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Liminal Experience in International Education:
A Study of Experiential Programming in a United World College

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Applied Science
at
Lincoln University
Canterbury, New Zealand

by
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Lincoln University
2007
Abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Applied Science.

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By Pablo Arsenault

This thesis is a qualitative exploration of student experience with the international education offered at one of ten United World Colleges (UWC). The UWCs are a group of ideology-driven international schools (Matthews, 1989) offering a two-year residential International Baccalaureate Diploma program to students from over one hundred different countries. The focus of this study is a ten-day program which allows groups of students to participate in service or project based learning while backpacking through India. It explores student perspectives of international education, curriculum, the UWC movement and experiences with this ‘project week’. It addresses the lack of research outside of formal learning situations in ideology-driven international education and explores the space between cultures in which international students are said to become suited for life in a global society (Bowman, 2001). The research sought insight into the place of project week in the broader experience of international education at a UWC through students’ perceptions, accounts of lived experience, opinions and perspectives (Deegan and Hill, 1991). Instruments consisted of informal observations and semi-structured open-ended interviews with teachers and students as well as a journal based method which was discounted due to a low response rate. The study calls on literature addressing people who have spent their developmental years in culture(s) other than their own. These are discussed as ‘third culture kids’ (TCKs), ‘mobile adolescents’, ‘global nomads’ or ‘international students’. Theories used to help understand these experiences include Simmel’s ‘stranger’ (1950, c.1908) or socio-cultural outsider; Van Gennep’s rites of passage (1960, c.1908); Turner’s (1967) theory of liminal space; and Erikson (1968) and Marcia’s (1980) theories of development and social moratoria. Following the suggestion that adolescence and globally mobile experiences are essentially liminal (Schaetti, 1999; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999) the discussion frames UWC students as liminaries in anti-structural space. Theories of experiential education (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Itin, 1999) are used to guide the enquiry into the pedagogy of the project week program. Results are suggestive of the UWC experience as one of liminality typified by the potential for creative adaptation – similar to that of the TCK – and having potential advantages if it can be oriented towards liminality itself or grounded in the local context by way of programs such as project week. Further research would be required to make substantive claims and generalized conclusions; however the study flags areas for such inquiry which should take a longitudinal qualitative approach.

**KEYWORDS:** International Education; study abroad; international exchanges; international students; third culture kids; mobile adolescents; global nomads; stranger; social moratoria; United World College; ideology-driven international schools; International Baccalaureate; rites of passage; liminality; experiential learning; experiential education; qualitative methods.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to
My Supervisors, Pip Lynch and Kevin Moore.
The teachers, staff and students at Mahindra United World College India.
The United World College international office and European Council of International Schools.

Thanks and love to
My family for all their support from so far away.
My Whanau here in Aotearoa.
Thanks for making me feel like a Kiwi.

Special thanks to
The Southern Alps, the Southerly Winds and the Long White Cloud.
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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

This thesis is a qualitative exploration of student experience with the form of international education offered at Mahindra United World College of India (MUWCI\(^1\)), one of ten United World Colleges (UWC). The study investigates student experiences on ‘project week’, a ten-day program which allows students to travel in India or participate in some form of service learning or ‘project’. The study attempts to place this program in the wider context of international education, experiential learning and experiential education. The current study looks at a very specific program but calls on the larger field of international education which, in recent decades, has seen a dramatic increase in the number of international schools, students, as well as research and practical literature.

In exploring the particular form of international education offered by a UWC, this study employs the concept of the globally mobile child or the third culture kid (international students who have spent a significant proportion of their developmental years in a culture(s) other than their own) as a potentially parallel experience to that of the UWC student. The ideas presented in the literature surrounding these international students may be valuable beyond the scope of this study, as these students have a long history of experience with the increasingly globalized society in which we find ourselves today. My motivation for dealing with curriculum based issues in international education stems from this potentially broad societal application of the globally mobile or third culture kid experience. That is, what we can learn from them, and their experience in life and education, may be broadly applicable and beneficial for the less mobile who may find themselves increasingly aware of global interconnectedness and interdependence.

1.1 Introducing International Education

‘International education’ can be used to refer to several different forms of education but is defined in this thesis as the education provided by international schools serving a combination of local and international populations with a specifically international curriculum. These schools gear students towards further education in a particular nation or equip them with an internationally recognized secondary school certificate. Such schools are typically attended by the children of military personnel, employees of multinational corporations, missionaries,

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\(^1\) Pronounced ‘MUWKI’ with a hard ‘C’ as in ‘cat’.
diplomats, local elites and students who need to be temporarily educated overseas but want or need to maintain congruence with a specific system of education (Willis & Enloe, 1990). International schools, international education, international curriculum and the UWCs are discussed at length in Chapter 2. The UWCs are a particular type of international school, identified as being “founded for the express purpose of furthering international understanding and cooperation” (Matthews, 1988, cited in Hayden & Thompson, 1995a, p. 336) and are said to be ideology-driven (Matthews, 1989).

The UWCs offer a two-year residential program, and each college accepts up to two hundred students from over one hundred different countries. Acceptance is based on merit and students are chosen through a process that is said to be blind to financial need and seeks as diverse a student body as possible. The two-year program follows the International Baccalaureate (IB), an internationally recognized secondary curriculum (discussed in Chapter 2). This study explores student perspectives of this curriculum, international education in general and the UWC movement as a whole. The main focus of the study is on students’ experiences with project week, a program that falls within the prescribed formal curriculum of the UWCs as defined by Branson (1997) but is not part of the IB curriculum and takes place entirely outside the formal classroom experience. The focus on project week is because research on international education and the UWCs points to out-of-class experiences, including programs such as project week and the social and residential experiences at the college, as central to an ‘international education’.

Other forms of education that are referred to as international, including foreign students studying in a new nation (such as immigrants or foreign students in New Zealand) and study-abroad programs (short, intensive international education experiences), are related to but are not the focus of this thesis, although literature from study-abroad programs is called upon where relevant. UWC students undertake a special kind of international experience, one where the traditional study-abroad exchange program is stretched in time and in scope to encompass a longer and possibly deeper sojourn, and one that may share some of the benefits and challenges of the globally mobile childhood but on a smaller scale. The UWC experience can be understood as somewhere between these two ‘international educations’ and may share many things with both, but it must also be understood as having many unique features.
1.2 Value and Justification of Research

This study contributes a much needed focus on ideology-driven international schools to the international education literature. This study also begins to address the lack of research on experiential programming in international education and picks up on research which has pointed to factors outside the formal curriculum and outside the classroom as central to an international education and a UWC experience. Westrick (2003) has also called for research in international schools that seeks specific “strategies [that] are more effective in assisting students to resolve issues related to cultural difference” (p. 162). Thus, research such as this, with its focus on project week, is warranted in so far as it picks up on these suggestions and begins to explore specific pedagogical sites outside the formal curriculum but within the larger structures of an international education.

The international student literature also calls for strategies to help students find grounding in what is described as a potentially marginalizing and confusing experience for individuals ‘caught’ between different cultures, as well as more research on “situation[s] in which people from many different countries have been brought together in a host country that is native to none of them” (Alston & Niewodt, 1992, p. 322). This study addresses both of these gaps in exploring a UWC context where students are brought from many different places to a place that is new to all of them. Moreover, studies of this kind may provide insights into the general human reaction towards an increasingly global and interconnected society by exploring the space between cultures in which international students are said to become truly globalized people (Fletcher, 2001) ideally suited for life in a global society (Bowman, 2001). Studying the experiences of the UWC student may allow researchers a view of both society acting formatively on individuals and individuals acting creatively on society. It is this rationale that underpins the decision to study the UWCs, a social space that could be described as in-between cultures and thus a site for potentially marginal experiences of strangeness and outsider-hood which may serve to highlight opportunities for individuals to participate in the creation of culture and the re-formulation of social structure.

1.3 Theoretical Underpinning

My investigation of the MUWCI student experience begins with the idea of the individual on the margins of cultures and societies and the opportunities and challenges presented by such a position. George Simmel (1950, c.1908) refers to these individuals in the *The Stranger*, on which
Park (1928), Wood (1934) and Schuetz (1944) expand with reference to the marginality of the many forms of migration they observed in their respective eras. Today, individuals in the role of ‘the stranger’ can be found in migration, travel, war and industry where there is a crossing and mixing of cultures and societies. Hartung (2002) points to the international student experience as one typified by the social position of ‘the stranger’ and the marginality associated with it. Like Hartung (2002), this paper calls upon Park (1928) who suggests that outsiders, strangers and marginals (i.e., international students) are a worthy focus for study:

> It is in the mind of the marginal man [sic] where conflicting cultures meet and fuse. It is, therefore, in the mind of the marginal man that the process of civilization is visibly going on, and it is in the mind of the marginal man where this process is best studied (Park, 1928, p. 882).

In this thesis I am specifically concerned with adolescents in the role of the socio-cultural outsider. These adolescents are referred to in the international education literature as ‘third culture kids’, ‘mobile adolescents’, ‘global nomads’ or ‘international students’ and said to have experiences of marginality similar to Simmel’s ‘stranger’. The United World College (UWC) student experience does not necessarily fit easily into these definitions as student’s reasons for and experiences of mobility are quite different to the ‘third culture kid’. However, UWC students may provide an example of individuals in the role of the cultural outsider where strangeness may typify their experience in various ways.

This thesis also calls on Turner’s (1967) anthropological theory of liminal space, or the in-between spaces in which social structure is suspended and made un-recognizable, or anti-structural. It describes MUWCI as a liminal space, or an anti-structural space with regard to the status quo of any one culture. Turner’s theory of liminality was developed from theories of rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960, c.1908) and parallels theories of human development and the adolescent’s experience between childhood and adulthood (Erikson, 1968; Marcia 1980). Thus, MUWCI students are discussed as liminaries between childhood and adulthood in a socially derived system of education as well as luminaries between the social structures of education. In this anti-structural space MUWCI provides between cultures, no one culture can be said to have exclusive influence and each student has a different background against which to judge the experience. This framing of MUWCI as liminal space and MUWCI students as liminal subjects, or liminaries, is based on the literature which suggests the globally mobile student experience is one of liminality (Schaetti, 1999; Schaeetti & Ramsey, 1999).
The theory of experiential education (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Itin, 1999) is used in this study as a point of reference against which to explore the project week programs, which at face value seem to have certain commonalities with experiential theory but are not necessarily explicit expressions of it. The theory of experiential education is used not to assess or evaluate the project week program, but to guide the enquiry into the pedagogy behind the program and help place it in the wider context of an international education. Experiential education is discussed in Chapter 3, but here it is worth saying that it shares with international education a concern for socio-political issues and a valuing of multiple perspectives, critical thought, dialogue between students from many backgrounds and the potential to be a freeing and emancipating force in the lives of individual students and society as a whole (Freire, 1993, c.1970, 1973). Experiential education theory is discussed later in this thesis as a pedagogy which may aid programs such as project week to act as grounding and ‘localizing’ a force for an international education. Thus, the use of experiential education in international education might prove a fair response to calls from researchers to help international students ground their experiences of liminality or to find grounding in liminal space itself.

1.4 Research Question and Methods
There is very little research on the type of international education offered by ideology-driven schools, such as the UWCs, and none on potentially experiential programs in UWCs, such as project week. Consequently, the methods and analysis applied in this study are best described as exploratory. This research sought insight into international education through students’ experiences, as well as an understanding of the relationship between project week and the broader experience of international education at one UWC. The research did not seek to test a specific hypotheses, but instead to paint a detailed picture of the students’ experiences of MUWCI and project week. The following research questions guided this exploration:

1. What aspects of the third culture kid and globally mobile student experience expressed in the literature are common or applicable to the student experiences at the MUWCI?
   a. What are the students’ experiences and understandings of this form of international education at this particular school?
   b. How do the teachers view and understand the students’ experiences of this form of international education at this particular school?

2. To what extent are the project week programs an expression of experiential education?
a. What are the students’ experiences and understandings of the project week program as it is implemented at this particular school?

b. How do the teachers view and understand the students’ experiences of the project week program?

3. How do the project week programs fit into students’ experiences at the school and into the larger context of an international education?

The research methods used to answer these questions were designed to allow the culture of the college to emerge through qualitative field study, as this method would allow the greatest amount of depth and detail in a relatively short period of time. The methods consisted of living at the venue for approximately two weeks and the collection of qualitative data by way of informal observations, and semi-structured open-ended interviews with teachers and students (see Chapter 4 for details). As suggested by Deegan and Hill, (1991), these methods sought an image of a place as constructed by its inhabitants through short biographies and accounts of lived experience, opinions and perspectives. What emerges is an image of one group of people, in one place, at one time, in a particular educational context with its own particular social characteristics. The respondents do not represent the population of the college as a whole because self-selection failed to gain participation from enough host national students. As such, results are only suggestive and further research is required to make substantial claims or generalized conclusions.

1.5 Thesis Organization

This thesis is organized into nine chapters of which the first four serve to establish the background, review relevant literature, present the theories used for analysis and the research methods by which the study was implemented. The final five chapters present the data, discuss them in light of the theories used, and conclude with suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2 is a review of background and research literature on international education, international schools, the UWCs and specific research on out-of-class programming in such schools.

Chapter 3 reviews research on the international student, globally mobile or ‘third culture kid’ experiences through which the theoretical lens of liminality is presented. Chapter 3 also presents
the theory of experiential education, used here to guide the inquiry into project week and place it in relation to the larger international education.

Chapter 4 recounts the open-ended qualitative methods used in the data collection and Chapter 5 begins the presentation of the data by discussing the research sample as compared to the overall college population and issues related to respondents’ international experiences.

Chapter 6 presents the views of student and teacher respondents with regard to international education, the UWC movement, the International Baccalaureate curriculum, social and residential life at the college, and factors which affected their own personal development and learning during their MUWCI experience.

Chapter 7 focuses on respondents’ views and experiences in terms of the project week programs. Chapter 8 and chapter 9 respond to the research questions mentioned above by discussing the data and the literature in light of liminality theory and the theory of experiential education.

This thesis concludes in Chapter 9 with recommendations for further research in international education.
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

This research aims to understand project week, an out-of-class, activity-based component of the UWC experience, within the larger context of an ‘international education’ delivered through an ‘international curriculum’ at an ‘international school’. The following review aims to clarify these three terms and so begins with definitional and research literature on international schools and the United World Colleges, followed by literature on international education and the International Baccalaureate curriculum. The review ends with research on the International Baccalaureate’s creativity, action and service programs (known as CAS programs) which are related to project week insofar as they are out-of-class, activity-based components of the larger international education.

2.1 International Schools

Adequately defining international schools can be problematic as no single definition is wholly inclusive. ‘International school’ is an umbrella term referring to schools serving a variety of different communities for a variety of different reasons (Hayden & Thompson, 1995a; Brewster, 2002). For example, Ponisch (1987, cited in Hayden & Thompson, 1995a) distinguished 11 types of international school:

1. Schools founded specifically to meet the needs of particular groups of international mobile families (such as United Nations organizations);
2. Schools founded with a specific philosophy and set of aims (such as the United World Colleges);
3. Schools whose original purpose has changed radically since foundation (such as the Vienna International School: once a primary school serving allied occupation forces and now a large international school);
4. Propriety international schools ([privately] owned ... may offer [international curriculum] ... or follow national systems);
5. National overseas schools founded to serve one national or linguistic group;
6. Schools offering international programs which none the less retain strong links with a national system;
7. Geographically limited schools taking children from one region only (such as the nine European Schools);
8. Bilingual or trilingual schools based on two or three national systems;
9. National schools which welcome foreign pupils and provide ... some form of international program;
10. Schools which have a mono-national intake... and have adopted the International Baccalaureate for... broadening the curriculum;
11. Schools operated by a company (such as the ... [school] in The Netherlands, serving the needs of children of employees of Philips [electronics]) (p. 335).

Matthews (1988, cited in Hayden & Thompson, 1995a) offers a classification of international schools focused on a divergence of underlying philosophy between ‘ideology-driven’ schools “founded for the express purpose of furthering international understanding and cooperation” and
‘market-driven’ schools “which have arisen from the needs of particular expatriate communities” (p. 336). The United World Colleges fall clearly into Ponisch’s second category of schools founded with a specific philosophy and on the ideology driven end of Matthews’ typology.

The history of international schools and international education is relatively short, with most of the defining moments and growth occurring within the last 50 years. Since the publication of the 1964 Yearbook of Education, which listed fifty schools world-wide that were considered international (Bereday & Lauwerys, 1964, cited in Jonietz & Harris, 1991), the number of schools that claim to be international has grown to over 1000 (Jonietz & Harris, 1991), with an estimated 50,000 teachers and more than half a million students (Matthews, 1989). These numbers may have grown since the early 1990s, though no published statistics are available at the time of printing.

To varying degrees, depending on their particular context, international schools tend to share two broad goals: to provide the best possible, and internationally recognized, education, and to foster some degree of international understanding and ideals of global citizenship in their students (Gillies, 2001; Brewster, 2002). They are typified as being places of multi-cultural influence, having highly transient student and staff populations made up of socio-economically above average students and highly qualified and motivated faculty, within an institutional setting that is academically rigorous while maintaining a social atmosphere that is, to varying degrees, less discipline and punishment oriented than national education systems (Gillies, 2001; Posner, cited in Gillies, 2001). An international school does not necessarily imply an international education (Peterson, 1987; Jonietz & Harris, 1991; Hayden & Thompson, 1995a). Schools serving mono-cultural groups and expatriate communities with curriculum modelled on their home country (e.g., propriety, military and missionary sponsored schools) are said by researchers to be less international in focus than schools serving a diversity of cultures with a curriculum structure that is founded in internationalism (Hayden & Thompson, 1995a). Also, the Deputy Director General of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) refers to the emergence of “internationally minded schools” (Hill, 2000, p. 1); that is, schools based in a mono-cultural or national context,

---

2 See Hayden & Thompson (1995a) and Sylvester (2002; 2003) for a full account of the history of international education and international schools, including the developments of the last 50 years, but also traditions of international education-type experiences that span the last several hundred years.

3 The IBO governs the International Baccalaureate, an international curriculum which dominates the international education sector and is used by the UWCs. It is discussed further in following sections.
that nonetheless, "offer programs synonymous with those offered in [international schools]" (p. 1). Thus, a school need not be international in location or clientele to be international in ideology and not all schools which serve overseas and expatriate communities are international in ideology.

The specific form of international school studied in this thesis, the United World College, is different in ideology, approach and student base from most international schools and requires its own introduction. International education, international curriculum and relevant research will be discussed in following sections of this chapter.

2.2 The United World Colleges

The United World Colleges are unique among international schools and could be considered a flagship organization for international education because the 'movement', as it is called, has had considerable influence on the development of international curricula and international education in general. Matthews (1988, cited in Hayden & Thompson, 1995a) distinguished the UWCs as being ideology-driven and not market-driven and Ponisch (1987, cited in Hayden & Thompson, 1995a) cites the UWCs as an example of his second category. Matthews writes that where many international schools exist to fill a market need of some kind (e.g., expatriate communities), the UWCs are driven by the ideology of internationalism and thus stand out as an ideal type.

2.2.1 The Origin of the UWCs

The idea for the UWCs was born in 1957 during Kurt Hahn’s experiences at the NATO War College in The Netherlands, a post-war experiment designed to bring formerly opposing military commanders together in cooperation towards common objectives. Hahn, an influential figure in politics and education in Germany before the rise of National Socialism (Nazism) and then in the United Kingdom, was moved by the success of the NATO College in bringing together 'mortal enemies' and diminishing boundaries through common ordeal (Peterson, 1987; Sutcliffe, 1991, p. 25). Hahn believed that if the lessons of the World Wars were to be transferred to the next generation, a college built on the ideals of peace and internationalism, such as the NATO War College, was a necessary endeavour. His other achievements and initiatives (Gordonstoun School, Outward Bound, The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award) set the stage for the success of the UWCs (Sutcliffe, 1991) and allowed Hahn to put political weight behind the idea and raise funds from the West German and British governments, the Ford Foundation in the United States and
many other private sponsors, foundations and trusts. This led to the opening of the Atlantic College in South Wales in 1962, renamed the United World College of the Atlantic (Peterson, 1987; Sutcliffe, 1991; Mahlstedt, 2003)\(^4\). Thus the UWC movement was born.

The UWCs have been fully coeducational since 1969 (Sutcliffe, 1991, p. 29) and Atlantic College was the first school to fully abandon its national curriculum base (British secondary school examinations) for the "then largely unproven International Baccalaureate" (Sutcliffe, 1991, p. 29) in 1971. The IBO and the UWCs are intertwined in their history and grew together through a cycle of informed theory and practice and the development of international education made great advancement through their cooperation in the 1970s (Fox 1984, 1998; Peterson, 1987; Sutcliffe, 1991; Mahlstedt, 2003). Hahn’s belief in action as a source of inspiration, personal growth and opportunities for learning ensured that both the IB and the UWCs valued challenging physical activity and ordeal, service to one’s community and creative endeavour of some kind as central to addressing the whole student regardless of nation or culture, and to be of value to them, regardless of where and how they chose to apply it. This can be seen today in the IB’s focus on Creativity Action Service activities (CAS) as a central part of the curriculum. In the UWCs, this commitment extends into programs such as project week, and initiatives such as search and rescue operations in the Bristol Channel and the New Mexico wilderness, offshore research stations in the North Pacific, brush and forest fire control teams in India and Canada as well as many other student and staff initiated programs\(^5\).

2.2.2 United World College Movement Today

Since these beginnings in the 1960s and 1970s, over 30,000 students from 176 countries have graduated from UWCs (United World College [UWC], 2004c). Between teachers and students, each college has from 60 to 85 nationalities represented at any given time (Mahlstedt, 2003). The UWC movement has always enjoyed active participation from high-profile and prestigious governors including The Prince of Wales, The Duke of Edinburgh, Lord Mountbatten, Mikhail Gorbachev and Lester B. Pearson. The UWCs are currently presided over by co-presidents Nelson Mandela and Her Majesty Queen Noor of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

\(^4\) For a detailed account of the history of the UWCs, the IBO and Kurt Hahn’s “puppeteer and midwife” (Sutcliffe, 1991, p. 26) approach to the politics behind his various initiatives, refer to Rohrs (1970), Peterson (1987), Sutcliffe (1991) and Flavin (1996).

\(^5\) See [www.uwc.org](http://www.uwc.org) and links to specific colleges for details on these programs and initiatives.
Today there are ten UWCs in ten different countries on five continents. Each of these colleges is linked through the UWC international office in London but is left to develop according to its unique circumstances and thus maintain very individual characteristics. The colleges fall into three discrete categories. First, the ‘classic’ model based on the original Atlantic College, consisting of a two-year residential program in which students in their final two years of pre-university education follow an IB curriculum. Second, two of the UWCs were once market driven international schools as described by Matthews (1988, cited in Hayden & Thompson, 1995a), have adopted a UWC stream within a larger community of primary and secondary students, and have thus been subsumed into the UWC movement. Third, the Simon Bolivar UWC of Agriculture in Venezuela does not offer an IB curriculum, but a tertiary-level agricultural program for 18- to 21-year-old students, designed to train third-world and tropical farm and food production managers with the tools required for globally aware and sustainable agricultural practice (UWC, 2004c). The UWC in which this research took place, falls into the ‘classic’ UWC model. Table 1 shows a full listing of the UWCs, their locations and year of incorporation into the UWC movement.

Table 1: United World Colleges, Locations, and Dates of Founding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School name</th>
<th>Location and Founding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UWC of the Atlantic (AC)</td>
<td>South Wales, UK 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWC of South-East Asia* (SEA)</td>
<td>Singapore 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lester B. Pearson UWC of the Pacific (PC)</td>
<td>Vancouver Island, Canada 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford-Kamhlaba UWC of Southern Africa* (WK)</td>
<td>Mbabane, Swaziland 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armand Hammer UWC of the American West (AW)</td>
<td>New Mexico, USA 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWC of the Adriatic (AD)</td>
<td>Trieste, Italy 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Bolivar UWC of Agriculture** (SB)</td>
<td>Caracas, Venezuela 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Po Chun UWC of Hong Kong (LPC)</td>
<td>Hong Kong, China 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Cross Nordic UWC (RCN)</td>
<td>Fjaler, Norway 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahindra UWC of India (MI)</td>
<td>Pune, India 1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No asterisk = ‘classic’ model. * = within larger international school. ** = non-IB, agricultural program. (Adapted from Mahlstedt, 2003, p. 13).

The UWCs developed their official mission statement in 1992 (Mahlstedt, 2003):

"Through international education, experience and community service, United World Colleges enable young people to become responsible citizens, politically and environmentally aware, and committed to the ideals of peace and justice, understanding and cooperation, and the implementation of these ideals through action and personal example (UWC, 2004c)"

Mahlstedt (2003) explores this mission statement in detail, showing how the focus on "responsible citizenship ... experience and service ... [and] understanding and cooperation"
amongst cultures serve to guide UWC faculty in their interpretation and delivery of the IB curriculum. Further, this mission statement serves as a guide to the entirety of the UWC experience, including residential life, CAS activities, and formal schooling, and includes the 'UWC ideals' that respondents in this study refer to in subsequent chapters.

The venue for this research, Mahindra United World College of India (MUWCI), is the youngest of the UWCs (founded in 1997) and is based one hour’s drive from Pune, a large and prosperous city two hundred kilometres south-east of Mumbai in the Indian state of Maharashtra. The college is set on a hill above a village and a variety of farms and pasture lands on the upper flanks of a river valley in the Western Ghats, a range of mesas and flat-top mountains that runs along most of the west coast of India from Mumbai to Kerala. The college is quite removed from any large base of population and the setting is one of serenity and simple agrarian life. The college itself consists of low buildings made from local stone with an open concept design between buildings, landscaped outdoor areas and small stands of native bush and hardwoods. Most community members live in similarly designed residential areas separated from the working buildings by a five-minute walk through these forested and landscaped areas.

2.2.3 United World College Student Selection

Fundamentally, the [United World] Colleges work because their students are voluntarily committing two years of their lives to studying away from home, with new classmates, new teachers, in a new curriculum ... because they believe that the aims of the college are important... The motivation is high and explains why they succeed (Sutcliffe, 1991, p. 34, emphasis added).

While it is true that many students at the colleges are highly motivated, their motivation to become ‘voluntarily mobile’ is not necessarily sourced from an ideological belief in the UWC mission, as Sutcliffe would suggest. Some of the research reviewed in the following sections (Paris, 2003) finds that not all students who opt for an international education do so for the same reasons (UWC or otherwise).

On application to the UWCs, students have normally completed ten or eleven years of formal education and are fifteen to seventeen years old. Prospective students apply to national committees or selection contacts within their own nation, or other avenues set up explicitly for students from unrepresented countries, refugees and stateless persons (Mahlstedt, 2003; UWC, 2004c). In keeping with the decentralized control structure of the UWCs, these committees are
left to interpret the selection criteria as is best for the context in which they are operating, and can thus provide a degree of relativism that allows for a fair process across the many and varied contexts from which the UWCs draw their students. The selection process is competitive, but supposedly merit-based and need-blind, and is said to make every effort to exclude no student based on their ability to pay. Selection committees are made up as much as possible with UWC graduates and others who have experience with the UWC movement in some way. Proponents of the selection process say that “selection is rigorous, and the availability of scholarships makes it open and fair ... and the selection has more to do with personal qualities – motivation, idealism, interest in world affairs, proven talents in music, arts or other pursuits – than with school grades” (Sutcliffe, 1991, p. 34).

To stay connected with their local context, colleges are encouraged to maintain at least 20% representation from the host culture, though in practice this ranges from 2% to 40% (Mahlstedt, 2003; UWC, 2004a). The specific college in which this research took place admits 40% of its students from the host country. UWC graduates are encouraged to return home and contribute to the development of their own countries (UWC, 2004c) but given the opportunity to attend university in Europe or North America, however, it is common for them to delay their return, if they return at all. Figure 1 shows the percentages of students, by continent, attending all of the United World Colleges at the time this research was done.

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6 Determined by the national selection committee through which the student gained entry, not necessarily the nation, continent, culture or sub-culture with which the student identifies.
One of the main questions for international educators is that of equal access to international education (Peterson, 1972b; Wilkinson, 1998; Cassidy, 2000). The globally mobile life-style that often grants access to this type of schooling is often one of privilege. The UWC movement has, to a certain extent, addressed the issue of equal access through their decentralized, nation-specific, need-blind, merit-based selection process. Although there exists an elitism of sorts; what Mahlstedt refers to briefly as a “Western meritocracy” (2003, p. 16). This is an elitism based on personality and ability to sell one’s self to the selection committee as a potential proponent of the UWC – essentially Western sourced – ideals of internationalism. Also, at the age of sixteen or seventeen selection relies heavily

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7 The ‘Other’ category refers to stateless persons and the ‘International Quota’ category refers to students who live a globally mobile life-style and are rarely in their passport nation, so cannot apply through the appropriate national selection committee.
on an assessment of an unformed personality, on evaluation of performance at an
interview which gives very great advantage to the precociously mature and articulate ...
[and not] the late developer, the shy candidate, the candidate [who] lacks a sophisticated
cultural background and social confidence ... the introvert ... The UWCs have had a
natural attraction for ambitious ‘action men’ and ‘action women’, a less obvious attraction
for the artistic, the dreamers and the late developers (Sutcliffe, 1991, p. 36).

However, Mahlstedt believes that many of the students are indeed the introvert, the artist and the
dreamer that Sutcliffe says are excluded from the selection process:

[UWCs] certainly have some ‘socially odd’ kids, and I think it is a reflection of the fact
that UWCs do attract kids who are out of the norm, and so the selection committees are
populated with [UWC graduates] who were out of the norm themselves, and so are drawn
to kids like they themselves once were.... Of course there is some truth [to Sutcliffe’s]
critique, but I wouldn't level it at all as a legitimate criticism. More legitimate would be
socio-economic elitism, even though that is only so much and can easily be countered
with a heavy dose of pragmatic realism – unless someone wants to find a billionaire
philanthropist in every country, we need to accept some kids who can pay (A. Mahlstedt,
personal communication, January, 2004).

On the topic of ‘economic elitism’ and ‘pragmatic realism’, Sutcliffe (1991) writes that the on-
going scholarship funds, which tend to come from private donors, UWC graduates, foundations,
funds, NGOs, companies and governments, can be more elusive than the one-time injection of
start-up capital required to establish a college. While most students are on full or partial
scholarships, the economic realities and year-to-year uncertainty of available scholarship funds at
the national committee, international office and college levels, dictate that most colleges need to
accept a certain number of fee-paying students. UWC of South-East Asia and Waterford-
KaMhlaba UWC of Southern Africa have the highest numbers of fee-paying students, as they are
still market driven, international schools on many levels. UWC of the Adriatic and Pacific
College accept no fee-paying students at all (Mahlstedt, 2003; UWC, 2003c), although they are
both in the fortunate position of being heavily subsidized by national and local governments in
Italy and Canada respectively. Percentages for fee-payers and scholarship holders at MUWCI are,
according to the Head of College (D. Wilkinson, personal communication, December, 2004): full
scholarship 40%; part scholarship 55%; full fee paying 5%.

2.2.4 The United World College Experience

The United World College experience is designed to be intense and transformative for students in
that it overlaps with a particularly ‘excited’ (or ‘liminal’, see chapter three) time in adolescent
development. Hahn believed the ages of sixteen to nineteen “to be especially significant for the
formation of attitudes... [and] influence of new ones.... it is the age when idealism is strong and attitudes take root for life” (Sutcliffe, 1991, p. 28). The combination of adolescence and the experiences of common humanity that are part of the UWC experience are not without their challenges for students. Sutcliffe (1991) writes that the intensity and the various stages of idealism that students move through in their experiences at the colleges are not always easy:

Idealism at the age of sixteen is an uncompromising sense of expectation. The knowledge that shared humanity means shared weaknesses as well as shared strengths is sobering and in some cases disillusioning. Frequently, UWC students struggle to regain their early sense of perhaps naive idealism in the second year (Sutcliffe, 1991, p. 36).

By limiting enrolment to 200 and encouraging less formal relationships between individuals, the founders of the UWCs engineered the experience to “highlight the importance of personal relationships, between students themselves and, with almost dramatic effect, between students and teaching staff” (Sutcliffe, 1991, p. 30). This allowed for a blurring of traditional boundaries and power structures that facilitates the development of the egalitarian learning communities that are a central feature of the UWC experience. The literature has little more to say in terms of student experience and questions of how students from so many different backgrounds experience these egalitarian relationships and experiences that the UWC are said to provide. Thus, the current study seeks, in part, the student experience of a UWC education.

2.2.5 United World College Research

In 1991, Sutcliffe noted:

In spite of their [then] 28-year existence, the United World Colleges have escaped serious educational scrutiny from writers or researchers. Literature on the colleges is overwhelmingly press literature, or has been prepared by the colleges themselves for their own purposes (1991, p. 33).

According to the UWC International Bibliography (UWC, 2004b), this gap in the literature is still present and the body of research on the UWCs is small. Recent contributions from Mahlstedt (2003), Wilkinson (2002, cited in Mahlstedt, 2003) and Branson (1997) will be discussed below. The UWC international office is reported to be in the data collection stages of the first large-scale survey of UWC graduates (UWC, 2004). Within the UWC research it is also hard to find much that is critical in nature. Even research that calls “into question the very idea that the … global citizenship and universal values of the UWC … [are] a form of neo-colonialism” (Mahlstedt, 2003, p. 17) is quite supportive of the movement in suggesting we turn “to the UWCs as an ideal
model of global education" (Mahlstedt, 2003, p. 26). The current study makes a contribution towards a fuller literature on the UWCs.

Mahlstedt’s (2003) study is concerned with the practice of teachers in the delivery of the formal curriculum at a United World College. Through teacher surveys, interviews and observations, Mahlstedt explored teaching strategies employed by teachers in what he termed “global citizenship education”. Employing concepts of “universalism” (commonalities between cultures) and “relativism” (diversity and difference between cultures) Mahlstedt argued that UWC teachers, through their adaptation of the IB curriculum, strike a balance between these two, seemingly opposed perspectives:

The very concept of global citizenship, or even of educating for a similar perspective, draws on some level of universalism; however, the path through which one travels to universalism may be through emphasizing differences (2003, p. 23).

Mahlstedt’s study concerns the formal curriculum of the UWCs. The current study follows on from literature that emphasizes the informal aspects of the UWC experience and focuses on student experiences outside of the formal curriculum. Wilkinson’s thesis (2002, cited in Mahlstedt, 2003) employs an instrument used to measure changes in students’ ‘world-mindedness’ through their experience at a UWC. Wilkinson found that students at the UWC where her study was conducted perceived themselves to have become more ‘world-minded’, and that these students perceived themselves to have changed to a greater extent than did those in similar studies with international students in a non-UWC context (2002, cited in Mahlstedt, 2003). The current study also seeks to understand how students understand their international education but does not make comparisons outside of the particular UWC where it was conducted.

Branson (1997) offers the only organization-wide study of the UWC movement. Through interviews, observations and surveys with students, graduates, teachers, selection committees and others involved with eight UWCs, she provides insight into various aspects of the UWC movement. One of Branson’s key findings that relates to the current research is that at the UWCs, the informal aspects of school life and the extra-curricular programs are considered by students and graduates to have been more important to their experience, their international education and their current life than aspects of the formal curriculum. Specifically, Branson (1997) found that residential life was perceived by students to have the greatest impact on their development of international understanding and tolerance, with extra and co-curricular programs (cultural events,
camp expeditions, project week, and CAS activities) having the next greatest impact, and academic learning and class discussion (formal curriculum) as having the least impact by a significant margin. Branson’s research points to the importance of the out-of-class aspects of the curriculum at the UWCs. This is a result that is echoed in the research on international education discussed in the following section, and also contributes to the confusion as to where the distinctions lie between informal and formal aspects of schooling in the UWCs.

2.3 International Education

Arum and Van de Water (1992) write that the term ‘international education’ is “so ambiguous, so nebulous, that it defies any easy definition [and] so receives none at all” (1992, p. 191). The Centre for Research in International Education (CRIE) defines international education as “educational processes which transcend national boundaries in either real or virtual time and place” (Wilson, 1998, p. 1) and according to Hayden and Thompson (1997), an international education, while difficult to define in full, “essentially involves crossing a frontier of some sort” (p. 460). Be it a crossing of international frontiers or intellectual frontiers, it is an education that not only brings students in contact with the cultural other but also engages them in an active and purposeful “movement towards others” (Phillips, 2002, p. 162). These definitions include many forms of education that can be referred to as ‘international’, including international studies, international programs, global education, multi-cultural education, global studies, and study abroad (Arum & Van de Water, 1992; Thompson, 2002), as well as the international education as it is understood in national systems that host large numbers of overseas students. A more precise definition is therefore required to distinguish the form of international education studied in this thesis.

The 1947 UNESCO working group on education for international understanding was concerned that “far too large a percentage of the schools of the world are not only not developing world-minded individuals, but are consciously or unconsciously developing narrow nationalists” (Kenworthy, 1951, cited in Sylvester, 2003, p. 229). This group therefore turned its attention to carving out a niche in education that addressed ideals of internationalism. Fifty years later, through similar UNESCO working groups and other private and academic initiatives, international educators have been able to articulate what they mean by an international education as
an instrument for the preparation of young people to cope with life in an increasingly interdependent world, where expansion of the international market place, development of sophisticated and rapid forms of travel and communication networks and potential for damage to the environment and mass destruction of human life, make it increasingly impossible for individuals to disclaim knowledge of and responsibility for events on a larger scale than their own village, city or nation (Hayden & Thompson, 1995a, p. 328).

A centre-piece for international education is an emphasis on both human commonalities and differences, since focusing on "the common denominator approach – that we must surely have something in common – is too simplistic" (Walker, 1999, cited in Lewis, 2001, p. 24). An international education needs to address humanity's diversity while at the same time addressing its essential sameness (Bell-Isle, 1986). Further, an international education needs to look towards not just the 'other' but also the 'self'. Walker (1999, cited in Lewis, 2001) suggests that an international education requires an inward and reflexive contemplation of one's own culture and needs to promote understanding and respect for it, as well as for other cultures.

Other writers place the emphasis on specific aspects of international education, including world-mindedness (Sampson & Smith, 1957; Gleason, 1973); intercultural understanding (Fox, 1984, 1998; Hayden & Wong, 1997; Armstrong & Rutherford, 1999; Hinrichs, 2002); education for peace (Thomas, 1998); a global focus rather than a national focus (Jenkins, 1998; de Moraes, 1998); a multi-lingual environment; and second or third language acquisition (Nakamura, 2002). Overall, most of these writers agree that an international education should focus on teaching the whole student (Willis & Enloe, 1990) through the development of "general powers of the mind" (Phillips, 2002), and encouraging a variety of ways of thinking rather than simply encouraging the acquisition of knowledge (Peterson, 1987). All this under an ethos of tolerance, empathy, mutual respect, adaptability, flexibility and broad-mindedness with a committed effort to establishing such values through balancing global thinking and local action (Willis & Enloe, 1990). This is said to occur best in "an international community of learners consisting of teams of well informed students and adults engaged in critical, purposeful, inquiry into significant content, conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect for differences in language and culture" (Bartlett, 1993, cited in Phillips, 2002, p. 162).

Hill (2000) emphasises a focus on peace, human rights and democracy. Based on UNESCO's 1995 aims of international education (see Hill, 2000, p. 28), he asks how principles and ideals translate into the delivery of an international education that should be "concerned with the total
formal (planned learning) and informal school experience" (p. 28). Hill writes that international education in practice is about:

1. Course content which provides an international perspective (including global issues and foreign languages), civic education (via community service, for example); the global issues include environmental awareness, the causes of conflict, consequences of intolerance, dangers of mob psychology, and establishing ethics in science, technology and economics.

2. Recognizing that the world is increasingly interdependent; a pedagogical approach which develops an open attitude towards all cultures, non-violent conflict resolution training across cultures, and skills of critical analysis to make informed choices.

3. Activities which bring students into contact with people of other cultures and with those who may be less privileged, to develop solidarity at local and international levels.

4. Knowing that world peace will only come about when the many cultures learn to live together in mutual understanding and respect, based on a set of universal human values (Hill, 2000, pp. 28-29).

Phillips (2002) grounds this discussion of ideals in international education in the pragmatic functions of an education. He writes that while it is certainly a worthwhile, if idealist goal to instil in students these values of internationalism in order to provide them with a viable future, education must also prepare them for successes in a capitalist economy whose values, while increasingly globalized, may run counter to the ideals of “international humanism” (p. 160). Phillips argues that international schools that are increasingly able to balance global, humanistic and socially critical education with global economic realities can serve as examples for nationally-based schools that wish to do the same.

Most recently Roberts (2003, p. 69) offers a framework for international education based on categories of content, context, delivery, derivation, assessment, governance, validity and acceptability:

[International education must] be a good general education, be a truly international construct, be internationalist in its intent, incorporate global issues, address cultural/linguistic/religious diversity, be implemented internationally, have international currency and acceptability, and produce better global citizens. (Roberts, 2003, p. 75).

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, an international education requires recognition of its own limitations as a system rooted in ‘Western’ thought. The ideas of the nation states, political boundaries and thus ideas and ideals of internationalism are ones that have emerged through the European history of the last 500 years, including little input from Asian, African, and Islamic
traditions, let alone indigenous populations in the Americas and the Pacific. Thus, a truly international and global education must include a reflexive and critical engagement with the wider cultural assumptions on which it is based (Bell-Isle, 1986).

2.3.1 Research in International Education

Research in international education is scarce, difficult to procure in New Zealand and originates for the most part from one group of researchers based in the United Kingdom. The research on international education discussed below is concerned with what students and teachers believe constitutes internationalism and international education, and questions of whether international curriculum does what it claims to do. Hayden and Thompson (1995b) report on a large-scale study of international students and teachers at 43 schools in 30 countries offering various forms of international curricula. Their instrument asked respondents to rank various items, seeking to identify the important aspects of internationalism and an international education, which were then analyzed under different constructs by different co-authors.

Hayden and Thompson (1998) compared students' responses from the initial pilot study with internationally educated university undergraduates, and teacher responses from the main study in terms of how important they felt the following constructs were for an international education: 1) teachers; 2) formal curriculum (planned teaching and learning); 3) informal but organized aspects of school; 4) formal or informal exposure to other students within school; and, 5) exposure to the local community. Students from the pilot study and teachers in the main study differed slightly on the items they rated most important or necessary for an international education. Not surprisingly, teachers rated items relating to the formal curriculum, items relating to other students within the school, and items related to teachers as examples of 'being international' and as being highly necessary for an international education. Teachers were shown to consider informal activities and aspects of school life (clubs, trips, boarding with people of other cultures, social activities, sporting activity) as being least important to an international education. Students from the preliminary study considered aspects of the formal curriculum as necessary, but placed less emphasis on the role of teachers and more on the role of peers in their international education, within the classroom as well as during informal and extra-curricular activities (Hayden & Thompson, 1995b). This can only be interpreted as a preliminary finding as it is the result of a comparison between two unmatched samples, but a finding that is supported in later analysis, which found that while aspects of the formal curriculum were perceived by students as important,
so too were informal activities in which they were encouraged to mix with each other and interact with the local community (Hayden & Thompson, 1997).

With data from the same study and using the same analytical constructs, Hayden, Thompson and Williams (2003) compared students by different curricula studied. The results showed that overall, students in their final year of secondary schooling at international schools ascribe a relatively low level of importance to the informal aspects of schooling. However, students studying in a curriculum which is said to address the ‘whole student’ (such as the IB) tend to value informal aspects of the curriculum significantly more than students studying in a curriculum that is predominantly focused on academic pursuits (such as the French Baccalaureate) (Hayden et al., 2003). The results from this analysis do not attribute the same importance to the informal aspects of schooling that Hayden and Thompson’s (1997) preliminary analysis does, but, as suggested by Hayden and Wong (1997), if surveyed with the benefit of hindsight and outside of the academic pressures of their final year (as students were in the preliminary study), students might respond differently since the effect of such an education is said to take several years to emerge. Research in a specifically IB and UWC setting, which finds the informal curriculum is central to the student’s experience of an international education, is discussed in later sections of this chapter.

Using the same data set, Hayden, Rancic and Thompson (2000) compare the perceptions of students and teachers on what it means to ‘be international’, this time under nine analytical constructs: 1) international experience and international-mindedness (being informed about, travelling in and living in other countries); 2) parental factors and type of institution attended/employed by; 3) second language competence; 4) neutrality (taking a neutral stance vis-à-vis national affiliation); 5) open-mindedness/flexibility of thinking and action; 6) attitudes towards other systems and cultures; 7) attitudes towards own value system and culture; 8) respect for others; 9) tolerance of the behaviour and views of others. Hayden et al. (2000) found that teachers and students agree that the second, fourth and ninth constructs (parental and institutional factors, neutrality, and tolerance) were not considered necessary to be international while all of the rest were. They concluded that both “pragmatic factors” (parents from different cultures, knowledge of other cultures and languages) and “attitudes of mind” (positive attitudes towards one’s own and other cultures, open-mindedness) are necessary to be international (p. 107). Pragmatic factors (with the exception of speaking multiple languages), however, are less
influential than attitudes of mind in defining an individual as international. This distinction between pragmatic and ideology/attitude-based constructs as necessary components of internationalism and an international education is found throughout the Hayden and Thompson research, supporting Phillip’s (2002) and others’ focus on pragmatic necessity in international education. These researchers also point out that Matthew’s (1989) categorization of international schools as ideology or market-driven is not one of mutual exclusivity because international education can exist to fill a market need while still being based in a strong ideological ethos. This emphasizes a need for balance between the real-world requirement for a sound and internationally applicable education and the abstract ideas of internationalism and global citizenship, hence the emphasis placed on both pragmatic and ideological factors by students and teachers in the three Hayden and Thompson research projects discussed above.

In sum, “what most international schools have in common is their very diversity and lack of anchoring points” (Phillips, 2002, p. 161), so there is no universally applicable blueprint for international education. International schools must then define for themselves what an international education is in practice because each has “a unique cultural setting and … idiosyncratic environment for learning … [and] must therefore develop a mission that is consistent with its [unique] social and educational context and an understanding of the local culture” (p. 161). Therefore, the current study does not employ a single definition of international education, but draws on a combination of the above mentioned definitions and the various issues they emphasize to form a basis for an inquiry that seeks what students and teachers in the particular context of MUWCI believe an international education to be.

2.4 International Curriculum: The International Baccalaureate
Curricula at all levels have been developed to provide international schools with a framework through which they can overlay their own context and deliver an international education. While this study does not directly address issues of the formal curriculum, it is couched in a curricular context that is paramount to the student’s experience in the United World College, namely the International Baccalaureate (IB). The IB is not the only option for schools that want to internationalize their curriculum. Other options are the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE); the recently developed Advanced International Certificate of Secondary Education (AICE); and the recently developed Advanced International Certificate of Secondary Education (AICE).
Education (AICE); and the Advanced Placement exams (AP) offered by the American College Placement Board (Hayden & Thompson, 1995a). The IB and its derivative programs are understood to be more in line with the philosophies of international education than these other curricula which are focused on university entrance, advanced credit (Hayden & Thompson, 1995a,) and international mostly in that they are recognized by universities around the world, not because of an ideological basis in internationalism (Hinrichs, 2003).

The IB was developed in the 1960s through the combined efforts of faculty and parents from the International School of Geneva, Atlantic United World College, The University of Oxford Department of Educational Studies and The United Nations International School in New York City (Peterson, 1972a, 1977, 1987; Fox, 1984 1998; Hill, 2002). The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) was founded in 1967 and initially offered the IB in the final two years of secondary school as a preparatory program for university. It is now available to students of all ages through the IB Middle Years Program (IBMYP, ages 11 to 16) and the IB Primary Years Program (IBPYP, ages 3 to 12) (IBO, 2003). In 2003, the IBO listed 1293 schools in 115 countries offering a total of 1493 IB programs across the IB, MYP and PYP levels (IBO, 2003).

Two main challenges through the IB’s developmental years were striking the balance between the practical objectives (preparing students for further study in their home country) and the ideological objectives of an international education, and striking a balance between a curriculum that was broad enough in scope to enhance students’ “awareness of common humanity” (Fox, 1984), p. 58) yet specific enough to ensure acquisition of skills and allow students to specialize in their areas of interest and aptitude (Fox, 1984). These two challenges reflect the issues of pragmatics and ideology present in the international education literature discussed so far.

The best insight into the IBO and its approach is through the IBO mission statement as adopted in 1996:

Through comprehensive and balanced curricula coupled with challenging assessments, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Organization aims to assist schools in their endeavours to develop the individual talents of young people and teach them to relate the experience of the classroom to the realities of the world outside. Beyond intellectual rigour and high academic standards, strong emphasis is placed on the ideals of international understanding and responsible citizenship, to the end that the IB students may become critical and compassionate thinkers, lifelong learners and informed participants in local and world affairs, conscious of the shared humanity that binds all people together while respecting the variety of cultures and attitudes that make for the
The course requirements of the IB diploma can be modelled as a hexagon around a central triangle (see Armstrong & Rutherford, 1999). Each of the six points of the hexagon represents a subject area from which students are able to choose specific courses at higher or lower streams of difficulty. The six broad subject areas are mother tongue, second language, experimental sciences, individuals and societies, arts and electives, and mathematics. Courses offered within each of these areas differ depending on the particular needs, goals, location and available resources of individual schools. In the centre of the hexagon sits a triangle made up of the three core components of the diploma: an extended essay, a theory of knowledge course (TOK) and CAS activities (Hayden & Wong, 1997; Armstrong & Rutherford, 1999; Hill, 2002). The IB is offered in three languages: French, Spanish and English, and final examinations and assessments are done through a combination of internal and external examination committees supervised by the IBO. The IB has a high degree of academic rigor, and students who perform well are granted tertiary credit by many universities in North America and Europe (Fox, 1984).

Criticized for being ‘Western’ and ‘Eurocentric’, particularly in history, language and philosophy courses (Fox, 1985), the IBO has made efforts to include content and curriculum development from Asian, Latin American, African and Islamic perspectives. Also questioned as an elitist project, the IBO has defended the IB which as a curriculum does not favour any socio-economic elitism (Peterson, 1972b; Fox, 1984). Also, the wide range of national and public schools which have adopted the IB suggests that as a curriculum the IB is flexible enough to function internationally and at a local level, with students of all abilities and social backgrounds (Fox, 1984).

2.4.1 International Baccalaureate Research

The IB has been shown by Daniel and Cox (1992, cited in Hayden & Wong, 1997) and Thomas (1988, cited in Hayden & Wong, 1997) to promote higher than average academic success in American and British universities. The research discussed below focuses on why students chose to do the IB (Paris, 2003), if and how the IB promotes international understanding (Hinrichs, 2002, 2003) and cultural preservation (Hayden & Wong, 1997).
Hayden and Wong (1997) ask if the IB facilitates mobility and promotes international understanding, the preservation and appreciation of one’s own culture and language. The research surveyed a small sample of nineteen IB graduates currently enrolled as undergraduate students, and six educators experienced with teaching IB courses or IB graduates. The results suggest that the IB is successful in achieving all three aims through its “provision of a total education” (1997, p. 354). The researchers were careful to add that the IB curriculum itself was less the cause of the international attitudes and understanding than the environment in which the curriculum was delivered (e.g., multi-cultural peer groups and national or international school settings). This supports the research already cited which suggests that the informal curriculum and activities outside of the classroom are important in maintaining the international aspects of an international curriculum.

Hinrichs (2002, 2003) compares IB students’ and Advanced Placement (AP) students’ (in two American secondary schools) development of international understanding through the analysis of personal definitions of ‘international understanding’ written by the students themselves. The IB and AP’s contributions to students’ level of international understanding were measured through seven analytical constructs: 1) personal skills and attitudes; 2) appreciating diversity and pluralism; 3) recognizing interdependence; 4) understanding global issues; 5) international interests versus nationalism; 6) understanding global effect of [American] domestic policy; and, 7) respect for human rights (Hinrichs, 2002). Hinrichs found that the IB program was effective in promoting international understanding in that IB students “used significantly more elements [from the seven constructs] in their definitions than did the AP students, [and] their definitions were also richer, more complex, more personal, longer and more varied than those of AP students” (Hinrichs, 2002, p. 7). Hinrichs’ method may have elicited more of a measure of IB students’ ability to articulate themselves in writing on topics of international understanding than the level of international understanding instilled in them through their course of study (Cambridge, 2002; Walker, 2002; Hinrichs, 2003). It would have also been useful to have had a view of student’s international understanding prior to taking the IB and their reasons for choosing to study the IB in the first place, since knowing if they chose to take the IB for idealistic reasons of internationalism – as opposed to pragmatic reasons such as acceptance to ‘good’ universities – would lend considerable weight to conclusions as to the IB’s ability to instil international ideals.
Paris's (2003) research investigates this very question – student motivation for choosing the IB – but does not investigate the effectiveness of the IB program. He offers a comparative case-study between a private and a public secondary school in Australia, both of which had recently adopted the IB curriculum. Paris (2003) found that students chose the IB with the perception that it offered smaller class sizes, better teachers, a superior curriculum, better access to a university and more space in which to excel; students who chose not to do the IB did so because the IB’s combination of a rigorous academic load and CAS requirements was perceived to be too demanding (Paris, 2003). Again, the issues of pragmatics and ideals are raised; the goals and mission of the IBO are sourced in the ideology of international education, but the motivations of students to take or not to take the IB are founded on the pragmatics of success and not necessarily in a desire for international perspectives or attitudes of mind. Paris’s research does not comment on whether having completed the IB, students have been instilled with the ideals of internationalism despite their pragmatic approach. Research that combines Hinrichs’ (2002, 2003) and Hayden and Wong’s (1997) inquiries into outcomes, and Paris’s inquiry into motivations may result in firmer answers as to the effectiveness of the IB. It seems that the IBO would benefit from large-scale and long-term research in the vein of the Hayden and Thompson’s projects on internationalism and international education.

2.5 Creativity Action Service (CAS): The Whole Student in the IB

The IB is designed to educate the ‘whole student’ through the core triangle of theory of knowledge (exploring the relationship between disciplines and the forms knowledge that are generated), the extended essay (allowing them to pursue a topic of interest that may not be otherwise available) and the Creativity Action Service activities (CAS) (Glover, 1991; Kulunda & Hayden, 2002a, 2002b). CAS activities are often student initiated and directed and provide opportunity for expression and exposure in several arenas including artistic creativity, physical action and service within the school community or the community at large (Glover, 1991; Kulunda & Hayden, 2002a, 2002b). In order for graduates to receive their diploma, the IBO requires them to complete a minimum of 150 hours of CAS activities spread over two years – not a lot of hours in which to achieve the aims the IBO has set for the CAS programs. Passive pursuits tend to be discouraged and the focus is on “the development of new skills, not simply practising those already acquired” (IBO, 1996, cited in Kulunda & Hayden, 2002b, p. 31) as well as self-reliance, and awareness and concern for the community and the disadvantaged (IBO, 1991). CAS activities, particularly the service-based ones, are understood in light of the fact that
while there are certainly benefits to those being served, the aim of the program is not service itself but student learning (Lindon, 1995, cited in Kulunda & Hayden, 2002b). Thus, CAS is essentially a ‘selfish’ program, based partly in altruism but harnessing the fact that service offers as much to the giver as to the taker. Also, in schools or nations where other opportunities for leisure may be limited, the aim of CAS is very much to provide students opportunities to ‘decompress’ and find time to ‘play’.

The project week programs are a ten-day opportunity for UWC students to travel or participate in some kind of humanitarian or educational ‘project’ away from their particular UWC campus. These programs are unique to the UWCs, and like CAS, are out-of-class aspects of an international education based in harnessing learning from altruism and providing students with time in which to ‘unwind’. There is little research that looks specifically at these project week programs, hence further discussion of the CAS-based research will be used to gain a parallel understanding of some of the relevant issues.

2.5.1 CAS Research
There is little available research on the CAS programs in particular. Kulunda and Hayden’s (2002a, 2002b) critical case-study of a specific CAS program asks if the program does indeed accomplish its expressed aims. Kulunda and Hayden (2002a, 2002b) surveyed and interviewed students who had been involved with the CAS program at an international school as well as teachers involved as CAS supervisors. While most respondents seemed to believe that the aims of the CAS were being met, Kulunda and Hayden uncovered some dissenting views related to the CAS aims of 1) providing challenges to students, 2) providing opportunities for service, and 3) complementing and providing balance with academic curriculum. Respondents in Kulunda and Hayden’s research found that by allowing students free choice in activities, the aim of providing challenges was not being met since students could elect easier and more comfortable activities. Also, the aim of complementing the academic curriculum was not met because of confusion as to whether CAS should be complementary by focusing on new and different types of issues, or complementary through the application of what was learned in the class. Respondents also cited the idea that service activities were perceived by all parties only in terms of the benefit to the

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9 For a detailed account of the CAS programs see Kulunda & Hayden (2002a, 2002b).
recipients and not to the developmental growth of the students, contrary to the stated aims of the CAS program.

Teachers and students also acknowledged that CAS was not universally popular, or perceived as ‘a chore’ by some. This resulted in an apparent lack of commitment by students and by some of the staff who saw CAS as secondary to their teaching load, an attitude that “would be bound to have a negative impact on students’ motivation and participation” (Kulunda & Hayden, 2002b, p. 34). This view of CAS as peripheral (when it is actually central to the IB by design) was also attributed to the lack of incremental or quantifiable credit given to students and to the fact that there is no real incentive beyond the intrinsic value of the activity to keep students from becoming ‘clock watchers’. That CAS can be perceived as external to the learning experience at a school is an issue that is all the more pronounced in a residential context, such as the UWCs, where out-of-class activities serve the dual role of providing students with opportunities for learning and recreation. This is not counter to the design of the IB where CAS is meant to allow leisure as well as learning, but the perception of CAS and project week programs as peripheral allows what research has shown to be of central importance to an international education to be diluted. Kulunda and Hayden concluded that the CAS programs at that particular school would benefit from greater communication and accountability between students and teachers, and a program structure that involved both students and teachers in “planning, implementation and reflection” (2002b, p. 35). This is a model that under the theory of experiential education has been promoted and used with some success in similar programs (Kolb, 1984; Itin, 1991; Luckner & Nadler, 1997; King, 2004).

CAS is a universal feature of an IB education, but project week is unique to the United World Colleges (UWC). Branson (1997) touches briefly upon the CAS and project week components of the UWC experience, quoting students and teacher respondents who felt that CAS and project week were “potent and formative … established new levels of understanding and friendship … and set the tone for community life” (p. 90). Also, in reference to the previously established debate between idealism and pragmatics, Branson found that students and teachers felt that these activity-based components of the UWC education provided insight into the realities of the world which classroom learning, essentially theory based, could not. Branson found students and teachers expressed a need to balance the ‘idealism’ of the classroom with ‘realism’ through opportunities for experiential learning such as CAS and project week where encounters with the
'real world' were unmediated by the filters of the college (p. 87). Other than Branson's brief treatment (1997), there is no research specifically on the UWC project week program.

What is not clear from any of the research discussed so far is where exactly a line can be drawn between the formal and informal curriculum. This imprecision becomes apparent in Kulunda and Hayden's (2002a, 2002b) study where the quality of the CAS program suffers precisely because students and teachers are unsure of the relevance or position of CAS within the larger curriculum. Other research, much of which highlights the relative positions of the formal and informal curriculum, has not made the distinction any clearer. Branson (1997), in describing the formal curriculum of the UWCs, includes CAS and project week as formal and structured requirements for completion, thus part of the formal aspects of schooling, with the informal aspects being the social contact between individuals and experience with the ethos, or the overall character, spirit and atmosphere, of the school. However, when Branson analyzes the UWC experience categorically, she draws a line of distinction between in-class and out-of-class learning, a line that separates the CAS and project week programs from the formal curriculum and lumps them in with the informal aspects of residential and social life.

The present study deals with project week, a program that falls within the prescribed formal curriculum of the UWCs as defined by Branson (1997), but that takes place entirely outside the formal classroom experience. This 'crisis of identity' for CAS and project week programs runs throughout the literature, and in being a formal requirement understood largely in an informal light, these programs bridge the formal and informal and so are difficult to define. CAS and project week are at once neither and both formal and informal aspects of the curriculum, a duality that this research will attempt to address.

2.6 Chapter Conclusion
The field of international education does not yet enjoy a single definition. Current definitions include engaging the 'whole student', a focus on human commonality and diversity, teaching towards ways of thinking and 'attitudes of mind', as well as encouraging students to reflect critically on and yet value their own cultures and backgrounds. Issues for international education include the need to balance its often utopian ideology with practical reality and pragmatics, as well as a need to reflect on its biases and assumptions as a form of education that emerged largely from a European perspective. This study focuses on a UWC, an international school which has
been identified as based in an ideology of internationalism but, like any other international school, requires a measure of pragmatic realism, reflexive critique and flexibility in order to take advantage and work within the particular national and institutional context in which it is set. Specific curriculum structures have been developed to address these ideals and issues for international schools. While significant import is placed on these formal curricula in effecting the ideals of an international education (Blaney, 1991; Hayden & Thompson, 1998; Hayden et al., 2000), some research finds that students perceive the most profound impacts to come from the informal aspects of schooling (Geller, 1993; Hayden & Thompson, 1995a, 1995b, 1997, 1998; Branson, 1997; Hayden & Wong, 1997; Hayden et al., 2000; Lewis, 2001; Hinrichs, 2002, 2003; Hayden et al., 2003; Roberts, 2003). In particular, Branson (1997) found that the formal curriculum at the UWCs was the least effective amongst several categories in its effect upon students’ ideas of internationalism. For this reason, this research does not focus on the delivery or impact of the formal curriculum offered at the UWCs, but on the informal interactions between individuals during the out-of-class aspects of the UWC experience and the way in which project week is positioned relative to the total UWC experience.

The next chapter presents the theoretical framework with which this research approaches the student experience and the project week programs at Mahindra United World College. Stemming from studies with students in more market-driven international schools, and study abroad programs I will explore the anthropological concept of liminality, espoused by Victor Turner, as it pertains to the experience of the globally mobile student (Schaetti, 1999; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999) and, in later chapters, inquire if this theory can be used to sheds light on the UWC student experience. I will also briefly explore theories of experiential education as they may aid in placing project week within the total UWC experience.
CHAPTER THREE: Theory

This chapter presents the theoretical framework used in this thesis. The theories used in this analysis stem from the three main research questions that guide the study (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 4). The first question seeks to identify the common ground between the UWC experience and the globally mobile or third culture kid experience, the second seeks to understand the project week programs in light of experiential education and the third seeks to place the project week programs in the larger context of international education. Through the following discussion on the globally mobile student this chapter will lay out theory which may be useful in mapping the common ground between a childhood of international mobility and the UWC experience, namely, Victor Turner’s theory of liminality (1967, 1969, 1992) as derived from Arnold Van Gennep’s rites of passage model (1960, c.1908). This is a theory suggested by Schaetti (1999) and Schaetti and Ramsey (1999) to typify the experience of globally mobile children, and a theory that may be equally relevant to the student experience in a UWC context. This discussion will be followed by a brief critical review of experiential education theory, examples of how rites of passage and liminality have been used in experiential education, and a review of how experiential education theory has been treated in the international education literature.

3.1 International Students, Third Culture Kids and the Globally Mobile

Students’ experiences with international education depend on what kind of international education they experience. Based on the discussion in the previous chapter, it is likely that short, study-abroad programs of three to six months would result in experiences that were different from those of students who spend all or part of their schooling in international schools and have had a ‘lifetime’ of international education. Thus, the two-year UWC experience can be seen as sitting between these two models of international education, in that it is relatively short-lived, as in study abroad, but long enough and designed in such a way as to provide a similar environment and affect students in similar ways as an international life style. Further, being students of an international curriculum (the IB) in an ideologically driven environment of cultural diversity, the UWC students receive an educational experience closer to that of an international school than that found in short, study-abroad programs. Hence, literature that deals with student experiences of liminality and as outsiders from both a study abroad context and an international school context will be discussed in terms of their relevance to the UWC student experience.
Children who grow up amongst the various cultural influences of an international experience are referred to in the literature as the ‘globally mobile’, ‘global nomads’ or ‘third culture kids’ (TCKs) (Gerner & Perry, 2000). These terms are reasonably synonymous, although ‘TCK’, having stemmed from studies with American Christian missionaries, tends to be used in the American literature\(^\text{10}\). The present study does not deal specifically with these internationally experienced children but with UWC students (some of whom identified as TCKs), who, as mentioned, may experience some of what the TCKs experience, albeit in a shorter time frame, a different context and for different reasons.

Pollock and Van Reken define the TCK as follows:

A person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside their parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all the cultures [in which they have experience], while not having full ownership in any … elements of each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999, p. 19).

Traditionally, the TCK is a term used to describe the phenomenon of Western children growing up in non-Western cultures, but the idea of the TCK as a non-Westerner in the West, or other combinations of cross-cultural contact is starting to emerge in the literature (Cockburn, 2002). Thus, immigrants, refugees, first generation minorities, colonized indigenous minorities, study-abroad students and other peoples who carve out ‘third spaces’ for themselves could fit the Pollock and Van Reken (1999) definition. However, the difference between the TCK as it is defined and these other groups is that as the children of diplomats, military personnel, foreign aid workers, missionaries, journalists, academics and business executives posted in foreign countries (Nadeau, 2003), they are living a lifestyle of mobility, not just a short-lived international experience or one-way migration; they are engaged in a lifestyle where moving, or having those around you move, is the norm. Although many repatriate, research has shown that mobility and travel become a comfortable and well known state for TCKs, who often choose careers that maintain their lifestyle of mobility (Cottrell, Useem, Useem, & Finn Jordan, 1999). Mobility, in effect, is the TCK culture, mobility is the ‘third culture’, and so it is to mobility that the TCK would naturally gravitate.

\(^{10}\) Literature and research stemming from the USA, American overseas schools or studies with international students having returned to the USA.
The ‘third culture’ is the result of the intersection of a parent culture, a host culture and other cultures the child may have significant contact with, resulting not in a pure hybridity between cultures, but in what is said to be the emergence of a third and different culture through innovative and creative coping strategies on the part of the child (Useem & Useem, 1967; Cottrell et al., 1999). According to Pollock and Van Reken (1999), regardless of the specific cultural contexts in which individual TCKs have grown up, their experience, and so the creation of the ‘third culture’, is overshadowed by two realities:

Being raised in a genuinely cross-cultural world where instead of simply studying other cultures they live in [and with] them..... In relationships with peers, teachers, host nationals and even when looking at parents and siblings, the TCK is often looking at another culture.

Being raised in a world where mobility is the norm, TCKs themselves or those around them are constantly coming or going; the people and places in their lives are always changing. Their social world is constantly up for revision (adapted from Pollock & Van Reken, 1999, p. 22).

It is in these two defining characteristics, true for virtually all TCKs, that they find common ground (despite having few common demographics) and a sense of belonging and commonality with one another that stems from a shared feeling of being at once home everywhere and nowhere (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; McCraig, 2002). The following four characteristics also define the TCK experience to varying degrees depending on the particular situation:

Difference is the norm: being physically different or having a substantially different perspective on the world than their peers, parents and teachers is a major part of their identity.

There is an expected repatriation: third culture families usually expect to return at some point to their country of origin, to live permanently, or visit.

Can be a lifestyle of privilege: the employees of international businesses and members of missions, the military and the diplomatic corps typically have certain privileges bestowed upon them by either the sponsoring agencies, the host culture or both.

System identity: they may be aware of representing something greater than themselves, be it their company, government or religion (adapted from Pollock & Van Reken, 1999, p. 22).

Writers and researchers have called TCKs the first truly globalized people (Fletcher, 2001, among others) and suggested that they are ideally suited for life in a global society (Bowman, 2001, among others) and that the global context of the TCKs helps us understand the general human reactions to trends towards a global society. In the context of this research, the lifetime of
international mobility and cultural contact experienced by the TCKs can shed light on what a UWC student may encounter as a result of their two-year experience in a ‘third space’ outside of both parent and host cultures.

3.1.1 International Experience: Advantages and Challenges

Research on TCKs and mobile adolescents in international education has identified issues with relationships (Useem & Downie, 1976; Cockburn, 2002), identity formation (Isogai & Hayashi, 1999; Bowman, 2001; Cockburn, 2002), cultural marginality (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999; Hartung, 2002), and re-entry into the parent culture (Useem & Downie, 1976; McClusky, 1994; Gillies, 1998; Isogai & Hayashi, 1999; Franck, 2002) as central sources of challenge for international students. The extent to which the lifetime of internationalism affects an individual has as much to do with individual personality (Werkman, Farley, Ki, Butler & Quayhagen, 1981) as it does with the nature of the overseas experience itself (Nathenson & Marcenko, 1995) and varies greatly across factors of time, place, time spent in specific places, the type of community and one’s role within those communities (Gleason, 1973; Werkman et al., 1981; Alston & Niewodt, 1992).

While TCKs develop an ability to be at home everywhere, they can lose touch with where ‘home’ actually is, and thus feel at home nowhere (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999), resulting in disorientation when faced with questions of identity, rooted for the TCK in the third spaces and not in a singular idea of home (Isogai & Hayashi, 1999; Bowman, 2001; Cockburn, 2002). It can be a life journey typified by vague, ungrounded, transient, uncommitted and confused behaviour and relationships (Werkman et al., 1981), issues which are said to show themselves upon re-entry into their ‘home’ culture where the TCK may find that their extraordinary experiences and multiple perspectives developed on the international stage are difficult to integrate into the seemingly narrow and singular views of peer groups in the parent culture (Gleason, 1973; McClusky, 1994; Isogai & Hayashi, 1999; Franck, 2002).

Adaptability is a hallmark of childhood, so adapting to the TCK lifestyle is not as difficult as some of the early literature suggested. Recent research that has explored the international experience of young adolescents found little in the way of negative effects (Nathenson & Marcenko, 1995) and that the experience of living overseas can be extremely rewarding for children (Willis, Enloe & Minoura, 1994; Gillies, 1998). High levels of adaptability and the
ability to feel comfortable in a variety of cultural and social situations are cited as the primary advantage of this international life-style (Cottrell et al., 1999; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). Research has also shown that these children, with their broader worldview and multiple sources of identity, grow up extremely well suited to life in a global society (Willis et al., 1994; Bowman, 2001) and with experience in many languages and cultures they have a unique ability to see what others are trying to say regardless of cultural nuance. This predisposes them to careers in diplomacy, mediation, international relations, international business, cultural interpretation and positions of leadership (Cottrell et al., 1999; McCraig, 2002). These claims are supported by research that finds American adult TCKs do better in university, pursue postgraduate degrees and end up in positions of leadership significantly more often than American national averages (Cottrell et al., 1999). These findings, however, are possibly a function of power begetting power, since the TCK lifestyle is commonly associated with socio-economic and educational privilege.

More than just being successful and adaptive, TCKs are expressly creative in terms of themselves and society. Gleason (1973) found that mobile adolescents generated expanded definitions through their broad experiences and developed new and novel patterns of behaviour for themselves. This is a finding echoed by Willis et al. (1994) who write that the globally mobile “continually inject new meaning-streams into their discourses” (p. 39) and that “culture for them is ... an arena for conscious choice, justification and representation” (p. 33). Willis et al. hold the experience in high regard when they describe the globally mobile as:

The most active of all contemporary imaginations ... [whose] influence may be particularly significant where new ideas, concepts and images are created.... Actively creating new ways of looking at and acting in the world [the globally mobile] are a significant bridge in the creation of an entirely new world (1994, p. 31).

Existence on the margins of various cultures and on the margins of one’s own culture is the source of both the challenges and advantages of the international experience for TCKs. In putting children in a marginal position – giving them the outsider’s perspective – the overseas experience can be eye-opening (Gleason, 1973; Hartung, 2002). Yet the creative potential of this marginality is not guaranteed and lies in a balance between its potential to free the individual and its potential to isolate them (Bennett, 1993, cited in Isogai & Hayashi, 1999; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999). Helping TCKs place and locate themselves in terms of their own experience with cultures (not an assumed experience of culture) and take advantage of their multiple sources of identity and the creative potential of their position on the margins is called for in education literature (Jalongo,
1994; Akram, 1995; Isogai & Hayashi, 1999) as is an understanding that international students think, process and construct their world in very different ways than do other students:

It is not always easy to have a multi-dimensional view of the world ... especially if those around you do not. [TCKs] may find themselves challenged by those with less of an international understanding. They may be perceived as arrogant when speaking of their 'exotic' adventures, may face a confusion of loyalties, and may be accused of lacking conviction. The reality, however, is typically less a matter of confused loyalty than a deep understanding of the complexity of the human condition (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999, p. 2).

It is on these marginal perspectives and spaces between cultures that this research is theoretically pinned, exploring the liminal, 'third', or in-between state of neither here nor there, in which Schaetti and Ramsey (1999) suggest the TCK, and arguably by extension the UWC student, exists. The following section presents liminal theory as it emerged from the rites of passage model, followed by Schaetti and Ramsey's (1999) description of TCK liminality and a discussion of this theory as it relates to adolescence, education and the international experience.

3.2 The Rites of Passage Model and Liminality Theory
The rites of passage model for social and individual change was first used by Arnold Van Gennep (1960, c.1908), a French anthropologist working in a European tradition of functional anthropology largely concerned with the classification and taxonomy of 'primitive' cultures, a tradition still very much in the Spenserian mind-set of social Darwinism typical of the intellectual establishment of the time. In the nearly one hundred years since the publication of his seminal work, Les Rites de Passage (1960, c.1908), Van Gennep’s theory has become an enduring theory in anthropology (Turner, 1977, cited in Andrews, 1999) and other disciplines where it has influenced theory on change, learning and studies with the marginal members of society (Kimball, 1960). The rites of passage model was developed through field-work and observations in a wide variety of 'primitive' cultures and has since been observed by anthropologists in one form or another almost universally across cultures and periods in history (Bell, 2003).

Understanding human life as a "series of passages" (1960, c.1908, p. 2), Van Gennep defined rites of passage as the rites and rituals which accompany the movement of individuals and societies over time through defined social status or fixed social positions (e.g., child to adult; lay person to priest; a passage from health through sickness to death). The passages or transitions that require these specific rites include both transitions of the individual within society (puberty or initiation rites) and the collective transitions of a society at large (rites to denote the change of
season or the declaration of war; rites associated with the geographic movement of people) (Van Gennep, 1960, c.1908).

The model as originally presented by Van Gennep consists of three phases, or schema, in a transition between fixed positions: separation (where the attributes of the old position are shed); transition (the space between, where neither the old nor the new definitions are appropriate); and, incorporation (where the attributes of the new position are embodied). According to Van Gennep’s original analysis each of these three schema were present in all rites of passage but were emphasized to a greater or lesser degree by different cultures and in different rites or ceremonies. Separation would be emphasized in a funeral rite, incorporation in a wedding rite and transition would be the central schema in a pregnancy, betrothal or initiation rite (Van Gennep, 1960, c.1908). In the context of international education and international students, the transition, or the liminal stage (as labelled by Turner, 1967, 1969, 1992) has been said to carry greater emphasis both as a stage in a transition and as a fixed state in and of itself (Schaetti, 1999; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999).

3.2.1 Liminality

The main contribution of Van Gennep’s theory was in acknowledging the existence of a transitional period between separation and incorporation. He considered this space as a space between that which was and that which will be and one that no longer has the attributes of the past and has yet to take on the attributes of the future. Turner (1967, 1969, 1992), an anthropologist writing more than fifty years after Van Gennep, took that space and described it as liminality, a formative and creative space which was not necessarily a function of change, but the space in which a process of change was allowed to occur. Liminality, from the Latin root limen or threshold, refers to the state or space between, in the margins, or on the threshold of two things (Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003). Liminal space can be a “state in and of itself” (Turner, 1969, p. 107), a “phase in a transition” (p. 169) or a state which is consciously and purposely entered and exited (Turner, 1992; Garsten, 1999). It is space between spaces that “evades cognitive definition or classification” (Turner, 1992, p. 49), a space “betwixt and between” fixed social structures (Turner, 1969, p. 95) and thus a place of formative power where individuals are actively indoctrinated in the dominant systems of their culture, and yet, are simultaneously provided opportunity to act upon and change those systems.
Turner studied religion and ritual in tribal societies and saw analysis of meaning and symbolism in ritual as a “key to understanding central constructs of humanity” (Turner, 1969, p. 6). Initially he found and explained liminal phases and states in the rites and lives of the Ndembu tribes of Africa, individual shaman, youth sub-cultures and social movements such as the hippies and beatniks (Turner, 1967). Turner’s ritual liminality occurs during rites of life crises, rites of status elevation and demotion as well as collective “calendric, cyclical or seasonal” rites for whole societies (1969, p. 169). Liminality is the space within those rites, where subjects are “neither here nor there” (1969, p. 95); where, consciously or not, individuals and collectives enter a social, emotional, physical, mental, ecological or cultural “condition where the usual practice and order are suspended and replaced by new rites and rituals” (Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003, p. 267). It is “a time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action” (Turner, 1969, p. 167).

Turner later expanded his analysis to post-tribal society and used the liminality of Franciscan monks, Hindu sects, millenarian movements, street gangs and Bob Dylan to expand on his original formulations to include liminality as a way of life (Turner, 1992). These explorations of contemporary liminal spaces were done using concepts of work, leisure, play and Csikszentmihalyi’s (1975, cited in Turner, 1992) ‘flow’. Turner expanded the liminal to include the category of the liminoid: a secular, constantly generated and individually-based space which “present[s] the possibilities for society, not what society actually is” (1992, p. 57) and through art, music, play and leisure stresses “the ludic – the experimental…. freedom to transcend social structure and normative limitations, the freedom to play with ideas, with fantasies, with words, with paint and with social relationships” (1992, p. 54). Recent work using Turner’s theories tends not to employ the concept of the liminoid as it was a reformulation for modern society, and since Turner made these distinctions “anthropology and the rest of social sciences have agreed that there is no ‘great divide’ between so-called pre-modern and modern societies” (Sahlins, 1994, 2000, cited in Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003, p. 271). While this comment regarding societies may or may not be true and would depend on the nature of the inquiry, the only significant difference between the liminal and the liminoid is that the latter uses artistic communities (painters, musicians, actors) as its main expression, hence the earlier formulating of the concept is less cumbersome and more widely applicable and still includes mention of the ludic, playful and experimental nature of liminality. For these reasons the present study does not use the liminoid, but uses Turner’s original liminal space as its theoretical lens.
Liminality, as presented by Turner, is based on the ideas of social structure versus social anti-structure (undefined social spaces), liminal communitas or the bonds formed between liminaries, the power of the lower status members of society and the ‘blank slate’ provided by liminal space which serves the dual purposes of social reproduction and social re-creation. This discussion will move through each of these ideas, starting with the characteristics of the liminal subject, or the liminary.

3.2.2 The Liminal Subject: Liminary or Novice

The ritual liminality that Turner observed as part of rites of passage was the space after the liminary had been separated from their previous role (e.g., as a child or a lay person) and before they had incorporated aspects of their new role (e.g. as an adult or a holy person). In tribal rites, Turner found a strong emphasis on a process of reduction and reconstruction where novices underwent a “destruction and humiliation of their previous role” (1969, p. 103) through “hazing, endurance tests, failure and ridicule” (1992, p. 49) and were rebuilt through exposure to and instruction in the symbols and structures of their new social roles. The effect was one of creating a “blank slate” (1969, p. 103) or a “grinding down to human prima materia” (1969, p. 170), to be refashioned upon completion of the rite.

During the liminal period initiates in tribal ritual enter into a state of “structural-invisibility” (Turner, 1969, p. 97), where they no longer fit into accepted social structures. As liminaries they represent the inherent paradox of liminal space: that one cannot simultaneously fill two social structural spots; one cannot simultaneously be a child and an adult; near and far; one cannot be both, cannot be neither, and is thus rendered ‘invisible’, ‘nameless’, ‘genderless’, ‘possession-less’, ‘position-less’, ‘polluting’, ‘unclean’ and therefore dangerous or threatening to the established order of the community. Kept physically as well as socially isolated or sequestered on the margins and at the “interstices of social structure” (Turner, 1969, p. 125), liminaries are ritually placed in, then ritually released from, liminal space to protect the community from, and allow space for, the turbulence of their transition.

During their structural inferiority and outsider-hood, initiates in the liminal period “occupy the lowest rung of society” (Turner, 1969, p. 125). Nevertheless, in Turner’s observation, they tend to accept their ordeal and are submissive to the community and to the teachings of their culture and society. In their submission, Turner’s liminaries are weak and powerless, but in their
outsider-hood they are also strong; they have a kind of “power emergent from humility” (1969, p. 103), a power of the low which allows social and cultural “breakthroughs at the interstices of structure, at the edge and from beneath” (1969, p. 129). The liminary must submit to the symbols of their culture, but in being exposed to them in liminal space, they are afforded the opportunity to recombine them in novel forms with new meanings. In this way Turner presents ritual liminality as having a dual purpose: to reinforce cultural norms, and to re-evaluate and recreate them.

In being between fixed points, liminality has been described as a state of marginality (Garsten, 1999). In being neither here nor there, liminality is also said to be fraught with confusion, isolation, ambiguity, loss, compromise, uncertainty, loneliness, disorientation and alienation (Mortland, 1987; Deegan & Hill, 1991; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999; McGuire & Georges, 2003). It is also said that liminal spaces can become the venue for “abrupt confrontations with a universe of difference” and liminaries can be encapsulated and isolated by difficulties in communicating and functioning in “new geographies and rudiments of life” (McGuire & Georges, 2003, p. 4). All of these things can be true to a certain extent, but can be minimized, and even capitalized on, if liminal space is understood as a useful “state, not an illness” (Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003, p. 272). Garsten (1999) describes temporary employees as liminal subjects who exist in liminal space on a semi-permanent basis with few ill-effects. He shows that while ‘temping’ as a way of life sits relatively low on the ‘corporate ladder’, it draws certain people because it facilitates a liminal culture under constant reform and re-creation. Cohen (1984) found that expatriates who live at the interstices of local cultures can find a similar footing in permanent liminality. Neither members of expatriate communities nor of the local community, Cohen’s expatriate liminaries “cherish a state of protracted or permanent liminality as a meaningful goal in itself, and not only as a transitory, preparatory state” (p. 112), and do not appear confused or uncertain in their ‘unstructured’ lives because of their “orientation to a liminal centre” (p. 91); they have found grounding in an intentionally liminal existence (Cohen, 1984). Similarly, Czarniawska and Mazza (2003) describe liminality as a conscious state that can be entered and exited at will, showing how business consultants enter a liminal state for the sake of the perspective it offers, assess a situation or perform a task, and return to their previous state unchanged. This is an example of the kind of intentional grounding in the un-grounded that is called for in helping international students recognize and use their experiences.
3.2.3 Social Structure and Liminal Anti-structure

Understanding society as a “structure of positions” (1967, p. 93), Turner juxtaposed liminality with fixed definitions or social positions, framing it as inter-structural or anti-structural (Turner, 1969). Liminality then is “a limbo of structurelessness” (1969, p. 97) and not classifiable in traditional terms. It is anti-structural “not because it is chaotic, but because its general construction is on principles different from those governing quotidian social life” (1992, p. 133). Based on his study of rites of passage and later on art and youth sub-culture, Turner (1992) concludes that human society requires both structure and anti-structure to remain healthy and achieve self-mastery. Structure and anti-structure “curb, penetrate and moderate each other” (1992, p. 133), they are the opposing forces of social reproduction and social renewal and creativity. Liminality, in offering liminaries an outsider’s perspective on social structure, is “a period of scrutinization of the central values of the culture in which it occurs” (Turner, 1969, p. 167); it is a perspective which affords a critical reflection on society. Liminal anti-structure is said by Turner (1992) to be in the subjunctive mood of culture: an inherently sceptical mood of challenge to and reflection on authoritative assumptions.

Liminality and anti-structure oppose the status quo, they are dangerous to it, and so liminaries, be they novices in a rite of passage or the voices of a particular sub-culture, are kept secluded, a strategy that insulates them from society while at the same time facilitating the outsider perspective which makes them socially ‘dangerous’ (Turner, 1969). Liminalies “present an open morality” (p. 110) of experimentation and possibility, and in so doing remind society why it needs a “closed and normatively bound” morality (p. 111). Liminal spaces, such as carnival or festival, and liminal characters, such as the court jester, are given “license to jibe” (p. 109), so that society and culture can be reminded of and reformulate the boundaries of what is acceptable. According to Turner, society is balanced on this interplay between structure and anti-structure, resting simultaneously on the old order and on pure possibility, built “on the human need to participate in both sides of the dialectic between structure and anti-structure” (1969, p. 203). This participation in the structural dialectic is facilitated by membership in Turner’s liminal ‘communitas’: a social unit that exists outside or below other social units; consisting of relationships developed in anti-structure, built on an internal human logic beyond status and social pretension, and only found between individuals together in liminal space where social structure is said by Turner to be temporarily irrelevant.
3.2.4 Liminal Communitas

In being debased and ostracized through ritual liminality, liminaries are collectively unequal and submissive to their society. From their position in the margins and on the lowest rungs they are able to look back upon society and see that which they could not from within its bounds. They are also able to look at each other and others in liminal space, without the normative structures that govern social status, class and privilege. Liminalaries are able to find within themselves an egalitarian comradeship and form “bonds … created outside, above and beyond social structure amongst the high and the low alike” (Turner, 1969, p. 97). These bonds formed at the “interstices of structure” (p. 138) run deeper than concepts such as community and solidarity, and are referred to by Turner as ‘communitas’.

A social grouping between liminaries within anti-structure, communitas is a common bond formed in common ordeal, built on equity and equality resulting in deep friendship, long-term ties, comfort, mutual outspokenness and freedom from usual social practices. Communitas is the result of the human tendency towards social grouping, but in liminal space, where “social structure is not dominant, but common experience is”; it is the “social without the structure” (Turner, 1992, p. 137). In no longer being bound by structure, communitas allows relationships between “whole people” (Turner, 1969, p. 136), providing for the development of an “essential ‘we’… or relationships between ‘I’ and ‘thou’” (1969, p. 136) through “full unmediated communication” (1992, p. 58) of a “spontaneous immediate and concrete nature” unlike the “norm governed, institutionalized abstract nature of social structure” (1967, p. 127).

Communitas, an expression for a collective of individuals sharing a deep bond in liminal anti-structure, is also said to be in the subjunctive mood (Turner, 1969, 1992), where the new and novel is actively created in the present, where the speculative, philosophical, imaginary and creative are held up against the pragmatics and rational organization of structure. Liminal communitas is “a moment in and out of social structure” (1969, p. 96) and can be grasped only in some relation to it; a dialectic relationship that provides a “necessary check for society” (1969, p. 129). Turner writes that “communitas is of the now; structure is rooted in the past and extends into the future” (1969, p. 113), suggesting that the natural communion and subjunctive creativity experienced in anti-structure is fleeting and will succumb to the force of history and an inevitable decline into organization and structure:
Liminal communitas is no substitute for the lucid thought and sustained will of social structure. On the other hand, structural action swiftly becomes arid and mechanical if those involved in it are not periodically immersed in the regenerative abyss of communitas... an act or process or function of social regeneration and refreshment (Turner, 1969, p. 139).

On the one hand, Turner presents ritual liminality as a levelling force and blank slate on which cultures indoctrinate their initiates; on the other hand, liminal communitas is a check and balance for those same initiates to rewrite their own culture. He presents the liminary as both low and powerful, as both under the influence and exerting free will, as a liminal subject being acted upon and a liminal actor in action. So the question remains, does liminal space encourage a hegemonic reproduction of dominant social forms or a critical and reflexive social re-creativity?

3.2.5 Reproductive or Re-creative?
A functional anthropologist by training, Turner sought explanations for social phenomena in theory that tended towards the harmonization of social order. He wrote of his own theory that its “central moral problem... is in establishing a balance between the aspirations to communitas and the norms of existing structure” (1969, p. 160), a balance found in the idea that “[human]kind grows through anti-structure and conserves through structure” (1992, p. 144). Liminal experiences push individuals towards communitas, deep bonds between whole persons which are creative, critical and reflexive, but serve the dual purpose of questioning society and enforcing it. Turner’s liminality allows a reflexivity and critical awareness, but towards the end of reaffirming and reinforcing structure.

However, in being able to “transcend particular social forms” (Turner, 1992, p. 51), liminal space also offers the possibility and promise of social re-creation. For example, festivals such as Halloween, with “children playing monsters” (1969, p. 174), or Latin American carnivals, with the “lampooning liberty” (1969, p. 178) taken by people regardless of social status, are moments of empowerment in which statuses are momentarily confused, released or reversed. In these carnivals social norms are momentarily suspended and social status, class and ‘common sense’ cease to govern people’s actions. But it is not a full or lasting re-creation, it is a reversal of the “pecking order in order to enforce the pecking order” (1969, p. 181) or “a touch of sin converted to domestic use” (1969, p. 183), as having witnessed and partaken in the excesses of carnival,
social status remains unchanged and society is all the more committed to its systems of normative control.

The liminal space entered into by individuals in status rituals or rites of passage also has this dual, seemingly contradictory aspect to it. The liminary is refashioned in a process of reduction and reconstruction where they are given instruction in the elements and symbols of their culture and also opportunity to re-think and recombine them (Turner, 1992). According to Turner, the images and symbols of culture, or sacra, are presented to initiates in liminal space to give them the building blocks from which to develop in line with existing forms, but in being made aware of these sacra while in a state of liminality, they are also provided opportunity to reflect upon them, to experiment with them and to re-combine them (Turner, 1967). This re-combination of sacra and symbols is allowed, be it in tribal or modern society, through what Turner calls a “surplus of signifiers” (1992, p. 155) where the pure potential of liminal space and the confrontation and tension between the normative pull of structure and the creative possibilities of anti-structure and communitas create a multiplicity of meanings, where one thing can mean many things, or nothing at all. Simply put, this surplus of signifiers offers liminaries choices as to what they can incorporate into their own meanings and understandings of their culture, and allows them to be active in the potential for social and cultural change. Amongst tribal societies this transmission, multiple meaning and recombination of sacra occurs in ritual liminality, in post-tribal and modern society similar mechanisms can be seen in the schooling and lives of adolescents and as expressed by various ‘alternative’ subcultures (Turner, 1992).

Turner’s theory was explicit in showing that ritual and liminality “facilitate cultural change” (Turner, 1967, p. 97), but his ideas of social critique and change through liminal ritual and festival tended towards reproduction of dominant and ordered social and cultural structure. This possibly reflects a tension between his functionalist roots, where the strength of a society was measured in its enduring cohesion, and the time in which he was writing, when that cohesion was being openly questioned by many. Recent authors, in a time that is perhaps more accustomed to calls for cultural change, have focused on liminality’s creative and deconstructive/reconstructive potentials, using it in a critical fashion to evaluate and expand upon existing social forms. Alexander (1991), for example, proposes that the liminal space found in the religious rites of an African-American Pentecostal congregation strengthens egalitarian bonds and facilitates new relationships along communitarian lines (Turner’s communitas) and so was an early but essential
part of a push for social change. For Alexander, “the greatest opposition to dominant society is simply showing that there is an alternative, [that] there is the potential for potential” (1991, p. 35), and in Alexander’s congregation, this potential for social change is found in creative liminal communitas allowing a break as a sub-culture from the main culture’s ‘intent’ for them. They show that liminal space need not be subject to a manifest destiny and need not follow a pre-determined course from a pre-determined ‘A’ to a pre-established ‘B’.

Similarly, based on a view of society as “in-composition, forever becoming and dependent on organized moments of categorical disarray and intense reflexive potential,” St John (2001, p. 48) frames the ‘neo-tribes’ of alternative lifestyle festivals as creative, liminal and anti-structural spaces. St John writes that the festivals are in the subjunctive mood, socially reflexive and necessarily communal and that amongst the festival goers “homogeneity and unity prevail over the disunity of ethnicities, cultures, classes and professions” (p. 49). This unity provides a common bond with a creative force that St John describes as sitting in opposition to the parent mode of culture, but not a bond of equality and sameness, rather a common bond in “ambiguous social spaces and counter-sites” full of “unstable energies holding to values, vocabularies and sensibilities” based on “unsettling juxtapositions of incommensurate ‘objects’ which challenge the way we think” (pp. 49-50). This means a bond formed in Turner’s anti-structure and based on common experiences with a ‘surplus of signifiers’, where participants experience a liminal realm of “mystery, danger, transgression and multiple meaning” (p. 51). These bonds allow, if only temporarily, the re-creation of social order through what St John calls an “alternative cultural heterotopia” (2001, p. 3), represented in this case by the contested spaces, competing discourses and re-combined meanings found between various factions, communities or ‘neo-tribes’ of the anti-structural festival space (e.g., drug-free community, techno-shaman-psy-trance community, anarchist-protest community). The spaces between St John’s ‘neo-tribes’ again show liminal space freed of the assumptions of specific and pre-determined transitions, they also show a liminal space purposely entered into for the purpose of the liminaries acting creatively on themselves. While the draw of communitas is present, they are not entering liminal space for the bonds of common ordeal alone, or with a collective political or religious agenda, as in Alexander’s rites; they do it purely for the ability to be expressive and to set their own social boundaries and so, perhaps re-set accepted social boundaries in the parent culture.
3.3 Liminality: Adolescence and Identity

An analysis of the UWC experience as liminal needs to be done with what Aguilar (1999) refers to as the ‘double-barrelled’ liminality of adolescence as a backdrop. This section presents a model of human development that lends support to Turner’s suggestion of adolescence as inherently liminal space (Erickson, 1968), presents a globally mobile adolescence as a particularly liminal one (Schaetti, 1999) and briefly discusses the concept of identity formation in liminal space (Marcia, 1966, 1980), leading to the suggestion that ‘double-barrelled’ liminality in adolescence can be used consciously and constructively by teenagers (Isogai & Hayashi, 1999; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999).

Biologically, socially and psychologically between childhood and adulthood, adolescence offers an example of the potentially confusing and inherently creative qualities of liminal space. Several theories of human development have been proposed in the past, each treating adolescence in a different manner. Piaget (1954) focused on the cognitive development of individuals, Kohlberg (1984) on moral development and Vygotsky (1978) on the integration of language, speech and communication with others into a scheme of social constructivism during an individual’s development. Each of these theories could be, in turn or together, applied to this particular research context. However, Erik Erikson (1968; Anders, 2003; Roazen, 1997) proposed a model of human development based on biological, psychological, and social life-crisis (a similar concept to rites of passage), and in the adolescent period focused specifically on the development and expression of identity as one of these crises. The crisis is resolved successfully if the teenager achieves a sense of identity, but, if the adolescent cannot make deliberate decisions and choices, especially about vocation, sexual orientation, and life in general, role confusion and later identity crises become a threat (Erickson, 1968; Anders, 2003).

Expanded by Marcia (1966, 1980), this theory of adolescent identity formation supports a view of adolescence as liminal space by framing it as facilitated through a socially sanctioned ‘moratorium’. Adolescents are able to create individual identities through this essentially liminal moratorium in which they ‘enjoy’ social licence and shelter from the accountabilities of adulthood as well as freedom from the restrictions of childhood. This moratorium is created through schools, juvenile legislative policy, apprenticeships and certain relaxed behavioural

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expectations, allowing for increased experimentation, shelter from certain consequences, and access to information and experiences not available to the child and no longer available to the adult. It is from this moratorium, an essentially liminal space, that adolescents question the society, morality and ethics of the systems they were born into, holding their traditional and parental sources of identification (economy, religion, politics, nationalism and regionalism) up for re-evaluation. It is a social critique by the newly active members of society which Erikson insists, like Turner, is necessary for human social development. He writes, “The search of youth, I believe, is not for all-permissibility, but rather for new ways of directly facing up to what truly counts” (Erikson, 1968, p. 37). The adolescent moratorium is a kind of social structure in which teens are ‘freed’ from the structures of society at large and so able to question themselves and the sacra of their culture, but it is also a social space in which this sacra is presented to the adolescent through systems of education and socialization. In this light, Erikson’s notion of a search for identity and questioning of self in a socially sanctioned moratorium becomes, like Turner’s communitas in liminality, a questioning of cultural norms and re-creation of individual, social and collective identities. Both Turner’s liminal rites of passage and Erikson and Marcia’s moratorium are anti-structural spaces in which the tension between society and the individual are apparent; the moratorium is a liminal space, and liminal space, in the context of adolescence, is a moratorium.

While still framing adolescence as an inherently liminal and creative social category where the “the contrast between kids and mature adults [is] neutralized... Neither one nor the other nor both”, Kirkpatrick (1987, p. 387) takes exception to the assumption of change in Van Gennep’s rites of passage and Turner’s focus on ritual. Liminality is an important aspect of adolescence, but Kirkpatrick writes that “the complex ways in which transitions can be formulated and accomplished can be better appreciated when a monolithic focus on rites of passage is abandoned” (1987, p. 400). He presents adolescence as “a liminal category [which] can play a major role in shaping transitions to adulthood” (1987, p. 401), but advocates an understanding of the transition from child to adult through the lived experiences of teenagers, not through singular and isolated moments of ritual (initiation rites or rites of passage such as graduation or bar mitzvahs) that might have more meaning for the community at large than they do for the adolescents themselves. He writes that “adolescence is a time of self-determination ... development of self-awareness and a search for autonomy ... [which] emerge from many complex interactions, not a moment of ritual” (Kirkpatrick, 1987, p. 396). In line with
Kirkpatrick’s view as well as a similar critique of the assumptive nature of rites of passage made by Bell (2003), the present study uses the liminal space as a lens to understand an adolescent experience, without relying on the ideas of ritual or rites of passage but centred on the lived experiences of the individuals in question.

3.3.1 The International Students’ Experience in Liminality

Schaetti and Ramsey (1999) and Schaetti (1999) present the globally mobile adolescent, or third culture kid (TCK), as living in liminality. They explain that on top of the inherently liminal space of adolescence, and the arguably liminal space associated with secondary school (Karp, Holmsrom & Grey, 1998), liminality can be found in the lives of mobile adolescents in the relationships they have, in the development of a liminal world-view, in the development of a liminal cultural identity and during the times when they return ‘home’ or re-enter their parent culture.

Based on research which has shown that the TCK comes to recognize no relationships outside the family as enduring and so develops an acute awareness of the substitutability of others and themselves for others (Useem & Downie, 1976; Cockburn, 2002), Schaetti and Ramsey (1999) write that the globally mobile student becomes accustomed to change and transition as their only stable norm. Hence, relationships with peers and others in their school and wider community are said to be liminal because they rarely become permanent and are couched in an inevitable departure. Also, in their international and cross-cultural experience, the globally mobile construct a world-view where truth is contextually relevant. Living in “the third culture or liminal environment affords children to be especially aware of choices, yet understand decisions as both/and situations not either/or situations” (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999), in which it is not necessary to choose, but rather to re-combine what might to others seem like discrete categories. Upon re-entry into the parent culture, this new world-view formed between existing views, cultures and perspectives can become problematic in that it does not easily integrate with the non-liminal world-views of their non-mobile peers: “What others might see as a lack of conviction or confused loyalties are actually a deep understanding of a given issue built in the intersection of various perspectives” (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999, p. 3).

12 Like St John (2001), Karp et al. (1998) frame the liminal spaces as opportunity for liminaries to define themselves. However, their analysis is loaded with assumptions implicit in ‘typical’ transitions between high school and college for certain strata of American society.
Having to go through the process of identity formation in this liminal space between cultures and perspectives is said to be the greatest challenge faced by the globally mobile student, that is, the development of an identity that is itself liminal or marginal in nature (Schaetti, 1999; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999). The danger here is that they can become encapsulated by a liminal identity and forced into personal decisions where either choice negates a certain part of their identity. Because they feel trapped between competing realities and unable to make choices – as any choice will negate a certain part of themselves – marginalized mobile adolescents become identity immobilized (Schaetti, 1999; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999). However, according to Isogai and Hayashi (1999) the process of sorting through constructions made of multiple options and multiple perspectives in liminal space, cited as the cause of much confusion, is also the root of liminality’s innovative and creative potential. Liminality can be put to positive use by these globally mobile teens if they can become conscious of it and constructive in it (Isogai & Hayashi, 1999; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999). The constructive mobile adolescent creates truth from two or more worlds, but the encapsulated mobile adolescent is literally stretching and tearing truth and identity between those worlds, where too many options regarding ‘who I am’ or ‘what is true’ create a situation where they have difficulty discerning truth and true self.

The Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1966, 1980) model of identity development discussed above would describe these liminal identities (be they constructive or encapsulated) as ‘identity diffused’ and so dysfunctional or disadvantaged. Their ‘moratorium’ model is based on an assumption of the adolescent ‘successfully’ emerging from the teen years, what they call ‘identity achieved’, with an intact and singular identity sourced in concrete and singular truths. It does not account for the multiple realities and perspectives of constructive identities formed in liminality, and so would always define a liminal identity as ‘diffused’. While the moratorium model frames adolescence as liminal, and cites its creative and socially critical potential, it nonetheless requires distinct choices or the creation of new options for the development of a healthy identity, and so leaves those who incorporate certain dualities and multiple perspectives to the realm of pathology. However, in turning this ‘diffused’ identity to constructive use (e.g., high achievement as shown in research by Cottrell et al., 1999, and others), the globally mobile adolescent has weakened Marcia’s case against identity diffusion as undesirable, especially in a world typified more and more by hybridity, duality, multiplicity and inter-connection where liminal states and constructive marginality are recognized as advantageous. And so, it is argued by Schaetti and
Ramsey (1999) and Isogai and Hayashi (1999), mobile adolescents could use the liminal aspects of their lives to their own advantage by staying conscious and constructive in their liminality. This positive use of liminality is possible only “when they recognize and understand the multiplicity of their experience and when they have the language to communicate it” (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999, p. 4). With that comes the call for strategies to help students find grounding in their in-between, marginal and liminal realities so as to take advantage of what can be an incredible, creative opportunity for both self and society.

It is from Schaetti and Ramsey’s (1999) suggestion that the current study employs the theory of liminality to the UWC student experience, which, while not identical to, might share certain commonalities with the TCK or globally mobile experience. They are both experiences of international education in a multi-cultural environment of predictable transience, and they are both experiences of adolescence, therefore the mobile adolescent’s experience in liminality may serve as an indicator to what the UWC students experience in their particular space between cultures.

3.4 Liminality: Education and Learning

The UWC experience is firstly one of education, and so its potential liminality must be considered in light of its role in facilitating student learning. Several contexts of education and learning have been explored as liminal space (Karp et al., 1998) and have been said to benefit from its conscious use. For example, Deegan and Hill (1991) present the postgraduate thesis as a rite of passage, or a problematic journey in which the “liminal-self” (p. 322) is under the creative and normative tensions of the liminal space between proposal and submission:

Laden with challenges and obstacles … unforeseen rivalry, enemies, bureaucratic traps, opportunities for self doubt and self deception and the reality of possible failure… in which the candidate must successfully claim independence and originality – must enter the realm of the pioneer – while judiciously heeding society’s expectations for academic excellence, scholarly rigor and the balance of imagination and conformity … [in] a hierarchal structured, bureaucratic organization embedded in a capitalist society …[that] rewards those who divorce scientific endeavour from meaningful, reflexive human action in the name of objectivity and speed (Deegan & Hill, 1991, pp. 324-326).

Tempest and Starkey (2004) explore the effects of liminality on learning, summing up its positive impacts as being greater access to a wider range of opportunities, experiences and skills built on a broader knowledge base. These advantages come from the unfixed and unhindered possibilities
of liminal space, also shown as problematic for learning in presenting too many opportunities for the unfocused learner, and requiring conscious moments of intentional grounding from which the learner, and the teacher, can reflect upon and assess the learning (Tempest & Starkey, 2004). In the same vein, Irving and Young (2004) warn that teaching and learning in these third spaces may pose problems for students used to more traditional ways of learning, and that older students with more experience, or students more accustomed to diversity, may have less difficulty. However, they also present liminality, ‘third spaces’, in-between-ness and hybridity as pedagogical spaces that can be entered into by students and teachers to learn experientially about diversity, dualism, subjectivity, complexity, relationality and creativity. In their work with social work students, Irving and Young (2004) hold liminal space as a “precondition for articulation of cultural difference” (p. 213) and “a condition that breaks with Western thinking … unsnaps fixity, introduces flow and creates more space for change” (p. 222). This suggests that liminality as an educational approach may be appropriate for application in the international school context, whose educational objectives are very similar to those sought by Irving and Young when they write that in teaching from places,

that are available for creating hybrid transitional subjectivities, in-between, liminal, interstitial places, and third spaces …[it is] possible to initiate processes of shattering hierarchies and boundaries … [creating] cultural locations that blend and mix gender, race, class, sexuality, and culture, creating creative people who do not see identity as constructed from single affiliations (Irving & Young, 2004, p. 221).

Mobile adolescents have been discussed as liminal subjects and the international school environment as one of liminality, and while it has been suggested that these students would benefit from conscious and constructive use of liminal space, the theory has not been explored in the international education literature as a personal or pedagogical space which can be put to use as an educational tool by students or teachers.

3.4.1 Liminality, Travel and Innovation

The literature which approaches liminal space as a site for lessons similar to those of an international education has more to do with travel and mobility in general than specific experiences of schooling. This literature also has more to do with creativity, innovation, and scientific insight than specific lessons of an international education, but is pinned in similar ideas as it addresses ‘attitudes of mind’, paradigm shifts and creative changes in perception through
contact with the 'other', and isolation from the 'usual', in the liminal spaces afforded by travel and mobility.

Rudwick (1996, c.1978) approaches the question of creativity in liminal space through a discussion of geologists' heightened potential for theoretical innovation while on isolated and remote field trips, framed as "liminal phases interposed between more 'structural' periods of life for the individual concerned" (p. 151) and "a double movement from the familiar to the unfamiliar and back again" (p. 143). This type of rite of passage in which the geologist in liminal space is "exposed to unfamiliar perceptual and personal inputs while temporarily insulated from their familiar scientific environment" (p. 145), sets the space between familiar and unfamiliar, between leaving and returning home, as liminal space in which "a deeper significance may more readily be perceived and... a new scientific insight may be born and may grow" (p. 158).

Rudwick writes that without experiencing the new, novel and unfamiliar, a geologist is "unlikely to do more than elaborate on the conceptual views of his teachers and colleagues", but that "without experience of the familiar – initial training – the observer of the unfamiliar will experience only bewilderment" (p. 147). A comment that is echoed in experiential education practices, discussed further in this chapter, which include the conscious use of the known and the novel as a mechanism for learning.

Rudwick (1996, c.1978) cites Charles Lyell’s journeys and Charles Darwin’s voyage on *The Beagle* as the source of their contributions to science, not only in that the voyages provided the liminal space between known and unknown, but because the intellectual isolation from their respective academies sheltered their burgeoning ideas, at first fragile and tentative, until they could mature for proper articulation:

Spatial and temporal separation from other experts may not only protect a new born concept or insight from criticism or indifference; it may also make such an innovation even more likely to occur in the first place, by altering the psychological conditions of the geologist’s thinking. The absence of conventional colleagues may not only remove possible inhibitions on unorthodox thinking; it may also positively encourage such thinking, by fostering an out of the ordinary attitude towards the object of study (Rudwick, 1996, c.1978, p. 149).

Rudwick adds that the liminal journey can be as intellectually fruitful for groups as for individuals “if that pair or group develops the relaxed and ‘anti-structural communitas’ that are characteristic of liminal situations ... very different from the ‘structured’ conformism or
competitiveness of the larger group” (1996, c.1978, p. 154). He concludes with a caution to modern scientific expeditions:

On modern field excursions the conditions for liminality are rarely present ... [they are] increasingly organized in ways that impede the development of liminality ... and the structure of the home institution is often imported intact into even the most remote area.... [Together, these] prevent the slow maturation of new insights in isolation from the conformist and competitive pressures of the larger group ... and hence inhibit the emergence of radically new concepts and insights (Rudwick, 1996, c.1978, p. 156).

Concerned, like Rudwick (1996, c.1978), with the generation of scientific knowledge through mobility, Kupferburg (1998) explores the cognitively privileged point of view of a visitor to a foreign culture – the migrant, stranger and traveller. Kupferburg (1998) traces the history of intellectual migration, travel and outsider-hood in several academic disciplines, including the migration of German intellectuals to America, who had “a privilege to think otherwise ... attributed to their marginal position in American society, [and so] an enhanced critical perspective” (p. 189). Along with the privileged perspective afforded to the outsider, Kupferburg believes it important to find release from the academic ‘bubble’ which has “orthodoxies...[and] powerful factors that suppress dissenting views ... leaving little room for creative breakthroughs” (1998, p. 188). Kupferburg echoes Rudwick (1996, c.1978) in writing that if travel is to “release the individual from institutional pressure or ‘conformism’ to certain cherished ways of thinking, and open that person’s mind for other possible ways of seeing things” (Kupferburg, 1998, p. 199) it must not become routine and must retain its open-endedness:

Prolonged travel with minimum planning represents a particular kind of passage of the emergent, rather than a chartered kind and that the ideas one might stumble upon on the road might be so revolutionary that they have to be protected from the destructive criticism most radical ideas tend to unleash in the scientific community (Kupferburg, 1998, p. 202).

In the context of the current study, where students from different origins with presumably different understandings of the ‘usual’ have travelled as individuals into the ‘unknown’ by coming to a UWC, and then further into the ‘unknown’ as small groups on project week, these discussions of travel as liminal space become paramount. It is with Rudwick’s (1996 c.1978) framing of travel as liminal and innovative, and Kupferburg’s (1999) framing of the liminal traveller in terms of the privileged perspective of the outsider and the stranger, that the literature discussed so far turns to Simmel’s (1950, c.1908) stranger, Schuetz’s (1944) homecomer and Park’s marginal man [sic] (1928; Wood, 1934); social types that Hartung (2002) uses to frame the international student as outsider. Hartung (2002) points to the international student experience
as one typified by the social position of ‘the stranger’ and the associated marginality. Like Hartung (2002), I call upon Park (1928) who suggests that outsiders, strangers and marginals (i.e., international students) are a worthy focus for study:

It is in the mind of the marginal man [sic] where conflicting cultures meet and fuse. It is, therefore, in the mind of the marginal man that the process of civilization is visibly going on, and it is in the mind of the marginal man where this process is best studied (Park, 1928, p. 882).

Hartung (2002) discusses how international students (and by extension the TCK and possibly UWC students) share with the social type of the stranger the experience of “living across [more than one] cultural group, [said to] create an unstable character [and] a personality with characteristics … [including] intellect … sophistication … [and] idealism” (Park, 1928, p. 892). Hartung’s (2002) discussion is in regard to American study-abroad students, but as pointed out briefly by McCraig (2002), Simmel’s stranger model is also relevant to both the TCK and international student experience. Hartung writes that through education abroad “students become more aware of their place in the world and as members of their own culture … [and so] learn something about themselves” because overseas experiences have the “power to … transform personal identity through trials, tribulations and opportunities for learning and growth” (2002, p. 7). She also writes that having experience across cultures made students “more tolerant” and “more brave” through a process of evolving from “newly arrived stranger to acculturated outsider” by taking “linguistic and cultural chances, … paying attention to the lessons inherent in exchanges with local people,” and so, becoming “sensitized to other ways of living and meeting basic human needs” (Hartung 2002, p. 7). Hartung writes that this is a liberating opportunity which challenges students to separate from the “taken for granted world of home” (2002, p. 2) and develop an “ability to let go of the way they thought things ought to be” (p. 7).

Hartung (1950, c.1908) highlights the international student’s representation of the “paradoxical nature of strangeness – to be physically near yet culturally far” (Simmel, 1950, c.1908; Hartung, 2002, p. 7). This simultaneous distance and nearness allows the international student to take on a position of heightened objectivity and a simultaneous “indifference and involvement” (Simmel, 1950, c.1908, p. 404) towards the social context in which they are imbedded, as well as the social context from which they came (Schuetz, 1945). They are “not radically committed to the unique ingredients and peculiar tendencies of the group” (Simmel, 1950, c.1908, p. 404) from which they came or the group which they approach, and so, outsiders, strangers and marginals are “not
bound as others are by ... proprieties and conventions” (Park, 1928, p. 889) and are described by Simmel as “free of entanglement and interests ... view[ing] [their] relation to others with less prejudice; submit[ing] to more general, more objective standards...” (Simmel, 1950, c.1908, p. 405). Hartung (2002) also calls on Schuetz's (1944) homecomer, writing that after significant experiences abroad, students “can never really return home in the same way” (Hartung, 2002, p. 2); they return home holding the practices of their own culture up against new examples experienced abroad. This objectivity on the part of the stranger is emancipatory as they are “bound by no... prejudice [in their] perception, understanding and evaluation of the given” (Simmel, 1950, c.1908, p. 405).

Hartung (2002) describes these experiences as a potential “source of frustration, but as skills improve, a source of pleasure” (p. 2) in which students learn to “navigate the new culture ... [and] move from a merely adequate functioning [in the new culture] to an adoption [of the new culture] in his or her own expression” (p. 7). This process through strangeness renders previously held rules of guidance and social positions unstable, creating crises in the conception of the ‘natural’ organization of the world (Schuetz, 1944). This “time of inner turmoil ... spiritual instability, intensified self consciousness, restlessness and malaise” (Park, 1928, p. 892) results in an opportunity to “break the cake of custom [through which] the individual is freed for new enterprise and new association” (Park, 1928, p. 882) and through which the international student may find in the constant need to ‘translate’ new situations back to their own cultural norms the ‘reality’ of relative and contextual truth (Schuetz, 1944; Hartung, 2002). This experience of relative contextuality challenges previously held assumptions and creates a situation where the stranger “loses ... rules of guidance ... the idea that the normal way of life is guaranteed and undergo[es] a crisis in ... conception of the ... natural organization of the world” (Schuetz, 1944, p. 502). The need to translate between and sort through multiple truths, and the ensuing “crisis of truth” (Schuetz, 1944, p. 502), is the source of the freedom experienced as a stranger and drives a creative force “that interrupts the flow of habits and gives rise to changed conditions of consciousness and practice” (Schuetz, 1944, p. 502). To the TCK, international student or UWC student in the role of the stranger, this offers choices where they otherwise had assumptions; “more choice, and thus more expression is available” (Park, 1928, p. 888).

The student as outsider is free from the bounds of any particular status quo and so afforded an objective and inherently creative perspective based in liminal space (Hartung, 2002; Schaetti,
The experience, like other experiences of outsider-hood, is a challenging and potentially marginalizing time in which human agency, reflexivity and creativity are at their peak. However, the adaptations and hybridizations of cultural forms, along with the creation of new ones all together, are examples of the international student, the TCK, the traveller and perhaps the UWC student’s privileged, yet challenging, perspective as outsider. A perspective through which ‘the marginal’ (Park, 1928) is better able to view and make personal sense of multiple truths and realities in essentially creative ‘third’ spaces, or liminal spaces, outside of the familiar and everyday structures of one’s habitual environment. They are liminal spaces from which people can more objectively,

reflect on the matter of fact … thus take self for subject matter … and distance ourselves from ourselves to know ourselves better…. It is the germ of a reflexive moral and cultural self critique … [a space in which] to reinterpret the past to give more flexibility to the present (Turner, 1992, p. 136).

3.5 Experiential Learning and Experiential Education

Part of the argument put forward in the literature reviewed above is that the different liminal spaces experienced by different people (including students) could benefit from grounding at several levels, even if that grounding is itself towards a liminal centre (as in Cohen, 1984). In this study one of these levels is the ‘education’ itself. As mentioned in the previous chapter, international education needs pedagogical sites (such as project week) that seek out the here, the now, and the local as opposed to dealing only in theoretical and ideological concepts such as the universal, the global and the international (Branson, 1997, among others). Experiential education becomes a useful tool in this grounding as it deals explicitly with an individual’s immediate experience of and in the immediate locale, as well as incorporating planning reflection on the experience of the here, now and local. In focusing students’ experiences with the local, project week provides a pedagogical connection between India and MUWCI, which itself makes a similar bond to ideas of the international through the International Baccalaureate (IB). This leaves MUWCI as a site in-between the local and the global, thus liminal in several ways. The bond project week makes between MUWCI and the local is one of students’ experience in India and so one of experiential learning, and potentially, one of experiential education. Because of this, experiential education is used to explore project week’s place in connecting the ideology and theory of an international education with the ‘here and now’ of India.
The terms ‘experiential education’ and ‘experiential learning’ have been used interchangeably (Kolb, 1984; Kraft, 1986; Itin, 1999) but have different meanings, just as learning and education themselves have different meanings (Itin, 1999). Experiential learning is a circular process that rests with the individual, does not necessarily require a teacher, can be largely unconscious, and can be understood as a change in an individual resulting from an experience, reflection on that experience, abstraction drawn from that reflection, and the application of that abstraction to a new experience (Stehno, 1986, cited in Itin, 1999; Itin, 1999). Kolb (1984) presents a model of the experiential learning cycle (Figure 2), built on the work of Piaget, Lewin, and Dewey, and best described as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38).

**Figure 2: Experiential Learning Cycle**

![Experiential Learning Cycle Diagram](image)

(Adapted from Kolb, 1984, pp. 21 & 42)

Learning is a process that occurs within an individual by which they acquire new knowledge, and experiential learning is one way that learning occurs. Education refers to strategies designed to facilitate learning, including curriculum, teachers, schools and all the social structures involved in systems of education. Learning can and does occur without these systems of education. Experiential education maximizes opportunities for experiential learning (Itin, 1999), and is more than simply a way of teaching something. It is a philosophy of education that capitalizes on the process of experiential learning. Itin’s diamond model of experiential education (1999, p. 95; see Figure 3) adds to Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle (Figure 2) the relationship between the learner, the teacher and the subject matter being taught as well as the “socio-political-economic” (Itin, 1999, p. 95) elements that come with environments of education. Figure 3 shows
this model in which the experiential learning cycle can be seen acting on both the teacher and the students as they both engage as individuals and as a learning team with the subject matter and the learning environment.

Figure 3: Itin’s Diamond Model of Experiential Education (Itin, 1999, p. 95)

Experiential education theory is often put into practice through outdoor and adventure programs (Ewert, 1989, Miles & Priest, 1999), adventure therapy (Gass, 1993), service learning (Warren, 1998a; King, 2004), facilitated learning (Herron, 1989; Luckner & Nadler, 1997), apprenticeships, study abroad and other forms of international education (Donnan, 1984, 1985; Sutcliffe, 1986; Peterson, 2002; Steinberg, 2002; Lucas, 2003). If approached as a general philosophy, the theory of experiential education could be applied to almost any form of education (Itin, 1999). Programs with an arguably experiential nature exist in many international schools but are not all necessarily expressions of experiential education theory.

The Association for Experiential Education (AEE) writes that “experiential education is a philosophy and methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values” (AEE, 2005). This definition is concise, but leaves many of the defining characteristics of experiential education in practice to be appended in what the AEE offer as twelve principles of
experiential education. Itin’s definition, while much longer, incorporates these principles and gives a fairly complete account of what experiential education involves as a philosophy in practice:

Experiential education is a holistic philosophy, where carefully chosen experiences supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results, through actively posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, constructing meaning and integrating previously developed knowledge. Learners are engaged intellectually, emotionally, socially, politically, spiritually and physically in an uncertain environment where the learner may experience success, failure, adventure and risk taking. The learning usually involves interaction between learners, learner and educator, and learner and environment. It challenges the learner to explore issues of values, relationship, diversity, inclusion and community. The educator’s primary roles include selecting suitable [and relevant] experiences, posing problems, setting boundaries, supporting learners, ensuring physical and emotional safety, facilitating the learning process, guiding reflection and providing the necessary information. The results of the learning form the basis of future experience and learning (Itin, 1999, p. 93).

Certain aspects of Itin’s definition are particularly salient for a discussion of international education and so are expanded upon below.

3.5.1 Socially Involved and the Need to be Critical
The social, political and economic issues that Itin (1999) refers to as well as questions of justice are central to the theory (and sometimes practice) of experiential education, as seen in the work of the American educator, philosopher and progenitor of modern experiential education theory, John Dewey. In his seminal works, *Democracy and Education* (1916) and *Experience and Education* (1938), Dewey argued for experiential education as education of ‘whole persons’ – understood as “thinking, feeling, physical, emotional, spiritual and social beings” (Carver, 1996, p. 9), for participation in a democratic society as active and critically reflexive members of a community, not just the transmission of knowledge to individuals by those in control of that knowledge (Kraft, 1986). Dewey argued for not entirely disregarding the lessons of the ‘elders’, but using one’s experience with the current and contemporary to incorporate this knowledge of the past into the creation of new social forms and sources of authority. Thus, Dewey’s education was not about social reproduction, but social re-creation through a critical consciousness and a “creative response to new situations” (Dewey, 1938, p. 27). Similar themes are present in the creative, re-creative tensions of liminal theory and have been expanded on in later work by other

As well as his contributions to international education and the UWC movement, Kurt Hahn is also recognized for his substantial contributions to the practice of experiential education (Flavin, 1996). Taking his core ideas from his study of the classics, particularly Plato, Hahn’s ideas of education were based on the development of citizens and the citizen’s responsibility to serve the community as a leader, “putting common cause before personal ambition” (James, 1995, p. 88), and the place of education in the democratic process (Itin, 1999). Like Dewey, Hahn argues for experiential education to take advantage of experience and experiential learning within a larger socio-political process.

Dewey represents the progressive education movement in America, and though Hahn did not want to be regarded as progressive at the time (Sutcliffe, 1991), he represents a similar movement in Europe and the United Kingdom. Despite their commitments to service, equality and democracy, both educators, to a certain extent, also represent privilege and elitism. While experiential learning is present to a degree in most people’s lives, Hahn and Dewey’s experiential education was for the most part only available to those who could afford private education. Further, while their philosophies and practices of education were socially and politically informed and involved, they were not necessarily overtly critical; their philosophies worked within the existing system, not making any real attempts to transform social structures and free or emancipate the underprivileged and marginalized members of society. It took a Brazilian Philosopher, Paulo Freire to highlight the potential for experiential education as emancipatory.

Freire’s theory of adult education was not only one of social responsibility, but of social change or “radical conscientização” (Freire, 1993, c.1970, p. 19), translated by Itin as “conscientization” (Itin, 1999, p. 93) and defined by Freire as “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire, 1993, c.1970, p. 19). Freire sought the liberation and democratization of the Brazilian people by teaching literacy through a dialogue (transactive, as opposed to a monologue) between teacher and student or simply between students (or comrades, neighbours, colleagues, or communities) regarding concrete and personally relevant experiences and situations. Freire’s use of experiential education encouraged students to reflect upon experiences, thus awakening the political and
social consciousness – as well as an individual and collective value of self – of a formerly illiterate and marginalized majority (Freire, 1993, c.1970, 1973; Itin, 1999). Freire also brings up the ethical question of a teacher-dominated education process, where the teacher is in a relationship of power to the student in terms of the possession of knowledge and its evaluation (Freire, 1993, c.1970, 1973). He focused on the transactive nature of the student-teacher relationship in experiential education, where the teacher and the student both stand to learn from each other (Carver, 1996). Student-teacher power dynamics are a concern that is often raised in the experiential education literature (Heron, 1989; Knapp, 1994; Bell, 2003) and are a central feature of Itin’s (1999) definition and model of experiential education. There are parallels here to the relationship and tensions between novices and the sacra of their culture in liminal space and the imbalances of power that are brought up in the international education literature in reference to a dominant culture in the education process (Fox, 1998; Walker, 1999).

Generally, theorists and practitioners of experiential education claim that experiential education is a strong catalyst for social change (Ramsey, 1994). Others believe that it simply promotes the status quo, and does not necessarily contribute to society (Gayak, 1994; McKenzie, 2003). Like theory in international education, there is a call in experiential education to take on a reflexive critique of its own practices and the assumptions on which it rests. Bell (1993) writes that “there is no generic clone for ‘the experience’ which applies to everyone”, that there is “no experience in general”, no such thing as “concrete experience”, and that all “experience ‘exists’ through interpretation … and is always contextual, specific and contingent” (p. 20). She argues that theories of experiential education built on Dewey (1938) and Kolb (1984), “were radical ideas in another time [but] are resting on assumptions which are inadequate now to help us understand the complexities of [all] experiential learning situations today” (Bell, 1993, p. 21). For experiential educators to make valid claims as to their program’s contributions to social justice, they need to maintain a critical dialogue in relation to their own theory.

In this vein, Warren (1998b) cites the white European masculine origins and the uncritical, almost standardized use of teaching methods in experiential education as preventing equitable experiences for some students. Service learning, for example, needs to be re-thought for use with Black Americans, service class workers and women, all of whom share a history of inequitable or bounded servitude (Warren, 1998b). Further the idea of service itself is often imposed from above, and not necessarily experientially derived through a transactive process between students
and teachers, or served and server. Warren (1998b) also questions the focus of experiential programs on the development of certain personal qualities valued in American culture which may run contrary to other cultural beliefs not as focused on ‘the individual’ (Warren, 1998b), and Bell (1993) makes similar complaints of the use of activities based on assumptions that certain affective realms (e.g., fear, anger, weakness) are to be avoided or overcome. There are also strong questions raised as to debriefing and reflection techniques, which Bell writes, “actually operate to organize who speaks, who remembers, who trusts, who fears and in whose interests” (1993, p. 23).

Service learning programs on study-abroad programs, are often cited as examples of experiential education’s practical application towards global social responsibility, but, as suggested by King (2004), may be idealized and in fact reinforce prejudice and replicate power imbalances in and between societies. King’s argument is that if students (and people in general) are more inclined towards personal interpretations of new situations (in King’s case the different living conditions and realities encountered in a third-world service learning project) which confirm their previous beliefs rather than change or expand them (Barley & Gross, 1983, cited in King, 2004) then service programs that do not actively seek to detach students from their assumptions and presuppositions will not be effective (King, 2004). The present study deals with this detachment, or “de-familiarization” as King calls it (2004, p. 1), as a part of the process of entering liminal space and a central element for a socially active and critical experiential education.

In line with Freireian principles of education, there is a call for experiential education to employ a ‘critical pedagogy’ (Bell, 1993; King, 2004) and a call for experiential education to allow “lived experience of social relations to emerge described in dissonant, contradictory ways” (Bell, 1993, p. 22) and so allow the understanding of those ways to inform practice, unavoidably cast in particular social moments and contexts:

When theories become so well-established that their premises become ‘common-sense,’ they … come to be accepted uncritically as ‘natural’, rather than understood as the result of social forces: certain thinking, meeting certain interests, at a particular time in history, and in a specific context (Bell, 1993, p. 20).

From this perspective, it is only through a personal, intellectual and affective engagement, not just simple contact (Warren, 1998a) with social issues that students can “realize that current conditions could reasonably be otherwise” (King, 2004, p. 137) and truly take advantage of social
re-creation (provided in liminal space) through King’s “de-familiarization”, Dewey’s “creative response to new situations” (Dewey, 1938, p. 27) and Freire’s critical “conscientização” (Freire, 1993, c.1970, p. 19). Research such as the present study in international education – with the arguably privileged international student – is neither meant to be emancipatory nor liberating in the sense implicit in Freireian education, nor does it deal with the oppressed or traditionally marginalized factions of society or even with specifically service-oriented aspects of international education. What the present study does do is explore experiential education on the margins of culture, between fixed cultural forms and in states of King’s ‘de-familiarization’ (2004) or Turner’s liminality (1967, 1969, 1992) where students and educators may be better able to accept the possibility for dissonant and contradictory ways of organizing the world. At the same time, they can also gain experience with incredible diversity, allowing an informed and experienced stance from which to be able to take the critical and constructive approach advocated in a socially responsible experiential education and so re-create society responsibly.

3.6 Rites of Passage and Liminality in Experiential Education

Showing how the wilderness expedition, a common form of experiential programming, is a rite of passage “through which participants journey from the conventional structures of society through the transitional phase ... and back into society again”, Andrews (1999, p. 34) discusses an experiential education application of Van Gennep’s rites of passage model and Turner’s liminal space. Andrews (1999), being quite supportive of the use of the rites of passage model, represents what Bell (2003) calls a “romantic fascination” with rites of passage from educators who are attracted to the model in a “ritually bankrupt” society due to the unfounded conception that “participation in a rite of passage is an essential component of becoming a healthy and well adjusted person” (Andrews, 1999, p. 42). Bell (2003) writes that educators must proceed with caution, since outdoor and adventure education as well as other forms of experiential education, may successfully replicate the first two stages in the rites of passage model (separation and transition) but do not replicate the appropriate incorporation activities necessary for the transformative aspects of a rite of passage to occur properly, resulting in students who “return to an environment lacking the formal social mechanisms for maintaining change” (2003, p. 43). The rite of passage is dependent on society accepting the new status of the participant; hence graduation from secondary school or acceptance to university is a socially recognized shift in

social status (Dunham, Kidwell & Wilson, 1986; Karp, Holmstrom & Grey, 1998), but participation in a wilderness trip, while possibly educational, is not for society at large a recognized mechanism for elevating social status (Venable, 1997; Bell, 2003).

Venable's research on his own wilderness program exemplifies the concerns regarding the assumptions of rites of passage raised by Bell (2003) in its presumption that "when [teenagers] handle their own transition to adulthood results are disastrous" (Venable, 1997, p. 7). Venable suggests that his program "nurtures students through healthy developmental change" (p. 11) and "ushers" 14 them on an "appropriate path to adulthood" (p. 10) through "rites and rituals" based on assumptions about "childish things ... sin ... [and] God's call" (p. 11). This could be viewed as an oppressive program based on an assumptive rite of passage, "teaching existing social values under the euphemism of freedom, or enacting value-laden rituals under a banner of emancipation, [which] undermines program effectiveness through its own hypocrisy" (Bell, 2003, p. 53). Bell's central concern is that rites of passage such as these tend to prepare individuals for standardized, pre-determined roles, putting educators in "the arrogant position of knowing what another should become" (Bell, 2003, p. 51). This is an assumptive and socially reproductive use of liminal space, in a right of passage developed by the 'elders' to take advantage of the same in-between and neutral space to act upon the students that a critical experiential education would use to afford the students space to be constructive. Bell suggests this is inappropriate for experiential educators and better left to small communities (churches, clubs, colleges, cults) to orient or indoctrinate new members, since it runs contrary to ideas of student-sourced and personally relevant lessons and the whole experiential education project as progressive or a site for critical and reflexive pedagogy (Bell, 1993; Freire, 1993, c.1970; Itin, 1999; Newton, Sandberg & Watson, 2001; Bell, 2003; King, 2004).

By taking the focus off rites of passage, Andrews (1999) frames liminal space as a place for students to undergo "personally transformative experiences taking place outside of the regular social structures" (p. 35), taking advantage of liminal space's reflexive and re-creative and regenerative potential. Andrews holds the wilderness trip as a state of liminality, including sacredness, humility, simplicity, nakedness, an altered sense of time, alternatives to the social order, freedom from social roles and authority, the intense and unmitigated bonds of communitas,

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14 As opposed to Kurt Hahn's "gently impel" them into action, cited in Citron & Klein (2001, p. 20).
with moments of ‘non-identity’ where participants report being “nobody’s wife and nobody’s mother, nobody’s boss or employee . . . I was just me. . . . Being no one meant I could be anyone” (p. 6). This is an equalizing and stripping of the socially enforced identities and distinctions “which delineate people and separate us from one another” (Andrews, 1999, p. 5), or the development of communitas, but not at the expense of individuality:

Communitas does not merge identities; it liberates them from conformity to general norms . . . representing the desire for a total unmediated relationship . . . a relationship which never the less does not submerge one in the other but safeguards their uniqueness in the very act of realizing their commonness (Turner, 1974, p. 274, cited in Andrews, 1999, p. 6).

For Andrews, the greatest triumph for participants in liminality is that they “learn to think in new and innovative ways” (Andrews, 1999, p. 9), something permitted by King’s ‘de-familiarization’ or “the subjective process by which students gain the ability to break with the taken for granted and set the familiar aside” (King, 2004, p. 121). This is an intellectual step into the unknown, required for liminal re-creation, facilitated, in Andrew’s case, by a parallel and comparable physical step into the wilderness.

Further steps towards rites of passage as socially critical would be to use the liminal space experienced by the individual as re-creative on the group, societal and cultural levels. This would be where the group, social and cultural re-creations could be lived out in a way that no longer assumes a distinct end to the liminal period and a return to an unchanging and unchangeable society; where a return to society might potentially include certain aspects created in liminal space as society. Steps in this direction can be found where both forms of education (international and experiential) intersect, the UWC being only one example.

### 3.7 International and Experiential Education

Experiential education shares a founding father with the UWCs and roots in social activism, as well as a recent history of critical theory. It therefore has long-standing parallels with the ideologies that underpin international education and reflects current thinking in critical applications of theory. It has also been argued by international educators that their programs are almost inherently experiential (Donnan, 1984, 1985; Sutcliffe, 1986; Citron & Kline, 2001; Peterson, 2002; Steinberg, 2002; Lucas, 2003), although, while their respective programs certainly involve experiential learning, as most experience does, the degree to which they practice experiential education varies (Donnan, 1984, 1985; Sutcliffe, 1986; Arsenault, 2003). In valuing
multiple perspectives, critical thought and dialogue, experiential education is ideally placed to address much of what is experienced in international education.

International education takes advantage of personal and direct contact with other cultures, other places and other ways of being to impart lessons about the ‘other’, and about self in the hopes that the student may reflect upon their own culture. These experiences of outsider-ness and stranger-ness, set in an international curriculum with international teachers and peer group, provide more opportunity for experiential learning between cultures than do the classroom discussions and examples typical of education in a mono-cultural or national curriculum. It is, somewhat obviously, a site of experiential learning between and about other places and cultures for both teachers, students (Sutcliffe, 1986) and those locals they come into contact with. However, educators “have not generally considered … the international or cross-cultural settings as experiential learning environments” (Kraft, 1992, p. 11). In attempting to fill that void and to take international education “beyond an experience and further into the realm of experiential education” (Citron & Kline, 2001, p. 9), one has to look to the literature in the related field of study abroad, where experiential education is the focus of several pieces of research and writing15. This literature deals mainly with American-based, study-abroad programs and is mostly a reiteration of experiential education theory, does not seek student experience and suggests that experiential education in an international context is widely utilized but under-researched.

Like international schools, there exists a spectrum in study abroad from programs that do not put into practice any principles of experiential education to programs firmly and intentionally grounded in experiential education theory (Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002). Regardless of their seemingly inherent connection with experiential learning, it is necessary for international educators not to simply leave it ‘up to the experience’, but to take an intentional approach to experiential learning. Lutterman-Aguilar and Gingerich (2002, p. 49 onward) present certain principles that should be used to guide the design programs including many elements present in both the philosophies of experiential and international education. These include a focus on

15 Frontiers: the Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad, volume 8, winter 2002: Special Edition on Experiential Education, includes articles on the theory and history of experiential education (Montrose, 2002; Cluett, 2002 Peterson, 2002; Steinberg, 2002) and the place of various forms and techniques of experiential education in American study-abroad programs (Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002; Annette, 2002; Honigsblum, 2002; Brandt & Manley, 2002; Chen, 2002).
integrating experiential learning communities with host nationals and collaborative initiatives towards mutual, personal and social development, facilitated, assessed and evaluated by trained experiential and international education professionals.

In the experiential learning literature, Kraft (1992) compares experiential programs that, in a wilderness setting, take away familiar environmental cues for students with sojourns in “strange lands” (p. 12) and experiences of culture shock that he writes are all the more powerful because they “take away most of the linguistic, cultural, religious, political and other cues” (p. 12), as well as environmental cues. For Kraft (1992), experiences of foreign countries, cross-cultural settings and culture shock are more powerful than several common forms of experiential education at facilitating the development of life-changing lessons and “moral courage” because “all of the cues which prop up our racial, gender, ethnic, and cultural biases are knocked out from under us” (Kraft, 1992, p. 14). Experiential education and study-abroad are “natural partners because they share the common goal of empowering students and preparing them to become global citizens” (Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002, p. 46).

Citron and Kline (2001), writing that “too often, [study-abroad] programs keep students in their comfort zones and, thus, deny them potential learning opportunities” (p. 5), argue that learning “beyond the comfort zone” (p. 4) through programs which “balance structure with freedom” (p. 8) are important for an experientially-based, international education to maintain authenticity. With too much freedom, students run the risk of missing out on or misinterpreting new cultural behaviours, and not forcing themselves to question their pre-held assumptions. With too much structure, students may not benefit from the optimum experiential learning condition where students “do not spend too much time in either their comfort zones or their panic zones” (Citron & Kline, 2001, p. 5).

This tension and balance between structure and freedom is exemplified in Krans and Roarke’s (1994) description of a faculty-advised but student implemented study-abroad program designed to provide enough structure to allow lessons to be conveyed in a physically safe and effective manner, while allowing enough freedom for students to explore and learn based on their own comfort levels. The structure is built on guided learning before, during and after the trip in the form of preparatory lectures, logistical meetings and personal journaling while travelling and post-trip. The student freedom comes as a result of this structure; being adequately prepared,
properly supported and appropriately followed up, students are free to explore the new country and culture to a depth and breadth appropriate to their individual comfort levels based on informed and personal choices. This maximizes student ownership of the program while minimizing the potential for them to become physically or culturally lost and also ensuring that the lessons themselves will not be lost. A key feature of Krans and Roarke’s (1994) program is a pedagogical transparency which includes discussions with the students on theories of experiential learning, experiential education, service learning and the premise behind the particular trip. According to Krans and Roarke this allows students to “actively and self consciously enter and engage in the process” (1994, p. 20) and is a way to promote structure within student freedom (and freedom within structure) by giving students an understanding of, and thus responsibility for, their own learning.

Other than the brief discussions found in Branson (1997), the occasional mention of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, and Westrick (2002), who writes that service learning might influence students’ inter-cultural sensitivity but is difficult to isolate as a formative experience among the many formative experiences of the globally mobile life-style, the international school-based literature largely ignores experiential education. Project week is a combination of outdoor and adventure programs, service learning and study-abroad programs, itself based on a model that holds close to certain core tenets of experiential education. Much of this writing is useful for the current focus on a UWC, but there exists a gap in the literature about “situations in which people from many different countries have been brought together in a host country that is native to none of them” (Alston & Niewodt, 1992, p. 322). Most of the literature referred to above assumes a meeting and an exchange between singular and defined cultures in a cultural context that is itself singular and defined. Be it an American in London, or an Israeli and a Palestinian together in Canada, these experiences are usually constructed in terms of a definable ‘A’ meeting and exchanging with a definable ‘B’ in some specific cultural place. To some extent, the UWCs take away this specific cultural place, replacing it with a neutral, undefined, unspecific, multi-cultural (arguably non-cultural), betwixt and between space on the margins, where culture is distilled and re-formulated by the necessity for students to form a common culture, because within the diversity and abundance of cultures there is an initial lack of shared culture. This research begins to address this gap in the literature by placing the role of experiential education in the liminal spaces of an international education, and so better positioning students to take advantage of King’s “de-familiarization” (2004) and freely recompose social orders in space between cultures.
The following chapter presents the qualitative research methods used in this study. This is followed by three chapters which present the respondents and their responses on international education and the project week programs. These chapters are then followed by a discussion of the data in light of the literature and the theories presented above.
CHAPTER FOUR: Methods

International schools and individual UWCs each maintain unique characteristics, based partly on philosophy and ideals and partly on the particular context in which these ideals are brought to bare. Often, the schools develop a complicated and dynamic third space for themselves between the ideologies that guide them and the context in which they are embedded. The current enquiry was exploratory in the sense that little research has been done on the student experience in a United World College context, and no research has been done on the project week programs in particular. It was decided that the best way to explore this third space was to enter it and allow the 'personality' and culture of the school to emerge through being open to several forms of data collection including informal observation, semi-structured interviews and journaling techniques. The method sought an image of a place as constructed by its inhabitants through short biographies, accounts of lived experiences, opinions and perspectives. Deegan and Hill (1991) refer to this as an experiential method in that it taps into people's reflections of their experience and allows a great amount of depth and detail in a relatively short period of time. Researchers with similar student groups in international education (Andrews, 1999; Deegan & Hill, 1991; Hayden et al., 1995 – 2003, Hinrichs, 2002, 2003) have followed similar methods but have often had the benefit of longer timeframes, longitudinal design and multiple researchers. What emerges in this study is an image of one group of people, in one place, at one time, in a particular educational context with its own particular social characteristics, but from a sample which did not accurately represented the population of the college because the self-selected sampling methods failed to gain participation from enough host national students. As such, results are only suggestive and further research is required to make substantial claims or generalized conclusions.

The aim of this chapter is to outline the development of the research method and the implementation of the research. The chapter concludes with a critical reflection on these methods. The methods of analysis are discussed at the beginning of Chapter 5 which also introduces the respondents.

4.1 Venue Selection

This research is a study of the students' experiences with international education and the project week programs at Mahindra United World College India (MUWCI), combined with instrument
piloting at Lester B. Pearson UWC of the Pacific in Victoria, Canada and a visit to UWC of South-East Asia in Singapore. MUWCI was chosen as the main venue out of five possibilities that emerged through an email-based venue search (James, 2006; Mehta & Sivadas, 1995; Raziano, 2001) aided by the European Council of International Schools, International School Services, The United States Foreign Service and the International Baccalaureate Organization in the form of mailing lists.

The UWCs were chosen because their approach to international education is based in a strong ideology, they are well known and reputable amongst international educators, and also have a strong history of experiential and adventure education. Also, the potential to link research through more than one school founded on a similar model was enticing and considered as an option during the initial planning stages of the project (Burnaford, Fischer & Hobson, 2001; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). MUWCI was chosen firstly because of its willingness to participate; Pacific College and UWC of South-East Asia were approached because they lay en-route to and from India, were easily accessible at minimal cost and were also willing to participate.

4.2 Intended Focus and Resultant Shift
Upon arrival at MUWCI it became apparent that the focus of the research needed to be altered. The research was initially designed to focus on students' experiences of a ten-day wilderness rafting trip. As that trip had been cancelled between the time the study was organized and the time I arrived at the venue, the focus of the research changed to the larger project week program under which the rafting trip was one option among many. A resultant shift from a specific river trip to the general project week program is a shift from a focus strictly on outdoor and adventure education to a focus on the various experiences that make up the MUWCI project week. This shift resulted in changes to the research aims and questions as well as the interview schedules to better suit the context of the larger program. The aim and research questions that guided the research are presented below.

4.3 Research Aim and Questions
This research seeks an understanding of the relationship between the potentially experiential project week programs and the broader experience of international education through

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16 The visits to these two other colleges were made partly to pilot the instrument and partly to gain some perspective as to how the individual colleges differed from each other in 'feel' and program.
investigating students’ experiences of international education and the project week programs offered at one United World College. The research was exploratory in nature and did not seek to test specific hypotheses, but to paint a detailed picture of the students’ experiences and to flesh out common ground between a UWC experience of international education and the experience the globally mobile or third culture kids are said to have. This is done through the international education literature which suggests Turner’s (1967, 1969, 1992) liminality theory as a possible common ground (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999). The study also aims to explore how the project week programs fit into this particular experience of international education, drawing on the theory of experiential education (Kolb, 1984; Itin, 1999). The following research questions guide the inquiry:

1. What aspects of the third culture kid and globally mobile student experience expressed in the literature are common or applicable to the student experiences at the MUWCI?
   a. What are the students’ experiences and understandings of this form of international education at this particular school?
   b. How do the teachers view and understand the students’ experiences of this form of international education at this particular school?

2. To what extent are the project week programs an expression of experiential education?
   a. What are the students’ experiences and understandings of the project week program as it is implemented at this particular school?
   b. How do the teachers view and understand the students’ experiences of the project week program?

3. How do the project week programs fit into students’ experiences at the school and into the larger context of an international education?

4.4 Ethical Considerations

This research met both Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee’s ethical standards and the ethical standards for research in international education put forth by the International Baccalaureate Organization [IBO] (1992). Issues of informed consent, anonymity, selection, risk to participant or researcher, and voluntary participation in the context of research with teenagers in a secondary school setting were central to the design of the study (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). Procedures surrounding the dissemination of information to potential respondents, recruitment and the time and place of interviews were all adapted slightly from the research proposal to better fit the schedule, structure and institutional culture of the research venue.
As described in the literature on the UWCs, the ‘culture’ of the venue was one of an informal community of staff and students. It had little of the professional structures and power dynamics with which research in a traditional secondary school setting is concerned (Burnaford, Fischer & Hobson, 2001; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). For example, it was common for students and teachers to meet casually in personal space outside of teaching hours for academic or personal reasons; thus, meeting for an interview relatively late in the evening (e.g., 11 pm) was not considered inappropriate as it might have been in a more traditional setting. These late evening time slots were popular with students whose daylight hours were typically committed to activities and academic pursuits. Interviews, day or night, were held in private yet publicly visible spaces such as the glass enclosure of the student activities’ office or outdoors in one of many landscaped areas on campus.

Due to a very full academic and activities schedule it was impossible to address the whole student body at one time or for very long, so the research information could not be presented to potential respondents in a single meeting as originally intended. This necessitated a multi-faceted approach that included a brief public announcement but relied heavily on information sheets posted on student notice-boards and word-of-mouth communication with individuals or small groups. In order to ensure participants were well informed prior to volunteering for the research, great care was taken to explain the research whenever possible and appropriate, as well as directing students to the posted information sheets.

4.5 Selection and Recruitment
The recruitment and interviews were conducted over a 15-day period during which I was housed in guest accommodation at the school. Potential participants were drawn from the 200 current students participating on any project week trip during their stay at MUWCI who self-selected for voluntary participation. Specific teachers were asked to participate based on key roles they filled in relation to the programs and student life, so they cannot be said to have self-selected, but were voluntary participants. This approach is consistent with the methods for selection advocated in education research (IBO, 1992; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Burnaford, Fischer & Hobson, 2001) and by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee. In two instances individual students were directly asked to volunteer because one was involved as leader of an outdoor-oriented CAS activity [S2-4], and the other was asked in a relatively late effort to gain an Indian perspective in
the sample [S1-23]\textsuperscript{17}. The relative contributions of these two respondents is represented in the host 'voice' and the international 'voice' presented in following chapters. Perhaps more 'key' players could have been approached amongst the students. Mostly, students were not individually asked to participate, nor did I bring up the topic of my research in conversation unless it was suggested by the students themselves. For example, students often broached the topic of my research over a meal, where a table of up to eight students could hear a description of what the research was about.

I made two presentations at the only opportunities available each week to address large groups of students: 'notices', an informal outdoor gathering for the sharing of news and other community business; and 'global affairs', a weekly student-led seminar in a large meeting hall. At the first of these gatherings (notices) I was given 30 seconds to introduce myself and my research, at the second (global affairs) I was given 60 seconds to elaborate on how students could participate. These gatherings are not attended by all the students, so much of the information passed on to potential respondents was done in one-on-one conversations or in small, informal groups, as described above. This could well have been supported by more printed information for all respondents, but it was decided that the small and informal nature of the college was more gently approached via postings in common space, oral explanations and a minimal use of physical resources. The downfall being that more time was needed in order to make such a gradual approach.

During the first of these gatherings, students were told the focus of the study was on their experiences with education in general, UWCs, MUWCI, CAS and project week and that they could get further information about the project by approaching me at any time, or reading the information letter posted in the student common area (Appendix A). Upon elaboration (individually or in the second presentation) students were again invited and told that they had several ways they could participate: 1) being interviewed, for which they were to schedule with me personally; 2) send comments or questions to an email address which had been set up for this purpose; 3) fill out a journal during project week; 4) contribute their own writings they may have or want to generate; 5) they could share any artistic pieces or statements they felt were relevant.

\textsuperscript{17} This was the only attempt to diversify the sample, as it was felt that requesting participation from students based on culture would be constituted as badgering (Lofland & Lofland, 1995) and that the absence of certain cultures, while unfortunate, was itself an informative result.
and were offered rolls of film, should they choose to document something for the research. Students were again told where they could pick up journals and find further information.

During the second presentation to the students at the global affairs gathering, those who had already participated were anonymously thanked and a deadline for research submissions was set for a week after they returned from project week. At this time I also mentioned that I did not want them to feel ‘researched’, that at dinner and around campus, while I was making general observations as a participant in the day-to-day happenings at MUWCI, I was not directly observing them as individuals and that if they wanted to tell me something on the record that they were to set an interview time with me. I also offered to make myself available to them most evenings at the student activities’ office, a reasonably public space, of which I had been granted use in the evenings.

Interviews with second-year students were scheduled mostly in the first week as they had examinations the following week and would have less spare time. While students were difficult to schedule they tended to be able to give longer interviews than teachers who seemed to have more demands on their time and could spare only half an hour between commitments. Students, on the other hand, were more flexible with their time commitments and were open to meeting relatively late at night.

One final group announcement (15 seconds) was made in the beginning of the second week of research during ‘notices’. Participants so far were anonymously thanked and potential participants were told the coming week’s interview schedule would be posted in the common-room so as to facilitate the tight scheduling of interviews. This posting was updated at the end of each day, though students were still advised to schedule with me personally and not write their own names on the posting.

4.6 Interview Instrument

Up to twenty-five student interviews and up to four teacher interviews were sought. Up to five student interviews were scheduled per day and each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. The interviews were open-ended and the interview schedule (Appendix B) broad enough to allow specific topics and questions to emerge from the students’ description of their experiences at MUWCI, as well as their personal histories, focusing on international experience and educational
experience to date. Similar interviews have been used by Deegan and Hill (1991) with postgraduates and are in common use with secondary students (Burnaford, Fischer & Hobson, 2001; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Hinrichs, 2003). Respondents were asked to discuss the broad topics of international education in general, the particular international education at MUWCI and the project week programs specifically. Respondents were asked to refer back to their own experience with these broad topics wherever possible as advocated by Deegan and Hill’s (1991) method of drawing data from people’s reflections on experiences. Teachers were not asked to comment more than briefly on their personal experiences, but mostly on their professional experiences and views of international education, UWCs, and MUWCI from a delivery standpoint as well as their opinion as observers of student experience at MUWCI.

4.7 Journal Instrument
The journals were used to draw out the students’ descriptions of their experiences during the project week program (Wilkinson, Wells & Bushnell, 2005) and “capture the particulars of experience and [identity] in a way that is not possible using traditional designs” (Bolger, Davis & Rafaeli, 2003, p.1). Journals were designed to allow the respondent some direction and structure in the form of prompts, against which to express ideas (see Appendix C for some examples). Many of these prompts directly addressed the issues identified in the literature on internationally experienced youth, as if to ask the students what they thought of the identity ascribed to them in the academic literature as well as to give them opportunity to present their own identities. Prompts based on the ideals of international education, as expressed in the international education literature, were also used. The journals also included a log-book section, meant to be used to log their trip experience with daily entries (see Appendix C for a sample page). Similar structured journals / logbook combinations have been used in education research (Murray, Alderman, Coppola, Grol, Bouhuijs & van der Vleuten, 2001; Blake, 2001; Pellegrini & Long, 2002) and are said to “fill the gap between planned curriculum and students’ opinions” (Wilkinson, Wells & Bushnell, 2005. p.1) and to illuminate “change processes during major events and transitions” (Bolger, Davis & Rafaeli, 2003, p.1) such as the international / liminal situation studied here. Given high response rates in similar studies using logbooks (83% or 287 of 345 in Wilkinson, Wells & Bushnell, 2005) it was anticipated that twenty of the semi-structured journals would be returned. The journals were prefaced by their own consent form and information sheet, and students were told that they would receive them back by mail within one year.
4.8 Pilot
As recommended by Loftland and Loftland (2005) the instruments were developed and adjusted based on a short pilot session. Interview schedule and a draft of the journal were developed with input from interviews and discussions held at a United World College (UWC) in Canada with two individual teachers and a group of students provided for me by the college. This particular venue was chosen because the school was based on the same UWC model as the school to be studied in India, and so the ‘pilot’ students were distant but ‘identical’ peers of the study group in India, subject to the same selection process and a similar educational environment (Wilkinson, Wells & Bushnell, 2005). Interviews that are a result of the instrument piloting are not analysed as formal data in this research.

4.9 Data Collection
The interview sessions started with the student being asked what they understood by the project and if they needed any clarification. A full explanation of the research and reiteration of the information for participants was then given, along with the formal information sheet for participants and consent form, both of which students had already seen posted in their common-room, and finally reminded of their rights as a research participant (IBO, 1992; Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Burnaford, Fischer & Hobson, 2001), and asked specific permission to record the interview.

The full explanation of the research given just prior to each interview, as well as to individuals and groups who enquired at other times, included: 1) the fact that this was exploratory research and that by approaching as an explorer I was hoping to let the story and culture of the place and people emerge naturally; 2) that the exploration was focused on the four broad areas of international students, international teachers, international education and the project week program; 3) that the strategy for the exploration was to ‘ask’ each of the broad areas about the other areas: in student interviews I ask students about themselves, teachers, curriculum, education and about project week, and the journals were a way of asking the trip itself about the student, in that it asks the student about themselves while they are on the trip.

4.10 The Data
The data consist of tape-recorded interviews transcribed verbatim, including six teacher interviews and 27 student interviews from the main study. In addition, there is a full set of project
week planning forms (the document students had to fill out to plan their project week trips). Out of the 30 journals left to be collected by interested students, 20 were taken. Of those 20, two were returned: one blank and one filled out by several project week group-mates together. A brief discussion of the data presented by the single journal and what the low response rate suggests will be discussed, but the whole journal-based instrument was subsequently dropped from the larger analysis (Loftland & Loftland, 1995; Wilkinson, Wells & Bushnell, 2005).

4.11 Processing and Analysis
The data were coded using the QSR Nvivo software package and analyzed through a combination of using QSR Nvivo as a sorting and coding tool and more traditional manual analysis, as suggested by Welsh (2002) and based on (Loftland & Loftland, 1995). The data were analyzed based on themes that emerged throughout the literature review, the interviews and during the analysis of the data. Interviewees are referred to throughout this thesis by their interview code numbers (e.g., s2-12: student, second year - interview 12). The development of themes and coding of student and teacher interviews were done separately as the interviews were different in nature. This process is described in more detail in the following chapter.

4.12 Influences, Limitations and Reflections
What follows are comments on certain factors that limited or constrained the research, as well as reflections on the method and the process and how it may have affected participation and the data.

Financial constraints are a reality for most researchers. This project was funded partly by the Environment Society and Design Division at Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand, and partly by my own contribution towards travel costs. As such, the project had financial constraints which did not allow an in-depth study of more than one UWC. Also, the research budget constrained the acquisition of certain theses, research articles and reports that are not available in New Zealand, or were not available at the libraries and research centres I visited in Canada and England during the research trip.

Time constraints are also a reality for most researchers. In this case I was concerned with not overstaying my welcome at the research venue and so limited my stay to 15 days, plus a brief two-day visit several weeks later to collect journals and tie up loose ends. Had I stayed at the
research venue longer I would have been able to move more slowly through the research and may have gained a deeper trust and understanding from the potential respondents, allowing me to gain access to students who may have been slower to volunteer by nature. This would have resulted in a sample that better represented the total population at the college and perhaps a better response rate on the journal instrument.

Some of the finer details of the workings of the research venue were vague upon arrival (the degree and structure of the project week program, the degree of outdoor / adventure education on project week, the length of stay, the ability to make a second visit, a method of disseminating information that fit with the workings of the school). I was required to adapt the proposed plan and communicate these changes with my supervisors and the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee. These unanticipated issues included practical matters of data collection and disseminating information about the research to potential respondents as well as the larger shift in the focus of the research from a single outdoor adventure trip to the project week program and international education as a whole. Looking back, the nature of the project week program does not allow for guarantees as to which trips will be run, so focusing on the whole project week program makes for a more accurate picture of project week and its place in the MUWCI experience.

Who chose to participate, and hence the data gathered, may have been influenced by the relatively short period of time I spent at the venue, the nature of the instruments used, the approach taken to informing the students about the research, the social and ‘political’ atmosphere at the college in regard to project week, and issues to do with my own cultural background. First, it is possible that in taking a qualitative, social science-based approach to an arguably extra-curricular program I deterred science (maths, physics, chemistry) oriented students as well as those who did not value extra curricular programs, and attracted humanities (literature, languages, sociology) oriented students and those who attributed high value to extra-curricular programs (Arambula-Greenfield, 1998).

As mentioned, I was limited in the time allotted to pass on information to potential respondents by the daily schedule at the college but every effort was made to disseminate information. However, it may have seemed to some students that I was not forthcoming with regard to the research, thus discouraging them from participation. I say this because many students had been
recently educated in research methods and were curious as to what lay behind my approach in terms of theory and assumptions. I do not think my explanations of the need not to taint interviews with prior discussions of theory satisfied their curiosity and I believe this ambiguity on my part to have been a deterrent to participation. In order to properly acknowledge their awareness and curiosity, researchers might consider alternatives which engage these kind of groups in an open and long term manner with the research itself.

In terms of instrument design, the low response rate on the journals may have been because they were cast at an inappropriate cognitive level (either too low, too high or too abstract), or that they sought responses that were perceived as too personal for some students (informal comments from students were that some felt uncomfortable revealing themselves to the depth that the journals sought). However, it may also be that time constraints on the part of the students and a desire to experience project week without the constraints of what might be perceived as ‘school work’ was the main cause of the poor return on the journals.

In hindsight I would have included in the instruments a short, one-page questionnaire for interview respondents (or perhaps the student body as a whole) to fill out with regard to demographic information and a few short-answer questions or simple scales to determine facts such as past project week participation and intentions for future trips. Also, the interview design left a lot of room for students to discuss the controversial changes made to project week. I may have been perceived as a kind of mediator or ‘expert’ on the issue, and while I tried to distance myself from this role much of the data has had to be extracted from discussions of the ‘politics’ of project week.

With regard to cultural concerns, it is possible that conducting the interviews in English may have deterred potential respondents and that in framing my inquiry as one to do with international education I deterred local students from participating as they may not have perceived themselves as ‘international’. Similarly, my cultural mannerisms, may have served to deter certain people from participating and encouraged others. However, in a school that explicitly seeks diversity and inter-cultural contact, one would assume this to be an inconsequential matter. This and other aspects of who did and did not volunteer for the research are discussed further in the following chapter.
Finally, it is worth mentioning that being overseas and having travelled and worked while conducting and writing up the research may have affected the project in requiring extra effort and organization in terms of communication with supervisors, gaining access to library materials, office space and time. In future research, it would be a wiser use of resources, given so much travel and necessary adjustment time for the researcher and the researched, to spend more time at the venue.
CHAPTER FIVE: Finding the Students

This chapter and the following two chapters (Chapters 6 & 7) present results from the open-ended and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students at MUWCI. The overall focus is on student voice, but teacher responses are added where they offer particular insight. The data are presented by themes that emerged from the interviews, starting in this chapter by describing how those themes were derived and treated as well as introducing the respondents. Chapter 6 reports what the students said in terms of international education and their experience at MUWCI (addressing research questions 1a and 1b). Chapter 7, the final results chapter, considers their comments on the project week program (addressing research questions 2a and 2b), followed by a discussion in light the literature, which has been purposefully kept out of these data chapters so as to keep other voices from clouding the voice of the respondents.

The interviews were transcribed then analyzed by first developing a broad set of codes and categories based on the literature review and interview schedule. During the transcription, themes and categorized codes that emerged from the respondents were noted. These themes and codes were further categorized and refined by cross-referencing separate notes taken between teacher and student interviews. These refined notes were used to develop an initial coding structure, entered into the QSR Nvivo qualitative research software package, and used firstly with the pilot interviews, then restructured and again, refined and applied to the teacher interviews from the main case-study. Student interviews were coded with a structure that emerged from the refined initial notes on themes, the themes and codes that emerged during the teacher interviews, and themes and codes that emerged while coding the student interviews themselves. The initial analyses of all the interviews was made while again re-visiting the coding and coding structure of themes with a further focus on the theoretical lenses of experiential education and liminality.

Throughout the remainder of this thesis, quotations from interviews are referenced by the respondent’s status as a teacher and interview number (t-26: teacher interviewee number 26) or by the respondent’s status as a first or second-year student and interview number (s2-12: student second-year interviewee number 12).
Because the interviews were open-ended, not all the interviews address each of the themes discussed in this thesis to the same depth. All of the interview material has been included for analysis, but certain interviews differed in nature. For example, interviews with respondents s1-14, t-19 and t-33 were less formal than others because I had already met these individuals on a hiking trip prior to commencing the research. Also, interview s1-15 is an interview with a pair of respondents who requested to be interviewed together in which there was obvious dominance by the male respondent over the female respondent. Interview s1-24 was dominated by the respondent who asked the researcher more questions about the research than she actually responded to herself. These interviews still provide relevant data and are used in the analysis where appropriate.

5.1 Journal Response

There was not a high enough response to warrant discussion of data received through the student journals and log-books. However, the one journal that was completed and returned showed a good depth of responses from the six students who collaborated on it, suggesting that similar journals could be valuable as a rich source of data in further investigations if steps are taken towards increasing the response rate while ensuring the voluntary nature of participation. The journal and log-book questions and format, as well as selected responses, can be seen in Appendix C. The low response rate for the journals could have been due to the students perceiving the depth of inquiry as too personal or invasive, or too demanding in terms of time. The high uptake (20 of 30) but low response rate (1 of 20, 5%) for the journals may also be reflective of the 'culture' of the school and the behaviour of the students within that culture and is thus the starting point for this discussion.

Early in my visit to the research venue, I was advised that the 'culture' of the school was one where students and teachers were stretched quite thinly across many academic, extra-curricular and social obligations, and suffered from a "perpetual over and double booking" (t-33) of their time and energy:

[MUWCI is about] trying to participate in as much as possible. Trying to help out lots ... do as many things as you can on time. A simple example, like if you skip once in CAS, it just shows that you can't hack one of the tasks at UWC. And that's doing as many things as you possibly can (s1-22).

\[18\] This interview was counted as one interview, but as two respondents, coded as s1-15a and s1-15b.
The culture of the college is one where being as active and involved as possible, while at the same time being as academically successful as possible – on top of finding personal time, space and sleep – is what is expected of students by teachers and peers alike. There seems to be a normative force built into the culture of the college which limits free and unstructured time and encourages students (and teachers) to participate in as many activities as possible, while being as academically successful as possible. Students reported trying to find an appropriate balance in this ‘culture of involvement’, the implications of which were no lack of interest in being interviewed or in filling out journals, but that not all interested respondents were able to keep up with their own intentions. Further, project week, certain CAS activities and certain social obligations, though structured and planned into the workings of the college, serve as de-facto free and leisure time and are key in balancing the demands of college life with the demands of personal well-being. In the case of the journals, it is quite possible that they were not completed because they infringed on a time and space students considered free of structure or tasks that could be perceived as ‘work’. This defence of their de-facto free time can be understood in light of the ‘culture of involvement’ found at the college.

5.2 Student Respondents
Who chose to participate in the research is as informative as the content of the interviews themselves. The following section presents the student sample in terms of year level, gender, socio-economic background, academic orientation and entry origin, and discusses reasons as to why certain segments of the college population may or may not have chosen to participate. Teachers were individually asked to volunteer for the research based on their involvement in and experience with certain programs and so are not included in the following discussion.

5.2.1 Age and Year Level
UWCs are said to have students aged between 16 and 18 years, but the different education systems in the different countries from where they draw their students necessitates a wider range of ages often as young as 15 on entry and as old as 20 on graduation. The ages of the respondents, where known, range from 15 to 19 years of age. Older students were typically in their second year, but it is not uncommon to have students in the first year as old as 19 sharing classes and year status with students as young as 15. Because of this range of ages within a level and because the social meanings attributed to age vary from culture to culture, age was not used as a factor in this analysis as it would not provide a scale equally applicable to each respondent.
Not all of the respondents were asked their age since year level, experience in education and previous international experience and mobility were deemed more relevant; there is therefore no data regarding age for 13 of the 27 respondents. Out of the 200 students invited to participate in the interviews, 100 each from the first and second-year levels, approximately 30 students expressed an interest and 27 students were interviewed, 12 first-year and 15 second-year students. The different year levels had different formats for project week and so responded differently in terms of these experiences.

5.2.2 Gender
Twice as many female students chose to participate in the research than did male students (18 female, 9 male). This does not accurately represent the college population in terms of gender split, which has been reported as approximately half and half (D. Wilkinson, personal communication, May 2005). The reason(s) for this skew are not clear. Perhaps some male students were uncomfortable with the idea of an in-depth interview with a male researcher, or female students, being arguably more mature than males of comparable age, were less intimidated by the prospect of an interview, or were better able to manage their time, but there is nothing in the data to support such claims.

5.2.3 Socio-Economic Background
All but six of the students were asked or otherwise volunteered information as to their socio-economic background. Students described their socio-economic status using a variety of terms (average, middle, middle working, middle high, upper, high, very high) or through statements about their parents such as, “both my parents are doctors” (s2-7) or, “my father is an executive for a major multi-national corporation” (s2-29). All but one of the six who did not provide direct evidence of their socio-economic background made statements such as, “I attended an all-boys private school” (s1-15a) or were from Northern European countries where poverty and unemployment are relatively low, and so their socio-economic background could be assumed to be similar to those whose status was known. None of the students interviewed could be considered or identified as poor, disadvantaged or to come from a lower socio-economic background. This may not be a misrepresentation of the college population, as there was a strong perception among the respondents that while a certain socio-economic diversity did exist within the college, “the people who apply and are able to apply, are already able to afford it, they have to be able to afford it” (s2-9):
the people [here at MUWCI] are almost only rich people, like the upper classes from all over the world. They wear the same clothes, they listen to the same music, they are relatively rich, they have money, they have access to good education back home and they all speak English (s2-8).

5.2.4 Academic Orientation
All but six of the students gave information as to their preference in academic subjects and focus in their past education and at MUWCI. Little is known of the preferences of the six for whom information is missing, but the other 21 students were heavily skewed towards a focus on humanities, languages and social sciences, as opposed to mathematics, physics and other sciences. This could be understood as a result of science-oriented students possibly seeing less value in, and being less inclined towards qualitative-based social research. Qualitative research methods are part of several of the optional courses for humanities students, who, having a greater understanding of the research methods, may have been more inclined to participate. Also, humanities-oriented students might perceive the project week and CAS programs as being more valuable to their education and overall UWC experience than did science-oriented students, and so may have been more inclined to participate in research on these programs.

5.2.5 Entry Origin
For purposes of comparison with the overall UWC entry and selection statistics, respondents’ culture or country of origin has been deemed that country or category through which they applied and entered the UWCs. In six of the cases, their origin in terms of UWC entry and country of citizenship or passport are not the same, four of those incongruities are due to globally mobile students ‘from’ a variety of countries entering MUWCI under the international quota category and two of them are due to globally mobile or multiple passport holders entering as citizens of countries to which they do not live in or, according to them, culturally belong. Figure 4 shows the research sample by entry origin compared with the total population of MUWCI (Confirmed Entry 2002 & 2003 combined), showing how unrepresentative the sample is in terms of the cultures and nationalities represented at MUWCI during the time the research was conducted.

19 16 respondents preferred and studied humanities, five preferred and studied sciences, whereas the breakdown in the population at the time was reported as 55/45 (D. Wilkinson, personal communication, May, 2005).
Figure 4: Student Respondents Compared to MUWCI Student Population by Entry Origin

Student Respondents by Entry Origin

- Refugees: 0%
- Pacific: 0%
- North America: 11%
- Middle East: 0%
- Latin America: 11%
- Other: 0%
- Africa: 7%
- Asia: 4%
- International Quota: 15%

MUWCI Confirmed Entry '02 & '03 Combined (UWC, 2004a)

- Refugees: 0%
- Pacific: 0%
- North America: 6%
- Middle East: 2%
- Latin America: 6%
- Other: 0%
- Europe: 22%
- Caribbean: 1%
- Africa: 5%
- Asia: 16%
- International Quota: 2%
- India (HOST): 40%
Imbalances in the sample’s representation are present for all segments of the MUWCI population, but are particularly pronounced with Indians (hosts), who represent a 40% majority of the total MUWCI population but are underrepresented in the sample at 7% (2 respondents), and Europeans, who only represent 22% of the total MUWCI population and are overrepresented in the sample at 45% (12 respondents). Seven percent (2 respondents) of the respondents in the sample are of African entry origin, but this is a misleading figure as one of the two African respondents would be better suited to the International Quota category. This student entered the UWC through an African selection committee and so is represented in the African entry statistics. The International Quota category is also overrepresented in the sample at 15% (4 respondents), when only 2% of the total MUWCI population fits this category (with a total school population of 200, this would mean all of the potential International Quota students participated in the research). In summary, students from India, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the Caribbean are underrepresented, with Indians being the most underrepresented. Europeans, North Americans, Latin Americans and International Quota students are all overrepresented, with Europeans making up the majority of the sample and all of the International Quota students from the total population present in the sample.

These under- and overrepresentations in the sample may be due to several factors. First, potential respondents may have known, through casual interactions, that I had worked in international education and had prior personal and professional experience with issues of global mobility, thus students from the International Quota category may have been inclined to participate. Second, I may have attracted students of similar cultural background to myself for the research, namely, Europeans, North Americans and Latin Americans, and in the same way dissuaded students from India, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the Caribbean. Although, by that argument, there should be stronger representations from Latin and North Americans in the sample, so it might be equally valid that potential respondents were dissuaded from participation because I was of a similar background. Definite answers are not in this case apparent, and I do not think it appropriate to say that Westerners are more inclined to participate than non-Westerners, as it is more likely a

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20 This respondent has mixed parentage, identified as a TCK, is a multiple passport holder, had lived in several countries, had attended several international schools and reported not identifying as wholly African or wholly European.
21 Their abundance in the sample was not a result of intentional selection, nor was the research was designed to further draw out their experience in particular, or differences between them and their non-mobile peers.
case of different people needing to be approached differently or over a longer period of time to establish the trust required for participation in qualitative interviews.

The underrepresentation of the Indian (host) students is the most problematic issue for this study, as they are the cultural majority at the college and represent the host culture in which the college is set. Several reasons were proposed (by Indian and non-Indian individuals) for why Indian students did not volunteer for the research. Including the perception that Indian students differed from non-Indian students in their motivations for attending a UWC, and that their lack of interest in the research was an example of their focus on the academic aspects of college life. It is also possible that Indian students, still being in India, did not consider themselves ‘international students’ but ‘local students’, a distinction that could lead them to approach the UWC experience differently as well as perceive my research as not interested in them or their experiences. Regardless of the reasons why Indian students did not choose to participate, their absence in the sample is the largest limitation of this study, but is also a pointer towards the divergent experiences had by locals and non-locals in the UWCs.

5.3 Students’ Backgrounds: Essentially Western

As has been mentioned, MUWCI students represent a great diversity of cultures but do not tend to be as different from one another as the entry statistics might suggest. The overall opinion of the respondents was that each student brought different things to the college from their cultural background, but that all in all, students came from the middle or upper classes of their home societies:

Here there's not as much cultural diversity as might be hoped, because everyone is Western.... Even if I come from the US, and someone else comes from England, and someone else comes from India, they're basically middle- to upper-class ... from the same social background ... For example, I think my Indian room-mate ... we would empathise with each other more than he would with someone down in the [local] valley, even though [they are both] Indian and I'm American. He would still understand my way of thinking much better than he would theirs (s2-4).

Even within these limitations, respondents felt that there was still a great diversity of culture within the college: “Even if it is all middle-class ... I know that middle-class Africa is different from middle-class England” (s2-5). There was certainly a Western influence in much of what I observed as a researcher, but there was also a strong influence from the host culture as well as a general feeling of cultural diversity, so much so that culture came across as simultaneously
central to the whole project and irrelevant to it. It seemed as though in offering diversity, MUWCI provided a space in which similarity became the stronger force.

5.4 Students’ International & Education Experience
There are two main aspects of students’ prior experience that have been used to determine the degree to which students were internationally experienced before coming to MUWCI: the amount and type of travel that they had previously done, and their previous experience of a national or international education. Table 2 (on the following page) shows each student’s standing on a continuum of international experience. Respondents are grouped vertically by their previous educational experience in five discrete categories: national schools (NS), where students had described their educational experience as not international; national private schools (NPS), where that experience was not international but not a state or public school; national and exchange (NE), where students had attended a non-international school but had had some form of international experience as part of their formal education in the form of an international exchange or a UWC short course prior to attending MUWCI; International Baccalaureate (IB), where they had attended an IB school that was not by definition an international school; and international school (IS), where they had attended one or more international schools, often, but not necessarily, with an IB curriculum. These categories arose from respondents’ descriptions of their previous educational experiences.
Table 2: Students' Previous International Experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Education Experience</th>
<th>TOURIST EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>DEEP INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE</th>
<th>GLOBALLY MOBILE (TCK)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National School</td>
<td>s2.4</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Private School</td>
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<td>National</td>
<td>s2.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Exchange</td>
<td>s2.10</td>
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<td>National &amp; Exchange</td>
<td>s2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>s2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>International School</td>
<td>s2.7</td>
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<tr>
<th>Zero / V. Little</th>
<th>Same Continent</th>
<th>Inter-Continental</th>
<th>Purposeful Travel</th>
<th>Education Travel</th>
<th>Short Living</th>
<th>Low GM</th>
<th>Med GM</th>
<th>High GM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
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Note: The table presents the distribution of students' previous international experience divided into categories such as Tourist Experience, Deep International Experience, and Globally Mobile (TCK) categories. The numbers indicate the count of students falling under each category.
Horizontally, respondents are arranged by experiences they reported of travelling and living in countries other than their home or passport country. Respondents’ degree of international experience is categorized by three main levels, each with three sub-levels, numbered I through IX. The first category, tourist experience, and its three levels (I, II and III) refer to experiences that were described by respondents as tourist and sight-seeing oriented trips, typically in the form of family vacations. Level I refers to students who had done no international travelling whatsoever, or had only reported making insignificant day or weekend trips across borders where the cultural changes are arguably minor. Level II refers to students who reported having travelled for periods of time longer than two days in more than one other country on the same continent. Level III refers to students who reported having had tourist experiences on more than one continent. The second category, deep international experience, refers to respondents whose reported experiences abroad were for some kind of purpose other than tourism (IV), some kind of short (one to three weeks) educational experience (V), or some longer period away that could be considered living in a foreign country, in this case, full semester, overseas exchange programs (VI). These levels tended not to be discrete, as several respondents fit into more than one level. For example, a respondent whose dominant life experience was travelling within the same continent, but had participated on one short international education experience, fits into both levels II and V. Also, a respondent who had never been out of their own country except for a single visit to relatives overseas at a young age would be simultaneously placed in levels I and III.

The third category (levels VII, VIII and IX), refers to respondents who described their life experience as one of global mobility, or as that of a third culture kid (TCK). Four of the respondents who fit into these levels are represented in the entry statistics under the International Quota category (see Figure 4), but three others who entered through the selection committee of specific nations also fit in this third category of international experience. All of these respondents showed awareness of their ‘label’, identifying themselves as TCKs or globally mobile students without prompting. Respondents in levels VII, VIII and IX are ranked low, medium and high, based on how long they had lived away from their passport country, how many different countries they have lived in and if they were the product of culturally-mixed parentage, all of

22 For example, between Toronto, Ontario and Buffalo, New York, where the two cities can be described as extensions of each other connected by a bridge, or trips within the United Kingdom.
which are criteria said to determine degrees within the TCK or globally mobile experience (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; McCraig, 2002). Low global mobility (VII) was established as students who reported having lived in, or back and forth between, their passport country and one other country for at least one year. Medium global mobility (VII) was established as similar experiences of at least one year, but involving two or three countries other than the country of origin. High mobility (IX) involved living experiences longer than one year in more than three new countries. The TCK literature suggests that TCKs who also have parents who are of mixed culture, experience the TCK mind-set in a more profound fashion (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999), and so respondents in this category who reported having mixed parentage were moved up one level.

All of the categories and levels, both horizontal and vertical, present in Table 2 arose from students’ responses, but would require further research and development to be validated as a precise scale from which larger claims could be generated. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this study, the continuum of international experience presented in Table 2, in combining individual histories of education and mobility, provides an adequate view of the varied background with which student respondents entered their MUWCI experience. It clearly shows the wide variety of international experiences represented in the research, ranging from respondents who had never left their home country and had had a national education, to one respondent who had called up to six different countries ‘home’ and had attended as many different international schools. Where the analysis of the data is referenced back to the respondents’ position on Table 2, a grid reference will be included in square brackets as follows: “I have travelled a lot with my parents” (s2-18) [IS, VII].

5.4.1 The TCK’s experience of MUWCI
The following chapters (Chapters 6 & 7) systematically present what all of the respondents had to say when questioned about their experiences at MUWCI and of the project week programs in particular. This section begins that process by briefly introducing aspects of the experience as it may differ across the factors of mobility and international experience shown in Table 2. Being an exploration, however, this research does not focus exclusively on these factors, so I mention them only briefly here in order to confirm that which has been said in the literature with regard to the

23 Both of these respondents had lived between two distinctly different nations for many years.
TCK mind-set and to highlight the potential commonality between the MUWCI experience and the experience of global mobility, as well as to point this as an area for further research.

As will be presented in Chapter 6, most students, regardless of their position in the Table 2 continuum, express a certain degree of personal change, growth and learning, some of which can be attributed to the MUWCI experience and some of which might be better understood as changes, learning and growth inherent to the late adolescent stage in life. However, the seven students in the lower-right quadrant of Table 2 [IS, VII – IX] – the already globally mobile students – identified themselves as different from the rest of the students and expressed being less 'impressed' with the MUWCI experience as something new or as a source of personal development.

The TCK and globally mobile respondents tended to be quite aware of their own situation as unique, speaking of themselves as having “[grown] up in … different cultures … hav[ing] different histories” (s1-13) and being “from all the places that I have been … and so, from a third culture” (s1-13). They were conscious of certain traits that were said to come along with “not know[ing] how to answer when you ask me who I am” (s1-13), including “not get[ing] culture shocked” (s1-13) and having “the kind of qualities … that other people struggle for – responsibility, adaptability, international-mindedness” (s2-29), as well as certain challenges:

I think I'm fairly adaptable … I have a very practical outlook on things, and I always seem very neutral, in that I kind of tend to see both sides of an argument, which can be a problem sometimes … or five sides, which means that I'm fairly bad at making decisions, and generally I tend to [end up saying] 'I don't know' (s2-29).

In understanding their life experiences as unique from those of their peers and common to each other, some of the globally mobile and previously international educated students found that they were “much more alike no matter what their background” (s2-7) because “there is always a ‘thing’ that connects us… there’s some things that [others] can’t understand… [For example], you can’t just take fifteen minutes to answer the question, 'Who are you?' Nobody [else] would understand that” (s1-13). They saw the diversity of the college and certain lessons of an international education as nothing new and experienced MUWCI as “just another school” (s1-12), although appreciated the opportunity to continue in a similar and possibly more intense, social and educational environment. Mobile students also said “the changes you’ll find in me are probably less than you’ll find in most people” (s2-29) and that in terms of “an international
mind-set ... I was already there" (s2-29) since “I've been all over [the world] already” (s1-13) and “all my life ... my friends have always come from different places” (s1-12). These students had a head start in terms of MUWCI ideals and adjusting to the international experience as compared to those for whom “this is the first step” (s1-13) and were said to be “going through the same things I went through when I was ten [years old] or something” (s1-25):

We have ‘cultural identity problems’ [but] we ... dealt with them before we came here ... and the people that come here are not used to the international background that we have.... We know what it is like to feel displaced and like most people here in the first two months they change so much and we found we hadn't – mostly because we were used to interacting with people from other cultures and talking in other languages and just generally not feeling at home anywhere in the conventional sense (s1-25).

With regard to where they were from, mobile teens responded in line with the conscious (and possibly unconscious) selection and construction from multiple sources said in the literature to be typical of the TCK mind-set (Useem & Useem, 1967; Pollock & Van Reken, 1999; McCraig, 2002). Their identification with an ‘origin’ was less on a single place or culture and more on their life journey through several places, or through “everywhere I've been” (s1-13):

I adopted so many things from the countries I lived in so that's become more ‘me’ rather than just one country.... Wherever I have gone I thought, 'Oh I like this, let's take this, give it a special place in me’ (s1-25).

Along with this view of being “from everywhere” (s1-13) there came the assertion that “I am just myself” (s1-13), “I pretty much represent myself and that's about it” (s2-29). The mobile respondents “found it a bit strange to be put into this ‘culture’ category” (s1-13) but also did not want to be excluded from cultures, expressing a focus on being both representative and without affiliation, finding these issues more a matter of active choice:

People here still say, 'How can you take part in the North American international evening? ... You are involved, but you are not North American!' (s1-25).

Nationalities are very much like religions.... If people find comfort in them, if people like them, if it works for you – defining yourself by where you were geographically born – good for you, go for it, you know? I don't feel the need to, I certainly object to being classified as either [culture X or culture Y], I also object to ... being excluded from either, you know? So it's both sides of the thing (s2-29).

Globally mobile students and their reactions and adaptations to a ‘lifetime’ of mobility are said to be indicators as to the general human reaction to global society (Willis et al., 1994; Bowman, 2001; Fletcher, 2001; McCraig, 2002). An extension of this is the idea that already internationally experienced UWC students may predict the reactions of other students in the UWC setting. For
example, due to their international background and education, the previously mobile students “came [to MUWCI]... not expecting this nationalistic classification” (s2-29), whereas others “come here as ... ‘ambassador[s]’ from every country” (s1-12) but “by the end of the two years ... they get less attached [to ideas of nationality] – they become like the kind of [international people] I was with before coming here” (s2-29):

When I came here, people would immediately ask me where I was from.... It becomes a part of who you are and how people see you.... While when I was with these [international] people [other TCKs], like, it didn't really matter where they were from at all. I knew where they were from, but it didn't matter; I didn't need to know. But here, people need to know, and people feel so attached to their nationalities – it's ridiculous. NOW they are where I was when I first came here (s2-29).

This transition over time to do with ideas of nationalism and representation is also present in the responses of non-mobile student respondents. They also reported transitions in thought towards dualities and multiplicities typical of the both/and (not either/or) distinctions of the TCK mind-set (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999). This included what was described as a need to gain the “skill of the middle ground” (s2-10) and understand truths as contextual and possibly conflicting while at the same time making active choices about what one believes or holds ‘true’.

Again, the TCK or globally mobile student experience in life may predict the experience of other UWC students, who, as will be discussed in the following chapter, expressed a trend towards ‘both/and’ perspectives as a result of the MUWCI experience. This ‘both-ness’ and trend towards the middle ground – already typical of the TCK mind-set – is part of the paradox of Turner’s liminal space (Turner, 1967, 1969, 1992; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999), hence the use of Turner’s theory to explore potentially common ground between the TCK experience of liminality and the UWC experience. This research does not employ a method or an analysis that allows the responses of mobile and non-mobile students to be compared and contrasted in depth. However, if other researchers are correct in their description of the globally mobile experience as liminal, and the mobile students attending MUWCI report little in the way of personal change and recognize the MUWCI space as ‘normal’, where the less-mobile students find they have changed in some way and see the MUWCI space as novel, then the MUWCI space may share certain characteristics of liminality with the TCK or globally mobile experience.
CHAPTER SIX: Finding Student Voices

This chapter addresses research questions 1a and 1b. It discusses comments from respondents in response to questions on international education, the UWC movement, the IB curriculum, and other issues related to student life, learning, growth and the MUWCI experience. Respondents’ comments on the project week programs will be discussed in the following chapter, addressing research questions 2a and 2b. Analytical discussion of this data has been kept out of these results chapters so as not to interrupt the student description of their experiences and discussion in relation to research question 1 will be addressed in chapter 8.

Due to the qualitative nature of the research method and the use of open-ended interviews, the quantification of data was problematic as not all of the topics were discussed in all of the interviews and respondents often presented multiple points of view or made statements that could be seen as contradicting other statements they had made. As such, the strength of a certain perspective presented by ‘x’ number of students would depend on several factors, not the least of which being the overall themes from individual interviews, which as mentioned, differ. However, whenever easily quantified, the data are accompanied by a number to denote the number of students who shared a certain perspective. More often though, I have used terms such as ‘all’, ‘less than half’, ‘more than half’, ‘a minority’, ‘a majority’ to refer to the general strength of certain perspectives within the group given the variety of articulations of similar points of view. Further analysis can build on this work and take a more quantitative approach.

6.1 What is an International Education?

One of the central questions put to respondents was to do with their own definitions and understandings of what constitutes an international education. To begin with, there were suggestions that an experience in international education was not, in essence, different from an experience in any other form of education, that it was “just normal” (s1-27):

If you go into the middle of the remotest region ... and you see two secondary students talking, like I think there is a lot that you would see the same here. I don't know, just because it's international, I don't think it's very different from any other schools (s1-14).

One of the more pragmatic perspectives that came from respondents had to do with the universal applications and acceptance of an international education. The education “is international because it's in the English language, and well, that's international”(s1-28), and “the fact that [the IB] is the
same everywhere” (s1-30) makes it “a standard that is held and recognized throughout the world” (s2-17), so “my idea of an international education, is its universal applicability” (s2-16), and “the options I have after this are also international” (s1-12). The overwhelming response, however, was that an international education was about the students, that having students from all over the world was the central and defining feature of an international education. More so, it is about the interaction between these students and the “international exchange ... [in] culture” (s2-16) and experiences:

What makes it international is ... there are twenty other people ... from different regions of the world and they all have different opinions ... have different views ... have been taught different things, and it is interesting to see in class a German talking about the same things as an American. So that is what makes the school international (s2-9).

Given the middle-to upper-class backgrounds of students, the question of whether these students are in fact so diverse as to be truly ‘international’ is one that arises indirectly from the students:

I don't know, an international education brings people from all over the world, but eventually we're all pretty much the same type of people, anyway. I mean ... I'm not very conscious of the fact that when I'm talking to my friends, they're from South America, or something (s1-27).

However, international peer groups were nonetheless described as fundamental to an international education for these respondents. The total MUWCI experience was described by students as an education where they “never focus on one place” (s2-17); where “you're not just learning about your home town, your home country, your home environment” (s1-12); and “you can learn about cultures and languages and people of the world” (s1-14), but always with a strong emphasis on their multi-national peers as the source of this learning.

Teachers also come from a range of backgrounds and were the medium through which the curriculum was delivered, but they were acknowledged by only four respondents for their role (both positive and negative) in “making [a subject] more relevant on a global scale, instead of just talking about just one country” (s1-25):

Here the teachers are all from different places as well, and their method of teaching and the way they are as people, and the things that you can learn from them are different. ... In class you learn about the teacher and about their culture and who they are, and where they have been (s2-10).

On the whole, respondents tended to down-play the role of class-room learning, teachers and curriculum in making their education international, saying it is “definitely not the curriculum” (s-
international education is not on campus" (s2-16), and "it is very much the input from the students here more than from the teachers – teachers as well to a certain extent, but not as much as the students" (s2-31). One respondent disagreed with this general trend towards and attributed the internationalism of the school vaguely to the unique kind of learning that comes at MUWCI which she described as "so different from what you learn back home" (s1-24).

A few respondents (five) suggested that above and beyond the diversity of their peer group, their experience was an international one because they had left their parent culture, were "foreigners in a far-away country" (s2-10) and so afforded a new, or outsider's, perspective on their own culture as well as the cultures of others:

[An international education] is about being removed from your environment, so your perspective changes, to get to look back at your life objectively, and think about whether you like the way you live or not (s2-5).

To one degree or another the students at MUWCI are placed in a new environment that can no longer be defined in the same terms and on the same presuppositions that defined and guided them in their former experiences. This may be less true for the host students and TCKs but even they are placed in a different educational, cultural or social environment than they had previously experienced. One of the teacher respondents, preferring the term 'global education' to 'international education', described the experience as part of:

creating a perspective consciousness, meaning not only being aware that there are other perspectives but that your world and your reality is ultimately a perspective and not a reality, and so when I say there are multi-perspectives to everything, that yeah, in that sense it's global education (t-19).

Typical comments from respondents in this regard would be “through having many perspectives in the same common program” (s2-3), and “international education is about broadening your perspective” (s2-6). The underlying message here is that it is more than just diversity and having these different perspectives around that make it an international education. It is about a collective engagement with these perspectives in space that allows students to disengage from the perspectives they brought with them:

International education is thinking less in conflict, less in boxes, less in kind of fitting things into compartments ... and taking that a step further, part of this internationalism, is breaking out of yourself and it requires a lot of strength and effort (s2-5).
An international education for these respondents is not only contact with new and interesting cultures, or simply about understanding and making friends across cultures, it is about the merging of different perspectives, beliefs, traditions and ways of thinking.

The final comment that emerged from the respondents, one that has already been alluded to, is that an international education is not solely a function of what students get in the classroom, since their classroom experience is based on a “curriculum that is quite Western” (s2-8):

I really think that the real international experience doesn’t come in the classroom, but through socializing. It comes very much, during lunch, when I talk to people, during activities, that is when you talk about someone’s background and situations, and that’s when you really notice that you are present at an international school (s2-6).

Responses to this effect may have been due to their knowledge of the research focus on project week, experiential education and out-of-class experiences, but they are responses that support much of the international education, and UWC specific literature (see Chapter 2). Even teachers at MUWCI believed that much of the learning “goes on outside of the classroom. It’s a real shame, because as a teacher, it’s not where I wanted it to be” (t-19). As one student pointed out, the core aspects of an international education “are really difficult to teach” (s2-5), and require first-hand experience with each other.

6.2 United World Colleges: Movement and Ideals

The UWCs are not, if such a thing exists, a typical international school.

We are a different form of school. We are not an international school. We are United World College and that makes the problems [and] the issues that we face very different in our schools (t-34).

The UWCs fit into Ponisch’s second category of international school: “schools founded with a specific philosophy and set of aims” (1987, cited in Hayden & Thompson, 1995a, p. 335) and the “ideology-driven” end of Matthews’s typology of international education (1988, cited in Hayden & Thompson, 1995a). This philosophical and ideological starting point for the UWCs creates a certain mystique, encouraged by views of the UWCs as ‘a movement’ and incorporating the ‘UWC ideals’.

I think there is an idealized picture of the UWCs … it is painted as this idealistic world, and you know, I certainly had it to an extent when I first got involved, but very quickly it was like OK, come on, like, it’s a place and it has people in it, every place with people has

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24 As seen in the UWC mission statement, Chapter 2.
its issues. Whereas I think when you are sixteen years old, it's easier to be won over by the marketing and by the utopian picture of it (t-19).

All of the student respondents described their experience with the UWCs as starting a year or more before they actually attended the college (some were as young as fourteen years of age) through paper- and internet-based advertising, information and presentations at their former schools. The selection process was reported as an intense and introspective process of essay writing and interviews, usually culminating in a selection weekend where finalists participate in a myriad of group games and group dynamics exercises, problem-solving tasks and initiatives. The selection experience was likened by at least two students to the recent American or Australian Idol reality television shows, where competitors are assessed by a committee of UWC selectors on several 'performances' and their commitment to the UWC ideals. Regardless of the nature of the marketing, the seeds of the movement and the beginning of a potential commitment to the ideals are planted well before the students arrive in their first year, and students were well aware that there were certain ideals they were supposed to be working towards:

There is a whole mission statement ... all about international relations and working together to make a difference, and community and voluntary, and just living together and realizing that you can learn a lot from each other and get along with each other, and I was really attracted to that (s2-10).

Students seemed to really value these ideals, but, in experiencing the reality of them in practice, many said they became less idealistic and occasionally jaded in terms of ideals and philosophies that the experience is supposed to instil in them:

People don't mix their ways of life with the theoretical part of this. Like they can give you a really good essay on theory of knowledge and life and philosophy, but then they don't live that way. I don't practise what I preach, so I don't really know how much [it all] means (s1-14).

Generally, the students’ responses reflected a transition from a utopian vision to one more grounded in a realistic and attainable reality:

I'm a victim of those [ideals], of course I used to believe in all these ideals when I was like in first year … you just become less idealistic, you sort of get in touch with reality and what you can do and can't do, and you become a little less idealistic I guess (s2-31).

This was sometimes a case of merging naïve utopian ideology with a practical sense of what can and cannot be accomplished in terms of 'changing the world' and sometimes of an abrupt confrontation with the realities of idealism:
I actually remember being told, in an orientation week exercise, where we had to discuss what our hopes for Mahindra College were, ‘Forget about UWC, forget what you’ve been told about this place.’ And one second-year actually said, ‘Oh yeah, forget about UWC, that isn’t this place, I came with all these ideas, and it’s bullshit. UWC doesn’t exist’ (s1-27).

When asked about whether their expectations with regard to ideology were met, one student responded with what seemed to be a balanced understanding of his own personal transition from idealism to realism:

I’m not disappointed. I just changed my point of view because everybody who comes here has a sort of ideal, like, it should be this and that…. You assume it to be true … and then you experience your own things, and it becomes yours, so I don’t know, not disappointed, it could never be perfect (s2-20).

Others expressed not really having expectations, and thus not being disappointed, or having vague expectations that were vaguely fulfilled:

So as far as ideals and everything, I didn’t really know a lot about them – I came here … with a very kind of open mind. I didn’t have many expectations. So I immediately fell in love with the place when I got here (s2-29).

Those who had been on UWC short courses (two students), or had other international education experiences (approximately ten students), said they were let down in comparison to certain aspects of what they had experienced before, but only a few (three) respondents displayed a deep disappointment:

I am really disappointed … I think this experience is, I wouldn’t say it is bullshit, but close to it … I came here and I really, really wanted to save the world, I really wanted to make things better … then the first thing I hear when I come here is, ‘Oh no one cares in this place, it is not important, we are just fooling around in all these things and we don’t care about the IB either, and you don’t really make a difference in the end.’ … I don’t know, I just think this place hasn’t worked (s2-18).

Others were not yet ready to decide whether their expectations had been met, since they were “in the process of doing it” (s1-30), and that perhaps it was an experience that would be better understood with the advantage of hindsight. Almost all of the respondents commented in one way or another about disappointments to do with the different reasons for other students to attend, and thus the different levels of motivation in terms of how and to what students applied themselves:

When I came here, I was relieved of this idea that everybody was here on full scholarship, which was not the case. … As I said, fifty percent attendance for a global affairs discussion, not everyone is here for the same thing (s2-6).
Fulfilled or disappointed, students' responses about their expectations suggest that it is an experience that is dependent on “what you make of it” (s1-27):

I had this really great idea that UWC is something big, something that is going to push you to work. And it did push you to work, but the thing is, when you come here, it should not be what you expect of UWC, it's what you expect out of yourself. It's up to you whether you want to make this a life experience, and enhance it for yourself. Or do you want to just sit back and say this is just another school, yeah right, let's get on with life? (s1-24).

6.3 The International Baccalaureate

By definition and design, the IB includes both the CAS programs as well as the academic and classroom components of the MUWCI experience; they are equal and complementary aspects of the curriculum. In practice, as is the case with other IB schools (Kulunda & Hayden, 2002a, 2002b), CAS at MUwci is often seen as extra-curricular. One teacher expressed this as disappointing:

One of my ideals ... was that the realms of CAS and academics were integrated and I think ... that at least students, and maybe everyone here, separates the realms still. I think at this school they're still fairly traditional academically because they haven't integrated the realms (t-19).

In speaking to teachers and to students, the message was clearly that while the IB required a certain involvement in CAS activities, the two were not necessarily inclusive. The terms ‘IB’ and ‘curriculum’ were used synonymously with reference to academic subjects, but neither term necessarily included CAS activities. CAS was discussed, if not seen, as separate from the IB, so in this section the results tend to focus on formal academic subjects.

Respondents were asked if they found the IB challenging or difficult. It is worth noting here that students are admitted to the UWCs by competitive selection, which involves submitting academic transcripts, sitting examinations and providing references. Thus, none of the students in the sample should be considered anything but academically successful:

These kids are the ultimate success stories of traditional education, they have ... been really successful. They have done just fine ... so they like it. They are also products of it ... so they have no problems with it (t-19).

According to this teacher, problems arise for some of these traditionally academic students when teachers take the liberty given to them by the IB guidelines to teach in an alternative fashion, or to expose students to ways of learning that they may not be accustomed to:
So then when you come in and say, 'I'm not going to teach that way, that's not the way to learn, when you learn that way all you're doing is learning knowledge that someone else controls, and you are not independently thinking, you are not creating the knowledge yourself', ... their response is that, 'We are not really learning anything.' It's really sort of insecurity on some level, because they don't value the knowledge that they generate as highly as the knowledge that a teacher generates (t-19).

However, most respondents appeared open to the different ways of thinking and approaches to learning presented by the IB through courses like Theory of Knowledge and the self-directed nature of the Extended Essay (see Chapter 2) and self-taught languages:

I'm less interested in learning stuff out of a textbook, and less interested in this sort of Western knowledge of acquisition – having all these facts in your mind. I prefer to learn in a way that challenges me, challenges my way of thinking, rather than filling myself with new thoughts (s2-5).

For those coming from a national education background (typically those on the upper-left, or less internationally experienced end of the continuum in Table 2), the IB was described as fairly challenging:

Because it is a higher level than back home, so it obviously gets harder (s2-10) [NE, II].

I dropped it and I switched to a lower math level because it was sort of tricky to do it for the exam (s2-20) [NS, II].

The academic is much harder in this place ... the education, is quite tough (s2-8) [NS, I]

It is challenging for me, yes (s2-9) [NS, II].

However, with the exception of one student, the respondents on the opposite end of the Table 2 continuum (those with significant international experience and prior experience in international education), reported finding little difficulty with the curriculum:

Some classes I'm like, oh, this is really, really interesting, and I take notes and focus. And there are classes that I just say, well, I'm going to fall asleep now (s1-25) [IS, IX].

I don't find it academically challenging (s2-29) [IS, VIII].

When questioned on what an international education was, the role of the academic curriculum, the role of the teachers and the role of the IB were not held in high esteem by respondents, as compared to other aspects of college life:

No, it is definitely not the curriculum, because it’s way too Western. We only do certain philosophers and no Asian philosophers at all. ... We study history only focusing on the Cold War and the Second World War... I don't really notice the international aspect of the education itself, as in the curriculum (s2-6).
Other than the idea that the IB was an international standard and provided a venue for the different perspectives of their multi-national peers, respondents on the whole did not really feel that the IB content itself was overtly international but based mainly in “Western ideas” (s2-7) “from several countries that have like a strong basis in the IB” (s1-12), “It is international because of my friends, nothing else” (s2-18). Student and teacher respondents did point to aspects of the curriculum that made overt attempts at addressing the international beyond a European base, such as Global Affairs and the World Studies Extended Essay “which imposes a certain awareness of what is going on outside, and where... different opinions, arguments, cultures, people all come into this” (s1-22). However, the emphasis here was again on the interaction between students and, like the CAS programs, the Global Affairs discussions were not for credit, and something that was not universally valued as it was described as “not very global most of the time” (s2-29), or “the same people talking and talking” (s1-24) and “discussing the same discussions” (s1-28).

Almost unanimously, and regardless of their position on the international experience continuum (Table 2), student respondents felt that the international aspects of their international education were not within but outside the academic curriculum; that “in terms of academics there is no culture or international in [the IB] whatsoever, it's the extras” (s1-22). This is not to say that respondents felt their education at MUWCI was not an international one, but that the international aspects came through other aspects of the program, including CAS and project week and the social and residential aspects of day-to-day life at MUWCI as well as their interaction with Indians and in India itself:

The ‘education’ is in India, it’s not just the IB, life is not exactly in school, sure you learn about other cultures, but life is when you sort of get out there (s1-22).

6.4 Social and Residential Life

At MUWCI, being a fully residential boarding school, the lines and boundaries between the various aspects of the experience cross over and can be hard to distinguish. Home is school, free time is structured time, teachers are de-facto parents, work space is social space and vice versa. Respondents expressed awareness of, and at times confusion with, the fluid dynamics of their social, residential and academic worlds. Worlds where “community life, academic community, it’s all the same ... so I think it's sometimes difficult” (s2-3) to “try and find the balance between
these three things – socializing, studying and [activities]” (s2-6). This environment of blurred boundaries is typical of residential schooling, but at MUWCI:

They don’t call it boarding school, it’s MUWCI, it’s a UWC, it has none of the connotations of boarding school … you’re allowed to be who you are, not who they want you to be… this is different, the fact that I am not wearing a uniform shows that I can be who I am (s1-22).

Like any high school or grouping of young people, the social realm provides the main background for other aspects of the experience. In the case of MUWCI, where the curriculum is said by respondents to fall short of the goals of the movement, the social and residential life takes on an all-the-more important role. All other aspects of school life (academics, activities, project weeks, class-room time) appear to capitalize on the nature of the particular social environment. The idea that MUWCI is “not a school” (s1-15a), or that without the students and the social interactions that spill into the class-rooms and activities, the international education would hardly be noticeable, is fairly close to the experience of most respondents:

The majority of the education that goes on here is in from 11 pm to 2 am hanging out with their friends. And that's where they learn the most about, you know, other cultures and other peoples, just sitting around … where there are so many nations and religions and cultures and races represented, and just by living around them (t-19).

In the words of the students, MUWCI is “about me living together here with people from all over the world and being part of this, and living through all these things” (s2-9) and “seeing the way people behave, and interacting with people, living with them. You know, taking education out of the classes, the UWCs are brilliant for this” (s2-5), “because everything happens after check-in [after 10pm]. You see people, you sit, you talk, you explore” (s2-31). With “two hundred people put together this close for two years like this” (s2-4), it is “a bunch of people living in the hills, and that's just amazing in itself” (s1-25):

I think just the fact that we live so close to each other – two hundred people, one hundred people per year, you know, you have breakfast, lunch, dinner with these people, and you get to see them on their good days and on their bad days. If you get to know them, you see from very many angles, until you get closest to the truth of what they're really like (s2-5).

However, the residential life is not without its difficulties. Issues of privacy were a common complaint: “With four people in a room you have no privacy at all” (s2-8), “you don’t really have a way out – it’s harder to be able to sit by yourself” (s2-29). As well as issues of balance between the ready-made social life and the heavy academic and activities load, “Here, you have a built-in social life all the time. You have all these activities available to you all the time. And then you
have to do your work, all the time – you have to manage your time really – and it’s like, much
more intense” (s1-28). Overall though, respondents felt the personal compromises inherent in
residential school life, the adaptations they each had to make, were worth the benefits:

It’s good and sometimes it’s stressing. Good in terms of I don’t have to wish I was with my
friends or to wish I was talking to people, I can see them all the time. Stressing in terms
of, I was used to doing my work in my space, and now we’re sharing space, so it took a bit
to adapt to. But it’s fine, it’s even easier, because if I do all my homework, I just walk to
the next room to socialize; if I don’t have my book there, I just walk to the next corner and
borrow one, you know, it’s really nice (s1-30).

The residential life (in accounting for basic needs) and the social life (in accounting for the need
to be social) are in many ways the heart of the whole experience. They compensate for the
apparent failings of the academic curriculum in terms of internationalism, and provide the
foundation on which, and substrate in which, students grow and learn during their MUWCI
experience. However, it is not simply the contact with diversity that makes the social aspects of
the experience so important, but the personal connections and relationships that are developed
amongst students and, hence, between cultures:

Doing activities, or just hanging out having a cup of tea with these people, it lets you see
the different countries in such a different way. And you befriend them, and you KNOW
people from that country (s2-17).

It is this ‘knowing’ of people and these personal connections that allow students to not only think
in global terms but to do so with an empathy and understanding of various countries and cultures
developed through personal relationships where “everything that is happening in the world right
now, I relate it to someone I know” (s2-20):

I cannot think about just India, because I am also thinking about Argentina, about my
friends from there, about Austria because my friend is from there, about Malaysia because
my room-mate is from there, and Bangladesh because one of my class-mates is from there
and, like, that makes you think in global terms (s2-17).

Not only does the social environment encourage students to think globally, but it facilitates one
of the central lessons of the UWCs that “culture is a very thin veneer” (t-34) and provides
wonderful diversity within the human race, but no fundamental differences: “They [UWCs] want
everybody to realize that the world is one family, or whatever you want to call it. And then, any
time I think of my friends, it’s like, ‘Yeah, we are all one people’” (s1-27), “I think that helped
me to know that these cultural boundaries actually don't exist” (s2-17).
Along with this idea that a personal relationship with an individual from another country somehow connects one with that country come questions of representativeness. Does that person represent their country? Can one person adequately represent a whole nation? At MUWCI, where there are rarely more than two or three individuals from each nation (other than the host nation), people might be unavoidably seen as a representative, or as “an ambassador” (s1-12) from their homeland:

When you think about another country you might think about that person who was your friend from that country, and I think in that way your whole opinion of the whole country changes, and in that way that person is a representative of the country (s2-10).

Overall though, respondents showed resistance to the idea that they or their peers were representative of anything but themselves. First, by saying, “I am representing my country [in terms of entry statistics], but that does not mean that is who I am or is who all people in my country are” (s2-10). And second, because students’ initial identification with each other in terms of where everyone is from becomes less important, almost irrelevant, as the relationships progress:

When you first get to know people, you're always like, ‘Oh yeah, this person is from that country.’ When you really get to know people it makes you forget where they're from. It's good in the sense that you don't create a divider anymore, you just remember that person as that person (s1-24).

Thus, personal relationships at MUWCI seem to facilitate global awareness with two apparently opposing mechanisms, one of which keeps the focus firmly on the individual person and not the nation from which they come, and the other of which uses the individual as a connection to their nation. In allowing people to draw connections between their friends and the far-off places that their friends are from, an informed empathy and personal connection that would otherwise not be present is encouraged. But at the same time, these personal relationships loosen the connections between one’s friends and the places they come from, allowing people to dispel potential stereotypes and ideas of representation and focus on individual people.

Does all this connecting with foreign cultures somehow disconnect the students from their own culture? In some ways it does, but not in the sense that one sheds one’s identity to takes on a new one, but more in that one is temporarily freed from the immediate pressures and structures of one’s home culture. Conversely, one’s cultural origins become an “important identification point to know where I come from” (s2-7) so peoples’ relationships with their home country, culture or nation are also strengthened. In either case, the relationship with other cultures and one’s own
was reported as central to the international education and afforded by a perspective of outsider-
hood and stranger-ness, what has already been suggested (in Chapter 5) as a ‘standard’
experience for globally mobile students and what I will later explore as a vantage provided by
entering the liminal and anti-structural space between cultures that MUWCI provides.

6.4.1 Grouping

In any school students will be attracted to each other and form groups and cliques based on a
variety of different reasons, thus grouping at MUWCI is a normal and expected social
phenomenon. The emergence of a popular or ‘in crowd’ is common expression of such grouping;
MUWCI is no different and has its “group of ‘cool guys’” (s1-14):

Those people are cool people, you know, ‘toooo cooool’, and you have to be part of that
group ... last year, I really wanted to be popular. ... I was definitely in it, and I was
definitely there, front row, centre seat, first class. But this year I am obviously out of it
and far away (s2-18).

Respondents expressed an awareness of groupings on several other levels, also common within a
high school setting, including groupings by year level, and by common language or similar
cultures. They expressed an understanding of this grouping as expected and inevitable, but also a
disappointment in the degree to which these divisions seemed to counter the ethos of the UWCs:

I'm socialising with the same people every week, and they're good friends, but I'm not
getting to know all these amazing people on campus, as well. I like to spend time with the
people that I am friends with even if they are all European. But you know, that's not what
I should be doing (s1-27).

So in contrast, or perhaps in unison, with bringing people together, the MUWCI experience also
serves to split them up at certain levels. This inquiry did not delve so far into the student’s social
world as to be able to discern the politics of popularity and other small-scale, intra-group
divisions, but year level, language and culture were some of the more obvious groupings that
could be seen.

Like other educational contexts, year level acts as a ‘class’ structure in which a logic of seniority
and hierarchy is maintained in the group. The MUWCI ‘class’ structure is organized in a simple
two-tier system, where the first tier has just arrived and the second tier is about to leave. This
predictable two-year and in/out ‘life-cycle’ overshadows much of what goes on at the college.
MUWCI approaches the relationship between the year groups as an important measure of
community cohesion, and that a strong bond between the years was what the students, teachers
and administration seemed to strive for. The first-years were “trying to get to know the second-years, because they could tell us a lot about this place” (s1-24) – as the second-years had presumably done the year before – and so the more experienced members of the group had a kind of social ‘responsibility’ to share their experiences, passing on knowledge to the next generation. Both years seemed to show this push towards a cooperative relationship and the bond or cohesion between the years could be viewed as a measure of Turner’s push towards ‘communitas’ and the transfer of *sacra* (1967).

The inter-year cohesion was expressed as increasing over time by those who said that the division between the years grew “less and less” (s1-22) as the year went on and first-year students generated experiences of their own through participation in the social, residential, CAS and project week aspects of the MUWCI experience:

Of course, the first-years are going to seem very young to the second-years because it takes a while to get used to ... the system. What I heard from last year is that, yeah, there was a big split between the first-years and second-years. And they said, ‘Then we went on project week with the second-years, and from there we kind of gradually become one group’ (s1-28).

In reference to previous years, students said there was currently a significant and undesirable gap between the two year groups. Two students played this division down, describing it as “subtle ... discreet ... [and] not discriminatory [or] prejudiced” (s2-5), or a function of simply being closer to those one spends more time with. However, the majority of first-year respondents did feel “there was this big split” (s1-28) and three second-years commented on the “huge gap between first-years and second-years, which was much less last year at this time” (s2-31):

There is definitely a major division. Last night ... I was the only first-year, one person said, ‘You’re a first-year, you should be proud you’re with us.’ ... As a first-year, I feel like I’m imposing (s1-22).

This gap between years, division within the community and thus barrier to cohesion and communitas was expressed as especially disappointing for first-year students, four of whom expressed a desire to change things when they moved into the second year:

I want to be a nice second-year – like there are a lot of second-years who make even me feel kind of intimidated – and I really don’t want to be that type of person (s1-27).

Why this division existed to the extent that it did was an important question for all the respondents, the majority of whom cited a project week segregated by year level – traditionally a time of inter-year bonding – as a major factor in failing to close the gap between the years. They
said that "after the first project week [last year] we saw that the gap which definitely existed between the first-years and second-years sort of disappeared" (s2-6), but "this year for example, the first-years went on their own, and you can see very clearly there is a distinct gap between the first- and second-years still" (s2-18), "I felt like we didn't get to know our second-years that much" (s1-28), "I think it's really important to have first-years and second-years together" (s1-27). This issue of inter-group cohesion and as it relates to project week is picked up again in Chapter 7.

Respondents also reported that students did not necessarily self-segregate on cultural or national lines, but more along lines of a common native language. Students arrive at the college with different language skills and non-native English-speakers tended to group based on their ability to easily communicate with each other. Spanish speakers, German speakers, French speakers and Hindi speakers were cited as the language groups who tended to carry on at the exclusion of English speakers and those who were alone with regard to native language and rarely got the opportunity to speak 'freely'. It was an issue that respondents described as expected and understandable because "when you are with your people you feel comfortable" (s1-13), so overall, language grouping was perceived as only a minor annoyance: "they find it easier to express themselves in their own language, but they don't 'group up', they just talk a bit more" (s1-30).

A bigger issue for the respondents was the apparent grouping of Indian students, creating what was expressed as division between the host students and the international students: "Just generalising, but Indians don't interact that much with everybody else.... We call it grouping, because all the Indians stick together" (s1-12), and "they tend to form groups among themselves. So, a lot of, like, foreigners ... don't even know half the Indians" (s1-24). An example of this phenomenon, as mentioned in previous chapters, is the low number of Indian respondents. Only two of the student respondents were Indian, and so the host culture has no opportunity to speak on its own behalf with regard to the division expressed by the largely non-Indian respondents. However, even the Indians in the sample were critical of their fellow host students and tried to distance themselves from what was understood as 'typical' Indian behaviour at MUWCI, that is not trying to integrate with other cultures and "taking [high level] physics, chemistry and mathematics; taking CAS activities which tie in with your future plans not just taking an activity for the sake of it" (s1-23).
The grouping and divide between the Indian students and the international students was reported to go beyond language or an inclination towards science-based courses and into issues of motivation towards certain aspects of MUWCI life (such as CAS, project week and social life) and overall commitment to the ideals of the movement. Just over half of the student respondents (fifteen) commented to the effect that MUWCI was being used by “Indians mostly just as an escape route to the West where they can go to university” (s1-14). Indian students were said not to value cross-cultural contact through social time and activities and were perceived by some respondents as “just... study[ing] and do[ing] nothing else. Don't care about anything, don't come to any activities or global affairs, anything like that” (s2-7). This was frustrating for many respondents and ultimately led to the idea that certain “students ... are here for the wrong reasons ... not giving as much as other students” (s2-10):

I think it's really lame. I think you're wasting space for somebody else that could have come and used the opportunity well and made a difference in the world. And like you, who just come to get into university and get a good job, and what do you do for society? Nothing, you sit in your office and make money, you don't care (s1-30).

The reasons respondents suggested for these differences in approach to the experience were less to do with culture and more to do with issues of class and a perception of economic elitism at the college because “[MUWCI] doesn't run on all scholarships like other UWCs” (s1-15a) but has forty percent of the students paying fees of some kind. This was quite frustrating for students who “had difficulties with accepting the fact that we have Indian students on campus who were not selected on who they are, but on what their parents are” (s2-20) and saw this as directly affecting the college:

We don't know who is paying and who's not, but it's going to make a difference because ... you don't come with the same mind, you don't come and say I have a scholarship here, you come with a mind that says, I'm paying to be here and it's not a very cheap price (s2-16).

However, even full scholarship holders who were disappointment in the approach taken by fee-paying students said that having students from mixed class and economic backgrounds was as important to the global education as having students from different nations: “It is part of the whole thing; it is nice to mix all of these people” (s2-16), “because you get to know them and a side of the country which you don't hear about. They're twice as rich as I am – three times probably – but I think it really challenges your views.... I really did think that everyone in India
was poor” (s1-27). This was a view on the part of student respondents that was echoed by certain teachers:

There is a much bigger issue for me than being able to step across national borders and that's the whole business of being able to step down through classes, you know, I have found far more problems of uniting people with class than with nationalities (t-34).

These issues of class, economic divide and an associated decline in commitment and motivation were central for student respondents. Still, in some respects, the culture of MUWCI may act as an equalizing force between the rich and the poor, high caste and low caste, within the student community:

The culture of this place, I think, engenders amongst, particularly amongst the city and upper-class kids, an awareness that there's another side to the world, and makes them question, inherently, makes them question, sort of, this system they come from and the way everything is (t-19).

This is a central feature of Turner's liminal communitas in anti-structure, where the hierarchies of class and other social structures no longer matter, and where the structurally low are temporarily empowered, an equalizing of sorts where “it's cool to be poor” (t-19). This is also a central concern for international education, which as described in Chapter 2, is concerned with balancing the ideals of inclusion with the pragmatics of economic reality.

6.5 Personal Growth, Learning and Change

Respondents were asked how they felt they may have grown or changed through their experiences at MUWCI, and what it was they thought they had learned through the international education they were said to be receiving and how they thought they learnt it. Students displayed a mix of embracing change and growth and being hesitant towards it, but felt that some kind of change and growth was an inevitable part of the experience and was best approached with a “willingness to change” (s2-5). Generally, all the student respondents (including the TCKs and globally mobile students mentioned in Chapter 5) expressed some kind of personal change or growth, but several students found questions of this nature difficult to specifically address with a tangible response, commenting to the effect that “I don't see the difference that much in myself, but I know I've changed a lot; I can feel it” (s1-28), “but how can I explain how I changed?” (s2-6). Other students (particularly second-years) were able to recognize change, growth and learning in themselves upon visiting their home countries during breaks in the school year: “When I went

25 Although the concepts of growth, change and learning are different, they resulted in very similar responses and so are used interchangeably here.
home for my summer holiday, my friends found me different” (s2-17), and “I just realized [I had changed because] they were exactly the same as they were when I left in September, as if time had not passed” (s2-3).

No students said that they did not change or grow at all, but one student believed that “there are people who come here and nothing happens” (s2-16), and another found that the experience had affected her but “had made [her] stronger in the beliefs [she] had already before” (s2-7). However, as one student commented, “I don't think a person who has come here a year-and-a-half ago can be the same person who leaves from this place. I think we're changing every day” (s2-11). From two respondents there seemed to be a worry that the ‘inevitable’ changes they would undergo would somehow negate who they were or that they were “going to be a totally different person, just from seeing this – from having these experiences. And I don't know how I myself will be able to deal with that” (s2-4). One student was able to counter this sentiment with a compromise between losing touch with one’s roots and embracing the inevitable change and growth:

I wanted to change my views, but I didn't want to change who I am, you know? I want to do things the way I've always done them, and if my ideas change, then I want to incorporate them into who I am (s1-30).

However, almost all of the respondents expressed awareness that going back to their former lives would be challenging, but that the changes they would undergo would not necessarily hinder them or present too much difficulty:

I wanted to be able to go back to my old life, and now that’s gone ... I won't be able to live the same way I used to.... It may be a bit hard sometimes, and difficult, and what I have heard from lots of people that have left and gone home, is that it is very tough to go home.... But actually, I don't think it is a disadvantage (s2-9).

But what do the UWC students perceive themselves as changing into? How are they growing? What is it that they are learning and how are they learning it? The following section reports what respondents believe the lessons of the MUWCI and UWC experience are and by what means these lessons are conveyed.

6.5.1 What They Learned and How They Changed
Respondents identified four areas in which they felt they had grown or learned: maturity and independence; activism, initiative and leadership; cross-cultural learning; and new perspectives and open mindedness.
Growth and development in terms of maturity are not necessarily a function of the students’ experiences at MUWCI. Arguably, students of similar age would tend towards responses that suggested they had “become far more mature” (s2-11), “have grown up a lot” (s2-10), and “become more serious” (s2-18) regardless of having attended a UWC or not. Thus, students’ responses in terms of their own maturity need to be considered in light of a process of maturation that is not a result of but aided along by the UWC experience in providing an opportunity to gain independence by leaving parents and home. For respondents who already had very independent lives, or had previously attended boarding school, this was not such a big area of growth, but for those who had not, “the main thing is that [they] went away from home” (s1-12), the relative freedom “builds up a lot of maturity, because you have to think for yourself for a lot more things” (s1-24), and “it has made me independent” (s1-22).

Along with independence comes responsibility, and the UWCs, and MUWCI in particular, provide ample opportunity for students to “develop a sense of responsibility” (s1-30), to learn “to manage [their] time really well” (s1-28) and to “become more organized than [they] were before” (s1-30) through the degree of freedom and thus responsibility that they have for their own experience and learning (as discussed below). This accelerated independence and responsibility was seen by respondents as an advantage over their peers back home who “will soon be in university, crying, ‘Help, I can’t do this!’ and I will have already made those steps, so it helps a lot” (s1-22). These advantages were reported as the ability and confidence to “stand in front of a lot of people and say some words … [and] be able to lead a group or facilitate discussions” (s2-7) and the confidence to be able to take the experiences they have and use them. MUWCI “prepares you to be a leader later on in life … it gives you this stepping stool to step ahead of the pack, or at least give you the ability to…. So I think [we] would have an advantage” (s2-4).

Students expressed this advantage as sourced in the MUWCI experience encouraging them to take in as much as they can, but also to contribute just as much. The “UWC tries to enable you with the knowledge and motivation to go out and do something more productive” (s1-27), and “I have definitely become far more outward” (s2-11). It could be argued that UWC students are already outgoing and active upon arrival, but students still cited activism, involvement and initiative as major changes they felt in themselves:
In myself, I've changed a lot... back home, I wasn't really involved. I was involved and I had my own opinions, but I wasn't really – It wasn't that much on my own initiative (s1-28).

So a bit of activism has developed inside of me. And this idea that I can be active, and that I can make a change, I really like (s2-5).

They said that this initiative and belief in their own ability to make a difference was empowering, and more than simply instilling in them a desire to be active, it showed them that they could be active and how to be active: “There is no limit – there's nothing you can't do ... within reason, if you can drive yourself to do it” (s2-4):

I think the major change is really that I want to do something about things and that I feel I CAN do something. And I believe it doesn't matter if I am working in a [local] village or at home, as long as I am happy and I am doing the things I like, it does make a difference (s2-9).

Comments from a few respondents (six) suggested that along with the knowledge that they could and should apply their experiences at MUWCI towards some positive end comes, again, a certain degree of responsibility: “I got so serious in the last year, suddenly you are confronted with all these world problems, social problems, all these wars around the world” (s2-6), and “the pressure to try and create something and do something good for society, it’s very hard” (s2-8). But, as mentioned earlier, this pressure is counter-balanced because the MUWCI experience also instils a healthy sense of realism along with the idealism of activism and change, where “you sort of get in touch with the reality of what you can do and can't do” (s2-31). For students who came to the UWC with the desire to ‘change the world’, these lessons of how “to know when to be quiet and ... when you can change things, and when you can’t” (s2-4) do not take away from their desire to change things, but frees them to do so:

The one thing I have discovered is that there are limitations to everything. To what you want to do, to how far you can go, to how idealistic you can be, to how much effort you can put in ... quite depressing, if you just say that there are limits to everything, but [also] quite freeing - you know the scope of what you can do.... If you're aware of the limits, you can work within the limits and be more effective that way. It's about reaching a goal, rather than it being unattainable [s1-25].

The third area of growth expressed by respondents was in terms of learning “about other people's cultures” (s2-10), learning things “about other countries” (s1-13) and gaining “insight into other cultures” (s1-12):

I think this place is very much shaping people ... there are a lot of different mentalities, due to different cultures, there is a lot more variety than at home and it shapes you a lot,
in the sense that we are together all the time ... you are hearing people, you see how other people work and you learn. ... So in that sense ... everybody has changed incredible amounts in every way (s2-31).

This cross-cultural learning was expressed universally by student and teacher respondents as an obvious and unavoidable result of spending two years in such a close knit and culturally diverse environment. Respondents elaborated on the cross-cultural contact as allowing them to “overcome a lot of prejudices about people” (s1-12), “not bother anymore about where a person came from at all” (s1-23) and see “that [many] boundaries actually don’t exist” (s2-17). Similarly, many respondents felt that a central area of growth was in shifting from a perspective limited to their own country to one that is more global in scope. As one respondent reported:

Before coming here I had a very local vision. I was thinking my country.... National politics, national things ... your country and your vision opens, and [you] have [a] more wide, I don't know, vision of the world (s2-16).

Respondents expressed this broadening of perspective as affecting changes “not so much in ... public persona, but in how I think” (s2-4), which opened up possibilities that had not previously occurred to them:

I think I am more open ... to everything, like when I was at home, you have just this ... it’s hard to say, it’s like I was just stuck in one place, in a routine, it’s a closed world, my future was of school and then work. But once you are here, these things open up; the walls come down (s2-17).

In broadening peoples’ perspectives, “the whole program really helps open peoples’ minds” (s1-24), to “think a lot differently ... address problems differently ... in a more broad way ... [and] think about both sides more” (s2-10):

I became more open with lots of things. There are lots of things I would never have spoken about because of my culture.... I am much more open about them here (s1-13).

Along with the opening of one’s mind to new and novel ways of thinking and perspectives, the MUWCI student is simultaneously freed to speak their mind and act on their own beliefs (previously held or presently emerging) without fear of ridicule or persecution. This is due to a culture of openness that is developed, as reported by respondents who said, “This place has made me more tolerant” (s1-27), and “I can express my opinion without being accused” (s1-22). But that is not to say that students are not challenged in their beliefs and assumptions:

I get challenged with my belief everyday. What I always saw as correct because everybody [at home] thinks the same, I never questioned. Then suddenly somebody asked me, and I actually have to think about, why do I have this belief? Is it just because we
have been taught? Or your parents? Or your media? Or is it really your opinion? And if it is my opinion where did I get this opinion from? What kind of sources did I use? (s2-7).

These changes in the way they think, a function of becoming “more aware and just better informed” (s1-22), amounted to “so much of a paradigm shift” (s1-24), that it could be a touch disconcerting for some:

Perceptions about the world – you know, all this philosophical, religion and acceptance of life and how it happens, and when I came I was more like closed in – well, I was very happy how I was living back home, and I didn’t want to change, to come back a different person, if it would be for bad (s1-14).

For others these changes in perspective and ways of thinking were welcomed whole-heartedy:

I think it’s breaking out of the boundaries of ‘normal’ thought. And I think this is good for everyone to do, because I think … it’s enjoyable to think in different ways, also … [it] enables me to look more objectively at myself. And I really like to kind of challenge myself, change myself, and like, not to use the phrase, but to try and get more ‘international’ in perspective, rather than just the nationalist, conservative perspective, which is the propaganda back home, you know (s2-5).

As mentioned, several (five) respondents expressed the idea that through contact with other cultures, and the separation and distance they were afforded from their own culture, they could take a more objective stance on their own behaviour and assumptions: “I’ll have seen my country from the outside…. It will be an advantage” (s2-3), because “I’ve learned so much and been able to look at my own way of behaving greatly, through just living with people that have lived differently” (s2-5). So the MUWCI experience “teaches people to deal with different cultures, and to respect different cultures” (s2-29) but also allows students to engage with their own culture with a certain hindsight or from the more objective vantage of an outsider, allowing them to apply to themselves the new perspectives they have gained from others.

It all amounts to an intellectual culture of being open to and accepting of what other people say and believe, while simultaneously challenging other beliefs as well as your own. It is an institutional ‘culture’ balanced in the contradiction of being supportive and critical at the same time, where challenging another person is “not shooting them down [in] what they are saying … just opening up, maybe, their eyes to a possibly different viewpoint than they have looked at before” (s2-10). It is a way of thinking about and approaching ‘truth’ that requires some getting used to for those students who may have been more accustomed to a reality based in a single world-view from the standpoint of a single culture; one that was “more closed, more ‘it’s my
culture, anything that's opposing it is wrong', kind of thing. Sometimes we need to look at it globally and see if we're being unreasonable, that can only come out if you understand the other side' (s1-30). This understanding of both sides was for many students (more than half) something that needed to be learnt, they had to get “used to the fact that things or discussions don't end” (s2-20), that the resolving of a particular issue may not be in a definitive ‘yes’ or ‘no’, but more often in a ‘maybe’ or a ‘sometimes’ or some other un-decisive (not indecisive) and contextual compromise:

>This is what changed my way of thinking, that I always, sometimes, when I speak or when I write an essay, or when I think about something, I always think about both sides (s2-20).

This thinking about both sides is part of what four respondents referred to as critical thinking, saying that “before I would be more 'yes and a smile', but here it would be more like 'why?' Do I really want that?' (s1-28), as well as being able to “question the entire premise behind things” (s2-4), or “questioning like, how do we know of things, how do we perceive things?” (s2-9) although in doing so, “I am constantly like, contradicting myself … in seeing both sides, because you have to” (s1-12). But ‘critical thought’ in and of itself does not seem to adequately cover the change in thinking that the respondents were trying to articulate. Critical thinking is elevated to a necessary survival skill in a place like MUWCI, what one respondent referred to as the “skill of the middle ground” (s2-10), which seems to combine the “skill of being adaptive” (s2-8) with the absence of concrete points from which to adapt from and to. This 'skill of the middle ground', more than simply critical thought, is what students gain through their MUWCI experience. It is a skill that needs to be acquired through practice and over time, and for a mind that is more accustomed to tangible truth, or even intangible ideas of faith, the transition to an environment of unrelenting middle-ness is not easy:

>There is something very interesting about here - in any discussion you never reach a conclusion, like with anybody … sometimes we talk about an issue for an hour … but you never reach a conclusion. There are always people trying to prove points, people at different levels of pragmatism, idealism, and you never reach a conclusion, but yes, sometimes I do walk out very frustrated from these discussions. I hardly ever talk, because whatever you say you know you could be contradicted by someone who is talking about the other end (s1-14).

In the end, the question of what the students learned or how they changed is difficult to fully answer with a method that relies on their own perceptions from within the experience. Perhaps they would be better positioned to comment once the experience was over, having had time to re-integrate into their home cultures or into a university setting and having had time to reflect on the
whole MUWCI experience. Nevertheless, their responses to these questions provide insight into how the experience, as described by the students, may affect them in terms of learning and growth. The next section briefly presents student responses to two questions that are central to the lessons said to be imparted by an international education and possibly a measure of how students of the UWCs come to view the world and the people in it in light of developing the ‘skill of the middle ground’ described above.

6.5.2 Big or Small, Same or Different?
Respondents were asked if, now that they had these ‘international experiences’, they thought the world had become a bigger or smaller place, and if they felt people the world over are the same or different. Although these questions are rather vague and not a full or necessarily accurate measure of the learning students undergo, they were understood by students and teacher respondents as summing up “the biggest goal of the UWCs” (s2-16): that is, to show that the world is not so big and we are “all one people” (s1-27); “I would guess even the implicit or even the unstated [goal of international education] is to get these cultures together and try to get them to see how little they actually differ from each other” (s2-4).

This cross-cultural experience is, in part, balanced by pointing out the diversity of cultures and the similarities between people, our differences and our essential sameness, and student respondents mirrored this two-fold message by responding on both sides of the argument. Some emphasized human sameness: “Now I realise … a different nationality is just like having a different name … nationality is no different than name, that's the only difference” (s2-17) or:

It's an annoying cliche, because I think it's quite true, this idea of the world as one family … when I'm down [in the village] and I see kind of, I see these guys laughing and … hanging around, just as if I were to hang around with my friends back home…. [Or] meeting this [local] guy, you know, he's walking along the road, just the way I am, obviously our backgrounds have been different … but then, we're walking along the same road, both of our legs are aching, both of us have respect for each other – in a way, all the material-ideological ideas are overlooked and you kind of connect on this human level (s2-5).

Other students emphasized differences between people: “People are very different. Extremely different…. They're just different! You know, people are different! You can't explain it – it's just, they think differently, they act differently, they're different” (s1-30). One student described certain social implications of that difference:
I don't know if it's good or bad that we're all different – in a sense, I think it's good that we have differences – I think that it does hurt us in some ways ... because of all these differences we have, we won't ever be truly unified, but whether being unified is actually a good thing or not, I don't know. But definitely I can see that we're not all the same (s2-4).

Few of these responses could be categorized discretely, since for the most part, if respondents did not begin with the emphasis on ‘both’ then their emphasis on either sameness or difference was quickly qualified in such a way as to bring them closer to the middle ground, where “people have many things in common, but they also have many things which are not in common” (s2-8) or with an understanding of the problem being more complex than black and white distinctions: “You cannot say different or the same, because this concept is opposites, it is not like that” (s2-16).

There were those who started with sameness but for differences in personality and there were also those who moved from the idea of essential sameness to differences in “ideas [and] opinions” (s1-22) based on culture and lived experience in “different realities” (s2-17). There was also very much an expression that these were themselves changing over time, not necessarily towards sameness or difference, but towards the idea of ‘both’; pre-empted by one teacher who said:

We are all on some level, beyond our gender, beyond our culture, beyond our religion, beyond our race, we are all humans. And so we need to recognize that humanity. ... [But] I have asked students this question, and the answer in life is always both, like clearly that's one of my truisms; the answer is always both (t-19).

That the answer was ‘both’, that people “are all the same, but we have our differences” (s2-10), was a common view amongst students who felt that “culture only goes so far” (s1-12) since “people are the same in biology [and] in habits and behaviours and many things” (s2-16), but “it's not something that's inborn or anything” (s2-4). For many of these respondents, it was the experience at MUWCI that had helped them address if not decide on issues of human commonality and diversity:

You realize that the other people on the other side of the world are very similar to you and you are all people and you all have beliefs, you really all have the same structure ... you all have religion, some beliefs and some morals, you all have past experiences, you all have future plans, and some of them criss-cross, and some paths are similar, and other paths are different, and generally we are doing the same thing (s2-10).
Along with the differences and commonalities of our species came questions of the perceived size of the planet on which we live. For some students, the experience of travelling to India and attending a UWC with peers from so many other countries made the world seem larger and more inclusive, for others it made it seem smaller and more accessible. What is interesting about this change in perspective is that respondents often cited the same reasons and the same rationale for the world seeming smaller as others did for it seeming bigger. For example, some saw having peers from all over the planet as opening up the world into a much bigger place:

> It has to come bigger because I know now, if I read about Jamaica in the newspaper, I have my room-mate from there, if I hear about the Maldives and something is happening, and then I can go to that person and say, 'Hey what's up, what's that?' So it has become bigger but more familiar (s2-7).

By contrast, others saw the experience of having “the whole world … on one campus” (s1-30) as bringing the world closer to them and making the world smaller “in terms of the fact that I know almost one person from every single country of the world” (s1-22):

> I think smaller. Smaller because, I mean … here there is someone that I can talk to and that makes the world closer to you. And this comes and it reduces, get what I mean? Just an idea, like the world is near, close to you – you can approach, you can hold (s2-16).

A similar discrepancy in reason occurs between students who related travelling to India, or travelling in general, as affecting their perception of the size of the world. Some thought the world was “much bigger” (s2-17) because they had opportunity to see more of it: “Like I don't know, travelling, for example – you can't go to any two places and find the same thing… the world is just big… I don't think that the fact that now you can meet people randomly makes it a small world. It's a big place” (s2-29). For very similar reasons, other students felt the world was “tiny” (s1-30) or saw it as having “gotten smaller” (s1-27), saying “I think it has gotten smaller … because before I thought India was something really far away, and now I have been here” (s2-8).

As with the question of human diversity and similarity, the answer to the question of the world as big or small may very well be “both” (s2-31), or the concepts of big and small don’t quite fit the complexity of the question:

> The world is still as big … you think in a different way and you perceive things differently, or through many aspects…. I think if a globe would have sides, the world has more sides to me now…. Everything that [has] happened in the world I relate it to someone I know … so in that extent it comes closer to you … but I don't know if the
world becomes smaller then, because you [then] directly think of that other person ‘on the other side of the world’, so the place is larger again (s2-20).

Whether students believe it is a small world with different people, or a big world with similar people, or any combination thereof, is secondary to the fact that the international education and the MUWCI experience has the students engaging with and thinking about questions of this nature, and more so, has them shifting from singularity to multiplicity and ‘both-ness’ in perspective. The following section presents selected comments from student and teacher respondents that highlight the means through which students grow, change, engage with and learn some of the lessons and subjectively feel the changes discussed above.

6.6 How They Learned

Comments from respondents on how they learned what they learned fell into two broad areas: one to do with the juxtaposition between the formal curriculum and the informal social aspects of college life; and the other to do with the freedom and responsibility students were given on campus, in the local communities and India at large. This freedom was perceived by students to be kept in check by the constraints of living in an isolated community and also perceived as under threat by administrative changes to the project week program. It is important to keep in mind that much of the student commentary is coloured by this perception of threat and constraint and some of the data presented has been lifted out of this angst in order to stay focused on the research questions.

The students’ beliefs that the bulk of their learning occurred through being “pushed emotionally, personally, and socially” (s2-29) and by “sharing experiences” (s1-14) with “people from all over the world” (s2-17) have already been presented in the preceding sections of this chapter. To again draw out these views would be overstating the case. Suffice to say that even teacher respondents de-emphasized the role of the IB and its delivery as a source of learning:

I think for most of them it is not going to the IB or even being out here in India, it’s the experience with each other, you know, I mean the interaction with so many different people from different countries, and there is no doubt that is one of the most amazing things probably here (t-33).

When formal aspects of the curriculum were cited by students as sources of learning and growth, they were positioned equally with aspects of community life and cast in a supporting role for “discussions on campus that randomly occur between people, mainly based on the philosophy
and the TOK course, and ... global affairs” (s2-10) taking in-class lessons and extending them into the social realm:

You could get the correct information if you went to a book ... but it's hard to get an image in your brain. There's much more that you can learn and feel and identify with because you are making friends (s1-14).

However, it is not enough to simply say that students felt contact with each other was the source of all their learning, as it would obviously be more the source of learning about, for example, different cultures than about mathematics or physics. Again, without overstating the case, it was in terms of different perspectives and ways of perceiving the world that respondents felt they gained from their peers. In particular, they said that "being friends with people that have completely different views from your own" (s1-15a) allowed them to “get the most of many perspectives in the same common program” (s2-3) and “to take in others’ ideas and points of view is the biggest gain you can have” (s1-14):

You see different people and their perspectives and you see how your own perspective has a bit of shape in, like, the kind of media you have seen, the sort of education you have already had, sort of family upbringing that you have been through, and how other people from other cultures would see it differently (s1-23).

One respondent commented that it was “a chance ... to be schooled as a minority” (s2-10). This was a simple comment that sums up what many of the MUWCI students are talking about when they refer to contact with other perspectives; that they are also referring to the fact that they are no longer immersed in their own culture, can no longer hold the same cultural assumptions they once did, and are thus alone, or a minority, in the way they see the world. This is an expression of Simmel’s (1950, c.1908) and Park’s (1928) outsider, stranger and marginal perspectives as a source of learning and growth.

6.6.1 Travel and Mobility

Students also described travel, both in terms of coming to India and travel within India, as a source of learning and growth. Discussions of travel focused largely on project week, where opportunities for interacting with other students and opportunities to explore India were viewed as central to the whole MUWCI experience. Project week is not the only contact students have with India, in fact they are given considerable mobility, being free to travel to the local villages daily and the larger city on weekends. Respondents commented to the effect that “this education is so dependent on these opportunities to get off campus” (s2-17), and to, “you know, get to smell it – get to smell India – that is always what I say” (s2-6). Students felt that to smell, see or “really
know India, you should get out there and travel” (s1-24), should “have to go find [India] out on your own” (s1-15) and be “confronted with a lot of these things that you initially wouldn’t” (s2-31):

I noticed that the first-years who stayed [and travelled in India] over Christmas and didn’t go home, they changed so much, their personalities developed so much, they were so different after the three weeks travelling in India, than their class-mates that went home. So I think the project week is such a development time and to miss out on that I find sad (s2-7).

Students also saw opportunities for this kind of contact with India in the contact they had with the local village and surrounding urban centres. They described “some of [their] best experiences at MUWCI, walking back from [the local village]” (s2-5) and said “if you go down to the village, there is so much new stuff and things to learn from” (s1-14). Students saw this learning in the local villages as tied into ideas of personal growth, development and independence:

Every day we are allowed to leave campus ... every weekend we can go spend a day and a night in Pune. Which is something that I think is good, that sort of made me independent. Cooking noodles, doing my own washing. The fact that if I go to Pune, that I choose the market I buy my own things, I have to think about things that I need and it’s not my mum (s1-22).

More than independence, contact with the local area, and broader contact with India, provided opportunity for students to seek sources of learning that the college could not provide:

The whole point right now is that we can go down and do these things, whatever the school doesn't provide, we can just go out and take it, take anything from India we want, and, as well, it is really nice (s2-31).

Students also presented the idea that the main things the college could not provide in and of itself were opportunities to practise what has been learned within the closed community in an open or ‘real’ context such as India. That within the ‘ready-made’ social life and class-room experience at MUWCI there was little room to apply certain lessons, for example, “my history teacher tells me something, and I know it, but I don’t realize it, when I am going out there and am experiencing it, it makes me realize it’ (s2-9). So outside the formal curriculum, out of class time and even further a field, out of MUWCI all together, is where students pointed to as the source for some significant learning and development. Issues of travel, mobility and freedom as they pertain to the project week program will be discussed in Chapter 7.
6.6.2 Freedom to Learn

Along with and part of the mobility described above, MUWCI students enjoy a certain degree of personal freedom on campus and through a student-sourced approach to several aspects of college life and schooling:

They know that this is an amazing country, and so again they give us the liberty and they don't force us... I think this is one of the great things about MUWCI is the amount of freedom we have here (s2-5).

Students felt this was “liberating” (s2-29) and that integral to “the MUWCI life-style [were] the specifically MUWCI ideals of freedom and responsibility” (s2-29). The whole MUWCI project was described by teacher respondents as one that “sees a lot of value in students having that kind of freedom [and does not] believe in imposing unnecessary restrictions” (t-19). Most teachers (all but one) felt that “the [freedom] ideology sort of runs across the spectrum here” (t-19) and “is absolutely vital to achieve the mission statement [of the UWCs]” (t-34):

[Students] are allowed to make their choices and fail or succeed and learn from each other to a great extent, to a much greater extent than they would be at a normal high school, and so they allowed to at an earlier age, so they're two years ahead of 99.9 percent of the world, and so they continue to stay ahead of them, because they are always pushing further. Because they are taught to push here, they always continue to push (t-19).

This freedom is provided in social liberties such as “no [fixed] time to go to bed” (s2-5), the freedom to use the facilities in the local villages, flexible eating arrangements, as well as trying to be as inclusive as is reasonably possible in making administrative and college-wide decisions; a level of involvement that is not common in a secondary school setting. Students understood their involvement in the process of institutional change and growth as “to do with the school getting older ... here it's I think the most free UWC. And it's changing with age” (s2-4). Student respondents, as well as students I spoke with informally, found this open and obvious opportunity for institutional change, and direct involvement in that change, empowering and expressed what seemed a strong sense of ownership over the direction in which this relatively young college would move over the next few years:

I think the amazing thing is that we are building this college, this place, it is still in a process, we are very much involved in it ... things were very different last year, and they will change over the next few years ... we have student meetings, and we talk about things, and ... the faculty listen to us and we are involved in making this place, like building this place, very much (s2-9).
I want to improve this college, not ... in the sense that it's gone really bad, but I think that our role like, in the first ten years, first twenty years, is to keep it progressive ... since I've been a student here, it's progressed (s1-27).

One teacher summed up the students' involvement in administrative and school-wide decisions by saying that “no school is a democracy” (t-34), but that freedom, responsibility and involvement are:

part of the experience here – that we go a long way further than we would if our job was to run a day-school in a national or international school.... In order to fulfil the objectives of this place, there has to be a different relationship between ... the students and the faculty, but the bottom line is that there are certain absolute non-negotiables. ... But we try to do it in such a way [that] you carry people with you, you know it is part of the experience, part of the education that they understand why there are certain decisions (t-34).

Almost all of the activities and events during the year are sourced and carried out through student initiative, so along with freedom they are burdened with responsibility for their own experience:

We’re leading the activities... everything is arranged by groups of students, so you have a lot of meetings to go to (s1-28).

The burden of responsibility for school life was also extended into the class-room experience where students reported “depending a lot on the learner more than the teachers” (s1-14) who “tell you ‘we have an assignment’ but they don’t tell you what you have to do ... [so] I think I have learned to do stuff on my own and to be independent in my work” (s2-18). Teacher respondents spoke of a conscious effort by MUWCI faculty to “not be over the students, [but to be] at their level” (t-26), or to minimize power imbalances by taking a “passive role as a teacher” (t-21). Minimizing the power they had over the students, in the class-room and across the MUWCI experience, centred and sourced the learning in students:

The way I teach, it’s a very student-centred, decentralizing the role of the teacher, is to decentralize the role of authority on the whole ... what I am doing is showing them that they need to, not necessarily hold the authority positions on high – they need to question them, and they need to generate their own knowledge (t-19).

Overall, student respondents seemed to appreciate the opportunity to take control of their own learning and tended to fight to protect this kind of freedom when they perceived it to be compromised, but as reported above (section 6.3), one teacher found that “in the class, given that freedom, they don't necessarily respond to it. Yeah, it's a total contradiction ... they don't value the knowledge that they generate as highly as the knowledge that a teacher generates” (t-19).
From the student perspective, the “do-it-yourself” (s2-20) aspects of the college, extending from administration, to the class-room and into student life, where “the onus is still on you” (s1-27) was seen as empowering students, forcing them to “get up and find it” (s1-27) and to take ownership of the whole experience; “it's not that MUWCI learns you something – you have to learn yourself something” (s2-6). However, students being “at the same level as [the] teacher ... and having fifty-one percent of the authority” (s1-22) was questioned by some of the teachers, even those who endorsed the free nature of the college, as possibly being a bit too student-centred:

A lot of our things are very student-oriented, so ... at the top of the heap you have got the students, the second-years, and below them the first-years, and below them the teachers, and that is the way that the school is structured. ... It is a funny grey area ... there is something not quite right ... it's strange sometimes to be ... debating some of the things that get debated here (t-33).

6.6.3 Too Much Freedom?
Presumably (and according to about fifteen respondents) for most students the educational and personal freedom they had at MUWCI was different from what students their age would be experiencing in their home countries and was something they “have to learn how to deal with” (s2-18). Three students felt that the freedom they had at MUWCI was illusory, or that “there's not enough ... [and that] this place is really controlled by structure” (s1-28). The majority of respondents did not say this themselves, however, but suggested that other “people say we do not have enough freedom” (s1-25) or that students “complain [that] democracy and freedom here... is just a façade” (t-19) and “when they implement rules... people start getting excited about... [administration] removing our freedom” (s2-18).

Some students (five) believed that they might have too much freedom, saying that “it is easy to get intoxicated with the freedom that we have here” (s1-25) and teachers questioned whether the freedom that was presently such a big part of the MUWCI experience was “actually... sustainable ... I would argue there is too much freedom” (t-33). Certain abuses of freedom and a lack of consequences for those abuses were cited by those who felt the freedom was too much for the students who “choose to break the rules” (s1-14):

It is freedom without accountability is what it is, I feel ... we don't set any boundaries... they just carry on... with no consequences. I think everybody needs boundaries, and I think you need to know when you have reached the edge of those boundaries, and, you know, something has to kick in, and here it doesn't happen, and it is a bit frustrating from that sense (t-33).
Other respondents, teachers and students alike, felt that while certain students might be pushing their limits, most of the students “are behaving quite responsibly” (t-21) and stayed well within the bounds of acceptable behaviour, and that when they stepped out of those bounds there was opportunity to “learn through the mistakes you make” (s1-30) and “this freedom is for [developing] responsibility” (t-21). In terms of consequences, administration was said not to “get into petty things” (t-34), and preferred to allow the repercussion of students’ behaviour to manifest itself in relevant forms: if a student misses too many classes, then it will show up in their grades, or if a student offends the community or their house-mates, there will be social repercussions. There also exists a community contract that students are held accountable to:

The community contract comes into action ... the consequences are absolutely clear to see. ... If you're found with marijuana, you are expelled ... the people who went to town and have come back the worse for wear [drunk] all have their national committees alerted and their parents get involved. They all know that if it happens again, they will be expelled, so there are serious consequences (t-34).

There are also academic consequences which student respondents were quite conscious of, since in the last year, “several people have gotten kicked out for – if you don't keep your grades up enough ... if you don't attend your classes.... I think it was four people this year” (s2-4), “every year, two, three or four people don't make it into the second year for a variety of things” (t-34).

Despite clear consequences, there are still misuses of privilege and transgressions amongst the students, but as reported, they are viewed as mistakes from which students can learn:

If you are giving to the majority of the students the opportunity to grow from having that personal freedom, you have got to put up with the fact that behind your back there will be people who misuse that, we know that they misuse it. You hope, as I have seen, that even having misused it, they have gone forward from here and grown from it. ... There is always the opportunity to learn from the fact that you have misused your freedom. ... The majority gain huge benefits from that (t-34).

Freedom seemed central to the MUWCI experience, and the issues of whether students had too much or not enough, or if they were losing it in being excluded from certain decisions, were major concerns for student respondents. Overall, the strongest message that came through was that “there are always people that can't handle it, and there are people that want more. ... I feel for most people, the freedom you get teaches them something, and pushes them on their own limits, and makes them find out things about themselves” (s2-29). It allows students to test and experiment with ideas of right and wrong, in simply providing them the choice of misuses and the potential for transgressions:
Coming here has just made me even more aware of the fact that I have a lot of will-power and I have the strength to not, when I have been in a place where I could, do absolutely whatever I want, you know? (s2-11).

Being free to make choices, establish priorities, make mistakes and misuse their privileges, students learn that “academically, socially, and in terms of maturity, they can look after themselves – they have learned to look after themselves here” (t-34), and that “the freedom I have on this campus really just made me a stronger person” (s2-11). Again, one of the largest benefits of this freedom is that it empowered the students and placed the responsibility for the experience and the education with them:

It’s what you make out of it, if you don’t feel like studying, if you don’t feel like doing your activities, you don’t do it. Nobody is going to tell you you should do your homework, and nobody is going to tell you you should sleep, you know (s2-6).

6.7 MUWCI Bubble: Free but not Free

Even with all the freedom and responsibility, respondents felt that “being in a UWC is really like being in a bubble” (s1-23), or “a protected environment” (s2-9), that they were “isolated up here on the hill” (s1-14), “extremely isolated like a cage” (s2-7) and that “the isolation can drive you nuts sometimes” (s2-11):

Something just makes you feel like you’re in a prison – these walls, although they look quite pretty, in this nice Indian stone, sometimes they’re so constricting and so constraining, the fact that all the rooms are the same, and you eat in the cafeteria every day (s2-5).

Respondents expressed feeling isolated from many things, including ‘real life’ itself, because they are “not really confronted with things” (s2-9), that “on this hill you don’t have the real life; you have your UWC, and MUWCI life” (s2-20). They also expressed the view that despite the apparent international-ness of the experience, “being in a bubble, it’s kind of hard to get through to the outside world, and vice versa” (s2-29), citing the fact that they had little access to news media, current affairs and global issues: “I miss sometimes the international aspect because when I was at home I had more information from the rest of the world, and now I don’t” (s2-20). Respondents also felt that they were “on an island” (t-33) “isolated from the community” (t-32) in which the college was set. Even the activities that involved students interacting with the local community were questioned by one student as being just “some isolated [charity or project], again a bubble, [where] the people [we are serving] get driven in jeeps up here” (s2-7). Beyond the local community, respondents also questioned whether they were overly isolated from Indians
in general and the country as a whole: "In this world of our own nothing that happens out there in
the daily lives of people in Pune ... is going to affect us" (s1-24):

In our bubble we don't have so much interaction with anyone else. It's only ... during the
days you happen to go to Pune, whatever, walk out into the valley ... [that we] see how life outside in India really is (s2-4).

Students felt that this isolation or bubble in which they lived, and all the amenities that the bubble
provided, called into question the responsibility and independence that the college was said to
instil, because “here you cannot say that you are really independent” (s2-3):

On this campus, you have everything that you need, like you wake up, you go to the
cafeteria and breakfast is there – you don't have food to worry about ... there are toilets
with seats and paper. There are snacks and lunch, and you have your room right here,
your friends are here (s2-17).

This bubble, and the fact that “people are very comfortable sitting on the hill” (s2-5), provides as
much a sense of security and insulation as it does a sense of isolation; providing a “place that
[students] can sleep at night without worrying about being robbed or raped” (s1-24). In this
sense, the isolation provides space in which students can focus on accomplishing what is required
of them, as “people would be disrupted” (s1-14) if they were “right in the middle of the
developing world all the time” (s1-27). So while students felt caged to a certain extent, they also
appreciated, and were in a way liberated by, the respite and the comfort they found inside the
MUWCI walls: “You get really exhausted just travelling and being out in India” (s1-28), so
returning to campus “you're like ‘Oh my god, it’s so nice to be back’ because it’s like a break
from India” (s2-17).

Having a safe and secure retreat space is important, but the stronger message that came across
from student and teacher respondents was that “it is nice to just break away from this isolation
and go somewhere” (t-32). Respondents felt that to get the full value of their experience at
MUWCI they needed to extend themselves beyond the bubble and try to break the isolation
because “if you are in India, you should experience India, and you should not stay closed in a
place like this – it’s Indian-ish but not quite Indian-ish” (s1-3). One student summed up the
isolation/insulation situation by, once again, suggesting that the answer might be both, that
students needed to be able to move back and forth between the freedom they felt in India and the
encapsulation of the college:

Sometimes you get sick of the life of the elite, you know, so then you go down there, and
you get sick of life down there and you come back here – it's twofold (s1-14).
Students have quite a bit of liberty within MUWCI, but feel tied down in the trappings of comfort and the isolation they feel from the world, from the local community and from India and its people. In this way they feel that they are free, but at the same time not free; that their freedom truly comes when they step outside of the college walls and enter 'India proper'.

6.7.1 India but not India

The question was raised of just what was ‘India’ for the students, or if inside the college walls students felt they were really in ‘India’:

I ask myself this often. Many people think that we are only on top of this hill at a UWC, but I think it’s an exaggeration. You are on top of the hill AND in India (s2-8).

Again the answer is both, that MUWCI is both India and not India at the same time, exemplified beautifully in responses to the question that went something to the effect of “yyyyaannoo” (s1-15a) or “nnnooooyyaa” (s1-15b). Mostly though, before giving their responses, students and teachers, Indians and non-Indians, asked me, “What do you mean by ‘India’?” (t-21; s1-13), qualifying India “as a country, compared to any other country in the world, is very hard to put a finger on, and say, ‘This is India.’ ... there are very many kinds of India” (t-33):

First of all, you can’t say something is India. ... India is as much [the local] valley, the village around here, as the top place in Bombay, as everywhere in Varanassi. In India, there are many realities (s2-16).

Respondents were quite aware that there are as many ‘Indias’ as there are Indians, that “you’ve got seventy percent of the people living below the poverty line [but] ... then you go to Bombay and you have the cosmopolitan people – the people who don’t know about all this” (s2-11). They said that there are as many ‘Indias’ as there are dispositions and motivations among Indians, that they will go out of their way to help you, “but then some people really rip you off, oh man ... they trick you” (s1-15a). And so India could be confusing, frustrating and take some getting used to:

Well, everything takes more time [in India], nothing is efficient, just painfully slow sometimes. Nothing is working and nobody feels the need to fix it. The internet doesn't work, the phone doesn't work, the Indians don't work [laughing]. You get cheated even in the college by the company that runs the phones, and it doesn't matter. ... Maybe not for Indians is it a problem, but for foreigners it is. Then having said that, Indian people are really amazing, they are so friendly and they try to help you as best they can (s2-8).
India has many ‘faces’, and the answer to the question of whether MUWCI is India was generally a simultaneous ‘yes’ and ‘no’, although more than half of the respondents were fairly certain that MUWCI was “not this Indian thing” (s2-20), “not even close” (s2-11), “definitely not” (s2-16), “doesn’t even claim to be an Indian thing” (s2-11) and this is “not India, this is a school that has been dropped in India” (s1-30):

No. No. No. Campus is an international school, a UWC, on the top of the hill in India. So what is surrounding us is India. The climate is India. The people who come to work here, most of them are Indians. But conditions here are very different from the rest of India ... here we have a more Western place, rather than Indian (s2-16).

Those who felt it was not India cited contrasts between the college and the rest of the country in “the fact that we have green grass, and gardens all around us” (s1-28), “the way [students] are dressing” (t-32), “because I have all the luxury I have at home” (s2-9) and “the fact that I am at ease means I am definitely not in India, the fact that I have space and colour around me, this is not India at all” (s1-22). Others cited the distance between the people at MUWCI and the people of India, “We are in India but we are nowhere near ... people” (s1-24), and similarly, the distance between mentalities:

Well, technically yes, mentally no. OK, there are people out there who have the same sort of outlook on the world as we try to get up here, but the people in India are very focused on India and that is why this is not really India, really (s1-25).

However, others felt that ‘yes’, MUWCI was India, or that there was much of India in MUWCI:

There are so many things from Indian culture at this college, the way things are done is Indian, the food is Indian, everything is done in an Indian way ... the buildings are Indian, everything is Indian, and we have lots of Indian people (s2-8).

These respondents saw parallels between what they perceived as the chaos of India and what they saw as MUWCI’s ‘free’ systems: “India ... the streets, the roads, it's all a bit unorganized ... it's all a bit panicky, which I quite like. There's a bit of that at MUWCI – things often don't work and the fact that there's not this big structure” (s2-5). I don’t believe respondents were making these comments as a criticism of India or MUWCI, but more as a comment that they could feel some of what they felt in India, in the College:

That's how India works. ... It seems like from the outside there is no system, people turn up late, you know it runs on a whole different set of rules, so the fact that our college is like that too is a great way to experience the culture (s1-15b).
One teacher respondent made a careful distinction between the common stereotypes of a poor India and the educated portion of the population as “more the modern version of India” (s1-30) that was well represented at MUWCI:

I wouldn't say [MUWCI] is not India. I think that the educated, like my cohorts in the faculty here ... are just as much India as the shanty towns of Bombay – the National Geographic stereotype (t-19).

For some, MUWCI is India, and for others it is not, but overall the answer is still both ‘yes’ and ‘no’: “It's definitely India, but it's not India like it is anywhere else” (s2-29) “it's a variation of India ... we are in India, you can't escape being in India, everything from the weather to the people we deal with is India, but what you have up here is kind of a different sort of India” (s2-29). MUWCI is a different India than the India, or Indias, which exist outside the college walls; it is India but only because certain aspects of India penetrate the bubble and “because [students] have lots of chances to go out, like every weekend and on these project weeks” (s1-15a). Without these opportunities to get out of the bubble, students would not necessarily see that “India is not the reality of this campus. ... If you go travel and you see India you will think that it is a completely different reality” (s2-17):

The only time we're in the real India is on project weeks when we go travelling or our weekends when we go to Pune. ... That's how we're IN India, that's how we SEE India, living in India, and it's one thing for me to say. ‘Oh, I lived in India for two years’, but I didn't ... live in a shack or whatever, you know, I didn't have to really fend for myself ... the only part that I lived in India is when I [travelled] and went to a work in an orphanage ... or I went to this village ... went on project week and I visited this village way up north ... and it's not a touristy thing ... when you travel then you're more with living in India, you know, you're going to find yourself a place to stay, you're going eat some food from wherever (s2-10).

This chapter has presented respondent’s comments in response to research question 1a and 1b. The reader should now have a clear understanding of how students and teachers at MUWCI understand their experience of international education. This data will be discussed in Chapter 8 in relation to liminality and international education literature presented in Chapters 2 and 3 in order to address research question 1. The following chapter, Chapter 7, presents the students and teacher’s views and experiences of the project week programs (addressing research questions 2a and 2b) which allow them the opportunity to break out of the isolation they feel at MUWCI and experience India, so providing them with opportunity to connect the ideas of ‘the global’, implicit in international education, with the reality of ‘the local’, in this case India.
CHAPTER SEVEN: Finding Project Week

There is an Indian proverb that ‘you learn in the schools or you travel’. ... It’s like, you go to school; that also gives some kind of education. It might be kind of formal, but at the same time if you travel, that also gives you a lot of exposure; that also gives you a lot of knowledge over time (t-21).

For ten days, twice a year, midway through each semester, students at MUWCI are expected to follow the advice of this Indian proverb and embark on what is referred to across the UWC movement as ‘project week’. Each college puts their distinctive mark on the program based on the opportunities provided in their specific context, and so project week at MUWCI should not be taken as representative of project weeks across the UWC movement. This research sought students’ experiences of international education at MUWCI, but focused specifically on their experiences with the project week program because the literature suggests that such programs are central to an international education. The data presented thus far also suggest that the project week is an important feature in the students’ experience at MUWCI, in that some of what students valued in their international education is also seen as central to the project week program. In this chapter a brief explanation of the forms and structures of project week is presented, including the changes that had been made to the program just prior to this research. The two distinct models of project week (as it had been prior to 2004 and as it had become for the first semester of 2004) are discussed where appropriate but the focus of this chapter is on students’ and teachers’ understanding of their project week experiences, not the differences between the two incarnations of the program. The issues that arose from this data are later discussed in terms of project week’s relationship to experiential education, international education and the MUWCI experience.

7.1 Project Week in a Process of Change

The traditional model for project week was sourced in student initiative and based on students planning and developing their own experiences or working cooperatively within small groups of students and teachers to plan and lead trips. Groups were required to create a rough plan through pre-booking train tickets and submitting a two-page planning form. This form required groups to provide a “list of all members in the group and a designated project leader ... provide departure and return details ... transport details ... [and] the name of the town in which the group intends on staying each night” (MUWCI, 2004, pp. 1-2). Project week planning forms also require a
designated project leader to sign and agree to five rules: “Stick to the itinerary, check in with all
group members each night, contact the project week coordinator back at MUWCI regularly,
travel in groups of five or more at all times, [and] carry a list of emergency contacts” (MUWCI,
2004, p. 2). Three other rules surfaced during interviews: that trips must stay within the Indian
mainland, students must not travel by airplane and when travelling by train must not travel in
first-class cabins.

Each year there are a range of ‘project’ oriented options organized by teachers and students,
including visits to wildlife sanctuaries, work with Habitat for Humanity, disaster relief
organizations and environmental NGOs, river and mountain-based adventure trips, and living
experiences in Adivasis tribal villages. However, it was suggested that it was a “misnomer to call
it project week” (t-33) as the “following the Lonely Planet [guidebook]” (s2-5) style backpacking
that many of the students do during their week may not fit the same definition of ‘project’ as
might volunteering on a relief project with an NGO. Backpacking projects were a popular choice,
but many “students want to make sense of the project week... see what India is all about and ... [there are] some who want to actually go to these NGOs and work, ... the interests are quite
varied, there is a mix” (t-32). Because of these varied interests, choice was reported as an
important feature of the program as it had been implemented prior to 2004:

I would agree with the idea to have some project weeks, whether teacher-led or student-led,
that actually go and do something concrete – go and build a house ... or something like that.
But I disagree with the idea that people should be forced to do that. Like I think this learning,
becoming independent, it is just as important, if not more than doing something supposedly
‘concrete’ (s2-4).

In sum, the traditional project week model incorporates the freedom, mobility, choice,
responsibility and independence that were reported in the previous chapter as central features of
MUWCI’s approach to international education. This allowed students to take control of their own
experience, but required of them the maturity and responsibility to independently manage both
the potential for learning and the potential for risk associated with travelling in India. This is an
excursion that requires the college to trust the students to “just get a group of three or four kids
together and ... go out and do whatever they want ... everywhere in India” (t-19). This degree of
freedom is rare, even among international schools, and can be understood as an approach to an
experientially-based international education that is consistent with certain core aspects (but not
all aspects) of experiential education, international education and the culture that has developed at MUWCI.

Figure 5 shows some examples of where respondents in the sample said they had been for past project weeks or where they were going based on the project week forms they had submitted.

Figure 5: Project Week Destinations (adapted from Maps of India, 2005)

The concerns that sparked the changes to the structure of the project week program in 2004 were based on a rationale of minimizing risk to the students and the reputation of the college stemming
from the college having “to act *in loco parentis*” (s2-5). These issues were said by respondents to have been raised by the UWC international office, MUWCI administration and faculty and sourced in the questions of parents and students prior to attending. There were also the pedagogical concerns raised by teachers that project week might be a better learning experience if it slowly introduced students to the skills required for travelling in India, was integrated into the ‘This is India’ course and involved more “concrete follow-up activities” (t-33). Student respondents also mentioned that some might squander the potential for learning by focusing overly on the ‘vacation’ aspect of the week or by ‘partying’ excessively:

I mean, since we have complete freedom in what to do, you may as well just go party in Goa the whole week… I think that is actually not appropriate (s2-9).

Goa, a colonial Portuguese beach paradise and tourist ‘hot-spot’, where travellers go to enjoy beach and night-life presents a significant draw for students, yet represented a squandering of the project week experience for most respondents, rendering it “a bit pointless, because you’re not even doing anything good for yourself” (s1-15b). This was not because Goa itself was a poor destination or did not offer a valid experience of India, but because “some people have wanted to go to Goa for every project week” (s2-4) and “if you go every time, it’s the same thing; you need to experience something different” (s2-8). In returning to one place time and time again, one is not stepping out of the MUWCI bubble, or personal comfort zone, but merely extending it to include a repetitive experience. Other ‘misuses’ of project week cited by respondents were that some opted out of the experience all together by staying on campus, saying “they have too much work” (s2-7), and that many Indian students took the opportunity to go home for the week.

Based on these concerns, project week went from a choice between self-directed backpacking experience or organized ‘projects’, to mandatory, teacher supervised trips, with the intention of gradually loosening the supervision over the subsequent project weeks, and culminating in a student-led model:

Now what’s tightened up is that first project week for the first-years, will be with a member of faculty, and that’s a question of safety in the sense of the student, not letting them loose two months after they arrive in India, you know they get used – with a member of faculty there – to travelling in India first, then I feel, having done that, they go onto the other three projects, they know what they are about, they have been in India long enough, they know what they can and they can’t do, they know how to behave; to be safe (t-34).
In this new model, first-year students were sent in pre-determined groups with local tourism companies “in ten different states” (t-32) who provided “ten different ‘itinerized’ projects” (t-32). Most respondents felt “[the] travel agent really let [the college] down” (t-32) with “extremely badly planned” (s1-12) sight-seeing bus tours. It seemed that the agencies were over-promising and under-delivering, resulting in students “paying way more\(^{26}\) and getting way less” (t-32). The irony is that respondents felt they were paying for services which they did not require and which were also detracting from the experience and the potential for learning. These included having “the travel agent book the buses, trains and hotels” (s1-12), traditionally done by students under the guidance of the project week coordinator, and overly extravagant transportation, with “TOURIST VEHICLE written ... in huge yellow letters” (s1-27) across the side in which they “travelled around India behind a screen” (s1-25).

As a group, the students reacted to this change with a public objection voiced through community meetings, student-only meetings, and a great deal of debate with each other and the faculty. There was a fair degree of emotion surrounding the topic and some of the loudest complaints came from second-year students in defence of project week as they understood it, saying, “it’s supposed to be travel on your own, go where you want to” (s1-12), not “a totally tourist experience” (s2-4) which was in the end described by some first-years as “boring” (s1-24). However, students also displayed a measure of understanding and acceptance of the rationale behind the new structures during the first project week, citing personal “safety ... confidence ... and security” (s2-10) as important for allowing them to travel confidently. In no case did student or teacher respondents express overall satisfaction with the changes, or believe them to have adequately addressed either the pedagogical issues or the issues of risk identified with the traditional project week model. The response from the college’s administration was that as long as they could “limit the possibilities of danger” (t-26), they were open to getting involved with students in the development of the program and which all parties agreed was in need of a “better framework” (t-33).

Much of the interview commentary was to do with these ‘politics’ of project week and opinions ranged from hard-line, freedom-oriented students, to students who appreciated certain aspects of

\(^{26}\) The cost of project week is shouldered by students, hence the focus from many on ‘shoe-string’ budget backpacking. In outsourcing the program the cost was reported as going from about “4000 rupees [$130 NZD] at most ... [to between] 6000 and 8000 rupees [$190 and $260 NZD]” (s2-9) including both the flat fee for the trips and ‘extras’. 
the change. It is important to keep in mind that the students' reactions to these changes colour much of the data and that first year respondent had a very different project week experience than their second year counterparts. The rest of this chapter presents data aimed at answering this study's second research question and its sub-questions and in order to maintain this focus I have had to lift out the data regarding student experiences with the trips from these 'political' comments and complaints.

7.2 Why Project Week?

Programs such as project week in UWCs, and CAS in the IB, are rooted in a tradition of experience, ordeal and service stemming from Kurt Hahn's early involvement in the UWC movement. The short answer to the question of 'why?' is that "project week is such a development time" (s2-7) during which "the point is to experience" (s2-8). The long answer follows in this section and includes learning, growth and experiences in terms of the skills necessary for travelling in India, direct contact with the local culture, contact with each other in the local context, strengthening of personal ties between students and within the MUWCI community, the development of responsibility, independence, initiative, leadership and encouraging ownership of experiences and accountability for decisions. Also, project week provides opportunities to apply some of the lessons of an international education in a real and relevant context outside of the college walls where the ideology of the UWCs can find a practical outlet.

Teachers described project week as "a vital sort of learning experience" (t-33) and one that was "priceless ... [and] a very important part of the MUWCI life" (t-21) since "ninety percent [of students] came back with high energy levels ... [it] was clearly a very positive experience for them" (t-33). These high energy levels can be attributed, in part, to the first 'why' of project week, which is to provide students with an opportunity to find time to decompress and relax. As such, using project week as a vacation (e.g., Goa) is not entirely inappropriate, since according to students "we [have] a lot of pressure" (s2-17), so "I want to go to Goa and relax, and do nothing there ... and I think that's fine, I really think that's okay, because we're in a school where there is no vacation" (s1-13) and "I have IB [examinations] starting up in two months and ... I have travelled so much in India and now I need a vacation" (s2-8). Teachers also felt that this was "okay, [students] all need a break after these exams" (t-32), and so ways of using project week as "a kind of release" (s2-17), "time to chill out [or] escape this place" (s2-5), and "having a good
time” (s2-31) were understood as underlying goals for the program. Providing an enjoyable experience is a goal which is meant to underlie and allow for the larger goals of providing students with experience in India and opportunities for personal development, both things that require students to act independently, take responsibility for their own learning and understand that project week is much more than a vacation, hence “it’s the students’ responsibility to understand what the point of project week actually is” (s1-12).

Another underlying ‘why’ of project week that allows access to experiences and facilitates the potential for learning and growth is the travelling itself:

Sometimes travelling around [in India] is confused and frustrating…. Yeah, you hate it, but you need it twice a year. I guess that’s the thing about project week (s1-14).

Backpacking and independent travel are skills that need to be developed, and MUWCI offers students an opportunity to do so in a country that the Lonely Planet travel guide describes as “a place to expect the unexpected … [where] travelling is so frustratingly draining, yet also so inimitably inspirational … [that it is] guaranteed to challenge, inspire and confound all at once” (Singh, 2003, pp. 17-18). During project weeks respondents travelled in a style described as “the whole backpacker, travelling, low budget thing” (s2-31) and one where “conditions are harder than they are [at MUWCI]” (s1-14). For some people this may not sound like an ideal way to travel, but MUWCI students “don’t mind roughing things out” (t-32):

None of us are picky, none of us want to be in a three-star hotel, and none of us want to be picked up by an air-conditioned, five-star bus. We would just get our backpacks and walk all day. We really are like that (s1-22).

This was a style of travel that was traditionally encouraged by the college (though now tempered with a bit more risk management in the new project week model) and one that set the experiences had by MUWCI students apart from the experiences students had at other international schools in the region:

Other schools really pamper their kids when they go out. You take [a school in] Bombay. … They will fly into a place, they will ‘jet’ them in, they will have a private air-conditioned bus that will take them out to their location. They are much more pampered, whereas I think our kids, you know, they do it in a much more basic level, they are trying to do it on a budget, and that’s valuable (t-33).

Part of the appeal of ‘roughing it’ for the students was expressed in the idea that to “miss out on the ‘wrong’ places” (s1-22) was as bad as missing out on the right ones, that “everyone should
experience the worst and the best to really have a feel” (s1-22). This was something also
expressed by teachers who, as mentioned in the context of freedom on campus, felt mistakes and
transgressions were opportunities for learning, ‘mistakes’ that in the context of project week
would lead to students’ most memorable and most educational adventures and experiences:

They strike out and fail a lot, and they love it. They show up in a town, and they go, ‘Oh, we’ll
get a hotel when we get there. Oh, shit, there aren’t any, let’s stay up all night and walk around
the streets’. Like, I have done it, I guess that’s what I did all the time I was in [Asia], and so I
guess that’s why I see the value in it (t-19).

India provides the alert and intelligent novice with an ideal and challenging venue to gain some
of the skills necessary for travel in a developing nation on a ‘shoe-string budget’ and with
minimal risk. These include issues of “how to travel with other people” (t-21), transport and
“experiences in trains” (t-21), issues of communication and commerce in learning “how to buy ...
[and] how to bargain ... without knowing the language” (s2-16) and “handling money” (s1-
22), as well as securing basic needs such as food and accommodation:

You learn how to choose your hotels, you know – it’s not just cheap, it has to be cheap and
proper, because if it is extremely cheap, let me tell you … so we learned no, no, no, don’t just
take any opportunity like that, go SEE, go EXPLORE, and don’t just go for a hotel that’s right
in front of you. There are so many other better ones (s1-30).

These skills of travelling, ‘roughing it’ and the ability to do so comfortably and with a minimal
amount of anxiety are the first lessons of project week and, like having an enjoyable experience,
are a prerequisite to setting up the rest of the lessons that project week might provide.

The switch to outsourced trips during the first project week was aimed at delivering these lessons
of how to travel during the first project week in a controlled and incremental fashion, so that in
future opportunities to travel students would be better skilled and better able to use their
experiences in India. However, these outsourced trips were questioned by some in terms of their
ability to impart the skills necessary to enable students to travel safely and independently on
subsequent trips, as they did not provide experience with planning or securing basic needs on
one’s own. Some students suggested that instead of gaining experience on these trips they were
momentarily “protected” (s1-15a) from experience and did not become actively engaged in the
trip and “[didn’t] take responsibility” (s2-7). Other students appreciated the incremental fashion in
which they were introduced to travel in India:

Coming from [home] I knew nothing about India, and it was much easier for me if they
planned it for me for the first time and I got experience from that, so right now it’s so easy
for me to travel, because they did it for me, they showed me what they did, and they didn't put me in any danger, they did it for me in a nice safe way (s1-30).

In sum, for the larger goals and lessons of project week to be actualized, students needed to first enjoy the trip, and second, gain a degree of comfort and experience with travelling in India. In changing the first project week, the college was not trying to dilute these aspects of the experience, but inject into the program a structure in which these things could be better put to use by the students.

7.2.1 Contact with Each Other

In the previous chapter (Chapter 6), respondents were reported to understand the contact they had with each other as central to the international education and the overall experience at MUWCI. Project week was reported as a particularly important time for these social interactions and a space in which students could “learn from each other” (t-26), and make connections with each other outside of the college walls that when brought back served to strengthen the community as a whole.

All of the student respondents expressed something to the effect of getting “to know quite a few things about the different cultures of the people I went on project week with” (s1-13), or getting to know class-mates as individuals through “a bonding experience” (s2-7) where “closer interactions with each other as students” (s2-10) can occur as “the main thing about project week” (s1-13). More than simply getting to know each other and about each others’ culture, which is achieved on campus anyway, “travelling as an international group of students” (s2-10) through India provides a change of pace from everyday college life where fellow travellers can “get to know people ... better than you would ... because you see them in different [and changing] circumstances and how they react to that difference” (s2-18). It was widely felt that within the project week groups there was the potential for a deeper or special “connect[ion] when you travel” (s2-11), allowing students to get closer to each other’s ‘true selves’. This was true for teachers as well who said that they “quite look forward to [project week]” (t-32) because “they can know [students] much more than what you get on the campus” (t-21). I would also argue, and will expand upon in the following chapter (Chapter 8), that a student on project week is afforded ‘contact’ with him or herself which he or she would not otherwise have within the comfortable and familiar confines of the college.
The experience also allows students to “learn a lot about living with ... other students while travelling” (s1-14) and “working together with a similar goal” (s2-10). ‘Project’ focused, backpacking or on a bus tour, the experience is one of common ordeal and bonding “in that we ... worked closely ... there was a lot of team work ... and we achieved something” (s2-10). This is a bond formed in a shared ordeal that lasts well beyond the ten-day experience itself:

The people I went with last year ... somehow you have more respect for them ... because we had to do something together. ... When you meet again, or when you have to do something for each other again ... I always feel this, ‘Hey, we did this together, you know, remember?’ (s2-20).

Even on the pre-arranged bus tours there existed bonding through common ordeal, shared ‘hardship’ and sense of accomplishment. Approximately five first-year respondents felt that “although it might not have been the most interesting project week” (s1-22), “you just come together as a group no matter who you are travelling with, no matter how you are travelling” (s1-25):

We met this other [first-year] group and they hated all the things that had happened, and they hated all the forts, they hated everything, but still they had the whole experience and they had been together as a group and everybody was part of it and happy and laughing (s2-31).

In providing these deeper, unmitigated connections between students in common ordeal, outside of the everyday structures of the college, project week “helps build the community” (s1-15a) by strengthening relationships between friends and helping students “find somebody new and ... start hanging out with them” (s1-12), “after a week they are your soul-mates sort of thing” (s1-22). Having said that, the majority of respondents felt that in segregating the year levels in the new model, the goal of building community across the whole college was undermined as a result of encouraging the division between ‘classes’ at the college:

What is important is that first-years and second-years get to go together, because I think that is one of the things that has brought us farther from each other. This year there is a huge gap between first-years and second-years, which was much less last year at this time, and it could be because we were not together on project week, [togetherness] happens very much [on these trips] ... it is quite important (s2-31).

Speaking from experiences they had in the previous year, second-year students felt “it’s way more useful when you actually go on your project week with second-years” (s2-6) because it acts as an opportunity to close the ‘generation gap.’ On last year’s trips “we mixed in” (s2-5) and got “to know our second-years ... [so] we saw that the gap ... sort of disappeared” (s2-6). The
majority of first-year student echoed this concern, that in having segregated trips, they missed out on what the second-years have to offer, and also, second-years miss out on the opportunity to share and teach what they themselves had learned on previous trips. These were mutual benefits that could be recuperated on future project week opportunities, but missing out on bonding between the years on the first trip was said to have set a precedent where “no second-years are really going with first-years on this [coming] project week” (s1-27), “the fact that we didn't travel together in the first project week means we won't travel together in the second” (s1-25). First-year students recognized that if this precedent was left unaddressed the year levels could become permanently less cohesive and be less able to transfer knowledge, experiences and ‘oral histories’ from one generation to the next:

I really want to get to know my first-years. I think it's really sad that my social group is more first-years than second-years. So I really want to make a difference next year, and that's why I'm fighting so hard for the project week. ... I want to teach my first-years how to handle a rickshaw driver and how to book a hotel (s1-28).

In sum, both the ‘free’ and outsourced models for project week provide a deep contact with an international group of peers in a joint endeavour which was reported as a central benefit of the program. However, in not requiring mixing between established peer groups, the ‘free’ trips did not encourage new friendships, and in not mixing the year levels, the outsourced trips did not provide common experiences between generations. Future plans for the program intended to address these issues by including second-year students in organizing and leading the mixed year trips in conjunction with teachers, in the hopes of building community, dissolving ‘class’ structure.

7.2.2 Contact with the Local

A lot of people think with UWCs we should be changing the world while we're here. ... But I think for me, like it's more of a local thing, as far as, you know, do things kind of that are around [here] ... and I think that then enables you to go out into a global scale and do things with your experience (s1-27).

Respondents were asked how they felt the project week program fitted into their international education and if they felt project week was itself ‘international’. Aside from the more obvious aspects of “learning ... other culture[s]” (s2-4), they tended to suggest that project week was not a part of the international aspects of the experience, or that “I don't know if being international has anything to do with [project week]” (s2-4), “no, [being international] is not the point” (s2-3) “because these things ... are very Indian focused” (s2-16), the point is “to know the places in
India, the real life in India, [what] you cannot see here at MUWCI” (s2-3). These responses place project week firmly in the domain of the local, not the global or international, affirming the intent of the larger UWC and international education project as one “not only to do … with students from other countries but [also] to go into the country that you're studying in and learn detailed amounts about [it]” (s2-10) because “you can’t leave out the local when you are talking about the international” (s1-25). In the context of MUWCI, where the college was understood as isolating students from the local people, culture and experiences, project week provided a connection with the “the real India” (s1-23):

Even though it was, like, two months after coming here … [project week] was the first time on a squatting toilet, sleeping in a room on the floor, and the first time I had encountered eating on the road, and yeah, as a first time exposure, I really, really liked it. It felt like being in an entire new world (s2-7).

According to students “when we go out, there is a different reality” (s2-17), so “when you travel, then you're more with living in India” (s2-10), in fact “the only time we’re in India is on project weeks when we go travelling … that's how we're IN India, that's how we SEE India” (s2-10). This belief in project week’s ability to connect the students with India and with the local culture was also present in teachers who were said to “try to encourage people to go out … [and] take any interaction with [the local] community very positively” (s1-14):

They have to learn about the people, have to go to the small town and talk to the people and even if they don't know the language, … to see these people with kind of an inspiration to KNOW something. … and have a lot of experience about the Indian culture…. I think you can see this opening up the experience (t-21).

Respondents described experiences with “languages, dress, food” (t-32), temples, architecture, “Indian history … philosophy … Hindu [and other] religion[s] … societal stuff” (s2-5) and the “habits and traditions” (s1-14) of the diverse states and regions of the subcontinent. Students on project week were also able to access the people that make Indian culture what it is. In “seeing the way other people live” (s2-5), “you see and learn how people act and the differences between your culture and this culture” (s2-8) and you “see different mentalities” (s2-29) and how “Indian morality is completely different” (s2-9); as well as how it may be similar:

I realize that … these foods and their religion is very unique and it is special to them… but it is also very similar to my religion… so I realize that we ALL have these celebrations, yet these are [also] very culturally specific things (s2-10).

In connecting with the local people while out on project week, three respondents were impressed with how warm and open the people were, allowing them to “stay at … their houses, and [have]
This openness was said to 'rub off' on the students and allowed them to open up themselves and learn from the Indian people:

If you have the time you meet this nice woman who invites you to go home and cook with her, and you cook with her and you see how her family is functioning, you do these things.... I think India is, especially, so different from my culture in its openness, it is these small things, how people approach each other.... Here you get to talk to people, you get to know their culture, you are invited home, you get to see everything, and that touches you and it changes you and sometimes you become more like them (s2-31).

On the other hand, several respondents (seven) described “Indian culture [as being] a bit of a challenge” (s2-8), or that “people here are friendly but they are not so helpful” (s2-17), “like you ask for a certain thing, and they might actually purposely direct you to a different lead” (s1-24) or “do everything [they] can to ... squeeze money out of you” (s1-23). Indian people, culture and society were described as inspiring and frustrating at the same time:

Walking through the rice paddies ... to see how people work the land ... and how they interact with nature more than most places.... At the same time, along the railways, you see, tonnes, whole roads of rubbish, and you think, ‘How can this be the same people that I've seen working and looking after and interacting with nature so harmoniously in a little village?’ I think again, in the end, that even people here are so diverse, and there are some who don't give a damn about anything ... and there are some who are, very, in their little village ideals ... in harmony with nature. So there's not a trend that you can follow even here in India (s1-14).

These are experiences with ideas of sameness and difference that are central to an international education with relation to local customs, local people and an individual’s – a stranger’s – relationship to them.

International students were said to gain “a lot more experience [on project week] than many of the Indian [students], because they have an interest in India ... [and] go where Indian [students] can't even think of” (t-21). However, this access to the novelty and diversity of India was also said to apply to Indian students, especially those “from more upper-class [or caste] backgrounds, [who] if they allow themselves to, can go and travel around India in a way that they never would with their parents” (t-19) and so see sides of India that they themselves would not be accustomed to. In addition, there is the potential for Indian students travelling together in an international group of students to see and discuss the reaction others have as outsiders and cultural strangers to their country and so gain insight through the eyes of their foreign peers. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient representation of Indian students in the data to make gain a clear picture of this in practice.
Students also felt that on project week they were able to “see humanity” (s2-8) in the poverty and destitution of India, something they described as an important experience because “if you see a beggar on the street, you think differently afterwards” (s2-7). This was something that was not accessible during the day-to-day life at MUWCI, and moreover, reported as not available anywhere else within the UWC movement:

One student said to me, ‘You can’t have UWC anywhere else but India, like, what is a UWC in Italy, or Norway, or the U.S.? ... You want to be compassionate for indifferences in the world, how can you have a UWC in Norway?’ You have to have it in a place like India, so that when you get out of the college, which is why project weeks are so fundamentally important to the education here ... you see just the horrendousness of life in the world. ... I think it’s seeing the destitution of India and experiencing it when we travel on a train or walk through a city and stepping over dead bodies or, you know, beggars, or just walking around in trash, I think that is one of the most fundamental things about this [MUWCI] education (t-19).

The outsourced trips, however, were criticized by students and teachers for rendering the above mentioned experiences somewhat benign. The bus tours were said not to be a deep and direct experience of India out of the MUWCI bubble, but an experience of India from the bubble of “little tour buses [where they] travelled around India behind this screen” (s1-25) where “we saw the sights, but I didn’t feel the sense of India” (s1-25):

I want to see India from another point of view than a minibus ... because it’s not about that at all, it’s about being on Indian trains, like filled up, it’s about being on [local] buses ... train stations, bus stations ... [and] rickshaw drivers (s1-28).

In the context of an international education, where the peer group and the intellectual focus – if not the curriculum itself – can be characterized as global, project week serves to meet the greater program’s aim which seeks “a balance, ... to learn about India AND the world” (s1-30). Project week is a curricular space that grounds the lofty ideals of ‘the international’ in the concrete realities of a specific (and current) location, affording students real situations outside of the constructed enclosure of the college. This occurs both physically, where students can witness the country, meet the people and access a culture, and intellectually, where students can explore, experiment with and put to practical use the new perspectives they have acquired from peers, from India and from the other lessons implicit in an international education.
7.2.3 Apply and Extend the International Education

The culture of this place ... where ... it's cool to want to do it the simple way when travelling ... engenders ... awareness that there's another side to the world, and it makes them question, inherently, makes them question this system and the way everything is (t-19).

Project week was described by students as complementary (often central) to the formal and informal education they received at MUWCI. In the previous chapter (Chapter 6) it was reported that student respondents felt travel and mobility were key mechanisms through which the lessons of their MUWCI experience were delivered. This has already been expanded on in this chapter in terms of contact with each other and contact with India, where students, as ‘strangers’ to their peers and to the local context, engage with ideas of diversity, commonality and the cultural ‘other’. This was also reported in that project week allows them to find “[themselves] in [their] own way” (s2-9) and learn “whatever the school doesn't provide” (s2-31). Also in the sense that “project week is an ideal time to emphasize what [is taught] in [some] classes” (t-33) and an “opportunity to apply the knowledge [they] acquire ... practically” (s2-9). For example:

In history, I learn all about these things in India, ... and this is all theory, and then I go out and I see it happen, I experience it, I talk to people, I stand by the road and have some chai with locals and try to interact somehow with [them] and talk to [them] somehow. The things that I am being taught here in classes, our outside classes, I see happening in the real world. My history teacher tells me something, and I know it, but I don't realize it; when I am going out there and am experiencing it, makes me realize it (s2-9).

Underlying this opportunity to apply concrete knowledge, project week serves as an experience in which ideology and theory can be grounded and applied in a real and relevant context. Consciously or not, project week allows students a forum, fundamentally different than the closed community of the college, in which to apply, extend and experiment with the principles, ideals and ‘attitudes of mind’ that are part of an international education. This is an idea discussed further in the following chapter, Chapter 8 in relation to the literature on an international education as well as ideas of liminal space and experiential education. Here, the main aspects of an international education at MUWCI that were reported by respondents will be discussed as being extended by the project week experience (responsibility, independence, ownership, accountability, initiative and leadership, as reported in the previous chapter), all core aspects of an international education that were said to be “really difficult to teach” (s2-5), and need to be gained through first-hand experience.
The project week experience of learning how to travel through India is an extension of the independence that MUWCI students reported in everyday life at the college as well as the responsibility they are expected to take of their own learning. Project week allows the opportunity to “do it themselves … and make mistakes and learn from them” (s1-30); part of the freedom which is “absolutely vital to achieve the mission statement” (t-34) of the UWCs. Students felt that these lessons implicit in “knowing that I can get my way around and travel” (s2-7), were in terms of the ‘unteachable’ qualities of “take[ing] responsibility for your own life” (s2-7), “help[ing] you grow up, help[ing] you mature” (s2-4) and “gain[ing] … independence” (s1-22). Students reported learning “how to rely on myself a lot more … from project weeks” (s2-4) and felt that learning “how to look after yourself, to take responsibility [and] to deal with things yourself” (s2-9) would enable and empower them “to live [their] own life” (s2-9) and confidently follow through with future plans:

It really makes you feel like you are capable of doing a lot of things, and I think from now I can go on and say, ‘Hey, well I travelled around India by myself’… now I can easily go to another country and teach English without any fear, no hesitation, because I feel I have gained an ‘I can do this’ attitude (s2-10).

This was reported by teachers as especially pertinent for Indian students, Asian students and others who come from cultural, educational or personal backgrounds which somehow limited independence. According to teachers these students stand to benefit considerably from opportunities to act independently because “they are within themselves and they don’t open up so easily” (t-32) due to the culture and educational system from which they come so “to go on these project weeks on their own and … do activities on their own … makes them very independent and confident and they really, really shine” (t-32). The same might be true for those who had a limited amount of international or cross-cultural experience in that they are, as a function of their ‘stranger-ness’ and ‘outsider-hood,’ partially freed or “de-familiarized” (King, 2004) from, and afforded a more objective perspective on, the cultural and national assumptions that coloured their view of the world.

The outsourced trips, while only the first of four opportunities to travel in India, were criticized by students and teachers for extending the protective environment of the college without also extending the freedom and flexibility that was part of the overall experience. Students recognized
the potential risks of independent travel, but based on their readings and experiences so far did not believe India to be dangerous – not “anymore than [living] at home is dangerous” (s2-4), “the shock might ‘hurt’ you a bit, but it’s not like we’re going to get shot by rebels” (s2-4). At the same time, students acknowledged that it would be foolish to believe there was no risk whatsoever, since “anything could happen” (s1-14) and they acknowledged that the bus tours provided a greater margin of security, but said that “you can’t protect [or teach] people in a cage like this…. If you’re protected now and we show you ‘the ropes’, then next time we let you out will you be safe? No” (s1-15a):

If you don’t have freedom you will never be able to take care of yourself, to behave yourself, you will never learn. Like if they took my hand for everything then next year, on my gap year in [South America], I won’t know what to do (s2-8).

Students felt that to underestimate the dangers would not be prudent but to overly compensate would negate personal growth involved in “going home and saying I have actually done” (s1-22) “things that I would never think I would do at all in my life” (s1-28). More so, in saying that “you might get into some sort of danger but it’s healthier” (s1-25), the feeling from some students was that to be overly concerned with issues of security in India would act as an isolation that entrenches people in false fear (and false senses of security, accomplishment and preparedness), doing little to further the aims and lessons of project week or an international education:

I could get mugged, you know, these fears start coming in, and I think it’s important to break – or I very much value breaking through these fears, because I find there’s a big reward at the end of it. It’s very satisfying to break through these fears … [and] it’s part of this internationalism … breaking out of yourself, it requires a lot of strength and effort, I think (s2-5).

This relates to what the experiential education and study abroad literature refer as learning outside the ‘comfort zone’, and to the central tenants of uncertainty, relevance, adventure, risk and the potential for failure in definitions of experiential education (Itin, 1999).

Activism, initiative and leadership are encouraged by project week through engaging students in the process of planning and developing their own trips. This was something students came to expect as a result of the student-sourced and free nature of the college and was said to encourage ownership of the experience, responsibility for their own actions and accountability for their own actions.

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27 The Lonely Planet travel guide for India, reported as a “Bible” (s2-5) for students, says, “Although we provide warnings … there is no need to be suspicious to the point of absolute paranoia … common sense and reasonable caution are your best weapons against theft or worse” (Singh, 2003, p.123).
decisions. In being “told where to go and what to do at every single hour of the day” (s1-22) on the outsourced trips, first-year students had to submit flexibility and the ability to evaluate, account for and plan for the best use of their own time and resources (i.e., ownership and accountability) to an itinerary which was more concerned with sight-seeing:

The true essence of project week is not exactly knowing what you are going to do, where you are going to stay. ... If you were on an organized project week you don’t handle these things yourself ... you get out of the train, you already know exactly where you are going ... the hotel is waiting for you, but if you have to search for it first, you really learn how to live your own life in a way (s2-9).

Although a small group of publicly vocal students (but only one respondent) advocated a hard-line, “no structure ... absolute freedom” (s2-6) approach to project week, most felt that in having a basic plan they “gained [their] flexibility” (s2-10), saying that booking train tickets with decent warning, “tell[ing] [the project week coordinator] where you are going” (s1-14) and “calling [the project week coordinator] every day [or when possible]” (s1-13) were reasonable amounts of structure. In this vein, one student said that even on their so-called ‘unplanned’ project weeks, students were, in fact, doing as much planning as was necessary for the kind of self-sourced experiences they valued:

We want to have a sort of a freedom ... but at the same time we are quite structured, we’re NOT unorganized, we just want to have a bit of excitement, and if that little bit of excitement is not knowing where you’re going to sleep that night, and having to kind of run around at 5am finding the cheapest hotel you can, and eating some dodgy food and getting diarrhoea, it’s all part of the experience, and that’s fine (s1-27).

As was noted in relation to offering ‘project’ oriented trips, there was an emphasis from respondents on choice, saying that “we had no need for a teacher ... but a few people did, because they were less confident, and so ... it definitely needed for there to be a choice” (s2-5). The overall message was that whatever planning was required, students wanted to do that planning themselves, and whatever experiences were out there to be had, students wanted to have those experiences fully. Moreover, it was felt that inflexible itineraries negated activism, initiative and leadership and were an unnecessary divergence from the ethos to which they had become accustomed at MUWCI, and, along with the extension of the MUWCI isolation into a ‘bus-bubble’, a departure from their understandings of how the UWC ideals could be put into practice.

Experiential education theory and the form of international education that was reported to exist at MUWCI (and is represented in the literature) suggest that the learner should assume
responsibility, take initiative, make decisions, take ownership and be accountable. The UWC literature, as well as the critical literature in experiential education, calls for this to occur in a learning community that is, if not egalitarian, makes a concerted effort to minimize power dynamics between the learner and the teacher, an important aspect of which is sourcing the lessons and the learning in the student and not forcing certain experiences or assuming certain outcomes. Moving from a ‘free’ project week to a structured, teacher-led, and pre-planned bus tour raises questions of whether the delivery of the program on the first project week is consistent with these goals of an international education and the social context that exists at MUWCI and India in general. On pre-planned trips, certain things such as security, mixed peer groups and more focused and specific lessons about India may be gained, but other things are lost:

The one problem I've seen ... is that when they get so planned out, there's this loss of freedom, which means you might gain something in terms of concrete knowledge, but you lose something – I don't think you can gain something without losing something. ... I would love it if we could get it to the place where we'd actually really learn something AND have amazing experiences, I just really want to be careful about it and really think it out, so that we don't lose what we have (s2-4).

The purpose of the current study is not to make a critical evaluation of the project week programs at MUWCI, but to better understand the role they play in the student experience of international education. The above data begins this enquiry by addressing research questions 2a and 2b. In the following chapters I address the main research questions by exploring MUWCI as a liminal experience which, like other experiences of mobility and international education, requires purposeful grounding (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999; Hartung, 2002) and discussing project week in relation to experiential education and its potential to ground the liminal experience, allowing the ideology of international education to find practical expression in the real, relevant and local context of India.
CHAPTER EIGHT: Discussion

The previous two chapters addressed research question 1a, 1b, 2a and 2b. This chapter aims to answer research questions 1 and 2 through a discussion of the findings in light of the literature on international education, liminality and experiential education reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. The third and final research question will be addressed in the following conclusion chapter. The main research questions make up the general structure of the following chapters and are presented here for ease of reference:

1. What aspects of the third culture kid and globally mobile student experience expressed in the literature are common or applicable to the student experiences at the MUWCI?

2. To what extent are the project week programs an expression of experiential education?

This research sought insight into the relationship between the project week programs and the form of international education in which they are embedded through students’ and teachers’ expression of their own experiences. This discussion begins by framing the general experience of adolescence and secondary school as having inherent liminal characteristics. Then it presents three different categories of the MUWCI experience and uses TCK and liminality literature to discuss the common ground between respondents’ two year experience at MUWCI and a lifetime of mobility. Finally, respondents’ perspectives on project week are considered in light of experiential learning and experiential education.

8.1 The Liminal Backdrop: Adolescence and Education

The experience of adolescence is an inherently liminal period in human development and, in this case, is one in a socially derived system of education, or Erikson (1968) and Marcia’s (1966, 1980) adolescent moratorium, with inherent undertones of Van Gennep’s (1960, c.1908) rites of passage involving the re-creative / re-productive tension found in Turner’s theory (1967, 1969). Liminality theory stems from anthropological research on rites of passage in modern and traditional societies. However, the adolescent phase – commonly considered a liminal period between adulthood and childhood – does not require a focus on ritual symbols because the biological and psychological transition does not require the increments, stages and acknowledgement of society (Kirkpatrick, 1987). Having said that, there is a kind of implied rite of passage in the movement through the human life cycle which is easily framed as an individual and collective passage that fits with the separation, transition (liminal) and incorporation phases
in Van Gennep’s model (1960, c.1908). Thus, a subtext of passage, if not rites of passage, will always be present within the larger context of social status and human development, within which adolescence is a liminal or transitory phase.

If viewed from Erickson’s bio-psycho-social perspective (1968), the passage inherent to adolescence is one of identity formation in a social moratorium which allows for experimentation and expression of identity to occur (Marcia, 1966, 1980). This is a liminal space in which teenagers are afforded opportunity to observe, absorb and recombine aspects of themselves and society (i.e., re-creating society and culture). It is space given to them by society in an arrangement where in exchange for the shelter of status as a minor, thus licence to comment and re-create, they must submit to the teachings of their ‘elders’ through some form of schooling. As features of the social moratorium these experiences of education are liminal experiences that include a tension between acts of re-creation and acts of conformity. In this isolation adolescents find room to be creative while, at the same time, society indoctrinates them in its sacra and points out which behaviours are to be shed and which are to be acquired in order to reach adulthood proper. It is first and foremost this moratorium that makes teenagers and high school students liminal subjects in that they are placed by society(ies) in a permissive, yet limited space between social categories and so isolated from the responsibilities of an adult and the privileges of a child while at the same time having access to both.

Before considering the MUWCI experience as specifically liminal it needs acknowledging that there are inherent subtexts of passage through biological development, through social status in general and through systems of education which are experienced on some level by many people. Had they never come to MUWCI, these respondents would still be liminal subjects on these basic levels with reference to their own societies and the sacra of their own cultures. Having come to MUWCI they further enter a state of liminality in being isolated, grouped and educated in an environment that is liminal in the ideas it seeks to instil and the relationships students have with one another, themselves, and their own cultural assumptions. I argue this ‘double-barrelled’ liminality (Aguilar, 1999) becomes multi-barrelled and thus a unique form of concentrated liminality, when one adds to the already liminal experience of adolescence and education the liminal experiences of an international education in a United World College (UWC).
8.2 Respondents’ Experiences

There is no single or all-inclusive answer to the question of how MUWCI is experienced by students as the experience varies depending on their personalities and backgrounds with mobility, education and culture. This study has distinguished three distinct experiences of a UWC education: 1) the experience of the already globally mobile student; 2) the experience of the other, less-mobile, international students; and, 3) the experience of the host national students. The first two of these categories are represented in table 2 and were discussed in Chapter Five in order to suggest common ground between the TCK/globally mobile (GM) experience and those of a UWC student. These categories are more a matter of degree than distinct groupings as respondents can be further categorized along lines of individual culture as well as education and international experience. Further research exploring the factors presented in Table 2 may lend weight to this study if it also explored cultural background and degrees of mobility within these categories using a sample more representative of the school population. Nonetheless these three categories of experience provide a platform from which to base a discussion.

This study only reflects the first two categories of experiences and gains what information it has of the host students’ experience through the second-hand reports and perceptions of a mostly non-Indian sample. However, in reporting the perception that host students were oriented and motivated differently than other students, the findings suggest Indians do have a unique experience and so make up a distinct, but yet to be explored, category. Further research at international schools that have similar host student-to-international student ratios is required to further discuss this issue. I will suggest, however, that in this first look it seems the experiences had by other students cannot be generalized to host students. Perhaps this is because host nationals are not, to the same degree as others, separated from their parent culture. They are, however, still exposed to a great deal of diversity through which they may be afforded a parallel, yet unexplored, experience of outsiderhood and strangeness. I would also suggest that the TCK in this context and the host national have much in common insofar as they are both exposed to a lesser degree of novelty than the other international students; the hosts being presumably more accustomed to India and the TCKs, as reported, being at ‘home’ in the diversity and multiple truths of a UWC. I would argue that further research may find adjustments to the in-between

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28 Table 2 differentiates respondents on scales of mobility and educational experience
spaces of an international education observed most acutely in the less mobile international student group for whom both the UWC experience and the experience of India are novel.

8.3 MUWCI as Liminal Space

This discussion begins with a consideration of MUWCI the place and institution as liminal (including the nature of the social environment at MUWCI and its position with regard to India), followed in the next section by respondents’ experiences within that space. The rationale for approaching MUWCI as liminal space (Turner 1967, 1969) and MUWCI students as liminaries having Simmel’s stranger or outsider experiences (1950, c.1908) is founded on the suggestion of the international education literature (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999; Hartung, 2002, among others). Support for this claim is suggested in the data by globally mobile respondents’ descriptions of familiarity and being “already there” (s2-29) with aspects of the MUWCI experience described by less-mobile students as requiring acclimatization. The TCK or globally mobile experience may predict the experience of other UWC students, who expressed a trend towards ‘both/and’ perspectives as a result of the MUWCI experience. This ‘both-ness’ and trends towards the middle-grounds, multiplicities and perspective consciousness – already typical of the TCK mindset – is part of the paradox of Turner’s liminal space (cannot be neither, nor be both) (1967, 1969, 1992; Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999), hence the use of liminality to explore the UWC experience. If researchers are correct in their description of the globally mobile experience as liminal, and the already mobile respondents of this study recognize MUWCI as ‘normal’, where the less-mobile respondents found the need to adjust, then the MUWCI space may share characteristics of liminality with the TCK or globally mobile experience. Based on an understanding of the TCK reality as liminal, the following discussion explores various aspects of MUWCI from the standpoint of this potential common ground, employing both TCK and liminality literature where relevant.

Part of the source of TCK liminality identified in the literature was the institutional environment of the international schools they attended, which, with high student and teacher turn-over, were said to result in the TCK’s development of liminal relationships. In a UWC, the transitory nature of an international school takes on a predictable, accelerated and collective character. The clockwork of the two year life cycle of a MUWCI generation, or class, determines much of what is experienced at the college. It does so both in the sense that it frames and punctuates the experience in terms of time, but also in that it creates the overlap and hierarchy of experience that
exists between the generations – the fundamental grouping at the college. Like growing up in a family with one, two or three siblings, the experiences at MUWCI would be different if it were experienced one generation at a time.

In the traditional TCK scenario, mobility is predictable in its presence and in a certain degree of inevitability. The UWC’s predictable mobility serves to increase the ritualistic and incremented nature of the liminal space. The whole experience is punctuated by the timing of the IB exams, as well as two winter breaks, one summer break and four project weeks. The experience was further connected to the idea of a liminal ritual by respondents who identified distinct before and after periods and transitions into and out of MUWCI incremented from entry application, to first year, to second year and into ‘third year’ or out of the UWC and into post-MUWCI experiences. Like many experiences of education these increments serve to bracket the experience chronologically and make for a collective transition through a defined liminal period. This is discussed below in terms of the relationships between the year levels within a learning community. Further research in this line could plot student experience through each of these stages.

As well as being an institution of accelerated and predictable mobility, the rhetoric and ideology of international education in general, and the UWCs in particular, are based on concepts which favour liminality as a desirable state of in-between-ness. Concepts such as tolerance, understanding, empathy, mutual respect, communion, global citizenship and solidarity included as defining characteristics in the international education and UWC literature all imply “crossing a frontier of some kind” (Thompson, 1997, p. 460) and exchange in spaces between different ‘things’ outside of one’s usual convention. Also, the “attitudes of mind” (Hayden, Rancic & Thompson, 2000, p. 107) that are said to be encouraged through an international education such as adaptability, broad-mindedness, relativity, critical thought, hybridity, creativity, and the balance between the development and the acquisition of knowledge (Peterson, 1987; Phillips, 2002) all have a presence in experiences of liminal communitas and social anti-structure (Turner, 1967, 1969). Moreover, in framing itself as a balancing point between global thinking and local action (Willis & Enloe, 1990) and a space from which participants are encouraged to critically and reflexively engage with their own cultural assumptions as well as those of others (Lewis, 2001), the international education literature is suggestive of in-between vantages and liminal frames of mind from which students can simultaneously explore local, international and personally relevant situations. Further, the nature of student selection at the UWCs brings these
far away ‘others’ into close proximity more intentionally than other international schools and so, arguably, more explicitly facilitates the liminal aspects of international education. Consequently – at the level of rhetoric, through their mission statements and intentions – the UWCs seek a liminal space on the threshold of more than one set of cultural norms and social structures, drawing on many but rooted in none.

In describing their international education at MUWCI student and teacher respondents support this idea by showing how the experience encouraged cross-cultural learning, flexibility and broad-mindedness. They also showed the experience as involving “general powers of the mind” (Phillips, 2002) such as ‘perspective consciousness’ and ‘the skill of the middle ground’ as well as less singular ideas in terms of human similarity and cultural difference. These are ideas and views of in-between-ness formed in an ideology of education that facilitates experiences of liminality. This is not to say that the liminal does not occur in other forms of international education, but by design the UWC model is explicit and intentional in providing liminal space between cultures. Further research which involves more than one UWC and more than one form of international education could seek to further explore this idea.

Rites of passage are criticized by Bell (2003) and others in the assumptions they make as to what direction transitions should take, but in the UWC case the nature of the assumptions as to the directions for students are arguably less assumptive. This is not to say that ‘passage’ through a UWC and the International Baccalaureate (IB) is not guided by assumptions as to what students should learn, think and progress towards. However, these assumptions are sourced in the multiplicities of internationalism and multiculturalism and based in students’ individual backgrounds and their own understandings of multiple options sourced in their own cultural backgrounds and personal circumstances. Without the strong and singular assumptions of traditional rites of passage, MUWCI is a space that allows the adolescent process of experimentation and expression to occur in an environment which makes creative innovation more likely. This is because the elders’ influence over the re-creative / re-productive dialectic of liminal spaces and social moratoria is, in part, oriented towards a re-production of relativity, perspective-consciousness and multiple ‘truths’. Similar to Rudwick’s (1996, c.1978) and Kupferberg’s (1998) liminal travellers, protected from the influences and assumptions of their respective academies, MUWCI’s liminaries are ‘protected’ and afforded room to innovate because their academy is founded on the less-assumptive assumptions and rhetoric of an ideology.
driven international education in which liminaries are from many different countries, cultures and thus ‘truths’ and so no one perspective (or set of cultural sacra) is privileged. The privilege in this case goes to the liminality itself, presented to the liminaries as the sacra of international education, and so the privilege goes to the re-combinations and creative potential liminal space is said to provide. Examples of this are discussed further below. Thus, the inherent rite of passage at MUWCI is one with the emphasis on Van Gennep’s (1960, c.1908) separation and transition phase, or King’s (2004) de-familiarization and Turner’s (1967, 1969) liminality, but not necessarily the incorporation into any one particular or predetermined thing but achieving liminal, in-between and threshold perspectives as a meaningful goal in and of itself. Like Cohen’s marginal travellers (1984) and Czarniawska and Mazza’s consultants (2003), places, spaces and perspectives with liminal qualities are what are sought in the particular passage experienced by students at MUWCI. Consequently, the assumptions made – based in an ideology of openness to, and mixing of, multiple perspectives – can be described as assumptions concerning the loosening of assumptions and so are, in fact, not assumptive at all.

These assumptions of ‘relativism’, as well as the pragmatic assumptions that come with any system of education, are present in the literature on the UWCs (Mahlstadt, 2003), international education (Phillips, 2002) and the comments from respondents who described MUWCI as a passage through a mode of thought and an ideology that assumes little but the benefits of “perspective-consciousness” (t-19), “the skill of the middle ground” (s2-10) and multiplicities such as “the answer is always both” (t-19). As such, MUWCI begins to address Bell’s (2003) concern with the “the arrogant position of knowing what another should become” (p. 51) in being a place where the main assumption is that ‘knowing’ anything is always contextual and that ‘truth’ is more often a matter of multiple ‘truth’.

8.3.1 The Social Environment and MUWCI’s Liminal Relationship to India
The ideology and ethos of the UWCs set up the nature of the social environment at the colleges, which is one of intentional diversity, and so one of liminal space between, in the case of MUWCI, over sixty different cultures (UWC, 2004a). Because of this diversity, where differences between one’s peers, not necessarily commonalities, are the norm, the MUWCI environment can be considered one of liminality between cultures. Along with the clockwork of the MUWCI lifecycle (i.e. substitutability of relationships), this is one of the stronger parallels between the MUWCI reality and the TCK reality, where genuine cross-cultural relationships
couched in difference-as-the-norm set up both the challenges and the advantages provided by experiences of liminality. Although starting points for identity were reported as never being wholly abandoned by respondents, MUWCI was said to be a place where individuals interacted at a level "beyond ... gender ... culture ... religion [and] ... race" (t-19) in an environment where "nationalities go out the window, completely" (s2-29). As such, MUWCI can be considered a liminal space between, in the margins and on the threshold (Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003) of cultures that itself "evades [cultural] definition or classification" (Turner, 1992, p. 49) and provides a neutral "neither here nor there" (Turner, 1996, p. 95) place that allows "withdrawal from normal modes of social action" (Turner, 1996, p. 167) as determined by any single culture. Thus, I argue that MUWCI itself has no nation, is culturally neutralizing and like the globally mobile student and TCK, has the potential to be an amalgamation of cultures developed through conscious and unconscious choices made by participants, individually and collectively, in its culturally neutral space.

However, to argue MUWCI provides a truly neutral space in terms of cultural influences may be a contentious statement, since respondents raised concerns that the MUWCI population was skewed towards a globalized middle-class. Nonetheless, it was reported that there is still great diversity at the college which allowed for meaningful contact between a wide range of students allowing for exchanges and recombinations of cultures and economic classes. Respondents also complained of the ‘international’ curriculum as being overly Western. While the theories and curricula of an international education are rooted in European traditions, they are often formulated and expressed in such a way as to take a critical and reflexive approach to their own assumptions (Hill, 2002). This was reported by respondents in saying that MUWCI’s programming takes a "student centred [and] decentralized" (t-19) approach; addressing the Western influence if not minimizing it through the rhetoric of relativism present at the colleges. Respondents further displayed the movement’s self-critique as participants in open dialogue with (and against) various aspects of the experience including the day to day and long term structural aspects of the college. If anything MUWCI showed itself to be young, evolving, dynamic, and committed to the idea of an equal portion of control for all of the stakeholders, in all their shades of culture. Having said that I would agree with Phillips (2002), that balancing the inclusion of divergent, conflicting or marginalized modes of thought with a pragmatic application towards a Western dominated system of education – without taking on a Western bias – remains a challenge for the UWCs, the IB and international education as a whole.
Because it is in India and has a forty percent Indian population it is arguable that MUWCI does not provide a culturally liminal, or neutral, environment. There are several points that arise from the data that keep this potential for bias towards Indian culture from becoming a problem in framing MUWCI as liminal space. Further research is required to gain insight into the reported perceptions of Indian students, but that they do not integrate to the same extent as others suggests that their influence remains isolated and does not skew neutrality to the extent that their numbers might imply. The second reason is that MUWCI was reported as isolating and protecting students from the ‘real’ India and its people and so was more a refuge from its national context than a representation of it. The overall effect suggested that MUWCI was both India and not India. Hence, MUWCI is “neither here nor there” (Turner, 1969, p. 95) and India is both absent and present at the college. This duality “embodies that synthesis of nearness and distance which constitutes the [liminal] position of the stranger” (Simmel, 1950, c.1908, p. 403) and represents “the inherent paradox of liminal space: that [something] cannot simultaneously ... fill two spots ... cannot be both, cannot be neither” (Turner, 1969, p. 125). As such, MUWCI as an institution has a liminal relationship to India, as might other UWCs to their local context. Further research could look at degrees of this kind of liminality across the UWCs, enquiring if older colleges or those which are purposely integrated into their location, also display it.

The third reason why MUWCI can remain a liminal space between cultures, adding to the students’ perception of it being both India and not India, is the idea that MUWCI is also between India and ‘not-India’ – ‘not-India’ presumably encompassing the rest of the world. Both and between are related concepts which are equal attributes of liminal situations described as “betwixt and between” (Turner, 1969, p. 95), dual, contradictory, ambiguous, and containing multiplicities where one thing can mean many things and/or nothing at all (Turner, 1992; St John, 2001). Thus, both and between together describe MUWCI and place it as a liminal space that is both Indian and not Indian and so between India and the ‘international’:

“Here we are only half way [in India] because we live up here, and... we go down there” (s1-14).

By political analogy it is similar to the way a national embassy creates its own space within the country in which it is situated and therefore is both in that country and not, or, similar to the nationless in-between space that the headquarters of the United Nations represents, despite its Manhattan location. MUWCI provides a similar space as a pedagogical site between an
international education and the national context in which it is set. Being rooted in Western concepts of the ‘international’ and being situated in India is, in part, what makes MUWCI a liminal space between the global and the local. MUWCI is an educational site in which a formal curriculum focused on the international combines with activities, programs and unstructured experiences that focus on the local to forge and maintain connections between the locality of India and the ‘globality’ of the international education.

It can be argued that access to technology, media and modern communications can serve to reduce the isolation and liminal characteristics of ‘third-spaces’ such as MUWCI by way of reducing perceived distance and increasing the speed, depth and ‘reality’ with which liminaries can access to outside world. Though they suggested that they did not access them as often as they might have back home, respondents did report having access to television, internet, print-media and, by my own observation, spent a fair deal of time on-line with instant messenger services (e.g. msn, yahoo). Although further research would be required to properly address the role of technology and communications in the UWC experience, I would argue that it serves the liminal space of MUWCI in providing a medium through which students can engage in a constant and ongoing reflection with peers back home and their own previous cultural contexts. While email and instant-messenger based communications provide immediate contact over enormous distances, they may also, in increasing the contact between past structures and current anti-structure, serve as a venue for the outsider based reflections on past experiences, relationships and social structures which are a central feature of Turner’s theory. As such, modern communications may allow MUWCI students to be more informed, active, attentive and reflexive with regard to their current situation in liminality, but may not necessarily make the situation less liminal. Do modern communications make the experience less isolated? Perhaps, since they may spread out the shock of leaving home and entering the liminal space as well as ‘homecoming’ across the two year experience. What was reported by respondents and described in the literature as a confrontation with home culture is divided amongst many two-way ‘dispatches’ or ‘little homecomings’, in effect softening the collective blows of exit and re-entry. There is insufficient data in the current study to comment further, however, I would suggest that this ongoing reflection might also increase awareness of the differences between the liminal space and the ‘outside’ world, rendering boundaries more immediately visible to both the liminaries and those on the ‘outside’, thus serving to remind liminaries that they are, in fact, not part of ‘reality’ for the time being. This would bring students’ current experience into stark, and immediate, contrast
with their past experiences and those of peers back home, bringing what isolation did exist to the forefront and further driving the comparative and creative process afforded by liminal anti-structure.

8.3.2 Liminal Anti-structure at MUWCI

The final comment required to frame MUWCI as liminal space prior to discussing the student experience of it, has to do with Turner’s ideas of liminal space as inter-structural or “social anti-structure” (1992, p. 155). Liminality’s “structureless-ness” (Turner, 1969, p. 97) is sourced in the fact that “its general construction is on principles different from those governing quotidian social life” (Turner, 1992, p. 133) and it provides “a time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action” (Turner, 1969, p. 167). It is not that liminal spaces have no structure, but that the (anti-)structures they do have sit in opposition to life as ‘normally’ lived under rules normally lived by.

One of the initial difficulties with this aspect of liminality theory as applied to MUWCI is that being a secondary school and a UWC with an IB curriculum the college involves many of the same structures that students are accustomed to from their previous experiences of schooling and so cannot be considered entirely anti-structural with regard to the larger system of education. Anti-structure in Turner’s use does not imply the absence of structure all together, but simply a different structure than that found in the ‘every-day’, and, more over, a dialectic tension between the every-day structure and the anti-structural in liminal space. Thus, the structures of a system of education that do exist within MUWCI do not negate the experience as anti-structural, but allow anti-structural aspects within the college (communitas and the surplus of signifiers) to exist by providing a readily available context against which tension between the way things are and the way things could be can build up. This is seen in the angst surrounding project week and, more positively, in the students’ level of involvement in day-to-day and longer term experiences at MUWCI. I argue below that further involvement from them, and so further active engagement of that tension, could be positive for the learning community and can be facilitated by the pedagogical transparency advocated by Krans and Roarke (1994).

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29 Reported in the data as scheduled and compartmentalized time frames, social differences between students, staff, faculty and administration, segregated and streamed subject areas, examinations and evaluations geared towards entrance into subsequent levels in a larger system and so on.
Structure and anti-structure “curb, penetrate and moderate each other” (Turner, 1992, p. 133) and are required by society to remain healthy and balance the opposing forces of social reproduction and creative social renewal. Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1966, 1980) write similar things of the adolescent moratorium, and like Turner, frame their liminal space as inherently sceptical of authoritative assumptions and “a period of scrutinization of the central values of the culture in which it occurs” (Turner, 1969, p. 167). For example, the ideology and the curriculum at MUWCI are underpinned by a European concept of ‘international’ (Bell-Isle, 1986) yet are opposed to overly nationalistic concepts and seek to instil perspectives and ideas that are between or supersede the idea of nation all together. Thus, MUWCI is itself a site of liminal anti-structure compared to the current systems of world politics.

The other difficulty that needs to be addressed is that UWC students, being from different backgrounds, all have different scales against which to judge experiences as anti-structural. MUWCI is an anti-structural space in which each student is in a new situation with reference to their own unique experiences of social structure and so liminal and anti-structural for each of them with relation to something different. An example of this from the data is that for some respondents the experience of social freedom or learning based in critical-thinking constitutes ‘life as usual’, for others, is a socially and intellectually emancipating experience and for others still, is a dramatic and disconcerting paradigm shift with which they need to come to terms. Even for the notable exceptions of the host students and the already liminal and internationally educated globally mobile students there are certain aspects of the MUWCI experience that sit as anti-structural to their own status quo. Therefore, regardless of background, students reported some degree of novelty as compared to their previous experience, and so MUWCI can be understood as including the tension between structure and anti-structure described in Turner’s theory of liminality.

Turner’s formulation of anti-structure was in opposition to a definable and singular culturally derived set of social structures by groups of liminaries who shared common experiences, understandings and meanings. The recent discussions of liminal anti-structure found in Alexander (1991), Andrews (1991), Garsten (1999), Czarniawska & Mazza (2003) also address the anti-structural within discrete cultural categories. St John (2001) provides the only example of liminal anti-structure between (sub-) cultures with divergent interests and conflicting meanings. Even the international student literature that addresses issues of liminal space (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999),
outsider-hood (Hartung, 2002) and marginality (Isogai & Hayashi, 1999) does so in the context of TCKs sharing a common ‘TCK culture’. The situation studied here, however, involves anti-structural tension between sixty different cultures, each of which presumably have variations and conflicts in meaning and significance. That liminaries are from so many different contexts makes MUWCI an all the more complex liminal and anti-structural space where the tension is not between the liminaries and the *sacra* of a single culture, but between liminaries and each other, and, between liminaries and the *sacra* (ethos and ideology) of the UWCs. This is an example of the kind of “situations in which people from many different countries have been brought together in a host country that is native to none of them” called for by Alston & Niewodt (1992, p. 322).

In this case the ‘country’ that none are native to, or the new culture to which they are being exposed, is not necessarily India, but the ‘cultureless’ / multi-cultural space between students’ individual experiences, perceptions and assumptions. In this sense it is not the host nationals who are the ‘locals’ in this culture formed between cultures, but the already mobile respondents, themselves accustomed to spaces between cultures and experiences with Turner’s social anti-structure.

Anti-structure is a key feature of liminal space and one of the driving factors, along with liminal communitas and Turner’s “surplus of signifiers” (1992, p. 155), that allows for the creative dialectic between society and the individual. It is in anti-structural space where students are no longer bound by the rules of the past, and are de-familiarized (King, 2004) to their own cultural assumptions, in which the novel, the speculative, the philosophical, the imaginary and the creative (Turner, 1969, 1992) replace the pragmatic and rational structures of individual students’ past experience and so providing the ‘blank-slate’, or liminal realm of “pure possibility” (1969, p. 203). MUWCI is liminal on multiple levels and goes beyond Turner’s formulation of liminal anti-structure in reference to a single culture. Thus MUWCI goes beyond being ‘multi-barrelled’ and can be described as involving a compound and concentrated form of liminality similar to that experienced by the TCK. The following sections describe the MUWCI students’ experience as liminaries and further discuss anti-structural space between cultures, perspectives and between India and the rest of the world with reference to liminal communitas and Turner’s “surplus of signifiers” (1992, p. 155).
8.4 MUWCI Students as Liminaries

For most students the choice to attend a UWC places them in a social moratorium similar to that from which they came because it is a structure within the larger system of education. However, it is different insofar as it is no longer the venue for the transfer of a single set of cultural sacra to a collective of liminaries already accustomed to those particular sacra. It is the transfer of sacra based in the ethos at MUWCI and the ideology of ‘internationalism’ – both characteristically liminal – to a group of liminaries that each have the unique experiences of sixty different nationalities. This is the crux of MUWCI’s compound and concentrated liminality, that firstly the sacra of the college itself favours liminal states in-between cultures, and that relationships among liminaries are typified by difference and, over time, increased degrees of commonality encouraging experiences of communitas in anti-structural and liminal space. This is also one of the stronger parallels between the MUWCI student and the TCK, that despite few common demographics, there is a common culture, or bond of communitas, created through a shared experience of anti-structure.

Turner’s theory involved communitas formed through a reduction and reconstruction of the individual liminaries, dismantling their previous social role and rebuilding another through exposure to the sacra of their new social role (1969, 1992). In this process liminaries were said to be “ground down to human prima materia” (Turner, 1969, p. 170) and kept on the “interstices of social structure” (1969, p. 125) and so temporarily freed from it. This was a collective reduction that facilitated communitas and provided a “blank slate” (1969, p. 103) on which cultural sacra is reproduced and on which individual and collective agency is able to re-combine that sacra and so re-create culture. In this way teens are reduced and controlled, yet, paradoxically, freed for creativity.

MUWCI is not necessarily a venue for the “destruction... humiliation... hazing... failure...and ridicule” (1969, p. 103, 1992, p. 49) of Turner’s liminaries, but the experience does have elements of this equalization, reduction and reconstruction. Liminaries at MUWCI are equalized because they have each, in different ways, “crossed a frontier of some sort” (Thompson, 1997, p. 460) and have been isolated from the structures of their home culture and are subject to what St John called “incommensurate ‘objects’ which challenge the way [they] think” (2001, p. 49-50). In coming to MUWCI and being afforded a deep contact with diversity in meaning they are distanced, separated and de-familiarized from their parent culture. Even the already mobile
students must make some coming to terms with the college, and, I would speculate, the Indian students are also exposed to other perspectives and ways of being. As such, students are equalized in that they are all engaged in a process of de-familiarization to some degree. This can be seen in the tendency for MUWCI students to become “less attached... to their nationalities” (s2-29) and questions raised by respondents as to whether students “still, at the end of two years [at MUWCI], represent their own culture?” (s1-13); the answer to which was “I don't think so” (s1-13) “everybody here is changing [together] so everybody becomes... this one overseas student” (s2-31).

This separation from parent culture is a form of Turner’s reduction and reconstruction as it reduces the bond one has with one’s identity as sourced in one’s place or culture of origin and facilitates a reconstruction of self along new lines, in liminal space:

It has encouraged in me a bit of philosophical analysis about the way I was living, what my values should be, the values that have been given to me, my conditioning, why my dad goes to work from nine to five only to achieve a salary for the past 25 years, and how that has affected me, and so you know, trying to find a bit of my own path and looking for where that path crossed with others (s2-5).

The disconnection from parent culture was reported as progressing over the two years as students became distanced from previous assumptions and so became stranger and stranger to them. Becoming a stranger to one’s own culture of origin provides students with a more active and objective relationship with it. They can look at their own culture, and themselves, with the detached objectivity of an outsider, and so better assess that which they had previously assumed, engaging more freely with their own past, as a function of being distanced from it. This is a simultaneously grounded and disengaged perspective that provides an “important identification point to know where I come from” (s2-7) as well as a reflexive re-evaluation of said identity. This movement from insider to outsider with reference to their own past can be seen in responses that suggested students could reflect on and better understand their own cultures but could not return home unchanged. That respondents also displayed awareness of their changing selves and, at times, distress, a sense of loss and a protective response with regard to who they were is suggestive of this relationship with a changing self and consistent with Schuetz’s model of the Homecomer (1945) – the individual forever changed, unable to return home in the same way. However, further research that explicitly sought UWC students’ experiences upon return to their own cultures would be required in order for this to be further discussed.
Difference is a form of commonality and so an equalizing force among MUWCI's liminaries through which they are all, in different ways, experiencing relationships of outsider-hood and strangeness to each other, to themselves, and, as they are afforded contact with it, the local context of India. These relationships of outsider-hood in the role of Simmel's stranger (1950, c.1908) are dynamic and shift over the two year experience to relationships based less in strangeness and more in common experience, or communitas, through which students progress from "newly arrived stranger to acculturated outsider" (Hartung 2002, p. 7).

As in other collective experiences of adolescence, bonds of community and common ordeal are formed among peers. In the case of MUWCI these peer groups are made up of identities and meanings formed in different cultures and experiences with social structure. As such, bonds sourced in common culture are not readily available to them; they are strangers to each other, physically near yet culturally far (Simmel, 1950, c.1908). Consequently, their relationships with each other are not necessarily governed by any one set of structures in particular and must therefore be governed at deeper levels of human sociality. This is what Turner calls the free and unmitigated relationships of communitas "created outside, above and beyond [the] social structures" (1969, p. 97) that govern status, class and privilege. MUWCI students experience communitas firstly as a collective of adolescents in a passage through the rites of a system of education, and more so, that within their collective they have diverse experiences of culture, and so have relationships built in liminal spaces between cultures. These relationships of communitas were described by student respondents who said their "group... bonding experience" (s2-7) was one "in such a close community with so many different cultures you really [get to] know the real nature of someone" (s2-6):

People here are very open generally, and so it does create this open atmosphere... you kind of connect on this human level.... more open... boiled down to human relations... I've been able to have these relationships ... [where] you have the perspective of someone, from very many angles, until you get closest unto the truth of what they're like (s2-5).

Also, that student relationships progressed from being based on differences in experience (differences in nationality) to relationships which transcend the idea of nation demonstrates anti-structural and communitas-based relationships at MUWCI. As mentioned, this is one of the stronger parallels between MUWCI students and TCKs, who were reported as sharing a similar connection that transcended divergent demographics, finding a sense of belonging and
commonality, or shared culture, in their collective experience of liminality. This can be seen in respondents’ descriptions of moving from understandings of each other as representative of something (system identity as described in the TCK literature) to understandings of each other as individuals, or a movement towards anti-structure with reference to nationality as a structure:

The thing is, when you get to know people it makes you forget where they're from… you don't create a divider anymore. You just remember that person as that person (s1-24).

The common experiences of MUWCI were also expressed by respondents as allowing them to “realize [that they were] all very equal” (s2-10), a characteristic of liminal communitas which allowed them to form commonalities where before there had been few:

Well here we all come in around the same age and we all go through all the same experiences. and we all change as a group, you know, we are all developing, and some people come in maybe a bit ahead of me, or a bit behind me… but we all grow, and we all kind of just end up very similar in the way we think since we have gone through a lot of these things, discussions and experiences together. Sure we still have very different ideals about things, but we are more on the same track, we think similarly (s2-10).

This transition is one of students moving from an initial stance towards each other as strangers and outsiders to acceptance of each other as individuals, insiders and “whole people” (Turner, 1969, p. 136) through the common experience at MUWCI. Arguably, this is through common experience of liminal anti-structure in which they are able to develop bonds of communitas along lines no longer subject to the “norm governed, institutionalized [and] abstract nature of social structures” (Turner, 1967, p. 127) such as nationality. In this way the ‘other’ becomes ‘each other’ at MUWCI through liminal communitas and base level human experiences between the “essential I… forming the essential we” (1969, p. 136). It is possible that the national and linguistic groupings reported by MUWCI students limits this idea, and while there is insufficient data to comment on much of this grouping (e.g. host student grouping), I would suggest that there is likely a middle-ground between strangeness and commonality where students remain culturally strange to each other in terms of sources, but engaged in a collective process of disengagement, shed the sense of otherness and develop common ground with cultural strangers.

Another strong example of communitas at MUWCI is with regard to the relationship between the year levels. As reported the predictable two-year in/out ‘life-cycle’ which acts as a ‘class’ structure overshadows much of what goes on at the college. What came through from respondents was that community members at MUWCI sought to strengthen camaraderie between the ‘classes’. Respondents of both classes displayed this push towards egalitarian communitas-
based relationships which is discussed further in following sections. I have explored the idea of MUWCI as liminal and anti-structural space in its rhetoric, ideology, assumptions, social environment and position between India and the rest of the world, as well as MUWCI students as liminal subjects in a transition from relationships of strangeness to relationships of communitas with each other. The following section briefly comments on Turner’s surplus of signifiers at MUWCI and flags the area for further research.

8.5 Social Re-Creation and the Surplus of Signifiers

Turner described liminal spaces as having the “central moral problem... [of] establishing a balance between the aspirations to communitas and the norms of existing structure” (1969, p. 160) and as serving to both question and enforce society. In saying that the overall experience was still “framed on... getting those grades and achieving the top” (s2-7) and that students were resistant to freedom in the classroom (t-19) respondents showed that at MUWCI, while there may be realms in which they contest it, they are still subject to social structures and the pragmatics of economic reality. Thus it can be said that the co-existence and tension between the re-creative and the re-productive found in Turner’s theory also exists at MUWCI.

In Turner’s liminal spaces the creative push was allowed because the space was anti-structural, as discussed, and driven through a process of liminaries re-combining cultural sacra in unique ways, creating situations of multiple meanings or a “surplus of signifiers” (1992, p. 155), from which they could choose what certain sacra meant to them and thus act creatively with regard to their own culture. This was referred to by Turner as the ‘subjunctive mood’ of challenge and reflection (1992) and allowed because in being made aware of cultural sacra while in an anti-structural state, liminaries could reflect upon them more objectively as outsiders, experiment with them, re-combine them and create a multiplicity of meanings – where one thing can mean many things or nothing at all – to force a confrontation between normative pulls and creative possibilities (Turner, 1967, 1992). This surplus of signifiers has been described by others as providing “ambiguous social spaces ... [of] categorical disarray... [and] juxtapositions of incommensurate ‘objects’...[and so] mystery... transgression and multiple meaning” (St John, 2001, p. 48-51). They provide “opposition to dominant society [by] showing that there [are] alternative[s], [and at least] the potential for potential” (Alexander, 1991, p. 35) of a society
reformed along new lines. That students start their MUWCI experience on different footing with regard to custom, culture and past experience of social structure is key in that the *sacra* involved, and the re-combinations that liminaries will make of them, are drawn from multiple and divergent sources. This gives MUWCI a distinctive tension between self and society(ies) predisposed towards the re-creative. This is also described in the TCK literature which describes liminal identities and world views driven through revised social environments, broad experiences and expanded definitions resulting in the development of new meanings and innovative and expressly creative patterns of behaviour.

The ideology of international education as presented by the UWC and experienced by students at MUWCI is suggestive of a similar process in which the re-combination of *sacra* and meaning is sourced in individual student's unique and diverse experiences of social structure. Consequently, there is a multiplicity of meanings and 'incommensurate objects', and so a surplus of signifiers that exists by virtue of student diversity, contact and exchange. That respondents cited this diversity as the source of their 'international education', in a context where discrepancies in meaning are “not necessarily something negative” (s2-9), but used to explore assumptions, exemplifies this process of taking on and experimenting with new perspectives, ways of thinking and behaviour, merging beliefs and traditions into pluralistic yet common experience. Like the TCKs, MUWCI students can be said to “actively create new ways of looking at and acting in the world” (Willis et al., 1994, p. 31) because culture is “an arena of conscious choice, justification and representation” (p. 33). This research did not begin by seeking sites of social tension and re-creation, but sought a general picture of MUWCI, through which experiences of liminality arose as potentially relevant. In order to gain an understanding of social re-production / re-creation in an international education research with a focus on the total college experience (including in-class and out-of-class aspects) is required. As such, this discussion can only point to areas for more focused inquiry.

At a general level this re-creation is shown by student respondents who said that “because we're so isolated [read liminal], we create our world, we create what we want” (s2-5). Respondents also described the surplus of signifiers in saying that at MUWCI there are “so many different views and ideas” (t-32) so “other people may not see what you see” (s1-24) because they “look

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30 Turner used youth sub-cultures (e.g., punks and hippies and beatniks) and artists as examples of this “critical... cultural change” (Turner, 1967, p. 97) which “transcend[s] particular social forms” (1992, p. 51).
differently at the same things" (s2-9). Further, students said “take[ing] in other's ideas and points of view, is the biggest gain you can have” (s1-14) and described incorporating other's ideas into themselves (or not) and putting the experience to conscious, critical and creative use in that “you can choose... what you believe” (s2-29) and that “it's a question of me picking what I want ... leaving out what I don't, and forming my own ideas” (s1-14). One of the strongest comments in this regard came from a teacher who framed this process of sorting through and “coming to terms” (t-34) with multiple meanings as the main aspects of the MUWCI education, with reference to individual change, but also by extension to change on a social level:

This place is about change, it's about bringing people from very different backgrounds, who will think that they share in ideals...[but] have only a theoretical understanding [of each other] as they are from mono-cultural backgrounds. What they experience here and what they have to be free to experience here, is the individual change that comes through the little daily contacts [with each other], the adjustments they have to make, the coming to terms that they have to make. You know you do not leave this place the same – wherever you come from and whatever you thought – you do not leave this place without being profoundly changed (t-34).

This idea is represented in the TCK literature which described the construction of worldviews where truths are contextual and multiple and may include innovations and re-combinations. This is supported in the current study by respondents who discussed “perspective consciousness [which requires] being aware... that there are multiple perspectives to everything ... and your reality is ultimately a perspective and [only one] reality” (t-19), as well as the tendency shown towards “the answer in life... always [being] 'both'” (t-19) and the “skill of the middle ground” (s2-10). This 'middle ground-ness' is an intellectual stance in liminality and anti-structure which combines 'perspective consciousness' and 'both-ness' in which students “get challenged [in] belief” (s2-7), re-evaluate and re-combine sacra and meanings and come to “realise that [they] can easily support” (s2-10) and accommodate multiple and “contradict[ory]” (s1-12) perspectives. This is exemplified by respondents who reported re-evaluating what they had presumed to be a likely course for their future lives. No longer “stuck in one place, in a routine, [in] a closed world... [of] school and then work” (s2-17) some respondents (nine) were considering other paths (gap years and ‘third’ years) or questioning traditional models of success:

Salary... house... car... kids... pension...maybe then you think you're free, but who decides that, you know, what is 'free'? For me, this isn't freedom, so I haven't applied to university because I'm still thinking about [these things] (s2-5).
There were also suggestions of a shift towards “the ludic, the experimental ... [and] freedom to play with ideas [and] with fantasies” (Turner, 1992, p. 54) hinted at in the data and informal observation (e.g. fashions, trends, social and sexual behaviour) which would require more focused inquiry. However, students did report the need to find a balance between “do[ing] anything I want” (s2-18) and being careful so as not to offend community members who may have different moral codes and reported experimenting with these codes themselves through participation in festivals and rites (s1-23, s2-20, s2-31, t-21 and t-32) as well as reported shifts in views as to what is, to them, morally 'questionable'. This sense of being able to do anything, yet still being limited by the possibility of offence and the need for moral structure, represents what Turner wrote about liminal anti-structure as providing “an open morality” (1969, p.110) of experimentation and possibility, but also reminding society why it needs a “closed and normatively bound” morality (1969, p.111). This is suggestive of the separation, detachment, re-evaluation and engagement with one’s self represented in the objective and reflexive stance of the outsider (Simmel, 1950 c.1908) in the investigative light of liminal space. This was described in the TCK literature as resulting in vague, isolated, ungrounded, transient and uncommitted behaviour felt most acutely on re-entry to parent culture. This potentially confusing and immobilizing process of sorting through multiple truths and perspectives (Turner’s surplus of signifiers), is, however, the root of innovation and creativity in TCK and UWC liminality. Students must begin to “recognize and understand the multiplicity of their experience [and develop] the language to communicate it” (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999, p. 4), so locating themselves in terms of their own experiences and finding grounding in a liminal reality. As such there is a need to develop programs accordingly in a UWC context, where I believe the pedagogical transparency advocated by Krans and Roarke (1994) could temper the double edged sword of multi-barrelled liminality.

The above discussion serves only to suggest that the liminal space provided by MUWCI allows students to act creatively with regard to the development of a common culture among them through the re-evaluation of their own assumptions. Further research would be needed to support this, but it is suggestive of similar processes by which the TCK is said to take on an outsider’s stance with reference to their parent culture and, through creative recombination of multiple meanings and multiple sacra, create their ‘third culture’. In the least it can be said that accommodations for ‘both-ness’, or separation from singularity, makes MUWCI “an arena for conscious choice” (Willis, Enloe & Minoura, 1994, p. 33) with parallels to Willis, Enloe &
Minoura's (1994) globally mobile students who “inject new meaning-streams into their discourses” (p. 39) and “actively create new ways of looking at and acting in the world… and [so create] a significant bridge [to] an entirely new world” (1994, p. 31). Therefore, a concise answer to the first research question is that MUWCI provides an example of liminal space on the threshold of intersecting ‘worlds’ similar to that experienced by TCKs and mobile adolescents in other contexts of international education. Further, the UWC students’ experience is, to varying degrees an acute, concentrated and multi-levelled liminality by way of adolescence and education and more so, the rhetoric, ideology and ethos of the UWCs and the nature of the social environment at MUWCI as well as in the college’s physical isolation and positioning ‘between’ India and the rest of the world (i.e.: the intellectual, social and geographical landscapes at MUWCI).

8.6 Project Week and Experiential Learning

This section addresses the second research question, considering expressions of experiential education in project week based on answers to research questions 2a and 2b presented in chapter 7. By way of a conclusion, the following chapter discusses the place of the project week program in relation to international education, the UWC ideals and the MUWCI experience as described herein. Students reported different experiences and displayed different perspectives depending on their experience with past project weeks as well as different positions with regard to future project weeks. These differences can be discussed broadly in terms of first and second year student experiences and project week experienced collectively in a learning community. The following explores these different experiences under the broad topics of students as experiential learners and the college as a provider of experiential education. The central questions are whether programs are experiential education, whether the students are learning experientially and whether the college is acting as a provider of experiential education.

First I will consider experiential learning, which is “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38). As shown in figure 2 (Chapter 3), experiential learning is the circular, conscious and unconscious process of an individual changing as a result of experience, reflection on that experience, abstraction drawn from that reflection and the application of that abstraction to new experiences (Kolb, 1984; Itin, 1999).
There are four opportunities for project week, two as a first year and two as a second year\(^{31}\) so individuals have four distinct experiences over the two years. As year levels they are experienced simultaneously, often collectively with, but differently from the other year level. In terms of a simple application of Kolb's (1984) cycle, applied sequentially across the four experience program as a whole\(^{32}\), respondents could be viewed as being in different stages of experiential learning depending on year level in any one instance of the program. Individuals of different classes may very well be on the same trip, doing the same things, but as viewed from a standpoint of experiential learning may not be in the same stages of the cycle.

At the time of this research, the second years were approaching their final project week and first years had three more to look forward to. Thus, second years could discuss project week in terms of multiple and cumulative experiences and first years only in terms of one introductory experience. First year respondents, having had their first concrete experience with project week and several months for reflection and abstraction, were on the verge of their first opportunity for testing and experimentation in a second concrete experience. In terms of Kolb (1984), first years are on first project week to experience predominantly novel experiences in India outside of MUWCI from which to later draw abstractions. Winter break aside, the second iteration of the program is the first years' first opportunity to apply and test what abstractions they have made since the previous trip. For the second years the coming project week was their third (fifth if they had travelled in India at winter and summer breaks) iteration of 'experience with India'. They were in a similar position to first years but further down a successive and progressive spiral of experiential cycles (Joplin, 1981); between their third and fourth cycles of experience, abstraction and experimentation. In terms of Kolb (1984), second years have now drawn multiple abstractions which they will apply in their project week to a now less-novel India. They are more experienced and for them this is their last chance to apply their knowledge under the banner of project week and as a student of the UWCs.

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\(^{31}\) Over the two years there are also other opportunities to travel independently, including long weekends, 2 winter breaks and a summer break. However many students use these opportunities to go home, or travel in a country other than India so this research stays focused on project week. Further research should consider how students use these breaks, and could track student experiences through the triangle of home, UWC and host culture.

\(^{32}\) This research approached respondents at a particular moment in time between two project week opportunities; their responses, however covered both past experiences and future plans, allowing for the program to be discussed here as a whole.
This is a simplistic view based on a simple model, however that the two year levels are in different positions in the sequence of project week opportunities would also place them differently in an associated cycle of experiential learning. As a function of their generation and the mechanics of experiential learning, any single instance of the program will provide year levels with different opportunities and will be associated with different interpretations and motivations on the part of the participants.

At the time of this research, with experiential learners at the beginning of a series of experiential cycles, first year students were still on the verge of their first opportunity for experimentation and application in a second experience. They were less concerned with infringements of freedom that occurred in the past project week (as they had not known that freedom on previous trips) and more looking forward to the coming project weeks as an opportunity to apply what they had learned. Regardless of their ‘quality’ and style, the first project week experiences described in the data fulfilled their goal in terms of experiential learning for the first year students: to provide an initial concrete experience with India on which to base further experiences in India. In agreement with the theory, first year students were also fulfilling their role as experiential learners: consciously and unconsciously focusing reflections on past experiences with India towards coming experience with India and using both the positive and negative to inform their upcoming trips. This is demonstrated in the data by first year students who, on the whole, tended to focus their commentary on coming trips and more so by first year students who demonstrated applying their experiences to date through participation in the process of re-structuring project week and well into the future, with regard to how they wanted to approach their junior generation on project weeks to come.

Second years, about to take on their fourth and final project week, were also fulfilling their role as experiential learners, but further down the successive cycles. They were getting ready to apply what they now knew, based on experience, for a fourth and final time. It was pinnacle and cumulative experience for them and for many a ‘last chance’ with each other and with India. Where the motivation in their first project week would have been simply to get out and have initial novel experiences, the motivation in the fourth would now be about something more specific – time with friends, a desire to see a certain India, complete a certain project, party or simply relax – informed by previous and cumulative experience in India and at MUWCI.
These different interpretations of the program based on year level are further demonstrated in the
data by degrees and varieties of opinions, positions and orientations with regard to the changes
made to the program. Simply, first year students did not have past experiences with project week
and so could only compare their first experience with hearsay of previous trips. As such, the first
year reaction to the changes was relatively less negative then the second year’s reaction. First
years displayed disappointment with certain aspects of their experience, particularly the way the
organization and grouping was handled, but generally felt it adequate as an introductory
experience from which they would be able to base further, progressively more independent,
experiences. Second years, having had more experience of India and project week from which to
base an opinion were substantially more critical with regard to the changes as they felt first years
were being given a lesser experience than they had been. This critical perspective is afforded to
them on account of having more experience-derived knowledge. Thus, with reference to project
week second year respondents could be understood as being further down successive cycles of
experiential learning.

The second year’s disapproval of the changes could also be interpreted in a pastoral sense. If
considered as generations with a pre-determined life-cycle in a learning community, the year
levels can be seen as having been given certain opportunities and responsibilities by each
occasion of project week; namely (from the first project week to the fourth): the opportunity to be
taught, the opportunity to ascend into equality, the opportunity to teach and the opportunity to
receive ascending equals. The first project week of the year is not as expressly novel for second
years as previous trips, but it offers them their first opportunity to share the India that they had
‘discovered’ in previous years with a ‘younger’ generation. After having reportedly spent the first
two months as explicit and defacto mentors to the first years with regard to international
education, UWCs and MUWCI, second years now have opportunity, perhaps responsibility, to
extend that mentorship into India and the local context in which the international education is set.
First year, second year and teacher respondents all pointed to this by emphasizing the importance
of mixed year project weeks, for general purposes of increasing community bonds, but also for
the passing of specific skills (how to handle a rickshaw driver, book a hotel, or just stay safe)
between generations. Considered in light of experiential education theory which has the teacher
learning alongside the student, often sharing common experiences, this opportunity for second
years to be guides and teachers provides an important reciprocal exchange between generations,
in which, like service-learning, there are benefits to the taker as well as the giver. The most
obvious of these benefits is the general strengthening of community, but also, as reported by
respondents in making strong and specific reference to this intergenerational exchange, a social
fecundity of sorts where experientially derived knowledge generated by one generation can find
its way into the knowledge of another. This intergenerational transfer was almost universally
valued by the respondents and its importance was demonstrated by those not having ample
contact with their elder generation, thereby missing opportunities for learning and gaining the
approval of and equality with their elders.

Through the above described generational overlapping and opportunity to teach, an experiential
learning cycle can be said to supersede the generations and act at the level of community, where
if allowed, one generation’s concrete experience and abstraction can be tested and applied by the
next generation. Learning – experiences, reflections and abstractions – undertaken by one
generation can be tested and applied by the next; becoming the common knowledge, legends and
myths of successive generations33. Thus seen, MUWCI is an example of successive cycles of
experiential learning within generations – overlapping and supporting each other in a parallel
fashion over the four project weeks – as well as a larger cycle of learning through the generations
of a learning community.

Evidence for this is based largely in its absence presenting a chief complaint for respondents;
affirmative evidence is suggested in the intention of first years towards developing strong
relationships with their coming juniors. Also the second project week is in the last moments of
this particular iteration of the MUWCI community and, as reported, presented their last chance to
do project week together. Similarly, the second project week of the year is, in terms of the larger
community at that particular moment in time, the closest the two classes will ever get to
‘equality’ in terms of experience in India. It is as ‘grown up’, or experienced, as the second years
will ever see ‘their’ first years and it is as close to the second years in terms of experience that the
first years will be while still with ‘their’ second years. For the first years approaching their
second trip the role is one of the apprentice outgrowing their station, for those on their fourth, of
the master accepting (or not) the apprentice as equal. The overall effect is of the ‘student’ (first
year) and the ‘teacher’ (second year) becoming peers, no longer looking at each other but in the

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33 Future research could do a better job at capturing these ‘myths and legends’ however they did appear in the data in
reference to the second year’s second years, their experiences with project week and their relationships with their
own second years. That shows an institutional memory spanning several generations, and further study would
certainly need to take this phenomenon into account.
same direction, and can be viewed as a relationship based, for that moment, in a state of liminal anti-structure with regard to the 'class' system at MUWCI, so a step towards communitas. Thus viewed the second project week is a first and last chance to experience India together, across the classes, as a community with less of the defacto mentorship (power imbalances according to Freire (1993, c.1970); social structures or limits to communitas according to Turner (1969)) inherent to the first project week. The second project week is the swansong of that particular iteration of the MUWCI community, and as seen in the data, extremely important to respondents. Perhaps, it is also an important measure of a 'successful' community for members who commented to the effect that togetherness on project week represented togetherness on the whole; citing the lack of such togetherness in both the coming project week and in day to day life, which they blamed on not having been together on the first project week of the year.

Perhaps the second years' prominent critique was due in part to the fact that what first years had experienced on project week was so different to what they had experienced; so to them, somewhat less valid. There is lag visible here in the continuity of the program and commonality of the experience, like a skip on a record heard only by the second years (and in hearsay by the first years) of that particular generation. Not only were second years not travelling together with the younger generation, but the trips were dissimilar to the point of not allowing second years to relate. When they look back upon the first year's experience, they do not see in it a shared or parallel experience. The two experiential cycles I refer to above (one for the seniors, one for the juniors), while still in occurrence, are no longer connected by way of parallel or shared experience. In effect the rites have been altered mid ritual. For the second years as the elder generation, this is disconcerting, tenuous and, as seen, cause for complaint. The change, for better or for worse, disrupts what the seniors understand the juniors to 'need' to go through, and offends their sense of stewardship towards them. In terms of experiential learning, in a community where two generations are undergoing related overlapping cycles, the change effects the degree to which those cycles run parallel to each other – in effect momentarily hindering the larger, collective, community wide cycle of intergenerational experiential learning. I would argue that it is this discrepancy between the parallel cycles of first and second year experiential learning that is the source of the tension over the changes, as it disrupts community and communitas, and not the content of the changes themselves, which in many ways strengthened the experience for certain respondents and were truer to practices in experiential education.
I have described the four project week cycle as involving Kolb's experiential learning on two levels. One, of individual year levels' position within their own cycle of experiential learning and, two, of the individual years' positions to each other as less, and progressively more, experienced members of a community engaged collectively in experiential learning. I have argued that this results in a cycle of experiential learning that sits above the individual at the level of community and occurs perpetually through the generations. I have, as of yet, said nothing about the delivery, the content, the learning, the outcomes or directions of either the individually seated cycles of experiential learning, or the community wide ones. I have simply pointed to their existence, as suggested in the data by community level commentary, and said that different generations are afforded different roles (learner/equal/teacher/equal) within the same project week and, similarly, occupy different positions within successive cycles of experiential learning (first experience, first reflection, first abstraction, first experimentation, second experience and so on). The above discussion is obviously overly simplistic – treating project week as if it occurred in a vacuum of experiential learning and was the only venue for intergenerational exchange at MUWCI. The following section releases the vacuum to a certain extent and explores experiences of project week in relation to the definitions and literature of experiential education presented in Chapter 3.

8.7 Experiential Education and Project Week
International education as expressed in the UWC takes advantage of experiential learning as defined by Kolb (1984). It does so most obviously with the opportunities described by respondents for contact, interaction and the development of relationships with the cultural 'other', and through facilitating contact with India. All of these combine to result in experiential learning with regard to the ethos of an ideology driven international education in its particular cultural context, and, possibly experiential learning with regard to oneself in the role of the outsider or cultural stranger and culminating in heightened reflexivity with regard to one's own culture. The total UWC experience is inherently one of experiential learning, as most experience is, and at this general level does not require the 'education' provided at MUWCI, but for the opportunity provided for travel, contact with the 'other' and outsider-hood. This has been said for most forms of international education including study-abroad and exchange programs (Donnan, 1984, 1985; Sutcliffe, 1986; Peterson, 2002; Steinberg, 2002; Lucas, 2003). In a UWC context this inherent experiential learning is further amplified by the length and breadth of the cross-cultural, cross-class and cross-national contact and the depth of the relationships that develop over the two
years. This occurs above and beyond the ‘education’, or other structures of the MUWCI experience, but happens as a function of the social environment described herein. After allowing the whole thing to happen in the first place, MUWCI’s structures only facilitate, perhaps harness, what is already occurring as a function of a community in liminal space, a community that by the necessity of the ‘blank-slate’, the in-betweens and the ambiguity between them are engaged in collective learning and creative construction.

The UWCs have an inherent element of experiential learning but the extent to which the MUWCI experience includes expression of experiential education depends on when and to what one inquires. This study falls short of answering this question in full, as it does not explore the full MUWCI experience. However, it begins to address the larger question in focusing on project week as an educational structure within MUWCI and the ways in which project week does or does not support the experiential learning which occurs in an international education by way of explicit applications of experiential education.

In order to take advantage of the process of experiential learning, the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) suggests educators should “purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection” (AEE, 2005). Itin (1999; see Figure 3) complements Kolb (1984) and the AEE (2005) by including the relationship between the learner, the teacher and the subject matter, as well as the socio-political-economic aspects of education, and further defines experiential education in practice. Table 3 summarizes Itin’s definition into its main aspects for use in this discussion. Other aspects of experiential education theory and literature presented in Chapter 3 – including socio-political issues, de-familiarization, learning outside the ‘comfort zone’ – will be addressed below in relation to project week as an experiential program and MUWCI as providers of it.
Table 3: Highlights from Itin’s Experiential Education
(Adapted from Itin, 1999, p. 93).

a) Carefully chosen suitable [and relevant] experiences

b) Reflection, critical analysis and synthesis =
The basis of future experience and learning

c) Learner to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable

d) Learner posing questions, investigating, experimenting, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, constructing meaning and integrating knowledge.

e) Engaged intellectually, emotionally, socially, politically, spiritually and physically and
Issues of values, relationship, diversity, inclusion and community.

f) Uncertain environment =
Success, failure, adventure and risk taking

g) Between learners, learner and educator, and learner and environment.

h) Educator’s role =
Suitable [and relevant] experiences, posing problems, setting boundaries, supporting learners, insuring physical and emotional safety, facilitating the learning process, guiding reflection and providing the necessary information.

The central question here is whether or not project week is an expression of experiential education. But the discussion is cast first at a more general level, asking, based on the identified transfer of learning between generations, just who the ‘educators’ are in this case? Second years? Staff and teachers? The whole MUWCI community? India? The data made it clear that teachers and content are not the only sources of knowledge at MUWCI. The data suggested that the international education\UWC\MUWCI experience would be much less should any one of these sources of knowledge (peers/teachers/people/community members; ideology/curriculum and delivery; India) be dismissed or somehow negated. These three central features discussed by respondents fit well with Itin’s diamond model of experiential education, which includes a three-way interaction between members of a learning community, the content of that learning and the context in which it is learnt. So in identifying and valuing these three sources of knowledge, respondents place the role of the ‘educator’ very much on themselves as a community in the local context of India as facilitated by MUWCI.

I would add, in light of the theories used here, a fourth source of knowledge that the respondents may have only subtly referred to, that is the self (individual-self, as in “I, Pablo”), as a source of
knowledge, and, as a heightened function of self in a context where one is a sole representative of their own nation, nation-self (as in "I, Canadian"). It is the outsider perspective, and the relative solitude and isolation of the stranger that in my interpretation of this data bring self (I) and own culture (we/us then, as opposed to we/us now) to the forefront as a source of knowledge equal to the learning community, the course content/ideology and the local and international contexts. Home becomes an “important identification point” (s2-7) which if understood in light of the ‘I am where I come from’ / ‘I am who I am’ duality and transition discussed by respondents, interplays with self and nation-self as an internal source of knowledge each student carries with them to the UWC setting. This research missed its mark in this regard and was not able to capture respondent’s individual reflections against their home cultures (in having to disregard the logbook instrument). Analysis at this rougher scale of year level and community uncovers experiential learning as a community and across generations which is, however very much seated in the individual’s own experiences and reflections. As such, self, and more specifically changing self as reflected against past experiences, cannot be denied as a source of knowledge at MUWCI.

Because traditional sources of knowledge (teacher, curriculum, ideology) share their positions with the community and with the context, we can speak of MUWCI in general as satisfying experiential education’s requirement for “exchange and engagement between learners, between learners and educators and between learner and the learning environment” (Ittin, 1999, p. 93). These issues were central in the responses from students and teachers and have been discussed at length above in terms of class structures within a learning community, which in the case of MUWCI are the year levels. If MUWCI is to take full advantage of international education’s discussion of diversity, class and inclusion it needs to organize programs such as project week with an understanding of the class systems inherent to its own community’s two year life cycle. Project week is experienced (and so subject to experiential learning) by students as individuals, as members of particular trip groups, as year-levels, as members of the student body and as members of the larger learning community, which also include as a central feature, the transfer of experience-derived knowledge between generations. Further research may be quite valuable if it considered the sequencing and overlapping of student experience on project week in which power, privilege and equality are very much tied to its generation-based learning community.

In addition to issues of community and collective engagement, MUWCI in general can be discussed as approaching other core aspects of experiential education. These include obvious
content and experiences with regard to values, diversity and inclusion (all part Itin’s definition and central to international education), decentralized power in the learning community as well as an associated freedom to make decisions and a responsibility to be accountable. The view of MUWCI as a learning community begins to address issues of power in the educational relationships. Respondents also emphasized a certain kind of student centeredness across the whole MUWCI project, including, for some, unprecedented freedom. This freedom included freer relationships between students and teachers, student sourced origins for CAS programs, day-to-day social freedom and the freedom for students to learn in their own ways. Students were, however, not free in how they would be assessed (IB exams) and so did have to orient their energies towards the structures of a particular system of education. They did say, however, that they felt the IB, as presented at MUWCI (especially considering CAS and the new global affairs extended essay), allowed room for them to find their own way. The other side of the freedom coin, as shown in the data, is responsibility. Definitions of experiential education include this responsibility by way of student initiative, decisions and accountability. At MUWCI, this coupling of freedom/initiative and responsibility/accountability was reported across the experience, and notably, through student involvement in certain aspects of administrative and school wide planning. Freedom, student sourced programming and accountability combine at MUWCI to place the power associated with the possession of knowledge as equally on the whole community as in the curriculum and its delivery. The other educational power dynamic that emerged from the data was the ‘class’ structure between first and second years. This has been discussed at length above. Suffice to say that respondents showed an awareness of how the ‘class’ system served to privilege the more experienced and in certain ways affected the community.

To what extent all of this is valid outside of what respondents were asked to comment on would need to be the focus of further research which took an all inclusive approach to the MUWCI experience, but I feel it safe to say that MUWCI certainly includes the socio-political requirements in definitions of experiential education (including the global, the local and relationships within the immediate learning community) and to some degree, MUWCI seeks the
kinds of power diffused relationships espoused in Freire (1993 c. 1970; 1973) and Bell’s (1993) critical experiential education.34

Questions of whether MUWCI, in line with Bell (1993), is critical of itself (at the IB, UWC, MUWCI or project week levels) are also best left for future research and analysis. However, the data presented here does demonstrate a certain accountability of the college to its community, a broad self-critique on the part of members of that community with reference to the programming, the international education, and the institution and often, their own ideals and behaviour as individuals and as a collective. With reference to project week, I believe the fact that the institution was engaged with its community in further developing the program and negotiating things that could have been non-negotiable demonstrates this self critique. Whether the UWCs as a movement is engaged in similar self-critique and development are unknown, but at the individual college level there certainly seems to be the potential for ongoing grassroots re-evaluation of ideals and practice as sourced in the lived experience of the community, as called for by Bell (1993).

To what extent the whole MUWCI experience lives up to these and other aspects of experiential education theory was not sought by this research, and further comment is kept in relation to project week and its stakeholders. The above was simply to establish the importance of the learning community, varied sources of knowledge, decentralized power, responsibility and accountability at MUWCI, as they serve to set up the socio-educational context in which project week occurs and are what allow for the possibility of experiential education in the first place.

8.8 Project Week and Itin’s Definition
The following section discusses project week in terms of those specific aspects of Itin’s definition of experiential education outlined in Table 3 which have not already been addressed above. As a structure of the MUWCI experience which relies heavily on the community of learners, including peers and teachers, how does project week measure up as experiential education? As such the following discussion is in terms of program participants as year levels, as a community as well as MUWCI as provider of the program which is considered at three levels: the free model, the

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34 Consider also the less assumptive assumptions of an international education discussed above with reference to Bell’s (2003) critique of assumptive rites of passage.
predetermined bus tours and the program as a whole – each of which favour only certain aspects of experiential education theory.

8.8.1 Carefully Chosen, Suitable [and relevant] Experiences

Is project week a carefully chosen experience? In some respects it is. In assuming at its core the importance of the local Indian context to UWC’s goal of ideals based international education, it certainly is. One of the strongest messages from the data was that the MUWCI experience depended on accessing India, for which project week as a whole was a central vehicle. It is also carefully chosen in terms of being a needed break from school as well as providing leisure and the development of deep connections between individuals who travelled together, thus providing a service to the community. These are very pragmatic reasons, given the objectives of the UWC and an international education (discussed above), and show project week as not only chosen, but necessary. Further, it would be hard to argue against the relevance of project week considering the aims of a UWC. Its forcing of an engagement between student and India at various degrees of self-guided discovery in India, and so self-discovery in India, are clearly relevant to an ‘ideals in practice’ based international education. Forcing students to do it together strengthens the learning community which is distinctly international so feeds back into the experience as relevant to the larger aims of a UWC. As such, the premise behind the program on the whole is appropriate with regard to the UWC’s aims, on the whole. However, in practice, its suitability to all its stakeholders including MUWCI the institution (the providers), the students (clients/learners), the learning community and the context (India) raises questions.

As providers choosing a program there had traditionally been an inclination to leave the experience up to students. This is suitable considering an ethos of freedom in a student-sourced learning community, though not necessarily suitable to the realities of a global institution with social, ethical and legal accountabilities. The unfortunate paradox here is that what seems suitable to the ideals of the movement is no longer because of the institutionalization of those ideals. If individual parents wanted to send their sixteen year old children backpacking in India there would be no such litigious accountability, but as soon as those parents choose an organization to do so, there appear limits to what is suitable, or a lower common denominator of suitability. As providers of a program MUWCI has to balance between what is suitable for their aims and ideology and what is suitable for pragmatic reality. The quick switch to an outsourced project week was a reflection of the providers taking strong steps from idealism towards
recognition of pragmatic reality, namely, risk to students and the associated risk to themselves as an institution. This balance between the ideal and the real is identified by Phillips (2002) as a central challenge for international education and further research with an explicitly applied focus to risk management and applied programming could explore the particulars of balancing ideals with the mitigation of risk in contexts such as MUWCI.

Both the free and the structured project week models represent steps towards educational suitability, all be it in different directions. The switch from a fully free program was a move towards educational suitability in injecting more direct accountability to the program’s aims on the part of the students. Respondents complained, however that the pre-planned and ‘sheltered’ project week did not serve student learning because it did not allow them to learn through real and relevant experiences. There is some truth to this, however, in terms of experiential learning the trips did provide an initial experience from which to base further experiences. It is arguable to what extent that experience was authentically Indian and I would argue that by outsourcing the trips the college overshot what was generally a suitable target; to progressively scale project week over the two years across four opportunities, so strengthening the whole program. In terms of experiential education it is an attempt at choosing an introductory experience for the newly arrived, but, again in reference to experiential education, contrives the experience to the point of it being of questionable validity. In their initial experience students need a higher degree of protection, but they also need to develop independence and proficiency in using specific skills for use on later trips, not just grounds for abstraction, for use in later similar experiences. The initial experience need not be so watered down, lest the following experiences also be comparatively diluted.

Also, as reported, the goal of community is undermined as the first years are denied the mentorship of their second years who are in turn denied the opportunity to provide it. First years lose out as learners, as they are not afforded access to the experiences of generations past, as such their progress is slowed and they remain distanced from second years. As reported, this sets the tone for the year and on second project week first years have not reached the ‘equality’ described above. Community bond suffers, so everyone suffers, through the loss of contact with the knowledge produced through the experience of generations past because the window for its transfer has become significantly smaller and the distance it has to travel significantly wider.
Since experiential education is framed here as a dialogue between 'stakeholders' including the learner, teacher, content and context, we must ask if project week is suitable to India. It could be said that as there is no one India there is no one answer here. India can be dangerous, but not, by most accounts, with proper precaution; the change to bus tours perhaps being an over regulation of risk, but of a risk that needs regulating. The former, freer, project week on the other hand was doing India a disservice in allowing some students to squander their opportunity. Again, the change was an overshot attempt at diversifying the content of the trips, better representing India and increasing educational accountability. The choice to show them India on packaged tours, does not do justice to India, does not engage India in dialogue, and so falls short of several of the main tenants of experiential education. The choice to allow students absolute freedom is also unjustifiable with regard to India and the many opportunities it presents. Which brings me back to the relevance of the program, which overall is high with regard to the goals of international education, but varies with its various incarnations with regard to the ethos of MUWCI, the skills students will need on coming trips and the diversity of India. If the goal of the first project week is to introduce India, and the skills necessary to travel independently in India on future trip (already noted as in line with experiential education theory) then the outsourced trips, as reported, are considerably less effective, considerably less relevant. In practice the extent to which India is engaged with is really in the hands of the student based choices across the whole project week program, but for the first project week, where the engagement was filtered through third-party planning. I would argue that the larger problem with this third-party planning was its effect on the engagement between the classes or generations effectively fragmenting the community.

8.8.2 Engaged Intellectually, Emotionally, Socially, Politically, Spiritually and Physically

As with other aspects of experiential education, engagement at each of these levels is a matter of degree, and, presumably a matter of fluctuating degree, as each of the four project week experiences, in their content and social factors would engage different people differently. For example, one trip might engage the physical more then the intellectual by virtue of demands, where another might engage the emotional and the social as a function of intense group dynamics. Students reported engagement at all of these levels, and several displayed awareness that the program as a whole could be used to purposefully engage these things in different amounts at different times by controlling the group make-up and the purpose of the trip (leisure, environmental, adventure, physical, NGO, etc.). Even where students did not display a conscious effort to this end, they reported engagement at these levels; social engagement being the most
universally cited by respondents. As such, the whole of project week certainly meets these experiential benchmarks, and more so in that the program depends on the students to seek that engagement themselves; it is not provided for them on a platter and accessing engagement is itself a problem posed by the experience. Thus I would argue that transparency (Krans & Roarke, 1994) with regard to the educational approach (be it experiential or otherwise) would be in order, as it would provide students – ultimately responsible for their own experience and learning – deeper engagement, ownership, understanding and greater opportunity for success. If students were made more explicitly aware of a requirement to seek these levels of engagement and techniques and methods to facilitate this engagement then they would be better equipped and more successful in doing so.

8.8.3 Reflection, Critical Analysis and Synthesis as the Basis of Future Experience and Learning

There are two levels on which this can be discussed: the degree to which the program providers have intentionally planned for reflection, analysis and application, and the degree to which it happens inherently and/or was demonstrated by respondents. However, this research did not take a longitudinal approach that could track students’ reflections over time, or their application of these reflections in new experiences but sought its evidence in students’ descriptions of past experiences and future intentions. The failed logbook method was an attempt at seeking data regarding this kind of reflection, but is not included as data in this analysis.

Firstly, there did not seem to be a great deal of programmed reflection. Respondents referred only rarely and vaguely to the program’s integration into the ‘This is India’ course or other follow up activities. As for individual, guided or group reflection, no intentional strategy was described by respondents. If there was any journaling, discussing, feedback, sharing or thinking to be done with regard to their experience, the students were left to do it on their own. The exception of course here is the public debate regarding the structures of the program, very much a follow up reaction to the experience and one promoting reflection, discussion and analysis which was being applied to future experiences by way of a more inclusive planning process. Perhaps the energy expended on trip structure reduced available energy for public or programmed reflections on trip content in that particular year, which would find their way into a more fine-tuned program in coming years. There may also have been purposeful reflection on project week encouraged in classroom time, however further research would be needed to make informed comments.
On the individual and community levels, respondents did give certain examples of reflection and follow up that occurred naturally through social interactions as functions of the inherent process of experiential learning and community living. Respondents described picking groups, deciding on destinations, buying train tickets, debating activities, daydreaming about the trips, formulating intentions, and other forms of planning can be considered examples of framing and reflection in practice, if not in a formal sense. Also, the issues and lessons they expressed as being highlighted by their project week experiences are examples of this process, as are the relationships they said were formed, strengthened and continued as a result of project week. When students reported meeting someone they had been on project week with, and the spark they felt – the "Hey, we did this together, you know, remember?" (s2-20) – they were very much describing a kind of natural, social, follow up and reflection. Along with the sharing of pictures, stories, memories and experiences this reflection occurs organically over the year as a function of the community of learning extending well into the social community; the constant presence of, and proximity with, peers providing a kind of inescapable follow up and reflection. So perhaps explicit follow up is redundant in a residential learning community, where stories, pictures and relationships are bound to circulate and grow. In any case I would suggest that if intentional reflection was to be further programmed it would need be done cautiously, so as not to overshoot another valuable target. An example of the need for caution is the would-be journaling device from this research, designed along the lines of typical guided reflection journals and as a way to capture and record reflection. That they were ignored and/or rejected by students suggests that similar strategies to formalize reflection might not be welcomed, or necessary.

The multiple movements in and out between India and MUWCI represented by project week also points to a ‘flip-flop’ reflection between the college and its local context reported by respondents. Back in what was reported as the sometimes stifling but appreciated safety and isolation of the college, students could reflect on India; while in India, students could reflect, in often sharp contrast, to college life. There is also the reflection respondents reported with regard to home culture (across the whole experience, not just project week). This is a central feature of strangeness, outsiderhood, liminality and an international education. A necessary and natural three way reflection by the self on old home and culture, current location and culture, and changing self.
As for project week and reflections on it providing the basis for future experience and learning on future project weeks, the jury is still out, as the commentary by respondents only provides evidence of intention. This intention, however, was quite an active intention and was displayed most notably in the first year's concern for their, yet non-existent, junior generation. Their comments showed that, based on their own experiences, they wanted to change, and were changing the program to better suit their understanding of an international education. By way of a negative example, the past perpetuating the future is evident at the level of community, where because second years did not travel with first years on the first trip, they also did not on the second. This is an example of a negative outcome, but that community members were able to identify this as a source of their problems, and begin to seek ways to change it, displays the process of experience, reflection and application on the part of the community and, moreover, its facilitation on the part of the provider shows experiential learning at work and experiential education in practice.

8.8.4 Problem-Based Content
Two of the main aspects of Itin’s definition can be summed up as problem-based content. Where the above deals mainly with the theory and mechanics of experiential learning, the problem-based content discussed below refers to the learner posing questions, investigating, experimenting, solving problems, being creative, constructing meaning, integrating knowledge and assuming responsibility in this regard by taking initiative, making decisions and being accountable. Each of these aspects of experiential education are a matter of degree if comparing the two models of project week, and if considered across the whole program, are a matter of increasing degree because they are intended to occur in an incremental fashion over four experiences. They can be together considered as an explicit programming approach on the part of the providers, as well as occurring inherently as a function of the experiences of adolescence overlaid by the experience of an ideals-based international education. Project week as a program is a problem posed to the community in terms of design and, in the lessons it seeks, a series of problems posed. Most of those problems are posed by India and the peer groups in which students travel, and as such MUWCI does not pose anything directly, but facilitates the posing of the problem. Not that India or peer groups are ‘problems’, more that they are central questions for an international education, which as described, relies heavily on the local context and the international peer groups as the sources of knowledge. India is both the venue for the problem and the problem itself and the project week groupings are as much a vehicle to access India as a problem to be navigated in and
of itself. The same can be said of project week’s student sourced nature, that having to plan and organize the trip is itself part of the larger problem posed to them. Project week provides both access to the problems India may pose and the problem of how to access India. This is a multilayered problem posing that places the project week program as a whole firmly within the definition of experiential education.

One iteration of project week was based fully in learner initiative, decisions and accountability and the other, by design, lacked it completely. Seen as a whole, however, project week was still entirely student-sourced for the second years, and still intended a student-sourced model over the coming three trips for first years. It was precisely in trying to give students the ability to take initiative, make decisions and be accountable that they were taken away in the first place. If anything, initiative, decision-making and accountability permeate the whole MUWCI experience, including project week, and, as reported, are sourced in an ethos of freedom. With regard to project week, it can be said that even the free trips, being entirely sourced from the students, also lacked in accountability. Students reported several abuses of the opportunity and others suggested the program was less accountable to the international education and balanced experiences of India than it could be. Accountability in this sense has several layers, and includes accountability between all the major players in the education (provider, receiver, community, content and context). Changes made to the program which momentarily removed student accountability were designed to increase it over the long run. This is an example of MUWCI, as provider and member of the community, and so engager in the education, taking ‘initiative’ and ‘making decisions’ with regard to its own ‘accountability’. Once balance is found between the suitability of the program for all stakeholders, lessons of initiative, responsibility and accountability will likely be maintained as central aims of the program.

The degree of question posing, investigation, experimentation, creative problem solving, constructed meaning and integrating knowledge which exists or occurs on or as a result of project week is also a matter a degree, and also a matter of increasing degree as the programmed experiences progress across the two years. The extent to which the answers to problem-based content are creative or products of constructed meaning resulting in integrated knowledge raises interesting questions in light of outsider-hood, the international experience, multi-cultural groupings and theories of liminality and global mobility. As a result of the failed logbook instrument this research failed to uncover conclusive examples of constructed meaning and
creative responses to problem-based content as an explicit result of the project week experience. Future research may uncover examples of constructed and creative responses (such as the accommodations for ‘both-ness’ and multiple meanings, re-evaluation of assumptions, recombination of *sacra* and creative common culture) which arise specifically from experiential programming in what has been described above as the liminal position and the surplus of signifiers afforded by the rhetoric, ideology and ethos of the UWCs and the intellectual, social and geographic landscape at MUWCI.

Based on the data it can be said that the project week participation is certainly an act of investigation and experimentation in which students pose questions of themselves and others in order to solve the practical and intellectual problems that the experience poses of them. Again this is a matter of subjective degree and, in theory, incremented over two years. Problem-based content runs throughout the program, where students, in planning experiences themselves, are faced with the need to question, investigate and solve from the outset. That students can opt into various degrees of this – by opting into teacher planned trips, tagging along with friends or undertaking a project – speaks to the subjectivity of the experience and accommodates for different levels of comfort. It also provides flexibility for those respondents who reported purposefully trying to diversify their four project weeks across the realms of leisure, service, adventure and so on. This flexibility within a problem based program, where the severity of the problem is partially chosen by the individual, and so ‘self-streamed’, is in line with the experiential education espoused by Bell (1993) which has choices based on individually lived experiences as its source.

That the pre-planned trips disregarded this self-streaming, as well as much of the problem based content, is one of their central downfalls in light of Bell (1993) and others, though they would have what inherent level of posing questions, investigating, experimenting and solving problems occurs as a result of any experience. To facilitate experiential learning, however, education needs to take hold of this inherent process and act to more purposefully engage the learner. The programmed level of problem solving needs to somehow amplify, or add value to, the inherent level of problem solving. This is true both in the sense suggested by Bell (1993) – where the learner can make choices about experience, based on experience – and in the sense that the problems posed need to be of a very real nature. The more contrived the problem, the less it speaks to the lesson.
Evidence of this from respondents runs both ways and includes comments which suggest that some students felt pre-planned trips were a cloistered and watered down experience – essentially an extension of the MUWCI bubble – yet others found they were a necessary introduction to what would otherwise be an overwhelming experience of culture shock. For some, the sheltered introduction to India served to insulate them from the problem-based content, for others it allowed them time and space in which to decide what degree of problem they would tackle in future trips based on their own experiences and level of comfort. An outdoor education metaphor for this might be the difference between a first climbing wall experience and a real outdoor rock climb. While the former can be experiential, instructional and incremental towards the latter, the latter has a higher degree of reality and a greater depth to the problems posed. The pre-planned trips, like the climbing wall, are aimed at preparing students for future trips. However, they provided no instruction in the ‘knots’, ‘techniques’ and ‘systems’ of the metaphorical climb; they were very much a ‘clip and go’, fully guided, one time, ‘climbing’ experience typical of amusement parks and industry convention climbing walls. The pre-planned trip, like the one-off climb, is designed only to provide a taste, without any attempt at facilitating the inherent experiential learning process. In one sense the tentative climber is freed to focus only on the problem posed by the ‘climb’, but the less tentative ‘climber’ finds on a bus-tour, that the ‘climb’ did not pose a challenge with any depth or real effort. As such, it can be said that the experience of project week can be either not ‘real’, or ‘too’ real.

Again this is a subjective matter, as the bus tour was an appropriate introduction for some students. The main issue was the availability of choice to the learner in selecting appropriate levels of problem based content. Note the difference here between choice and complete freedom, as it would be as irresponsible to allow the student to, with no guidance, facilitate their own experience as it would be to allow them to undertake their first rockclimb un-roped or ‘free-solo’. Choice in this use means freedom within clear and agreed upon boundaries and towards stated and agreed upon ends. When this research approached project week it was precisely these issues of agreed upon boundaries and ends that were unclear and being discussed by the community. I believe the subjectivity of the experience with regard to comfort necessitates choice regarding problem based content, otherwise certain students will be over-stimulated and others under stimulated. I believe this balance can be aided if broached, along with other aspects of
experiential education, transparently with students so engaging them further in the theory behind their own process of experiential learning.

8.8.5 Outside the Comfort Zone: Uncertainty, Adventure and Risk

Herein lies a simple but central feature of this discussion. The intersection between international education and experiential education represented by project week would need to include ‘learning outside the comfort zone’ in some way if it were to satisfy definitions of either international or experiential education (Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002; Citron & Kline, 2001) or define learning that occurs through experiences that sit neither in an individual’s comfort zone, or their panic zone. An individual in either zone is denied certain lessons because they are over or under stimulated and may not benefit from optimum experiential learning conditions (Citron & Kline, 2001). Being ‘in comfort’, students are not forcing themselves to question pre-held assumptions, being ‘in panic’ they revert to survival mode and are less able to retain the nuances of the experience for reflection and abstraction. The ideal place then, is in-between, where experiences are new and novel – just slightly uncomfortable – but not so obscure that they present no apparent connection to past experience. It is on this principle that adventure and risk-based education find their rationale and on this principle that experiential education employs degrees of uncertainty and the possibility of failure as well as success. Experiential and international education are “natural partners because they share the common goal of empowering students and preparing them to become global citizens” (Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002, p. 46) and also in that they both hold the unfamiliar and the uncertain – be it a new experience or a new culture – as a central tenet.

Learning outside the comfort zone is well documented in experiential education and referred to by Itin as uncertainty, success and failure, adventure and risk. Uncertainty refers to both a climate where one is outside of what one is accustomed to and the uncertainty of success and the risk of failure. Risk and adventure refer to the use of controlled risks – physical and intellectual – as tools for learning. This is exemplified in experiential learning by wilderness trips which, framed as liminal rites, involve ‘journeys’ taken by students outside of conventional structures of society and social relations and into physical and intellectual uncertainty (Andrews, 1999). Learning outside the comfort zone is present in the various definitions of international education which include ideas of actively crossing frontiers and purposeful movements towards others. Of particular relevance is what Rudwick cites (1996, c1978) as the necessity of “experience with the
unfamiliar” (p.147) for allowing “potential for theoretical innovation” (p. 143) while travelling or living in other cultures.

Study abroad and international experiences can take away most of our linguistic, cultural, religious, political, racial, gender and environmental cues and biases (Andrews, 1999, p.12&14). Thus, the pedagogy where experiential meets international involves taking linguistic and cultural chances, the risk of a potential paradigm shift, risks to previously held assumptions and so an intellectual risk to self. This both requires and encourages adaptability and flexibility through the uncertainty and multiplicity of the international education experience. Like Andrew’s (1994) wilderness trips, this experience with anti-structure offers life-changing opportunities, sourced outside of society’s status quo.

Thus viewed, international education presents great risk to ones own origins and ideas in requiring such broad-mindedness. As such some of the biggest risks and adventures taken in an international education are those with effect to intangibles like individually held ideas and cultural behaviours. One can be outside the comfort zone with reference to ideas just as one can be with reference to physical experiences. If experiences of international education are to be considered as liminal experiences with the socio-anthropological consequences of creative anti-structure, than these risks are not only to the individual, but to the whole learning community, and by extension to global society. From “interstitial places, and third spaces…[it is] possible to initiate processes of shattering hierarchies and boundaries…”; which implies that we will be able to put them back together, or exit the interstitial space, returning to where these social structures are not smashed (Irving &Young, 2004, p. 221).

There is also a risk involved in international education’s requirement for engagement in critical, purposeful, significant content, and its suggestion of future leadership positions for the international students. That is in having the high expectations of meaningful and sustainable contribution, the risks of failure are, if not increased, certainly more dramatic. Several respondents suggested that as students there was pressure from families, governments and more often, self, to “really do something with the experience” [s2-11]. This is a risk inherent to adolescence and secondary school, but at a UWC with a certain sense of global responsibility.
Adolescence as framed by Erickson (1968) involves this uncertainty and risk, being a ‘crisis’ of development for which there was no guaranteed outcome. Hence Marcia frames the moratorium of education as allowing space to solve this crisis. The protective bubble MUWCI students reported as sheltering them from ‘real-life’ situations exists very much to provide them the space to take these cultural and intellectual risks as adolescents taking part in an international education. The anti-structure of their whole experience is facilitated by the existence, if not structures, of MUWCI in the first place. Like physical risk in an adventure based learning approach, intellectual and cultural risk involved in education through liminal space is not risk without safeguard. The IB and orientation towards western systems of education effectively keeps the students ‘on belay’, while the experience allows them to venture certain core aspects of themselves and their societies.

International education is not necessarily in the business of physical risk, but there are elements of adventure based learning and the use of perceived risk (and other Kurt Hahn-founded approaches such as common ordeal and service) in the various UWC programs. The overshadowing experience, however, is one of mental and cultural risks. International education, like experiential education, embraces the risk involved in unfixing ties to the world as normally understood, the uncertainty of the physical and intellectual environments and uncertain outcomes to keep the “open-endedness” (Kupferburg, 1998, p.199) of learning experiences and keep the learner outside their own, personal, comfort zone. King describes this as an individual’s de-familiarization with the familiar (2004), allowing participants to break away from what they each, subjectively, take for granted. However, the risks involved in this are such that they require “conscious moments of intentional grounding” (Tempest & Starkey, 2004) such as maintaining an intentional connection with one’s home culture, one’s personal journey through culture, or orienting to the liminal place itself, for individuals to avoid confusion, or encapsulation and take best advantage of the experience.

Project week as discussed by the respondents provides both examples of a program which keeps “students in their comfort zones, deny[ing] them potential learning opportunities” (Citron & Kline, 2001, p.5) and which also extends them – too far in some views – outside of it. Project week’s attributes with regard to the comfort zone differ greatly between the free and unplanned models, but on the whole, are in line with the use of risk and uncertainty to foster learning. The project week model on the whole incorporates, in various degrees, aspects of freedom, mobility,
choice, responsibility, independence, maturity and the trustworthiness of students to independently manage both the potential for learning and the potential for risk while travelling in India.

Project week could be likened to the liminal space of the wilderness trip, where it provides uncertain and anti-structural space outside of the confines of the MUWCI structure and society. It does for MUWCI the same that Andrews’ (1994) wilderness trip does for American society. This discussion however is based on the idea that MUWCI, the international education, is the liminal space and that project week is a grounding force, a hand-hold, a road-map and a release for that interstitial liminality. I will acknowledge the parallels between the ‘uncertainty’ of backpacking through a foreign land with that of a wilderness trip, a study abroad experience or a liminal rite of passage. But relative to the larger experience at MUWCI, even the uncertainty of India can act as a stable object against which to push, and it is project week, in all the uncertainty of India that facilitates this grounding. That is project week does take advantage of uncertainty in line with experiential education, but does so in the larger context of international education, an umbrella program in such intentional ambiguity that it needs tethers to the local context. Project week is one of these tethers.

The degree to which project week employs the uncertainty of success depends on what is deemed as a successful project week. For student respondents, ideas of success on project week vary greatly and involve a combination of leisure, recreation, education and opportunities to extend their experience into the ‘real’ India. Failure on project week was represented in the data by mention of social breakdowns amongst co-travellers, getting lost, missing trains and spending the night in bad hotels or not being able to find a hotel at all. The opinion of teachers, students and administrators with regard to these little ‘failures’ was that they were part of the learning project week provided. Students had to “experience the worst and the best” (s1-22) and make mistakes in order to gain all they could from the program. As such, the potential for ‘failure’ and failure itself are used in project week as they are in experiential education.

Taken as a whole project week certainly involves uncertain environments for many students. Even Indian students, and those who had become accustomed to India, would encounter the new and novel as they ventured further into the country and gained more experience with its people. That they were not allowed to use first class cabins, for example, provides moments outside the
comfort-zone for those students who, while comfortable in India, were more accustomed to the comfortable life of the globalized middle and upper classes. For the rest of the respondents, having little experience of India, they were, and reported being, on the edge of their comfort zones, if not totally out of them, while travelling in India. When students return to one place for consecutive trips or go back to the familiar fields of home for the week, they are not necessarily stepping out into the state of de-familiarization on which the learning is pinned. If they were made more explicitly aware of this idea of comfort zone, would they take more initiative to get out of it?

This potential for failure in a very real and uncertain environment determines a certain amount of risk for participants. It is a central challenge for many provider's of experiential education to control risk to a level acceptable to both safety and the need to gain certain lessons. MUWCI's project week provides an example of a program in two extremes. One where the uncertainty initially outweighed the potential for learning – as that learning was not as structured as it could have been – and the other where moves were taken to minimize the uncertainty to the point of compromising experiential learning. Initially, student based planning was thought to reduce the uncertainty and associated risk to an acceptable level in that groups were limited in size, were required to use pre-booked ground transport and to check in with the college regularly. Planning mitigates uncertainty and is necessary to maintain the unknown as a tool for learning, not just a realm of confusion (so within the parameters of experiential education). Outsourced planning, however, minimizes uncertainty to the point where uncertainty is less likely to be able to be used by the students, or the teachers, as a pedagogical tool.

Adventure education often uses risk, or engages in activities which are inherently risky. This risk tends to be controlled with safeguards and is kept largely in the perception of the participant. In terms of physical risk to the participant project week spans a spectrum from the inherent risks of being guided down a Himalayan river to those involved in backpacking in India. The degree of risk varies greatly and would require individual assessment for each of the project week options. Useful research which might help the UWCs make informed decisions regarding project week would include risk analysis of each of the adventure, NGO, vacation, backpacking and bus tour oriented trips. The trip options are discussed in general terms below.
Adventure-based trips often take a goal-oriented expedition mindset. As such there is less of the risk of paradigm shift as a function of exposure to India, since that exposure is focused on each other as a team approaching a particular physical challenge. While the people of India are not ignored on these trips, they are certainly not the focus. Adventure trips include a higher physical risk but generally with an increased degree of professionalism and risk management on account of the tour provider or the college (i.e. international standard and professional guides and outfitters or a formalized adventure based learning program with in-house professionals). The risks presented by such an experience can easily be used as fodder for experiential learning, but the extent to which they are on these specifically adventure based trips was not specifically sought.

Keeping in mind that recreation and leisure were goals for the program, vacation-oriented beach trips like those to Goa can be said to involve the risk of lessons lost. Exemplifying the risk of idle hands, these beach trips provide few risks which can be adequately facilitated in order to promote experiential learning with subject matter appropriate to international education. The kind of experiential learning which occurs on these 'party' trips involved learning one’s tolerance for alcohol and experimenting with drugs. These are both valid experiential learning opportunities which employ physical risk (often used in hindsight by educators and interventionists) but which cannot necessarily be actively managed by the college.

There is travel involved in all the forms of project week discussed above. Here I refer to trips where “the whole backpacker, travelling, low budget thing” (s2-31) is the project itself. On these trips there exists also the potential for idle hands. But the planning, implementation and adaptation involved see that participants are kept busy by the act of simply moving through India. The actual risks on these trips are no different than the others, but take on a quality of the unknown that makes it disconcerting. On a river trip the risks are the river and the weather and the skills and the equipment and the people; within an acceptable tolerance it can be quantified, predicted and managed. On the trips across India to the river and from the river, one adds the transport risk and multiplies the human factor beyond our ability to account for it. It is not that the risk is great in simply travelling across India, it is because it involves so many unknowns. Backpacking as an end in itself embodies and stretches out this transport and human based “unknown risk” factor across the ten days instead of simply en route to a river an NGO or the beach.
It is the unknown risk that is at the heart of the institution’s discomfort with the program as it had always run. But the unknown risk comes with the other unknowns and uncertainties that are essential to project week. As such, the risk and the need to manage it without smothering it, is essential. NGO and project based trips tend to offer less physical risk, than say a mountaineering trip, and more intellectual risk to culturally derived paradigms and identities. The local people are often the focus in these cases, as are environmental and social issues. Trips of this nature have a great potential to use involvement in a purposeful activity to balance out the risks involved with backpacking in India.

The bus tours also held travelling through and seeing India as their central end, without any of the planning or student choices. The ‘unknown’ risks were outsourced, and were only minimized in as much as the outside agency was able, willing or capable of managing risks. I made no analysis of these agencies and cannot comment on their professionalism in this regard, but the suggestion from respondents was that they were less than professional in terms of logistics and tour design, and so their risk management process is also suspect. This said, there was arguably a lesser degree of risk on these pre-planned trips insofar as itineraries were set and inflexible and students’ time was almost 100% accounted for. However, idle hands were kept bored, not busy, so risk was minimized in such a way as to minimize hands on opportunities and result in insulation and isolation from India. These trips were understood as negating activism, initiative, leadership and detracting from the potential for learning and were criticized for extending the protective environment of the college without also extending its intellectual flexibility. They were seen as an unnecessary divergence from the ethos to which they had become accustomed at MUWCI. That is to say if MUWCI provided them day-to-day uncertainty and the intellectual risk discussed above then how could a program that was meant to extend and complement their experience in fact impede the use of uncertainty and risk as a tools for learning?

In one iteration of the program the kinds of risks that can be used to impart learning are present. In the other, these risks are removed and uncertainty is replaced by certainty. Allowing for the open-endedness of project week takes the risk out of purely the intellectual and into the real and relevant. Miss a train, break an ankle, lose a bag, eat a bad samosa; to “miss out on the ‘wrong’ places” (s1-22) is as detrimental as missing out on the ‘right’ ones. To overly
compensate for risk is to negate learning which is said to arrive primarily from having real and relevant experience which can then be applied to further real and relevant experiences.

The emphasis overall from respondents was on choice and suggested the need to find their own subjectively sourced, individually based definitions of comfort zone. ‘Unplanned’ project weeks included as much planning as was necessary for the kind of self-sourced experiences that some wanted to have; bus tours were exactly the kind of introduction to India that others felt they needed. The important thing with regard to the students is the flexibility to determine one’s own comfort zone. By limiting choice programmers neglect the subjective nature of the comfort zone: that everyone has their own personal comfort zone, and in an international education context, everyone sources those comforts in different cultures or combinations of culture.

In these ways, the pre-planned trips displayed a major divergence from experiential education as defined by Itin (1991) and Bell (1993). I believe that in being transparent and involving students with the pedagogy of project week the college could establish a structure which keeps risk and uncertainty to a level where they were still real enough to impart learning yet controlled enough to be safe. This tension between structure (certainty / safety) and freedom (uncertainty / risk) and how both are used in balance with each other to facilitate learning is exemplified in Krans & Roarke’s (1994) programs. These programs, in order to allow student designed and independent programs, include pedagogical transparency and a focus on exploration based on informed personal decisions and individual comfort levels.

An approach such as this would enable MUWCI students to make informed choices regarding their own comfort zone and take best advantage of the opportunity by way of having been prepped in the theory of experiential education. Knowing that an objective of project week was to seek out new experiences, while staying out of panic situations – and having the opportunity to develop the skills and self awareness to do so – would give students an understanding of and responsibility for their own learning and prepare them to “self consciously enter and engage in the process” (Krans & Roarke, 1994, p. 20).

While project week on the whole represents, to varying degrees, the use of risk and uncertainty to facilitate learning, developments and changes made to the program need to maintain an approach that is consistent with these core aspects of experiential education, international education and the
culture that has developed at MUWCI. That is not to say that there is no need be in control of the 
learning environment, but that students clearly reported that they needed to move in and out of 
the controlled environment of MUWCI and the unknown of India. Thus I argue that the place of 
project week is very much in providing a vehicle for students to do this.

8.9 Educator’s Role in Experiential Education

The final piece that emerges directly from Itin’s definition is the role of the educator in choosing 
suitable [and relevant] experiences, posing problems, setting boundaries, supporting learners, 
insuring physical and emotional safety, facilitating the learning process, guiding reflection and 
providing the necessary information. Much of this has been discussed above, but I have yet to 
directly address the extent to which MUWCI acts as an experiential educator. Comments can 
only be made with reference to project week, as it was the focus of this study. However, the data 
are certainly suggestive of MUWCI as an experiential educator with reference to the general 
experience of international education at a UWC. The big picture at MUWCI has the college, and 
more accurately the learning community it creates, posing, setting, supporting, ensuring, 
facilitating, guiding and providing. That these things are done with reference to values of 
diversity, inclusion and community by way of direct experience and relationships with people of 
other cultures, together in the intellectual, emotional, social, political, spiritual and perhaps 
physical uncertainty of another culture makes the MUWCI experience one of experiential 
education and MUWCI its facilitator. Taking project week as an example – already shown as 
both suitable and unsuitable for different stakeholders to various degrees in various iterations – 
does the college fulfil its role as an experiential educator? Does it pose problems, set boundaries, 
provide information, ensure safety, and guide reflection thus supporting learners and facilitating 
experiential learning? As with most everything else, the answers are both yes and no.

The obvious caveat to the posing of problems is the posing of the right ones. In such a case where 
the true problems are posed by context and community the provider takes only a facilitative role 
and sets boundaries and provides necessary information so that the problems encountered are 
appropriate, solvable and emotionally and physically safe. The changes made to the first project 
week were, as shown, aimed at this three tier goal of setting boundaries, providing information 
and ensuring safety. It was without a doubt a clear setting of boundaries, but the extent to which 
it provided information or safety was contentious for respondents. Comments ran to the effect 
that boundaries were set too closely and too abruptly and limited access to information and
experiences that would be of use on later project weeks, and so, did not serve the end of increased safety in the long run, as students now lacked experience-derived knowledge to be applied on future trips. This limited available information, and instead of opening access to it may render future problems posed by future experiences in India less readily solvable. It is in the setting of boundaries that the crux of the project week debate is found, and any exercise in boundary setting within an experiential program needs to consider the suitability of said boundaries to all the stakeholders in the education. What I think is lacking in this instance of boundary setting is suitability with regard to the larger aims of the UWCs and an international education because of a valid, but overcompensated, attempt to make the programs more suitable to MUWCI as an institution. As such MUWCI is fulfilling its role as an experiential educator in placing boundaries, but any boundary setting that needs to be made needs to be considered in light of all the stakeholders and the larger aims of the program.

To what extent MUWCI provides guided reflection has been discussed but I would highlight the idea that guided reflection in a residential UWC context needs to be considered in terms of reflection that occurs inherently over the two years. This reflection cannot accurately be called unguided, as it parallels and is intertwined with the academic and ideological discourse of the international education and is ‘guided’, so to speak, by the learning community in as much as it is its own entity. MUWCI then makes a significant, if inherent, contribution towards reflection in simply facilitating community, more so in facilitating community based in a dialogue and reflection amongst great diversity. What project week brings to this reflection is the in and out between MUWCI and India, and so a back and forth reflection between the ‘local’ and the otherwise international academic/social aspects of MUWCI; each providing space to reflect on the other. This is discussed further in the following conclusion which places project week in the liminal experience of international education.

So the answer to whether MUWCI as a provider of project week, an experiential program, is fulfilling its role as an experiential educator in supporting learners and facilitating learning is yes in several areas, and where they are not, that they are showing initiative and taking steps to do so. That these steps were in the first instance an over-compensation is forgivable in light of the larger context where the balance between stakeholders was being actively worked out by the community. As mentioned, MUWCI would be making great steps towards an experiential education which spoke to the issues of an international education at a UWC if it were to continue
towards the pedagogical transparency advocated by Krans and Roark (1994) where the students are themselves educated in theories of experiential and international education so as to give them the tools to take full ownership over program design, thus balancing freedom and structure, and fully engaging them in their experiential program.

As a concluding comment to this section I would point out that neither of the models for the first project week of the year or the program taken as a whole fully satisfies the definition of experiential education yet in each iteration of the program there were certain aspects that were in line with the main aspects of Itin’s definition and model. At the time of this research project week was between two extremes for which it had yet to find a balance. It seems that the program itself and the community with which it was co-dependent were together the subject of experiential learning cycles which had yet to result in a consistent program. As such, the answer to the second research question is that while the program did not fully and completely present itself as an expression of experiential education it was a program in transition, and so it would take time and further research to come to a conclusive and accurate conclusion.

This discussion chapter sought to answer research questions 1 and 2 by firstly discussing respondents’ descriptions of the MUWCI experience in light of liminality theory and secondly, discussing respondents’ experiences of project week in terms experiential education. By way of a conclusion, the following chapter places project week as an experiential program within the liminality of a UWC international education (addressing research question 3), considers the future of such programming and calls for research to make a more specific and better designed analysis of experiential programming in the liminality of international education.
CHAPTER NINE: Conclusion: The Place of Project Week.

This chapter concludes the study by addressing the third main research question and discussing the place of the project week program in the liminal experience of international education at MUWCI as well as suggesting directions for further research. Project week’s position will be considered in regard to: its various stakeholders; the theories of international and experiential education; to the mission and ideology of the UWCs; to an accurate representation of India; to the students as adolescents; to the students as a whole and in various groups; to the community as it changes each year; and to its contribution towards the students’ futures in economic reality and, perhaps, to the rest of the world insofar as these students will likely hold some influence in years to come – and hopefully do so in light of their MUWCI experience.

Because this research did not seek the full MUWCI experience or gain participation from host nationals it is hard to place, fully, the project week experience. However I can refer to it outside of the context of MUWCI’s formal curriculum and without solid reference to host national experiences.

9.1 The Place of Project Week

This is not a question of whether project week is liminal or not. In some ways it is very much typified by aspects of liminality, but if taking the wider view it is not necessarily so. In this study project week’s place needs to be considered in terms of MUWCI as a place where the liminal experiences of adolescence, mobility and international education meet to make for multi-barrelled liminality. As such, while containing aspects of a liminal voyage between India and MUWCI, it is in fact a space which buffers the liminal space of the college. Therefore, if taking a wide view of the context, I would consider project week as an extension of the space which, like a hand or a foot, connects the liminal to something, if only slightly more tangible and singular.

Though project week includes aspects of liminality and uncertainty common to these types of programming (Anderson, 1994), it is not viewed here as a place of liminality between India and the international. There are aspects of project week that are liminal with reference to India and to MWUCI. Project week could be considered a liminal space between MUWCI and INDIA, or a liminal space in which the UWC places its students as a rite of passage, similar to the liminal
wilderness expeditions described in the experiential education literature. Project week could be considered a rite of passage within the rite of passage of the UWC. I prefer to consider project week as a grounding, or non-liminal aspect, of the essentially ungrounded liminality of the UWC and MUWCI experience.

In placing project week I start from the ground up and the sky down, the local context being the ground. The far away other, despite technology’s illusion of proximity, remaining in the sky. Starting from the ground at MUWCI means starting in India, and from the sky down, the idea of the international. That everyone is from different places is what connects the MUWCI experience to the international. The actual and intentional diversity at MUWCI, as opposed to the circumstantial and rhetorical diversity at other international schools, sends concrete connections skyward to the abstract ‘international’. Each student represents, in corporeal proximity, the real experiences of the cultural other. Their collective experiences in their diverse pasts tie the MUWCI learning community to the international / sky in the same way that on the opposite end, project week tethers the community to the local / ground. With MUWCI framed as the liminal space mingling the ideology of the international and the reality of the local, project week can be seen as a moment of intentional grounding emerging from a protracted state of liminality. Starting from the ground up and the sky down, project week is where, through the medium of MUWCI a UWC, the ideology of internationalism is able to make proximal, person to person, culture to culture, contact with the a specific people in a specific place. It is ‘global thinking and local action’.

A big question left after a review of the CAS, IB, International education and UWC literature is the place of programs such as project week relative to the formal curriculum. In other words, are programs such as this part of the formal curriculum, extra or co-curricular, or are they a non-curricular social activity? Branson (1991) was unable to come up with a specific answer, and the official place of project week in terms of curriculum at a UWC has never been defined in the literature, as it is at once a formal, prescribed piece of UWC pedagogy and at once a non-credit extra. As such project week suffers from a duality of identity, being both and neither an aspect of the formal and / or the informal aspects of MUWCI life and a not-for-credit requirement. The implications of this program identity crisis are seen in that science students and students of certain cultures were under represented among the self selecting respondents. This suggests that while certain sectors of the learning community hold project week as a centrepiece of their
international education (enough to volunteer for research), others did not consider it a topic worth discussing. That journals were not returned also exemplified, perhaps, the kind of ‘work’, or structures students expected to have as part of the program. The idea that – viewed as ‘work’ – the journals infringed on free time is suggestive of the non-formal aspect of project week, while the testimony of respondents to project week’s impact on their international education is suggestive of a program that is of great educational importance. Its place in this regard is very much liminal and anti-structural as a piece betwixt and between the formal and informal aspect of the college. This research is in part seeking to identify and deal with this identity crisis of the program.

It is not a problem that the program sits in this liminal position, it just means that like Tempest and Starkey’s (2004) institutional liminality, and like Irving & Young’s (2004) use of liminality as a tool for teaching, the program would benefit from orienting itself towards a liminal centre (Cohen, 1984) and anchoring itself purposely, not just inherently, as an ‘in-between’ curricular space. To anchor itself there the program needs to seek out explicit and transparent links to the better defined (i.e. not liminal) concepts of explicit curriculum, hidden curriculum and co-curriculum. Project week could look to the IB’s CAS and TOK for examples of programs which specifically define their place with regard to the formal curriculum in a way that makes them at the same time part of it and at the same time complementary to it. Like Tempest and Starkey (2004) taking advantage of liminal institutions would require curriculum developers to consider the implications of liminality on the larger institutional and educational contexts in order to be able to then use it at the programming level.

Respondents focused on contact with each other, contact with the local and the opportunity to apply and extend the lessons of an international education as the main purposes of the project week program. Unfortunately I cannot say what project week means to local students, but the stereotype presented by other students was that it was too often an opportunity to seek the shelter of home and generally considered an unimportant distraction to academic studies. Further, there was the idea that it presented to host nationals an opportunity to act as a representative of India – a tour guide – whether they wanted to or not. I believe that like the example of second years mentoring first years, project week presents a tremendous leadership opportunity for the Indian students. As it is now, however, I was told that the majority of Indian students do not take, are perhaps not shown, this opportunity. Their role in liminal space than is to enter it and de-
familiarize, but also to provide grounding for it in their own culture. On project week specifically, their role may be equally dual, and equally as important.

In the big picture, local students obviously play an important role in the grounding of the liminal experience. That role is currently hard to distinguish, but I would hypothesize that for them it is a confused position that may contribute to the marginalization they were reported to experience as a group at MUWCI. Questions for future research might be how their particular approach from the local towards the liminal – as opposed to the TCK’s approach from the global – effects their experience of international education and ability to seek the ideals of the UWC movement. The Indian students don’t cross the globe like many of the others do. From getting a passport to going through the whole cleansing process of airport security, Indian students, presumably, experience ritual steps less amplified by time and space than those of the far away other in their voyage to MUWCI. Their apparent disposition – not wholly engaged with the liminal space – may have been a result of entering the liminal space from the opposite direction from their guest students. I would hypothesise future research may find that local students are in a naturally more entrenched position where purposeful and sequential strategies are needed to entice them out into liminal territory.

I will suggest that, while perhaps to a lesser extent, Indian students are being de-familiarized to their own ‘truths’ and do re-evaluate assumptions. They are experiencing, in effect, the mirror reverse of the outsider and stranger points of view, allowing a meeting with those outsiders and strangers – their guests – in the space MUWCI provides. With outsiders and strangers as room mates, classmates and trip mates they participate in exchange and the creation of a new and novel anti-structural environment. It is for these students that international education should employ the transparent experiential approach, with specific focus on having host nationals come to recognize their dual role in the liminal space and its requirement for taking an explicit, self-sourced step outside of the comfort zone, even if it is within one’s own country; especially if it is one’s own country, given the opportunity to show it and interpret it to the cultural stranger while out on project week.

For the globally mobile TCK the experience runs in a very similar fashion. They are in effect the locals, the savants, and the guides in the uncertainty of liminal space, and likely have other experiences of simultaneously seeking grounding in a liminal centre and in its accompanied local
setting which they can disseminate on project week, among other places. In the same way that the Indian students are a social/human grounding to India for MUWCI, TCKs are a link to change as the norm, liminality as the centre, uncertainty as a comfortable and constructive place.

To TCKs project week also represents access to the ‘right’ they have as a globally experienced person to seek out that which they would in India. Depending on their experience with India to begin with, it is an opportunity to get out and see India, and if you will, practice their ‘trade’ of mobility through intentional grounding in new places. Thus for already mobile students project week is necessary in the grounding which they are said to require. Like the Indian student, TCKs serve further in guiding and coaching their less international guests through this act of grounding. Grounding is the place of project week for them, and their place in facilitating that grounding. It is perhaps with regard to the non-TCK/mobile international students that the effects of project week are most visible and its place most clear, but would need to be accompanied by further exploration of the TCK and host national student experience in order to make for more generalizing research.

Internationalism, globalization, global culture, are all abstract ideas that would only take on a real sense if, as said, they were viewed from the moon. The way in which international education is manifest at a UWC and at MUWCI in particular is essentially a construction, or the coming to fruition of an impossible abstraction; the whole world in one place. International education will always present at one level a dis-believable un-real and not wholly achievable reality. MUWCI is an impossible representation of people in an impossible place. It does not exist without being created, it is in this sense artificial, not natural and so naturally disconcerting and a site for the confusion and contradictions of liminality.

Like other experiences of mobility and international education (Schaetti & Ramsey, 1999; Hartung, 2002) MUWCI requires purposeful grounding. Single places, such as India, Pune, or the local village are far more real – in an attainable and tangible sense – than the notion of the global. The notions the international and the global are connected with, and cannot exist without, the notion of the local. Liminal space needs some kind of resolution in order to keep from marginalizing its inhabitants. Project weeks act to provide the various layers of liminality found at MUWCI with either that resolution, or access to the material (tangible or experiential) to be used in making that resolution.
Project week is as real as India is, or as real as the India which it seeks is. It provides the ‘real’ context outside of the constructed and controlled – necessarily contrived – reality within the college. It allows the lessons of an international education to be grounded in a specific location, both geographically and by definition, as opposed to the non-local defined location of a UWC. In order to be truly grounding and serve as the necessary tether to the hot air balloon of international education, project week needs to maintain its authenticity as an experience of exposure to India, not simply an extension of MUWCI’s protective bubble in India.

In this view, to deny students experiences with the local context of India, such as project week, is to deny them connection with a tangible and realistic reality in which they can apply, lofty abstractions of the ideals based rhetoric of a UWC experience. It would be to deny them a foothold, a handhold or a tether to a non liminal reality. Because MUWCI is not real, project week must be real, it must be India. Because MUWCI is liminal, project week must ground it in accessing a platform off which to push. Stepping into India is fundamental, without it the ideas are just that, and any sense of reality that develops at MUWCI will not be applicable outside of the utopian ideal of a UWC. In the same way, the curriculum and the larger ideals of the movement are what ground MUWCI as a form of international education, viable on an international scale, and useful, if advantageous for students in practical economic reality.

Part of grounding the liminal aspects of the college involves project week providing various experiences not available to students within the college. One experience is that of the true India. Another is the opportunity for students to apply those aspects of their international education thought to be “really difficult to teach” (s2-5) and requiring first hand experiences. Project week serves as an opportunity to apply, extend and experiment with the concrete knowledge, ideology, theory, principles and ‘attitudes of mind’ that are part of an international education. These practical and theoretical lessons are broached within the college but are not necessarily applied or exemplified without venturing out into India. Students need to find real, relevant and ‘un-programmed’ venues for transferring these lessons into experience. Project week, CAS and other ‘non-MUWCI’ activities are where these lessons, through the process of experiential learning, become useful tools for the real world. They are what allow international education’s utopian ideals to find realistic application and solve realistic problems. An example might be the discussion of micro-credit I observed during the ‘This is India’ class and students who then go
out to work with an economic NGO, or, more culturally based, students who have only an
academic understanding of the Indian caste system, and then go out into India and see /
experience it in action.

Along with the opportunity to take newly acquired skills and ideas into India and use them comes
the opportunity for India to make its own contribution. Project week’s place is very much in
fulfilling the ‘need’ of a place to make an impact on the strangers and outsiders who enter it. This
involves interactions and observations of Indian people and customs which allow the student to
gather ideas, tangible objects as well as socio-cultural intangibles which are not available within
the MUWCI walls. Examples of this range from the local clothing students purchased (which I
observed many of them wearing on campus), to the food they ate and the way in which they ate
it, to mannerisms and expressions gained in part on their experiences in India, to actual
dispositions gained from contact with and observation of Indian people. Thus they can combine
the ‘things’ they gathered theoretically within MUWCI and the ‘things’ they gathered
experientially in India by way of the cycle of experience, reflection, abstraction and
generalization while moving between the utopian setting and the reality of India. They can
constantly hold one up against the other and is in part what students may be expressing when
they cite the need to move between the safety of the college and the freedom of India.

Another experience, by way of retrospective vision and comparative reflection, afforded by
project week is with home, home culture and one’s own identity insofar as it is a representation
of these two things. Contact with far away home occurs as a result of the inherent reflection
against that which we hold as ‘normal’ while out in India. Project week forces a comparison of
sorts, and so an interaction and reflection on one’s origins, applied in India. In the same way, a
student on project week is afforded a ‘contact’ with themselves which they would not otherwise
have within the comfortable and familiar confines of the college, both in the sense that they are
able to see themselves in a position of independence and responsibility – and see themselves fail
or succeed at that – and in the sense that they are witness to their own reactions – positive or
negative – to the new environment. This completes an experiential cycle started long ago in one’s
initial experiences of life as lived back home and brought through a full cycle of reflection,
abstraction and now application in new experience. For those for whom India is their first
experience with a foreign culture this is the first time that the experiential cycle started in their
own culture is closed. This opens up great possibility for the international novice who can now
take that same cycle and spiral it on towards applications and new experiences in other cultures, or – as in the homecomer – spiral it back to their home situation. Project week, and other contact with India, facilitate this process and provides the central lever for the paradigm shift which opens up new worlds and allows students to see their old world in a new way.

Project week’s position with regard to the larger student body, framed herein as being typified by communitas-based relations as a response to the outsider / stranger based characteristics of these, essentially cross-cultural, relationships is, again, to provide a different backdrop than that of MUWCI in which to have real experiences. Project week encourages collective experience of ‘strangers’ in a ‘strange’ land and so highlights for students their essential similarities and differences, and, in being an experience of the cultural other – with another cultural other as each other – drives the transition they described from stranger to insider in their own relationships. As such, project week facilitates the development of communitas in the liminal space by providing common ordeal and common experience against the backdrop of the local context. It is this function of project week that makes it an essential feature in the relationship between the year levels and so a driving force towards communitas, and experiential education’s notion of community and social engagement.

Finally, project week can be seen as providing the same retrospective self critique students experience with regard to their own culture with reference to MUWCI and the UWCs as a movement. International education is meant to maintain a reflexive and ongoing critique of itself as part of its defining characteristics. Project week provides to the participant an outside vantage from which to look back at international education and make, from the student perspective (arguably the heart of it), the necessary self critique. In holding the MUWCI space in contrast with the spaces of India, students can enter and exit their cultural and intellectual comfort zones, enter and exit liminal space, flip between different and relative degrees of structure and anti-structure, so keeping the movement physically and intellectually rooted in the local context. In this light project week’s place is very much the avenue from the international, through the liminal space, and into the local.

9.1.2 The Future Place of Project week

International schools each have vastly different contexts in which they operate and so must decide for themselves what ‘international education’ means. In the case of MUWCI – and
perhaps other UWCs – where international education is sourced in student initiative, that context
has as much to do with who the individual students are in any one year as it does with the
political and social climates or ideology. The students are the context, they provide the impetus
as well as – in reporting that the education rests largely on experience with each other in a
learning community – the content, the lessons, and the teachers.

So any structure that is developed for project week programs may best be developed in such a
way as to allow for the input and the involvement of students each and every year, each and
every trip and each and every day on trip. An important aspect of this is student sourcing and not
forcing activities or assuming what experiences are appropriate for what students. Project week
can extend the choice and freedom in the UWC model and still find balance between acceptable,
educational, risk and inappropriate risk. Student choices with regard to planning, structure and
supervision as well as the extent to which they stretch their own comfort zone are essential in
maintaining the validity of the program.

Students will always be protective of the real and relevant spaces they can forge themselves
outside of the bubble, where the influence from the elders, regardless of how un-assumptive or
liminal its orientation, can be discarded and so allow students to make their own decisions about
what is real. Curricular spaces like project week are in place to allow this. Any program
adjustments need to be done with the understanding of MUWCI as a social space with an ever-
changing population who will each and every year demand to (need to) be involved in that
planning in order to take ownership, and thus full advantage, of the program. Flexibility to
accommodate for a more or less ‘adventurous’ or more or less ‘project-oriented’ community year
in and year out would be moving towards a program more consistent with its unique and
changing social and educational context.

If what is taught is to question assumptions and be proactive then the energy and impetus for
change is going to always exist amongst the students. The energy spent on the ‘politics’ of
project week could be re-directed into some kind of negotiated curriculum or structure set up to
establish individual paths through the project week program each and every year. ‘Negotiations’
within defined boundaries could tailor the program each and every year and for each and every
student. This is a form of dynamic student sourcing and if second years were taught to guide this
process for first years the program could involve students facilitating individual programs for other students and so students sourcing the program in students.

This would require pedagogical transparency beyond what is found in Krans and Roarke (1994) for the second years who would need to be guided through understanding of education in practice as well as in theory in order to do the job well. The benefit to the second years in this is the illuminating experience of teaching, guiding, facilitating and leading. This is the idea of community building as opposed to teambuilding and borrows heavily from the Montessori idea of accelerated maturity through larger, multi-year, age brackets instead of single age groupings in education. It is also what I believe is called for by respondents who focused on the weakening of community ties as a result of segregating trips.

Krans and Roarke's (1994) program is quite similar to the project week program but the UWC program does not seem to take as many deliberate steps towards ensuring the safety of the students or the potential for learning. The preference in project week it seems, is to allow India to determine the lessons on her own, so a reliance on the inherent aspects of experience at the expense of explicit strategies and pedagogy. A balance between choice and requirement could source project week much more explicitly in both the students and in what the mission, rhetoric, history, theory, research, praxis and practice of international education requires of them.

A structure spanning the spectrum from general guidelines to non-negotiable rules, yet is also in line with the student sourced and free 'culture' of the college, would lend more rigour to the program while at the same time allowing the flexibility to draw methods and lessons out from the students themselves and their experiences of India and each other. Based on my research objectives, how this happens in practice is not for me to say. But sourcing the experience so directly in the students would need to involve both elements of requirement and elements of choice and agreed upon goals, as well as boundaries, in which the students and teachers are free to move. Not freedom, but a structure to formalize freedom and guide students through discovering India own their own, but in such a way as to be safe and guarantee a certain degree of contact with appropriate experience for learning.

Being exploratory the current study can inform the development of further enquiry, but does not necessarily provide the basis for specific recommendations at the programming level. I will
suggest, however, that there exists here the opportunity for MUWCI to continue to develop their project week programs in line with international education, experiential education and the unique ‘culture’ which exists at the college. As I was leaving MUWCI this development was continuing through the involvement of students, faculty and staff in a process which sought an agreed upon place and purpose for the program within the wider context and more fully engaged all the stakeholders.

9.2 Further Research

The results and discussion are exploratory as the study did not seek the full MUWCI experience, including in-class aspects, and failed to gain participation from a sample which represented both international and host national students. Further research would be required to make substantial claims or generalized conclusions. The study suggests that the following avenues and methods would be appropriate for further research.

Exploratory research such as this is useful in flagging certain areas for inquiry with methods and instruments that are more refined and more explicitly seeks specifics answers and examples. On the suggestion of the literature and the need to focus this study I looked at the out-of-class aspects of college life. I believe further research in international schools should continue with this focus on the social and informal aspects of college life, however, an approach that included more of the in-class and formal learning aspects, as well as more teachers and staff members might result in more conclusive outcomes.

This study did not adequately reflect the MUWCI community in terms of gender, academic orientation and culture. Future research in a similar context should attempt to diversify the sample with regard to these factors in order to be more representative. Further consideration with regard to sampling and data collection needs to be made in light of ‘third spaces’ occupied by such a unique mix of potential respondents.

From a study-abroad perspective Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich (2002) identify issues for experiential learning in international education, citing the integration of host nationals into learning communities. The integration of and interaction between host nationals and internationals is an avenue for development which can build on the work herein. Research that more explicitly inquires into differences between students by national origin as well as between
host national students and international students would be warranted. Also, research that further explores the differences between globally mobile students or TCKs and less-mobile students is warranted as the current study could only show tentative differences based largely on the globally mobile students' own opinions. Analysis based on the different experiences of the globally mobile students on one end, the host national students on the other, and all other experiences of mobility in-between could uncover a variety of cross-cultural phenomena and go a long way towards understandings of other liminal spaces and experiences of mobility in societies at large.

This research may be biased towards 'third spaces' because it ignores formal learning sites and the central systems and structures of education. If future research was to pick up where this research leaves off it could seek out specific examples and mechanisms of cultural re-creation, hybridity and the creative aspects of anti-structure alongside examples and mechanisms of cultural and social re-production and the normative push towards structure.

This research represents a snap-shot in time during an experience in which students may have been able to comment more objectively once the experience had been completed. Longitudinal research that seeks the journeys made by students from their pre-UWC homes, through the college experience and into their post-UWC experiences would allow a bigger picture of the kinds of changes students might undergo and how those changes are maintained or otherwise put to use. Within the two year experience the longitudinal approach could also take a finer grain and consider how students use breaks to move in and out of the school's 'third space', tracking their experiences through long weekends, project weeks, winter and summer holidays as well their homecoming and third-year options. This would essentially track the in and out movements between home, UWC and host culture and the in and out of intentional liminality and stranger-ness.

Similar explorations that focused more fully on the whole learning community, including teachers and students, and the whole experience, including in-class and out-of-class experiences across multiple UWCs would be useful to further the literature on ideology based initiatives in international education. However I would encourage researchers to more readily cross, re-combine and re-establish the typologies presented by Matthews (1989) and Ponisch (1987, cited in Hayden & Thompson, 1995a). Be it in a study abroad or an international school context,
research might benefit if it was sourced more inclusively across the different ‘cultures’ of international education. There is much in study abroad that can inform international schools, and vice versa, especially in a UWC context where the experience is a mix of both as well as something all together unique. Finally, I would say that both these fields of international education would benefit from diversifying the origins of work in their academy, encouraging writers and researchers from varied nations and disciplines, as well seeking out specific venues for research that break the mould of what has yet been considered feasible ground for international education. In other words, I feel the research and the literature and the places from which they are sourced need to more accurately reflect the rhetoric of diversity and inclusion implicit to the subject matter.

9.3 Concluding Remarks

Experiential theory is discussed in this thesis as a pedagogy which may aid programs such as project week to act as a grounding and ‘localizing’ force for an international education that in being ‘global’ and all inclusive becomes a liminal and anti-structural space between nations and cultures which requires explicit connections to its local context, in this case, India. Thus, the use of experiential education in international education might prove a fair response to calls from researchers to help international students ground their experiences of liminality – or to find grounding in liminal space itself – in order to take better advantage of freeing, creative and advantageous potential and better avoid confusion, marginalization and encapsulation.

A wider application of this may be in the conscious and constructive use of liminal space through calibrating to changing and contradictory situations in our own experiences as members of an increasingly interconnected society. I believe that on a personal / individual level, as well as on levels as high as global politics and ‘foreign policies’ we too can take advantage of the useful perspective liminality offers and the ways in which international education and international students use it.

It may be a matter of mapping the interconnections and interstices of (and from within) liminal space and finding personal footing so that the space can be used as leverage towards a particular end. What exactly that end is for the individual, the institution or the nation to decide. As shown by Turner (1992) in his later writings, this space can be mapped out and used towards artistic ends in the same way that can it be used by business consultants to bring about changes within
institutions, in the same way it can be used to create moments intentional of liminality to force windows for conscious action in the re-formulation of social structures. The liminal states discussed herein were generally purposeful, voluntary and positive. There may be lessons here, however, for those who find themselves cast into liminal situations that are less positive, such as illness or forced migration. In these, with re-orientation towards liminality and a focus on the in-between-ness as a form of connectivity and not of separation, intentional and grounded liminality can be used by people to bring about change, improving their situation or the situation of others.

The larger implications may be in regard to fostering tolerance and acceptance among the intolerant and un-accepting, if they can be shown that the inclusion of one thing does not necessarily mean the exclusion of another, or the possibility of both/and situations.

For those entrenched in their own culture, or found resistant or intolerant of those whom they meet in their increasingly liminal realities, ritualized, incremented and increasing steps into explicitly liminal situations may aid by slowly bringing them into experiences with and understanding of the emerging global reality. This exposure to and experience with liminality could act to reduce fear in situations of change which could be applied to high level discourse between nations and to individuals or groups; fostering tolerance and open-mindedness, or perspective consciousness, at every level.

I'll end by suggesting that perhaps life is always in a state of changing flux, and that any single moment or social construct could be considered as being between, and so liminal to, other moments and social constructs. As such, all our points of reference, or grounding actions, are constructs which we use to survive the liminality of all our other experiences. Liminality could easily be synonymous with 'the now'. Everything is a voyage from point A to point B and everything is the space in transit from everything else, or at least from that which came before and that which is to arise. Life thus seen requires that we become familiar with liminal spaces and how to navigate them in our sub-conscious acts of living. To bring that awareness to the conscious and constructive level would only serve as advantageous. We can use the self applied – pedagogically transparent – experiential method on ourselves to re-orientation to a liminal centre to justify, come to terms with and learn from incommensurate objects we encounter day to day.

This study was an exploration of student experience in a particular context of education in which more research is required. I have suggested the experience to be one of liminality for MUWCI
students, typified by the potential for creative adaptation allowed through a surplus of signifiers in anti-structural space between cultures, and in this way, similar to that of the globally mobile student and TCK. This experience, while potentially difficult, disconcerting and confusing for liminaries is one that also has the potential to be advantageous and freeing as long as they are able to find grounding in it and avoid the marginalization of being ‘betwixt and between’ specific truths and in an ever-changing relationship of strangeness and outsider-hood to themselves and their peers. Programs such as project week can be used to ground these liminal realities of international education in such a way as to bring them to bear on particular, non-liminal, situations and help students to maximize the advantages of the outsider’s multi-faceted and objective perspectives developed in liminal spaces.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A

Information for Participants and Consent Form
The following letter and consent form were used for both students and teachers, only slightly modified to fit context. <Alternative text is shown in italics.>

**Lincoln University**  
**Environment, Society and Design Division**  
**Canterbury, New Zealand**

**Information for Participants**

**Project Title:** An International Adventure: Qualitative Explorations of an Outdoor and Adventure Program for Multi-Cultural Student Groups in an International School in India.

Greetings,

You are invited to participate in an interview <fill out this logbook> for the project entitled: An International Adventure: Qualitative Explorations of an Outdoor and Adventure Program for Multi-Cultural Student Groups in an International School in India. I am a post-graduate student at Lincoln University in Canterbury New Zealand and this research project is part of my Masters of Applied Science Thesis.

The project has been established to investigate the contributions of outdoor and adventure education to international students’ understanding of the world and their place in it. This study, and all of the methods used, have been reviewed and approved by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee. Participation in this project has no bearing whatsoever on your assessment, academic or otherwise. <last sentence deleted for teachers>

Interviews will be conducted with up to 25 international students enrolled at Mahindra United World College India (MUWCI) who are involved in outdoor and adventure programs during the 2003/2004 school year. Each interview will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Students who will be participating in upcoming adventure programs at MUWCI will also be asked to complete a logbook of their adventure experience.

Student interviews and logbooks from MUWCI will be combined with teacher interviews at MUWCI and three other United World Colleges to form the qualitative data set for the project. The interviews and logbook analysis will be conducted by me and me alone.

If you agree to an interview, <filling out a logbook> you will be asked which country/countries you come from; which cultural and ethnic groups you affiliate with; what you understand by the term 'adventure'; what your experience of international education has been and questions regarding your identity (i.e.: who you are) and what your experiences have been in outdoor education. <teachers: you will be asked about the curriculum goals of international education, your teaching practices, what students learn, what the student experience of international education is, potential issues that the students face and how an international education and outdoor education may address these issues.> There are no right or wrong responses to the questions asked in interviews or log books. It is your opinion I want to hear and your identity I want to emerge.

The interviews will be tape-recorded, with your consent, so that they can be transcribed for later analysis. <logbooks will be transcribed word for word, excluding sections you do not want included in the research> You will be asked to give your consent to participate in the project and to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that you will not be able to be identified in the results or publications. You may withdraw from the project at any time, in full or
in part, up until the time of final printing. The interviews, interview tapes, logbooks and transcripts will be treated confidentially and respectfully. <Logbooks will be returned to you once I have transcribed them.>

Feel free to contact me at any time while I am on your campus with your questions, or email me at pablo@lincoln.ac.nz. You can also contact my research supervisor, Dr. Pip Lynch at the address provided below, should you have any concerns that you do not feel comfortable discussing with me.

Thank you,

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Environment, Society and Design Division
Canterbury, New Zealand

Consent Form

Project Title: An International Adventure: Qualitative Explorations of an Outdoor and Adventure Program for Multi-Cultural Student Groups in an International School in India.

I have read and understood the description of the International Adventure project. On this basis I agree to participate in an interview, <fill out a logbook> and I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding my anonymity will be preserved. I understand also that I may at any time, up until final printing, withdraw from the project, including withdrawal of any information I have provided.

I consent to the interview being recorded: ____________________ (initial)

Print Name in English: ________________________________

Name in Characters: ________________________________

Signed: ________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________
APPENDIX B

Teacher and Student Interview Schedules
The following Teacher Interview Schedule was used as a guide for the open-ended interviews. Topics were not broached in the order presented below, not all of the topics presented below were broached, and some of the topics discussed in the interviews are not presented below.

Teacher Interview Schedule

Hello – Intro on me - questions about process (ask any time) - about interview – about info sheet – about consent form – explain pseudonym process – explain to them not to refer to specific students.

DEMOGRAPHICS
Name, gender, ethnicity, education, international experience, places lived, how long & why, teaching experience, subjects taught.

CURRICULUM GOALS
International Education
In general, at UWC, at MUWCI (or other).
What about Project Week and CAS programs?
How do they contribute to international education?

Outdoor/Experiential Education
In general, at UWC, at MUWCI (or other).
How is it international in nature?
How does it speak to the aims of international education?

The Programs
Describe the programs you’re involved in....
Overview, assessment, the experience for teachers; for students?
Strengths and weaknesses of the program?

LEARNING OUTCOMES
International/Outdoor/Experiential Education (project week)
What do you want kids to learn in an international education?
What do they end up learning?
Are they successful programs?

TEACHING PRACTICE
What is your approach to what you teach?
To International Education?
To Experiential Education?
To other subjects?
How might this come across to the students?

STUDENTS
Describe to me the student experience at MUWCI.
How are they different/common from other school groups?
Who are they as a group?
Do they group up within the school?
Along what lines?
Interaction across groups?
How do they perceive their international education?
Do they value it?
What are the benefits and challenges of this international education?
   Personal, academic, now, future.
Can the cultural diversity propose certain challenges to them?
Who, what kind of students, have a hard time?
   Culture, gender, maturity, personality.

POTENTIAL ISSUES
Disorientation
   Are they disoriented? What is disorienting?
   Entry, now, re-entry?
Marginality
   To what are they insiders?
   To what are they outsiders?
   To what extent are these in-groups and out-groups interlinked and fluid?
   Are students breaking out of in-groups and into out-groups?
   In what are they grounded? How solid is that grounding?
   As an educator are you seeking to ground them? What in?
   What can they see from their vantages? What can’t they see?
   To what extent are they freed or limited by their perspective/position?

Relationships
   People – peers, gender, culture, host-culture, teachers, staff.
   Places – school, local, national, global, natural, urban.

How will issues above, be affected on re-entry?
   Will it be disorienting? How?
   Will they feel like outsiders at home?
   How will their relationships with peers and family be affected upon return?
   What will happen to their relationships formed during their international education?
   Will the people places and ideas founded in this international education endure, change, be disseminated?

Other Issues?
   How can students deal with these problems? How will they?
   What can educators do?

How does MUWCI address these issues, what is ‘taught’ to help students?
How might outdoor/experiential education (project week) help?

OUTDOOR/ADVENTURE/EXPERIENTIAL/PROJECT WEEK
What programs have you been involved with?
   At MUWCI?
   Elsewhere?
   In what capacity?
   Project week experiences, past, future.

Tell me about the trips you have been on with MUWCI.
   A vacation?
   Difficult? Easy?
   What did you learn?
   Best part, worst part, how does it engage you?
What is the point, what are they trying to teach you?
Are they successful?
Part of school or just an extra?
Fit into an international education?
Are the programs "international"?

**Experienced differently by people from other cultures?**
How? How might these different perceptions affect the group on a trip? Closer together? Farther apart?

**PW debate** (didn’t inquire unless they brought it up in some way)
Stance?
How better?

**OTHER**
Is the world big or small? Bigger or smaller?
Are people the same or different?
Is this India?
Local vs. global?
Advantage, difficulties, disadvantage?
Blessing Burdon

Thank you. – Was there anything else you wanted to say? Questions for me? Now what?
The following Student Interview Schedule was used as a guide for the open-ended interviews. Topics were not broached in the order presented below, not all of the topics presented below were broached at all, and some of the topics discussed in the interviews are not presented below.

**Student Interview Schedule**

Hello – Intro on me – questions about process (ask any time) – about interview – about info sheet — about consent form – explain pseudonym process.

**DEMOGRAPHICS and PERSONAL HISTORY**
Name, gender, ethnicity, education, SES, education experience, international experience, places lived, how long & why? Year of study, favourite subject, worst subject. UWC application process.

**SCHOOL**

*What is an international education?*
Are you getting one? Is this one?
What are you learning, what are they trying to teach you?
Is it international?
And the IB?
The UWCs? The Ideals?

*How do they approach the teaching?*
Does it work for you? For others?

*What about project week and CAS programs?*
How do they contribute to your international education?

*Are there challenges, advantages to your international education?*
Now, future, personal, academic?

*Has your international education so far changed you at all?*
Will it? How?

*What about freedom (generally arose from them without asking)*
Why freedom?
Too much?
Discipline, consequences?

**CROSS-CULTURAL CONTACT**

*Is culture a factor? A challenge?*
Relationships, communication, ideas, perceptions.
What have you learned from cultural contact?
What have you shared with others?
What of the host culture?

*Are there in-groups and out-groups?*
Along cultural lines?
Other lines?

*Do you feel as though you’re representing your culture?*
If so, how?

*Do others represent their cultures?*
If so, how?
POTENTIAL ISSUES

Disorientation
Have you felt disoriented at all during your time here? What is disorienting?
Entry, now, re-entry?

Marginality
To what are you an insider?
To what are you an outsider?
To what extent are these in-groups and out-groups interlinked and fluid?
Are you breaking out of in-groups and into out-groups?
In what/to what are you grounded? How solid is that grounding?
Do you want to be grounded? What in?
What can you see from your vantage point? What can’t you see?
To what extent are you freed or limited by your perspective/position?

Relationships
People – peers, gender, culture, host-culture, teachers, staff.
Places – school, local, national, global, natural, urban.

Return home?
Challenges, advantages?
Relationships with peers and family?
Will the people, places and ideas founded in this international education endure,
change, be shared? Be disseminated?

Other Issues?

OUTDOOR/ADVENTURE/EXPERIENTIAL/PROJECT WEEK

What programs have you been involved with?
At MUWCI?
Elsewhere?
In what capacity?
Project week experiences, past, future.

Tell me about the trips you have been on with MUWCI.
A vacation?
Difficult? Easy?
What do you learn?
Best part, worst part, how does it engage you?

What is the point, what are they trying to teach you?
Are they successful?
Part of school or just an extra?
Fit into an international education?
Are the programs “international”?

Experienced differently by people from other cultures?
How? How might these different perceptions effect the group on a trip? Closer
together? Farther apart?

PW debate (didn’t inquire unless they brought it up in some way)
Stance?
How better?
OTHER

Is the world big or small? Bigger or smaller?
Are people the same or different?
Is this India?
Local vs. global?
Advantage, difficulties, disadvantage?
Blessing or Burdon?

Thank you. – Was there anything else you wanted to say? Questions for me? Now what...?
APPENDIX C

Journals/Logbooks and Selected Responses
Logbook Consent, Instructions and Sample Page

What follows is only a sample; the originals were small, bound booklets with the journal and logbook sections reversed back to front.

CONSENT
Please read the following 3 pages before you sign the consent form!!!

I have read and understood the description of the International Adventure project (next page). On this basis I agree to fill out the attached logbook and I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that my anonymity will be preserved. I understand also that I may at any time, up until final printing, withdraw from the project, including withdrawal of any information I have provided.

Name in English and in other language or characters: ____________
Signed: ________________
Date: __________________

--- Thank You!!

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THE PROJECT

You are invited to fill out this logbook for the project entitled: An International Adventure: Qualitative Explorations of an Outdoor and Adventure Program for Multi-Cultural Student Groups in an International School in India. This research project is part of my Masters of Applied Science Thesis from Lincoln University in Canterbury New Zealand.

The project has been established to investigate the contributions of outdoor and adventure education to international students' understanding of the world and their place in it.

PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROJECT HAS NO BEARING WHATSOEVER ON YOUR ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT.

Interviews will be conducted with up to 25 international students enrolled at Mahindra United World College India (MUWCI) who are involved in outdoor and adventure programs during the 2003/2004 school year. Students who will be participating in upcoming adventure programs at MUWCI will also be asked to complete a logbook. Student interviews and logbooks from MUWCI will be combined with teacher interviews at MUWCI and three other United World Colleges to form the qualitative data set for the project. The interviews and logbook analysis will be conducted by me and me alone.

If you agree to filling out a logbook you will be asked which country/countries you come from; which cultural and ethnic groups you affiliate with; what you understand by the term ‘adventure’; what your experience of international education has been and what your experience has been in outdoor education. The logbooks will ask questions regarding your identity (i.e.: who you are), and thus ask a variety of questions from many different angles. There are no right or wrong responses to the questions asked in interviews or logbooks. It is your opinion I want to hear and your identity I want to emerge.

Logbooks will be transcribed word for word, excluding sections you do not want included which you should not remove from the book, but highlight instead. You will be asked to give your consent to participate in the project and to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that you will not be able to be identified in the results or publications. You may withdraw from the project at any time, in full or in part, up until the time of final printing. Logbooks and transcripts will be treated confidentially and respectfully and will
Feel free to contact me at any time while I am on your campus with your questions, or email me at pable@lincoln.ac.nz. You can also address any questions to your CAS coordinator, should you have any concerns that you do not feel comfortable discussing with me.

- thanks

______________________________ page break ________________________________

THE LOGBOOK

This logbook is designed to do three things:
- I.
Provide you with space to write, draw and express what you want how you want
- II.
Provide you with space to record your trip as you see fit
- III.
Provide me with insight into who you are, from where you come and how you might express that

* Space in the log is balanced between free space and structured space. The Section starting in the front of the book is for you to make daily entries about your trip experience. The section starting at the back is a combination of free space in which you can write whatever you want and specific questions and queries. Make an attempt to address at least some of the questions sprinkled throughout the log, but do not feel bound by them as some are not questions at all but just there to give you something to think about!

* Do not include natural objects (ie leaves) as it is not allowed by New Zealand law. Please be honest, imaginative and write as much as you want! And have fun with it !!!!
Trip day    Location    Time

Weather

Personal Condition (mood, body, etc.)

How is the group doing?

What did you learn today? From who? How?

What did you "teach" or share today?

Did anything make you think today?

What else is on your mind?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **How is the group doing?**                   | Day 1: Brilliant, lots of arguments. Five philosophy students and an outspoken Croatian!  
Day 3: No real leadership, but we all seem to agree often.  
Day 5: Now began a little bit of tension in the group...  
Day 6: Good, we have started to do stuff by ourselves. |
| **What did you learn today?**                 | Day 2: That two heads are better then one!  
Day 3: That I change my behaviour around different people.  
Day 5: That different people have different priorities.  
Day 7: The beauty of a gathering of people.  
Day 8: If you want it buy it and pride is a very high hurdle. |
| **Did anything make you think today?**        | Day 1: Everything, as usual.  
Day 2: Are you ever finished “knowing” anyone?  
Day 7: All the first year groups have no money left. They just can’t handle themselves. It makes one worry about next year.  
Day 8: Just because someone is trying to sell you something does not mean that they cannot be trusted. |
| **What else is on your mind?**                | Day 2: Different people, different mentalities, different worlds. ...Can we expect people to be conscious of themselves fully?  
Day 3: Visited a place where over 2000 people were massacred....I have no belief in ghost or spirits or energies.... However, standing at this place and touching the wall with the bullet marks I felt something.... Putting yourself there, your full self.... Closing your eyes and giving into empathy, that was cool.  
Day 3: Sometimes it just hits me that we are just teenagers, just teenagers.... Finding yourself at MUWCI is like trying to swim without goggles.... You can only really count on yourself.  
Day 5: ...My opinion of the Dali Lama has changed. I wonder whether peace truly equals non-violence....  
Day 8: Hung around in McDonalds today, met the first year group there... bought black market movies and illegal copies of video games, morality is relative! Then Boarded train, 25 hours to Pune, [three student names] don’t have seats. [one of them] bribed the conductor, two of them still don’t have seats, morality is suspendable if morality is not convenient. |
Journal Prompts and Questions Sample Pages

I'm looking for you.
How you help me find that
is up to you....

Try and include a bit of everything.

Show me your art
your work
your play
your passion

be who you are
who you were
and who you might be

Tell me in words
in pictures
in song and
in sincerity

If at all possible....

... find and include

A meaningful picture
An advertisement you like
An advertisement you hate
A piece of art
Your favourite recipe
The rules to a game you made up
Your top ten things to do alone
Your top ten things to do with others
The worst joke you have ever heard...
...and the best one
a good photograph
Favourite lyrics in a song or poem
An interesting newspaper article
A sad story...
...and a happy one to make up for it
Your top three favourite quotes
Something random

e tc. etc. etc. .................
What are you afraid of? What are you not?

Who do you trust? Who don't you trust?

Do you trust yourself?

If you had 'power', how would you use it

What advice would you give the poorest of people...

...the richest of people?
Your Top Five...

Idea  Design  Style
Inventions  Animals  Sports
Innovators  Muses  Legends
Innovators  Heroes  Experts
Innovators  Models  Muses
Innovators

----------------------------------------------------------------- page break -----------------------------------------------------------------

agree
agree
agree

disagree
disagree
Strengths & Weaknesses

Universal?
“SPACE & QUESTIONS SELECTED RESPONSES”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prompt</th>
<th>“Response”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who do you think you are?</td>
<td>Individuality is a scarce commodity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a postcard to your great great grandchildren.</td>
<td>I am not going to have any, sorry, I apologize in advance for your lack of existence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what do you identify?</td>
<td>I don’t know, check back in two years…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How have you changed?</td>
<td>I’m stiffer around some people and annoyed by others, I’m comfortable around the rest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what do you owe your…</td>
<td>To everything I have done and everyone I have met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is true?</td>
<td>I don’t know….. Instinct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How when where who?</td>
<td>What better place then here, what better time then now, who else, but us?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the world changed?</td>
<td>After the whole ‘let there be life’ thing, it’s gone down hill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How might the world change?</td>
<td>It could become a disc carried on the back of four elephants, who stand on top of a giant turtle, swimming through space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead or follow?</td>
<td>A little bit of both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…anything you want.</td>
<td>peace of mind, power, wealth, style, respect, sleep, travel, family, immortality, non-smelly feet, freedom, independence, opportunity, excitement, understanding, knowledge, truth, food, connections, friends, happiness, time, everlasting youth, love, future, life, thrills, health, time-travel, telepathy, absolute honesty, telekinesis, a shower and pleasure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>