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Creating Community: A qualitative study to identify factors impacting community in a university Learning Community cohort

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Creating Community: A Qualitative Study to Identify Factors Impacting Community in a
University Learning Community Cohort

by

Maura B. Denny

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology
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Abstract

This study explores the role of 'community' within a university campus Learning Community (LC). With a cohort-based structure, an LC exists to enhance student learning through peer cooperation and participation, however the scope of what constitutes community within these cohorts is not currently understood. This study investigates the roles of individual reciprocity, communication, need, time, and physical environment in community building, utilizing qualitative interviews and observations of a 30 member LC over the course of two academic years and a four-week study abroad experience in Panama. Through this, the vital roles of the orientation period and programming staff are revealed and should be considered in order to generate more effective LCs with stronger cohort communities.

Chapter 1: Introduction, Research Aims, and Background

Community is a loaded word. There are worlds of meaning in those nine letters, which have kept academics busy for lifetimes, and it is all too easy to get caught up in the nebulous world of what community might entail. This thesis does not seek define the term in all its broader context, but rather focuses on what it means to identify, initiate, and incubate an academic-based *Learning Community*.

A *Learning Community* (LC) is a cohort of individuals joined by common values or beliefs who actively engage in learning together and the creation of common practices that sustain learning (Smith 1993). LC-based literature focuses strongly on the *learning* aspect of LCs and the correlation of these programs with academic success rates. However, there is a gap in understanding the *community* aspect of LCs and how community is formed. To address this gap in understanding, this study investigates the LC of the Global Scholars General Education Program on a university campus. Within this study the *community* of the LC I will examine the community's existence, the nature and shape of an LC community, and how the components of the LC and the student body influence or affect that community.

LCs are thought to enhance students' academic lives and the overall quality of university education by encouraging students to share their ways of learning and understanding with fellow students and instructors across academic disciplines (Smith 2004). By creating the opportunity for members to play a part in the construction of the cohort's education, students must take an active role in the education process, not just a reactive one, enabling more

productive results (Andrade 2007). It is for these reasons that LCs have become the model for cohort-based, interdisciplinary approaches in higher education, which have been gaining popularity in universities across the United States since the 1980s (Smith 2004). However, evidence suggests that while LCs may indeed enable or increase academic achievement at large universities for participating students, naming a program a *community* or a *cohort* is not enough to construct a group identity or generate community (Andrade 2007).

This leads to the question: why should anyone be interested in LCs? From an academic standpoint the answer is easy. LCs offer an opportunity to examine community in a laboratory setting. LCs are artificial communities, unnatural groups that are plucked from an applicant pool and instructed to work together. Sometimes these members come together and create a community easily, other times the individuals remain as separated from each other as possible (Smith 1993). Reviewing a whole LC from inception to completion may give us a glimpse of what truly builds and binds community in a university setting.

From an academic standpoint, this study of LCs has the potential to offer a little more to the great body of existing community literature by inspecting the bare skeleton of community structure. From an applied anthropological view, this study holds more immediate potential by allowing facilitators of the current case study, the Global Scholars Program (GSP), and other LC organizers, to reorganize their approach for better implementation of their goals.

This is not to say that LCs are necessarily the best options for universities. While generally thought of as good tools to enhance the university experience for members, there are critiques that LCs are promoted as idealized entities where serious problems of belonging and social differences have no effect (Quinn 2005). With university LCs often targeting students of

certain ethnic or working class backgrounds, these structures can potentially isolate certain group further or stigmatize members of specific LCs (Quinn 2005). While LCs are structured around the idea that unified knowledge acquisition gives meaning and value to education (Tinto 1993), there are critiques that such learning structures can also curtail students strong personal beliefs or arguments for the sake of the cohort community or that group academic success can diminish some of the individual academic drive (Quinn 2005). Though these critiques lie outside of the scope of this research study, they are important for universities to acknowledge when implementing LC programs.

With an increased call for LCs and cohort-based structures over the last few decades in both business and academic institutions (Smith 2004), this inspection of the community of the LC is necessary as currently the outcomes of LC programs are extremely varied with no simple process of creating an effective LC. Even within a particular program there can be extreme variance from year to year in the effectiveness of the group and the degree to which the students feel connected to a community (Smith 2004). If community building is essential to the success of creating and directing effective LCs, then to enable more effective LC construction it is necessary to understand what impacts the community of an LC and the role of community as vital components of LC success.

Spurred by this knowledge and encouraged by the enthusiasm of the first GSP cohort, I set out to explore the neglected community aspect of LCs and attempt to understand and isolate certain characteristics, events, and processes that help to create or deter community growth within cohort based programs. This will in turn give program staff a better hand in creating and cultivating a sense of community more regularly in their programs.

Research Aims

The specific goal of this research is to understand the aspects that influence the creation of the community within LC programs. Through thorough investigation of the GSP this study inspects the factors of *reciprocity, communication, need, environment, and time*, all factors extracted from the anthropological literature explored in Chapter 2 because of the impact on social organization these factors are known to have on other types of community, within the cohort community from inception to completion. To pursue this goal, the GSP was selected as the LC for investigation. The GSP is a university LC program based in a large university, whose name for ethical reasons will be withheld. The GSP had the student cohort structure that was of interest to me for this study as well as having a short two-year program. This made the scope of the research possible for the time and economic restraints on the study when it was carried out over five months in the spring of 2013.

Data were collected through a series of observations, focus groups, and in-depth semi-structured interviews with student members of the first cohort of the GSP as well as the faculty who participated. This population was selected in order to include students who had been involved in the GSP for the longest period of time and could therefore give more in-depth information as to the changes they had seen in the cohort community over time. These interviews provided insight into the development and evolution of community in LCs. I corroborated this information with in-class and extracurricular-event observations during the course of the students' fourth semester in the program. Additionally, participant observation and informal interviews were conducted over an intensive four-week period of a subset of the GSP cohort who participated in a summer study abroad trip to Panama City, Panama. When

analyzed, the results of the study provide insight into the elements of LCs that actively shape community within cohorts and provide program staff with the means to tailor their actions to promote community generation.

Specific research aims of this study are to 1) understand the nature of community within cohort-structured LC programs, and 2) identify and understand which elements of LCs effectively promote or deter community growth within LCs. The main question around which this study has been focused is: what creates community within LCs? Second, what are the factors that promote or deter the community growth? The research aims to assess aspects that can be controlled by program staff to encourage stronger community growth between individuals in these cohorts and decrease the number of failed communities in programs such as the GSP.

This thesis consists of seven chapters, which are outlined here. Chapter 1 consists of the Introduction and the research goals of this study, and provides a brief background for the study's focus, the GSP. Chapter 2 serves as a brief background on the emergence and importance of LCs within higher education on university campuses and a literature review discussing varied viewpoints on community and elements that impact community. Chapter 3 outlines the methods I used to carry out this research including focus groups, interviews, and observations. Chapter 4 presents the data collected from participants to reconstruct the life history of the program as well as the results gathered from the student survey. Chapter 5 provides the data observed during the GSP Panama study abroad trip, which took place after all four semesters of the GSP had been completed. Chapter 6 discusses the data presented in Chapter 4 and 5 and presents the conclusions drawn from the data. Chapter 7 briefly discusses

how these results can be applied to future LC programs, and makes some suggestions for improving community formation within cohort-structured programs.

The results of this thesis will be shared with the GSP community with whom this study was developed. In particular, program staff members, who can use this material to the best effect, will be presented with this information. This work could not have been done without their patience, compliance, and goodwill, and will hopefully be beneficial to the continuation of their program. To protect the population and program, all individuals and the program itself have been given pseudonyms within this work.

Global Scholars Program

Officially beginning in the fall semester of 2011, the Global Scholars Program (GSP) was conceived in response to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) call to revise general education across American universities. The AAC&U recently named the new decade part of a “global century” and was receiving proposals from universities across the country for education reform, looking specifically for proposals that would produce globally minded students and employ high impact educational practices.

As the leader of the proposal team at a large, urban, public state university, Dr. Sue Donym sought to create a program designed around cohorts with a global outlook. This proposed LC was intended to produce students with a foundation in four key areas of knowledge: global systems and processes, human and cultural diversity, ethical reasoning, and information literacy. General Education courses would be reshaped with these learning goals in mind and student cohorts would take two or three of these general education classes together each semester for the first two years of their college education. Major incentives for student

participation in this LC program would be small class sizes, priority registration of courses, close interaction with faculty, participation with peers, opportunities to conduct original research and a substantial scholarship to study abroad in a location of their choice.

Donym's proposal was chosen, along with 31 others, by the AAC&U and approved to begin in the fall of 2011. A call for applications was subsequently sent to the incoming freshmen of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), encouraging students to apply. From the responding applicant pool, twenty-six students were chosen for the first cohort and the GSP pilot program commenced.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A *Learning Community* (LC) is defined by Barbara Smith in *Creating Learning Communities* (1993) as a cohort of individuals joined by common values or beliefs whose members actively engage in learning together and create common practices that sustain learning. The use of LCs as a learning tool is a rising trend in both education and business (Smith 1993). In higher education, these communities are believed to enrich students' academic life and improve the overall quality of university education by encouraging students to share their individual processes of learning with fellow students and instructors across academic disciplines (Smith 2004). The LC structure creates the opportunity for student members to help shape the cohort's education, and take an active role in the education process. This proactive engagement in the educational process facilitates a more productive learning experience that has been gauged by improved academic success (Andrade 2007).

Because of the enhanced learning environments created, LCs have become the model for cohort-based, interdisciplinary approaches in higher education, which have been gaining popularity in universities across the United States since the mid-1980s (Smith 1993). While it is generally accepted that the LC paradigm enhances learning for participating students, naming a program a *community* or a *cohort* is not enough to construct a group identity or generate the desired academic outcomes (Andrade 2007). Although LCs have been utilized for nearly three decades, programmers are still unsure what *does* generate group identity or how to reproduce it in successive cohorts (Johnson 2001).

Despite the well-intentioned attempts by universities to foster LC development, there is currently no simple prescribed process for creating an effective LC. Even within one particular program, extreme variation may exist from year to year in the effectiveness of the group and the degree to which the students feel connected to a community (Smith 2004). If building community is essential to the success of creating and directing effective LCs, then understanding both the nature of the cohort community of an LC and what impacts the community is necessary to enable effective LC construction. Currently, LC-based literature (Andrade 2007; Dodge 2004; Engstrom 2008; Hotchkiss et al. 2006; Johnson 2001; Smith 2004) focuses strongly on the *learning* aspect and the correlation of these programs with academic success rates. However, this is only one half of LC, and a significant gap exists in understanding the community aspect of this practice and how it is formed.

To understand these gaps, it is necessary to address several factors. First, I explore the core of the LC and how the community aspect is understood in the current literature and identify where the gaps in understanding are located. Next, I look to other models of community to help identify factors that are known to identify, create, and shape populations into communities. Exploration of these factors should identify elements of community to examine within the LC as potential creators and maintainers of the cohort community.

Learning Communities

Within university settings, LCs currently operate as restructured curricula, linking courses and coursework to provide greater curricular coherence, more opportunities for active team building, and “enhanced interaction between students and faculty” (Smith 1993:32). This perception of camaraderie among community members is thought to help tie people to a place

and action, encouraging them to excel, since social systems promote communication and the transfer of ideas or interests (Andrade 2007). It is also believed that curricular coherence, with integrative, high-quality learning and collaborative knowledge-construction, can help create and foster skills relevant to living in an increasingly complex and diverse world (Dodge 2004).

There have been many reports on the success and failure of LCs (Smith 1993; Johnson 2001; Andrade 2007). However, in nearly every case, academic success is used as the metric with which community program success is assessed (Andrade 2007). Generally, LC cohorts' grades are compared with non-LC students' grades and any noticeable improvement is lauded as the positive effect of community (Andrade 2007). Therefore, the importance of community and 'cohorts' is stressed in these reports, but at the same time no particular attention is given to the degree to which community has formed, or in what manner similar results could be replicated. Within the literature, the community is loosely defined as a group of co-reliant individuals who have built a network of support between members of the group (Dodge 2004; Engstrom 2008; Hotchkiss et al. 2006; Johnson 2001; Smith 1993), however the degree to which students feel connected to the community, or if a community has truly formed, remain unclear. Since current LC research stresses the importance of community and small cohorts as being key to more effective education, being unable to define successful community building acts as a barrier to replicating successful LCs (Smith 2004).

When discussing what impacts the LC cohort, aspects of community are not well addressed or identified. Instead, like methods of assessing LC success, the current literature focuses on academic structure. For example, LC courses and course work are designed to connect content from multiple classes taken by the LC cohort (Johnson 2001). This greater

curricular coherence creates a sense of how different areas of knowledge should connect and complement each other, forming a stronger interdisciplinary approach to projects (Smith 1993). Furthermore, the courses should connect to the overarching theme of the LC (Engstrom 2008). This aspect is said to allow for greater collaboration in student work, generating an academic focal point and once again “opening the door for conversation-led formation of social ties” (Andrade 2007:13). Keeping all of the courses and coursework connected and concentrated to a central theme seems to be important advice for program staff. However, these reports stop short of explaining why. Why and how does this adherence to a theme allow for greater collaboration and communication between students? The question could be asked: would not a wider and more diverse range of topics expand the community to many different areas? If focused content is in fact fundamental to creating the community, it must be better understood why topics need to connect to central themes, why that adherence to core tenets creates community, and why deviation from it does not.

The current body of LC literature does go on to identify several components of effective LCs. The small cohort structure allows for more student-teacher and student-student interaction (Andrade 2007). This is believed to generate a more comfortable atmosphere than the widely used model of large, general education lecture classes (Smith 1993:31). LCs give students the opportunity to create ‘webs of communication’ through which to share learning, ask questions, get help, and collaborate with peers and professors (Andrade 2007). According to some LC studies, interaction in class alone can be enough to create a community, as the required communal time allows members to interact and form social webs with each other through the process of communication (Andrade 2007).

Beyond communication, according to current understanding, the lynch-pin of LC community building is the faculty. Faculty who are excited by and engaged in the coursework are believed to stimulate their students' desire for learning and pass these traits and qualities onto the students (Engstrom 2008). LC professors are encouraged to create group projects and collaborative activities within the classroom setting to encourage increased student interaction (Hotchkiss et al. 2006). Dodge (2004) advises faculty to dedicate time each week to student study groups in the classroom setting so they may potentially translate to study groups outside of the classroom. Tinto and Goodsell-Love (1993) encourage program facilitators to promote or create extracurricular events such as volunteering or field trips to promote engagement of the students outside of the classroom, thereby creating a stronger LC sense of community.

The components discussed above may in fact be excellent methods of facilitating communication within an LC, but the ability of these factors to generate and enhance the sense of community identity of an LC has not been addressed. These communication avenues and opportunities focus more heavily on the academic goal than the community aspect. This may be effective for the immediate academic goal, but may not actually achieve the desired community. Reviewing the suggestions above for creating an LC, it seems as justified to say that the academic progress witnessed is due to a more intimate, engaged, and excited learning atmosphere rather than the formation of any sense of community.

Despite this gap in understanding community within the current LC literature, this does not mean one must charge blindly into the study of the LC cohort community. Let us instead look first to the anthropological literature for a better understanding of the nature of

community and guidance on which factors of community are most likely to affect its generation and maintenance.

Anthropological Models of Community

Approaching the topic of community is difficult due to the myriad forms community can take and the varied definitions in use. Without limitations the discussion of community becomes a herculean task. While discussed at length in the literature, distinctions can be made between earlier and later approaches to defining community especially regarding the 'local community' or small populations inhabiting a particular geographical space bound together by common cultural practices and beliefs (Redfield 1960).

From the 1940s well into the 1960s, the 'local community' was the recognized social unit studied intensely by sociologists and anthropologists (Wolfe 2006), and today these local communities continue to be vital in exploring the nature of community. These studies showed community has a highly varied nature due to unique interpersonal ties responding to different external and internal factors of each human unit (Putnam 2000). Despite the differences in populations, pressures, and place of each community, a comparison of literature offers some clarification on which of these internal and external factors influence and define social formations (Wolfe 2006).

For early anthropological literature focused on group identity and social systems, *community* was most commonly defined as a social unit that shared common values or as a group or society that interacted and communicated with each other out of necessity and choice (Arensberg and Kimball 1972; Bates and Bacon 1972; Hillery 1955; Redfield 1960). These earlier studies were focused on discerning patterns of small-scale social units and tried to identify

factors that shaped the social organization of members (Redfield 1960). In order to analyze community these researchers incorporated a variety of techniques such as geographic zone mapping, statistical techniques relating to time and space variations, and participant observation to reveal the meaning of significant personal and social experiences (Taylor 1945), all of which were aimed at tangible aspects of community. As a result of this approach, studies occurring from the 1940s to 1960s list common characteristics of social systems as bounded geographic determinants, division of labor, kinship, gender roles, age, and occupation (Bates and Bacon 1972).

However, by framing studies largely in terms of the visible aspects of community, one risks neglecting other concepts that identify and contribute to community. This refocus leads to a shift in how community can be understood (Wolfe 2006). More contemporary approaches to understanding community have expanded to take into account other less tangible aspects that impact community (MacQueen et al. 2001). The long tradition of thinking of the local community as an extant, bounded entity and a natural focus for study has instead given way to considerations of how community is imagined, constructed, maintained, negotiated, and revised by the associated members in less visible ways (Cashman 2011; Change 2004; Nowell and Boyd 2010; Noyes 1995; Shuman 1994). Methods of approaching community moved towards a more in-depth qualitative analysis of conversation, folk lore, shared social memory, etc. to assess who belonged to a specific community (Cheng 2004).

Although newer concepts of community have been explored, that is not to say the older literature does not aid in our understanding of community. From both older and newer anthropological literature factors have been identified that impact the construction and

maintenance of community (Wolfe 2006). I will now briefly explore several factors to gain a basic understanding of what impacts a community.

Reciprocity

One factor identified by anthropological models of community as extremely important but not identified within the LC literature, is reciprocity. Reciprocity is neither an internal or external factor, but something that grows between members. Within more recent studies (Cashman 2011; Cialdini 2009; Goldstein et al. 2011; Sahlins 1972) what defined individuals as members of the community was not necessarily the geographical setting of their everyday lives, but reciprocity and the willingness of members to labor and socialize together, helping each other in times of need.

One of the central drivers of social organization is the norm of reciprocity, the societal rule that obligates individuals to repay gifts, favors, and services that have been performed for them (Cialdini 2009; Goldstein et al. 2011; Gouldner 1960; Emerson 1976; Mauss 1954; Regan 1971). Communities are a social arrangement for mutual aid with an ethic of reciprocity that cuts across boundaries of age, gender, and denomination, to become a network of interacting, mutually engaged people (Glassie 2006). Long-term relationships of reciprocity build a strong sense of community between members (Gudeman 2005).

In local reciprocal exchange, reciprocity is most easily understood as Party A provides resources to Party B, making Party B feel indebted to Party A. This in turn obligates Party B to return the favor to Party A (Goldstein et al. 2011). In reality it is not this simple. The favor paid from Party A to Party B is not always returned in a way that is easily identifiable to outsiders. Within a community, members do not necessarily want to receive immediate returns, but

rather tolerate one-way giving for extended periods of time to maintain the relationship, so returns can be collected in time of need at a later point (Sahlins 1972).

The strength of social bonds dictates the level of reciprocity, altruism, and cooperation individuals expect from and extend to other members of the group (Marlowe 2010). Stronger relationship bonds in local communities that garner reciprocal behavior are often based on kinship, exchange, or ceremonial relationships. Individuals utilize respect of land rights, marital relations between groups, hospitality, and emphasis on relations of equality and respect in order to initiate new relationships of reciprocity (Wiessner 2005).

Receiving benefits that directly enhance one's own welfare "creates a sense of indebtedness and obligation" to return the favor to the benefactor (Goldstein et al. 2011:442). The most critical determinant of choosing to maintain a relationship with members of a group tends to be how much beneficiaries believe they benefitted from the favor given (Greenberg, Block, and Silverman 1971; Goldstein et al. 2011; Zhang and Epley 2009). Relations that do not provide any beneficial reciprocity to the individual are dispensed with. Therefore much vigilance is extended on the part of community members to watch for any relationships that may be deteriorating (Wiessner 2005). Strong reciprocity requires high levels of monitoring within the group and subsequent action to bring individual behavior in line through reward and punishment (Wiessner 2005).

Communication

Communication, whether written, verbal, or non-verbal, is neither an internal nor external factor. Like reciprocity, it is something that exists and lives or dies between group

members (Wolfe 2006). While difficult to analyze, communication is immensely important in creating the bonds between members of a community (Cashman 2011).

Instead of being bounded in time and space, a community can be seen as a network of communicating individuals (McMillan 2011). This communication network is not a random phenomenon, but is generated by an idea or need among the members (Wolfe 2006). This concept is upheld by studies of newer forms of community, such as virtual community, where members have no shared physical environment or time together. Communication between members proves vital for constructing the community network when individuals are unfamiliar with each other; the more communication between members, the stronger the network that connects them becomes (Willi, Melewar, and Broderick 2013). Over time group identity is created by the communication between members establishing new connections, reaffirming old ones and reinvigorating the network (Cashman 2011).

In the generation and maintenance of community, communication plays a vital role in reducing uncertainty, minimizing conflict, and promoting common interests (Swaney 1990). Communication establishes what is and is not important to the members of a community, who is or is not a part of it, and what is or is not acceptable (Cashman 2011).

Need

Another factor that holds a particularly strong influence on the formation of community is need. Need is an internal factor in members that generates much of the sustaining power behind community formation and continuation (Hillery 1955). The needs of individuals within a community might range from sustenance and shelter to religious and social functions or beyond. In the local community, some needs, such as obtaining food, can be met by individuals

working alone, but many needs are more easily and/or reliably met when individuals join forces to work cooperatively with other members (Mauss 2008). With specialization of different skills and tasks often distributed by age and sex, the community can provide for all or most of the needs of the members (Redfield 1960).

Newer studies on virtual communities have also shown the needs of individual members to be a strong component of creating the community support network. In virtual communities, where members are initially unknown to each other and have no shared physical environment, it is shared interests and goals among members that connect individuals of a group to one another (Willi, Melewar, and Broderick 2013). Many other factors for these newer communities have changed, but need still affects community formation in much the same way as older studies of community; the more needs that can be met by the community, the more intimately tied the members will become (Redfield 1960). However, these needs are not necessarily static and as the needs of the community change and expand over time, the base of a community often experiences a reorganization of members to reflect and accommodate those new needs (Gudeman 2005).

Just as need creates community, drawing members into a network of reliance, the lack of need can break down that network (Redfield 1960). As individuals look towards government to meet their needs, individuals stop looking to local neighborhoods or immediate geographical communities to meet their needs. Without need pulling a community together, it becomes harder to build and sustain community far beyond the family unit (McMillan 2011).

Environment

Another factor that impacts a community is the physical environment. Environment is often employed as the framing convention that informs the way an anthropologist brings a study into focus on a particular population (Hirsch 1995). This is not solely something that geographically locates a community but also is a factor with strong influences on the shape the social organization assumes (Steward 1939). Environment is better understood as a set of ecological conditions instead of simply a geographical space inhabited by a population (Barth 1956). It encompasses all of the natural resources that are exploitable by the culture as well as being a physical space inhabited (Steward 1939).

The relation between social organization and environment is neither simple nor direct. As individuals utilize the environment, the location and abundance of resources in the environment produce various patterns of group formation (Steward 1939). For example, in temperate or extreme climates, where the influence of the seasons is clearly evident, there is a reoccurring theme of seasonal changes forcing people together or spreading them apart (Mauss 2008). If food resources are sparse in a given environment, the social formation of the population also becomes sparse, with small units of people and very loose ties between those units (Steward 1939). In another example, a scarcity of water funnels individuals into central locations, lumping large groups of people together for a stretch of time (Thomas 1959).

The space and resources of any given environment impact the ultimate formation and shape of a community (Mauss 2008). For local communities, the environment dictates food sources, which in turn influences technology or patterns of foraging necessary to acquire food (Steward 1939). This means the environment also affects whether cooperative efforts are

possible, making a species sociable or solitary, and in turn influences the level of competition or cooperation within a population and strongly affects the ideal size of community (Marlowe 2010).

Although the environment shapes a population, this does not mean two populations inhabiting the same area will be identical. Communities and their associated members use space differentially (Steward 1939). Communities create settlement patterns, land use and property distributions, assembly points and dispersal zones that are unique to themselves within a given environment (Mauss 2008). This in turn produces differences in communication and connection between segregations of sex, age, class, occupation, rank, etc. It can therefore be determined that the physical environment, both the physical space inhabited and the resources available within that space, impacts not only social organization, but also community networks (Arensberg 1955).

Time

Our final factor is time. Time is best understood as any opportunity in which community members are together and can interact or communicate, such as during social or religious functions and daily tasks (Arensberg 1955). Within local communities, time spent together is often dictated by age, gender, and division of labor. Hunting, for example, requires certain individuals to work together from hours to days, but also excludes those individuals from interacting with other members during that particular time (Marlowe 2010).

Because of the opportunities of shared time, when individuals are brought into close contact with one another, their social interaction becomes more frequent, more continuous, and more coherent (Mauss 2008). Ideas are exchanged and feelings are mutually received and

reinforced (Marlowe 2010). By its existence and constant activity, connections between members become secure and assume a more prominent place in the consciousness of individuals, reaffirming the sense of community (Mauss 2008). Conversely, some individuals within the same group might not have much or any shared time. Differences in skills, obligations, or need can keep members apart just as they draw others together during daily interactions. These role-based segregations highlight the necessity of larger group functions, such as worship or celebrations, as the only time in which some members can interact and connect (Mauss 2008).

Applying Anthropological Models of Community to the Study of Learning Communities

Both the older literature (Arensberg and Kimball 1972; Bates and Bacon 1972; Hillery 1955; Mauss 2008; Redfield 1960; Steward 1939), and the more recent literature (Cashman 2011; Chen 2004; Cialdini 2009; Glassie 2006; Goldstein et al. 2011; Nowell and Boyd 2010; Wiessner 2005), have helped to identify important aspects that generate and shape community. It is not just important to identify reciprocity, communication, need, environment, and time within an LC, but also to investigate how these factors relate to one another within a particular community. Since communities are the product of many different aspects and characteristics coming together and interacting (Hillery 1955), it is logical to assume the five identified aspects of community interact and affect each other, in some settings promoting community growth in other cases and deterring it (Arensberg and Kimball 1972).

LCs are not the 'local' communities we find in the anthropological literature. LC members are not born or married into the community, nor do LCs form organically. Instead, LCs are preselected groups constructed from applicant pools and located where many of the

community aspects can be controlled by the LC program staff. We must then expect that the factors of community discussed above take a different shape in LCs than they do in local communities.

Reciprocity appears to be one of the main factors of community maintenance within other models. This factor creates a social obligation between members that prolongs and strengthens relationship within a community. The continued exchange of goods and services not only helps identify members of the community, but impacts the overall shape of the social organization. Within an LC what, if any, goods or services are being exchanged between LC members? How those exchanges impact the community relationships must also be explored.

Communication is actually an aspect we have seen appear within the LC literature. In the anthropological literature, it is identified as a vital factor for communities. From anthropological models of community, we understand communication is important for creating and maintaining group identity. Within the LC, however, it is not clear what generates communication, who is involved, and how it shapes the cohort.

Need is a factor that seems of great importance in other community models, but must be understood within the LC literature. There is, of course, the possibility that this factor, so important in local community formation, is not relevant for LCs. Need is easy to understand within the context of a local community with subsistence practices and social and religious functions all coming to mind. But within and LC, what shape might need take? Provided needs within the LC community can be identified, it must be assessed if these needs are substantial enough to bring individuals together in the same way need does in anthropological models of community.

Taking the concept of environment offered by anthropological models of community we can return to the LC as well. Environment is understood not only as the physical space, but what resources are available and challenges presented. For an LC, what physical space and resources are being utilized, and do they have any impact on the shape or the social organization of the cohort? From the LC literature above, we could make an educated guess that the classroom is the environment the LC inhabits, but the literature does not present us with the impact the physical classroom has on community formation nor what would be considered resources within that particular environment.

Just as with the other factors discussed above, we can take the anthropological understanding of shared time in a local community and study it within the LC. After identifying what time means within the LC, we must look at how it draws members together or separates them as it has been shown to do in local communities.

By applying what can be gleaned from other models of community to this study, focus can be directed to the factors that are known to generate and shape community. Factors of reciprocity, communication, need, environment, and time within an LC may have different forms than they do in the anthropological models of community discussed above, but it is very likely they are still important shapers of community; it is simply that these factors must be observed in their new forms within the LC.

Chapter 3: Methods

In the current literature discussed in the previous chapter, LCs do not have an easy method by which to assess community and the current way of assessing LCs rely heavily on quantitative data, such as grade point average, to measure learning (Smith 2004). Qualitative feedback from faculty and students is needed to obtain a more complete picture of the depth of impact resulting from LC participation (Andrade 2007). If the factors identified by the anthropological literature (reciprocity, communication, need, environment, and time) can be located and examined in the LC, there may be patterns reflected that show how these factors generate and influence community growth and development within LC cohorts.

We can utilize the understanding of how these five factors impact community and adapt them to the LC. Does *reciprocity*, understood by other models as an important bond between members, exist in the cohort communities of LCs? What generates *communication* within the LC and how does communication affect the cohort community? What shape does *need*, identified in anthropological models of community, take within the LC cohort and does it generate community the same way other models understand it to? If *environment* is the physical space and resources utilized by a community, what physical space and resources are used by the LC cohort? What shared *time* do the LC members have and how do they interact during it?

By identifying and understanding the nature of those five factors within the LC and observing how they interact with and shape the cohort into a community, it should be possible

to equip LC programming staff with the tools to create more regular and effective cohort communities. Using the expectations taken from other models of community, the study of the LC can be set up to identify and examine these five factors and their impacts within the LC through the essential qualitative data strongly suggested by Andrade's 2007 report. Thus the main methods employed in this study are qualitative focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews with the members of the populations identified below, as well as extensive observation of the student population.

Research Setting

This study took place in two locations. The larger part was performed on a public university campus in the United States with a student body of roughly 40,000 students. All interviews, observations, and focus groups were conducted on campus. This provided a central and neutral location for the research populations over the course of the Spring 2013 semester (January-May 2013). The secondary research setting was in Panama City, Panama, where a smaller subset of the cohort population went on a short study abroad trip for two weeks near the end of this study. This research setting is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Research Populations

As previously described, the research population for this study consists of two groups that participated in the first section of the GSP; these are (1) the faculty and (2) the student cohort. While staff members who serve an administrative function for the program were initially considered for the study as well, preliminary data collection indicated they did not interact directly with the student population often and therefore were not in a position to

discuss the student community in great depth. The staff perspective then was dropped from the study so time could be more effectively used to investigate the faculty and student aspects, both of which have a more direct influence in shaping the cohort community.

The Faculty

This population is comprised of ten professors currently working at the university where the GSP operates. These faculty members represent diverse academic backgrounds and were each chosen by the director of the GSP to participate as faculty in this new LC. The disciplines of anthropology, philosophy, music, religion, library studies, engineering, environmental sciences, and language are all represented in this population. This variety of backgrounds provided a wide range of understanding and differing opinions about the student population for this research.

Of the ten professors who taught for the first cohort of the GSP, eight consented to participate in interviews over the course of the 2013 spring semester. Unfortunately, although the remaining two members were willing to participate, time scheduling conflicts prevented the final interviews from being conducted. However, these two faculty members did permit in-class observations during the semester and therefore are at least partially represented in this study. A total of eight faculty members were interviewed, while I observed five different faculty informant's GSP classes.

The Student Cohort

The student cohort population, as the essential part of the study on community development, received the largest amount of attention during the 2013 Spring semester. This

population originally consisted of 26 students who were selected in the fall of 2011 from an applicant pool in the College of Arts and Sciences. Over the course of three semesters the cohort's numbers dropped from 26 to 22. These 22 individuals participated in the student focus group, interviews, survey responses, and class observations were carried out.

Within the 22 current members of this cohort, the students' ethnic and national make up is very diverse. African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Asian students are represented, and the students originate from Europe, the Caribbean, and North, Central and South America. While there is racial and ethnic diversity among the students, this cohort is heavily skewed in gender towards females. Of the 22 students, only three are male. When the program staff was asked why this female heavy cohort occurred, the answer was simply that gender was not one of the factors they were assessing when picking students from the applicant pool. It was only after they had assembled the cohort based on other factors, mainly student essays explaining why becoming a Global scholar was important and how it would further the applicants career choice, that this particular skew was realized. While the gender ratio did not seem to have a significant impact on the overall data, it is worth noting and keeping in mind as a possible factor for investigation in future studies.

Data Collection

Data collection was completed in four stages over the course of five months. *Phase I* consisted of a student focus group and in-class observations; *Phase II* consisted primarily of student and faculty interviews, but also included a written student survey which has been provided in *Appendix A*; *Phase III* focused on observing and participating in the GSP Panama study abroad classes as well as ongoing student and faculty interviews; *Phase IV* concluded with

post-Panama-trip interviews and continued in-class observation as well as an informal focus group with students discussing the future of the program.

The community was approached first through Dr. Sue Donym, the creator of the GSP, to discuss the potential for the study and make initial contact to the faculty and student members through joint emails. After initial contact, primarily with faculty members, an introduction of the program in three GSP classes was given and students had the option of supplying their email for further contact and participation at this time. Arrangement of focus groups or individual interviews were then coordinated primarily through the use of university email. Each participant was forwarded a copy of the IRB-approved Informed Consent form well in advance of any meeting, and was given with a hard copy to sign before any session commenced.

Phase I: Focus Group and Class Observations

Initial contact was made with the proposed research populations in early January. In order to gain a basic understanding of the program before starting individual interviews, classroom observations were a logical first step. In-class observations of the three GSP classes being held early in the 2013 spring semester gave a good starting point from which to begin forming questions for focus groups and interviews with students and faculty.

After three in-class observation sessions, a focus group was held, with invitations sent to all members of the student cohort. Ten of the students attended, these self-selected individuals meeting with me on campus to discuss in brief detail many aspects of the GSP over the course of an hour. The focus group was not recorded, but notes were taken. This focus group was not meant to provide in-depth information, but instead to construct a broad understanding of the

program. Combining this information with the class observations helped me to form more focused and critical questions for the next phase of the data collection.

Phase II: Interviews and Survey

Phase II was constructed out of the exploratory data collected during the previous phase of research. Throughout February, March, and April, seven faculty member interviews and twelve student interviews were held. After developing an interview protocol that addressed student and faculty perceptions of the GSP and how the cohort had changed over the four semesters of the program, individuals were contacted. All interviews were in-depth, individual and semi-structured, and were carried out on the university campus. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour each. I chose not to record these sessions, for reasons outlined below, but instead took copious and diligent notes throughout the duration of all interviews. While recording was an option, the participants, especially the students, did not appear comfortable with the practice despite agreeing to it. After agreement, a recorder was used for the first ten minutes of the first student interview, but proved to be such a distraction that the recording stopped and the recorder was removed. This was tried twice more with similar results. With the absence of the recorder, participants spoke more freely and comfortably. Deciding to remove the recorder made for better interviews and conversation with informants.

The information from the initial analysis of the interviews during the second and third months was used to develop a survey of ten questions provided via email to all the students in the cohort. From this survey, ten responses were received and entered into Microsoft Excel, where the descriptive statistics were used to generate the three graphs used in Chapter 4.

These graphs are used to view trends in cohort members' preferences and patterns of communication within their GSP general education courses and compare these patterns to cohort members' preferences and patterns of communication within their non-GSP general education courses.

Phase III: Panama Observation, Participation, and Interviews

The third phase of the study was by far the most enjoyable and proved extremely instructive. A subset of the cohort participated in two summer classes held first at the university for a week, followed by classes in Panama City, Panama, for two weeks, and finally returning to the university for one more week. Aside from performing class observations, I actually attended and participated in classes, doing homework and projects assigned to the class. I travelled to Panama with the cohort, continuing to participate in class and observe community formation in this new environment. In Panama, my observations extended beyond class to encompass living, eating, and traveling with the students.

While in Panama, many informal interviews were held daily with the students, focusing on the research study content and expanding the overall concept of community as it pertained to the GSP. These informal interviews ranged from just one student to the whole group and lasted between ten minutes to three hours. They were extremely flexible and fluid, and provided a chance to explore subjects that the earlier, more rigid interviews had not. Information discussed during these times was recorded diligently in a field notebook, either during or after the conversation when time and environment permitted.

Phase IV: Post-Panama Interviews, Class Observations, and Focus Group

Returning from Panama, class attendance and observation continued much as in *Phase III*. This last week of the study was also dotted with shorter semi-structured individual interviews, lasting fifteen to twenty minutes, with all eight of the student members of the GSP who had gone to Panama. These interviews were focused solely on their experience in Panama and the changes the students perceived in their community during the previous weeks and now that they had returned to the university.

Lastly an informal focus group consisting of all eight members occurred in this last week during which the group discussed their perceptions of the future of the program and more specifically their cohort. Potential ways to shape future cohorts and cultivate community in the GSP's future were also discussed and are presented in Chapter 7.

Data Analysis

The purpose of analyzing qualitative data collected over all four phases was to determine the factors that promoted or deterred community growth within the GSP's pilot cohort. Due to the nature of the data collection and the lack of any external funding for the purchasing of data analysis software, the qualitative data from the interviews, focus groups, and observations was transcribed, coded, and sorted by hand.

Primarily, a network analysis approach was applied to both the qualitative data from interviews and focus groups and the data collected from the short survey. By observing both types of communication being used by individuals and the information being exchanged between the individuals, network analysis is used to ascertain preferred patterns of communication between program members as a means of assessing member involvement

within the community (Wolfe 2006). A narrative analysis approach was also used to discover themes and recurring structures within the informants experiences (Bernard 2011). This approach facilitated identification of patterns and characteristics of the cohort community as seen by both faculty and student populations. Further, discourse analysis was used to study naturally occurring language use within and between the two research populations (Bernard 2011). This analysis was added as a means of identifying how each informant saw the different populations and themselves in relation to each population.

Additionally qualitative data in the form of the student survey was processed in Microsoft Excel. Responses were used to generate three graphs that bring to light the potential of communication patterns in determining who is or is not part of the GSP community. Since the sample size (ten) is small and the main focus of the research was qualitative, this process was only for exploratory analysis on the survey responses. The results represented by the surveys are intriguing enough to include and discuss, but are not sufficient to stand alone due to the small population, the limitations of which are further discussed in Chapter 4.

The main themes expressed through the student and faculty interviews, as determined through careful coding of the interview notations consist of patterns of communication, reciprocity, and academic and social need. Themes emerging primarily through dissection of observation data were the importance of time and environment affecting the cohort community.

Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Within the scope of this research, there were unfortunately inherent pitfalls and limitations. The most obvious is time and number of researchers. Being one researcher, it was

not feasible to investigate multiple cohorts or multiple programs to compare the data collected in this study at this time. Understanding this, the choice was made to limit this study to just one program, and furthermore, one cohort within that program. As such, the first cohort of the GSP, which has been participating in the program the longest, made the best choice. Considering this, it would be advisable for future studies to compare the data found within this study to a larger sample.

Within the population there is the further limitation that the populations are themselves very small and inherently self-selecting. The research depended very heavily on the goodwill of the research population, as it provided little immediate benefit to the individuals. Since this study took place without funding, there was no incentive I could offer to encourage individuals to participate. As such, there are members of the student population who chose not to participate and may disagree with my conclusions.

For the purpose of respecting and protecting the informants who participated in this study, I have withheld all names or pseudonyms have been given. Student informants chose their own pseudonyms. The name of the program has also been changed in this work to provide a further level of security. Due to the small and easily distinguished population, the name of the university where this program is taking place has also been withheld.

Chapter 4: Global Scholars Program Semesters One through Four

Orientation

From the incoming freshman class of 2011, 26 students were accepted into the first cohort of the GSP from an applicant pool of nearly one hundred and fifty students. In late August 2011 the orientation for the program initially was not meant to be anything extraordinary; the students were invited to a reserved room in the university library where they could meet Dr. Sue Donym, the program's creator, and their fellow students. There would be a short speech introducing the students to the program and giving them a general overview of what exactly they had been selected for.

However, the orientation did not stay a small affair for long. Important university personnel, who had been invited courteously with no real hope of a reply, were now responding they would like to come see this new and exciting program launched. Surprised, but delighted in the support for the program, Donym scrambled to rearrange the order of the orientation to accommodate the new esteemed guests.

"If I had known the Provost of the university was going to be there, I wouldn't have worn shorts and a T-shirt," one member of the student cohort said with an eye roll, remembering the orientation. Walking into the orientation, many of the students admit they were not quite sure what the GSP was and certainly did not know what to expect from this orientation.

What was waiting for them would set the tone for the next two years of their college career. They discovered a number of significant university officials welcoming them as a 'cohort', extending congratulations for being selected for this unique experience of globally minded education, and words about how the university expected great things to come out of this program in general and this new cohort in particular. However, for all the fine words, these students were not yet a 'cohort.' In this moment they were a room of 26 individual students, many of whom were wishing they had taken the time to run a brush through their hair.

After short speeches and brief introductions, the students were invited to partake of refreshments and mingle. The opening presentation had included quick introductions of each student, but even with this they remained 26 strangers, making awkward conversation between sips of lemonade. Students would later recall that no greater force than the simple luck of where they were standing, or who they had randomly selected to sit next to, broke this uneasy group up into smaller, more manageable hubs of conversation.

It was apparent from the beginning that the group was highly skewed in favor of the females. Of the 26 students, only three of them were male. Despite this imbalance, the group had diversity in another way. The ethnic and national background was fairly diverse, including students from North, Central, and South America, the Caribbean, and Europe. "I noticed immediately that there were a lot of internationals," one student remembers. This fact helped to put the student at ease as another international student, but it also gave their particular small group a new topic of conversation to latch on to.

Between conversations, students were brought off to the side to make a short video interview where they voiced their hopes for the program and what they thought the next two

years would entail. “It was a little weird,” a student laughed as she recounted the whole event, “but it made us seem special and if nothing else, it gave us something to talk about.”

Before long, it was time to wrap it up and plastic champagne glasses were handed around. Donym gave a short but heartfelt toast for the success of the program, cheers were given, cider was drunk, and the newly oriented party dispersed.

First Semester

Two days after the orientation meeting, GSP classes commenced. The students would be taking two classes together this first semester. One would be *Global Issues and Perspectives*, a course taught by Donym herself. This class would meet for fifty minutes once a week on Tuesdays in what is possibly the coldest room on the university’s campus. The second class the student cohort would share was *Library Research*, which would meet twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

“I sat with people I recognized from orientation,” a student recounts of the beginning of Donym’s class. “I didn’t really know them, but I knew them more than the others.” Most students agreed to similar sentiments. They came in, sitting in a strained silence or awkward conversation until class commenced. From that day forward, it seemed only natural to continue sitting there class after class. “No one really moved around,” a student says with a shrug of the seating arrangements in Donym’s classroom. Although Donym’s classroom had seating set in an open center circle, which helps facilitate class discussion, friendly conversation never seemed to make it past the individuals seated close together. Being too far away from someone meant being too far away for small talk and social conversation.

However, “They had to talk in my class,” Donym said of her teaching style. An important part of their grade was class participation. Asking questions of the guest speakers aloud in class would get a large portion of the students’ weekly assignments done for them. Students remembered this facet of class a little differently. “We got a chance to know each other’s personalities,” a student says of these class discussions.

The second class the students shared, *Library Research*, met twice a week. “From the start they were an energetic and motivated bunch,” this professor relayed during an interview. “They knew what they were doing was different from other incoming students.” This class, adhering to the GSP learning outcomes stated in the *Introduction*, focused particularly on building student research skills. Due to the nature of the material, this class tended toward a more traditional lecture style. This, combined with the fact the class needed computers to access many of the library resources, meant it did not generate much discussion within the classroom between students.

Some students struggled with understanding how this second class fit into the program or met their personal needs as students. “At first I didn’t like the library class; I didn’t see the point,” a student admitted. After the first few classes, the group’s enthusiasm was waning. The class did not seem to fit with students’ understanding of the program. It was not globally minded, as their orientation had said all these classes would be. It did not seem to be as conducive to being a Global Scholar as Donym’s class. Two years later, that same student confesses she understood the value of this class later and in fact uses what she learned from this course the most frequently. However, at the time, she found herself becoming less and less inclined to pay attention. Fortunately for the cohort, the professor was so genuinely concerned

about students learning that even students who did not necessarily want to learn about databases and JSTOR did their best to remain attentive.

According to the professors interviewed over the course of this study, a typical general education class found at this and other United States public universities has at least 60 students in it; Donym further specified that her class sizes have sometimes reached 350 students. Having a class of only 30 students did not go unnoticed by the teachers or the students. The small class size not only made class discussion possible, but it made the classroom environment comfortable: “By the end of that first class, you could really judge where a conversation was going and who would react to what topics.” Slowly but surely over the course of the semester, the classroom was becoming a safe and creative area to discuss.

Within these first two classes of the program, two environments where students would meet and connect had been made. At first conversation pertained to class topics and homework assignments. Then, a little over a month into the program, something new happened. The students took a step toward becoming a cohort completely independent of program faculty and staff: they went to lunch.

This might not sound like the particularly earth-shattering breakthrough researchers dream about. To be honest, there have been very few historic moments that involve college cafeteria food. And for the students, at the time, this decision did not seem like anything important. It seemed like a perfectly practical idea. They had an hour or so between Donym’s class and *Library Research*, and it was lunch time. It was easy enough to ask at the end of one class if people wanted to go get lunch before the next class. Add to this equation all the students had meal plans and therefore price wouldn’t be an issue and it becomes easier. There

was a general bit of shrugging and a few why-not's thrown out there, and the open invitation was taken up by about half of the cohort.

During lunch, conversation flowed outside of the classroom topics to new areas. New connections and realizations were made and avenues of communication started to flow more freely between these cohort members independent of program staff or faculty: "For the first time, out of class we were together." The experience was enjoyable, and easy enough to repeat, and so it became a fairly regular occurrence. "It was an open invitation, but normally we had from four to ten people at lunch," a student explained. Some students had other classes or commitments that prevented them from joining lunch. Some chose not to go. But some, who sat on the other side of the classroom, were not sure the invitation extended to them and felt it would be awkward if they went.

"To be a community, a group has to have its own identity," a student of the first cohort insisted, "The people need to regard themselves as a group." Group lunch was one way in which this budding identity was showing itself. Around the time of the first lunch, another development occurred that helped bolster this group of students into not only regarding themselves as a group, but solidifying the identity; they created a Facebook group.

This group Facebook page was a form of communication that existed outside of the GSP program staff or faculty direction; in fact, as the page was accessible by invitation only, it was also effectively out of reach of the program staff. The students had created for themselves another area where they could freely talk and discuss, but this time free of oversight. It was an environment that was not started or maintained by any one GSP class, professor, or project and therefore would transcend all classes and projects to become one of the most useful forms of

group identification and communication. Group members could discuss homework assignments, post relevant information, joke, and yes, occasionally say things that required strong language.

“We were like a family, we went together like peanut butter and jelly,” a student says of the cohort’s first semester in the GSP. While this sentiment was shared by about half the group, others remember things a little differently: “I will be honest and say I felt like an oddball because I think my major sets me apart, so after the first meeting with everyone I was a little uneasy. It seemed really cliquy right off the bat if that makes sense.”

Over the course of the semester, through in-class conversation and out-of-class conversation, small groups began to form. Some of those groups melded together very well, but some didn’t extend beyond conversations of homework and class topics. Further still, some individuals didn’t connect to a group at all; “Cliques had definitely formed by the end of first semester, but I was shy and had recently become very nervous about my accent.” Some individuals, like the student above, from an academic standpoint looked right on track, with high grades and perfect attendance. In terms of the cohort connections, however, they had faded into the background and fallen off onto the fringes of this growing social fabric.

“The group got pretty comfortable pretty fast, but now that I think about it, group cohesion started as small groups and cliques first and had to work up to a whole group unit,” one girl shrugged, trying to summarize her experience with the program, “but you have to be willing to interact to form community and some just weren’t.” Some of the shier or more reserved students had trouble with this aspect of the cohort. If they missed the opportunity in the very beginning, at the point when no one knew anyone, they were finding it harder now

when groups had started to solidify. Furthermore, some students were not concerned with being part of this budding community; “She wasn’t really interested in interacting with the group,” one cohort member says of another, “she just wanted to put the GSP on her résumé.” Others were invested in more time-consuming communities such as fraternities, sororities, and other student activities and were not particularly interested in making connections with the members of their GSP cohort.

However, these connections being made outside the classroom were not just social ones. They had the GSP and its classes as the base of this connection and each new connection between members strengthened that bond. Students were more likely to ask and answer questions about school work of those who they knew better. Students in the cohort were more likely to work with someone they had a stronger communication history with inside and outside of class. This showed itself fairly clearly with the final projects of both classes. Students, allowed to choose their partners, chose those they knew best as their first members. This meant while conversation and communication within groups grew stronger, connections *between* groups seemed to drop off rapidly.

As the first semester of the GSP grew to a close, and final projects were handed over for grading, things were off to as good a start as the GSP could have hoped for. Many students had found some rooting within a particular aspect of the program and many would, looking back, say they had congealed as a cohort by this point. However, this budding community had not yet made good connections between groups, and worse, some individuals had already fallen away between those community gaps.

Second Semester

Winter break drew to a close and as the Spring 2012 semester commenced, members of the first GSP cohort found themselves back on campus, eating in dining halls, and standing in those impossibly long lines at the student bookstore. The GSP had scheduled two courses for the cohort this semester: introductory courses on ethics and anthropology.

On the first day it became apparent these classes were different from the typical general education courses other students took; the GSP students already knew everyone in their class. The comfort level they had managed to acquire the previous semester in class had held intact over the winter break and they found themselves extending enthusiastic greetings and launching into conversation about their holidays.

“It was a roar of conversation from day one,” the ethics professor chuckled, recalling the first impressions of the cohort. “It was like I didn’t matter when I walked in at first.” Both professors from the second semester shared this sentiment. For them, they did not encounter 26 individuals in a classroom. They encountered one group. At first glance in this second semester from a faculty perspective, this ‘cohort’ in name had become a cohort in reality, which oddly enough would work both to the professor’s benefit and detriment.

On the positive side for the professors, the students’ comfort level helped to facilitate conversation and class discussion. “Social solidarity is positive, it empowers the students to a general self-confidence,” one of the professors stated. It was much easier for the instructors to invite discussion and debate in the GSP class than in other classes of corresponding size and subject, which they taught outside the GSP. The professors recall how students helped each other be academically responsible and used positive peer pressure to not only come to class,

but to excel. “They were more interactive than my other classes. This cohort was more open to talking and more energetic right away,” the anthropology professor related, “which allowed me to do more hands on, applied aspects in this course”.

On the other side of the community coin, there were also obstacles to overcome. “Normally as a professor, the students don’t know each other and that is an advantage,” one of the professors admitted. The professor went on to explain how usually the first class of a semester, the orientation period for a course, sets up an understanding of how the course will go, what the overall culture generated in this particular classroom environment will be. But with the student cohort, came residual culture from the previous semester. It was not a clean cultural slate. On one hand the students knew this was a GSP class, and as such expected it to meet certain criteria that fit their understanding of a global outlook like Donym’s class had done the previous semester. On the other hand, they had certain ways they were used to interacting with each other as fellow students.

“If I had them from day one in the fall, it would have been different,” the ethics professor said, “I wouldn’t have been an outsider then.” “In many ways I had lost the upper hand,” the other professor added. “Now it was me versus the group and I had to win over the group.” This professor explained that while winning over 26 *individuals* in a class is not particularly easy and does take time and effort, it also give the professor a longer period in which to earn that trust and build rapport. While a professor may not win over all the individuals in the class, there is usually very little peer-to-peer influence in a general education class to interfere with the professor’s relationship with another student. In this instance however, both professors from the second semester immediately realized the difference of

walking into an existing community; “I realized I had to win them over almost instantly. If I lose one, I can lose the group.” And this one group had a multitude of personalities; the ethics professor recalled, “I had to lasso a huge dynamic.”

Like the orientation they had received six months earlier in August, this introduction to the new classes and new professors reaffirmed for the GSP students the notion that they were different from other university freshmen, they were a group set apart. The professors weren't the only ones who had started to really see the cohort as a group; the students had themselves. This might have remained less obvious at this point for the students if it hadn't been for one non-GSP student named Jeff.

Jeff needed to fulfill one of his general education requirements and had asked for permission to join the anthropology class that had been set aside specifically for the GSP cohort. While it remains unclear what Jeff was expecting to walk in on his first day, it is clear the GSP students were not expecting Jeff.

“This kid [Jeff] walked in to the classroom and we looked at him and said ‘this isn't your class, you're not supposed to be here’,” one of the students laughs. “He wasn't one of us, so we didn't know why he was in the GSP class and we told him that,” another student agrees. Even the professor could tell Jeff didn't belong to this group: “This poor student [Jeff] was an intruder and they treated him differently, but he was also something new and that made him interesting enough at first to the students to give him a chance.” Jeff, bringing the male ratio up just a little, was almost like the class pet, included by the group, but not quite like the rest of the group. In a bold move to include him, as well as make group project facilitation easier, Jeff

was even given access to the cohort's Facebook group page, a privilege extended only this once to an outsider.

Part of Jeff's acceptance into the group might have been because of his personality, easy going by all accounts, but a larger effect might have had to do with the two professors teaching that semester. Despite the fact the cohort members could identify the professors or other students like Jeff as 'outsiders' that did not mean they had become one homogenous community. Those smaller groups or nodes of communication within the cohort were still very much in existence and still in the process of becoming more solidified and isolating. Within a fairly short time, this became apparent to the professors as well.

"Normally as the instructor you have to spend time building groups up," the anthropology professor explained, "But in this class I had to spend time *breaking* the group up rather than forming it." The professor expanded on the attempts to re-order the pre-existing group structure. While the previous semester, *students* had chosen groups for large and small scale projects, the professor was now "forcing students to work outside of the established cliques". Through the simple technique of *assigning* new partners for each class project, this professor was forming new lines of connection between members who did not previously have any channels of communication. "They got to see new perspectives of each other throughout the semester. I could see them coming together as a larger group."

Independently in the ethics course, the same approach was being applied just as strongly. "They were comfortable with certain people, but that doesn't help facilitate learning new things," the ethics professor clarified. "Assigning groups took them out of their comfort zones." This professor chose debate teams and project groups, deliberately trying to get

students of different views, opinions, and personalities together. This meant the students, especially when working on larger projects that had to be done out of class, needed to have a form of communication to facilitate those projects with.

The cohort's Facebook page, created the previous semester, became useful once again. Since the students were already part of it and could access it in a variety of ways, it made communication between less connected members easy. This reordering of the group's dynamic by the two professors probably had more to do with non-GSP student Jeff being accepted into the group on a long term basis. Since he needed to have access to communication between students for their numerous group projects, adding him to the existing Facebook page made more sense than making a new form of communication. At the same time, by having the professors actively breaking up those smaller groups, cracking them open and shaking them up to form connections between isolated members, this created the perfect time for Jeff to start forming connections to the other students too.

Third Semester

Coming into their second year of college, the GSP cohort was back for its third semester of the program. However, instead of 26, there were only 22 students returning. What had happened to four of the students over the course of the first year that had prevented them from continuing in the program?

"One girl was an athlete," one of the students explains, "she had such a tough schedule and couldn't make the GSP fit in anymore." Another non-returning student had left the university all together, "The one girl said she would miss us all, but she didn't like the university and she missed her boyfriend." As for the other six, some also expressed to Donym their class

schedules were too tight to accommodate GSP classes. Others had come into the university with so many general education credits already fulfilled, that continuation in the GSP would give them redundant credits they could not use, and therefore believed the program no longer filled any of their needs.

The problem of already filled credits was not just limited to the students who left; it was of critical concern for many of the students who remained in the program in the third semester. "Some classes didn't fulfill any of my credit requirements, which meant it was a lot of work for no reward," a student tells of her second year concerns. This student was not alone in her sentiment. Many of the student informants recounted similar attitudes: "In the second year, I decided not to take classes I didn't need."

In response to the growing concern among the GSP students, and determined not to lose more of the cohort from the program, Donym made the call that students were not required to take the classes offered if they already had those credits filled. This was a relief to many of the students as they could still remain in the program, but not at the expense of their academic progress.

Due to this development, the classes being taught in this third semester, ecology and music, saw their rosters settling at about thirteen students each. "I usually teach classes of 400 students," the ecology professor explained, "so teaching twelve was like a dream." With only twelve out of the remaining 22, it was more like a seminar for this professor; it meant the class could engage in more active learning, more discussion, and more flexibility in the time and topics. "In a small class like that, we know each other; there is negotiation, congruity and collegiality. This class was a luxury in every way."

While students spoke enthusiastically about their ecology class from the third semester, many remembered their second class with less exuberance. “Honestly? I barely went to that class,” one student admitted, “I didn’t see the point and I could get notes from someone else, so I just didn’t go.” The other students who took the second class of the semester agreed that while they went to class, it was not something they necessarily looked forward to.

“All teaching is theater,” the ecology professor declared, “One must engage students in the context of the material and work to keep the students’ interest. The classroom is an environment for interaction. It is important to get to know the students, to pay attention to them, call them by name, and engage them in dialogue.” While these are important points, there was something more at work here than good prof/bad prof. Why did one class really come together around the ecology professor and the music class did not?

“It wasn’t really global,” one of the students explained. “We are supposed to be Global Scholars, but the class didn’t account for that.” This deviation from one of the core tenets, which had brought the group together in August 2011, was not being appreciated by the students. Much like the members who had decided against taking classes that did not meet their individual needs, this class group had aligned against the music course material since it did not appear to be meeting the group’s goal of becoming globally minded. “We would be having an interesting dialogue, but then you could see during a lecture their eyes would glaze over,” the professor said with regret. “This was a new class for me too, the first time through is always difficult and looking back there is a lot I would change next time around.”

Outside of the two classes offered for the cohort, other factors were shaping how the cohort community, which had become much stronger after its second semester, was evolving.

On one hand, student members were prodding each other into taking classes together outside of the GSP. "I really wanted to take another class with our ethics professor, so I got two of the others [students] to take it with me," a student says. Others had similar experiences with classes for other general education credit or major courses in which they purposefully scheduled with GSP members to take non-GSP classes. In this way, parts of the community were expanding outside of the GSP confines. Bonds between certain members were strengthening as they took on new connections or experiences that did not depend on global scholarliness.

On the other hand, there were students who fully recognized their connections with the cohort were starting to weaken. "I wasn't taking either of the classes, but I would look on Facebook every once in a while and realize I had no idea what was going on," a student recounts. "I was feeling out of the loop," another affirmed. Students taking either the music or ecology classes noted the trend as well, "There were people we just didn't hear from. They just disappeared."

Much of the work the anthropology and ethics professor had done the previous semester was disintegrating. Without any particular reason or need to stay in contact, many of the connections between members were falling into disrepair. On the other hand, many members were strengthening bonds between themselves either through continued GSP class time or insisting on taking non-GSP classes together. The shape of the community was very much returning to the segmented structure it had resembled after the first semester, but this time there was a larger core group continuing to connect within classrooms with more separated individual members feeling left out.

Fourth Semester

In the final semester of the GSP, three classes were offered for the cohort members that would fulfill general education credits and meet the requirements of the GSP. Similar to the third semester, as students already had credits filled, there were fewer enrolling in the classes. The largest class had twelve students in it. The other two only had eight and five GSP members enrolled so the courses had to be opened to the general university students in order to have enough students to run the class at all. This setup was not like non-GSP student Jeff coming into the second semester anthropology course; it was much more in line with the cohort members taking non-GSP classes together. "Sometime in those classes it felt like I was the only one participating, like none of the other students wanted to be there."

As the researcher making observations in these classes, it was easy for me to find the GSP students. They would sit together, talking before class, while non-GSP students sat farther away, not making eye contact or showing any inclination towards communication. This showed from an outsider stand point that the GSP students were a group with a separate identity from their other classmates.

From an insider perspective this juxtaposition of GSP-students with non-GSP students helped reinforce their community boundaries. "Most of them [non-GSP students] don't even show up to class," students said. Terms of 'us' and 'them' are used often when speaking about the fourth semester classes. Having an 'other' to compare themselves to helped fuse together some of the gaps within the cohort community, unifying and remedying a little of what the previous semester had broken.

However, many of the same principles applied from all three previous semesters. Students who were not taking classes this semester with other GSP members were feeling disconnected and finding it hard to maintain any meaningful communication. Others, it seemed, simply slipped off to the fringes of the group, unconcerned about maintaining a connection.

Within their GSP classes many of the practices the cohort members had built up over the last year and a half were still very much in use. The Facebook page still remained one of the most useful tools for organizing or passing on information. The students were still being assigned group projects, and the group approach to an assignment had become so commonplace that many times *individual* projects were dealt with in a group fashion. “You can’t expect us *not* to work in groups,” one of the students laughed, reaffirming what many of the others had said. “The professor gave us the assignment and told us it was individual, but of course we are going to talk about it, of course we are going to compare and help each other, working in groups is what we do.” Another student, speaking of their group approach to classes summed it up in the very telling sentence: “For us, number one is community and communication; we strive to succeed together.”

Communication had become easy for the students within their GSP classes, and now, facing non-GSP classes and non-GSP students, they began to realize how unique these practices were to their community. “I can ask the cohort anything and usually get an answer within a few minutes, but in my chemistry class, if I had a problem? I would rather work it out for hours on my own than ask someone for help,” a student confessed.

The one fourth-semester professor who had strictly GSP cohort students, mentioned many of the traits that had been commented on by previous professors about this cohort. “They all sat together from day one, which was a little weird,” the professor mentioned. “They were comfortable speaking up and participation was not an issue.” The professor continued to discuss how as a professor one of the most difficult things is getting the class to feel comfortable enough to ask and answer questions without fear of how they looked to other students. “With this group, I didn’t have to work to create a safe environment in which people could discuss as a group.”

Of the cohort’s academic performance, this professor noticed many advantages to the community approach. The class itself, structured to include many group assignments, worked better than it had in the past according to the instructor. From the grading standpoint, it was noted the bottom end of the curve was better than normal, but the professor also noted the high end was not as high as usual. “There are normally some standout students, but then there are also normally students who are not engaged at all.” Like their seating arrangement, this cohort’s grades seemed to be firmly lumped together.

With the strong points of the community approach, the professor also noted some of the pitfalls, which had been apparent the previous semester, were still there as well. From the beginning of class it was clear the instructor had very little time to win over the class; “In a small class the students will either all align for or against you, and once you gain their allegiance you have to work to keep it; you have to beware of a mutiny because they *will* mutiny.” The instructor expressed one of the issues with having a community that needs to be won over is that communication can be a detriment to the outsider. Community members expressing their

opinions between each other often means that group alignment for or against the outsider happens much more quickly than when an outsider is trying to win over a group of individuals.

Outside of classes, there was another set of issues circling around the GSP study abroad scholarship that was causing discord in the GSP community. The students had to complete two years of classes and then, in the final step of the program, each cohort member would be awarded a \$2000 (USD) scholarship to study abroad. For the first three semesters this had been a vague concept to be dealt with later. Later, however, had arrived and debates arose in earnest as to how the scholarship should be used.

Dr. Donym had her own ideas of how the scholarship should be applied. Working with the university offices, she was able to create a month long program to Panama in which the students would take an anthropology class, centered around the Panama Canal, and a language class of intensive Spanish. This program was designed with the scholarship budget in mind so all students would have to supply out of pocket was their airfare.

Students, however, were not as receptive to the idea as Donym had hoped. "I already have anthropology credits," a student explained of her resistance to the Panama trip, "and I don't need any more Spanish." Many of the students were feeling the same; the courses being offered would fulfill credits they already had. Others, with credits still open, were disenchanted with the location choice, "I'd love to go somewhere with everyone, but Panama was my last choice."

Still more students had decided long ago where exactly they wanted to study abroad, "I wanted to use my scholarship to go to France, but I don't know if I can now." This became another issue for the students; if they were not going to Panama, what programs could they

use their scholarship on? “We wanted definite guidelines to follow for the scholarship; what do I have to do to get it?” This was a common refrain from students who had decided against going to Panama. “It needs more structure,” a student insisted. “It’s causing problems because my application is due and I am not sure if I will be able to use my scholarship or not.”

Even students who had shown interest in the Panama classes were getting frustrated. “I wish there were more of us going,” said a student who would eventually elect not to go herself, “but there are a lot of problems with Panama [the proposed program]. For starters we still don’t know the cost. There has been a breakdown of communication and it’s causing trouble.”

The breakdown was not between students. If anything, this confusion over the scholarship was reuniting drifting members of the community as they tried to assess within their student community what was going on. The breakdown was happening between the Study Abroad office, Donym, and the students.

“But we trust Donym,” a student said when asked about their commitment to Panama, “She says it’s going to go and that it’s going to be great.” Two years of good communication and trust with Donym had many interested at first in the Panama program, but the longer it took for the study abroad program to congeal and criteria for how the scholarship could be used for other study abroad programs were issued, more students dropped away from the idea, looking instead for programs that fit their individual needs. In the end only eight students would commit to going.

Student Survey

The breakdown between the Study Abroad office, Donym, and the student cohort was certainly unfortunate and stressful for the GSP, but for me as a researcher during this small

crisis, it was a perfect opportunity to see the many forms of communication being used between the students. It was obvious that some methods of communication were strictly for contacting GSP authoritative figures such as Donym and university offices. Other forms, such as the Facebook page, were strictly for communication between cohort student members. This was a perfect opportunity to use network analysis, discussed briefly in Chapter 3, to see if communication methods could be used to help define the student's community network.

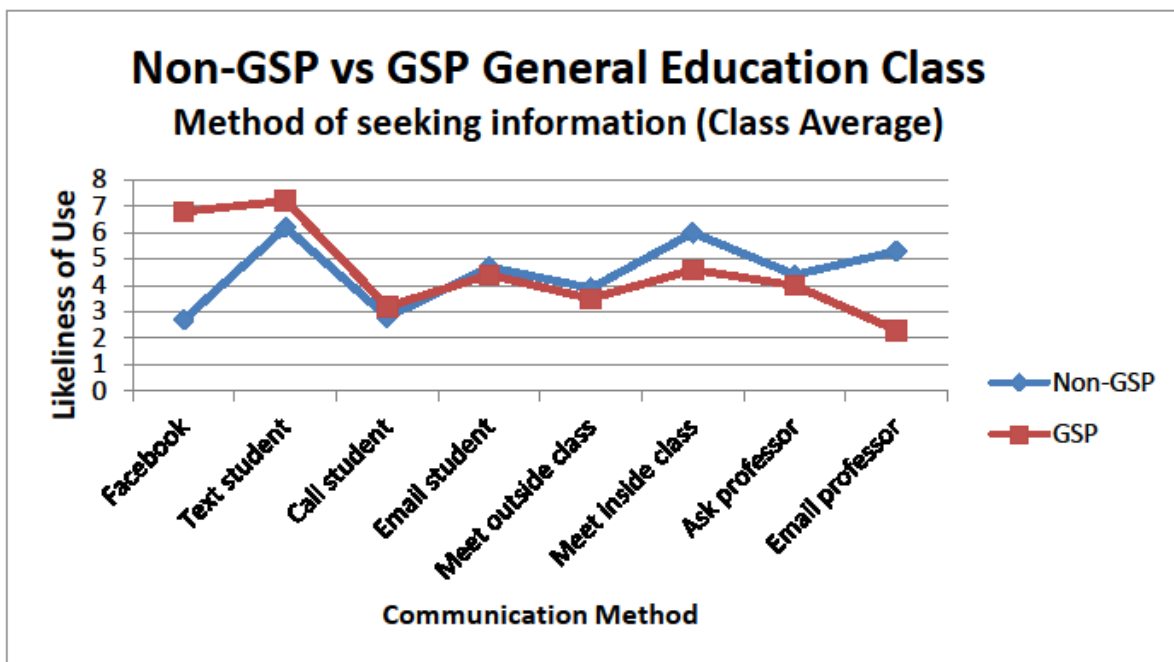
The results of the student survey provide insight into patterns of experience across students. Though it may seem the most direct, a question asking how connected a student may feel to the LC cohort would be an arbitrary exercise. Personal scales of assessment are not easily compatible since one student's seven might be another student's five. Therefore, instead of taking a survey asking directly about community, a survey can be crafted that looks for differences in behavior within the GPS student classes and their non-GSP general education classes. As discussed in the Chapter 2, patterns of communication are one of the ways we can assess community, which presents a way to go about assessing student involvement.

A survey, provided in Appendix A, was sent out to all 22 cohort members in the last three weeks of the Spring 2013 semester and resulted in ten responses. While this is almost half of the population, there are inherent problems with running in-depth statistical analyses on the data. With a sample this small nearly every difference will come up as statistically significant, some of which might not be considered significant with a larger sample pool. The second issue with these responses is that it is not necessarily a random sample; it is self-selected, which is not the preferred sample type.

This does not mean nothing the results are invalid; in fact several interesting points came to light. It simply means the focus shift to look more closely at the descriptive statistics instead of doing more rigorous statistical analysis. When paralleled with the qualitative data already presented above, the descriptive statistics present several interesting trends.

The student cohort was asked the question, “When you want to ask a question about a GSP class or assignment you will normally...” The students were then asked to rank in order of preference the eight communication methods that had been taken from the qualitative data, where 8 was the most preferred method of communication and 1 was the least likely to be used. This same question and set of communication methods was then asked for their non-GSP general education classes. The averages of the two questions were synthesized from all ten responses and graphed below in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1



Looking at the graph in *Figure 1*, we can see something different is happening here between the students' GSP and non-GSP classes in terms of preferences for communication. If these were two different sets of students' responses, it might easily be dismissed as difference in preference; however these are the same ten students preferring to act very differently inside of their GSP classes and in their non-GSP classes.

The choice 'email professor' ranks very highly as a communication method for the students in their non-GSP classes and is the least used method *within* their GSP classes. This may show a greater reliance and connection to the professor in non-GSP classes and less communication between fellow students. On the other hand, Facebook, the least used methods in non-GSP classes, is one of the most preferred methods for GSP communication. It seems that within the GSP the students may have a greater connection and reliance on each other. They have learned to look to the community for help first and learned to trust the community such that it continues to be a viable and valuable tool.

When we break the averages up into their individual responses we get a better look at students' actual communication patterns (*Figures 2 and 3*). When we look at the non-GSP graph (*Figure 2*) no noticeable trend can be derived. Student preferences are incredibly scattered. It could be said that there is a marked convergence around 'ask another student in class', which is one of every students' top four choices, but this would make sense as it is the easiest way to get in contact with students one does not know well.

Figure 2

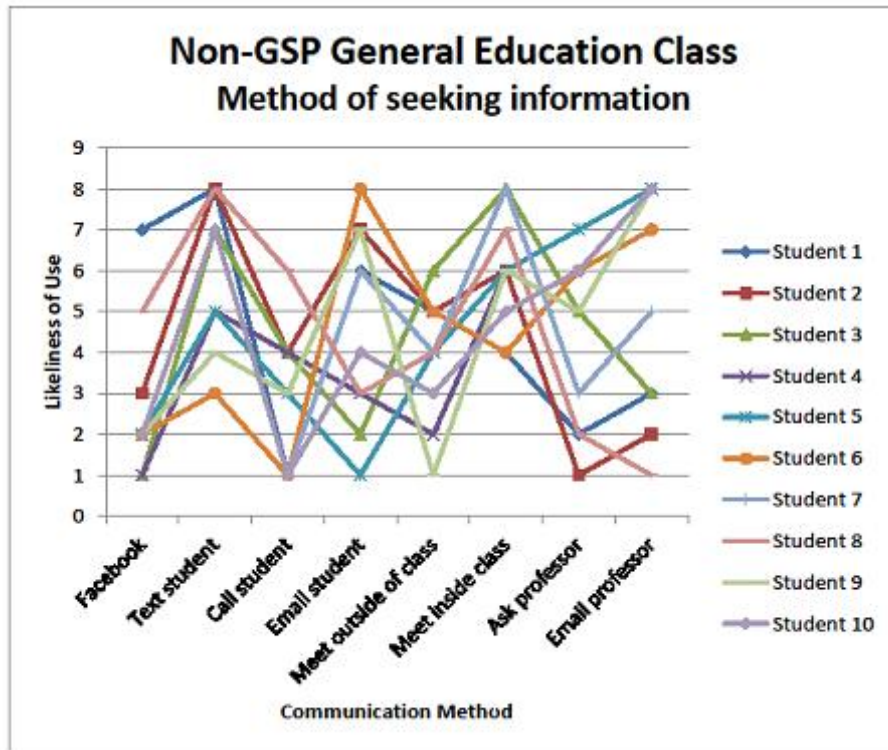
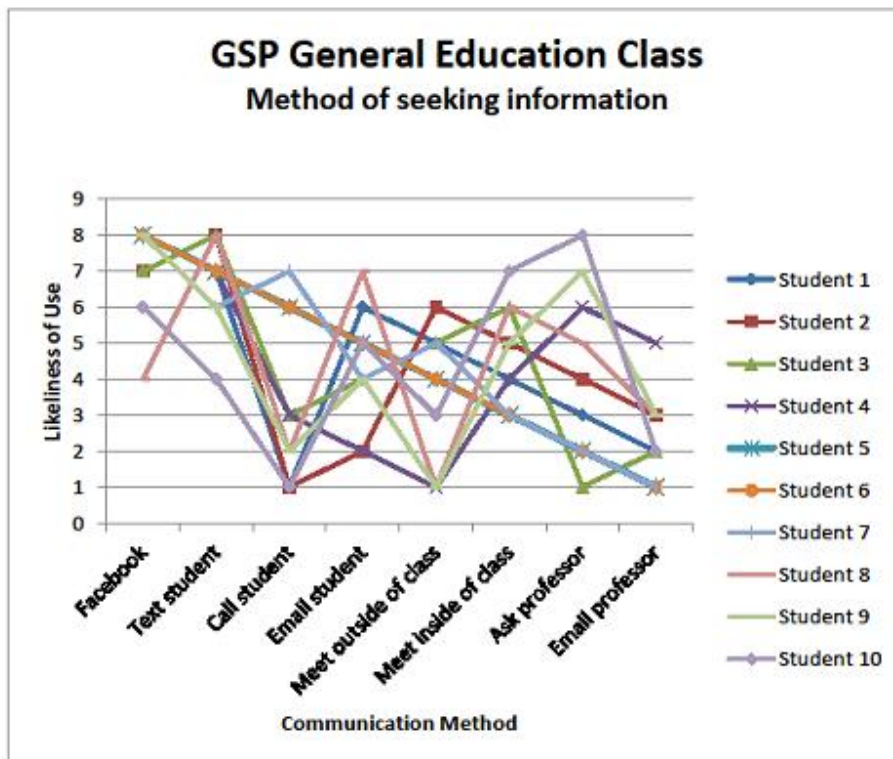


Figure 3



Looking instead at those same students' preferences when within their GSP group (*Figure 3*), a more clearly developed trend appears. The cohort members have created these patterns of communication that have not transferred to exterior classes. They are strictly a GSP community practice.

It could be said the non-GSP graph is a good representation of how the cohort members originally acted back in August of 2011. They spoke in the classroom as a first means of communication. Gradually they shifted from the non-GSP communication (*Figure 2*) into the GSP communication (*Figure 3*), from scattered individuals into a cohort community with particular practices of communication, which according to network analysis, discussed briefly in *Chapter 3*, is a main way of determining who belongs to a community (Wolfe 2006).

Student 8 and *Student 10* on the GSP chart are particularly worth examining. These students have noticeably different preferences for communication *within* the GSP from the other students. Their first course of action would be to ask the professors, rather than their fellow students. This is interesting when paired with these student responses to another survey question that asked 'For you, the cohort really started to feel like a group after....' *Student 10* responded 'the second year of the program' and *Student 8* responded that they did not feel it had ever congealed as a group. These are much different responses than the other students who replied positively, feeling the group had formed by either the end of the first semester or beginning of the second. The differences in communication preferences and group belonging with *Student 8* and *Student 10* is fascinating because with a larger sample, it is potentially possible to assess who has and has not become part of a community based on patterns of communication.

Chapter 5: Global Scholars Program Panama Study Abroad

Week One

The spring 2013 semester ended and students vanished for the summer, leaving only eight GSP students who would be going to Panama. With them would be Donym, a Spanish instructor, and myself, the insistent researcher, bringing our little party to eleven in total. The students would have classes on campus for a week, then spend two weeks in Panama, and then return to campus for one more week to finish projects and present their findings. I would not only accompany them to Panama and sit in on their classes, but actually take the lower-level Spanish class with three of the GSP students.

The first day of class proved an interesting one. Unlike the classes observed during the previous semester, there was not a flurry of conversation that morning before class commenced. It was a slightly awkward series of conversations mostly hinging on Donym's engagement with students more than student's engagement with each other. Odder still, the students were as spread out as the small room permitted. It was no surprise empty seats would be left around me, the nosey interloper, but it was interesting to see these students purposefully leaving spaces or moving away from other members of their cohort. By the time all eight of the students had arrived and Donym began to introduce the courses, it had become apparent that these seating and conversation gaps bespoke of missing cohort members. This was not their whole group. Worse yet, from a student perspective, there were not even whole subgroups they had constructed over two years. While some strong core friendships were still

evident between some students in this subset, this was not a general truth. They needed to reorder and organize these remnant members into a new group and carry on without those missing members of their GSP cohort.

They had done this before, this reorganization of gaps in their community. Over the last two semesters of the GSP, every time they had less than full GSP cohort enrollment in a class they had gone unwittingly through this process. Here, within these two new courses the group would *reestablish* a group culture that existed without the missing members. But what would shape this new community? What were the factors that would affect the social organization and how students came together into a support network?

The first, a passive but extremely prominent factor, was the physical environment. While the physical environment was to expand over the course of four weeks, for the moment, it was the small classroom. It was small enough that individuals could not remove themselves far from the group, but it was large enough to allow for physical distance between members who chose it.

The second factor to be imposed on the forming of this new community was time. While the whole group had class with Donym three times in the first week, the importance of time became most obviously in the division of the Spanish class. Students had been separated into two classes based on their existing competency with the language. Five had been sorted into the upper-level class, the other three and I made the lower-level. This division imposed different time restraints. Our lower section met for ninety minutes early in the morning and the upper-level class convened afterwards. By default in the first week, students interacted more

within their Spanish level than between levels for the simple reason of this was who they saw more frequently.

This was certainly true for me. Much like Jeff in the second semester, I had imposed myself on the group at the best possible time. Here, at the very beginning of these new courses, the breaks in the group were still fresh; everyone was attempting to reestablish themselves in this new class community, seeing how they fit together with the others. Identities and friendships were shifting and changing from what they had been. Here was the best time to add someone into the mix, right after the immediate break; it meant I had the ability to become part of whatever this new community would be, as opposed to trying to intervene in something existent and stable. Furthermore, the new domain of knowledge offered by the new courses, especially Spanish, gave me, the outsider, a vein of conversation to follow and connect over.

Of the other three students in our lower-level Spanish class, two students, Jake and Sasha, were a strong, confident pair of friends. The third, Connie, was not so lucky. Her closest connections in the GSP cohort were not enrolled in this program and so she was working to reconnect herself. Judging rightly that she knew the other two in our Spanish level more than she knew me, she moved to sit with them on the second day, leaving me on the other end of the pair. She was using the environment of the classroom to her best advantage to connect more strongly with Jake and Sasha. Ironically, her move to the other end worked to my own advantage more than hers.

My own adoption into the community began by a strange combination of my own merit and the pair of Jake and Sasha accepting and almost claiming me. This is a strange sentiment to convey, and stranger still to dissect as the whole process was so subtle it was barely perceptible

at the time. Jake and Sasha had decided to include me into their small group because I was new and novel and potentially useful. The place where I ended up sitting in Spanish led to my working three or four times a class, by dictation of the instructor, exclusively with Sasha on small team exercises. Our lack of Spanish put us both at ease with each other and often led to butchered statements and laughter. I struck Sasha and Jake as a little quirky, a little funny, and capable of holding my own ground, so through an effort of extending conversation, jokes, and invitations toward me, I had been completely adopted into a small group by these two halfway through the first week. It would take Connie and I until the end of the week to reach a similar regard, but at least by merit of the other two students, she regarded me in a neutral way and opened many more avenues of conversation in my direction. I was the other two students' problem now. If I turned out to be exceedingly annoying, on their heads be it.

The first two factors discussed briefly above, environment and time, were indeed important, but there is a third factor that may be the most important for understanding how the community evolved: *need*. What did they need to accomplish? The two classes had very simple goals: pass. This would mean a project for Donym, which divided the students into four teams of two, and for Spanish this would mean a series of quizzes, assignments, and group projects. From these guidelines, the students only *needed* to form one attachment for Donym's class, whoever they chose to do their project with. For Spanish however, it seemed to be the more connections with competent students, the better. This was perhaps one of the influences that led to Jake and Sasha adopting me. I had no formal education of the language, but I was a fairly competent student. What the instructor taught, I could aid in recalling. Likewise, I found

myself cataloging which students within the whole group might be the most helpful if I had questions.

In this first week, those three factors of environment, time, and need, were fairly easy to account for. The *environment* consisted only of the classroom, *time* consisted of ninety minutes to three hours given the day, and 'needs' were restricted solely to academic pursuits. Small groups or pairs were beginning to form again, and I was happy enough to find myself included in one. Getting adopted by one group meant I had my foot in the door. However, from here I could sense the very real potential that if I continued to use Jake and Sasha as my crutch, continued to sit and talk exclusively with them, I would miss the window of opportunity to get to know everyone else, and they would continue to see me as this outsider. But how did one make any meaningful connection to another pair? Were things to continue to progress at the pace they did on campus with no other intervention, I believe we would have faced continued solidification and isolation of small groups instead of coming to a real group cohesion. However, once we got to Panama, things would change.

Week Two (First week in Panama)

After a long day of travel and one insane trip to the grocery store, eleven of us had made it to Panama City, Panama. The small hostel we were staying in would be home and classroom for the next two weeks. Donym and the Spanish instructor would be sharing a room and I had acquired my own. All eight students, however, had been packed into one room like sardines in a tiny luggage-cluttered can. Outside of our bedrooms, a small common space, which now doubled as our classroom, was ours to share with the other occupants of the hostel.

The environment shaping our community had grown exponentially. It was no longer just a classroom. It was now bedroom space, common space, eating space, buses, boats, and more. Time also had changed its influence on the group. It was no longer just an hour or two in the morning that we were together. It was nearly every waking moment of every day. There was no real respite from human interaction.

These two factors, now so different from what they had been on campus, had profound effects on the third factor, need. Individual needs expanded to cover all the new territory that environment and time had expanded to. It was no longer just the needs of passing two classes the students had to rely on each other for. They needed to survive for two weeks in a foreign country. They needed to live peacefully together in one room. They needed to procure and cook meals, wash clothes, and spend extensive amounts of time together, all of this on top of their preexisting need of complete homework assignments and class projects. Considering the range of personalities and preferences, I didn't know if this was going to turn into a sitcom, a soap opera, or quiet possibly, a murder mystery.

This bizarre reality we had stepped into here in Panama was not real life. By the same token, now that we were here in Panama, nothing seemed to exist beyond this group. If the first week had left gaps where students from the GSP cohort were missing, Panama showed gaps where everything from our daily lives was missing: family, friends, personal space, etc. Now it wasn't just those missing GSP members we would have to reorganize our community around, it was our own missing lives. Every need had to be addressed within the confines of this new reality. All the normal and comfortable things of home that were normally relied on were half a world away.

The first full day in Panama showed a marked difference from the class the students had attended a week before. They had all paired off into two's. Jake and Sasha, Megan with Nikole, Angelina with Connie, and the quieter Luka and Lucy. Interestingly enough, these were the partners they had chosen to do their final project with for Donym's class and had needed to speak the most with the previous week. This isn't to say each pair held themselves away from the others, for in truth the environments they were in would not allow anyone to move away at all. It is merely these pairs showed a very marked propensity for sitting, standing or talking with their project partner more than another member of the group. As for myself, I still belonged to Sasha and Jake.

After spending most of the day out in the city, the group returned to the hostel for Spanish lessons. As it had been on campus the week before, the class would be split, lower-level class first, upper-level afterwards. Unlike campus, the other half of the group was still present during both classes, not really having anywhere else to go. While one half was in class, the other students hung off to the sides of the common room, checking their email, doing their homework, chatting quietly among themselves, or taunting from the pool. While this split class still did cause a time division in the group, it was less significant now that we were in Panama and certainly was almost trivial compared to the amount of time we spent together as a whole group.

On the first day of our Spanish class in Panama, I accidentally endangered the few good social connections I had made in a way I had not predicted: I did my homework. In the lower-level class, we had been instructed to write a short essay utilizing the material we had gone over in class. As I was taking this class as a student as well as an observer, I too was required to

do the assignments. Although I had not taken Spanish previously, I had good working knowledge of other romance languages and provided enough time and a dictionary, I was able to make a decent attempt at my assignment. When the instructor was looking our paragraphs over, she singled mine out saying I had done an exemplary job. When I met the faces of the other students, I realized this would not be to my social benefit. I had spent a week trying to fit in and here I had in one simple assignment singled myself out. I was a threat to their grades now, the person who would ruin the curve. In the grand scheme of things, this was not the worst thing I could have done, but it had put a slant on how the others of the group viewed me, and I would have to work a little harder to even things back out. Mostly, this would require me to add the statement "I don't know if that's right," to the end of nearly every Spanish statement I would make from then on, regardless of my true degree of confidence in my answer. I would work very subtly over the next two weeks to make sure I remained firmly in the middle of the Spanish learning curve.

While I had been able to write a short essay in Spanish that was not to say I had any good ability to speak it. I was not the only one with this problem. During the first day in Panama, something had become glaringly apparent to those of us in the lower-level Spanish class. We needed help with every interaction we made outside of our immediate group. "Those of us in Spanish One couldn't really interact with people, and that was felt rather keenly," one student remarked. Ordering food, making purchases, asking questions, answering questions, and so many general life occurrences we were so used to handling for ourselves suddenly were beyond our comprehension. Numerous situations had already arisen that required us to hastily grab one of the upper-level Spanish students and make them come to our rescue. We knew

many more language barriers had yet to be vaulted, but this new need, the lower-level Spanish speakers relying on upper-level translators, was one-sided. The upper-level students didn't need the lower-level in the same way, and while they were willing to help the first day, we all feared patience would run thin if we did not provide something in return.

The first few days, travel time proved a great influence on the cohesion of the group. The van held a captive audience, the time and conversation was almost a type of forced socialization. Everyone was there, trapped in a 4'x8' space, with nothing else to do. However, conversation between the back and the front of the van was not always so easy. By default the two pairs in the back spoke more frequently and the two pairs towards the front were more engaged with each other during travel. By day three two distinct groups were often visible within the van and had every new environment we encountered been arranged in seating for four, there is a chance the group would have remained fairly split. Luckily, this was not the case.

The van was static in its seating arrangements, meaning like the classroom on campus, whatever seat someone sat in the very first time, it inevitably became theirs. That was not the case with other environments the group encountered and inhabited. Each new day and new activity brought a new set of spaces: meeting rooms, canoes, restaurants, indigenous houses, trains, etc. No two of these spaces shared the same seating arrangement. This meant the group was constantly being rearranged by the environment. This meant opportunity arose for new conversations with different people the students would not have necessarily chosen for themselves. Instead of conversational bonds only strengthening between the groups of four the van had carved out, those bonds were beginning to weave all eight students together.

But seating, which was helping to build this community, could also be a deterrent. As seen during the two years of classes the students had already taken with the GSP, conversation is difficult to sustain over so many seats. When conversation is such an important way of producing bonds within a community, being excluded from conversation can almost be equated with being excluded from the group. While not intentional or vindictive in any way, these exclusions happened quite often due to the setup of each new environment. For example, when taking a train across the country, the seating was not consistent. Six could fit in one booth, which left two out. Those two found other seating, but it was too far away to be included in whatever conversation the others were having. Two of the six already seated went to join those who had been left out, taking some of the sting out of the accidental exile and reaffirming them as part of the group. Now in this particular instance it perhaps mattered less since every single student promptly fell asleep, but this situation would occur time and again, sometimes without such a good resolution.

Even within the common space in the hostel there was a constant reorganization of seats. The tables could fit four or five and could be pushed to include eight. Unlike the class excursions, group members were not all showing up in the common room at the same time and would come and go as they pleased. This meant they would sit next to whoever was already there, not waiting for someone else to arrive before they chose a seat.

For the students, living in one room together, and spending nearly every moment of the day together had profound effects. They knew each other on a level now that went so far beyond anything else they had experienced in the whole GSP thus far. "I thought I knew everyone before," one of the students laughed over breakfast, "I mean, we were close before,

but now we know each other so much more.” Another student agreed, “Eight people sharing one bathroom? We *needed* to know each other to make that work.”

The professors and I were not sharing a room with the students, but we were participating in everything else. We too found ourselves forming unbelievably fast relationships with the group. By day three of our stay in Panama, I could comfortably engage any one of the students in conversation. This was amazing considering after the whole first week of the program, only two would actively attempt to speak with me. I would like to think that this had to do with my charming personality, and perhaps some can be attributed to that, but it had more to do with all those seating rearrangements. It had given me a completely legitimate reason to speak with someone if I was suddenly next to them for the duration of a meal, a class, or on the bus.

Food was another facet of our time together that worked subtly to connect us all. The group was comprised of adventurous and reserved eaters with many differing tastes and preferences. In some cases, due to the timing of our meals, people just were not hungry enough to take on a whole entrée themselves. This led to quite a bit of food sharing. For nearly every meal we ate as a group. Inevitably the words “What did you get? Is it good?” were uttered by someone. This would cause someone to casually offer a portion of their own plate for others to try. It seemed rude to refuse the small bit offered and ruder still not to reciprocate with a bit of whatever was on one’s own plate. By the time a meal was through, one had essentially tasted eight or nine different dishes. In this art of group eating, giving, taking, sharing, reciprocating, enjoying, a type of trust and camaraderie was bolstered.

Week Three (Second Week in Panama)

By the end the first week in Panama, the group had spent nearly 170 hours practically living on top of one another. We had shared so many stories, jokes, experiences, and disasters, it would be impossible to keep count. The eleven of us had formed a group identity, molded out of individual personalities.

“Before this trip, we didn’t have this connection,” Lucy discussed with me over breakfast one morning. “Being all together bonded us, there was no choice. I thought they just didn’t like me before, now I realize we just never got to know one another.” This was a fantastic change in perception from our interview several months before where this same student had perceived herself on the barely attached fringes of the social fabric of the GSP.

She was not the only one who had appreciated being enveloped into this new little GSP-Panama community. Speaking with Luka, a bright but admittedly shy girl, about when she had felt she really became part of the group she shrugged. “Honestly, I finally felt like I was part of the group in Panama. Before, I would always work on problems myself, I wouldn’t ask anyone. I used the Facebook page once and then immediately deleted my post.” When asked to explain what she felt had made her now part of the community, she decided it had not happened in the first week of class, but at the airport. “Meeting before the airport and checking on each other made me start feeling like we were together. This was a thing we were all going through together, it was the beginning of all these shared experiences we have had here. I didn’t get one of the group shirts or go to GSP events, but now I wish I had.”

Lucy and Luka had all the opportunities as the other students over the past two years, but their more reserved personalities had not landed them in any of the small little social

groups that had formed within the cohort. They had perceived others' indifference as dislike and chose to keep themselves as part of the program, but not part of the GSP community. But here, in Panama, the conversation could never get very far away from them. Given all these joint experiences, which provided any number of avenues for conversation, these two students found it much easier to participate now than it had been over the last two years.

"I'm glad I got to hang out with you on this trip," one of the other students said to Lucy during a conversation, "You are a cool person. You are hysterical." This was not the only time I would hear such statements, and in fact, the concept of humor came up often enough. An interesting need had arisen in our group almost as soon as we got to Panama; we needed to kill quite a bit of time. Travel time, meal time, time between excursions and classes, were all little bits of time we filled with stories, jokes, absurd questions, or serious discussion. In this regard a lot of the lower-level Spanish class' debts for Spanish translations were paid. We amused the other five students and they continued to help us cope with our language insufficiency.

In this third week, a group identity had been very firmly established, but this did not mean things had stagnated. Internally the group, now extraordinarily comfortable with each other, would continue to evolve and change as people settled into this life more fully and dropped the levels of civility a little. The honeymoon period was over. With such strong connections between people, there was less fear of an unkind word or harsh statement truly breaking the bond. This meant, as this next week progressed, some tension started to build.

"It started in the airport," one of the girl explained, when asked about her less than jovial mood. "The airport was splintering for the group because some people had lost things or forgotten things and now all of us had to wait or help figure out what to do." This statement

was much at odds with what Luka had remembered of the group's transit. "The problem is, when something else starts to bother you about a person, you suddenly remember the airport too and it just makes it worse."

Into the second week in Panama, people were tired. We were up early everyday and out of the hostel for most of the daylight hours. When we returned we had Spanish class, and after dinner, homework. "Being in the one room brought us together, but it also started to break us apart," one of the girls explained. Students were already feeling tired and a bit rundown, but added to that the fact they could never have any real reprieve from each other, the only word that really catches the nature of their mood is 'cranky'.

Within the group there were five very strong personalities, and three calmer, quieter ones. Those five louder individuals, unable to escape from close proximity to each other, had started to grate a bit against each other's nerves. I can even admit my own patience at times wore thin, but for the most part I remained in better shape than the students because I had the blessed relief of my own room.

"It wasn't even big things that were causing problems," a student deduced, "it was things like someone telling someone else to get up, or not being able to decide where to eat. It was stupid little stuff that got on peoples nerves." But without an outlet, they had to figure out internally how they could survive each other for another week.

It is important to note, that for the most part, everyone was still congenial towards one another, but it was obvious that it was wearing thin between certain people and personalities. "I just really can't be near her right now," one student said as she dropped into a chair beside me, effectively blocking off the offending party. This was not the first or last time such a thing

would occur. The easiest thing to do was use the environment to their advantage. At meals or in class it was easy to see students making a calculated choice to put the greatest number of people between themselves and another, using their classmates as personality buffers.

More interestingly, the group's dynamic began to shift towards those people with quieter natures. What had been two groups of four, which merged into one group of eight, did not collapse back into those original groups of four. It broke into new groups of three, two, and three again. Just as I was not entirely immune to the general unrest, I was also not immune to the general redistribution. "You've kind of become part of the group now," one of the student smiled apologetically as I was utilized as a buffer. "You've missed the window on becoming a Global Scholar, but your part of Panama." I knew I had become perfectly friendly with all the students, but I had failed to realize by the beginning of the second week, I no longer belonged to Jake and Sasha. I had been adopted by all eight now. Since I had been deemed a quieter, calmer personality I was utilized as buffer as well. Like the others, I was taken in gratefully as an outlet.

For all that there was a tone of dissonance, the important webs of community were still intact. Students still knew each other's strengths and utilized those connections to achieve their goals. If anything, this period of rearrangement had strengthened bonds with different members and given those quieter people like Lucy and Luka a greater anchoring in the community.

This rebalancing of group members held through the rest of the week and by the time we reached the last days, nostalgia that this was the end of our time in Panama pulled everyone back together. In our last bit of share time there, no one wanted to be excluded or to

exclude anyone. After nearly 340 hours together, individuals had gotten quite good at seamlessly moving toward or away from others when they entered places to ensure agreeable seating arrangements, knowing each other's personalities, habits, and humors.

Then our time was up, bags were packed, and we separated with casual goodbyes as we left for the airport, knowing full well we would see each other bright and early Monday morning for Donym's class.

Week Four

As exciting as weeks two and three were, one would expect great things in week four as well, but in terms of a group dynamic, it was rather muted. Truly part of it was everyone's need to decompress and enjoy the beauty of solitude after so much togetherness. However, a larger part was simply due to the fact that now the group was back on campus for a week, the factors of environment, time, and personal need had fallen back to their original settings.

The only time that required everyone to come together was class time, two hours on Monday morning and two hours on Thursday morning. Outside of this, students' time was their own to complete their team papers for Donym and their group Spanish projects. Now that we were back in the United States, other time constraints such as jobs and commuting had returned as did individual needs that could not be met by our community or were better met *outside* of our community. Also, those of us with Spanish deficiencies were no longer reliant on others for daily transaction communication.

"In these projects it's almost easier to work on things separately and then send them to the other group member for editing," a student insisted when asked how her group was proceeding. It was almost shocking to see members of this community, who had been

incredibly close for two weeks, returning to what they had been in week one of the program. They were back to seeing group members for work on projects, and sometimes not even for that.

To be sure, a sense of camaraderie still existed. New levels of joking and understanding, which had not existed in week one, were present whenever the whole group was together. Casual invitations to lunch after class were accepted by everyone, including the members who three weeks before had not felt those invitations truly extended to them. And I myself was welcome in a way I had not been before our time in Panama. It was the easy communication of old friends, but now talk tended to center only around two items: what does each group's project look like and where does the GSP go from here?

The first item was of the utmost importance. Unlike a non-GSP class, everyone felt comfortable enough within this community to ask intimate details of other's projects so that they could raise theirs to match or feel confident they had already reached a level of acceptability. A project group that was perhaps going above and beyond with their assignment was told with a joking edge, but real sentiment, to stop over-achieving much as I had been with my Spanish essay. Any project that lacked in certain aspects was given ideas of how the work could be improved. There was no academic antagonism between groups, only general community support to see they all succeeded together.

As for the latter topic of discussion --where does the GSP go from here-- this topic circled around many times before nailing down ideas certain students felt confident enough to bring to Donym. They had really enjoyed their time in the GSP and wanted future students to

have access to a similar experience. More than this, now that their time was over with the GSP they wanted to stay a part of this community they had built.

The sad truth was, and I think some of them had realized it then, after our last class on Thursday morning, our Panama community would come to an end. Yes, the friendships would remain and linger for a time if we took up the incentive to maintain them, but our active need for each other was at an end. The environments, time, and needs that had shaped our relationships were no longer active forces in our life. We would not have any more prescribed meeting times, nor would we have any more class assignments to get through. The things that had brought us together would no longer be able to keep us together. If they could, however, find some new purpose to come together around, such as participating in the future of the GSP, then these students could maybe maintain the essence of this new level of connection they had made in Panama.

Chapter 6: Discussions and Conclusions

Examining the student cohort's journey through the Global Scholars Program provides a foundation for understanding the aspects and elements that effectively shape the community within the LC. Comparing the university-based semesters with the GSP Panama study abroad offers a much deeper opportunity to examine how those elements work in real-time, as well as inspect elements of which the community members themselves may not be aware. Looking at the cohort over the four semesters of the GSP there are definite patterns of change and evolution in the community formation that help inform our understanding of the LC.

As discussed in Chapter 2, being placed in an LC is not like the local communities social scientists have studied for over a century. In an established local community, whether one is born, married, or wanders in, a network of trust and reciprocity already exists. There are prescribed ways of connecting to the community that one need only learn, not create anew. There is an established culture that dictates what individuals must do in order to maintain the community (Christiansen and Levinson 2003). An LC, which is an artificial attempt to create a community, has none of those elements. It is a group of individuals placed together with the intention that they will rely on each other to reach some ultimate or series of limited goals. There is no inherent trust or reciprocity that exists among these individuals. The community structure needs to be built up from scratch on strengths and resources members are unlikely to know about each other. In addition, individuals have to weigh if the benefits of this new community will be worth taking on the responsibilities of community. Community is a give-and-

take agreement, but new group members may see their side of the agreement as being too much of a burden. Considering members do not know the other individuals or have clear guidelines of the culture for this proposed community, this is a difficult question indeed.

The LC literature loosely defined 'community' as a support network of individuals (Smith 1993) and the data suggests that a support network did form among the first cohort of the GSP. The students changed from working together on projects because it was required, to working on individual assignments as a group. By the third and fourth semester, and certainly in Panama, the student informants could be seen giving input on projects and assignments that had no bearing on their own grades. This network had not appeared instantly during the orientation in August 2011, but happened gradually over their four semesters together. The students came to rely on each other in order to achieve their academic goals. This might be the increased academic success rate university's hope to see when they implement LCs. However, both on campus and in Panama, it wasn't just a culture of making sure everyone succeeded, but also having no outstanding students, their practices curving both ends of the academic scale. While academic grades fall outside the scope of this study, it would be useful for future studies to see if this practice is something unique to this GSP cohort or typical of LCs. If it is typical of LCs, it raises questions of what universities are really trying to achieve by implementing LCs.

Reviewing the information provided in Chapters 4 and 5, in this study the GSP community can be best understood as a network of communication that aids in meeting individual goals through a group structure. This is perhaps the simplest understanding of what the heart of community really is. What complicates this understanding of community is the recognition that community is not stagnant. The connections and networks are not just created

once and then solidified. With each change in environment, time, need, communication or reciprocity, the community reacts, adapts, and evolves into something different. Thus for this study, the important thing to understand is that community is not about making *friends* but making *connections*, although socializing can be a need pursued by individuals. That is not to say members of the GSP were not friendly towards each other, it is simply that for understanding what impacted the GSP community, we will be observing what encouraged student members to make *connections*.

Using the data presented in chapters 4 and 5, we can now dissect the five factors of community taken from the anthropological literature and examine them within the context of the LC. This will not only allow us to understand their shape and impact within the LC, but identify which factors can be controlled and utilized by program staff to generate community within future cohorts.

Reciprocity and Communication

Throughout the larger scope of humanity, we see people tend towards community building and accomplish more through being part of one (Linton 1936; Taylor 1945; Christiansen and Levinson 2003). But when we look at the GSP cohort's beginning, we can see the students were not necessarily inclined to create a community, perhaps because of the responsibilities inherent in joining a community. Not only do members need to actively participate, but there must be a continuous system of communication and reciprocity created by members interacting with each other. This means one is not simply putting time and resources into meeting one's own needs, but also being utilized as a resource for other's needs as well, the benefits of which are not always immediately obvious (Sahlins 1972).

Reciprocity within a community, especially an LC, is not always as easy to follow. For example, in the GSP sometimes borrowed notes could be a form of reciprocation in answering a tricky homework question. Sometimes the exchanges are more difficult to see externally: help offered for a story or a joke. The resources being exchanged between LC members may be different than those exchanged within the local communities examined by the anthropological literature, but the practice still serves the same function. We have seen in the GSP that not only does reciprocity give access to aid and resources to community members, but it is in these little exchanges that small ties begin to accumulate between members of a group and that those members find their place secured within the group.

With reciprocity also comes trust. As Wiessner (2005) states of reciprocity between individuals of a community, the more interactions and instances of reciprocity between group members, the stronger the trust and the more likely individuals are confident that their help will be returned in the future. No actual tally of these exchanges are kept, but each individual has a good sense of a social debt and if he or she wishes to remain in good standing within the community, he or she will actively work to return the favors bestowed upon them. Looking at the data in Chapter 3 and 4, we can see this holds true for the LC as well. Help provided for an assignment at the university or language translations in Panama were always noted by members and repaid in order to maintain connections to other members and keep open avenues of help for future problems.

As reciprocity was an important constructor and maintainer of community within the GSP, so too, was communication. In conversation, not only can entertainment be found, which we have seen can be a form of reciprocity, but potential resources are realized. Through

conversation, members learn each other's personalities, strengths, weaknesses, and what will or will not be considered acceptable by the group (Cashman 2011). This concept taken from the anthropological literature is still true within the LC. Communication between members not only reaffirmed group membership, but the group identity and the community's purpose.

For the GSP there were many forms of communication and they denoted different levels of connectedness. There was face-to-face conversation which was the most frequent, and easiest to negotiate. Within the classroom face-to-face conversation was the most accessible form of communication. Outside of the classroom, students would meet to talk in person, but normally only if they felt they had a strong social bond or had a pressing need, like a project. Students were more likely to use other forms of communication outside of class: texting, calling, emailing, or Facebook.

The use of Facebook in the GSP gives us the best example of how communication needs to occur as naturally as possible *between* members in order to form the support network of community. Where Facebook can be a virtual community in some instances (Miller 2011), for the GSP it was a communication tool. The Facebook page allowed students to converse with their cohort and share information, but most importantly, it was a communication method they had control over. While there was a university-operated site, Canvas, which electronically linked all the students together with their professors, the student cohort chose not to utilize it as a tool to communicate with each other. Instead they created something for the cohort only. By using a familiar tool, Facebook, there was no external influence. The students had control over who could and could not access the page, it was something created for and used by only the cohort members.

Like conversation in class, students could choose to participate or not on this page, but those who were more active in this communication method, grew to rely on each other more than those who didn't and trust the community for help. This communication tool was something the students created among themselves and would have functioned very differently if it had been set up by the GSP program staff or faculty with their input and surveillance. Like the Canvas school site, it might not have been used by the students at all.

Both reciprocity and communication, identified as important creators and sustainers in local communities in Chapter 2, show themselves to be just as important for LC cohorts. However, it also became apparent in studying the GSP cohort that communication and reciprocity are delicate and difficult factors to *force* between members. As the anthropological literature shows, communication and reciprocity are factors that are neither internal nor external but occur *between* members (Wolfe 2006) and this is still true in the GSP. The decision to engage in communication and reciprocity with others rested within each student's control. Though GPS students were given almost all the same opportunities, some chose to very actively engage in these connections with others and some did not. This comparison of students' action helps us understand that communication and reciprocity, two key elements of community, are not aspects an LC programmer can create directly. Both elements must be naturally built within the group between members. When we look at the GSP, we see communication and reciprocity can, however, be generated and highly influenced by manipulating other factors that affect the LC such as need, environment, and time. We will now dissect need, environment, and time as they stand within the GSP LC, so that not only can the changes to the GSP community over time

be understood, but certain aspects can be applied to the creation of new, more effective cohort communities by understanding how they influence communication and reciprocity.

Need

When we look at reciprocity and communication in the GSP, at first glance it appears these factors *can* be forced through group assignments, but on closer inspection it becomes apparent it is not the *assignment*, but the *need* to work together in order to complete the assignment that generates communication and reciprocity between members. Looking at the GSP we can see the importance of individual needs in generating community. Other aspects certainly affected how the GSP community was shaped, but individual need was the catalyst that began connecting student members to one another.

Within the local communities explored in Chapter two, we saw a wide range of very important life needs being met by the community. These needs helped to create and maintain a network of connections through communication and reciprocity. Perhaps if the GSP cohort had been taken and dropped on a deserted island and told to survive, they would have come together in the same way as those local communities. GSP members would suddenly find themselves in need of everything: food, shelter, water, fire, etc. They would also find themselves with a group of people who had the same needs. Unable to easily meet all those requirements alone, the overwhelming needs of the individual, which matched the need of their fellow stranded peers, would likely galvanize the members into a community as they attempted to create shelters, find food and water, and all other necessities for life. Yes, this community might quickly dissolve into factions fighting over resources, but at least for a brief

period in the beginning, they would likely be very actively communicating and trying to work together.

However, these GSP members were not dropped in any situation so strange or dire. Instead they were placed in a classroom together, where their needs were relatively minimal and, unlike the deserted island, those needs could for the most part be met as individuals. Within the anthropological studies of community explored in Chapter 2 (Hillery 1995; Gudeman 2005; Mauss 2008; McMillan 2011; Redfield 1960; Willi, Melewar, and Broderick 2013), the need that was present in local communities was most often understood as sustenance or essential goods. Within the GSP we can determine the basic shape need takes is meeting all the requirements laid out by the GSP and passing specific classes. Passing courses is something many students manage to do on their own. But we have seen that the GSP community did go from individuals at the orientation, to small groups in the first semester, to a large GSP community in the second group before it started to dissolve again. This same pattern was replicated in Panama. So how did this need manage to pull the GSP students together? Why did it impact the GSP differently from non-GSP members with the same goal?

For the GSP, being required to work in groups for class projects changed not only the nature of need, but that of communication. It elevated the students' need beyond simply passing the class to needing to work with others in order to meet that goal and complete their assignments. So the students first turned to those they already had some history of communication with. Working on a group assignment was not a one-off occurrence, but happened many times in both classes throughout the first semester. This brought those first groups into a relationship of dependence, meeting their joint goals through joint-work,

communication, and reciprocity within their small groups. However, a larger community did not form since there was no need that could be met by working with other students with whom they had no existing connections. Why would one take on a potential burden of a new relationship without any obvious or certain gain? Regardless of an open opportunity to connect with other cohort members, the students chose not to venture outside the small groups they sat near and trusted.

This held true until the professors assigned the students to work with *other* people. Need had changed again and would affect communication. Now the students *needed* to work with new people, needed to create those bonds all over again with other individuals: learn their strengths, weaknesses, personalities and build a level of trust. Since students still had connections of communication and reciprocity with their old groups as well, one group project could easily connect to another group and use each other to assess how their work progressed. Here they began to tailor a larger GSP community culture to succeed together and a stitching together of individual small groups began to occur. This was expressed not only in their interactions, but within their accomplishments as well. Through this comparison of projects, students brought their grades closer to the middle of the class curve. No one failed, but also no one went far above and beyond everyone else. Within these interactions manipulated through a change in need, the beginning of reciprocity in this group was born. It was a semester-long game of reciprocity. The more students worked together, the closer they became and the easier it was to work together on future projects because they knew more of each other's strengths, weaknesses, reliability, and personality. Through this communication and reciprocity a level of trust had been reached within the GSP.

Retrospectively, this act of manipulating need, rearranging the students and making new opportunities for new relationships to form, was one of the most important aspects in generating the first GSP community. The professor kept creating *new* needs to form *new* bonds with *new* people. Surely it was tedious from a student perspective, but it created avenues and pathways of conversations that had not existed and likely would not have formed on their own. Through this reorganization the second semester professors generated a web of communication that caught nearly every member of the cohort. Using the small space and time allotted, the professors created bunches of little needs that sparked communication and reciprocity between all the members of the cohort.

However, need has another side that can affect community generation just as strongly. That which can make community can also break it. Community is a group that meets individual needs, so if it stops meeting the individual's needs, he or she does *not* need the community anymore. In fact, if a community is not meeting individual needs, it can become a burden since the individual is still a resource for others, but cannot claim any benefits themselves (Gudeman 2005).

For the GSP, the community started to break down in the third and fourth semester. The answer to why is fairly simple. Individuals no longer needed to be there. They had already met their general education requirements so the GSP classes no longer met any of their academic needs. In fact, it would be a waste of time and tuition to continue taking classes they did not need (Potential solutions to this problem are discussed in Chapter 7). This meant they had no reason for maintaining their connections to the cohort. True, they were still friendly and spoke about wishing they could see each other more socially, but the core of all their relationships,

the need to succeed together and of having a common goal, no longer existed and thus communication and reciprocity began to fail. This led the larger GSP community to dissolve.

For those who remained involved in the GSP courses, these smaller classes strengthened the connections between the remaining individuals because they were still grounded in the mentality of the previous semester's community. For them it was easier to work together and communicate as a group. They knew the benefits and power of community even if they had fewer members to rely on now.

Through examining the idea of need within the generation and maintenance of a community, important factors were identified. The factor of need in the cohort community is something that can be controlled by program faculty and staff. This is important because for a community communication and reciprocity are required and we now understand that individual need is often the spark that generates those between members. The concept of individuals looking to others to meet personal needs and accomplish goals is an important factor to understand if one wants to build a stronger community. Along the same line, if an individual is not meeting their own personal goals through a community, they are likely to drop it all together even if they have formed ties to others within the community.

Environment

We understand the environment is a strong force on local communities (Barth 2008; Mauss 2008; Steward 2008). The shape and size of a space can have important influence on the shape and size of the community. Within the anthropological models of community explored in Chapter 2, the environment referred to was often a geographical tract of land with natural features where the resources are water sources and vegetation. Within an LC, we can now

understand the environment is most often a classroom with desks and the resources are the individuals present. However, unlike the models of community explored in Chapter 2, environment within the LC is not shaping patterns of foraging, but patterns of communication and reciprocity.

We have seen in Chapters 4 and 5 how little sections like booths or small tables can mean a greater chance of isolation between groups. On the other hand, having a large, open circle facilitates more discussion and is less likely to accidentally exclude anyone. At the same time natural conversation before or after a discussion might not include the whole group. The more individuals that are included in the space, the harder it is to include all the individuals in one conversation.

The study abroad experience in Panama provides an example of how each environment presents a different set of challenges for individuals in a community. Each new environment, be it a classroom, a bedroom, or a restaurant, is in some ways like a group moving onto a new tract of land. Individuals must quickly assess the physical layout, the resources, and how to situate it to their best advantage because the environment can have a profound effect on one's place within the community.

Where one is seated dictates what conversations one will be easily included in or excluded from. Since we have seen conversation is a main way community is maintained, the environment can strengthen and weaken the bonds between members through facilitating or obstructing conversation. This certainly was apparent in Panama because of the great number of different environments the students inhabited versus the more stagnant classroom at the

university. Reciprocity is also shaped in this way. Individuals seated closer together are more likely to share food or resources, help one another with small problems, and share stories.

Furthermore environment can show tensions and gaps in the community fabric. When one member is seen to actively manipulate the environment to their benefit, such as moving quickly towards or away from someone, the other members will take note. If this happens repeatedly, it will solidify those gaps and make them harder to reconcile. Likewise, if conversation can never extend beyond a certain number of individuals due to the constraints of the environment, then strong, smaller groups will solidify instead of a larger web of communication.

We understand how the environment can affect the community formation in the LC cohort. Like need, this is a factor that can be actively controlled by the LC program staff and faculty. They can choose how to rearrange an environment to include the greatest number of individuals or they can also choose to continue changing environments, like the GSP did in Panama to continually change the order of community members and allow for new avenues of conversation.

Time

Time, within the anthropological models of community presented in the literature review, is understood to be any opportunity where group members are together that allows for communication or interaction. While in other models of community this often referred to daily tasks or religious functions, within the LC we can understand it in terms of class time or working on assignments together. With the addition of technology this becomes a little trickier since the students could communicate very easily with the use of texting and Facebook instead of

being in the same physical space. But for the most part, the GSP students communicated in person and in class, especially in the beginning of their relationships.

Time is a tricky factor because it alone does not inspire communication or reciprocity (Marlowe 2012). Having 20 people in a room for three hours without talking or interacting will not form any sort of connection, but having people in a space where they are talking and interacting, especially if they are working together, means most of them will connect to some degree because of the opportunity presented by shared time together. Even if it is only the flimsy connection the GSP students made at their August orientation, this is at least something that could be used as a base for future conversation.

Time the community members spend together, combined with need, was more likely to produce results than need or time alone in furthering community (Mauss 2008). For the GSP this meant a group project, a trip, an assignment, or some other goal that not only brought the individuals together for a time, but required them to interact in some way, where conversation grew naturally. Without the required time together to work, like the last week of the Panama program, students were less inclined to engage in extensive communication.

For the GSP, when individuals felt comfortable enough, or had great enough need, such as a pressing deadline, they took control of time themselves, asking others to meet in person outside of a mandatory class. When members did not have mandatory time together, even if they had the same need to meet, there is little chance they connected since they had less opportunity for communication and reciprocity to occur. Therefore any mandatory time together for the LC, such as class time, should have some opportunity in which students can converse and interact to complete some goal, a small project, assignment, or task.

By the end of the first semester the students had spent about two hours a week together. This equates to roughly 30 hours of time together before the students felt comfortable enough to say they had congealed as a group. Conversely, the Panama study abroad covered more than 30 hours of time together in the first two days out of the country. It was by the end of the second day that all eight students had come together as a unified community. In comparison it felt like this had happened so quickly because after two days the group felt extremely comfortable and connected. The real difference between this 30 hour time span in Panama and the time in the first semester was the compactness of hours. There were no breaks from other members of the group in Panama and the time also dictated the group was spending more than just class hours together. It was spending meal time, room time, down time, etc. together all of which dictated different needs and environments.

This helps us understand it is not just the quantity of time together, but the quality of time together. Time together is simply the opportunity to create connections of communication and reciprocity between members. If the members do not have a need to connect or are hindered by the environment from making such connections, then the factor of time is wasted as opportunities are lost. Time in an LC is not as all encompassing as in a local community, but it is still important for the formation of a community. Time together is the opportunity for community members to form avenues of communication and reciprocity. No, time alone does not inspire community formation, but without time mandated by the program, the cohort is less likely to act on need, communication, and reciprocity.

Looking over the four GSP semesters and the time in Panama from a researcher (and not a participant) perspective, shines light on those elements of community that cannot be as

easily controlled by program staff. In discussing the data we can attempt to separate the factors of need, environment, and time from each other, but in reality it is not so simple. Within local communities these elements interact and work together to shape how the community is formed (Hillary 1955) and as we have seen, it is still true for LCs as well.

The GSP study abroad trip to Panama gives the best idea of how need, environment, and time came together to influence communication and reciprocity within the community. For the eight students who went to Panama with Donym, this was as close to dropping the cohort off on a deserted island as the GSP could get. Panama took the community to a level it had never been before because the factors of environment, time, and need were so all encompassing. In Panama, these three factors made the group become something akin to the local communities reviewed in the anthropological literature. Aside from the Spanish and anthropology projects, students needed to eat, live, and survive Panama together. Time, environment, and need covered class, travel, meal, study, and social time, and by default the relationships and community grew to cover those areas as well.

Potential Problems

Individual personalities may present an unexpected challenge for community formation. Looking back on the second week in Panama, there started to be tension between certain personalities even if there was no exact cause for contention. It was simply a case of too much for too long. Within any group there will always be the potential for personalities to be a problem. Where you have people, you have personalities, and unfortunately, this is not something easily avoided. Louder personalities can either delight or irritate one another, and there is no way to know which it will be until they are put together. However, having the ability

to put other group members between themselves as buffers can help to mitigate the tension and allow them to continue to function together as parts of the community.

Individuals with quieter personalities, on the other hand, often require a longer time to connect to others and for others to know them. They tend not to give up information or conversation as freely and by default they look standoffish and not interested in becoming part of a group. Students with quieter personalities will also be less inclined to show up to optional events. Mandatory time, such as class time in the case of the GSP, requires them to attend, and this is something that must be used to the community's advantage. Where conversation can never get very far away from them, such as in Panama or small group projects, these quieter individuals have a better chance of connecting to the group and cracking open their protective shell just a little.

Size constraints should also be considered. The original GSP cohort was shown to be an appropriate number because it was large enough to fill a whole class environment, but remain small enough for group work and discussions. Much beyond 30, the class might become too large for everyone to form meaningful relationships with each other. This does not mean it cannot be done, simply that the shape of the community will more likely be smaller groups, even with the carefully planned attention of programmers to the important factors of time, environment, and need.

In conclusion, community is about the slipperiest fish an academic can try to catch. It is this complex and complicated word and it would be foolish to assume within these pages the whole mystery of community has finally been solved. This research was undertaken in hopes

that the aspects that promote or deter community growth could be assessed within the LC. In this respect it was successful because it helps fill in the gap of understanding the community side of the LC by determining that five elements, identified as important factors by other models of community, are also important structures in LCs. Furthermore, it examines those factors within the context of the GSP to show how they impact the community support network. Of those five factors (environment, time, need, communication, and reciprocity) the two factors, communication and reciprocity, are important maintainers of community, but they are not ones that can be easily manipulated by program staff.

As discussed above, communication and reciprocity, key factors in building community, cannot themselves really be contrived, but situations in which they arise can be provided. If conversation and reciprocity do not develop naturally between members, then they cannot function properly. Things such as group icebreakers, for instance, do not often fill their purpose of getting the group to converse in any meaningful way. But given a goal and time together to complete it, people will come to some understanding of each other no matter how small that connection might be.

The data presented here suggests that it is the controllable factors of need, environment, and time that can be looked to for the creation of stronger communities. Need, the catalyst, and environment and time, the shapers, are the things shown to create reciprocity and communication, which tie community members together. Fortunately, these three elements are almost completely within the control of programming staff and faculty. Now that this has been determined for LC cohort communities, the question is how can it be applied?

Chapter 7: Applying the Conclusions to Create Cohort Communities

This study brings to light the facets of community that program staff should consider if they wish to provide an atmosphere appropriate for the efficient growth of an LC. While there are numerous possibilities, the three easiest to manipulate from a staff standpoint are: time, environment, and need. Within the creation of community *need* is the catalyst while *environment* and *time* are important shapers. This being said, program staff should work to create circumstances that allow for connections and continuous reorganization of members, making people work together by circumstance rather than choice in the beginning of the program.

Choosing Members for the Community

The LC is not a local community into which individuals were born or married; the members of an LC came from an applicant pool. This means not only does the program staff know something of the individuals, but the staff has the ability to play fantasy football with these applications. What do they think is the dream team? Yes, staff may want to look for personality strengths, but as discussed previously, personality is not always apparent on paper. While personality can be a builder or destroyer of community, there is another factor that has proven to be far more active: need.

When choosing from the applicant pool, in situations like the GSP LC, one of the important things to consider is the intention of the community versus the applicant's need. The

GSP was designed to complete general education credits. Therefore, when choosing students, staff should not pick applicants who already have the majority of their general education credits accounted for such as a student with many Advance Placement credits. The community will not meet these students' needs and they will be more likely to drop from the program, creating holes.

Another solution would be to change the number of requirements for the program to incorporate *fewer* classes. In this scenario, the idea would be to extend the members' mandatory time to one class a semester over the whole four semesters in order to keep the maximum level of people in the community. The communities created in each new class the cohort encounters would then strengthen and maintain the connections holding the individuals together as a group. Without this need to stay connected, the group was shown to fall apart despite the best intentions to stay in contact. In order to maintain a need for the community, the whole cohort should take at least one class together per semester.

Looking at the whole GSP program, there is much that can be taken and applied to other LCs in hopes of creating stronger communities. Dropping a group of people off on a deserted island, creating a situation in which they are all reciprocally dependent on each other, would be one way to quickly produce a community, but deserted islands are difficult to come by. When considering all the parts of the program, it is the Panama trip that comes closest to this equivalent. As we could see, it took two days to meld the group into a unified entity verses a whole semester while at school. Mutual reliance is by far the quickest way to create the network of connections that constitutes a community.

Creating this sort of forced reliance would be an excellent way to begin the LC experience, by taking a cohort for a two- or three-day trip at the beginning of a program. It would manipulate the factors of time, environment, and need to allow the members to feel comfortable with each other fairly quickly. This allows important factors like communication and reciprocity to begin to fall into place more quickly as well. Members would also be less likely to fall off the fringes of the community fabric. It would also make maximum use of that initial window of time in which individuals are at their most receptive to new connections.

However, despite the benefits of such an orientation, moving a group of individuals to another location as a start to a program presents its own set of challenges program's might not be able to accommodate. So how else can we create this mix of time, environment, and need that quickly produce community? For programs like the GSP, the beginning of freshman year of college is foreign enough. It is already a new environment, with new time constraints, and new individual needs. The beginning of any new situation is preferable before that short window of time closes when individuals are open to new connections closes and everyone settles into isolated groups like can be seen with semester one of the GSP cohort.

Housing Environments

When we look at the GSP's time in Panama, it would be easy to draw the conclusion that having LC students live together in dorms is an easy way to expand their environment outside of the classroom, and some LC programs have done this. From the Panama trip we can see the profound effect living together has on shaping social organization and housing students near each other is certainly an option. For some very outgoing students, that may be enough to break the barriers between members. However, the same things which applied to seating

arrangements will likely transfer to rooming. Students who live together are more likely to converse than students who live in separate rooms. If the housing arrangements are single or double occupant bedrooms in a hall, like stereotypical college dorms, the doors are more likely to be left open which facilitates more conversation from passersby. Suite or apartment style housing in which main doors are often left closed and only bedroom doors left open within the apartment, limiting conversation to apartment occupants only. Also, it is difficult to move dorm rooming arrangements around in an easy or timely fashion. This means there still needs to be some other environment or activity in which students are getting mixed around to present opportunities to communicate with members of their cohort other than their roommates. Housing cohort members together is certainly a good opportunity to create a community, but it must be coupled with other activity.

Orientations

Orientations are essential to LCs and other small community formation. They present the core tenets the new community should be built on and provide a chance to make initial lines of communication between members. In fact, I would hazard to say the orientation lays the foundation for the community structure. The more united the community feels by the end of the orientation, the stronger it will be.

Upon bringing the new cohort members together in one space for a time, what the community needs now is a catalyst, some *need* to start bringing individuals together. For the GSP it was important group projects, but those required a whole semester and had considerable stakes in student grade point averages. Those are not necessarily the best or easiest way to begin forging a community. Instead, smaller needs can be created by program

staff during the orientation period. Some need must be presented that groups these individual members together and has them trying to reach a shared goal. It should not be something strenuous or important. For an orientation something simple like working together in a scavenger hunt will do as long as there is a goal to be reached. The tasks presented should be things that can only be accomplished in groups and only take a short time. Tasks must also allow for conversation while members work together. If these criteria are considered, there should be some sense of connection fostered between members. Putting the group together and giving them a goal that requires them to work together, allows for natural conversation and personal strengths to come about in a more meaningful and memorable way.

It is important that the activities presented during this orientation be somehow connected to the overall core tenets of the community. As we saw with the one class during the third semester of the GSP, things that are deemed useless or unconnected are not enjoyed and often resisted. Instead of sitting members in a room without giving them an activity to facilitate conversation, give them a nametag and give them a goal. This will provide opportunity for them to form some connection working together. When the goal is met, a community begins to break down, but as we saw semester after semester with the GSP, after a community is formed once, it is easier to reform since the connection can be quickly recovered.

Maintenance of Community

The second semester of the GSP was the most important period that brought the *most* members of the community together, and program faculty and staff are strongly urged to consider this section with care. From this a great deal about the maintenance of community can be gleaned. The ideal situation is to continue to facilitate and create situations where

conversation between individuals will occur in the time and environment they share. Program facilitators must work to continuously reorder the group, assigning members at random to work with others instead of letting small isolated groups form. This is not necessarily for large projects, but small group work or discussions in class.

We have seen with the GSP that once the connections between members are strong enough, the community no longer needs large-scale guidance by the program staff. The community will go to lunch, work on projects, and create communications on their own. Like the GSP cohort Facebook page, these avenues of communication the community sets up will be suited to meeting their needs and goals as a community as well as properly suited to the ages and comfort levels of the individuals in the group.

Mandatory events outside of class time may also prove to be a benefit to an LC. Admittedly I feel like a hypocrite suggesting this as I remember having an extreme dislike of mandatory extracurricular events during my own undergraduate career. However, if it is something presented from the beginning of the program, then it will simply be seen as an accepted part of this community. The benefit of mandatory events outside of the classroom, yet still attached to the tenets of the program, is that they present a new environment for these relationships to inhabit. New environments, like the Panama program, can change and strengthen relationships within the community. The mandatory aspect helps alleviate social fears of arriving alone or that others will not come.

The best advice, judging by the data collected and analyzed from the GSP cohort's program history, is for program staff and faculty to be heavily involved in the beginning of the program, actively working to create opportunities in which communication and interaction will

can occur between cohort members. Like the first two days in Panama, program staff should aim to get those first 30 hours of interaction as close to the start of the program and continuous as possible. More than that, make sure those first 30 hours include many opportunities for conversation and connections to begin through creating small, inconsequential 'needs' that must be addressed by the group. Program staff should mix, assign, and reorder groups constantly to form and strengthen bonds across the community instead of letting isolated groups form. When the community feels established, then the programmers can relax and let the community shape itself. However, those first 30 hours are crucial for program staff to address.

Above are some only a few suggestions to consider incorporating when creating the framework for LC programs. While these have been constructed with the GSP in mind, the underlying ideas can be applied to other university LC programs. By applying the understanding of *need, environment, and time*, stronger communities can be created within the LC cohort. These suggestions are not the *only* way programmers can proceed, but show how the anthropological understanding of community can help influence the student cohort of an LC. This research can be a platform for other LC programs both on university settings and outside of academia. These factors of need, environment, and time, will be different for each LC program and need to be considered carefully within each program's specific context. However, if utilized, they should help generate the communication and reciprocity needed to create the support network we call *community*.

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Appendix A: Student Survey Questions

Q1: Rank from first to last: You decided to apply to the Global Scholars Program (GSP) because of the ...

- FLK general education selection chosen for students
- Study abroad scholarship
- Small program size
- Sense of community
- Global perspective of program

Q2: Which of the GSP classes did you participate in?

Q3: For you, the cohort really started to feel like a group after...

Q4: Rank your communication preference from 8-1 (8 being the most preferred, 1 being the least preferred): When you want to ask a question about a GSP class or an assignment you will normally...

- Go to the Facebook page
- Text someone
- Email someone
- Meet with someone outside of class
- Catch someone inside of class
- Ask the professor inside of class
- Email the professor
- Call another student

Q5: Rank your communication preference from 8-1 (8 being the most preferred, 1 being the least preferred): When you want to ask a question about a NON-GSP class or an assignment you will normally...

- Go to the Facebook page
- Text someone
- Email someone
- Meet with someone outside of class
- Catch someone inside of class
- Ask the professor inside of class
- Email the professor
- Call another student

Q6: Rank from most used to least preferred (where 7 is the most used and 1 is the least used):
When communicating with members of the cohort you prefer...

- Talking in class
- Talking face-to-face outside of class
- Texting
- Facebook
- Emailing
- Calling
- Skype

Q7: Rank from first to last (where 6 is the strongest and one is the weakest): For you, the strengths of this program are

- Connecting with fellow cohort members
- Small class size
- Global outlook
- Connections in curriculum across classes
- Connecting with professors
- Research skills

Q8: Rank from strongest to weakest (Where 8 is the strongest and 1 is the weakest): What has helped you come together as a cohort

- Small class sizes
- Having multiple classes together each semester
- Group projects
- Studying sessions
- Outside events
- Class discussion
- Lunch before or after class
- Living together on campus

Q9: Check all that apply: When you think about the GSP you generally think of

Q10: Coming to the end of the program, what you will miss is...

Appendix B: IRB Approval



DIVISION OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
 Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
 12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC055 • Tampa, FL 33613-4799
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September 5, 2012

Maura Denny
 Anthropology
 5109 Excellence Blvd., # 553
 Tampa, FL 33617

RE: **Expedited Approval** for Initial Review
 IRB#: Pro00008958
 Title: Social-Environmental Conditions Impacting the Creation of Learning Communities
 in the University of South Florida's Global Citizenship Program

Dear Ms. Denny:

On 9/5/2012 the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above referenced protocol. Please note that your approval for this study will expire on 9/5/2013.

Approved Items:

Protocol Document(s):

[Social.docx](#)

Consent/Assent Document(s):

[SB Adult IC \(2\).docx.pdf](#)

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR.46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review categories:

- (5) Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis).
- (6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Please note, the informed consent/assent documents are valid during the period indicated by the official, IRB-Approval stamp located on the form. Valid consent must be documented on a copy of the most recently IRB-approved consent form.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,



John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board