Determine types of data to be collected Determine questions Record data
PHASE 1 APRIL 2015	INTERVIEWS: INDIVIDUAL, PAIRS, TRIADS WRITTEN RESPONSES FREE WRITE PROMPTS OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS OBSERVATIONS PROCEED AS INDICATED	Protocols Interviews & Observations Identify Recording Methods Written, Oral, Photo, Video Who, What, When, Where
PHASE 2 BASIC DATA COLLECTION APRIL, 2015 & 2016	LENGTH OF DATA COLLECTION PERIOD CONTINUE QUESTIONS	CASQ Pre-test Formal and Informal

DECEMBER 2016 MARCH 2017 MAY 2017 MAY 2018 OCTOBER 2018 DECEMBER 2019 CONCLUDING PHASE INTERVENTION GROUP	CONVERSATIONS: DISCUSSIONS: IN-CLASS AND OUT-OF-CLASS LARGE AND SMALL GROUP INTERACTIONS STUDENT-INITIATED ACTIVITIES FINAL DATA COLLECTION OBSERVATIONS	CASQ Post-test Unstructured Conversations Determine emergent Nature of Data Written and Oral Interviews CASQ Retention Tet Overt Covert
STEP 3 FEBRUARY – MAY 2020	ON-GOING EVALUATIVE ANALYSIS and DATA 'SNOOPING'	Evaluative programs, strategies, tools
STEP 4 TENTATIVE DATA INTERPRETATIONS MARCH 2020, MAY 2020	INITIAL DATA ANALYSIS	SPSS for Quantitative Ethnographic Reports
STEP 5 FORMAL ANALYSIS MAY 2020 -JANUARY 2021	DIAGRAMS, FIGURES, TABLES, MODEL:	Writing For Final Draft

As depicted in Figure 3.1, the methodology that designated here included the determination that ethnographic action research, rather than case studies or analytical research held preference. This was the best match for the objectives and quantitative component. Therefore, there are two *parallel* pathways. Using different methods the result is an abundance of complementary data that supports the conclusions. Ultimately, I made the decision for the methods of data collection to include determining, validating, and using the quantitative instrument, along with interviews, observations, oral and written statements, and formal and informal interactions connected with the qualitative portion. With mixed-methods

research, the narratives associated with qualitative findings were practically and philosophically linked to the quantitative results. The *mixing* of qualitative and quantitative data may provide the unique provision of equipping the researcher to better understand the findings of the study rather than simply relying on one set of data alone from one method or the other (Creswell & Plano Clark (2018).

A basic definition of the core characteristics of mixed-methods research is a method that conjoins research design and philosophical orientation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). They describe the key component practices for mixed-methods researchers as a rigorous collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. This corresponds to the research questions and hypotheses, consolidation and incorporation of two kinds of data and results providing a specific and organized logical research design and procedures to conduct the study consistent with existing philosophy and theory. Additionally, they express belief and rationale that these core characteristics sufficiently and satisfactorily embody mixed-methods research.

Mixed-methods research has been described as making use of pragmatism and a philosophical system with the logic of inquiry including induction, discovery of patterns, deduction, testing of theories and hypotheses, and abduction, uncovering and relying on the best set of explanations for understanding the results (DeWaal, 2001). In doing so, it effectively shows some commonalities between quantitative and qualitative research. A major feature and benefit of this type of research is its methodological pluralism or eclecticism that usually results in superior research when compared to mono-methodological research (DeWaal, 2001). Mixed-methods studies generate multiple qualitative components; ethnographies, interviews, observation, narratives, student presentations, portfolios, and professor evaluations. Quantitative measures, generally pretest and posttest self-report questionnaires, gained eighty-five percent acceptance among experts as a viable research approach according to Deardorff's Delphi study (Deardorff, 2004).

An interesting finding was uncovering little agreement on pretest and post-test self-report instruments regularly used to measure the effectiveness of programs. In some cases, data may be left unaccounted for and some *stones left unturned* when attempting to reach key components of intercultural competencies that may not be adequately assessed by pretest and posttest self-report questionnaires. Ethnographic studies and interviews typically garnered acceptance and support at levels of 90% to 100% by top intercultural studies researchers (Deardorff, 2005, 2007). This supports mixed-methods research.

The philosophical underpinnings contribute significantly to the entire research process and impact the scaffolding or framework of the research, including the design. Philosophically, as a mixed-methods study, the underpinnings are an eclectic union of epistemology, empiricism, and tools from both positivist and post-positivist ideologies to consider the concept of a theory, the research questions, validation, and discovery and revelation of objective reality. The research design, as the *plan of*

action, brings into tandem the philosophical assumptions and the scientific method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). As such, mixed-methods research is a bona fide, authentic, and genuine research design. The methods, it may be assumed, are more specialized because of the merging and hybridization of two different research paradigms. With qualitative research, the findings emerge and originate from the intervention group members leading to theme analysis from gathered data, often in narratives, interviews, and observations. Whereas quantitative methods empirically tend to be much more specific and rigid with procedures for data collection and analysis typically obtained from some type of standardized instruments, such as a questionnaire or survey.

Theory and method led toward merging one set of data supporting the other. As a single study, as opposed to a series or multiple objective study, the focus was on collecting qualitative and quantitative data from a single intervention and analyzing the data to determine the findings. The bottom line for this study was to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods and data to gain a deeper and more clear understanding of the research questions. Mixed-methods research utilizes the strengths of each to compensate potential weaknesses apparent in both qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Quantitative methods tend to miss important aspects of setting, context, and atmosphere, as well as the voices of the intervention group members.

Quantitative research is influenced by the background of the researcher and a survey or questionnaire may be more open to personal biases and individual interpretation (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Qualitative findings may *connect the dots* or *fill in apparent holes*. A mixed-methods study, by its nature, tends to promote collegiality and collaboration by bringing together researchers from both *camps*. Mixed-methods research accommodates different and multiple worldviews where researchers may consider paradigms that pragmatically include qualitative and quantitative views. In this way, a researcher is not bound to any particular methods but rather, may freely and indiscriminately use any methods available to address the research questions. Typically, both numbers and words are used to discuss, address, and solve problems along with deductive and inductive reasoning, and observations, behaviors, thoughts, opinions, perspectives, and attitudes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Investigation, discussion, and reporting of an incident (problem) require words and numbers. This is a natural way to discuss a problem and to search for solutions and may be the best-case scenario when attempting to solve research problems. The platform for this kind of research is mixed-methods. Mixed-methods research is neither simple or easy. It is time-consuming. Collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data yield findings that may be quite valuable (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A famous example several years ago involved an anthropologist who posed as a high school student in order to learn more about

high school culture (Ellis, 2020). Another study was conducted with participant observation among the Kwakiutl Indians of British Columbia. The observer did this by taking a job as a teacher at a tribal school. He was still an outsider, but he did have the advantage of participating in tribal activities and interaction to a certain extent (Ellis, 2020).

Advocates for mixed-methods research maintain that it naturally supports and serves as an accompaniment and balance to orthodox or traditional qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). They argue that mixed-methods research, based on its methodological pluralism may, in fact, yield higher quality and more comprehensive research.

Often times, a simple research map or diagram may be helpful both in guiding the investigation and benefit those interested in consuming the research (Figure 3.1). A visual representation of the research process should be a simple diagram with succinct and precise language that specifies the processes for each phase of both quantitative and qualitative analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The procedures for collected and emergent data should be clear and specification or prediction of the expected outcomes from both qualitative and quantitative may be followed by appropriate analysis.

There are several limitations and/or challenges to using mixed-methods research. The researcher needs to become familiar enough with mixed-methods research to have some degree of expertise in the subject matter of the study and the research procedures pertaining to this methodology (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A researcher needs to understand multiple research methods and how to apply and combine them properly (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Researchers must develop a congruous research design that fits both the type of study and will produce the clearest data to support and complement both qualitative and quantitative research. A decision was made regarding how data was to be evaluated and analyzed as ethnographic action research to obtain the optimal conditions for using these types of data.

Written reports represent a significant portion of qualitative data and often in considerable detail. In a dissertation this typically is not problematic, however, for a journal article with the number of pages limited, this could be a challenge. Mixed-methods research may present a challenge to a single researcher to conduct both qualitative and quantitative research; a pair or team of researchers helps mitigate this issue yet this may be more time-consuming and perhaps more expensive. An additional possible obstruction may be methodological purists pushing the idea that a researcher should always work within one research paradigm or the other; not both.

3.2 Participants, and Setting

This study involved a sample of ninety-eight, first through fifth year SPU students as intervention group and comparison group members. The seminar instructional teams varied from year to year, yet always included me and typically two or three additional members: all highly qualified instructors responsible for their language and culture lessons, workshops, and seminars. Several seminars I conducted alone. The instructional teams were culturally and gender diverse. For example the 2015 seminar faculty included two Americans and a Finn; two female teachers along with me. The American woman was fluent in French and Russian. The other woman, from the University of Oulu, Finland was fluent in French and English. I am a13th generation American of Scottish, Irish, and Swedish ancestry conversant in Finnish, basic Spanish and some Russian. In 2016, the same Finnish teacher from 2015 rejoined me and two Americans: an American male of Hawaiian descent and Finnish-American professor from Minnesota.

The research was designed to assess the effect of transformative learning and intercultural experiences of a specific population of university students, *informants,* and postulate any potential correlation with their apparent perspectives of *others*. For this study, the sample population consisted of the ninety-eight informants involved in data collection between 2015 and 2019. Each student informant responded to a pretest and posttest questionnaire, the *CSAQ.* This determination was based on convenient and sustained access to demographically similar groups of informants over this period of six years at SPU, a branch of Ivanovo State University in Russia. Data was not collected in 2014. This was an introductory seminar to become familiar with the setting, the research possibilities, and the people. Working with the university ultimately provided the setting for the study. This afforded access to the intervention group (N=47) and the comparison group (N=51) for the quantitative component, (total N=98). These remained an intact groups over the period of quantitative data collection. The informant group was also regular participants in the qualitative components of the study.

Graduation and freshman enrollment were internal validity considerations for qualitative research, yet consistent and similar results appeared to mitigate that concern. The university setting provided regular and unlimited access to informants, supportive administration and faculty, and the environment to conduct 12 two to five-day seminars. A pretest and posttest self-assessment instrument (the *CASQ*) was used to record responses to questions relative to intercultural awareness, knowledge, and competencies. This instrument was used at measured intervals with the intervention group from the linguistics department at the university. Fifty-one informants from various departments of the same university comprised the comparison group that received no instruction, interaction, or intervention. In addition to the quantitative data yielded from the *CASQ*, there was comprehensive

and significant ethnographic qualitative data from primary interactive field research. The intent was to more accurately describe, interpret, and explain the findings with the advantage of both qualitative and quantitative research in mutually supportive roles.

The interventions, as reported, were the two to five-day seminars with a schedule of classes, lessons, workshops, programs, projects, informal activities, and spontaneous gatherings designed to provide opportunities for informants to interact with teachers from other countries and cultural backgrounds in various contexts and setting. Also, for the purpose of novel interactive *intracultural* experiences for the students, small heterogeneous groups of 3 to 6 students were formed for various activities and discussions, as well as, cultural sharing presentations and programs. Heterogeneous groupings were used with purposeful intent to provide the informants opportunities to mix with others with whom they typically would not. Again, as earlier stated, in-class contact hours ranged between 10 and 24 hours for various lessons, workshops, activities, and program events.

Seminars were also designed to provide opportunities for informal interaction with and among informants outside the structured instructional day. A concomitant practical component of the study was the development of intercultural programs to facilitate sharing cultures and engagement in other shared experiences representing transformative learning opportunities and experiences. This was to promote learning with and about *others*, interact with members of other cultures and, as objectified, develop greater intercultural competencies and transformative thinking.

For these seminars, the SPU administration, faculty, and staff were all accommodating and occasionally sat in on some classes. The university's linguistics faculty joined all full intervention group programs and attended some of the off-campus extra-curricular activities. Members of the local media provided some community coverage of various activities associated with the seminars and the visitation of our American-Finnish team to the city of Shuya. The university administration and faculty allowed the seminar team autonomous access to the student informants and academic freedom in lesson content. This added a level of student comfort, confidence, and openness with the seminar instructors.

The university enrollment is approximately 2000 students, with freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior, fifth year, and masters' degree levels. The gender makeup of the students is roughly 60% female and 40% male. Specific diversity percentages during the time of the study were approximately 90% ethnic Russians, 9% from the several former soviet states (Uzbekistan, Turkistan, Kyrgyzstan), 1% African or Asian. The university is identified as middle to lower-middle-class in socio-economic status (SES). The university graduation data confirms an average of over 95% on-time graduation for the linguistics department and nearly 90% for the university overall. SPU maintains a staff and faculty of approximately 125 people. The university departments include most academic faculties and degree programs with

the exceptions of Medicine, Nursing, Theology, Engineering, and Law, although some classes are offered within those disciplines.

The IV, the intervention, was the language and cultural sharing seminars developed by me and my colleagues to involve the intervention group members in language and cultural experiences. These were hypothesized to promote the development of intercultural competencies through transformative learning experiences and opportunities. The common language for the intervention group was English. Nearly 90% of intervention group members had working and conversational competency. From that group, approximately 50% were fully fluent in English. Intervention group members participated in intercultural activities; seminars, classes, workshops, group programs, and additional activities including student projects and presentations.

As available, intervention group members frequently joined in games, after-hours recreation, and informal gatherings such as picnics, bowling, pool, evening walks, coffee house chats, and other non-academic opportunities for social interaction: many participated. These off-campus activities were sometimes hosted by members of each particular class; for example, freshmen planned the Monday evening activity, sophomores planned Tuesday, and so on. Heterogeneous groups organized other activities. These activities were student-planned for the visiting seminar team and were well attended. Student informants from the comparison group did not participate in any part of the program or activities, curricular or extra-curricular.

The dependent variable, DV, was the informants' posttest score on the self-report CASQ. All informants in both groups completed a pretest and posttest. Individual scores for each student on fifteen primary items were converted to mean summation scores for each student informant, each question, and for the *CASQ* overall. Initially, these scores from pretests and posttests were determined by calculating the sum of each test item score (questions 6-20) for each individual informant for both intervention and comparison groups, respectively. Those summed scores were compared within and between each group for each question. Secondly, the individual scores for each informant for each question were added together for a *total* sum score for each informant. Thirdly, these scores were added together for a *total* sum for each group. That value was divided by the number of informants (N) in each group and represented the mean score for that group. Please see descriptive statistics in chapter four. Ultimately, statistical analyses were conducted on this set of group means for pretest and posttests scores. Between and within the evaluation of groups, means were analyzed for statistically significant differences as shown in chapter four.

All 98 informants were members of non-random selection groups. So, it was determined to select informants within a culture and setting of their familiarity but different from the cultural settings of the researcher and the seminar team. In this way, the seminar staff assumed the role of the *other* and provided intervention

group members immediate access to people from another culture. The participating seminar team members facilitated experiential learning sessions daily during the 2- to 5-day seminars. Seminars were held in 2016 and 2017 for data collection using the CASQ, with a retention test for the intervention group in the winter of 2019.

Participating seminar teachers had international teaching experience and had spent time living abroad and navigating different cultures. Intervention group members were exposed to what could be considered western-influenced instruction as opposed to the more structured and authoritarian style of instruction typical of this Russian university. Thus, intervention group members had the opportunity to experience the culture of western education as it related to the methods, pedagogy, and content presented by each seminar teacher.

A key aspect of conducting an intercultural learning experience, such as the language and culture seminars central to this research, is the background of the teachers. Those facilitating and leading the lessons and workshops must themselves have developed intercultural competencies, experienced transformations, and have practiced "habits of reflection, self-awareness, openness, and observation in work and life valuable in helping people to improve their cultural competence," (Dolan & Kawamura, 2015. p.17). The selection of teachers for the seminars was a purposeful, intentional process. Actually, the *heart* of the matter is that the more culturally aware one is of themselves, the greater the positive impact may be in our interactions with *others*. The transition from cultural awareness to developing intercultural competencies does not occur in one fell swoop. Rather, it is a process, an evolution, and a journey.

As indicated, in this study, the IV was the language and culture seminars in which the intervention group participated. The DV was the informants' score on the posttest *CASQ*. With respect to Research Question 1, it was assumed that evidence of statistically significant differences in intervention group members' perceptions of *others*, as measured by the *CASQ*, would be a factor in predicting an increase in intercultural competencies and transformative learning and thinking. Regarding Research Question 2, it was assumed that transformative learning experiences would positively influence intercultural competencies and that ethnographic action research would support the quantitative findings. This pragmatic approach enabled me to utilize both qualitative and quantitative data to better describe, interpret, and explain the outcomes and results.

3.3   Quantitative Methodology

The proposed research questions and hypotheses were designed to investigate a possible causal or correlational relationship between the IV; participation in intercultural experiences through involvement in language and culture seminars,

and the DV. The DV was responses of potential perceptions of *others* as measured by pretest and posttest scores on the self-report, the cultural assessment survey questionnaire, the *CASQ,* with results recorded on 4- and 5-point Likert type scales. Regarding the technical and personal aspects of quantitative research, a level of practicality tempered with humanity supports a naturalistic and concurrently authentic setting which leads to greater confidence in accuracy.

This study exists in the realms of social and educational research with a focus on quantification in collecting and analyzing the data and tends to be deductive in the connections between theoretical testing and research. Theory may be viewed in various ways, typically and in this study, it refers to the most usual and regular explanation for categorizing and classifying an event, pattern, or phenomena (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Byrman, 2021). The research conforms to the basic standards of the natural scientific model of positivism and empiricism and thus provides supportive data with an objective and external reality as the view of social reality (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Byrman, 2021). In this case, the research approach can be looked upon as deductive as research question one (1) is theoretical and the observations and findings sought verification.

Characteristics supporting this dynamic depend on the content and expressive consistency of questions for all informants. In other words, the questions should be the same for all informants. Questions should be kept relatively short and without technical terms or jargon; thus, keep it easy and simple for all group members. Clear instructions and organization for ease of reading, as well as, definition of terms and a simple comprehension level were important. Each item was stated briefly and clearly in a closed format compatible with Likert scaling which made completion and participation easier for informants.

The questionnaire was available in both English and Russian and was administered in the classroom by me or trained colleagues with unlimited time for completion. Perception-related and attitude-type questionnaires typically should include at least ten items; this provides the minimum range for the researcher to adequately survey the construct (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Attitude is a difficult construct to measure (Turunen, 2020) and the CASQ more accurately assesses perceptions. The CASQ contained fifteen measurement items in addition to standard demographic information: identification number - typically the last four digits of their phone number for matching pretests and posttests, gender, date, age, and self-selection to membership in an ethnic minority population. Quantitative research proceeded according to the plan shown in Table 3.2. The research design has been displayed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.2: Quantitative Research Plan

STEP 1	PLANNING STAGE 1 Identify site Identify informants for participation Target sample: size and statistical power Initiate probabilistic thinking and strategy
STEP 2	PLANNING STAGE 2 Secure institutional permissions and approvals Recruit informants
STEP 3	PLANNING STAGE 3 Determine data to be collected Finalize instrument to be used for data collection Determine statistical procedures to obtain quantifiable data
STEP 4	DATA COLLECTION Administer data collection, explain use of instrument Record data sets from each longitudinal data collection point
STEP 5	DATA ANALYSIS Describe demographics - Who, What, When, Where, How Perform descriptive and inferential statistical analyses; ANOVA and *t*-tests Determine statistical significance and describe validity and reliability issues
STEP 6	REPORT RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Table 3.3: Quantitative Research Design

Intervention Group	NR	O_1	X	O_2
Comparison Group	NR	O_1		O_2

NR = Non-Random assignment

X = The intervention

O_1 = Observation of the dependent variable; the pretest

O_2 = Observation of the dependent variable; the posttest

The primary goal of the quantitative research component was to compare the mean scores of one group with the mean scores of the other groups to determine the probability that the group means were statistically different. For determining the

level of significance when comparing two means, the most regularly used statistical procedure is the *t*-test. The use of *t*-tests in addition to the repeated measures ANOVA added an additional statistical measure to support rejection of the null hypothesis of research question one. The *t*-test is a straightforward, formula-driven statistical procedure that results in a numerical value. This value or number indicates the probability (*p*-level) of rejecting a null hypothesis, and the higher the value, the greater that probability is (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). As reported, ninety-eight informants, forty-seven in the intervention group and fifty-one in the comparison group participated. In addition to the ANOVA, the paired sample *t*-tests were used for pretest and posttest analyses of the means of both groups. A *p* value of <.05 was used to determine statistical significance; this is a 95% confidence level in the resultant values. Because of the similarity of the sample sizes, populations and demographics, these parametric tests were used to compute the statistics. Results from both types of analyses were consistent and conformational.

To collect empirical data, the instrument used was the CASQ. The instrument was used to measure the DV posttest scores. The IV was participation in language and culture seminars. A comparison group received no intervention. Measurement of the scores and collection of data was facilitated by use of the *CASQ* as a pretest and posttest questionnaire. The *CASQ* was adapted from an instrument developed by Dr. Michael Godkin, Director of International Medical Education, University of Massachusetts. That self-report questionnaire seen in Appendix G was developed to measure the effect of medical students' international experiences on their attitudes toward serving underserved multicultural populations (Godkin and Sauvageau, 2003). Factor analysis of the original instrument strongly supported their defined domains of 1) Cultural Competence, 2) Community context of Medicine, 3) Humanistic self-awareness, and 4) Specific career interest in fields of medicine related to patient care of underserved populations.

The Godkin-Savageau questionnaire was rewritten and revised for field tests prior to use as the final data collection instrument for this study. Initial evaluation and assessment of the survey were done by an expert in empirical statistics from the University of Oulu (see Appendix B). It was field-tested at five international language and culture Kesälukioseura camps in Karjaa, Finland. A language evaluation was conducted to obtain input from reliable English as a Second Language speakers and readers proficient and fluent in English. The primary evaluator was a faculty member at two language and culture seminars at SPU, three Kesälukioseura international language and culture camps in Finland, and the administrative assistant and interpreter for a medical and educational mission to Togo, West Africa (see Appendix C). She was familiar with the scope and purpose of this research and co-authored two published articles connected with elements of this study's research. She evaluated the instrument herself and sought additional input from two other individuals. Her evaluation and input from a statistics expert, an education professor

from Seattle Pacific University, a colleague from the linguistics faculty at the SPU supported the CASQ. Members of seminar teams, along with comments and suggestions from students with whom I tested variations of the questionnaire also validated devising the final *CASQ* used for collecting data from the intervention and comparison groups.

To that end, the *CASQ* included four domains related to attributes of young peoples' perceptions of, and possible reflection of attitudes towards, others. The domains were based on evaluation of the Godkin and Sauvageau study(2003), the Deardorff-led Delphi study (Deardorff, 2003), and the Seattle Pacific University Global Studies Department Director, and existing literature. The domains for the 16 items on the *CASQ* included: 1) Cultural Competence, 2) Community or 'village' concepts of culture, 3) Humanistic values and self-actualization, and 4) interest in learning about other cultures and interacting positively with people from other cultures. The instrument was validated by expert peer analysis (Koivukangas, 2007; Ellis, 2012; Rantajääskö-Seauve, 2013; Honkala, 2013: Cornwell, 2014; Burlakova, 2015).

As indicated, the SPSS software package was used for statistical analyses. The ANOVA procedure was used for between and within-group analysis of means. Mean differences were computed for comparison and intervention groups to determine *F* values and whether statistically significant differences existed. The ANOVA is a parametric procedure having the same basic purpose as a t-test: that is, comparison of group means and determination of the probability to be right or wrong in rejecting a null hypothesis (McMillan, 2008). In addition to the ANOVA, *t*-tests were conducted for additional comparison of group means. In consideration of the selection of statistical analyses of the data, the Institute for Digital Research and Education (IDRE, 1997) advises that the presence of any repeated factor indicates the probable and recommended use of repeated measures ANOVA. The repeated measure was the pretest and the posttest.

The pretest and posttest *CASQ* was designed for informants to rate on 5- and 4- point Likert scales the extent to which transformative learning and intercultural experiences may have influenced their perceptions of *others* as indicated by the score of their response to each item. Items 6 through 13 dealt with relative perceptions of *others* in terms of personal interaction and the general societal status, and the availability of social services for *others* (1=strongly disagree through 5= strongly agree). Questions 9, 11, and 12 were reversed logically as a reliability check: this was successful. Items 14 through 20 addressed knowledge of, or familiarity with, members of other cultural groups (0= not familiar at all, 4= very familiar). The pretest indicated their disposition, perceptive view, or potential attitude at that point in time toward each item and set a baseline from which to measure any possible change upon final analysis of the data. Changes between pretest and posttest scores were analyzed separately for each group and the entire group. Pretest and posttest

scores for intervention group members were compared by within-group analysis and a between-groups analysis was conducted for the intervention and comparison groups.

The SPSS statistical software package Analyzing and Understanding Data, available through the University of Lapland's site license, was used for quantitative data analyses. The ANOVA was used for pretest and posttest comparison of mean differences within the intervention group and between the intervention and comparison groups. The F statistic was calculated to determine statistical significance with an alpha of .05 which refers to a confidence level of 95% in the results. Sample sizes were large enough (N=47 and N=51) for intervention and comparison groups, respectively, and homogeneity of variance was consistent to avoid using non-parametric statistical tests. The mixed-methods approach used for this study was intended to provide a pathway to uncover and open access to information not attainable through, but supportive of, quantitative research. As clarified for a mixed-methods investigation, the quantitative component was the administration and evaluation of the *CASQ* and qualitative data was collected from direct interviews, discussions and conversations, participant statements, student projects, formal and informal gatherings, observations, and presentations. Mixed-methods research opened an opportunity to garner the strengths of both methodologies and reduced possible weaknesses of both if this had been single method research study. Mixed-methods research provided opportunities for the researchers to use methodologies to help bridge the gap between quantitative and qualitative research (Onwuegbuzi & Leech, 2004).

3.4   Qualitative Methodology

An advantage to qualitative research is its flexibility in comparison to sampling techniques used in quantitative research (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). This flexibility is evident in the emergent nature of qualitative research. In effect, this provides researchers an enhanced degree of freedom to accommodate and devise methodologies to facilitate opportunities to discover new insights into phenomena being studied. Ultimately, the qualitative component became co-primary and of equal value in supporting the overall findings.

There are a range of methods under the umbrella of social science research that may be employed in educational research. It is the prerogative of the researcher to utilize accepted theory and intrinsic factors that influenced the worldview and intellectual position of the researcher (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Bryman, 2021). However, the educational and social research methods are not entirely tied to the preferences and opinions of the researcher using them. The methods may fall closely within a range of concepts and ideas relative to the nature of the perceived social reality and the preferences for its study. Generally, these are tied to a broader picture

of perceptions of social science, generally. Thus the researcher gathers and analyzes data in relation to the theoretical, typically an existing or proposed theory (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Bryman, 2021).

Epistemologically, one may consider how education in the social world should be studied. As seen in this study, both empiricism and interpretivist approaches were guided by an array of contextual factors. These may include: existing theory and the researcher's point of view, literature searches, epistemology, and current political conditions along with ethics and values (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Bryman, 2021).

3.4.1   Action Ethnography

The qualitative research strategy for this study was an ethnographic approach. This is considered *action* ethnography because of the high degree of the researcher's immersion in the education programs conducted and studied. Of course, as the researcher, it was necessary to maintain continual awareness and vigilance of the entirety of my role. This was actually not a difficult or challenging enterprise, simply one of keeping a high level of cognizance.

Conversations, observations, and other techniques proved useful in gathering data. The process involved interpretation of the data and determining if it supported the quantitative results. Ethnographic research is an interactive process requiring a significant time commitment to be on site. I stayed on campus in university housing with access to intervention group members to systematically observe, interview, and record processes as they naturally occurred. Intervention group members who had shared experiences provided a focus for ethnographic interviews to uncover what the experiences meant to them. Ethnography, as a branch of anthropology, deals with the description of human cultures (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study, educational settings and informal settings alike focused on observation, interviews, naturalistic inquiry, and informal and spontaneous interactions.

There is quite a variation in ethnographic studies, yet common ethnographic research methodologies and strategies of participant observation and interviews exemplify this type of inquiry. Many ethnographic research studies are designed to explore and discover intervention group members' views of their world and experiences, and then develop some understanding of the concepts uncovered. Ethnographic research provides tools for the researcher to analytically describe groups, social occurrences, and individuals by recording their actions, behaviors, beliefs, feelings, and practices. Additionally, ethnographic studies look at interactive phenomena of human life. Qualitative research strategies are subject to data collection pertaining to each person's perceptions and behaviors in social settings and during individual conversations and interactions related to a particular research question in the context of the settings.

Ethnography, a long and often used process in anthropological studies, is becoming more and more common in educational research and gaining broad acceptance across

the field as either stand-alone research or complementary to empirical investigations (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The primary goal of much ethnographic research is the first-hand study of cultural features. The ethnographic action approach in this study was intended to allow the discovery of cultural themes in the behaviors of the intervention group members. This facilitated investigating how behavior reflects perceptions, attitudes, values, customs, beliefs, and other aspects of commonalities, and indicators of culture. The entire research team interacted closely with the intervention group members as they participated in the language and culture seminars. The research methodology thus was, in fact, ethnographic and emergent.

This research approach allows readers of the study to, in some ways, understand the cultural dynamics uncovered without having to actually experience them personally. Ethnographic research allows for the discovery of themes from factors that may support the possibility to predict the behaviors of other cultural members and the effects of intercultural experiences on the behaviors of cultural group members. Yet, as indicated several times throughout the study, it is not the goal of this study to generalize. Human uniqueness, as well as collective similarities, are both influenced by culture. Some of the most notable differences between groups are typically related to culture. Culture allows people to live together and to successfully co-exist through a system of shared values, understandings, and meanings. The *flip side* of this may be the oppositions to *others* and existential cultural values that could lead to conflict (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

With ethnography, the approach is not necessarily *fixed:* the approach typically is flexible and emergent. Therefore, the researcher has the freedom to be creative, inventive, inquisitive, and spontaneous with the requisite documentation and record keeping to gain further insights into the phenomena being studied. Particularly, analysis of qualitative data with a large volume of subjective responses, tabulating and categorizing the frequency of responses is an effective method for establishing a starting point; yet, accepting situational fluidity that facilitates developing patterns or themes from the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Interviews and open-ended questions, observations, formal and informal activities, impromptu conversations and outings, leisure walks, games, and chance encounters such as meeting in stores or parking lots, were important components of data collection in this study.

The orientation of the ethnographic qualitative research differed from the quantitative research in that ethnographic research is founded on the premise of considering human behavior from a naturalistic and pluralistic worldview and philosophy. As such, the researcher is situated as an observer in a natural context to describe and interpret emergent factors that impact behaviors and possibly perceptions. This leads to interpret, reconstruct, and process the data concomitantly with the quantitative findings to better understand the impact of intercultural experiences on young people, transformative thinking, and their perceptions toward *others*.

In this case, knowledge of ethnographic methods helped formulate the awareness of understanding how, why and under what assumptions the research is to be conducted. Examining ethnographic research methods is like tooling up for the endeavor. It creates an environment and sensitivity with knowledge and awareness to feel confident in methodology choices and decisions (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Bryman, 2021). Contingent on studying research methods one is emboldened or empowered to structure the research to collect, analyze, and evaluate copious amounts of data relevant to the research goals and the expected outcomes. Ultimately, congruent with conducting the research, there is a unifying effect among researchers to study research methods because, for the most part, we see the same or similar contributions of other researchers (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Bryman, 2021).

A defining step in preparing for ethnographic action research lies in the interest of the researcher and the identification of a problem or situation worth investigating. The research questions were based on direct experience with the intervention group members and the instructional seminars. This research was based on phenomena of transformative learning, intercultural competencies, and perceptions of *others*. The research problem aimed to investigate and evaluate the impact of transformative learning experiences on the development of intercultural competencies and the resultant perceptions of young people toward *others* and tangentially, the intervention group members' acceptance of the program.

Ethnography has been considered to be the most highly favored research tradition to investigate the complexities of culture (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The foci and orientation of ethnographic research are holistic and allows the researcher to uncover both diverse and related elements of the culture to discover and generate coherent themes or patterns. The careful orientation to collecting and analyzing qualitative data in this way garners one the ability and insights to probabilistically envisage and interpret events occurring within the group studied nearly as fittingly as members of the group would themselves. The researcher should exercise caution in that the ethnographer may describe aspects of culture from the perspective of its members to explain the culture. Or, may form their own criteria to understand and describe the culture from that perspective.

This method is often preferred for intercultural studies and care should be taken to avoid criteria that, due to the researcher's own perspective, understanding of the specific culture or certain phenomena within the culture may be tainted (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Advances in mixed-methods designs have helped mitigate some concerns. The convergent design procedure used in this study was based on those philosophical underpinnings. A theoretical and conceptual framework articulated the connections between the qualitative and quantitative components and combined the data sets. This facilitated the development of insights to understanding and compare personal perspectives with measured results (Creswell &Plano Clark, 2018).

3.4.2 Data Gathering

In designing a plan for the collection of qualitative data, I intentionally and purposefully attempted to maximize the extent to which the sample was accurately representative of the population being studied. It is well known that the larger the sample size, the greater the probability and likelihood of rejecting the null hypothesis, which was a primary goal of this study. Therefore, a primary objective was to determine and then mitigate existing differences evident for informants within and between both groups. The major difference between the intervention and comparison groups was the intervention and additional interaction with the facilitators. The design worked well and the cooperating university faculty clearly accepted and supported the similarities and compatibilities for the intervention and comparison groups. Thus the sampling frame, the lists, indexes, population and student records from which the samples were taken, and the completion rate, or portion of the sample that participated as expected, all supported the validity and reliability of the sample for the qualitative plan.

The plan for the collection of qualitative data must take into consideration possible threats to validity. The previous chapter described primary validity threats to quantitative research. Qualitative research plans must also account for threats to reliability. As clarified, the sample for this research was a convenience study which basically included volunteers. No student was compelled or coerced into participating. Studies show that volunteers tend to have a greater preponderancy for social approval than non-volunteers and generally seem to be more sociable (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Female volunteers tend to exhibit stronger tendencies toward the aforementioned characteristics than their male counterparts. The gender make-up of the sample population for this study was approximately 80% to 85% female. Interestingly enough, volunteers generally are less conforming than non-volunteers and one may make the inference that volunteers tend to be more honest and reliable (Gall, Gall, & Borg (2007).

As was important in collecting quantitative data, it was even more important in the qualitative aspect of the study to develop the personal aspects of working with the intervention group members. Of course, confidentiality was promised and maintained, as rapport and trust had been established throughout the six years of the involvement at SPU. The benefits of participating in the study were explained to the intervention group members and the process began and continued to emerge with clear and meaningful questions for the intervention group members.

Single ideas were introduced and processed within a specific frame of reference. Questions and responses were recorded as were and interview questions, and then tallied with intervention group members' responses. Effective and typical strategies included; being sensitive to non-verbal cues, avoiding leading and especially *threatening* questions, refraining from contradicting informants, and dismissing any appearance of *cross-examining* informants. It is strategically constructive for a

researcher to talk far less than the intervention group members but also may find it effective to use simple probes such as "tell me more", without hinting. A skilled research interviewer will use discretion in saving complex or controversial questions until later on in an interview when the *table* seems to be set for such topics. In this connection, the interview remains more substantive if the researcher does not change interview topics too often.

Observation may contribute significantly to qualitative research. Naturalistic observations may occur in a classroom setting, groups sessions, smaller break-out cohorts, informal *walk and talk*, coffee shop and mealtime conversations, and during sports and recreation. An abundance of factors contributes to what may be referred to as descriptive observational variables that are low-inference variables. These observations inform the researcher about *what is going on* but do not conclusively lend to inferences about *why it is going on.* As effective tools, duration recording over a specified period of time, frequency counts of how often something is observed or verbalized, and interval recording of the same or similar events or statements help the researcher accurately maintain data records. During this investigation, there were situations when observation and/or data forms were used. This method was helpful in keeping track of comments, criteria, and their frequencies.

The strategies include extensive and extended fieldwork, recording verbatim accounts, low-inference descriptors, precise, detailed, and literal recording of data. Researcher assistants, member checking, and informant or participant review of the recorded data helped. This included all possible conversations, interviews, and multiple observations. Observation and practice of these strategies were intentional, hence the referral to *action* ethnography.

The above factors were taken into consideration in developing the qualitative data collection schedule and plan. Not surprisingly, the plan clearly correlated with the eventual process model and the factor tables developed from the quantitative and qualitative data collected. In other words, the researchers *practiced what they preached*. A focused determination process for qualitative data collection began with a vision. In this case, the visualization included a *descriptive* stage initially with a rather broad focus quite general in scope; meaning, get to know the intervention group members. This stage, considered stage one at the outset of the actual study, helped to clearly identify the significance of pre-determined features of the plan and served to identify additional features of the phenomena to be studied. An approach like this helps to develop a baseline and determine the likeliest and most relevant directionality of this component of the study. Once satisfied with stage one, a more focused stage was developed. At this point, salient features of greatest importance and interest become evident and were determined to direct attention and energy to delve deeper into the information and data of interest. Collecting this naturally emerging data was germane to the study.

An example of this method was determining an introductory range of interview questions based on interactions with intervention group members, individual and by group, in positioning with sets of pre-determined questions developed for the study and based on previous experiences. A typical basic question was; "what were the three most important or significant *take-aways* for you from a lesson, workshop, experience, activity, or the seminar?" From these initial and introductory rounds, the progression to the *focused* stage was a smooth and efficacious transition.

The focused stage provided additional insights, information, and informed the research process regarding successful methodologies and led to the *selective* stage. The selective stage was purposefully positioned with the research questions and the overall focus shifted to refining and deepening the emergent understanding of specific elements of the investigation relative to the intervention group members' responses. An example for this stage was the question, "explain personally what learning, singing, and discussing the song *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother* meant to you?" At this point, having successfully navigated the plan and its stages, I began to uncover and identify results consistent with the most essential findings, informant perceptions, both theoretical and empirically determined. Although the F and t-statistics had yet to be calculated, *data snooping* indicated that the quantitative data gathered appeared to validate and replicate qualitative findings which turned out, in fact, to be the case.

Several other examples of the use and importance of qualitative data are provided by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018). They referred to a study in which the researchers collected data from a quantitative instrument and then qualitative data from interviews with focus groups to determine if the two types of data showed similar results but from different perspectives. In another study measuring the attitudes of adoptive fathers toward birth fathers, they explained that the use of qualitative data helped inform an intervention. A quantitative measure was used to assess a particular intervention and collect data with a questionnaire and a qualitative follow-up with interviews revealed more about the meanings behind questionnaire responses and supported the findings.

In the first stage, the semi-structured interviews initiated the qualitative component of this mixed-methods study following the preparation and planning. In practice, the following process was observed. Questions were intended to serve as prompts to initiate a discussion-type interview with the intervention group members from which their views would emerge. In one instance, as indicated, the intervention group members were asked to describe their three most important take-aways from the seminars. The second stage of qualitative data collection involved a set of questions based on their comments from the first stage interviews and a list of intervention group members' responses and comments. The complete list was developed in this way and used as a data collection template.

It is important to note that much of this qualitative research includes the presentation of the data as quotations of the intervention group members, however,

I took some liberties to correct grammar on some of the statements. They were all non-native English speakers and the grammar corrections did not affect the content, context, or meaning of the statements, but were for the benefit of the reader. All other participant statements are otherwise verbatim.

Ethnographic researchers utilize a full gamut of qualitative data collecting techniques, and when applicable, quantitative techniques as was the case in this study. This included: observations, interviews, conversations, gatherings, performances, plays, concerts, churches, shopping, parks and nature, street activity, homes, schools, athletics, classes, presentations, meals, coffee shop visits, etiquette, and even traffic and driving experiences. All of these aspects of the ambient culture were open to inquiry during this research study. The inter-relationship of these elements of culture predisposes the detection and emergence of categories, patterns, and themes related to social organization, economics, family structure, religion, politics, ceremonies; all of these factors were considered in the study. As data emerged, it became increasingly important to attempt to understand one aspect of the culture and the observed behaviors, while increasing awareness and studying other aspects.

In the case of the present study this meant that I, as an American, or other staff members as Finns, immersed ourselves in a different culture. Provincial Russia is more traditionally steeped in Russian culture than the cosmopolitan areas of Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and Sochi. Often times, it has been said that there are two Russias: the three cities indicated above as one Russia, and then all the rest: the provincial areas of Russia. My role in the ethnographic action research was to become personally immersed and involved in the phenomena being studied and collect data from intervention group in this way.

The key issue in selecting to proceed in this way was to be able to make a clear statement about the results of the investigation at the conclusion of the study. As indicated for this study and ethnographic studies in general, there must be a unit of analysis that can be sampled, defined, evaluated, and reported. The way in which ethnographic researchers approach their investigations may be similar in planning a quantitative research study. Both require institutional evaluation and approval and site permission. From there, the similarities may diverge and as data is collected, and the roles may be differentiate. There are clearly defined and sharply identifiable procedures for data collection and analysis.

The researcher maintains a limited role in the collection of data, for example, in this investigation the CASQ was used to collect quantitative data and very specific descriptive and inferential statistical tests were used to analyze the data. There is an interesting and relevant comparison; with qualitative ethnographic research, collection of data is generally more comprehensive and definitely more complex than with quantitative research (Gall, Gall,& Borg, 2007). Rather than a questionnaire or survey instrument to gather data, the researcher is basically the data gathering and data processing *instrument*.

An ethnographic qualitative researcher is personally involved with the variables being studied, with the intervention group members, and effects the data collection. This includes multiple data sources and methods (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). As such, the correlation and complementarity of ethnographic studies are clearly compatible with the mixed-methods research paradigm and philosophy. Relatively few actual procedures can be specifically designed apriori. The researcher typically will affiliate regularly and closely with the intervention group members, attend common events, and share experiences in order to lay hold on the phenomena being studied to gain insights and meaning as manifestations emerge. This connection unifies the roles of ethnography in mixed-methods research. Multiple strategies are available to corroborate data from any single strategy and integrate that data collected from various methods and under differing conditions.

As members of the research team we gained entry and access as individuals and team members at a personal and also at an education institutional level. Such research projects require careful and purposeful planning as indicated in the research plan shown in Table 3.1.

The qualitative methodology utilized for the intervention group, as explained, included interviews, oral and written open-ended questions, small and large group discussions, formal and informal conversations, observations, projects, student presentations, and student-prepared evaluations. No such contact occurred with the comparison group. This research focused on an assessment of the responses of intervention group members to questions related to intercultural, social, and ethnic awareness and related issues in society, and their involvement in the language and culture seminars. The purpose of the research was to observe and analyze the content, context, presentation, and discussion of the constructs and domains of intercultural awareness. This was based on responses of the intervention group members within an emergent framework of discriminant factor analysis that ultimately revealed categorical construct themes. All intervention group members responded to the same sets of discussion questions and additionally, offered independent written and oral voluntary statements that were recorded. Some statements and culturally relevant student presentations were video recorded. Other videos were created and made by intervention group members. These are available to the reader via the following internet link (www.tlici.org*).*

3.5   Ethics and Faculty of Education Approval

Exceptionally important implications for quality research are inseparably joined to the values of the research community. Foremost to these are ethical issues. There is increasing significance on the sources, collection, and use of data and background information as new sources become available, including social media. Thus, there

was careful attention to the processes of ethical approval and clearance prior to conducting this socially related educational research. The nature of this research required meticulous and sensitive planning because of potential vulnerability of participants and general ethical considerations in conducting the study in Russia at SPU. Attention to these aspects of the research significantly reduced the likelihood of overstepping ethical standards and accepted practices (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Bryman, 2021).

Additionally, values accepted in the research community strongly profess the inclusion of those being researched to be fully aware of the research process, goals, and expected outcomes. Consistent with the nature of educational and social research, theory may be impacted by the research as the findings of the study may contribute to the theoretical base to which the study relates (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Bryman, 2021).

The research for this study was conducted according to The Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK, which promotes the responsible conduct of research, prevents research misconduct, promotes discussion, and shares information on research integrity in Finland. All research for this study is in accordance with the guidelines on responsible conduct of research put forth by TENK.

A researcher must comply with the principles and responsibilities of conducting ethical research throughout the entire research process. This includes demonstrating integrity, diligence, attention to detail, and accuracy in conducting research in planning, recording, analyzing, and presenting research results (TENK, 2012). This study was conducted according to the TENK guidelines of appropriate ethics and good scientific practices and procedures applicable to educational and social science research.

Direct contact and interaction between researcher and informants were foundational to this study. With this dynamic there is an unavoidable imbalance of power. The researcher is responsible for the design of the study and the activities, lessons, workshops, and other aspects of interaction included in the study. The informants, also considered *participants,* typically have limited opportunities to influence the flow, content, or context of the research process and activities and methods used in gathering data. This places the researcher in a position of trust which must be honored and maintained. Along these lines, the informants were included in some of the decision making. They were encouraged to make suggestions and requests for topics of interest and flexibility in conducting activities. Prior to several seminars, a questionnaire designed by a member of the seminar staff and was given to the participants so that their interests would be taken into consideration. This proved to be helpful and also distributed some of the *power* to the participants, as well as increasing their level of *ownership* in the program. In the midst of a different culture respectfulness is vitally important. This includes how one interacts with *others* and ultimately, in the presentation of the findings.

This research was coordinated through the University of Lapland Faculty of Education and as such, approval was obtained for collection and statistical analysis of data. Pursuant to involvement in the study and collection of data from the intervention and comparison groups, they were advised of their free will to participate in the study. Informants had the freedom to drop out of the study and the option of remaining anonymous in regards to all aspects of the study. They were allowed to either verbally or in writing express their approval and accepted participation with informed consent.

Participation was voluntary and informed consent was explained verbally and in some cases written, particularly if it involved mutual participation and disclosure of the shared information or statements. Disclosure must always be accompanied by informed consent. Maintaining autonomy is a function of informed consent. For example, this also included their willing production of videos depicting student projects relative to their perception of the intercultural learning experiences. These videos were shared with the entire intervention group. The videos were informative, creative, and showed experiences and interests from the viewpoints of the intervention group members. They expressed clear enjoyment of the projects, developed team skills working together to complete the videos, had fun in the process, and demonstrated pride in showing them. No intervention group member objected to the public use of their videos and all participants chose to remain enthusiastic members of the study. Essentially, the simplest explanation means that informants in the study were formally aware of the research and gave their consent and willingness to participate.

The informants involved in this study were fully aware of my role as a researcher in addition to a teacher. On each occasion, seminar informants were made aware of the research aspects of the program. At the initial and subsequent seminars, a university colleague introduced me and team members to the participants. After the initial seminar, the participants knew me and warmly welcomed me back on campus. Likewise, they warmly welcomed other team members. Whenever interviews were arranged, I explained why I was collecting data and the purpose of the study.

As an *action* ethnographic study, part of the data collected was generated by my participation and observation at the university during academic and extracurricular activities. Sometimes notes were taken in process, but more often I was engaged in the activities and recorded notes later. For example, on one occasion the students planned a scavenger hunt or quest, as they called it, on Halloween night, with clues hidden in various places throughout the building. We were all assigned to a group and the fun started. Obviously, running around the building with my group of students, using the clues to complete the quest was not the time to take notes. This type of immersion with the students helped contributed to rapport which helps in the generation of data. Establishing quality relationships with the student informants may create conditions where informants may ignore or dismiss the fact

that they are sources of data. This aided data collection, but also required important confidentiality as informants did share sensitive information.

Interviews were conducted as informal conversations with the informants. The environment was easy-going and relaxed. This was beneficial as the atmosphere promoted a free-flowing conversations that provided a depth of information and emergent data that supported the study. Opportunities were provided for the student informants to ask me questions. In this kind of environment, the interviewee may share personal information that may or may not be necessary for research data. In such instances, I made decisions on the appropriate use of sometimes off-the-record remarks (Spradley, 2016). It is important to carefully consider the interview data that is to be part of the overall analysis and evaluation to maintain complete, trustworthy confidentiality.

On one occasion during a small group discussion, one of the participants asked what I thought of a Russian political figure. I responded that perhaps it was not so important what I thought, but it was important what they thought. The students wanted to share their opinions but before doing so they wanted to close the door. I reminded them that what is said in the room, stayed in the room. Seven of eight of the participants in this small group openly expressed their thoughts. Afterwards, I responded to their questions.

In my position as the active ethnographic researcher, I was also the seminar director and facilitator and one of the teachers. As may be expected, the initial contact with the intervention group may have impacted the ambience and feeling tone for the entire interaction and relationship between the researcher and the intervention group members. The processes of obtaining site approval, permission, and establishing and maintaining positive relationships with decision-makers and intervention group members was a critical part of the process. Fortunately, collegial and warm relationships had already been established with the powers that be at the university and some of the intervention group members were already familiar with us from prior positive interaction. In order to better fit in with the young people observed, we dressed casually, allowed the intervention group members to speak and use whatever words they chose without correcting them, visited with them informally in the hallways and dorms, ate with them in the cafeteria, and joined them in after-hours activities. The ethnographic researcher should consider various ethical perspectives that include steps to protect the privacy and maintain confidentiality.

Therefore, the informants were assured that their full names would not appear in this research report, or any publication. Under certain circumstances, it is possible that an informant may feel insecure, susceptible, and vincible. Researchers have pointed out the importance of guarding against harm and exploitation of such informants (Hurst, S., 2008). A key in shielding them, as well as the other participants, is through confidentiality. This seems particularly important in situations where participants

may reside in societies where personal liberties and rights may be limited or at risk when they may be critical of the government, persons, or institutions upon which they are dependent (Surmiak, 2018)

The main approach in dealing with confidentiality in qualitative research is how one considers normative codes and guidelines. These studies focused on modalities of accepted practices and ethical guidelines for educators, sociologists, and anthropologists who typically engage in some type of immersion with the group being studied. Also, there is a general expectation of researchers to ensure confidentiality in their research. For example, some authors point to the challenges related to securing confidentiality, which as some point out, are not always fully understood by ethics committees. These challenges may appear in applied research methods, as in visual studies. The objectives of the research, for example research that involves participants taking part in public events or the nature of the research setting, are conditions the researcher must take into account. Interestingly enough, some research participants do not want to be anonymous (Miller, T., 2015).

A significant aspect of this study was support for the well-being of all participants and the all-important the element of trust: researcher to all constituents; seminar team and the researcher to participants-students; seminar team to university faculty and administration, and seminar team members with one another. In this regard, the sincerity of respect for all is tantamount to success (Sahlberg & Walker, 2021).

Qualitative research involves more than simply obtaining informed consent before an interview, ensuring that data sources are anonymous prior to analysis and publication. But also following the institutional review board's guidelines for how data will be stored securely. Ethics of qualitative research are considerably more than just an obstacle to overcome and are situated specifically to address important questions and concerns that arise during the conduct of research. As qualitative researchers, an obligation exists to have direct knowledge of the ethical challenges that are part of qualitative research. Collecting and monitoring data carefully allows researchers to respond quickly and effectively if ethical issues arise. It is also important to share how situations are handled. This enabled the improvement of qualitative research strategies and techniques (Paradis, E. & Varpio, L., 2018).

As a researcher, my views about the theoretical-research relationship unavoidably included certain implications relative to the research. Theory and reflection of theory were introduced in chapter two of this study (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Bryman, 2021). This aided in the development of the research questions and strengthened the resolve to conduct a mixed-methods study carrying out both qualitative and quantitative components of the study to obtain the necessary and ethically acceptable data to answer the research questions.

3.6 Summary

This study targeted the impact of the participation of Russian university informants, ages 18 – 23 years, in language and cultural sharing seminars and their perceptions of *others*. A sample of 98 university informants from a university located in a provincial region of Russia, including freshmen through 5th-year seniors, were involved in the study as informants by virtue of their enrollment in the university. The informants were placed in two groups: the intervention group was comprised of students in the linguistics department, and the comparison or *control* group informants were students from other departments. The seminar teaching teams provided a variety of lessons, classes, workshops, discussions, and a myriad of interactions through extra-curricular activities with the intervention group designed to provide intercultural experiences. The teachers themselves were components of the cultural experience. The comparison group received no intervention and was not in contact with the seminar team teachers, except for chance encounters if they happened to pass in the hallways or cafeteria, and they did not participate in any intercultural activities.

The study compared the scores of informants from both groups on pretest and posttest scores on the *CASQ*, a quantitative measurement instrument. Additionally, the study included a qualitative component with scripted interview questions, Socratic seminars, open-ended verbal and written questions, free-write student statements, impromptu conversations, expressions, opinions, observations, informal free-time activities, and anonymous student evaluations. Although, some intervention group members voluntarily chose to include their names. As indicated earlier, the inclusion of qualitative research methods was intended to support the quantitative findings in this mixed-methods study, and vice-versa. The delivery of the academic and culturally related content and activities purposefully and deliberately were integrated on a day-by-day basis and were intended to be as close as possible across all classes by each of the participating seminar teachers.

The quantitative results were analyzed by conducting repeated measures analysis of variance, ANOVA, and *t*-tests for within and between-group comparisons on scores of pretest and posttest means to determine any statistically significant differences. The IV was the participation of the intervention group members in the language and culture seminars. The DV was scored on the *CASQ* posttest. A subjective analysis of the empirical results of the main effect on the *DV* was the collection of qualitative data as part of this mixed-methods study. As the study proceeded, the importance of qualitative data increased. The researcher also took into account limitations, including internal and external validity, as well as, reliability of the *CASQ* and other extraneous factors outside the scope of the researcher's control. Chapter four will report results for both quantitative and qualitative research collected and evaluated in this mixed-methods study.

For successful qualitative research the goal is basically: a good plan, good questions, and consistent results with good data collection. Objectivity is important with the informants' responses and scores understood by the researcher while maintaining awareness of potential interpretive bias. Yet subjective objectivity is used in the analysis phase. Standard conditions should be maintained for the administration of the related specific procedures with consistent instructions for the same questions and observations. During this inquiry, oral questions were conjoined with oral responses that were manually recorded verbatim. For some questions, written responses were required and the informants' replies were maintained and recorded verbatim. To facilitate standardization and consistency, mutually agreeable times were scheduled for the components of the qualitative studies; this included interviews, discussions, conversations, formal and informal activities, and observations. Diverse and varied activities supported the authenticity of informants' responses, characteristics, experiences, and opinions. These aspects of the study fit within a prescribed yet flexible time frame, the actual physical locations, and the aspects of the topics. Observations and ethnographic narratives were recorded by other seminar team members also and were tallied, organized, and maintained by me. Qualitative data were evaluated with a form of a discriminant variable analysis as will be explained in chapter four.

4   Results

Measure thy cloth ten times, thou canst cut it but once.

Russian proverb

The overall results of the study confirmed the efficacy of the intervention and supported the theoretical hypothesis that student informants participating in language and culture seminars show a statistically significant difference in positive perceptions of *others* compared to participants in the comparison group not involved in the seminars. The results also found statistical significance in measurable positive changes for the intervention group informants in terms of their development of intercultural competencies over time and in connection with transformative learning experiences. The study further found clear evidence from the convergent design indicating mutual support and a deeper understanding by combining qualitative and quantitative data in the study's findings. This mixed-methods design and research process resulted in superior results than either research approach would likely have found unilaterally. For this research study, the mixed-methods approach was the proper research method.

4.1   Quantitative Results

The quantitative component of this study was to examine the impact of intercultural experiences on young people and their perceptions of and possible attitudes toward *others* as measured by the CASQ. The IV, as reported, was participating in language and culture seminars. Two groups were studied: the intervention group which received the treatment program of participating in language and culture seminars and the comparison group which did not. The DV was posttest scores on the *CASQ*. This chapter contains the analysis and interpretation of empirical data generated by assessing informants on the construct with a pretest and posttest questionnaire, the *CASQ*. The results of the questionnaires are examined and described. The statistical data reported relates directly to the research questions.

4.1.1   Data Analysis

As indicated, repeated measures analyses of variance *ANOVA* statistical tests were conducted to compare differences in the mean scores of the two groups on scores obtained from the *CASQ*. Paired samples *t*-tests were also conducted for pretest and posttest analyses for within-groups and between-groups comparison of means.

In other words, mean differences were compared within each groups' pretest and posttest scores *and* between the comparison group and intervention group. In addition to examination and analysis of the empirical quantitative data, results of the qualitative findings will also be presented. Collaborators in data construction, analysis, and evaluation were clearly familiar, competent, and experienced with the research study (Ellis, 2012; Rantajääskö-Seauve, 2013; Honkala, 2013: Cornwell, 2014; Burlakova, 2015; Bailey, 2022).

The unit of analysis in this study was the university student; essentially, each individual student whether in the intervention or comparison group had his or her own test scores. To be more specific, the units to be analyzed as the DV were obtained from the two groups of university student informants relative to their responses to perceptions of *others* as measured by the CASQ. The pretest set the baseline and the posttest results produced the actual DV. The unit of analysis is the object, whether persons or things, being studied. In social and behavioral sciences research, the unit of analysis is typically the person or groups studied and may include perceptions, attitudes, social issue stances, and related factors (Vogt, W. & Johnson, R., (2011). With respect to the results reported regarding the size of the unit of analysis sample in this study, N= 98, it is important to note that enrollment, graduation, class schedules, and several other extraneous variables discussed in the previous chapter's comments on limitations were considered and N= 98 was the actual number of informants who participated in both the pretests and 13 months later, the posttests.

It should also be noted that informants in the intervention group, with the exception of incoming freshmen informants, had participated in two language and culture seminars prior to administration of the first pretest. This could have represented a threat to internal validity. Based on the final results of this study, this appears not to have been a threat. The initial pretest was administered simultaneously to both the intervention and comparison groups in April 2016 and the final posttest was administered to both groups in May of 2017. Two interim administrations of the test were conducted to assess general progress and for test reliability evaluation as reported in the previous chapter. A retention test was administered to the intervention group members in December 2019. This showed a high retention level with scores ascendingly similar to the final posttest.

Descriptive statistics for both groups of student informants involved in the study helped provide some context for interpreting the inferential statistical results, particularly when comparing their within and between-group means for pretest and posttest scores. The *total* mean scores were calculated from the sums of individual subject scores on the *CASQ* as described in Chapter 3. Thus, the data from tables 4.1 and 4.2 provided the input values for tables 4.3 and 4.4 displayed in the following section.

4.1.2 Descriptive Statistics

All participants in both groups completed the pretest and posttest. The data in Table 4.1 shows the sets of individual scores from which the sum of scores was generated for the intervention group. Table 4.2 displays the individual scores from which the sum of scores was generated for the comparison group. For complete data sets of individual scores from which tables 4.1 and 4.2 were derived see Appendix J. The data in Table 4.1 indicates relatively close mean scores on the pretest for both groups: intervention group mean = 44.49, comparison group mean = 43.63: the difference = 0.86 with only small within and between variances as indicated by the standard deviations (*SD*), including the *SD* mean total for the combined scores from each group. Table 4.2 data indicates a much different result when comparing the sum of the posttest mean scores for both groups: intervention group mean = 51.45, comparison group mean = 43.27, thus a difference of 8.18; this difference should be clearly noted and indicates statistical significance. The *SD* within each group individually indicates little variance but the *SD* for the mean total for between-group scores shows greater variance, which was expected. This is consistent with the inferential statistical results in the following discussion and Table 4.3.

Table 4.1: Intervention and Comparison Groups Pretest Scores

Intervention	Mean	SD	N
Informant Group	44.49	4.943	47
Comparison Group	43.63	4.821	51
Total and Difference	44.04 and 0.86	4.873	98

Table 4.2: Informant and Comparison Groups Posttest Scores (DV)

Intervention	Mean	SD	N
Informant Group	51.45	4.154	47
Comparison Group	43.27	4.968	51
Total and Difference	47.19 and 8.18	6.144	98

4.1.3 Inferential Statistics

The Intervention Group

To evaluate the relationship between the mean scores of the pretest and posttest for the intervention group, a repeated measures analysis of variance, ANOVA, was conducted with the following *F* scores reported. The *F* statistic is a ratio of variate

indices used to derive and indicate a probability level; the greater the F value, the greater the probability that the differences in mean scores are statistically significant, meaningful, and not simply random chance (Vogt, W. & Johnson, R., 2011). In this case, the result was: $F(1,46) = 8.796, p = <.05$

The result of this AVOVA is statistically significant. It is clear that the F value of 8.796 predicts the DV for the intervention. The p value indicates a probability confidence level of 95%. Therefore, the intervention of participation in the language and culture seminars showed a positive main effect and positively impacted the perceptions of, and possibly, attitudes toward *others* for the informants of the intervention group as measured by the *CASQ*. In other words, the intervention appears to have worked as expected and had a probable causal effect on transformative learning and the development of intercultural competencies for members of the intervention group.

When considering the F value, the greater the value the greater the probability that the result correlates significantly with the DV. Concurrently, it greatly reduces the probability that the result occurred randomly or by chance. It is well within standard and acceptable statistical procedures to interpret the result as accurate and significant. The results simply indicate that the intervention was effective in facilitating transformative learning and the development of intercultural competencies as related to the CASQ.

The Comparison Group
To evaluate the relationship between the mean scores of the pretest and posttest scores for the comparison group, a repeated measures analysis of variance was also conducted. The result was $F(1,50) = 0.892, p = <.05$

The result of this AVOVA was not statistically significant. This F value does not predict the DV, voids the null hypothesis, and inversely supports the alternative hypothesis. Therefore, non-participation of the comparison group in the language and culture seminars showed no positive impact on the perceptions of, or potential attitudes towards *others* for the informants of the comparison group as measured by the CASQ. In other words, there was predictively no causal effect for the members of the comparison group. Basically, there was no positive change in perceptions of, or possibly, attitudes toward *others* from members of the comparison group; this was expected. The F value of 0.892 is of no statistical significance and thus supports the alternative hypothesis that the intervention appears responsible for the difference in F values and the impact it had on transformative learning and the development of intercultural competencies attributed to the intervention group.

Paired sample *t*-tests were conducted for pretest and posttest analyses. Mean differences were compared between pretest and posttest scores for the intervention group, for the comparison group, and between the intervention and comparison groups. A p value of <.05 was used to determine statistical significance. So, from the

total of 98 informants, there is also here a 95% confidence level in the probability of the accuracy and statistical significance of the results. Table 4.3 shows the comparison of mean scores for both groups.

Table 4.3: t-test Scores for Pretest and Posttest Means: Intervention and Comparison Groups

Group	Pretest mean	Posttest mean	*t*-statistic	*p* value
Intervention	44.49	51.45	8.484	<.05
Comparison	43.63	43.27	0.892	<.05
Intervention: Comparison	44.04	47.19	10.358	<.05

The *t*-tests results indicate that the IV was significantly related to the intervention groups' posttest scores. Thus, there was a statistically significant effect of the intervention on the DV for the intervention group. This statistically significant effect was evident in the within-group scores for the intervention group and the between-group scores for the intervention group and the comparison group. Table 4.3 shows the numerical difference in pretest and posttest mean scores for the intervention group was: 51.45 – 44.49 = 6.96. This *t*-statistic accounts for the difference in the pretest and posttest combined mean scores shown in Table 4.3.

The difference in the pretest and posttest mean scores for the comparison group was: 43.63 – 43.27 = -0.36. This value indicates no significant effect on the DV for this group. Therefore without the intervention, there was no change. It is not the intent of this study intent to explain the small negative difference between the summative mean scores for the comparison group. Supposition can be made that the difference was simply random. It also may have represented the initial impact of a foreign teacher in the classroom administering the CASQ and may have contributed to a slight *experimenter effect* on the comparison group informants.

Test-retest reliability may be estimated using Pearson's *r*. This method calculates the correlation between a set of scores, or an individual's scores, on the same test but measured on two or more separate occasions. For this study mid-term tests were between administered between the initial pretest and final posttest. A commonly used correlation technique is Pearson's *r*, a correlation coefficient. The value representing a correlation can range from -1.00 to +1.00. A high positive value (for example, .86 or .95) indicates a high positive relationship; a low positive value (for example, .19, or .08) represents a low positive relationship; a negative value (for example, -.37, or -.52) indicates a negative or inverse relationship; a value of 0 represents no relationship at all. As the correlation coefficient (*r*) approaches +1 or -1, the strength of the relationship becomes stronger (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Thus, a correlation

coefficient as a value between +1 and -1 represents the direction and strength of a relationship between two or more variables with variables considered pairwise.

Test-retest reliability indicates the accuracy of the test over time and setting. In essence, does the test measure what it is intended to measure with repeated administrations of the test? Test-retest reliability with the intervention group for the *CASQ* yielded the following coefficient of r = .952 with a 13-month interval between pre- and posttests. This indicates a high positive relationship and reliability. The correlation coefficient for a different cohort of the intervention group with a test-retest interval of two months from March 2017 to May 2017 was r= .988. This value reinforces strong test-retest reliability and a very high positive relationship; again, the closer the *r*-value is to +1, the stronger the relationship. "Correlation coefficients are numbers that represent the direction and strength of relationships between two or more variables" (p. 230, McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this research study, the variables were test-retest scores. The results of the Pearson's r, the correlation coefficient, used to calculate test-retest reliability were determined by using the Pearson's r function in Microsoft Excel. Table 4.4 below indicates the scores for each test for the intervention group. Pre- and posttests were administered thirteen months apart to the both groups in April 2016 and May 2017. Attrition appeared to be evenly distributed between the groups. Table 4.5 shows the correlation coefficient, Pearson's r**,** for test-retest for the intervention group in March 2017 (N =46) and May 2017 (N =48). Any attrition and change here were due to graduation, enrollment, and individual student schedule variations.

Table 4.4: Correlation coefficient for the CASQ summative values. Test # 1 April 2016, Test # 2 May 2017.Pearson's r = .952.

*Question #	Test# #1 (N=46)	Test #2 (N=48)
6	2.65	2.54
7	4.00	4.04
8	4.17	4.17
9	2.64	2.81
10	4.09	3.94
11	2.41	2.56
12	2.46	2.48
13	3.83	3.77
14	1.70	1.17
15	1.52	1.25
16	1.47	1.38
17	1.65	1.65
18	1.87	1.75
19	1.89	1.65
20	1.42	1.46

*Note: Questions 1 – 5 were for demographic information and not scorable items.

Table 4.5: Correlation coefficient for the CASQ summative values. Test # 1 March 2017, Test # 2 May 2017. Pearson's r = .988.

*Question #	Test# #1 (N=46)	Test #2 (N=48)
6	2.65	2.54
7	4.00	4.04
8	4.17	4.17
9	2.64	2.81
10	4.09	3.94
11	2.41	2.56
12	2.46	2.48
13	3.83	3.77
14	1.70	1.17
15	1.52	1.25
16	1.47	1.38
17	1.65	1.65
18	1.87	1.75
19	1.89	1.65
20	1.42	1.46

*Note: Questions 1 – 5 were for demographic information and not scorable items.

4.2   Qualitative Results

The data for this chapter will be presented in five sections that cover emergent themes followed by the chapter summary. These sections, with tables, examples, and discussion are directly aligned with the themes developed from data evaluation. The themes were based on analyses of data collected and corresponding tables created from subject responses. This included verbal and written responses to interview questions, presentation of data as free-form voluntary subject statements including student comments on the role of music, subjective participant evaluations, conversations, discussions, formal and informal dialogue, researchers' observations and narratives, and also seminar faculty team member statements. The emergence of patterns and ultimately themes arose from the broad range of data collected. The conclusive result was a comprehensive concept diagram of the emergent patterns or relationships depicting a process for developing intercultural competencies. This, based on the impact of intercultural experiences on young people and their perceptions of others, as determined from the results of the findings. Results were conceptually and practically consistent with both Mezirow's and Deardorff's theories and research findings. Additionally, this study found congruence and agreement with the social science studies of Bryman and colleagues.

Determining goodness of fit for statement factors for each theme proceeded with organizing data by type, context, and case and formatting the data to facilitate analysis utilizing the aforementioned intuitive and intellectual, or cognitive discriminant

analysis. In exploring the data, I read through all the data, made notes regarding data pieces, and determined that the analytical approach selected was consistent with the research questions. The data was coded according to the content and context, such as with Table 4.7; grouping statements involving appreciation of music, friendship, the positive atmosphere, and being and doing things together were coded for similarity of content and context. All the other statement factors were grouped and coded in the same way. By grouping codes, descriptions and categories were developed and ultimately condensed into themes. Based on the nature of this type of study, there were interrelationships of themes based on the overall qualitative approach undertaken, as seen in Figure 4.1.

At this point, the task was to represent the findings with closely aligning commentaries best fitting the themes. These are included with each of the Tables 4.7 – 4.11. Evidence for the themes was presented with quotes, multiple perspectives, and also descriptions. Visual models, figures, and tables present the data.

The steps were somewhat similar for both quantitative and qualitative analysis in preparing the data for analysis, exploring and snooping the data, direct data analysis and interpretation, validation of the data, and interpretation of the results. For quantitative research, these steps tend to follow a linear pathway, especially with a longitudinal study. They are, however, often introduced and implemented along with and iteratively with qualitative research (Creswell &Plano Clark, 2018).

The actual process alluded to above, could be duplicated according to the following procedural description. Discriminate factor analysis is typically a statistical regression analysis procedure used with a program such as SPSS (Vogt, 2011). However, in the case of this study, I decided to use a cognitive approach rather than using a statistical program to distinguish among variables that were informant statements and align them with a limited number of categories or themes. As discriminant analysis is a form of regression analysis and designed for classification, this cognitive approach is based on the same principle but more intuitive.

A list was compiled of all informant statements and examined as variables to be placed in categories or themes that seemed relative to sub-dependent variables drawn from the qualitative data and consistent with the quantitative statistically significant outcomes. This provided a way to examine the IV and the qualitative data and uncover discrete categories as an exercise of cognitive multiple discriminant analysis resulting in five categorical themes: learning through interaction, understanding and appreciating cultural diversity, cognitive flexibility, cultural self-awareness and capacity to self-assess, and general openness and understanding others' worldviews. In other words, I looked for the best fit.

These themes may be considered to be sub-dependent variables, and as such, predictor variables for relating to each theme. As the immersed qualitative researcher, I took the liberty and responsibility to parsimoniously and with subjective objectivity predict a relationship between the informant statements and the categorical themes.

Discriminant validity is both subjective and objective (Vogt, 2011). The basic criteria for determining the placement of student statements in a particular category were, 1) does it seem to fit logically? and, 2) does it feel like it fits? A discrimination procedure aided in distinguishing the categorical themes as sub-dependent variables or outcomes. In this manner, the process provided for treating groups of related informant statements as variables, and in turn, segregate them from other variables and connect them with the categorical themes.

The procedure involved beginning with the initial list of 88 informant statement variables and color-coding related variables and segregating them into five separate lists. These five lists of variables were analyzed for the goodness of fit and as an entity and connection to the theme. This step led to three additional refining and redistribution of variables to better fit the categorical themes. Once the informant statement variables were aligned with the related theme, they were sent out for peer, staff, student, and independent review. Several suggestions were offered by the reviewers, none were unanimous, but two variables were moved to a different category based on the peer review input. At that point, the categorical themes and the corresponding variables seemed to accurately portray the analysis of the data and were ready for a more comprehensive evaluation as reported in the following Tables 4.7 – 4.11.

The investigative focus was on gaining perspectives of the intervention group members on how they defined reality through their experiences; this was a combination of both insider and outside descriptions. The study took place in the natural setting in which the culture is manifest, avoided contrived situations, and focused on the nature and quality of the relationships formed while maintaining transformative learning, culture, and language as the central concepts. This facilitated authentic communication. This portion of the qualitative data collection plan was initiated as follows and these specific questions in Table 4.1 were asked of each informant.

These questions, or subsets of them, were dependent upon the situation. Each member of the intervention group informants was regularly asked for written responses to interviews. Intervention group informants were routinely asked during the final meeting to provide their evaluation of the seminar by listing the three most important take-aways from the seminar, and to suggest three changes they would like to see for future seminars and to offer any other comments.

Questions requiring a written response were designed to be congruent and purposeful for particular lesson content. Usually, small group discussions preceded individual writing. Ultimately, discussions and conversations facilitated sharing ideas generated from the specific topic(s) considered. As earlier described, after listening to the song *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother,* the students were asked to describe what the song meant to them and provide an example of a way, or ways, it related to their life.

A number of songs, poems, and proverbs were used for this type of interaction, active participation, and experiential learning. For example, a short writing project typically followed group reading of a song, listening to and singing the song, or reading and reflecting on a poem or proverb; small group or paired discussions were facilitated, class sharing occurred followed by a individual free-writing assignment. The writings were collected and teachers provided written and/or verbal feedback and either generally or specifically spoke either individually with students or read some aloud in class, with the writer's permission. No paper was read without the writer's permission. Informal interviews, conversations, discussions, and informant written evaluations were conducted in April 2015, April 2016, December 2016, March 2017, May 2017, May 2018, October 2018, and March, May, October, and December 2019. The subject responses are in the informants' language, except for minor grammatical corrections, as recorded from field notes and interview transcripts. The events and the people involved as informants and faculty are displayed in Table 4.6. This provides the reader the actual kinds and amount of seminar activities and numbers of informant responses. While the collection of quantitative data was based on 98 participants, as intact groups: intervention N = 47, comparison N = 51, the field of participants from whom qualitative data was gathered shown in the table below, the total was 140 students. Members of the intervention group provided all of the qualitative data contributions over the course of the research study. Accounting for graduation and new enrollment, the average annual turnover rate for the intervention group was approximately 0.083, or 8.3%. Considering the significant values obtained from the inferential statistics, any apparent and measurable effect on validity was negligible as each data set showed internal consistency.

Table 4.6: Qualitative Data Records by Event and Personnel: 2015-2019*. N = 140

Seminars	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Totals
# of Seminars	1	2	3	2	2	10
# of Faculty	3	4	1	4	1	13
Lg. Group Meetings	7	7	10	6	7	37
Sm. Group Meetings	21	19	42	48	20	140
Informant Led Activities	2	3	5	4	5	19
Formal & Informal Talks	36	80	16	96	18	246
Informal Outings	4	5	4	10	5	28
Open-ended Writings	99	184	139	157	124	703
Open-ended Interviews	21	26	15	37	42	141

*Data from 2017 and 2019 was extrapolated from seminar schedules and comparable

The responses were categorized conceptually and ultimately identified with one of the five categorical themes: *1) learning through interaction, 2) understanding and appreciating cultural diversity, 3) cognitive flexibility, 4) cultural self-awareness and the capacity for self-assessment, 5) general openness and understanding other's world views.* These are considered to be major qualitative findings and were primarily based on unanimous agreement between me and my teaching team members and peer reviewers. Intercultural competence has a strong foundation on characteristics of the cognitive and affective domains, as well as, behavioral attributes (Deardorff, 2006 & Bennett, 2004). A basic hypothesis of intercultural experiences refers to these interactions as being *life-transforming* (Selby, 2004). Experiencing *culture clashes* through intercultural experiences often results in a variety of emotions including anxiety, excitement, fear, joy, and surprise (Savicki, 2008). The seminar team had already decided the substantial benefits of a positive feeling-toned vocabulary and demeanor was important. That was easily facilitated as we were authentically ourselves, as is our nature, and consistent with our worldviews. This helped informants relax and our team to sincerely honor the importance and need to listen and respond, as appropriate, to the non-verbal and voiced emotions and behaviors of all informants. Therefore, the emotional component became relevant and important relative within the themes.

These themes, at differing levels, fit into the phases or stages of the Intercultural Growth Continuum as Functional Factors for Development of Intercultural Competencies (Figure 5.2) through active participation and experiential learning. These, in turn, through the shared experiences and resulting synthesis, formed newly constructed contexts which resulted from the transformative learning experiences, growth of intercultural competencies, and the emergence of increased positive perspectives of *others*. These strategies, consistent with the themes, seemed effective for the seminars and consistent with the data.

Informant responses were recorded as statements and tabulated during and after each series of interviews. They were reviewed, organized and grouped conceptually as an academic exercise by a type of cognitive discriminative theme analysis rather than by using a statistical program. This allowed for a more holistic evaluation of the *human condition* in interpreting in a human way, qualitative data. Responses were shared with informants anonymously. Responses were also used to inform seminar educational planning and in the selection of music and songs to enhance cultural sharing and provoke thought. The role of songs and music was discussed in the introduction, but additional discussion about the use of music will be presented later in this chapter and in the overall conclusions in chapter 5.

The content and cumulative frequencies of informant responses recorded during interview sessions with individuals, small cohorts of the intervention group informants, from numerous written student evaluations, and many formal and informal conversations are displayed in Tables 4.7– 4.11. For example, a typical

structured interview session was convened on campus at SPU on March 6 & 7, 2017, and conducted in a private classroom with an attached anteroom in which I met with informants. Informal interviews took place as could be arranged per informant and my availability in the cafeteria, coffee shops, dormitories, hallways, outside, or via text message or email. Results were recorded on the spot if possible or later from brief notes and memory. Some interviews were pre-arranged, others were spontaneous. The purpose of the tables below is to present informant statements while rendering the purposeful meanings clearly to the reader. These are displayed as the corresponding *themes* that follow in sections 4.2.1 – 4.2.5 and Tables 4.7 – 4.11.

It is possible, even common, for qualitative researchers to initiate methods of inquiry with a specific data collection model or method and then transition to or add other strategies and methods. Adding additional methods to gather data about particular phenomena may have distinct advantages which allow the researcher to consider a plethora of data from a range of data collection strategies for comparison, consistency, and corroboration of results.

Data from several methods and measures resulted in certain key findings in the totality of the data collection. Informants demonstrated a high level of agreement in their independent written and interview statements on what they perceived as key seminar themes and issues from participation in the intervention group seminars. For example, numerous informant statements correlated positively with the concepts of learning about other cultures, appreciating the positive atmosphere, interacting with *others*, and the benefits and enjoyment of singing together. Thus, studying the themes and observing involvement of the intervention group members, it is not surprising that many informants made similar statements. This also corresponded positively to their overall scores on the *CASQ*. Each of the data samples tends to corroborate and add credence and validity to the findings. This helps eliminate bias from using just one data source and also allows for broader and deeper interpretation of supportive evidence and data. This process, using multiple data points and methods of data collection is sometimes referred to as the *triangulation* process (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

From the qualitative data, it was determined that the highest frequency of responses was fairly evenly distributed among the themes: for example, improving communication skills and the usefulness of the seminars correlated with cognitive flexibility, and wanting more seminars. The appreciation of songs and music correlated with both the behavioral/emotional and affective responses and connected closely with learning through interaction and appreciating and understanding other cultures. The sense of feeling respected and increased confidence and self-awareness correlated holistically with the opportunity to cross the cultural barriers with native English speakers as individuals with different cultural backgrounds. The clearly stated increase in cultural awareness by informants, fit with transformative learning experiences of openness, understanding *others*' worldviews and, valuing cultural diversity.

The ethnographic action research was interactive and required a considerable commitment of time spent with informants to systematically observe and record situations as they developed and to interview informants within a close time frame of events and processes as they occurred naturally. The goal was to provide descriptive analysis and summaries of individuals, groups, and social scenes that captured their shared feelings, beliefs, and practices that provided a view of the informants' reality as a form of social construction. Additionally, ethnographic research may depict human life as a study of interactive strategies (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

There is extensive variation within ethnographic research and there are some common methodologies that are germane to this kind of study. These include: informant or participant observation and ethnographic interviews with the intention of exploring and discovering an understanding of informants' worldviews in terms of qualitative concepts.

Informant statements are included within each thematic exposé. Statements are recorded in as close to original form as was practical and some grammatical *anomalies* reflect the originality of the informant. Specific seminar related themes were an integral part of the seminar content with the objective of providing the opportunity for the informants to consider topics from different viewpoints, to look at some topics or themes for the first time, and to practice metacognition. Many of their thoughts and ideas were both impressive, insightful, interesting, and appeared indicative of their evolving cultural perspectives. Individual seminar event themes were different from the overarching data-driven themes in sections 4.2.1 – 4.2.5.

In the sections that follow, the informants' comments and the ethnographic narratives describe their experiences of participating in the language and culture seminars. The contextual, conceptual, pragmatic, and philosophical underpinnings of the ethnographic approach in this study were to examine the impacts and effects of overall participation in the seminars and the shared experiences of the informants and our faculty team. This is seen in their impressions of the seminars and the influences and impact of transformative learning experiences, the apparent development of intercultural competencies and resultant perspectives of *others*. Presented in the context of the seminars, the informant sentiments are essential for the reader to conceptualize and understand the purpose, significance, and findings of this study. It is also important to understand the operationalization of the content and context of the seminars; looking at the *what, why,* and *how* of the intervention or IV to see the complementarity of the quantitative and qualitative components of this mixed-methods study and for examining future research or practices.

The evaluations in the following sections and responses recorded in the tables below were segregated for the particular overarching themes as recorded earlier through a process of intuitive and intellectual discriminant *statement* factor analysis. The main focus is on the themes and the informant responses. Frequencies are

reported to identify data volume and the origin of the data, written or interview; both are of equal importance. I acknowledge that there may be arguments made for including informant responses with one theme or another, but for this study and this particular evaluation, the categorization seems to fit per discussion of the discriminant analysis procedure explained above. The following sections, 4.2.1 - 4.2.5, represent frequencies of thematic subjects and informant responses from all qualitative data sources recorded between April 2015 and December 2019.

4.2.1 Learning Through Interaction

Within the somewhat flexible parameters of this theme *Learning Through Interaction,* our conversations, individually or in small groups, focused on real-life issues to which we could all relate and openly discuss together. The topics or subjects for our discussions could be described as basic in the sense that they were foundational to genuine life experiences and within the realm of concepts common to human nature. Simultaneously, the concepts were deeper and profound in that they uncovered insights and understanding of important elements of character and life within the range of human experiences shared by many. The results related to this theme indicate that active, mutual participation and interaction with others, in other words, doing things together, was an important factor and indicator of the transformative learning process. The informant responses in Table 4.7 and data extracts reflect this phenomenon. The responses related to this theme, in one way or another, indicated that interacting with others was an educational experience that promoted transformative thinking and learning through the vehicle of interaction and sharing of ideas, opinions, perspectives, and joining together in mutual activities. Ethnographic narratives describe potential correlations, connections, or consistencies between informant responses and this theme.

Table 4.7: Learning through interaction

Student Responses	Frequencies	
	Written Statements	Interviews
1. Enjoyed songs and music	47	29
2. Songs and music drew us together	46	23
3. Songs and music were great and helpful	44	33
4. Appreciate the positive atmosphere	44	14
5. Comfort level felt good	44	29
6. Teachers so positive	44	24
7. Like the way the instruction is given	43	28
8. Songs and music lifted my *spirits*	38	25
9. Enjoyed the group work	39	25
10. The seminars helped getting to know others	31	15
11. Develops relationships and trust	28	14
12. Creates friendships	28	13
13. Made new friends	28	20
14. It was good to have opportunities to share	28	19
15. Pressure & stress is high, seminars help cope	20	11
16. This was an emotional experience	20	10
17. Good to see kindness & openness, it spreads	9	7
18. The sessions improved my mood	8	22
19. It was great to visit friends	3	16
20. Time to relax, be myself	3	3
21. This was amazing breath of fresh air	3	3
22. The change of pace helped me gain energy	3	1

Data Extracts

> *The themes of our conversations were rather simple and true to life, that we can say something about it. They were simple but at the same time very profound. They show such important things as Trust, Believe, Love, Respect. They teach us how to be open, how to survive, how to support. And also how to avoid wars and save peace in our world.*
>
> *Student's written feedback, 2017*

This data extract showcases how culture indicates the way we are with each other. For example, responses like: positive atmosphere, comfort level felt good, songs and music lifted my spirits, creates relationships, made new friends, and good to see kindness - it spreads, indicate the positive behavioral and attitudinal interactions experienced by the informants.

> *What do you think about the opportunities to share thoughts and opinions? "Ok, um, when we communicate and when we do something together, um, it helps us to understand that there is no difference in us, that all people are the same and the only important thing is how you, um, is how you try to interact with the other person."*

> *Student Interview, Shuya, 2018*

The way we are with each other encompasses our attitude and behaviors and again also how we interact with one another. This theme relates to the atmosphere and environment that promoted openness, listening, and willingness to share (McKay, M., Davis, M., & Fanning, P. 1983). The additional data extracts below substantiate the impact of Learning Through Interaction as influential in transformational thinking, developing intercultural competencies, and enjoying learning together.

> *This student came up and stayed with me as we walked from the campus to the Teza river, about a 30-minute walk. It was a nice May evening and she, as well as the 12 to 15 other students, along with 3 staff members enjoyed this informal outing. We refer to it as walk and talk, which is exactly what we did. She asked why we came to her university. I told her I was very interested in spending time within another culture and I had already visited Shuya at an earlier seminar. She expressed joyous amazement that we Americans and Finns would come to their small university out in the provincial area. She smiled a lot and we had a nice conversation. She had a huge smile when I told her that kids like her were the reason we do what we do, working and interacting with young people.*

> *Observation, Shuya, 2018*

The degree of gratitude was quite apparent, actually throughout the analysis of all the themes. The affirmation was clear on the impact of doing things together; positive feelings were established and interest in cultural sharing. Just watching their happy faces and noticing that most of them were walking and talking with other students they had not known well or simply had never met was important and interesting to observe, as well as, uplifting. Doing even simple things together definitely has its place in learning through interaction. The focus of this statement is on time together with interaction. Playing games refers to time together but, more than that, *doing* things together; this is consistent with the importance of shared experiences and having some fun while learning. A clear and almost palpable component of the overall interaction; teacher-student, student-student, and teacher-teacher, was the

overarching concept of trust. Trust is built and our seminar teaching team provided learning activities that intentionally introduced and helped the development of mutual trust. At times, students asked if we could close the door so that they could share something in complete privacy and confidence.

Sharing provided the opportunity to hear others and reflect on different thoughts, ideas, ways of thinking, and observations. These may lead to transformations in ideas and thoughts, as well as, greater impacts such as one's worldview. Having the opportunities and interest in looking through other *lenses* to see the *other* is part of the experience in developing intercultural competencies, as both qualitative and quantitative findings confirmed. Within the seminar environment, a *microculture* developed an atmosphere like a song everyone knew and seemed almost palpable to staff and students alike. Ethnographic data supported this *microculture.*

Music was a significant part of our seminar and camp *intra-microculture.* Overall, there was a recognition by many informants of the role of music, and in general, the warm atmosphere it helped create and sustain throughout the seminars. Some supporting verbatim statements are as follows: "Friendly and comforting climate," "Your openness and kindness. The atmosphere was so warm and friendly, you guys made us feel like home," and "I liked the songs most of all. It makes a very friendly, warm atmosphere, it unites people like one big family." "Most of us rarely talk to each other on daily basis, but here I felt like we all are a big family, the members of which can support, comfort, help, and share your feelings when you need it, anytime. Moreover, it was fun." "Songs, they create a friendly atmosphere," and "I like the seminar, it was full of emotions, songs, to my mind it helps people to work together and it also concentrates the attention," and "and, of course, songs! They were amazing. It is very good way to learn English."

The role of songs and music is included with this theme. In the process of this qualitative analysis, there was an intentionality to discover what members of the intervention group thought about and learned from their experience in general and about certain experiences, specifically. Asking a person what they believe about a certain thing may open the door to seeing their values, goals, and intentions. Interview questions and/or writing prompts may be designed to draw out a person's emotional response or reaction to an experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

An example of one of the strategies designed for this aspect was listening to, learning the words, singing together, and analyzing the song: *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother*[1]. *He ain't heavy, he's my brother,* was the general seminar theme in May 2018. The preparation for this exercise included: introduction of the song, listening to the song with a video display of pictures of brother and brother or sister and brother, reading the words together, singing, and open Socratic seminar discussions in which informants shared their thoughts and feelings about the theme of the song. This was followed by a free-write session for the informants. The theme, He ain't heavy, he's my brother, was the inspiration for a *Boys Town*

painting[2] and also a motto for Father Flanagan's orphanage *Boys Town*[3] near Omaha, Nebraska, USA.

The following are verbatim samples of informants' comments about the seminar theme, Shuya, May 2018: *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother*

Informant responses to music and song
"The lyrics have given me some food for thought, and quite a lot of food of a different kind. Family, love, people, world, strong emotions, life, world, people, love. I've got to notice that this world has become big, complicated, and an indifferent one, a cruel one, but still full of life and love, strength, compassion, generosity and kindness. One must never underestimate the power of love which is one of the things to support life in our world. The kindness is still here, the love, the friendship. If not, then who or what will keep this world from self-destruction. Don't forget to tell the one's you love about your love, because 'Love is a life.' Don't close your eyes when you see someone's suffering, pain, and despair. Don't shift your head aside when a child is crying or a man being beaten. Do act when you're able – able to change something. Give people a piece of the warmth in your heart – the world is too cruel for being indifferent."

Song interpretation, Shuya, 2019

"When I listened to this song I remember my elder brother and I can say that he is a person with which you can share your problems and he supports you in any time. He will never refuse from help. I feel gladness when I'm together with him. I can open my feeling only to him. When you're in a difficult situation he will protect you and give you useful advice. It's a big happiness to have such a close person. We should to protect our close people."

Song interpretation, Shuya, 2019

"The words 'he ain't heavy, he's my brother' make me think about the core ideas of Christianity as a reflection of an internal dream of the humanity. Love, respect, and mutual support are the key ideas that have inspired people of all times. In the darkest epochs, during wars and catastrophes, valuing other peoples' lives and considering them as friends – and in a broad sense of the word – brothers, has made us able to comparison our 'dark side' and become a better society. And we all have that special instinct to distinguish between the vices and the virtues, otherwise we wouldn't have become what we are - humans. Animals also love their kids, but only people can reflect upon the mental lines that we should not cross if we want to preserve life on our planet. We have nuclear weapons, and we do not use them. Why? Love is the answer, love and respect."

Song interpretation, Shuya, 2019

Learning songs and singing together enriched this experience as verified in subject comments and student presentations. During the seminars, singing was an everyday activity and students began feeling free enough with me to request certain songs. Initially, as expected, some were a bit self-conscious or shy about singing but soon they became more and more comfortable and many said they waited for this part of the day when we could sing together.

[1] Song, *He ain't heavy, he's my brother.* (1969). (Appendix D).
[2] Boys Town painting. (Appendix E).
[3] Boys Town,(https://www.boystown.org/blog/Pages/story-behind-aint-heavy.aspx

4.2.2   *Understanding and appreciating cultural diversity*

The results relative to this theme indicate that exposure to elements of another culture and the opportunity to meet, become acquainted with, and share experiences with members of a different culture were valuable in the development of intercultural competencies. This aspect of the intercultural experience was a significant factor in the process of transformative learning and the development of intercultural competencies. Perceptions and attitudes about cultural diversity represent a good starting point where one may begin to value other cultures (Byram, 1997). This is coincident with emotions that are often influenced by the way we feel, and in turn, easily affect behavior. Thus, how we treat each other is related to understanding, appreciation, and the values of trust, a sense of freedom to do, or be, or to say, and happiness. An expanding worldview, as well as appreciation of different cultures and culturally new experiences and awareness, are consistent with the theme as seen in the informant statements presented and evaluated below. The responses recorded in Table 4.8 and the data extracts that follow represent statements showing congruence with understanding and appreciation and fit this theme based on the informant statements in the data collected, as well as, observational and evaluative analysis.

Table 4.8: Understanding and appreciating cultural diversity

Student Responses	Frequencies	
	Written Statements	Interviews
23. We want more seminars, please come back	47	29
24. It is helpful to meet foreigners	42	29
25. Good opportunity to communicate	41	24
26. Good mix of activities	38	14
27. I liked making our student presentations (cultural sharing)	38	32
28. Prefer American English	28	14
29. This was interesting	27	24
30. I enjoyed teaching methods to include students	25	20
31. Good to have a different experience	23	21
32. It was interesting to see real people	23	20
33. Initially a shock to see foreigners	20	10
34. First contact with real Americans	19	8
35. I liked the discussions	18	12
36. Local life is limiting, the seminars open eyes to the world	3	2

Data Extracts

> *"I really have fallen in love with all of you. The seminar has meant a lot to me because I know a lot of new people and new teachers. It's too bad to leave you to go to your home worlds. I'll miss you. There isn't things I haven't liked and I've known about Hawaiian, Finnish, American cultures. Maybe we could add some phonetics classes to improve our languages. Thanks for a nice Hawaiian culture experience."*

> Written Statement, *Shuya, 2016*

This particular data extract demonstrates the way the informant developed an emotional attachment to the staff which typically indicates openness and acceptance. This is seen quite often during the seminars. There is a connection to the affective dimension or *heartset* including attitude and motivation. This dimension of learning from experience reflects a willingness to take risks and suspend judgment, curiosity and thought flexibility, cultural humility, resourcefulness, and the ability to tolerate ambiguity (Bennett, J., 2004). For example, responses like: "It is helpful to meet

foreigners, it was interesting to see real people, and local life is limiting and the seminars open eyes to world," indicate the positive behavioral, understanding and, appreciative attitudes experienced by the informant (Deardorff, D., 2004).

> *What activities and lessons were particularly helpful or impactful for your learning and enjoyment? "Well, When I think about our university years, the most memorizing (memorable) was our seminars with you because we were here to study English and to learn English in a different cultural setting, and the days were very bright and unforgettable. That was, this is, exactly how we should learn; not as usual in lectures, reading books and doing homework. But this is like studying English in real situations. You don't have to be prepared when you just can be spontaneous and end up with other people (from different cultures) and you help other people. Well, of course there were many activities and also working in small groups and conversational activities where we have the opportunity to speak our mind, say what we think."*
>
> *Interview, Shuya, 2018*

The main connection to the theme and sentiment of this data extract seems to be on language learning opportunities, but within a different cultural framework and emotional atmosphere. Stepping outside of one's normal learning routine, and perhaps out of our comfort zone, may uncover value in doing things another way and finding benefits and advantages in the value of diversity. When diversity is supported as a worthwhile challenge, learners, informants, acquire and apply new skillsets to accomplish goals and achieve outcomes for self-improvement and to serve their communities. The narrative indicates coherence with language learning while the informant clearly articulates an understanding and appreciation for the value of cultural diversity and its connection to the teaching and learning environment and related pedagogies.

> *It appeared that the informants viewed this as an opportunity to learn more about other cultures with new information and the desire to understand more. She seemed to demonstrate the feeling that she was part of a group of wonderful people. But she apparently could not adequately describe her feeling's because she clearly was impressed by the nurturing atmosphere that was relaxed and friendly. She did indicate that it was very cool because in such an atmosphere she found herself in a comfort zone. She was enthusiastic about learning more new songs and was one of many who expressed hope that our team would come to Shuya for longer periods of time.*
>
> *Observation, Shuya, 2015*

Through innovative and classic methods and pedagogy, activities, lessons, workshops, interactive and experiential learning, and the all-important element of time together, each seminar and program guided all participants to integrate while

allowing them to experience a cultural awareness at a low level of stress or self-disclosure. Participants were warmly welcomed to the seminar and music proved to be an outstanding opening to set the mood. Each seminar was structured and designed to promote the development and growth of intercultural competencies while inspiring enthusiasm for new learning (Dolan & Karamura, 2015). Different teaching strategies were used to reach different learning styles while creating a safe, open, trusting, comfortable, and often fun learning environment. The seminar sessions were designed to help the participants progressively move along the intercultural growth continuum. Activities and interactions transpired from simple to complex and facilitated participant achievement conceptually, from superficial to deep. This inspired transformative learning, as the data revealed. The processes and strategies were shared with informants and the process of moving through the stages was introduced and emerged from shared experiences with a focus on expected outcomes.

4.2.3 Cognitive Flexibility

The findings co-incident with this theme support ways in which the cognitive aspects of transformative learning are impacted by the emergence of mental models that change the way one may think about various topics and concepts, including other cultures. These pertain to mental processes of perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning as contrasted with emotional or volitional processes. This is characterized by evaluating information followed by assimilating and accommodating new schema of fundamental nature. Then, to build upon scaffoldings of increasingly more complex concepts and experiences that prompt learners toward reflection and development of more sophisticated thinking skills (Ormrod, 2004). Ultimately, critical thinking skills provide a pathway to outcomes reached by design and not randomly or by mere chance. Affective learning typically occurs simultaneously and examples abound within other themes (Hunter, 2008). The list in the next table includes those informant statements that seem to most closely align with cognition.

Table 4.9: Cognitive flexibility

Student Responses	Frequencies	
	Written Statements	Interviews
37. Improved my communication skills	47	29
38. The seminars are useful	46	24
39. Increased language skills	45	20
40. We discussed relevant ideas & real life stuff	44	18
41. Increased knowledge of American culture	40	16
42. Helped my listening comprehension	38	15
43. Repetition helped (songs, reading, etc.)	38	23
44. We discussed important things	36	13
45. Increased my knowledge	33	12
46. Improved listening skills by hearing English	30	22
47. Increased my understanding of language	29	20
48. Enjoyed analyzing 'proverbs'	21	12
49. I like the new opportunity and experiential learning	20	10
50. Increased my understanding & awareness of nations	16	12
51. Increased my critical thinking skills	14	12
52. Gave me time to think, contemplate, reflect	12	9

Data extracts

> "*Listen to your body, negotiation is important, stay positive no matter what. It was a pleasure to have conversations with you and maybe we could communicate more. I liked learning the psychology tips, American slang, and Americanisms.*"
>
> *Written statement, Shuya, 2016*

This data extract indicates a cognitive function in thinking pragmatically and conceptually in regards to learning. There are various ways in which we learn; here, experiential learning and metacognition seem inspirational to this student's approach. Specifically, informant statements such as: "helped my listening comprehension, increased knowledge of American culture, and I like the new opportunity." Experiential learning and real meaning-making were grasped and/or accomplished by the informant.

Also, the informant highlighted language acquisition, as a viable component of the language and culture seminars. The possibility for new learning fits well with the theme of cognitive flexibility. While cultural knowledge does not equate with cultural competence, the ability to communicate in a second language is related to an increase in intercultural adaptability (Bennett, J., 2007; Hoff et al., 2005).

> *What have been some of your important learning experiences? "Most of all I liked Päivi's class, she told us how to express ourselves and our feelings and express our emotions. She gave us a lot of words how we can express our feelings. I think that is so helpful now. Knowledge; I've learnt a lot of new things about different cultures and differences between them. I've learnt a lot about psychology."*
>
> *Interview, Shuya, 2018*

Transformative learning changes the way an informant sees themself and how they see the world. When a learner is finding new ways to express their feelings and to learn new things about different cultures in fundamental and deliberate ways, the outcome can be life changing. For example, responses like: "increased my knowledge, gave me time to think, contemplate, reflect, and increased my knowledge and awareness of nations," leads to the assumption that thinking about new topics and thinking in different ways opens the door of this theme for new and different ways of looking at things.

> *Informants in the intervention group indicated cognitive engagement and some development of cultural competencies with verbatim statements such as: "I learned elements of new cultures."*
>
> *One girl said, "I've learnt a lot of new things about different cultures and differences between them."* Even synthesis of ideas about different cultures was manifest in statements like this: *"Closer connections with each other that we were lucky to make. We truly became a small 'village' in a week, where everyone is friendly to each other and no one is forgotten. Even more new cultural and linguistic information we got from you. Every time you come I feel like all the boundaries that were built by world policy are being broken with every song we sing together and every word we say to each other."*
>
> *Observation, Shuya, 2016*

Cognition may occur through assimilation, accommodation, and thought processes that form new mental models and representations of one's reality; this, in turn, may change the way we think about something (Hunter, 2008). The resulting *new* construction of mental scaffolding from shared and expanded life experiences helps to develop new and more sophisticated ways of thinking about certain topics. The educational elements were, of course, fundamental to the seminars. Student expressions included statements such as: "I like the opportunity for critical thinking,"

"usually the professors just lectures at us, and then for the test we have to repeat what we've been told. In the seminars, statements like the following verified the *thinking* or cognitive involvement of the informants: "Here we get to say what we think" and "I've learnt a lot about psychology," and "you help to improve my self-confidence, my speaking skills, my understanding of the real aim of my learning English," and "also they learned (sic, taught) us to communicate with people and understand myself."

4.2.4 Cultural self-awareness and capacity for self-assessment

Cultural self-awareness and assessment are foundational to transformative thinking and the development of intercultural competencies. We need to know who we are before we can become aware of who others are and how we may fit into the big picture frame of humanity. This, as in the wisdom of the ancient Greeks in the aphorism, *know thyself*. Traits of self-awareness and self-assessment and application of these abilities are fostered and developed in ways that help learners grasp the complex processes in building intercultural competencies by gaining awareness, skillsets, purposeful values, and personal behaviors and practices consistent with these traits (Dolan & Kawamura, 2015). Interestingly enough, one informant indicated that she would like to talk more about different problems and the ways they can be solved. She was thinking about teaching tolerance and that it would be nice to teach some Russian kids to be more tolerant. Informant comments follow Table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10: Cultural self-awareness and capacity for self-assessment

Student Responses	Frequencies	
	Written Statements	Interviews
52. Nice to have fun & smiles	46	31
53. Increased speaking confidence	47	29
54. I felt respected	46	12
55. It was nice that all opinions were accepted	37	19
56. More awareness of other customs and cultures	35	24
57. I like the question box	34	30
58. I was not afraid to speak	28	24
59. Lower 'fear factor'	28	19
60. Our world has barriers, seminars help reduce barriers	26	15
61. It was important to discuss problems	23	16
62. Good to hear other points of view & perspectives	19	17
63. Helped learn about life, how to live, behave, gain life skills	15	5
64. Negative opinions accepted but need to be explained	11	5
65. This will help to go abroad	10	9
66. Are there opportunities for exchanges to USA?	8	15
67. Increased personal gratefulness	5	42

Data Extracts

> *"Thanks for the cultural seminars, you teach us to be more tolerant of other people. I can practice my English skills."* For this student, the evaluation of an idea and its application came forth in this way; *"I would like to talk more about different problems and the ways they can be solved. I'm thinking about teaching tolerance now. It would be nice to teach some Russian kids to be more tolerant,"* and *"cultural seminar is the possibility to get acquainted with another culture and find differences between Russian culture and another one."*
>
> *Written Statement, Shuya, 2016*

In becoming tolerant of other people, the informant, in addition to being able to see from *others'* perspectives, must have the essential aspect of cultural self-awareness (Deardorff, 2007). Transformative growth emerges from purposeful action on behalf of the informant to become more tolerant and to develop a sense of self-awareness while considering the world around them (Hunter, 2008). These attributes are reflected in this theme.

"The experience of communication with interesting people and ability to practice English. It was great to have actual themes, family atmosphere, outdoor classes. The cultural seminars are the good but we need more time for communication and to practice English."

This informant successfully performed the task of self-assessment. It is clear that she recognized her needs and desire for increased and improved communication skills. She indicated the favorable *experience of communication with interesting people and the ability to practice English. She responded well to our actual themes, family atmosphere, and outdoor classes. She very actively participated and appeared to sincerely appreciate that the cultural seminars are good, but also saw and indicated a need for more time for communication and to practice English.*

Observation, Shuya,2018

The overarching themes developed from the data are not the themes to which this informant is referring. Each seminar had specific themes relative to time, setting, and staff determination upon which most of the sessions emphasized in one way or another. For example, as indicated in the section regarding music, the seminar theme was *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother*, Spring, 2018. Additionally, informants' responses may be considered representative of one learning about themselves and their recognition of novel elements of a different culture; new songs, meeting new people, interacting in small groups, new subject matter, and the ways *others* do things. For example, comments such as: "I felt respected," and "I was not afraid to speak," and "Good to hear other points of view and perspectives" may be indicative of the cultural perspectives and natures of the teachers, as well as, the intra-culture that developed within the program. This theme, in conjunction with Learning Through Interaction, also promoted a positive, invitational, and inclusive atmosphere. This helped the informants to reflect on culture, awareness, and the inclusive environment where they felt comfortable to be themselves.

"Tell me, (informant's name), how do you feel about the freedom to speak, and openness during the seminar? "I want to share the great experience about this whole seminar. I'm really appreciate your work, you do a really great work. You spend a lot of time away from your home with us, uh, trying to, um, you have all the possibilities to improve our skills. All the guys and all the girls here at the university are really glad that you are here with us. You charge us with your energy and your positive self, here it is great.

In our usual classes, we are more into listening and not speaking, just listening to the teacher and more into answering when we are asked. But you are always asking for our impressions about our opinions and that's a little bit unusual to us and we are almost always scared and scared about what we repeat but you always encourage us not to be afraid and that there's not pressure and you say 'no one is going to bite you' and say not to be afraid to gain our skills. And I think it is really precious moments of our seminars."

Interview, Shuya, 2018

If looking for an informant response offering positive feedback, this girl was clearly the candidate. This interview was spontaneous as she was sitting in the main hallway and I was walking along on my way to the cafeteria and decided to stop and chat for a few minutes. My colleague suggested I video record the conversation as an interview and she happily and willingly agreed. She clearly was aware of her own culture and the elements of culture that impacted her studies and education at the university. She further recognized the differences in educational practices between our foreign teaching team and formed an impression of our culture of education as well. Her responses affirmed this with statements such as: "It was nice that all opinions were accepted, "It was important to discuss problems, and "our world has barriers, seminars help reduce barriers." This theme relates to increased awareness and the willingness to reflect and be self-analytical.

4.2.5   General openness and understanding other worldviews

Local environments along with the effects of globalization and migration often create dichotomous conflicts from incongruent worldviews. Yet the same forces of globalization require people from various backgrounds to work together and construct avenues of cooperation (Dolan & Kawamura, 2015). Advances in technology and social media have given rise to a new kind of openness, communication, and information sharing that connects people from culturally diverse backgrounds. For example, church pastors in West Africa and South America have contacted European and North American churches after reading doctrinal positions from church websites. This opens a connection for sharing worldviews, and in these particular incidences, openness to discuss religious interests. Yet, the value and importance of face-to-face and person-to-person interaction cannot be understated.

This theme and the other four themes are, of course, interconnected. This emphasizes and highlights the complexity and interdependence of the themes and the constructs investigated consistent with the research questions guiding this study. There is an old saying, "to have a friend you need to be a friend." This may lead to increasingly open and understanding relationships with those from other cultures, both parties must share these characteristics and the willingness to consider *others* worldviews.

Table 4.11: General openness and understanding the worldviews of others

Student Responses	Frequencies	
	Written Statements	Interviews
68. Increased cultural awareness & exchange	47	30
69. Opportunity to talk with native English speakers	47	29
70. Appreciate cultural exchange with Americans & Finns	43	6
71. Build on common experiences	41	20
72. Impressed by the nature of teachers and teaching	39	31
73. Expanded my worldview	38	17
74. Felt the importance to be 'one' as people	33	32
75. I like the openness and freedom	27	24
76. Understood political barriers vs. culture	26	10
77. Increased my understanding & acceptance of others	20	15
78. Gave me a better picture of Americans	20	22
79. It is helpful to see cultures from different angle	18	32
80. Good to know about others & see & understand in person	17	20
81. Helps reduces prejudice and bias of different people in Russia	15	10
82. It was good to get feedback	15	14
83. Helped me understand about building 'people' bridges	14	12
84. Inspires me to help others, Re: Africa aid, noble work	14	19
85. Saw different ways of living from the Africa presentations	14	22
86. I learned to think about humanitarian aid	13	12
87. Realize Americans not always like TV and movies	3	2

Data extracts

> *"This is an opportunity for us to understand and show to others that the people that our government calls enemies are just like us. I was at a barbeque for the first time this year. I learned a few word in Hawaiian, Increase your team to 7 or 8 people, that will be better, and come to us more often! "*
>
> Written statement, Shuya, 2018

This data extract is somewhat remarkable in that the respondent made a leap from the seminar to geopolitics with reference to people supposedly considered enemies, but now seen as friends. It is clear that this informant recognized the importance and value of *building bridges,* rising above political barriers, and learning about cultures. For her, it was important to know about *others*, see them and understand them in *person*. The theme also, although having its own specific focus, emphasized openness, positivity, and understanding. Incidentally, as a gesture of good will and cultural sharing, the senior students planned and hosted an off-campus Bar-B-Que for our teaching team.

> *"Specifically, how have the seminars impacted you personally in your attitudes about, or appreciation for, other cultures?"*
>
> *"I think that's influenced me a lot and it's a great experience. The more I get involved in such participation, I get more open for other people's, or for, education, um, I don't know, new ideas. I've been waiting for the seminars. I missed you and was looking forward to seeing some new people, too. You always bring good vibes with you. I'm fond of psychology, Päivi's classes were fantastic. Harry made my every day with his jokes. Tomm, thanks for making us think and analyze in English. Veikka, is a very interesting person and was happy to talk with you.*
>
> Interview, Shuya, 2018

These data extracts provide a view or perspective on the worthiness of personal relationships and face-to-face interaction. This statement indicates the importance of personal relationships to this informant as she intentionally recognized seminar faculty by name. This is, in a way, a testimony to the openness experienced during the seminars. Examples include: "I like the openness and freedom, and increased cultural awareness & exchange, and expanded my worldview." The expected outcome from this theme was increased openness to each other, to different viewpoints, and to different worldviews.

> *The informants were divided into several groups with different students from other courses and levels. Typically, they work and study with other students in their particular course and level, but we (the staff) decided that heterogeneous groupings would be a good strategy for the seminars. This informant expressed that it was really good and helped the students to be more outgoing and more communicative with others. I observed some of these newly grouped students*

sitting together, walking in the hallways together, and gathering in the cafeteria together with members of their new groups. She also stated that "all of our seminars were useful for us because they were about different themes." She liked explaining the meaning of proverbs (words of wisdom), for example "What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity," Addison). Her experience in standing in front of a lot of people during the large group meetings, in which she admitted being a little bit nervous, was really helpful and interesting. When I asked her what she felt we could add to the seminars, she didn't know what to add, but said "it's really cool, you all are doing a great job, and thank you very much!"

Observation, Shuya, 2017

The qualitative data compilation was gathered from informants. Their input in the contexts of formal, semi-structured, naturalistic settings of the seminar curriculum, and extra-curricular events, was rich. The comments represent a large sample of the results of individual informants. The literature supports the use of open-ended questions and interviews to explore, uncover, and explain important phenomena and issues. This provided the means to conceptualize and develop meaningful, relevant, and purposeful questions to discover the true views and feelings of the informants (Bennett, 2004; Deardorff, 2006; Savicki, 2008; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Evidence for the themes is provided in the quotes, multiple perspectives, descriptions and narrations, along with tables, models, and figures that help interpret how the findings answer the research questions in tandem with the quantitative findings (Creswell &Plano Clark, 2018). Informants provided written responses over the duration of the seminars that were reported as close to verbatim as possible.

4.3 A Development Process for Intercultural Competencies, Perceptions or Attitudes, and Transformations with Intercultural Thematic Factors.

As indicated earlier, intuitive and cognitive discriminant factor and theme analyses of subject responses were conducted. The origin of themes emerged from the results of both quantitative and qualitative data. The factors were categorized and grouped according to the construct categorical themes to which they seemed most closely aligned. The themes and ultimately the factors grouped in each theme were peer and expert verified with a general agreement for purposes of this study (Appendix F). Tables 4.7 – 4.11 display related combinations of factors for each theme generating possible uncovered insights for data analysis. In forming the themes and searching for reasons to explain patterns and/or relationships, it is prudent for a researcher to look for other plausible and alternative explanations for connections between the

themes (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). A pattern becomes an explanation only when alternative patterns do not offer reasonable and clearer explanations central to the research questions. As a mixed-methods study, the quantitative design and resultant analyses provided empirical data. Whereas, the qualitative design and data have uncovered findings and plausible explanations, with discretionary judgment, based on the depth, nature, and quality of the data collected within the parameters of the research design.

The goal of this step in analyzing the qualitative research results was to find patterns in the informants' experiences and thinking that seemed to indicate relationships and connections of the statement factors within the themes. This required looking at the data from different angles to try to discover connections between expressions of the informants' thinking, their attitudes, and the data factors. The intention of the qualitative analysis for this step was to develop distinct groupings of factors revealed in the thinking and meanings cited by the members of the intervention group, based on their experiences during the seminars. Although the intention was to form salient groupings, it may be argued that the factors in each group are not mutually exclusive. The initial step in the groupings was a process that evolved from an inductive approach and informed hunches, to a deductive approach.

Thus, by evaluating the factors, themes, possible patterns, and potential relationships to try to confirm a uniting tendency of the grouped factors and their usefulness in detecting patterns and relationships. Factor grouping appeared to fit into the conceptual framework of the research plan and confirmed cognitive thinking and affective feelings in ways that seem to support this modality. Figure 4.1 represents the qualitative analysis of data impacted by intercultural experiences of young people and the development of intercultural competencies and transformations, ultimately showing a probabilistic increase in positive perceptions of *others*. This process was an analysis designed for the classification of the factors performed qualitatively rather than by quantitative regression analysis. The purpose of the process was to use the informants' data to predict and discover patterns that seemed to fit into themes. This was affirmed to be accurate based on colleague and expert agreement and verification. Therefore, this categorization confirmed the factors as *predictor variables* and supported their relative importance within the theme and ultimate impact on informants' thinking.

The factors, the initial informant responses and statements, the themes and patterns of correlated informant responses, along with the four domains, and the subgroups of special interest were conceptual and based on content. It ultimately led to the relationship and potential correlation to the DV initially indicated by the CASQ results. The mixed-methods design facilitated this connection.

The analysis of the quantitative data conformed to four domains: 1) cultural competence, 2) community or village concepts of culture, 3) humanistic values and self-actualization, and 4) interest in other cultures and interacting positively

with people from other cultures. These domains are related to the nature of the questions on the CASQ. Within the context of these domains and with a focus on the qualitative findings, a process of intellectual discriminant analysis was used to develop the themes. Rather than factor loading with an SPSS statistical program, the themes emerged as naturalistic factors from the statements gathered in the qualitative data and consistent with the quantitative findings.

The process involved several steps. The seminar staff and experienced camp staff members, advisors, and approximately a dozen intervention group members participated in the process. Initially, it was necessary to agree upon a correlation between the CASQ domains and a set of themes. From rigorous consideration of the 88 statement factors derived from the qualitative research, it was determined that five themes would sufficiently represent the statement factors and maintain consistency with the quantitative domains. The next step required categorizing qualitative statement factors with a discriminant factor analyses constructed intuitively and intellectually. These related statement factors shared commonalities. These commonalities fit within an inductive process proceeding from particular statements, or factors from the qualitative data to general conclusions about the connectedness of the statement factors. In turn, the general conclusions of the connectedness of the related factors led to the next step of determining the actual themes: 1) learning through interaction, 2) understanding and appreciation for cultural diversity, 3) cognitive flexibility, 4) cultural self-awareness and capacity for assessment, 5) general openness and understanding others' worldviews.

Ultimately, a developmental process for intercultural competencies, perceptions, and transformations within intercultural thematic factors resulted in the model created for Figure 4.1, The continuity uncovered in this process and model provided a systematic pathway to depict a starting point and stages that resulted in desired outcomes seen in Figure 5.2, *An Intercultural growth continuum: Functional factors for the development of intercultural competencies.* Finally, the entire evaluative analyses provided the basis for the Process model for the development of intercultural competencies shown in Figure 5.1.
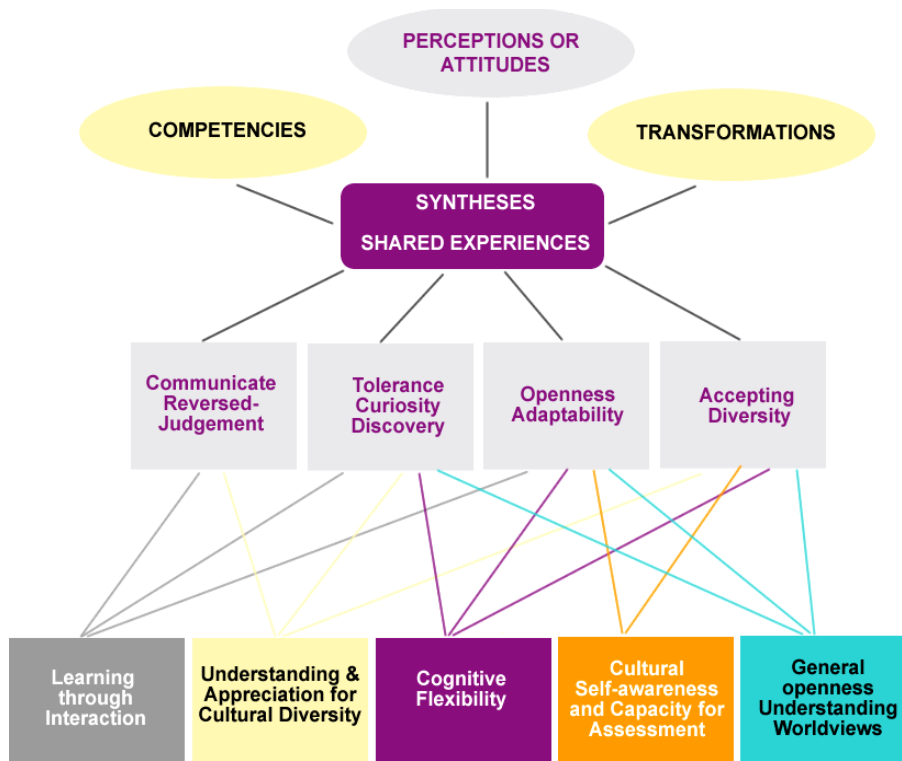
Figure 4.1: A Development Process for Intercultural Competencies, Perceptions or Attitudes, and Transformations with Intercultural Thematic Factors.

Data relevant to developing Figure 4.1 are based on Tables 4.7 – 4.11. Thus, the aligned thematic factors for the model above were derived from subject comments, statements, and responses consistent with the tables. The concepts and their relationships are original to this research study. The alignment corresponds directly with the themes in the bottom row of Figure 4.1. Each colored box represents a theme and arrows depict its connections to conceptual functional factors, their interconnectedness, and ultimately each themes' conceptual correlations. These concepts are also seen within the *Intercultural Growth Continuum: Functional Factors for the Development of Intercultural Competencies*, Figure 5.2. Thus, the middle row in Figure 4.1 above represents the conceptual functional factors. These factors, in turn, lead directly to the *Process Model for the Development of Intercultural Competencies*, Figure 5.1.

The following steps clarify the connectedness of procedure, process, results, application, and synthesis: 1) The application of the research plan and design produced the raw data, 2) The evaluation and analysis of the raw data provided

the information for formulating themes into which data conceptually aligned and fit, 3) Interpretation and application of the themes led to designing the *Developmental Process for Intercultural Competencies, Perceptions or Attitudes, and Transformations with Intercultural Thematic Factors* in Figure 4.1 and Tables 4.7 – 4.11. 4)This step applied the process pragmatically and conceptually to construct Figure 5.2. *An Intercultural Growth Continuum, Functional Factors for the Development of Intercultural Competencies.* 5) Further analysis and reflection upon the significance and meaning-making of the processed qualitative data, combined with results from the quantitative data, formed the pathway which led to the culmination of the entire research study and ultimate application in the creation of the *Process Model for the Development of Intercultural Competencies* (Figure 5.1). I submit this model as the *paragon* of this research study.

4.4   Analysis

This analysis of qualitative data initially began with a process of induction. It involves organizing the data into domains, patterns, and themes related to the attributes of intervention group members who display characteristics of intercultural competencies and may have undergone transformations in their thinking. As indicated in chapter three, the data were collected utilizing qualitative methodology exclusively with the intervention group that involved observations, interviews, open-ended questions, individual and small group formal and informal conversations and discussions, large group discussions, Socratic seminars, projects, student presentations, and student-prepared evaluations. The purpose of this mixed-methods research was to become immersed with the intervention group members to observe and analyze the content, context, presentation, and discussion of the constructs and domains of intercultural awareness. The process was primarily ethnographic, focusing on several methods describing social and cultural norms based on direct, systematic observation (Vogt, W, & Johnson, R, 2011). This involved emergent concept analysis, a technique that involves the separation of a whole entity into constituent parts in order to derive meaning.

This inductive analysis allowed for the emergence of themes and relationships from the data instead of pre-imposed categories into which the data would be 'pigeon-holed.' The inductive process seems to generate more abstract descriptive syntheses of the data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). This was not a quantitative process dependent upon computer-based statistical analysis. Seeking relationships or patterns, and themes as a qualitative process was based on an intuitive view from my past experiences at international language and culture seminars and camps, and informed impression or opinion, a heightened cognizance of the data, and input from experienced colleagues.

In analyzing and summarizing major aspects of a qualitative research design, the approach involved flexibility and allowing for the emergence of data from the intervention group members consistent with a common concept of the meanings. The researcher strove to make all aspects of the design and strategies clear. Seminar teaching team members were fully cooperative.

In connection to reliability, test reliability addresses the confidence level of obtaining consistent, stable, and precise test scores. Whenever a test is administered in which the outcome is expressed as a measured score, there is always some error of measurement (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Reliability assessed whether or not the same results would be obtained from an investigation repeated under the same conditions (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Byrman, 2021). Quantitative research examines reliability as a measure of conceptual stability of the findings. If the measurement error is large, the test instrument is considered unreliable. When the measurement of error between scores of the same instrument is small, the test is described as reliable. The *CASQ* administered during the study was also used at multiple 8- to 10-day international language and culture camps in Karjaa, Finland between 2007 and 2015. During that time work proceeded on the development of the instrument. The *CASQ* was field-tested as a pretest at the beginning of a camp and the posttest at the conclusion of the camp. Even over the relatively short period of time the informants spent at camps, the pretest and posttest scores paralleled pretest and posttest scores seen in the data of the present study. These were smaller but measurable differences between pretest and posttest scores than seen in the present study. The differences did, however, show an increase in apparent positive perceptions toward *others* as measured by the *CASQ*. No statistical analyses were performed on the results of these tests, merely data *snooping* of comparative scores.

The reliability of test scores proceed under the assumption that the score of each subject is a true score on the test and is consistent with the characteristic or construct being measured; for this investigation that characteristic is apparent perceptions of *others*. A second assumption according to classical test theory is that any test for this type of characteristic, perception, or attitude, is bound to have some error of measurement (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). If a subject takes a particular test twice within a close period of time with no intervention, for example, the *CASQ*, the scores may be close but not identical. A third assumption is that the error of measurement is likely random. Classical test theory states that test reliability is an indication of any measurement error present in the scores obtained from the test. Reliability refers to the test's scores and is not a property of the test. Further, measurement error is the difference existing between a subject's true score and what is scored on a retest under various, but appropriate, conditions. Measurement errors are seen to follow a random distribution and are non-specific and not specifiable. There are several methods to examining test reliability consistent with classical test theory (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Replication is related to reliability. For the results

of a study to be reliable, it must be replicable. In such cases the researcher carefully considers the methodology when replicating a study and when reporting the results and conclusions (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Byrman, 2021).

4.5 Summary

In this chapter a description of the analysis and interpretation of both quantitative and qualitative data collected during the present study has been reported. Included were descriptions of the sample population, the intervention group, the comparison group, the independent and dependent variables, and the process used to derive summative group means from individual scores on the pretests and the posttests for both groups. Statistical data related to Research Question 1 were reported. The results indicated that participation in language and culture seminars showed overall statistically significant differences in the mean scores between the intervention and comparison groups. This indicates promising but not conclusive evidence that the intervention produced the intended and expected main effects. Informants who participated in intercultural seminars showed a statistically significant increase in positive perceptions of others and possibly more favorable attitudes. This seems to reflect a personalized impact on the intervention group members themselves and toward others after receiving the intervention. This was compared to and contrasted with the comparison group informants who did not participate and were not impacted or influenced by the intervention, as measured by the *CASQ*.

Research Question 2 was also discussed and evaluated in the qualitative aspects of the study. Mixed-methods studies were analyzed and a discussion of the findings of this study and the connections and relevance to the ongoing conversation about transformative learning and developing intercultural competencies was examined. These concepts have been analyzed based on transformative learning experiences and intercultural competency developments of young people. This relates to their perceptions of, and possibly their attitudes toward *others*, as determined from the results of this research study. The role and efficacy of mixed-methods research were examined particularly as it relates to this investigation. As expected, this proved to be a valuable contribution as an effective methodology. Also, the need for continued research on the effects of transformative learning and intercultural sharing experiences, the methods to best facilitate such experiences, and the evaluation of such were addressed.

Included were descriptions of the types of qualitative data and the methods of processing the data. The presentation and handling of data followed four steps that emerged as a logical progression of the process. These steps were: 1) Analysis of the sets of interview questions and thematically displaying that data in tables from the recorded subject responses to the interview questions; 2) Presenting

free-form voluntary subject statements along with researcher observations and narratives; 3) Determining sets of thematic categories that emerged from interviews, conversations, and written statements either prompted or free-flow; 4) Developing a comprehensive concept diagram of emergent patterns or relationships based on unifying topics or themes from informant responses.

The emergence of themes, patterns, and ultimately context-dedicated thematic sections within chapter four supported and seemed to correlate probabilistically with both transformative thinking and learning and the stages and phases for the development of intercultural competencies. *The Intercultural Growth Development Continuum (Figurs 5.2)* displays the functional factors and stages that indicate and fundamentally support the themes and developmental benchmarks as indicated by both quantitative and qualitative data collected and analyzed in this study. The connection between theory, the analytical components, the research, and the findings may not always appear straightforward (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Byrman, 2021). In the case of this research, the connection was definite and clear.

This research explored ideas and intellectual traditions or practices of education from educational, social science and pedagogical standpoints. Do the practices create an environment where pedagogy and related educational interactions provide the conditions to scientifically evaluate collected data and reach probabilistic conclusions? According to Bryman (2021), when referring to ideas and intellectual traditions one mainly considers theories. The theories are sets of ideas that attempt to explain some phenomenon. In this study, the theory is that transformative learning experiences according to the corresponding pedagogies and setting, result in the positive development of intercultural competencies for the informant study group involved in this research.

5   Discussion and Conclusions

True education, whatever that may be, will have the greatest tendency to civilize and humanize people in their relations to one another.

Plato

5.1   Answering the research questions

Results of the study introduced in chapter four will be discussed in relation to the research questions and subsequent hypotheses including the role of mixed-methods research. The following is the evaluation of the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question 1: Do informants who participated in intercultural language and culture sharing seminars (IV) exhibit evidence of transformative learning, increased intercultural competencies, and statistically significant positive perceptions of *others* compared to the perceptions of comparison group informants who did not experience such seminars, as measured by the CASQ (DV) and qualitative findings? In response to this research question, the following alternative (A) and null (N) hypotheses were developed.

Hypothesis A1: informants in the intervention group receiving the intervention of participating in transformative learning and intercultural experiences through language and culture seminars will show a statistically significant difference in their perceptions of *others*, as measured by the CASQ, and supported by qualitative findings, compared to informants in the comparison group receiving no intervention, measured by the same questionnaire.

Hypothesis N1: There will be no statistically significant difference in perceptions toward *others* between informants receiving the intervention compared to informants receiving no intervention, as measured by the CASQ.

Statistical analyses were conducted to determine if the intervention of participating in language and culture seminars, the independent variable, would result in statistically significant differences in mean scores on perceptions of, and possibly positive increases in attitudes toward *others*. Scores were the dependent variable. The mean scores of the same construct were evaluated for the comparison group that received no intervention. The scores were determined by the responses on the *CASQ*. The results of repeated measures ANOVA and *t*-tests revealed statistically significant differences in mean scores between the intervention group and the comparison group. The difference in mean scores on pretests and posttests

for the Intervention group was $F(1,46) = 8.796$ statistically significant at the $p < .05$ confidence level. This result showed a strong relationship between the impact and influence of the intervention on the development of positive perceptions of, and possibly increased positive attitudes, toward *others* from members of the intervention group. In other words, I observed and measured a possible probabilistic increase in transformative thinking, in the development of intercultural competencies, increased positive perceptions of *others*, and the possible increase in positive attitudes toward *others* through quantitative pretest and posttest comparison of mean scores and the extensive qualitative analysis.

On the other hand, the comparison group's test results showed no such statistically significant changes between pretest and posttest perceptions of *others* or possible positive increase in attitudes toward *others*: $F(1,50) = .892$, $p < .05$. This finding was not statistically significant. In other words; no intervention means no impact on the main effect. The results of *t*-tests likewise confirmed the findings of statistical significance revealed in the repeated measures AVOVA.

Paired sample *t*-tests were used for pretest and posttest analyses for within-group comparisons and between-group comparisons. For pretest and posttest within-group scores for the intervention group $t = 8.484$, a *p* value of $<.05$ was used to determine statistical significance. This finding is statistically significant. For comparison of the posttest mean scores of the intervention group and the posttest mean scores of the comparison group, the result was $t = 10.358$ $(1, 97)$. Ninety-seven is the sum total for both groups, again $p = <.05$. This finding is statistically significant. As explained in the quantitative analysis, there was a very clear difference between the two groups for this construct as measured by the *CASQ*.

Finally, the mean differences were compared for pretest and posttest within the comparison group resulting in $t = .453$, also at the confidence level of $<.05$. This finding is not statistically significant. As such, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was confirmed. In other words, the present descriptive study yielded promising results that participation in language and culture seminars may positively impact the perceptions of, and possibly the attitudes of, young people toward *others* and support the roles of transformative thinking and development of intercultural competencies and increased perceptions of and possible increased positive attitudes toward *others*.

This leads to a probabilistic assumption that the informants in the intervention group experienced positive development of intercultural competencies and probable transformations in their thinking about *others*. It should be noted that the outcome of the present study pertains exclusively to the informants participating in this study and may not be generalized to other populations or similar studies.

With regard to Research Question 2: *How has an intervention of cultural sharing and language seminars, accentuating transformative learning and cultural exchange, impacted intercultural competencies, perceptions of others, accepting diversity, and*

overall findings for intervention and comparison groups of university students involved in the study, as determined by mutually supportive qualitative and quantitative data? This represented the very significant and important qualitative component of this study and provided a natural complement to the quantitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004).

Thus, the mixed-methods design offered a workable and pragmatic combination of philosophies and structure for conducting the research. This methodological partnership of ethnographic studies coupled with empirical research as was the case in this investigation may result in superior research studies when compared to single method research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004). Based on the correlation of the quantitative and qualitative results, it is clearly seen that ethnography was extremely substantial in helping explain the *what, how, and why* of the results from the quantitative process.

In terms of the methodology, collecting, analyzing, and comparing qualitative and quantitative data at several points during the research process proved consistent with the initial philosophical assumptions about the process and expected outcomes. The methods of collection, analysis, and aggregation or mixing of qualitative and quantitative data in this study results in a combination of data from both methods clearly seemed to yield a superior understanding of the research questions than either method by itself. This supports the findings of each with more comprehensive data and analysis from two methodologies and various perspectives to evaluate the study and answer the research questions. Thus, mixed-methods research allows the researcher to probe different worldviews, which is a naturalistic, practical, and pragmatic robust research approach. The robust exercising of well-planned research design and the data obtained provides powerful evidence for investigating the research question(s) through converging and corroborating mixed-methods research results to reach conclusive findings (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). With the present study, as well as with many others, a preponderance of reliable data is important because of the complex nature of the constructs evaluated (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The pragmatism and philosophy of mixed-methods research enabled me to fit together quantitative and qualitative data through a workable design, approach, and methodology to better interpret the results. The purpose and intent of the quantitative data helped to determine the *fit* of the data relative to theory as expressed in the alternative hypothesis (H_A) and the purposeful collection of qualitative data provided support, enrichment, and confirmation of the quantitative data through the informants' own views; several examples follow.

Question #14 on the *CASQ* is, "How familiar are you with the main cultural beliefs of at least one of the populations of color in your country? On the pretest, 38% of the intervention group informants indicated *Fairly Well.* On the posttest for the same question, the Intervention group informants responded at a 62% level of

Fairly Well. The increase of 24% by the respondents clearly indicates a difference. The qualitative data provides indications of *how and why* and this difference is explained in statements by multiple informants such as: 1) "More awareness of other customs and cultures," 2) "It was nice that all opinions were accepted," 3) "Increased my understanding & acceptance of *others*," 4) "It is helpful to see cultures from different angle," 5) "Helps reduces prejudice and bias of different people in Russia."

Question # 8 on the *CASQ* is, *I enjoy interacting with people from other countries and cultures.* There was an overall increase of 15% in the *strongly agree* category between pretest and posttest mean scores for the intervention group. This increase may be probable as explained by the following statements, from multiple seminar informants: 1) "Increased knowledge of American culture," 2) "Increased my understanding & awareness of nations," 3)" Helped me appreciate cultural exchange with Americans and Finns," 4) "It is helpful to meet foreigners," 5) "Helped me understand about building *people* bridges." These examples also illustrate apparent and probabilistic positive progress along the intercultural growth continuum and continuity and positioning with cognitive, affective, and transformative themes. As with the previous example, this also locates the informants within the model's cycle of accepting diversity, as seen in Figure 5.1.

Question # 18 on the *CASQ* is: *How well can you include culturally important information into your attitudes about people from other cultures?* The qualitative data helped explain this in the following ways: the seminars… 1) "Expanded my worldview," 2) "Helped getting to know *others*," 3) "Increased awareness of other customs and cultures,"4) "Was helpful to see cultures from different angle." There was a 22% mean score positive difference between the intervention group and the comparison group on this question. Seen here are also responses that appear to firmly connect the informants to accepting the cycle of diversity through succinct and elucidated expressions of the effects of transformative thinking: expanded world view, increased cultural awareness, and being able to see things from a different angle. Also of interest was the behavioral and emotional dynamics of getting to know *others*.

These three examples, randomly selected, demonstrate spanning the thematic spectrum and complementarily maintaining consistency with the conceptual domains, the functional factors, and the prescribed, emergent, supportive engagements in active participation and experiential learning.

Generally, transformative learning manifested or looked like cognitive and affective structural shifts that could be observed in expressed thoughts, actions, and shared feelings as indicated in the statements above and the thematic tables in chapter four. The transformations overtly demonstrated some change in worldview by stated and implied beliefs, attitudes, and value judgments; this phenomenon was borne out in the quantitative results, as well as, the qualitative data displayed in the thematic tables. The structural shifts, it is fair to conclude increased familiarity between seminar faculty and the informant students played some role.

This became evident in the increased levels of engagement, *filtering* of information and experiences, new and expanded interpretations of the world, increased critical thinking, visualization and expressions of new mental models. This was observed in new relationships, increased curiosity and exploration. These are evident, again, in the qualitative data in chapter 4 and also indicate an increased intercultural awareness. The transformations appeared in the curtailment of barriers and obstacles to former challenges and perceived impediments evidenced in conversations, the formation of fresh multiple friendships with those from other classes and cultures. This was seen in the mingling of informant students, seniors through freshmen and foreign students, who formerly had little, in any, interaction. The transformations were also clearly seen during classes, workshops, discussions, and multiple activities where informants sat with *new* friends and appeared to accept without judgment, habits, or different characteristics of others. Not to be redundant, but both qualitative and quantitative data support this assessment of *what transformative learning looked like* from observational and statistical standpoints.

5.2   Theoretical Implications

The proposed theory, based on the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, H_A, essentially is that informants receiving the intervention showed a statistically significant difference in positive perceptions of *others* compared to informants in the comparison group receiving no intervention. This is supported by this study's data and analyses. This correlates with the functional factors, the themes, fits the process model, and the work of other researchers. Concurrence with the holistic and transformative themes indicates that the intervention group informants successfully moved along the *intercultural growth* continuum to fit into the *process model* outcome of accepting the cycle of diversity. Theoretical positions of both Mezirow and Deardorff and others show similarities. The methodology, analytics, findings, and conclusions seen here verify the importance of existing theory providing the background and justification for the current research study and the resultant findings. (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Byrman, 2021). This ties together theory: learning theory, experimental theory, transformative and intercultural competency learning theory, and intercultural educational-social theory. As seen in the literature search and methodology, they coalesce with findings and conclusions consistent with researchers cited in this study. This was observed through the interaction and conceptualization of how the results of the present study drew *together,* in a solid and steadfast illumination, the affirmative answers to the research questions.

The aim of the present study was to examine the impact of transformative learning and intercultural experiences on young people and any transformations of their perceptions of and possible apparent attitude alterations toward *others*. Mixed-

methods quasi-experimental descriptive research was utilized as the design for the study. The findings were reported with the conscious effort to avoid generalization from the results. The value of undertaking a mixed-methods study was pragmatic, as well as, expansive in the nature of research design, data collection, data processing, and expected outcomes. As indicated in the introduction, much of the research in the field of intercultural experiences and the development of intercultural competencies, transformative thinking, and perceptions, and the potential increase in positive attitudes toward *others* has focused often on study abroad programs and cultural proficiency. However, a likely surge in studies related to the growing need for intercultural training and shared experiences is increasing. These are primarily directed to the development of intercultural competencies and experiences that support transformative thinking resulting in possible increases in the acceptance of other worldviews and cultures within our pluralistic society.

In theory, spurred on by advances in technology which open new avenues for communication, massive migration movements, and perhaps especially by phenomena associated with globalization, the demand for intercultural competencies has increased. The need for intercultural competencies is intensely compelling as global alliances continue to evolve, trade agreements and disagreements emerge, political landscapes undergo changes, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on people who typically have been more mobile. Intercultural education, appears to display significant variation throughout the international community, yet a common thread seems to exist (Eisenberg et al, 2013). Developing intercultural competencies is best taught through transformative experiential learning opportunities and Paideian influenced educational components that facilitate the development of the cognitive and behavioral attributes associated with the requisite skillsets alluded to in this study and other research for successful navigation within other cultures and better undersanding our own culture.

This original research study was conducted in Russia and all evaluated data was gathered from that source. It was important to provide the intervention group informants with opportunities for active participation in shared experiences with members of other cultures: this was accomplished. Providing opportunities for intercultural sharing, interactions and exchange, created an environment in which informants acquired and developed skills for the construction and emergence of cultural competencies and mental models through transformative thinking and learning. My colleagues and I and intervention group informants, as well as the university faculty, staff, and even some local community members *built bridges* that appear to offer significant promise in spanning the gulf between intercultural incompetence and intercultural competence.

The primary purposes of the present study can be viewed as three-fold. First, to determine the impact of transformative thinking experiences and developing intercultural competencies and possible increases in positive perceptions and

accompanying attitudes of young people toward *others*. Second, to determine whether or not involvement in language and culture seminars by members of an intervention group results in statistically significant differences in perceptions of, and possible positive improvement in attitudes toward *others*. This allowed examining differences with the comparison or control group for which there was no intervention or involvement in language and culture seminars. Thirdly, was evaluating the significance of qualitative research in support of the quantitative findings; this loomed large in the overall analysis of the research questions and evaluation and interpretation of the data.

As a reminder, the definition of culture for the purpose of this study is paraphrased as; *all things a person believes and does that enable them to identify with a group of similar people and distinguishes them from those who are not similar. The group is distinguished as people with shared history, behavioral patterns, and values* (Lindsey, Robins, &Terrell, 2009). The reported research findings are intended to add to the existing body of knowledge on the development of intercultural competencies and transformative thinking of young people and their perceptions of, and possible increased positive attitudes toward *others* through involvement and engagement in intercultural experiences. This study lends evidentiary support to the growing demand for increasing intercultural competencies as globalization accelerates worldwide.

The results of this study corroborate the findings of other researchers, as presented in the literature search. Intercultural experiences are associated with increased cultural competencies and sensitivities, humanistic values and idealism, transformations, and increased awareness of the role of culture in the lives of young people and their ability to relate positively to *others* (Savicki, Adams, & Binder, 2007). This research study also offers evidence that intercultural experiences may help people to become more open to diversity.

The investigation offers promising results that through this descriptive research study. Involvement in language and culture seminars may improve the abilities of young people to become more culturally competent and possibly undergo transformative thinking regarding *others* and other cultures. It is hoped that these experiences will promote an increase in international and intercultural education and experiences for young people. Life today is both a microcosm and macrocosm of intercultural environments in a culturally complex world. Therefore, this study indicates that considering and respecting other cultures and worldviews appears to be of ever-increasing importance. Hillamaria Rantajääskö-Seauve expressed it well verbatim, by writing "*The surrounding culture and values around us shape the way we see the world and who we are. Furthermore, exposure to other cultures may change us and influence our thinking. Seeing different cultures as a source of richness, understanding in an early phase of life that we are different in many ways and difference is not necessary always right or wrong, just different. Understanding yourself and your own behavior better helps when mirroring it to other cultures*" (p.141 of this dissertation).

The qualitative component of this mixed-methods study *opened a window* to the ways the informants see the world and their comments and statements provide clear insights that quantitative data alone did not reach. Thus, the complementarity of these two research methodologies supports the overall findings, resulting in rejection of the null hypothesis and rather powerfully led to an acceptance of the alternative hypothesis and seems to affirm the efficacy of the IV and the attestation of the research results.

It should be noted that the congenial relationships between teachers and student informants and the positive atmosphere maintained throughout the program, may have contributed to an experimenter effect. The students in the intervention group may possibly have wanted to please my colleagues and me and thus responded to questions accordingly. It seems unlikely that this effect would have resulted in the degree of statistical significance measured in the difference in mean scores between the two groups, yet cannot be totally ignored either.

The theory, or conceptual framework of this study, describes and explains the findings I intended to uncover in the study. Consistent with my own worldview, the theory that transformative learning positively impacts the development of young peoples' intercultural competencies is, in a sense, a small window of investigation, much narrower but heavily influenced by worldviews. Quantitative research generally functions along empirical lines and uses deductive reasoning to generate and test predictions and probabilities. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is typically an emergent inductive process to explain the findings of the study. There is then a dual functionality of theory because with quantitative and qualitative research; the purpose, intentions, and interpretations are seen as different (Carswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This means theoretically operating in dual ways opens the door to pragmatism. Pragmatism provides the researcher freedom to use methods and philosophy to combine quantitative and qualitative designs and data, put the pieces together, and find answers to the research questions and perhaps gain further and deeper insights.

Conducting this type of educational research, as a type of ethnographic social research, is purposeful and was conducted because I wanted to investigate and determine the efficacy of the multiple pedagogical strategies, develop relationships, and collect reliable and replicable data. The was done in terms of existing theory and its role in this research, as has been shown. Hence, as indicated in the review of other researchers I likewise considered the role of research generally, existing knowledge, and view pertaining to how new and/or confirmatory knowledge should be produced based on the educational and social settings, values, ethics, and even political considerations. The political environment especially, as the research was conducted in Russia. The key phases of this study included a thorough literature search, formulating theory and related concepts, constructing the research questions, constructing the research design, sampling, collecting and evaluating

the data, analyzing the results, and writing up the findings (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Byrman, 2021). This has been meticulously followed throughout the duration of this study and the results, consistent with other researchers, clearly support the theoretical underpinnings. This seems to convincingly show the probability and likelihood of the findings to be accurate and positively supportive of the research questions. It is also consistent with existing theory while contributing a workable approach to studying the impact of transformative learning on the development of intercultural competencies.

5.3   Practical implications

The practical thrust of this study was based on the research questions and designed to determine whether or not, and to what extent, culturally related perceptions of, and possibly attitudes toward *others*, changed over time, setting, and experience. From this descriptive research study, the findings appear to indicate a correlation between participation in language and culture seminars and a positive main effect of transformative thinking on intercultural competencies, positive perceptions, and potentially positive attitudes toward *others*. Thus, similar future investigations for different population samples seem justified, particularly focusing on the measurement of attitudinal aspects. Although chapter four comprehensively covers the data and results obtained from the qualitative and quantitative research components, several examples may elucidate advantages of the methodological eclecticism of mixed-methods research. This lead to the *Process Model for the Development of Intercultural Competencies, Figure 5.1.*

Searches in the literature about intercultural competencies, transformations, and attitudes toward *others* reveal that researchers and scholars have found common ground to define these concepts (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Several researchers have designed clear and succinct models that depict conceptual connections providing visual structuring for relationships of the concepts to each other (Deardorff (2004). For example, her model offers a framework for internal and external outcomes as they relate to the development and assessment of intercultural competencies.

The *process model* developed from the findings of this study is intended to demonstrate relationships and outcomes based on the operationalization of conceptual underpinnings of transformative learning and the development of intercultural competencies. This, in turn, appears to have positively impacted the perceptions of and possibly positive attitudes toward *others* held by the young people in the intervention group of this investigation. *The Process Model for the Development of Intercultural Competencies* proposes a pathway for the transformative process to occur and is based on the successful evaluation of the research questions analyzed from the data collected during this research project.

Process Model for the Development of Intercutural Competences. Stewart, Seauve-Rantajääskö (2020)

Conceptual
Operational
Functional Factors

First stage
1. Entry to "the new"
Communication/ Introductions

2. Reserved judgement
Observations/ Watching

Third stage
6. Openness/ Adaptability
Conversations

9. More same than different
Deeper connections discovered

5. Discovery
In class lessons/ workshops

10. Diversity accepted
Trusting each other

8. Non-judgemental acceptance
Freely expressive exchange

WHO YOU ARE
WHO I AM

Fourth stage
7. Shared feelings
Intentionally seeking Introductions

Second stage
3. Tolerance
Exploratory "small talk"

4. Curiosity
Basic interactions/ Shared experiences

Figure 5.1 Process Model for the Development of Intercultural Competencies

The proposed model seems appropriate for the exploratory and descriptive aspects of the present study and particularly for these findings. The topic has been the subject of some, but not voluminous, research. Research on the specific topic of the impact of transformative learning on the development of intercultural competencies deserves additional study. Therefore, this study recommends further inquiry. The purpose has been to focus on specific events, interventions, and processes and to develop a model with related concepts relevant to empiricism, pragmatism, philosophy, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, and emergent information and events that uncovered meaningful data. It is fair, however, to consider possible revisions and testing of the *CASQ*. The questions were perhaps too sophisticated in content and vocabulary. To mitigate this, copies of the questionnaire were available in the Russian language.

The model illustrates a carefully studied phenomenon, described by ethnographic methods including interviews, observations, formal and informal communications, emersion, and empirical data collected from the quantitative CASQ instrument. The purposeful qualitative sampling techniques uncovered data-rich cases and procedures to obtain information. The sample size of 98 included 47 informants in the intervention group and 51 in the comparison group and was of logically suitable size to extract accurate and rich data within the length of time dedicated to the study. The research design, with various and multiple data gathering procedures and strategies, provided adequate detail to support validity while maintaining the emergent nature of the qualitative data. The design also provided for commonality of meanings and the use of the low-inference descriptors for meaningful communication between me and my colleagues, and the informants.

The *process model* merges the diagrammatic concepts of *Intercultural Competencies, Transitions, and Perceptions/Attitudes Model of Intercultural Experiences and Relationships* with intercultural competencies, transformations, and positive perceptions and/or attitudes toward *others*. The concepts of the *Functional Factors for the Development of Intercultural Competencies* and the grouped thematic factors for model categories derived from informant interviews, conversations, comments, statements, and responses to prompts support the model empirically and qualitatively. These components define stages of development along the *Intercultural Growth Continuum and Functional Factors*. These are integrated with the results of the quantitative data for the creation of the *Process Model for the Development of Intercultural Competence*. Consistent with the results of this research, transformative learning opportunities and experiences appear to foster the development of intercultural competencies and an increase in positive perceptions, and possible increases in positive attitudes toward *others*.

The developmental processes indicated by the model account for the spectral nature of informants' mental and emotional migration from superficial introductory interactions to progressively deeper and more complex engagements with *others*. The operationalization occurring within each stage, concomitant with the concepts involved, indicates the levels of behavioral and emotional, affective, cognitive, holistic, and transformative internalization of impacts and influences of the intervention on the informants. The process is not universal in the impact but rather is dependent on the capacities and willingness of the participant to engage in the process. The results of this mixed-methods study indicated statistically significant differences in the development of intercultural competencies and positive perceptions of *others* as empirically and qualitatively determined between the intervention and comparison groups. The qualitative data supported the empirical findings of the quantitative data collected from the CASQ. The findings indicated that a significant number of intervention group informants experienced development and progression of transformative thinking and transitions to the fourth stage of the *Process Model for*

the Development of Intercultural Competence. At this stage, the informant seems to have developed the competencies to recognize the important aspects of their own culture, shown on the model as *WHO I AM* and also to respect and accept the important elements of another culture, shown as *WHO YOU ARE.*

Consistent with the findings of this inquiry, these intervention group informants appeared to achieve a level of intercultural competence that has resulted in increased positive perceptions and recognition of the value of other cultures. This may indicate a probabilistic increase in positive attitudes toward *others* and other cultures. It is posited that the informants acquired abilities to successfully navigate within intercultural settings and to communicate effectively and open-mindedly with others. This however, will require further investigation to accurately signify a correlation. The literature on intercultural competence offers definitions for determining what intercultural competence is but it is rarer to find the factors that indicate how intercultural competence may develop and the connections between those factors, transformative thinking, and the construction of new mental models (Deardorff, 2006).

The *Process Model for the Development of Intercultural Competencies* introduced here is a data-based representation of how transformative learning experiences support the development of intercultural competencies. The model connects operationalization of these concepts to functional factors and positive changes in perceptions and possibly attitudes toward *others* and other cultures. This appears to represent actual active participation, behaviors, and experiential learning during language and culture seminars that enhanced the observed and measured transformations.

These concepts fit within a spiraling framework that highlights a sequential progression in transformative learning and the development of intercultural competencies. The inner circle and its operationalization represent an enduring attainment of those outcomes and merge into the cyclical process of successful engagement in a variety of cultural contexts. In this way, one has achieved, demonstrates, and retains the competencies to positively and constructively interact with the *other* and successful navigation within other cultures. The findings of this study demonstrate there still is great importance in physical, social, psychological, intellectual, and emotional connections with *others* through face-to-face programs that focus on the promotion of, and opportunities for, transformative learning experiences for the development of intercultural competencies. Openness through emancipatory learning, within a secure environment and nurturing atmosphere, provides for reflection and generally facilitates transformations in perspective and worldview (Whalley, 1996).

5.4   Validity and reliability

Validity in this regard is in reference to the extent which the explanations of the constructs studied are consistent with actual known and accepted realities of the world. Qualitative validity takes into account both internal *causal inferences* and external *generalizability* and examines objectivity and reliability (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). *As noted*, generalizability is not a goal of this inquiry.

Although validity and reliability were addressed with methodology in chapter three, it seems fitting to conclude that discussion here in the final chapter. Pre-testing provides the researcher with preliminary data of validity and reliability and the opportunity to make adjustments, if deemed necessary. In terms of the personal aspects of working with informants, confidentiality is not only assumed but to be assured and the researcher is well-served by building rapport and trust with the informants. Such was the case, as the seminar team members and I developed relationships with the intervention group members over a period of six years with the primary intervention group. One of the most difficult tasks in conducting experiments is to eliminate, or at least mitigate, all extraneous variables that may have an effect on the outcome measured for the IV and the main effect of a pretest – intervention – posttest research design (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). If the researcher is able to effectively limit threats to validity, there is greater confidence and credence in attributing the outcomes observed to the intervention (IV). As indicated, the intervention studied was participation in language and culture seminars and the observable outcome (DV) was the difference in pretest and posttest scores on the *CASQ* within the intervention group and between the intervention and comparison group.

Internal validity of a research experiment is dependent on the comparison of extraneous variables such that the observed outcome, or results, may be attributed to the intervention (Vogt, W, & Jonson, R., 2011). This depends on the degree to which a valid conclusion can be drawn attributing the outcome of one variable (the IV) to another variable (the DV). An extraneous variable would have been any variable other than the IV, the intervention, that can have an effect on the outcome of the experiment. If the extraneous variables are not accounted for or controlled, the researcher is left uncertain in attributing that the outcome is due to the intervention (IV) or due to some extraneous variable(s).

Several limitations of this study have been considered. Relative to the length of the study, one of the threats to internal validity corresponds to the length of the time between the initial pretest and the final posttest. World events, such as political or social incidents, are out of the control of the researcher but may impact informants' attitudes. Because this study was quasi-experimental, selection was non-random. In this research, the intervention group members and the comparison group were matched as closely as possible in terms of demographics, academic standing, and number of informants, as non-random convenience samples.

The quantitative investigation relied on pretest and posttest scores. It is possible that a pretest may itself have an effect on the informants. The pretest familiarizes the subject with the nature of the questions and the construct(s) being studied and may impact their thinking; this has been particularly noted in research dealing with attitudes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Subject attrition and subject maturation may also present threats to internal validity, particularly in longitudinal studies where informants may move, enroll, drop out, or graduate. Over time, it is also possible that informants develop different perceptions and attitudes and/or experience other changes as they grow older. Possible changes from either attrition or maturation may impact observable outcomes.

There is a possible experimenter effect as indicated earlier by the *novelty* of the rare interaction with foreigners. This could be manifest in a number of ways, either intentional or unintentional. The present study dealt with the impact of transformative learning and intercultural experiences on young people and their perceptions of *others*. Along with the seminar team, I placed great emphasis on the nature and quality of relationships within our staff and with our intervention group members. The seminar faculty team members, from other cultures, may have reflected characteristics in our behaviors, interactions, and activities that could have influenced some informants' feelings, perceptions, and attitudes about *others*, beyond just the academic content and social activities of the seminars.

Experimental diffusion may occur if members of the comparison group see the intervention as a positive and desirable experience. Some may then seek access to, or contact with, the seminar team members responsible for the intervention administered to the intervention group or with intervention group members to *find out what's going on*. In the case of this investigation, the team members and I were *the only act in town*. As such, we experienced a kind of *celebrity* status which may have impacted the feelings, perceptions, and/or attitudes of members of both groups toward the researchers.

Additionally, potential limitations and bias exist from the use of a self-report instrument, however, the collection of qualitative data from the intervention group supported the quantitative findings and to some degree mitigated self-report threats to validity. Nonetheless, the potential for bias exists with the use of self-report questionnaires. Participation on the part of the informants was optional. This also contributes to the possibility that the results may be biased. However, this condition applied to both intervention and comparison groups, possibly mitigating, balancing, or limiting biases between the intervention and comparison groups in that regard. Finally, with self-report tools in a mono-method quantitative study, there are no observations of subject actions, behaviors, expressions of perceptions, attitudes, dispositions, or intentions. Due to the mixed-methods design of this study, data relative to those conditions and constructs was available from the qualitative data and supported the consistency of the findings. The findings also appeared to

demonstrate high internal consistency among the 16 questionnaire items with the support for cognitive factor analysis for the concept groupings used in the model displayed in chapter five.

External validity refers to generalization and as such, it pertains to the extent that the findings of a research investigation may be applied to groups (or individuals) and settings beyond the actual scope of the study (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Approximately 90% of the intervention group members were ethnic Russians and all were students at Shuya Pedagogical University. The university is located in Shuya, a city with a population of 58,500 inhabitants in the provincial Ivanovo Region of Russia. The majority of the informants were from the Ivanovo region and 8% to 10% from other areas. It is not a goal of this study to extend beyond the population studied and conclusively correlate and generalize the results of this study broadly across other populations of young people. However, although the results are not part of this study, the *CASQ* was used with a large number of international students from many different countries at 8- to 10-day language and culture camps, and the results on the CASQ instrument relatively closely matched the outcomes of this study.

Another limitation considered was construct validity. This refers to the degree to which variables accurately measure the constructs being studied. In other words, to what extent are the variables *operationalized* to reveal or uncover the constructs to be measured? (Vogt, W. & Johnson, R., 2011). In this case, the work done by Godkin and Sauvageau (2003) in developing, administering, and analyzing the results of their questionnaire, from which the *CASQ* was patterned, found it to be consistent with other findings in their literature search (Godkin and Sauvageau, 2003). Their findings supported the possibility that international experiences do, in fact, support medical students' abilities, interests, and desire to work with underserved multicultural populations (Godkin and Sauvageau). Those experiences may help develop students' intercultural competence and idealism. Again, generalizability is not a goal of the present study as it is a descriptive mixed-methods study. Also, typically, it is not an objective of qualitative research to generalize.

Observation is most effective when conducted somewhat systematically, although it is desirable that the qualitative research focus remains primarily on flowing and emergent data. Nevertheless, the practice referred to as *criterion-related observer reliability* helps assure that a researcher/observer has an understanding of the variables being studied as would an expert in that particular field (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Intra-observer reliability refers to the extent to which an observer is consistent with observational variables that highly correlate on multiple observational occasions of the same phenomena. Somewhat similar, inter-observer reliability is an indication of a high level of correlation that different researchers' observations have consistency of the same event(s) observed (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). These levels of reliability were achieved during this present study through observers' comparisons.

Purposeful design and planning facilitate effective and accurate data collection processes and a good plan is akin to the well-known proverb *a milligram of prevention is worth ten kilograms of cure.* Therefore, planning and following a plan is a key research investigation component. Constituent to this is keen awareness of the positives of effective planning, as well as, possible pitfalls of the lack of awareness. As an observer collecting qualitative data, one must be aware of any negative impacts the observer may have on the reliability of the data. These could include the aforementioned observer biases and observer *contamination* in which the observer's own knowledge influences the purity of the data. Even though some researchers may not particularly *like* or approve of some data, a condition known as observer *omission* results from the researcher leaving out important data, thus skewing the results, as would the failure to record behaviors and information that fits the observation schedule categories.

Qualitative validity is based on conformity to standards relative to the researchers, participants, and reviewers with the goal of trustworthy and authentic data. Therefore, qualitative validity depends on assessing the information gathered from accurate data that is confirmable, dependable, credible, and transferable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Several strategies are typically recommended when checking for qualitative validity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). I focused on member-checking, triangulation, and peer review. Member-checking involves sharing summaries and components of the findings with key participants in the study and obtain confirmation that the findings are accurate according to their experience. Triangulation uses data from several sources such as interview transcripts, observations, statements, and/or from several individuals to construct evidentiary cases for developing themes or patterns from this information while analyzing data. Another strategy is to request several peers, familiar with the research and content to examine the data using their own criteria to provide feedback (Creswell &Plano Clark, 2018).

Particularly with qualitative studies from an ethnographic point of view, the researcher should consider: observer bias, being privy to observations of other staff and others in general, and the influences on the participants due to their involvement. Also, considering other limitations is the reality that total objectivity and reporting on all activities are virtually impossible. Every attempt was made to conduct a superior research study carefully and accurately. I did the best I could, yet I acknowledge my own fallibilities and realize aspects of the study certainly could be approached in different ways and that other researchers may see and interpret this study differently.

Validity considerations related to mitigating potential threats to a mixed-methods convergent design, as was used in this research study, include several strategies that support the use of quantitative and qualitative research in a single study. Devising parallel questions directed to assessing the same concepts, using the same sample sizes, employing an integration strategy for convergent data analysis help to minimize validity threats (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Ultimately, validity is

focused on the integrity and accuracy of the findings and conclusions (Clark, Foster, Sloan, & Byrman, 2021). In other words, one should ask; based on clear, replicable methodology are the findings and conclusions trustworthy?

5.5 Recommendations for further research

The findings relative to the two research questions presented in this study provide several points of entry for future consideration. Measuring the impacts of transformative learning and intercultural experiences of young people and their perceptions of *others* deserves study, as does the pragmatic complementarity of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies through mixed-methods research. There are promising signs that intercultural seminars and shared experiences may have a positive effect on the development of intercultural competencies and transformations in how one views *others* and other cultures. Such experiential learning may serve to ease ethnic, racial, nationalistic, and economic disparities and tension. However, there are limitations.

The observed statistically significant differences on the positive impact of the intervention, participation in language and culture seminars, should be considered exploratory and descriptive research connected directly to the present study and not inferential beyond the scope of the present study. Nonetheless, this investigation intended to open lenses to areas of interest upon which future investigations could focus.

With regard to instrumentation, there appear to be valid reasons to consider the *CASQ* for further research. Depending on the circumstances and possible modifications, this instrument may be useful with a similar sample population and entirely different populations. Recommendations for its use would be based on a number of factors: nationality, race, ethnic background, gender, socioeconomic status, and homogeneity of variance of the groups being studied. Otherwise, a variety of research designs may be utilized for non-parametric quantitative data. It would be interesting to explore alternative wording for a questionnaire, similar but adapted and content based on qualitative data, and various formats, both written and verbal.

Certainly, a follow-up study with the informant population of the present study to measure long-term retention would be of value. A de facto study with informants of past camps and/or seminars from as early as 1995 would be interesting and valuable in assessing their perceptions of, and attitudes toward others: years removed from their involvement in these programs. A service like *Survey Monkey* could be used. Records from former camps contain contact information from more than 500 former language and culture camp participants. As informants of the present study's intervention group confirmed, outcomes of the seminars and camps helped create deeper understanding of *others*, new friendships, and interest in building bridges

between peoples. Continued research consistent with those findings would be worthwhile.

In our world today, tension and conflict exist around issues related to ethnic background, ethnicity, gender, nationalism, isolationism, and other secular issues. Parochial views are not excluded as sources of discord, conflict, and misunderstanding. This is by no means an exhaustive list of issues. Studies and research into uncovering possibilities for dialog and conflict resolution may not alone bring opposing parties *to the table*. However, such studies that report compelling, real, and accurate data prudently evaluated, may provide the impetus for dialogue, programs, and policies that teach and promote transformative thinking and the development and growth of intercultural competencies. An anticipated outcome could be the recognition of the *other,* the value of different cultures, and acceptance of the relevance of other worldviews. Perhaps this could bring together people who would otherwise not connect; and those connections may possibly lead to understandings and agreements heretofore deemed unreachable.

In terms of mixed-methods research, many possibilities exist to narrow the gulf existing between a host of quantitative and qualitative researchers. Of course, research design is the prerogative of the researcher. Yet in my view and experience relative to the methodology, processes, and results of this study, researchers may certainly benefit, particularly in education and social sciences by recognizing that mixed-methods research may very well integrate the strengths and advantages of both methodologies. Quite possibly, researchers conducting mixed methods research may intentionally or unintentionally focus more on their research question(s) than be hampered by methodological biases, thus resulting in superior outcomes.

5.6 Conclusions

The results of this study support the theoretical and practical views that transformative learning experiences and shared intercultural experiences specifically relative to this descriptive research investigation, seemed to promote and facilitate the development of transformative thinking and intercultural competencies. This may have possibly increased positive perceptions of *others* and other cultures and possibly enhanced positive attitudes toward *others*. It may encourage considering more broadly the value of language and culture seminars, camps, and classes across a wider span of educational settings, although it should be reaffirmed that the findings of the present study, while promising, are not generalizable. This research resulted in uncovering functional factors for the development of intercultural competencies.

The diagram of *the Intercultural Competency Growth Development Continuum, Functional Factors for the Development of Intercultural Competencies* describes the corresponding factors, behaviors, and actions that relate to and complement the

Process Model for the Development of Intercultural Competencies. The factors are interventive steps of interactive learning experiences designed to help informants along the *Intercultural Growth Continuum* in developing transformations and intercultural competencies. The sequence, significance, and, number of each of these factors may vary depending on the context, setting, population, objectives, and the intended internal and external outcomes. However, the factors, being evermore interwoven into the overall process model, contribute as a whole to reach the desired outcome: changing perceptions and possibly attitudes and *the cycle of accepting diversity* through transformative learning experiences and the development of intercultural competencies.

The transition occurring moves from simple to profound and conceptual ascent is from basic to complex. There seems to be an emerging acceptance of the nature of intercultural competencies supported by characteristics associated with the fundamental ABCs of effective and appropriate interactions in a myriad of cultural contexts. Although the findings here are directly based on the mixed-methods data collected and analyzed from this study, there appears to be a complementarity with Deardorff's process orientation of intercultural competence. A connection may be drawn between her levels of introductory knowledge, comprehension, skills and attitudes. This connects with an informed frame of reference, flexibility, empathy, effective and appropriate behavior in intercultural situations and attitudes of respect, valuing other cultures, withholding judgment, and living with ambiguity. Therefore, the desired outcomes, both internal and external, are expressed within the context of the cyclical phenomena based on active participation in intercultural growth opportunities. The *Intercultural Growth Continuum* shows the strategies and progression in the development of intercultural competencies through transformative learning opportunities. The examples of related activities illustrate the transformative nature of the experiences from simple interactions to more profound engagement and basic participation to complex involvement relating to the functional factors as seen in Figure 5.2.

Notably, the informants' feelings and thinking displayed positioning, concurrence, and probabilistic correlation to the conceptual domains, as well as, the functional factors, and the stage-specific emphases on designed activities to facilitate progress along the *Intercultural Growth Continuum*.

Guiding and helping members of the intervention group to become aware of inherent attitudes that may tend toward intercultural diversity and active participation was designed to elicit emotional and mental awareness and responses as indicated in the *Functional Factors for the Development of Intercultural Competencies and the Intercultural Growth Continuum*. Participation in the seminar programs facilitated the development of self-awareness, openness to transformative thinking, and apparent commitments to the growth of intercultural competencies. This resulted in perceptions consistent with the study's desired outcomes.

	Starting Point *Phases 1-2*	*Second Stage Phases 3-5*	*Third Stage Phase 6*	**Desired outcome** *Phases 7-10*
Conceptual Functional Factors:	*Communication, reserved judgement*	*Tolerance, Curiosity, Discovery*	*Openness & Adaptability*	*The cycle of accepting diversity*
Stage specific emphasis	*Heterogeneous Groups, Defining Community Values*	*Activities which promote curiosity and lead to discovery*	*Experiencing a safe, non-judgmental environment Willing Self-Disclosure (taking off our "masks")*	*New Competencies, Transformations, Perceptions and possibly Attitudes*
Breakdown of activities in the context of a language and culture learning seminars and camps	**Dining together** (Sharing everyday life activities together)			
	Music &Songs(Uniting through the universal language)			
	Art &Workshops, outdoor activities, sports, walks, and talks			
	Field Trips Together (Unique shared experiences)			
	Shared Poems & Stories (Activities that purposefully create discussion)			
	Games & Skits (Activities for fun and laughter)			

Figure 5.2: An intercultural competency development continuum

The relationships and patterns of informant responses are seen in the indicated categories and the more general conceptual domains of the *Intercultural Growth Continuum, Functional Factors for Development of Intercultural Competencies,* and in the *Process Model for the Development of Intercultural Competencies*. The four domains or phases along the continuum are, 1) nature of communications and reserving judgments; 2) tolerance, curiosity, and discovery; 3) openness and adaptability; 4) the cycle of accepting diversity. These domains of the continuum, a level subordinated by the themes and supported by the functional factors, correlate with the activities described. The examples of activities from the language and culture seminars concur with and show connectedness to the attributes of developing intercultural competencies described by Deardorff (2004).

These attributes germinate through the shared experiences by inclusive and invitational interactions that draw informants together. Deardorff describes the importance of individual development regarding knowledge arising from awareness of one's own cultural norms and by being sensitive to the norms of different cultures: thus, *others*. Processing the knowledge involves cognitive skills such as compare

and contrast, critical thinking, analytical and evaluative abilities, and flexibility in cognition. Utilization of the skills allows the participant to observe, listen, interpret, and relate while developing and experiencing an informed shift in their personal frame of reference. This, in turn, provides scaffolding for building increasingly broader ethnorelative and empathetic perspectives (Deardorff, 2004).

Promoting culturally relative activities for engagement and interaction with *others*, opens the door for informants to form new mental models and experience either enhanced or acquired abilities to more effectively, appropriately, and successfully navigate, communicate, and behave in intercultural situations (Spitzberg, 1989). Initially, and ultimately, the process starts and continues with attitudes (Byram, 1997). The attitudes deemed most conducive to the process include respecting and valuing other cultures, openness, non-judgmental, curiosity, discovery, and the willingness and ability to endure ambiguity (Lynch & Hanson, 1998; Deardorff, 2004).

For example, dining together has a much more powerful impact than one may realize. As a basic human need, food exists across the globe, the way one sees and appreciates different foods has a role in cultural identity. The activity of sharing meals together can, at the same time, be very personal but also very collective. Some cultures put more weight on the importance of certain meal-related traditions than others, but one's approach to food may often represent a portion of the reflection of one's culture. Dining together has a role in informal learning in the context of the seminars. It often creates opportunities for informal discussion, it sends a subtle message of equality and acceptance, and an invitation to commune together as shared experiences.

Music and singing together have a long history in cultures across the world. Involving music and songs in seminar was be done purposefully considering the numerous variables each situation may present. Music and song, as noted in chapter 2, are a form of cultural expression (Clauss-Ehlers, 2010). Integrating the music from various cultures within the language and culture seminar environment may increase the cultural understanding of informants (Chen-Hafteck, 2016).

In the present study, observations revealed the aspect of enjoyment on behalf of the informants and many requests to sing together. Descriptions of the informants' appreciation for this aspect of the seminars were expressed in many comments. In the context of language and culture seminars, music also served the purpose of language learning and vocabulary building through the introduction of new songs, new words, new ideas, and repetition of lyrics.

Art, workshops, outdoor activities, sports, and games can be used as means of inclusion in low-level entry activities for shared experiences with limited stress or anxiety in interacting with *others*. These are especially important in the beginning, as integrating and when communication skills or timidity may otherwise seem inhibitive.

There is something magical about going for a trip together. Field trips together offer a change of scenery, new experiences, discovery, and many times it shuffles the

routines enough to create new or to reinforce developing relationships. Return to campus often creates a sense of arriving *home* together and enhances the sense of mutual bonding around a familiar experience and place.

Humor may be a challenging aspect when functioning in an intercultural environment: discretion and sensitivity are needed. What may seem funny to some may not be so for others. However, shared laughter has a powerful impact on building togetherness and a sense of joy. *Ice breakers,* skits, and games, carefully orchestrated with cultural considerations, are excellent ways of bringing people together and cultivating enjoyable shared experiences.

The use of literature, typically poems and stories, is commonly recognized as a natural part of language and cultural learning. Thoughtfully selected stories and poems serve as a basis for generating meaningful discussion and Socratic seminars resulting in the realization of common human values, understanding the other's perspectives, cultural sharing, and clarifying thoughts and ideas.

Full group gatherings and evening programs are when we all came together. Culture sharing in the evening programs was an opportunity to celebrate the aspects of other cultures. These are presentations by the staff and participants of their own choosing, determined by the participants as the aspects of their culture to which they closely relate their desire to share. There, informants represented the pride and joys of positive experiences as members of their culture and society, and as citizens of their homeland. The sharing experience emerged as an empowering experience of better understanding one's own cultural identity and showing a genuine interest in the cultures and experiences of *others*.

The informants' comments and statements illustrated the influences of seminar activities and content on their impressions and thinking. Consistent with the themes, the informant comments seemed to fit within behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and affective patterns. I have long held the belief that students learn better when they enjoy and appreciate the learning environment and are having some level of fun. Pasi Sahlberg, in a recent post on LinkedIn (2021), expressed the importance of play within the educational environment. That does not mean the seminars upon which this research has focused were all fun and games, but the clear observations and informant statements indicated that the informants liked the programs in which they were involved and generally had a *good time*. The feelings, interaction, understanding, and appreciation certainly may have been impacted by a *researcher effect* on the informant's attitudes toward *others*. It seems that would be limited yet still important to note as the informants' perceptions also had a basis of cultural comparisons within the educational settings, both formal and informal, with our seminar teaching team. The assessment of informant comments addressed cognitive flexibility and transformative learning related to cultural awareness, interactions, and other worldviews. Several of the comments could easily be classified as 'hybridizations' of one or more themes. For example, references to a variety of activities can be seen from both holistic and affective

lenses through the interaction, appreciation, and openness; perhaps behavioral effects played into this as well. Humor, as was evident in "we could do with fewer mosquitos" along with many more verbal and written examples may be perceived as arising from both affective and holistic perspectives. We laughed a lot.

The qualitative data correlated well with the quantitative data. Qualitative studies were intended to present the context and quotations of participant language as the data, (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Each piece of data, whether a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph is a *stand-alone* and comprehensible component of the data and encapsulates an idea or segment of information from an informant and was relevant to the study. The structure and organization of the seminars fostered interaction and communication with others and in some cases with strangers; this was by design. Members of the intervention group were often clustered heterogeneously; this appeared to impact their thinking about others and help them develop competencies applicable to the situations. Participant comments verified this as especially indicated in the themes and displayed in tables 4.7 - 4.11.

This present mixed-methods study was designed to add to the existing body of research in the areas of transformative learning experiences and intercultural awareness. This also enhanced perceptions of and potential changes in, positive perceptions of *others*, and the development of intercultural competencies and transformative thinking. My colleague Hillamarie Seauve-Rantajääskö and I were invited to present a paper on related findings of this study at the Internet *ZOOM* Symposium on *Educational Innovations in Countries around the World*, July 13 & 14, 2020. The symposium was sponsored by the Center For Global Studies, Seattle Pacific University and the Center for Global Studies, and the East Asia Center both part of the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, University of Washington.

This study's findings also seem to make a strong statement supporting the value of mixed-methods research. There seems to exist an overreaction to the distinctions and differences between qualitative and quantitative research (Vogt, W. & Johnson, R., 2011). They contend that it is not often easy to avoid quantitative elements in most of the qualitative subject matter and that qualitative components may be quite important to quantitative research, consistent with a starting point or origin of theories, concepts, and constructs. The quantitative component in the present study demonstrated the importance of numerically quantifying statistically significant differences in the mean scores within the intervention group and between the intervention group and the comparison group. The qualitative component added a dimension to the findings that expressed the informants' feelings, perceptions, sentiments, and attitudes that helped to *explain* the statistically significant differences revealed in the quantitative data.

For example, the quantitative findings answered research question one: *Yes, the data from the present study indicated an apparent definitive positive impact of*

transformative learning and the development of intercultural competencies for the intervention group in contrast to the comparison group. This apparent development of positive perceptions and the possible increase in positive attitudes toward others was supported by the findings. Although research question one is clearly answered, it is important to more clearly know how this transition becomes manifest in the informants' perceptions, feelings, opinions, possibly attitudes, and behaviors. The qualitative complement provided data based on the informants' own interpretations of making meaning from their experiences. This helped in understanding, describing, and finding relationships from their personal experiences and relating them to the phenomena studied as dynamic human processes.

Recognized here is the importance and existence of the natural setting in which expressions of social, personal, cultural, relationship, and subjective thoughts emerged. It provided the opportunity for meaning and knowledge to be seen as tentative constructs that may change over time and setting through new and shared experiences. Culture has been seen as instrumental in shaping the minds of individuals and facilitates meaning-making in various settings and circumstances (Bruner, 1996). Meaning-making inclines an individual to face the world and comprehend the encounters in their appropriate cultural context. While the quantitative data told the story of *how much* the qualitative data provided a view of the *what, why, and how,* and added meaning to the *how much* determined by the quantitative results, and explained by the qualitative findings.

In reflecting on combining quantitative and qualitative research in a single study, it made sense intuitively to have data from both methodologies to address the research questions. The questions were revised several times to more accurately address the concepts investigated. From a practical standpoint, the design was efficient in facilitating data collection over the opportune time period. Data collection for each method could be gathered and evaluated separately using the techniques germane to the method and directly compared for informants' perspectives from the qualitative data with perspectives extracted from the empirical data adding voice to the informants. This allowed for a deeper understanding of the informants' perspectives and greater meaning to the statistical results.

From the work of other researchers (Creswell & Plano Clark, Johnson & and Onwuegbuzie, Bryman, et al,) on the use of mixed methods, it seemed clear to me that for this study I could obtain superior results with a mixed-methods research design. The objective was to answer the research questions to the best of my ability using the available and appropriate methods accounting for a practical and applied research philosophy to determine the methodological choice. Overall, this mixed-methods approach gave me the freedom to rigorously gather data from both quantitative and qualitative research to more completely, and with greater assurance, answer the research questions. Ultimately, we may have more questions than answers. Predominating may be this critcal aspect. In the face of diverse and continually

evolving world conditions, what are the most effective, efficient, and purposeful ways to develop and institute programs and practices to encourage pluralism, eliminate racism, support migration and reduce refugee crises, promote shared experiences, appreciation of *others*, and acceptance of differences? There appear to be promising possibilities for the support of increased interest in enhancement of transformative learning and the development of intercultural competencies. In order to succeed, I propose political and social activity at several levels; educational, governmental engagement and action, organic and *grassroots* movements and awareness, and a public global appeal on the principles of equality. This would include education programs in public institutions to prevent stereotyping on the basis of culture or ethnic background, protect citizens' right to free speech, and prohibit public institutions from any forms of discrimination on the basis of culture or ethnic background. I also advocate that parents and youth mobilize against divisive curricula in public schools and practices and policies in places of employment.

Diversity, as we hope most people understand, is a positive potential and we should aim for excellence as a mutual goal that challenges young people from all backgrounds to achieve their potential. It seems that this will be supported by those with the courage to be heard and to speak the truth. Support courage to withstand efforts that combat equality and intercultural dialogue. Fortify courage in some cases to *swim against the tide*, demonstrate courage to stand against mob mentality, and reinforce courage to discount possible scorn from *elitists*. Ultimately, when enough people recognize the human value of transformative learning and the development of intercultural competencies, we will find the courage to stand together, supporting equality and acceptance with truth, equality, and justice as the outcomes of transformative learning and intercultural competencies.

Learning from experience is more than just *being there*. Learning occurs within our capacity to construe those events and situations in which we are engaged and then to reconstruct them in transformative ways (Bennett Salonen, 2007). Making meaning from intercultural seminars may play significant and effective role in transformative learning and thinking and developing intercultural competencies through positive and constructive shared experiences, effective communication, and constructive dialogue. In doing so, it may help create a more conscious, kinder, gentler, and increasingly tolerant society. Generations of young people await and deserve opportunities to develop and grow skillsets and mindsets to become positive and culturally competent global citizens.

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Appendices

Appendix A

CULTURAL ASSESSMENT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Last **three** digits of your phone number: ___ ___ ___

Gender: MALE _____; FEMALE _____

Today's Date: _____

Age: _____

Are you a member of an ethnic minority population? YES _____   NO _____

In this first section please circle the response to indicate the degree to which you agree/disagree with the following statements (circle one response per item):

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. Creating government policies to help correct unequal treatment among racial groups is no longer necessary.	1	2	3	4	5
7. People from different cultural or ethnic groups, or people from different countries, living legally in your country, should all be eligible for the same social benefits and be treated equally like anyone else	1	2	3	4	5
8. I enjoy interacting with people from other countries and cultures.	1	2	3	4	5
9. People who enter my country illegally should not be offered health care.	1	2	3	4	5
10. When people move to a new country, they should learn enough of the common language to manage daily 'business' on their own.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I tend to feel uncomfortable with people whose cultural backgrounds differ from my own.	1	2	3	4	5

12. I have difficulty being understanding of people whose ethnicity or ethnic background, is different from mine.   1   2   3   4   5

13. Bilingual(two languages) education programs, which use English as well as pupils' native language to teach daily coursework, should be offered in public schools.   1   2   3   4   5

In this final section, please answer each question by circling one of the provided answers for each question:

14. How familiar are you with the main cultural beliefs of at least one of the major populations of color in your country.
(Exclude your own group if you are a person of color.)

    Not at all (0)   Minimally (1)   Fairly Well (2)   Very Familiar (3)

15. How well do you know the main religious beliefs and practices of at least one of the major populations of color in your country?
(Exclude your own group if you are a person of color.)

    Not at all (0)   Minimally (1)   Fairly Well (2)   Very Well (3)

16. How aware are you of the problems faced by people of color in finding jobs and getting social services (healthcare, etc.) in your country?
(Exclude your own group if you are a person of color.)

    Not at all (0)   Minimally (1)   Fairly Well (2)   Very Aware (3)

17. How well do you feel you understand an acquaintance's cultural background and culturally specific beliefs and behaviors?
(Exclude your own group if you are a person of color.)

    Not at all (0)   Minimally (1)   Fairly Well (2)   Very Well (3)

18. How well can you include culturally important information in your attitudes about people from other countries?

    Not at all (0)   Minimally (1)   Fairly Well (2)   Very Well (3)

19. How well do you know what languages are used by the populations in your country?

    Not at all (0)   Minimally (1)   Fairly Well (2)   Very Well (3)

20. How well are you able to describe the social needs of people of at least one of the populations of color in your country?
(Exclude your own group if you are a person of color.)

    Not at all (0)   Minimally (1)   Fairly Well (2)   Very Well (3)

This questionnaire was available to informants on a single sheet of paper and in the Russian language if requested.

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Appendix B

The following narrative is Dr. Pirjo Koivukangas' initial analysis of the instrument proposed for a cultural assessment survey questionnaire (CASQ) to be used at language and culture seminars and camps; August, 2007.

"Consider the following observations and comments in the development of your survey instrument, Best Regards, PK.

Question No. 5..... Ethnic minority population member (yes or no)

>>If "yes" how it affects the results?

>>If "yes" how he/she feels about the questionnaire?

Qst. No. 9 and No. 20 ! / No. 9 and No. 18 !

The "concept" / the same meaning / clarify before giving the questionnaire.

-ethnic group

-racial group

-cultural group

-foreign immigrant group

-people from emerging nations

-the population of color

-groups of color

-one of the populations of color

>> a little bit difficult in analyzing the results

First set of questions 6-13 in analysis of the results: be aware, that the logic is not the same, i.e. the directions of questions are not logically straightforward. It means that in the regression analysis -/+ has to be interpreted right.

Second set of questions 14-20

      1) which are independent variable(s)

      2) which is/are dependent variable(s)

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS METHODS TO CONSIDER

      a) typical regression analysis

      b) multivariate regression analysis

      c) qualitative (more or less) interview some individuals

The analysis method depends on the size of the population, but in all cases (%, frequencies, statistics, or 'narrative' method) has to be first hypothesized (˘ fixed") and then interpreted scientifically. The biggest 'weakness' is that the questionnaire is made to the EU countries, which are at the moment heterogeneous, i.e. Finland is most homogeneous and perhaps Holland less – USA is heterogeneous already from the beginning... The biggest meaning using this kind of (or related) questionnaire is for the purposes of some intervention, such as some language camp, → to ease people to comprehend and accept everybody as the same human being. If different kind of scenarios help everybody to see the neighbors such like her/his self, it is worth of researching."

Appendix C

Evaluation and comments made by Hillamaria Rantajääskö-Seauve, MA, on the initial proposed CASQ. Her comments are verbatim.

"I read this myself, as an ESL (English as a Second Language), but somehow familiar with academic text. I also read it to two other people, my mom, who speaks English well and can read and write (has used English in her life daily in the past), but not so familiar with academic English. And a 9th grade boy (15 years old), (Villi, my "adopted" little brother, not really but almost), whose level of English is above average for his age group.

On the first page they both understood all the other questions easily, except question number 6. I think you should rephrase it. On the second page my mom understood all the other questions easily except number 17. Villi had more trouble with the sentence structures and with the words, but that is probably because the English in the paper is much more complex than in ninth grade English textbooks. But this survey is aimed more for high school age kids (and up) anyways.. .? I was a bit confused about the terms, who are we talking about? About all the immigrants, ethnic minority groups, people from different cultures, it other words everyone else except the "original people" of the country. Or, are we talking only about people who are of other color than white or who look different? In other words, only the immigrants who are coming from countries which are further away, and the people who have already lived among the white population for a long time and "still" look different?

Rantajääskö-Seauve's ESL analysis of specific CASQ questions

CULTURAL ASSESSMENT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Last four digits of your ID or Passport number: ___ ___ ___ ___
2. Gender: MALE _____; FEMALE _____
3. Today's Date: _____
4. Age: _____
5. Are you a member of an ethnic minority population? YES _____ NO _____

In this first section please circle the response to indicate the degree to which you agree/ disagree with the following statements (circle one response per item):

Response **Key** for questions 6 -13.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. Creating government policies that correct for inequalities among racial groups [H1] is not necessary. ([H1] Brackets indicate a comment, shown below.)
7. People from different cultural or racial groups, or people from other countries should all be able to get the same social and health benefits [H2] as everyone else and be treated equally.
8. I enjoy interacting with people from other cultures.
9. People who enter my country illegally should not be offered health [H3] care.
10. When people move to a new country, they should learn enough of the common language to manage basic daily business on their own.
11. I tend to feel uncomfortable with people whose cultural backgrounds are different from mine.
12. I have difficulty being understanding of [H4] people whose culture or ethnic background, is different from mine.
13. Education programs which use the common language as well as student's own language to teach daily coursework, should be offered in public schools.
    In this final section, please answer each question by circling one of the provided answers for each question:

For the following questions Population of Color [H5] refers to non-white people. (Exclude your own group if you are a person of color.)

Response **Key** for questions 6 -13.

Not at all	A Little Bit	Fairly Well	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

14. How familiar are you with the basic cultural beliefs of at least one of the major populations of color in your country?
15. How well do you know the basic religious beliefs and practices of at least one of the major populations of color in your country?
16. How aware are you of the difficulties faced by people of color in seeking access to jobs and services [H6] in your country?
17. How well are you able to assess an acquaintance's [H7] cultural background and culturally-related beliefs and behaviors?

18. How well can you use culturally important information in your attitudes about people from other cultures?[H8]
19. How well do you know what languages are used by different groups [H9] in your country?
20. How well do you know the social needs of people of at least one of the populations of color in your country?

Rantajääskö's explanations for comments ([H1-H9]).

Question # 6 [H1]: This was definitely the most difficult to understand. Neither of my "test persons" understood it. I think you should rephrase this to something more simple.. Do you mean, that support the equal rights for different racial groups. What kind of policies are you talking about?

Question # 7 [H2]:clear. I think you mean getting the social and health benefits in "my country". I wasn't really sure of the context so I first thought that in general where ever they are in the world.

Question # 9 [H3]:"free health care"? The language is understandable, but I would have some trouble answering the question because this does not seem to be really an issue in the Finnish context. .. or at least the situation is really different of what I've read from the states. ... (but yeah maybe I'm analyzing it too far..)

Question # 12 [H4]does it mean the same thing that "understanding people"- the sentence structure is really weird for me. Otherwise it is comprehensible.

Regarding description of "people of color" [H5]:I haven't heard this term before, is it a new "non racist" word for "colored people". Is the term in an important role in the study? Maybe this works again better in the American context, but in the Finnish it a bit strange. For two reasons. 1: our major immigrant or minority groups, are not always colored, as the Russians, Roma people, People from Eastern European countries... Their situation in Finland is not that easy. but then again, it may be even more difficult for the colored ones, such as Somalis and other Africans. but there is also a bigger cultural difference as well..

2: The unfamiliarity and the grammatical structure of the term may cause the sentence to be less comprehensible for a ESL (especially in a long sentence).

Question # 16 [H6]:searching for jobs..
it's not bad, but I think it could be said it a more simple way..

Question # 17 [H7]:This was the hardest sentence to understand on this page. What does it mean. My "test group" didn't understand the sentence and I understand the words but not the point. .. how well are you able to evaluate/understand(?) a person's cultural background...etc. In what situation?

Question # 18 [H9]:Is this now purposely different than "people of color"?

Question # 19 [H10]:same thing here? ? is it only people of color, or also just white immigrants of also .. other minority groups in the country.

Appendix D

Lyrics to: *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother* (1969)

The road is long, With many a winding turn.

That leads us to who knows where, Who knows where.

But I'm strong, Strong enough to carry him.

He ain't heavy, he's my brother.

So on we go, His welfare is of my concern.

No burden is he to bear, We'll get there.

For I know, He would not encumber me.

He ain't heavy, he's my brother.

If I'm laden at all, I'm laden with sadness,

That everyone's heart, Isn't filled with the gladness, Of love for one another.

It's a long, long road, From which there is no return.

While we're on the way to there, Why not share.

And the load, Doesn't weigh me down at all.

He ain't heavy he's my brother.

He's my brother, He ain't heavy, he's my brother, he ain't heavy.

<div align="right">Bob Russell, Bobby Scott</div>

Appendix E

Theme picture from Father Flanagen's Boys Town Orphanage (1917- present)

Appendix F

Peer and expert verifiers for theme groupings and data analysis collaboration.

1. Dr. Arthur Ellis, PhD. Seattle Pacific University, Professor: School of Education, Director: Global Studies Institute at Seattle Pacific University. USA. aellis@spu.edu
2. Hillamaria Rantajääskö-Seauve, MA. University of Oulu. Finland. hilla.rantajaasko@gmail.com
3. Paul Honkala, MA. Northern Michigan University. USA. hhonkala@aol.com
4. Dr. Mariya Burlakova, PhD, Ivanovo State University – Shuya Pedagogical University Campus, Russia. teacher12@yandex.ru
5. Harry Cornwell, MA. University of Washington, USA. hcornwelljr@hotmail.com
6. Dr. Kimberley Bailey, PhD. University of Oregon, USA. kimberleyjbailey@yahoo.com

Appendix G

In the digital age, I feel it is important to provide readers of the study visual aids for a more clear representation of the study setting, format, participants and informants, and clear first hand evidence of the impact of the study on informants.

1. Informant presentations are from the May 2018 Language and Culture Seminar at Shuya Pedagogical University, Shuya, Russia.
2. Informant Interviews: 2018.
3. Photos of general interest.
4. All informants and subjects of photos and videos gave full consent to the use of their images in all visual aids. The only exception being incidental strangers in the background of Red Square and Saint Basil's Cathedral in Moscow.

Website address: www.tlici.org

Appendix H

Language and Culture Seminar Schedule
April 18 – 22, 2016
Shuya University – Ivanovo Region, Russia
Sunday April 17, Staff arrival and meetings

Day 1 Actual daily schedule

8:00 Breakfast

9:00 – 9:45 Group Meeting: 'Get Acquainted': ECC Team and Shuya Staff
    1. Welcome, Introductions, Purpose of the seminar – Hilla (H)
    2. 'Ice Breaker' - Harry (H_2)
    3. Song: Bluenose – Tomm (T)
    4. 'Ready, Set, Go' Closing Activity: - Päivi (P)

10:00 – 10:50 Small Group 'Break-out' sessions #1

Group A *MAUNA:* Socratic Seminar: The Wood Carver Tomm Stewart

Group B *MOKUPUNI:* Building a Camp Culture: Getting Acquainted Harry Cornwell

Group C *NAHELE:* Communication in a Multicultural Environment
    Hilla Rantajääskö

Group D *KAHAKAI:* Non-verbal Communication: What's Your Message?
    Päivi Lee

11:00 – 11:50 Small Group 'Break-out' sessions #2

Group B *MOKUPUNI*: Socratic Seminar: The Wood Carver
    Tomm

Group C *NAHELE:* Building a Camp Culture: Getting Acquainted
    Harry

Group D *KAHAKAI:* Working and Communication in a Multicultural Environment
    Hilla

Group A *MAUNA:* Non-verbal Communication: What's Your Message?
    Päivi

12:00 – 13:00
    Lunch

13:00 – 13:45 Large Group Meeting:
     Tomm

Songs
You Tube Video: Jeff Gordon "Pepsi" and Discussion
Profile Posters (Staff)

14:00 – 14:50   Small Group 'Break-out' sessions #3

Group C *NAHELE:* Socratic Seminar: The Wood Carver
     Tomm

Group D *KAHAKAI:* Building a Camp Culture: Getting Acquainted
     Harry

Group A *MAUNA:* Working and Communication in a Multicultural Environment
     Hilla

Group B *MOKUPUNI:* Non-verbal Communication: What's Your Message?
     Päivi

15:00 – 15:50   Small Group 'Break-out' sessions #4

Group D *KAHAKAI:* Socratic Seminar: The Wood Carver
     Tomm

Group A *MAUNA:* Building a Camp Culture: Getting Acquainted
     Harry

Group B *MOKUPUNI:* Communication in a Multicultural Environment
     Hilla

Group C *NAHELE:* Non-verbal Communication: What's Your Message?
     Päivi

17:00   Dinner

18:00 19:30 Evening Program: MC - Hilla

1. Ice Breakers: Harry
2. Media Show - Camps: ECC Video
3. New Activities: H&H
4. Music: Folk Songs T, H, H_2, P

Days 2-5 were very similar with appropriate variations

Appendix I

Interview Questions for Intervention Group Informants

1. What was your feeling of the overall atmosphere of the seminar?
2. What activities and lessons were particularly helpful or impactful: learning and enjoyment?
3. What do you think about the opportunities to share thoughts and opinions?
4. How has the influence of the language and culture seminars affected transformations in your thinking and attitudes toward others and your overall world view?
5. What have been some of your important learning experiences?
6. Explain the impact on your language skills: speaking and listening, comprehension, mechanics (grammar, sentence structure, word forms, pronunciation, etc.)
7. How do you feel about the freedom to speak, and openness during the seminar? Please explain.
8. Do you think that music and singing was an important element in the seminars? In what ways?
9. Specifically, in what ways has this experience impacted your thinking about people from other cultures and what we call *the other?*
10. Specifically, how have the seminars impacted you personally in your attitudes about, or appreciation for, other cultures?
11. What else do you want to say about the seminars and what would you like to change for future seminars?

Appendix J

Intervention group pretest and posttest scores. Cumulative descriptive data shown on Table 5.1.

Subject	Pretest	Posttest	• Subject	Pretest	Posttest
1	38	57	25	42	59
2	38	42	26	37	53
3	50	51	27	31	50
4	50	53	28	44	56
5	42	46	29	56	56
6	53	53	30	50	58
7	42	42	31	44	48
8	44	57	32	43	51
9	51	60	33	43	53
10	49	49	34	40	57
11	45	52	35	44	47
12	47	50	36	43	44
13	41	50	37	53	56
14	50	51	38	49	51
15	39	51	39	44	51
16	45	53	40	47	53
17	41	58	41	45	49
18	51	52	42	47	51
19	42	52	43	37	50
20	43	48	44	50	48
21	45	50	45	45	49
22	43	45	46	43	53
23	38	50	47	41	49
24	46	54			

Comparison group pretest and posttest scores. Cumulative descriptive data shown on
Table 5.2.

Subject	Pretest	Posttest	Subject	Pretest	Posttest
1	45	52	27	50	50
2	47	42	28	30	38
3	37	36	29	40	47
4	45	39	30	43	58
5	47	48	31	43	44
6	48	35	32	39	41
7	37	40	33	56	44
8	45	52	34	44	43
9	47	42	35	44	43
10	37	36	36	39	46
11	45	39	37	42	37
12	47	48	38	43	44
13	48	35	39	43	44
14	37	40	40	42	50
15	41	41	41	46	45
16	41	42	42	48	49
17	47	44	43	49	41
18	41	46	44	40	45
19	42	44	45	44	42
20	52	47	46	50	45
21	40	34	47	47	44
22	45	42	48	47	45
23	33	36	49	42	46
24	49	47	50	41	39
25	38	40	51	44	42
26	48	46			