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Cohesive Purpose: Learning in General Education and Residence Life

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by

Elizabeth Ann Hicks

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL
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MASTER'S THESIS
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This is to certify that the Thesis of

Elizabeth Ann Hicks

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Cohesive Purpose: Learning in General Education and Residence Life

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the

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Abstract

This study sought to explore general education professors' and residence hall directors' efforts to address liberal learning objectives and draw connections between various learning opportunities in the curriculum and co-curriculum. Previous research assessed the contributions residence life and other co-curricular learning opportunities make to students' overall development in college. Additionally, general education courses educate students broadly in a variety of disciplines. Researchers also emphasized the importance of all learning opportunities focusing on a shared institutional mission. In this study, eight general education professors and four residence hall directors participated in interviews regarding their practices related to both topics in their respective educational environments. The results evidenced educators' efforts to foster holistic development through a focus on liberal learning objectives and connections between learning opportunities. The educators tended to address a broad range of learning objectives in residence halls and general education courses. Additionally, while educators could grow by increasing the number and depth of connections, all participants either drew connections among different learning opportunities or articulated the importance of these connections. Many connections linked curricular and co-curricular learning. Interview results also emphasized time and opportunities for collaboration as resources to help focus on learning objectives and connect with different learning opportunities. Implications for practice included providing these resources and educating staff and faculty members about the efforts of other educators on their campuses.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

Clubs, athletic events, campus traditions, major courses, general education

classes, performances, Greek life, residence hall programming—college and university

students devote their time to these activities and many others. Society and the academy

often identify academic courses, sometimes specifically major-related courses, as the

main learning opportunities offered on campus. Students, however, learn and develop

through educational opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom. For example,

social connections and relationships increase opportunities for students to learn through

formal and informal interactions (Budwig, 2013; Haynes, 2006; King & Lindsay, 2004;

Shushok, Scales, Sriram, & Kidd, 2011). These relationships sometimes begin in the

classroom, but they often form and grow through extracurricular activities as well.

Without extracurricular education, often referred to as the co-curriculum, students

lose opportunities to foster skills not focused on in the classroom. Unfortunately, co-

curricular educational opportunities become hindered by the frequent lack of learning

connection between different campus programs (Kerr & Tweedy, 2006; King & Lindsay,

2004; Schroeder & Mable, 1994). In order for outside-of-class-learning opportunities to

complement rather than compete with education in the classroom, the institution must

have a clear and unified mission from which all departments operate (Kuh, Schuh, &

Whitt, 1991; Schroeder and Mable, 1994). Emphasis on learning in all areas of the institution and shared purpose among those areas increase opportunities for cohesive student learning.

Purpose of the Research

This study sought to explore faculty methods of addressing liberal learning objectives in the co-curriculum, specifically residence halls, and the curriculum, specifically general education. For the purpose of this study, general education refers to curricula that expose students to liberal learning opportunities and a variety of academic disciplines through course requirements or other programs. Additionally, the study investigated faculty members' attempts to connect learning from different campus areas.

Learning environments. General education courses offer opportunities for students to learn about a broader range of academic disciplines and topics than they would study in courses required for their individual majors or minors. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) defined general education as "that part of a liberal education curriculum that is shared by all students. It provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and forms the basis for developing essential intellectual, civic, and practical capacities" (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2014). These courses focus on skills such as approaching learning deeply and integrating learning from different areas (Hall, Culver & Burge, 2012; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009). These unique skills fostered by general education programs prove necessary components of students' overall development during college.

The residence hall offers an environment different from the classroom in which students learn through involvement and relationships. By living on campus, students

benefit from increased opportunities to spend time with and learn from others in the university community (Chickering, 1974; Shushok et al., 2011). The additional time spent on campus naturally leads to more frequent interactions with peers, faculty, and staff. Researchers note students who live on campus also experience greater "student satisfaction, involvement, personal growth, and degree attainment" (Schroeder & Mabel, 1994, p. xii).

Value of the co-curriculum. Learning within the classroom has become a commonly accepted area of education for college students, and many studies address learning objectives in this area. Learning opportunities within the co-curriculum receive less recognition, and research about learning objectives in this area appears less prevalent. Many institutions create learning objectives to assess academic programs, but few focus on "the broader dimensions of undergraduate education," such as the co-curriculum (Schroeder & Mable, 1994, p. 12). Residence halls, one specific piece of the co-curriculum, lack respect as contributors to the educational missions of institutions (Fenske, 1989). When institutions fail to position residence halls as educational venues, and when they disregard the assessment of learning in the halls, they sacrifice a valuable opportunity to foster student growth.

Research Questions

Considering the potential contributions to student learning from residence life and general education, the importance of assessing education via learning objectives, and the value of connecting learning in different areas, this study sought to answer two questions:

1. Comparatively, how do residence hall directors and general education professors facilitate student learning related to liberal learning objectives in their individual educational environments?

2. How do residence hall directors and general education professors facilitate the connection of student learning between their own educational environments and other areas of campus?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Conditions for Learning

In order to develop relevant and achievable learning objectives, institutions must consider conditions necessary to foster student learning, including unified mission, learning in community, and student involvement. Schroeder and Mable (1994) explained important college and university practices that facilitate learning include "coherent and complementary . . . purposes" and "an institutional philosophy that emphasizes a holistic view of talent development" (p. 110-111). When different departments of an institution, such as student affairs and academic affairs, share common purposes, students can better learn. Disjointed goals from each institutional program, on the other hand, lead to less effective learning. Kuh et al. (1991) noted, "activities and events that are not part of the curriculum" must still "complement the institution's educational purposes" (p. 7). Focus on broad institutional mission and goals from individual departments in both the curriculum and the co-curriculum leads to more holistic learning for students.

In addition to a unified institutional mission, relationships with peers also increase opportunities for student learning. While colleges and universities most frequently rely on university faculty to create learning opportunities, Newman (1905) claimed when students "freely mix with each other, they are sure to learn from one another, even if there be no one to teach them" (p. 146). King and Lindsay (2004) also emphasized the

ability for students to teach each other by explaining that peer relationships can enhance learning. The classroom alone certainly offers opportunities for students to learn. When classroom learning does not encourage students to connect with other people, however, they lose learning opportunities. Especially for traditional, college-age students, "the intellectual domain needs to be infused with affective and social elements" (Budwig, 2013, p. 43). In a college or university setting, these social elements frequently come through formal and informal interactions with peers in the classroom, the residence hall, on-campus events, and off-campus gatherings. "Membership in knowledge communities," such as the communities fostered on college or university campuses, deepen the learning experienced in the formal classroom (p. 41).

Involvement also increases opportunities for student learning. Astin's involvement theory presented the importance of student involvement through five postulates. In the fourth postulate, Astin (1985) theorized, "the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program" (p. 136). Astin's theory provided a strong foundation for work with college students, reminding institutional staff and faculty of the importance of encouraging student involvement to increase growth and development.

In relation to student involvement and growth, Schroeder and Mable (1994) mentioned "active learning" and "time on task" (p. 76) as two critical conditions for student learning. By learning actively and devoting sufficient time to work and activities, students evidence their involvement. Boyer (1987) echoed Astin's involvement theory in his explanation that "the effectiveness of the undergraduate experience . . . is directly

linked to the time students spend on campus and to the quality of their involvement in activities" (p. 191). Overall, the level of student investment and involvement both inside and outside of the classroom significantly impacts learning and growth.

Impact of Residence Life on Student Learning

The residence hall acts as one element of campus life offering natural opportunities for learning in community. While college students can certainly experience deep learning without living on campus, residence life provides extra opportunities to increase learning through relationships with peers. Relational elements in a residence life setting that foster learning include multi-generational halls, mentoring opportunities, and involvement of both faculty-in-residence and student affairs professionals in the hall (Shushok et al., 2011). When students live on campus, they experience opportunities to interact with other students and faculty members more frequently, and, according to Shushok et al. (2011), they benefit from "both structured and serendipitous educational moments" with others (p. 17; Chickering, 1974).

When living in a residence hall, students also benefit from opportunities to grow cognitively. Pascarella et al. (1992) found freshmen living in a residence hall at a research university experienced greater growth in critical thinking skills than did similar students who lived off campus. These findings indicate that living in a residence hall may offer increased opportunities for cognitive and intellectual growth.

Other researchers noted increased student involvement in the living community often led to greater academic and social satisfaction with the living environment (Arboleda, Wang, Shelley, & Whalen, 2003). Greater satisfaction can increase student comfort "to study and collaborate academically with others in their community" (p. 528-

529). This increased comfort with academic collaboration can lead to opportunities to grow cognitively by learning from peers. Chickering (1974) explained students who live on campus also showed increased engagement with academic programs and intellectual activities. Each of these researchers offers evidence of increased cognitive engagement through on-campus residence.

In addition to impacting students' cognitive development, living in a residence hall can impact relational development. For example, residential students "are more positive about the social and interpersonal environment of their campus" (Schroeder & Mable, 2004, p. 39). Students who live on campus also develop more psychosocially, increasing autonomy and inner-directedness and refining their self-concept. Furthermore, students living on campus display increased participation in extracurricular activities and leadership positions as well as greater attendance at cultural events (Chickering, 1974).

Though studies evidence on-campus residence as a potential factor to increase student learning, many colleges and universities fail to take full advantage of this developmental opportunity for students. Institutions can make learning opportunities more specific and measurable by utilizing learning objectives, but many residence life programs do not focus on learning objectives. Still, a few colleges and universities have created specific learning goals. The University of Delaware, for example, emphasizes citizenship education in residence life, with foci of self-awareness, connection, and community (Kerr & Tweedy, 2006). Their residence life curricular program includes learning objectives and seeks to educate students outside of the classroom.

Many universities use living-learning centers and programs to increase learning through residence life. Living-learning programs "allow residential students to enjoy the

learning and developmental benefits of living in an intimate academic community within the context of a large university" (Inkelas, Zeller, Murphy, & Hummel, 2006, p. 10). Whether through living-learning programs or traditional residence halls, intentional focus on learning in residence life can increase the value these departments offer to students.

Impact of General Education on Student Learning

General education, like residence life, fosters opportunities for students to grow and develop outside of their chosen majors. Courses required in general education focus "on developing learners who have a deeper conceptual understanding of the knowledge they are acquiring" (Budwig, 2013, p. 41). These courses emphasize different skills than do courses required by students' majors. General education courses tend to emphasize intellectual skills, diverse thinking, deep approaches to learning, individual and social responsibility, and integrative thinking (Hall et al., 2012; Laird et al., 2009). Non-general education courses, on the other hand, tend to place more emphasis on developing practical skills and offer more opportunities to interact with faculty.

General education programs focus on specific learning objectives more frequently than residence life programs. Unfortunately, general education learning objectives at some institutions use vague terminology and lack clear definitions. For example, at the University of North Dakota, faculty members realized the terms "critical thinking" and "problem solving" did not translate into measurable or achievable outcomes (Hawthorne, Kelsch, & Steen, 2010).

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) worked to establish clearer learning outcomes to increase student learning. It highlighted core skills students should develop through general education courses rather than requiring students to complete a sampling

of courses from different areas in the distribution requirement format. The institution's achievement-centered program, started in 2011, created ten distinct learning outcomes and assesses student achievement of these outcomes. Administration at UNL point out that a focus on these outcomes instead of on subject area led to successful reform of the school's general education program (Fuess & Mitchell, 2011).

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), a group of more than 1,300 institutions focused on liberal learning, also seeks to improve general education learning outcomes. The AAC&U authored essential learning outcomes to guide general education curricula reform and help increase student learning through these programs. The organization encourages institutions to help students learn according to the following outcomes: "knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world . . . . Intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibility . . . . [and] Integrative and applied learning" (AAC&U, 2014).

Disconnection in the Curriculum

Residence life and general education programs both foster learning and development among students, but they each have many areas for improvement. Both programs currently lack connection to each other and to other areas of the curriculum. Many teaching faculty, for example, "are aware of the work of only some of the many other campus professionals who provide or support learning opportunities for students . . . . this is unfortunate because these educators also help the institution achieve its teaching mission" (King & Lindsay, 2004, p. 51). Kerr and Tweedy (2006) also emphasized the lack of awareness between departments in their discussion of the student affairs dichotomy. The dichotomy explains the disconnection between faculty, staff, and

programs in academic affairs with their counterparts in student affairs. When faculty and staff in different departments of an institution fail to collaborate with each other or, worse, remain completely unaware of the work of other departments, they sacrifice opportunities to increase student learning collaboratively.

While faculty and staff struggle to overcome the student affairs dichotomy, students also notice a disconnection between academic and social activities. Institutions face a "great separation, sometimes to the point of isolation, between academic life and social life on campus" (as cited in Schroeder & Mable, 1994, p. 134-135). Tinto and Pusser (2006) noted involvement includes academic and social pieces, and when students integrate these two, they prove more likely to graduate. In order to connect learning and develop "true expertise," students must be encouraged to learn in different areas and "apply learning across contexts" (Budwig, 2013, p. 44). Whitt (2006) also supported application of knowledge in different areas by promoting engagement in learning both through in-class curricular opportunities and co-curricular activities outside of class.

Outside of class learning, when connected with learning through general education courses, "promotes vital awareness of the world beyond our institutions" and helps students validate "their learning in all of its forms and sources" (Reich & Head, 2010, p. 74). The National Leadership Consortium of the AAC&U supports further connection between the curriculum and co-curriculum through their goal of creating practices to "foster students' ethical, moral, and civic development across the curriculum and co-curriculum" (Loris, 2010, p. 48-49). To maximize student learning, institutions must foster these connections between departments in all areas of campus.

For many colleges and universities, the disconnection is particularly a problem for residence halls, with institutions often failing to connect learning between residence life and the classroom (as cited in Schroeder & Mable, 1994). Residence life has a specific opportunity to impact students through connection with learning in other areas. Whitt (2006) explained, ". . . residence halls can be an important locus of support and intellectual vitality—or venues that compete with the educational mission of the institution—that can have a significant influence on the quality of campus life for everyone" (p. 8). By facilitating connections between learning in the hall, in classrooms, and in other campus programs, student affairs staff can foster intellectual and holistic development opportunities for students.

In order to challenge students appropriately and present a unified approach to learning, development in both residence life and general education, as well as other departments, must fit cohesively with other learning at the institution. Schroeder and Mable (1994) explained, "The single most important factor in channeling student effort toward educationally purposeful activities is a clear, coherent institutional mission" (p. 110-111). They later called residence hall staff to "develop a philosophy of student learning consistent with the academic mission of their institution" (p. 310-311). From the general education side, goals for the general education program must become "integrated at all levels of the curriculum and in courses taught by a greater range of faculty" (Hawthorne et al., 2010, p. 32).

Institutions, however, have begun to accomplish this goal of integration (Hawthorne et al., 2010). When learning at an institution proves effective, "the fundamental mission of student affairs, that which encompasses all of the co-curriculum,

is the school's academic mission" (Whitt, 2006, p. 3). General education courses and residence life programs both have great potential to add to the learning students experience in courses required for their major area of study. To maximize learning from these areas of the institution, residence life and general education programs must connect closely with other departments, events, and courses and should foster opportunities for students to unite learning from a variety of sources.

Conclusion

Interpersonal relationships significantly impact learning, especially for students in a university setting. Opportunities to learn outside of the classroom, connections with faculty members, and consistent institutional goals also help foster learning. Since interactions with peers allow students to deepen learning from the classroom, living in a residence hall on campus can help students grow cognitively and relationally. General education programs also help students develop skills and apply knowledge in a variety of fields. By connecting learning in general education courses, residence life programs, and other departments, faculty and staff can equip students to grow and develop holistically. This study sought to explore how faculty and staff employ strategies for addressing learning objectives and drawing connections among learning opportunities.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Context

This study researched the impact of general education courses and residence halls on student achievement of learning objectives. The researcher used a phenomenological design to investigate the efforts of both general education professors and residence hall directors to address learning objectives and connect learning from various areas of the institution. According to Creswell (2013), "a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon" (p. 76). Based on individual descriptions from participants in empirical phenomenological research, "general or universal meanings are derived, in other words the essences or structures of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). This study explored the phenomenon of educators' methods of addressing learning objectives and creating connections between opportunities for students by interviewing a sample of educators. Through the experiences described by the sample, the researcher derived information about educators' methods of addressing learning objectives and connecting learning in general education courses and residence halls.

The selected institution adopted the general education program in 2012, three years prior to the study. To meet general education requirements, all degree-seeking undergraduate students at the institution must complete 20 courses from a variety of core

areas (e.g., spiritual foundation, fine arts, science, literature). The curriculum builds on the value of lifelong learning and emphasizes seven learning objectives, each of which includes three or four specific learning outcomes as sub-points.

The residence life program houses almost all undergraduate students at the institution and consists of traditional residence halls, university-owned apartment-style halls, and a living learning community. A professional or graduate student residence hall director supervises each hall, and in the larger halls, a graduate assistant residence hall director assists with hall leadership. Halls divide into floors or wings, and on each floor or wing, student leaders plan events, enforce policies, and offer support and education.

Participants

Academic and student affairs faculty members participated in the study. By definition, a faculty member holds faculty status at the institution and has earned at least a master's degree. This particular institution considers student development professionals faculty members. The faculty members interviewed had held their current positions for at least one year by the time of the study and thus had sufficient experience to discuss their interaction with the institution's general education learning objectives.

Four participants served as residence hall directors chosen via purposeful sampling to represent the population of six full-time residence hall directors at the institution. In purposeful sampling, the researcher intentionally selects information rich individuals "to learn or understand the central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2012, p. 206). The researcher purposefully selected four residence hall directors who had occupied their positions for the greatest amount of time. By selecting these four residence hall directors, the researcher gained an understanding of the potential for student learning with

residence life educators who had additional experience addressing learning objectives in their positions.

The other eight participants served as members of the academic faculty who teach general education courses, representing the population of all general education professors at the institution. In order to gain both a representative understanding of how academic faculty currently address general education learning objectives and insights into potential areas for improvement, the researcher selected academic faculty participants through a mix of random and purposeful sampling. For the random sample, the researcher chose four participants from a list of all academic faculty members who taught at least one general education course for at least one year.

The researcher selected four additional academic faculty members via purposeful sampling. The researcher chose these four faculty members from all professors who teach at least one general education course and serve on the general education committee, as they have greater exposure to the learning objectives. Insights gained through their interviews allowed the researcher to discuss the impact of increased exposure of the professor to the general education learning objectives on student achievement.

Instrument

The researcher conducted interviews with each faculty member. During the interviews, the researcher asked questions to determine if and how the faculty member addressed each of the seven general education learning objectives. Questions asked which, if any, of the learning objectives the faculty member addressed in his or her general education classroom or residence hall. Through the interviews, the researcher also determined the nature of the connection of the faculty member's educational efforts

with the learning objectives. Questions also asked if and how the faculty member seeks to connect learning in his or her environment with other on-campus learning opportunities. The researcher conducted a pilot interview before formal interviews to aid in refining questions.

Procedures

The researcher contacted the selected faculty members via an email message that explained the study and invited them to participate in an interview. The interviewer met with each interviewee, asked a pre-determined set of questions, and left space to ask additional questions based on the progress of each interview.

Prior to the interview, the researcher provided each participant with an informed consent agreement and a description of the interview protocol. The protocol included the study's purpose, expected use of the results, a reminder of confidentiality of interview content, and a statement of the approximate 30 minutes required for the interview. During the interviews, the researcher reviewed the protocol with each participant.

Analysis

With the permission of participants, each interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded. The researcher checked the accuracy of findings through the member checking method by confirming the transcriptions of interviews with interviewees via email. The researcher then triangulated the data, or corroborated results from the different individuals interviewed. The coding process determined common themes from the interviews to equip the researcher to answer the research questions. To code the data, the researcher read through the transcriptions and "divided the text into segments of information" (Creswell, 2012, p. 244). Next, the researcher used codes to label the

segments. After reducing overlap between codes, the researcher condensed them into themes. From the themes, the researcher interpreted and summarized the results of the research.

Summary

After analyzing interviews with educators in residence life and general education, the researcher gained understanding in three areas: (1) the extent to which educators in each department emphasize learning objectives, (2) if and how educators in each department work to connect with learning in other areas of campus, and (3) possibilities for improvement in educators' efforts to facilitate student achievement of learning objectives.

Chapter 4

Results

This study's results highlight educators' efforts to focus on general education learning objectives and draw connections between learning opportunities. As described in chapter 3, the phenomenological study gathered data through interviews with eight professors who teach at least one general education course and four residence hall directors.

Based on the data collected from the interviews, five themes and twelve subthemes emerged. These themes and subthemes represent the educational efforts of both the hall directors and the professors. The first theme, significance of learning objectives, encompassed three subthemes: number of learning objectives addressed, degree of focus on learning objectives, and intentionality in addressing learning objectives. The second theme of commonly emphasized learning objectives included three subthemes: spiritual maturity, critical thinking, and stewardship. The third theme was perceptions of educational abilities. The fourth theme, connections between learning opportunities, included four subthemes: past and current connections, desired connections, connections within the curriculum or within the co-curriculum, and connections between the curriculum and the co-curriculum. The final theme of resources included the subthemes of collaboration and time. In the presentation of the results, the researcher identified participants by pseudonyms to maintain anonymity.

The two research questions guiding this study outlined the following inquiries:

1. Comparatively, how do residence hall directors and general education professors facilitate student learning related to liberal learning objectives in their individual educational environments?

2. How do residence hall directors and general education professors facilitate the connection of student learning between their own educational environments and other areas of campus?

The first two themes and the included subthemes answered the first research question, and the fourth theme and its subthemes answered the second research question. The third theme offered insights to educators' abilities related to both questions. The final theme provided information for higher education institutions who seek to support educators in developing skills in both areas.

Theme: Significance of Learning Objectives

Each participant in the study reported on educational opportunities they offered to students related to seven different learning objectives. The participants varied in the number of learning objectives they addressed, the degree to which they focused on each objective in the course, and their intentionality in addressing learning objectives.

Subtheme: Number of learning objectives addressed. Some participants focused on a smaller selection of the learning objectives, while others addressed all seven in their educational venue. Overall, the hall directors took a slightly more broad focus and emphasized a greater number of the learning objectives in their halls than did most of the professors. All of the hall director participants addressed six or seven of the seven learning objectives at varying levels in their residence halls. Six of the eight professors

also addressed six or seven of the learning objectives, with the other two professors

addressing five of the seven learning objectives. One professor, Dr. Hunter, for example,

said he addressed "pretty much all of [the objectives] to a greater or lesser extent." Many

of the professors reported more depth in emphasizing a few objectives most prevalently

and only touching on others, while the hall directors described slightly more breadth and

variety in addressing multiple objectives more equally. These differences in depth and

breadth, however, did not prove significant enough to yield a distinct pattern.

Subtheme: Degree of focus on learning objectives. The research also showed a

variety in the significance of learning objectives in the educational venue of the

participant. Because of the breadth of focus of the learning objectives and their

connection to the university's mission and values, the hall directors naturally focused on

one or more of the learning objectives in almost all of their educational efforts. Some

programs, events, and conversations naturally connected to more than one objective.

Each professor identified one to four learning objectives as the most prominent learning

objective(s) in their course compared to all seven learning objectives. One participant,

for example, taught an art course and identified the aesthetic literacy objective as most

prominent with the critical thinking objective also playing a large role in the course.

Some participants focused heavily on the general education learning objectives in

their teaching, meaning the most emphasized learning objective(s) played a large role in

the course in comparison to all material taught and became consistently reinforced. The

art professor who focused on aesthetic literacy made this learning objective a key piece of

her course, emphasizing it through most course content and addressing specific outcomes

that fell under the objective. Six professors gave responses that clearly communicated

the significant role the learning objectives play in their courses, whether they addressed the learning objectives directly or indirectly. The other two participants offered answers that made it more difficult to discern the role learning objectives played in their course. As the general education learning objectives appear fairly broad and encompass most topics of potential instruction, even the two professors whose level of emphasis on the learning objectives seemed less clear still naturally connected with two or more learning objectives in many of their educational efforts.

Subtheme: Intentionality in addressing learning objectives. Most participants addressed learning objectives naturally rather than through intentional, planned efforts to teach specific learning goals. The hall directors did not communicate specific plans to address the general education learning objectives because they intentionally focus on the residence life learning outcomes instead. However, the content of the general education learning objectives related closely to educational efforts in residence life, so the hall directors still naturally incorporated them. Hall director Mr. Davis discussed the learning objectives:

> In residence life, we have a whole ton of formal programming that ends up being background and scaffolding. We just don't lead with it. We end up leading with . . . the really interpersonal. But truthfully, our staff is quite capable of delivering these things.

Many of the professors also communicated how connections with learning objectives occurred naturally in the course rather than through intentionally planned efforts to focus on specific learning objectives. These professors used words like "probably" and "might" when describing how certain pieces of their course connected to

the learning objectives, implying less intentionality behind incorporating the objectives. Dr. Johnson suggested "more explicit descriptions about how [the learning objectives] line up with the courses" could help students understand how professors meet the objectives. Participants who served on the general education committee understood the learning objectives more than participants who had not served on the committee. This involvement led to a small increase in intentionality behind focusing on the learning objectives for three of the four participants currently serving on the committee, but connections to learning objectives for these participants still proved more natural than intentionally planned.

Theme: Commonly Addressed Learning Objectives

Each of the seven learning objectives was represented in multiple participants' educational environments, but some objectives proved more commonly addressed. Spiritual maturity, critical thinking, and stewardship emerged as the most highly represented objectives in the participants' educational venues.

Subtheme: Spiritual maturity. Since the institution at which the research took place is a Christian liberal arts university, all participants not surprisingly addressed spiritual maturity. The institution defines this learning objective as including a strong faith foundation, knowledge of Scripture, faith integrated into daily life, practice of spiritual disciplines, and a continually growing faith in Jesus Christ. Regardless of which academic discipline the educator represented, all participants reported connecting their educational content with spiritual maturity. As hall director Ms. West, reflected, "Hopefully this weaves itself throughout all of [the university] and all the student experiences."

The educators shared a belief in the importance of this objective and articulated specific methods for focusing on the objective in their educational environments. The professors described connecting the majority of course topics to spiritual maturity through classroom activities, discussions, assignments, and components of lectures, encouraging students to reflect on their faith. Two professors reported emphasizing this learning objective during every class session, and the other six professors still addressed it multiple times per semester. One professor, Dr. Baines, explained, "Pretty much any and every lecture is going to have some eye toward their growth in Christ . . . . Each day I try to integrate or show how [the course] is relevant to our lives as disciples of Christ."

The hall directors reported connecting with spiritual maturity naturally through conversations and intentionally through programs offered at least weekly to residents. Mr. Davis identified the residence hall as a venue where students process spiritual development opportunities they experience in all areas of campus. Amid the responses of both the hall directors and the professors, four participants described a focus on educating students toward development of character traits that evidence their faith, with three of those participants referencing the fruits of the spirit from Galatians 5:22-23 specifically.

Subtheme: Critical thinking. While some participants expressed confusion about the university's wording in the critical thinking objective, all participants appeared enthusiastic about helping students build critical thinking skills and expressed methods they used to help students grow in this area. The university's definition emphasizes evaluating information and perspectives to discover truth, determining quality of information, and pursuing knowledge in multiple disciplines.

All of the professors offered opportunities in their courses to help students develop critical thinking skills. The level of emphasis in different classes ranged from getting "their feet wet" to "probably the main thing we do." Six professors connected this learning objective to a majority of topics or sessions in their course. The other two professors still emphasized critical thinking, but they did so in fewer course topics and sessions. Dr. Johnson mentioned helping students in his course develop critical thinking skills such as empathy for others and openness to self-criticism.

Three of the four residence hall directors described critical thinking as playing a significant role in educational opportunities in their halls. One hall director thought critical thinking wove naturally through most learning opportunities in the hall, and another described it as what hall directors are "constantly doing." Ms. West explained focusing on students' opportunities to develop critical thinking skills within the residence hall by processing whether or not they agreed with perspectives presented in chapel sessions. Overall, the educators reported referencing different aspects of critical thinking and using a variety of methods to develop skills, but they shared a goal of helping students increase critical thinking ability.

Subtheme: Stewardship. A final learning objective most participants emphasized was stewardship. Many of the professors and hall directors focused on educating students toward increased stewardship of their calling, gifts, time, communities, and physical resources. One professor, Dr. Howard, noted the potential to focus on stewardship in both the curriculum and the co-curriculum. He reflected, "Are we going to use what you are studying specifically to make yourself different, be transformed by your learning? How are you going to use this learning to serve the

world?" He and other participants emphasized the importance of students growing in self-awareness to increase their ability to steward their own potential contributions to communities. Similar to Dr. Howard, hall director Mr. Davis pointed out students' need to learn more about themselves in order to determine what they can contribute and what aspects of their person should be stewarded in community.

In general, participants discussed helping students reflect on different aspects of stewardship—including time, money, talents, and relationships—through experiences in their respective educational venues. The four hall directors all described this outcome as naturally and frequently emphasized through residence hall involvement. For the professors, stewardship usually served as an underlying dimension of the course, but it still naturally connected to many course discussions, lectures, activities, and assignments.

Theme: Personal Background Impacting Educational Abilities

During the interviews, each participant identified the learning objectives in which they felt equipped to help facilitate learning in their educational environment. For most participants, their confidence in offering educational opportunities related to the objectives came more from personal background or interest than from training the university provided. Many of the educators described a natural appreciation or some level of knowledge connected to each learning objective based on past experiences or education. One professor, Dr. Patterson, felt equipped to educate in relation to civic engagement because of her research and writing on social justice issues. Dr. Patterson's publications and speaking experience helped her facilitate learning in relation to communication skills. Communication and civics were not main emphases in her courses, but Dr. Patterson still felt confident facilitating learning in those areas.

Eight participants reported feeling equipped to educate students in all seven learning objectives. Depending on the participant and the objective, descriptions of level of educational ability ranged from an affinity for the topic and a desire to facilitate learning opportunities to expertise on the topic and confidence in offering direct teaching. Even if that educator's academic background did not closely relate to any of the objectives, he or she felt prepared to help students explore the topics on some level because of a personal appreciation for the topic. Hall director Ms. Wood self-identified as not an expert but a learner and co-educator in relation to some of the objectives in which she has less expertise. She would not "be putting on a program with [herself] as an expert in any of those areas" but would serve as a "resident expert," "exposing people to other voices" when possible. Dr. Baines also emphasized a natural tendency to connect with many of the learning objectives. While his course focused mainly on two learning objectives, he addressed others as "natural outcomes of a holistic course."

Theme: Connections between Learning Environments

Many of the questions participants answered related to connections between their own educational environment—either the courses they teach or the residence hall they supervise—and other learning opportunities on campus. Eleven of the twelve participants articulated at least one connection they have drawn between their own educational environment and another environment on campus. While the twelfth participant had not yet formed a specific connection, this participant communicated understanding of the value of connections between learning opportunities. The number and strength of connections, as well as the desire to improve or increase connections in the future, varied between participants. Additionally, some educators connected only

within their own realm, either the curriculum or the co-curriculum, while others

connected to the other realm. The theme of connections between learning environments

encompasses four subthemes: past or current connections, desired connections,

connections within the curriculum or co-curriculum, and connections between the

curriculum and co-curriculum.

      Subtheme: Past or current connections. When asked if they had connected

with other learning opportunities on campus, eight participants showed strong evidence

of connection by answering affirmatively and giving three or more examples of

connections with specific classes, programs, events, or departments. The other four

participants mentioned zero, one, or two current or past connections with other learning

opportunities. Each of these four participants, however, had either made at least one

connection between their own environment and another learning opportunity or

communicated understanding of the value of connections.

      Multiple participants referenced similar areas of connection. Ten participants

connected their own learning environment with an evening lecture or event, six

participants with service opportunities, four participants with a student activities group

focused on art and culture, and six participants with other classes or professors. Most

consisted of discussing students' involvement in the connected opportunities,

encouraging or requiring students to attend events, and talking with individual students or

groups of students about other opportunities. Dr. Johnson described talking in his course

about other classes students can take and drawing connections with mission trips and

social justice opportunities. Hall director Ms. West noted her emphasis on encouraging

students to attend existing programs rather than planning additional events for her

residence hall. She explained, "There are so many resources and things planned . . . so I want them to attend those events, and then come back to the hall and process them and debrief them." Another professor, Dr. Baines, recognized connections between learning opportunities as an area to improve in his course. He offered students extra credit to attend plays related to course content but did not recall other past or current connections.

   Subtheme: Desired connections. All participants expressed value in connecting with other learning opportunities outside of their own classroom or residence hall. Even the four participants who gave fewer examples of existing connections explained a connection they valued or believed they could make with another learning opportunity. Some participants articulated more enthusiasm for connections than others. When asked what, if any, specific learning opportunities on campus they could connect with in addition to any current connections, seven participants specified new areas they had interest in addressing. Other participants recognized the strength of opportunities offered through other departments on campus but felt uncertain about specific areas with which they could form new connections. As one professor, Dr. Richards, explained, "There's a lot of good stuff going on . . . . it's just a matter of trying to connect those" opportunities.

   Subtheme: Connections within the curriculum or within the co-curriculum. As one goal, this research investigated connections between the curriculum and the co-curriculum in students' educational experiences. The hall directors in this study represent the co-curricular realm, and the general education professors represent the curricular realm. During the interviews, many educators gave examples of connections within their own realm. Overall, the hall directors mentioned co-curricular programs for a majority of their connections. Many programs came specifically from the student development

department, which also manages residence life. Additionally, the hall directors, on average, mentioned more connections with co-curricular programs than the professors. All four hall director participants referred to specific student affairs offices or programs on campus with their appropriate titles, showing a strong awareness of programming in their own realm of the co-curriculum. Professors more frequently referred to co-curricular programs with general terms instead of specific office titles. Hall directors and professors referred to pieces of the academic curriculum, specifically courses or professors, in their courses or residence halls. Dr. Green, for example, mentioned taking classes in other disciplines on campus. He also said he would like to take additional courses to gain "a deeper understanding of the topics and . . . make more direct references" to other courses in his teaching.

Subtheme: Connections between the curriculum and the co-curriculum.
Professors and hall directors gave examples of connections they created or hope to create within their own realm, either connections from one curricular opportunity to another or from one co-curricular opportunity to another. Nine participants, however, also pointed out specific connections they made to bridge their learning venue with an opportunity in the opposite curriculum, meaning curricular opportunity to co-curricular opportunity or vice versa. One of the three participants who did not identify an existing connection mentioned a specific connection she would like to make to connect these two realms. Another of the three participants communicated clear understanding of the potential benefits of an example connection between a curricular opportunity and a co-curricular opportunity but had not yet made connections between his course and other areas. Dr. Hunter expressed the value of connections between the curriculum and co-curriculum:

"When students are intentionally asked to reflect on the co-curricular experiences that they've had, internships, mission trips, etcetera, and connect that to . . . the class, it has been very effective in helping them understand the relevancy of the . . . course material."

Professors reported a variety of connections they make from the curriculum to co-curriculum. The professors' most common connections with co-curricular opportunities included social justice related programs, chapel sessions, and theatre performances. Dr. Richards explained his requirement for students to attend and write reflections on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day programming and noted some informal class discussions about chapel content.

Hall directors described methods they use to connect to curricular opportunities, including inviting faculty to speak at residence hall events and talking to students about their courses in one-on-one conversations. Some hall directors had already formed these connections, and others desired to form them in the future. Ms. Wood mentioned a past event during which a Bible professor spoke to a floor in her residence hall. Mr. Davis described connections he has already made between his residence hall and the curriculum. He also noted a desire to have residents present projects they prepared for academic courses in residence hall programs on topics such as taxes or Eastern religions.

Theme: Resources

Participants answered two questions regarding resources to help improve their teaching. First, they discussed resources that would further equip them to facilitate learning in connection with the seven learning objectives. Second, they reflected on resources that would equip them to facilitate connections between learning opportunities better. From to these questions, two resource subthemes arose: time and collaboration.

Subtheme: Time. Seven participants referred to limited work time or class time as constraints on their ability to focus on the learning objectives or facilitate connections between learning opportunities. Some participants noted existing helpful resources, but with busy schedules, they often struggle to find time to use those resources. Hall director Ms. Wood noted a center offering resources and sessions to improve teaching, but her meeting schedule and crisis situations in the residence hall prevent her from attending sessions frequently. She suggested incorporating attendance at some sessions into the job description for hall directors. A professor, Dr. Howard, also noted the difficulty busyness presents. He mentioned the university "keeps faculty very busy," and while "it would be a wonderful thing if faculty had the time to interact with one another cross disciplinarily," more often, they have other responsibilities to address. Dr. Green commented specifically on the amount of class time. He stated increased class time or smaller classes—more time with each student—could increase his ability to offer educational opportunities in relation to the seven learning objectives.

Subtheme: Collaboration. While time emerged as one important resource in focusing on the learning objectives and connecting learning opportunities, eight participants also mentioned increased knowledge of other educational opportunities as a helpful resource. A professor, Dr. Madison, mentioned helpful past sessions about student affairs programs, and he would appreciate continued information on this topic: "Being aware of how my work ties into what student development is doing is a good first step." Dr. Johnson thought equipping educators around campus with a better understanding of what others do would prove helpful. Hall director Mr. Davis suggested professors share syllabi and reading lists with hall directors, especially for general

education courses many students take, to enable hall directors to connect with those

classes from the residence halls. Dr. Baines felt satisfied with the university's current

efforts to connect learning opportunities and create a holistic education but thought

promoting general education curriculum and connecting general education courses more

could help strengthen some weaker courses and make courses less independent.

Conclusion

The research results show hall directors and general education professors address

the liberal learning objectives identified for the general education program at this

institution. Some educators connect with all seven learning objectives in their residence

halls or classrooms, while others focused on a sample. Educators also varied in the

degree to which they focused on the learning objectives and the intentionality behind that

focus. While residence hall directors took a slightly more broad and general focus than

professors, no significant pattern existed in the number of objectives emphasized in the

residence hall compared to the classroom. Educators tended to find natural connections

between course or residence hall content and the learning objectives. Overall, educators

reported the strongest emphasis on spiritual maturity, critical thinking, and stewardship.

The professors and hall directors also reported important past, current, and desired

connections among learning environments on campus. Eleven participants articulated at

least one connection they formed between their own classroom or residence hall and

another learning opportunity. The connections participants made varied in strength and

quantity. Most participants also articulated connections bridging curriculum and co-

curriculum. Hall directors mentioned existing or desired connections with academic

courses, and professors described connections with co-curricular learning opportunities.

Chapter 5

Discussion

In this research, interviews conducted with general education professors and hall directors revealed the holistic focus of general education learning objectives at the institution studied. Prior research shows similar results at other institutions, with general education curricula helping students develop in a broad range of areas (Hall et al., 2012; Laird et al., 2009). As noted in the first theme from this research, every participant addressed at least five of the seven general education learning objectives, and many educators addressed these learning objectives naturally rather than through intentional planning. Based on the results, this study shows the broad focus of the general education curriculum studied and the resulting connection opportunities, supporting other research findings regarding the holistic development focus of general education curricula.

Prior research notes the importance of connections among learning opportunities to increase student growth (Budwig, 2013; Loris, 2010; Reich & Head, 2010; Schroeder & Mable, 1994; Tinto & Pusser, 2006), and this study evidenced educators' abilities to form those connections. The third theme in the results, connections between learning environments, described connections educators already draw between classrooms, events, residence halls, and other learning opportunities at higher education institutions. Additionally, participants described new connections they could draw, and some even described their own understanding of the value of cohesive learning opportunities.

The results from residence life participants in this research also showed strong connections with recommendations from prior research. Past researchers noted the importance of residence life supporting the institution's academic mission (Schroeder and Mable, 1994). The residence hall directors emphasized the institution's academic mission by connecting with general education learning objectives in the residence halls. They also looked for opportunities to connect with academic faculty members and courses. Interestingly, the study also found hall directors tended to have greater breadth in their educational efforts regarding the learning objectives. They covered a larger number of learning objectives in the residence hall, and professors pursued greater depth by emphasizing a few learning objectives most strongly while briefly touching on others.

Prior research also mentions a student affairs dichotomy, with some academic faculty members lacking an awareness of some other learning opportunities on their campuses (King & Lindsay, 2004). Academic professors in this study seemed split, with some possessing knowledge of many other learning opportunities on campus and referencing specific connections with those learning opportunities. Other participants either did not know about other opportunities or did not form connections. In order to make learning cohesive, a greater number of faculty members must develop awareness of other learning opportunities in the academic curriculum and the co-curriculum.

Implications for Practice

Based on this research, the institution studied should continue current training efforts and add new training efforts for educators in all areas of the institution, specifically related to helping faculty and staff in different areas better understand each other's courses and programs. While some participants had a strong understanding of

educators' efforts in other areas of campus, other educators did not. Two thirds of the participants mentioned that more knowledge of other professionals' work and more time to collaborate would help them connect with more learning opportunities.

While other institutions may have similarities or differences in how well educators in different areas understand each other's work, each institution should assess interdepartmental understanding and ensure the provision of strong training. Once educators know about opportunities in all areas of campus, universities should equip and encourage staff and faculty to form connections between different areas. This encouragement could occur by offering time to collaborate, providing other necessary resources, or requiring educators to draw a certain number of connections.

One key piece of educating staff and faculty about different learning opportunities is providing information about goals and learning objectives in different areas. Some participants, including some general education professors, lacked strong knowledge of the general education learning objectives. Educators must know the expectations and goals for their own educational realms, such as professors who teach general education courses having a strong grasp of the general education learning objectives. If educators also understand learning goals for other areas of campus, they will become better equipped to draw connections with those learning opportunities.

Overall, institutions must recognize the important contributions of all educational realms on campus. Often, courses within students' majors seem emphasized as the most important student learning opportunities, with general education curricula and co-curricular learning lacking respect. Institutions must value opportunities within general education curricula and co-curriculum more highly. Without these learning

opportunities, graduates lack a holistic education and preparation for life-long learning. Institutional leaders must model a respect for these different learning opportunities by increasing training on different learning environments, assessing understanding of different departments, and increasing the emphasis on learning outcomes. These steps can help foster institutional culture that values cohesive, liberal learning.

Implications for Future Research

This study evidenced the natural connection between educational opportunities in residence life and general education through the hall directors' ability to focus on general education learning objectives in the residence halls. Future researchers could contribute to existing data by reviewing residence life learning objectives and interviewing professionals in other areas of campus to see whether or not they address those topics. Previous research (Kuh et al., 1991; Schroeder & Mable, 1994) noted the positive impact cohesive learning environments make on student learning; thus, researchers already know the importance of pursuing these connections. The present study showed some connections professors and hall directors make between learning opportunities in general education, residence life, and other areas. Further research similar to this study proves necessary but with a focus on learning objectives from residence life or another area of student affairs rather than a focus on academic learning objectives.

Additionally, higher education professionals would benefit from further research on the similarities and differences between stated missions, goals, and learning objectives from different offices at institutions of higher learning. Higher education professionals recognize the importance of cohesive learning opportunities and a shared focus on the institution's mission. Unfortunately, departments within institutions may or may not

actively pursue a shared mission by aligning different offices' learning objectives or other stated purposes. While various departments focus on diverse areas of students' growth, in order to pursue cohesive purpose, educators should collaborate on some level to connect learning goals in different areas.

Limitations

One limitation of this research came in its scope. This study took place at a small, private, faith-based liberal arts institution in the Midwest. The institution also puts a strong emphasis on student affairs. Due to these specific characteristics of the institution, some results from this research may not apply at other institutions. Additionally, this research included residence hall directors and professors who teach general education courses as participants. Thus, the perspectives may not directly apply to other higher education professionals. Additional research would help determine whether results prove similar for educators in student activities, major courses, and other areas of campus.

Another limitation emerged in the research's reliance on educators' own perceptions of their efforts to address learning objectives and connect with other learning opportunities. Despite the value in personal reports of educational practices, this study did not include an assessment or observation to determine the accuracy of the educators' perspectives. Future research could focus on a similar topic with a methodology relying upon outside assessment of professors' and hall directors' educational methods.

Conclusion

This study found residence hall directors and general education professors address liberal learning objectives with students in their educational venues. Educators in both areas took a holistic approach to student learning and development, connecting with

multiple learning objectives even when those objectives did not directly relate to the academic discipline or the focus of the residence hall. Increased training and clarity related to the learning objectives and expectations for addressing them could improve professors' and hall directors' teaching efforts. Additionally, the research found that, while room for improvement exists, most participants connected with other learning opportunities, and many connected opportunities between the curriculum and co-curriculum. Previous research noted the importance of integrated education, holistic development, and application of learning across contexts (Budwig, 2013; Hawthorne et al., 2010; Schroeder & Mable, 1994; Tinto & Pusser, 2006). This research evidenced educators' current efforts and opportunities for growth in fostering holistic and cohesive growth for students at higher education institutions.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

Interview Template - Foundational Core Curriculum Professor
Cohesive Purpose: Learning in General Education and Residence Life

1) For each of the following learning objectives, please share:
   a) Have you offered teaching or other educational opportunities related to the objective in your foundational core curriculum course?
   b) What methods have you used to foster this learning?
      i) Aesthetic Literacy
      ii) Civic Mindedness
      iii) Communication Fluency
      iv) Critical Thinking and Information Literacy
      v) Quantitative and Scientific Literacy
      vi) Responsible Stewardship
      vii) Spiritual Maturity
2) Around which of the above learning objectives do you believe you are equipped to help facilitate student learning in your foundational core curriculum course (can be one or more)?
3) How would you describe your satisfaction with your current efforts to facilitate student learning in your foundational core curriculum course?

Very unsatisfied   Mostly unsatisfied   Mostly satisfied   Very satisfied

4) What resources would further equip you to facilitate learning in connection with the learning objectives?
5) Have you attempted to connect student learning in your foundational core curriculum course with other student learning opportunities offered at Taylor?
6) If yes to number 5,
   a) With which learning opportunities have you attempted to make connections?
   b) What types of connections did you attempt to draw?
   c) In your perception, how successful were the attempted connections at helping students connect learning from different areas of campus?
   d) Which learning objectives did the connections you facilitated relate to most closely?
   e) Are there any additional learning opportunities on campus you believe you could connect with? What are those other learning opportunities?

7) If no to number 5,
    a) Are you interested in connecting student learning between your area and other areas?
    b) Are there any specific learning opportunities on campus you believe you could connect with? What are those other learning opportunities?
8) How would you describe your satisfaction with your current efforts to facilitate connections between student learning in your area and other areas of campus?

Very unsatisfied   Mostly unsatisfied   Mostly satisfied   Very satisfied

9) Are there any resources that would help equip you to better facilitate connections between student learning opportunities?

Interview Template - Hall Director
Cohesive Purpose: Learning in General Education and Residence Life

1) For each of the following learning objectives, please share:
    a) Have you offered teaching or other educational opportunities related to the objective in your residence hall?
    b) What methods have you used to foster this learning?
        i) Aesthetic Literacy
        ii) Civic Mindedness
        iii) Communication Fluency
        iv) Critical Thinking and Information Literacy
        v) Quantitative and Scientific Literacy
        vi) Responsible Stewardship
        vii) Spiritual Maturity
2) Around which of the above learning objectives do you believe you are equipped to help facilitate student learning in your residence hall (can be one or more)?
3) How would you describe your satisfaction with your current efforts to facilitate student learning in your residence hall?

Very unsatisfied   Mostly unsatisfied   Mostly satisfied   Very satisfied

4) What resources would further equip you to facilitate learning in connection with the learning objectives?
5) Have you attempted to connect student learning in your residence hall with other student learning opportunities offered at Taylor?
6) If yes to number 5,
    a) With which learning opportunities have you attempted to make connections?
    b) What types of connections did you attempt to draw?
    c) In your perception, how successful were the attempted connections at helping students connect learning from different areas of campus?
    d) Which learning objectives did the connections you facilitated relate to most closely?
    e) Are there any additional learning opportunities on campus you believe you could connect with? What are those other learning opportunities?
7) If no to number 5,
    a) Are you interested in connecting student learning between your area and other areas?
    b) Are there any specific learning opportunities on campus you believe you could connect with? What are those other learning opportunities?
8) How would you describe your satisfaction with your current efforts to facilitate connections between student learning in your area and other areas of campus?

Very unsatisfied   Mostly unsatisfied   Mostly satisfied   Very satisfied

9) Are there any resources that would help equip you to better facilitate connections between student learning opportunities?

Appendix B

Informed Consent

Cohesive Purpose: Learning in General Education and Residence Life
You are invited to participate in a research study of faculty efforts to address learning outcomes in general education courses and residence halls. You were selected as a possible subject because you are either a Foundational Core Curriculum professor or a resident director. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you many have before agreeing to be in the study. The study is being conducted by Beth Hicks and the Taylor University MAHE program.

STUDY PURPOSE
The purpose of this study is to explore how faculty in both the general education program and the residence life program address learning outcomes with students and to investigate the ways they connect with other learning opportunities on campus.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE TAKING PART IN THE STUDY
If you agree to participate, you will be one of 12 subjects who will be participating in this research. More subjects may be added later depending on success of preliminary interviews.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY
If you agree to be in the study, you will do the following things:
- You will participate in an approximately 30 minute interview that will be recorded, transcribed, and coded. In this interview, you will answer questions focusing on personal methods of addressing learning outcomes with students and connecting with learning in other areas of the university.
- You will receive an email with the transcription of your interview, and you will be asked to review the transcription to ensure it accurately describes what you communicated in the interview.

RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY
While participating in the study, the known risk is being uncomfortable answering the questions. There also may be other side effects that we cannot predict. Measures will be used to minimize the risks listed above, including providing the option of not answering any question that makes you uncomfortable.

BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY
The benefit to participation that is reasonable to expect is an opportunity to reflect on how you are addressing learning outcomes as an educator. The study will also benefit Taylor University and other institutions in providing insights about how educators address learning outcomes and connect learning across areas of campus.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published. Only the researcher and the transcriber will have access to recordings of the interviews, and they will be destroyed following the conclusion of the study. Organizations that may inspect and/or copy research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the Taylor University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies, specifically the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) etc., who may need to access research records.

PAYMENT

You will not receive payment for taking part in this study.

PRESENTING THE RESULTS

The results of this study will be published as a graduate thesis and presented in a thesis defense, but no participants' names will be revealed. There is the potential that findings with this research will also be shared with other higher education professionals (e.g. conferences or publications).

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

For questions about the study or a research-related injury, contact the researcher, Beth Hicks, at beth_hicks1@taylor.edu or 616.551.9568, or the research supervisor, Jeff Cramer at jfcramer@taylor.edu or 765.998.4684. This proposal has been reviewed and approved by Taylor University's IRB, which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. Questions regarding institutional research, including this research project, can be directed to Ms. Sue Gavin, Chair IRB, 765.998.4315 or ssgavin@taylor.edu.

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Beth Hicks or Taylor University.

SUBJECT'S CONSENT

In consideration of all of the above, I give my consent to participate in this research study. I will be given a copy of this informed consent document to keep for my records. I agree to take part in this study.

Subject's Printed Name: _____

Subject's Signature: _____   **Date:** _____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____**Date:** _____

Credit: Taylor University IRB Proposal Packet
http://www.taylor.edu/academics/academic-support/institutional-review-board.shtml