Science and Mathematics Education Centre

Cultural Border Crossings in the UAE: Improving Transitions from High School to Higher Education

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Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published by any person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

Signature:

Date: 17 July 2012

Abstract

Over the course of one academic year, I documented the experiences of new first-year male Emirati students at a college of higher education in the United Arab Emirates. Using Giroux's metaphor of a cultural border crossing, I described and attempted to explain the gamut of transition experiences as young male Emirati school-leavers move from their pre-dominantly Arabic life-world associated with their families and schooling to the pre-dominantly Western culture found in higher education. I additionally investigated factors associated with both students and faculty that hinder and/or enhance student learning, and I assessed best practices in the college administrative and academic areas which appeared to facilitate smoother cultural border crossing experiences for new students. I adopted a multi-paradigmatic research design that drew methods and quality standards from multiple paradigms to create a methodology that enabled an artful, critical and interpretive exploration of complexity supplemented by a descriptive analysis of general social patterns. The latter was achieved by survey research methods and the former using observation, case studies, interviews, journals, student narratives, and focus groups. A Border Crossing Index broadly correlated with the four placement levels of students in Foundations with the result that those students placed in the lower levels were much more likely to leave college and seek full-time employment within the first semester – 66% of the new students left college during the year. Suffering from the effects of neo-indigeneity and a disempowering 'rentier effect', I identified almost twice as many factors that appeared to hinder student learning as enhance it. Mainly Western teachers who developed a classroom culture based on 'warm demandingness' and rapport-building appeared to have the most positive impact upon the students. The development of students' soft-skills in a new College Preparation and Readiness (CPR) program was assessed using a Mental Toughness Questionnaire which surprisingly produced lower post-test scores, indicating possibly greater self-awareness and honesty. I offered a series of suggestions from the macro societal level such as more engaged parenting, addressing a potentially devastating 'rentier effect', and improving the quality of education especially in the government high schools to smaller 'tipping point' changes at the micro college and classroom level. A key emerging question asks - whose interests are being served (or not) by compelling first-language students to cross cultural borders into higher education colleges and asking them to study using the dominant and hegemonic second-language of English?

Acknowledgements

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

كل فولة مسوسة لها كيّال أعور

Kull fūla musawwisa lahā kayyāl aʻwar

Every decayed bean has a one-eyed man to weigh it

cf. everyone finds his own level.[1]

I landed at Dubai International Airport with my young family and wife in August 1995. Nearing sunset, we disembarked from a rear exit of the aircraft, walking gingerly down the stairs after a long flight from Singapore. My seven year-old son, Tim, remarked that it was very hot and indeed it was, probably around 40°C. I explained to Tim that it was probably the heat from the jet engines. It was only when I reached the tarmac and continued walking to the bus, still feeling the heat of the Arabian summer that I had time to reflect on the silliness of both my observation and remark. As I was to find out many times over, like a mirage, everything in the Middle East is not quite what it seems to be at first sight...

The Problem

The impetus for this research arises from my 16 years of teaching and management experiences with a single federal institution of higher education in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), "dedicated to the delivery of technical and professional programs of the highest quality to the students, within the context of sincere respect for diverse beliefs and values" (*HCT Catalogue 2010-2011*, 2010). I have dealt almost exclusively with young Emirati male school-leavers aged around 17-19 years of age entering their first year in the Foundations program where they begin to recover their skill deficits in English, Math, Computing, and Personal Development, skills necessary for them to start their career program of choice in Business, Applied Communications, Information Technology, or Engineering. In observing and interacting with these young men, I have

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[1] Arnander & Skipwith (1995)

come to understand that, for too many of them arriving directly from high school, the social, emotional, cultural, and cognitive experiences in their first year at college are very difficult and problematic, making the transition from high school to higher education an almost impossible feat. They either do not turn up to college or they simply leave within the first few weeks.

As a faculty (I use the terms 'faculty' and 'teacher' interchangeably) and more recently, a Chair of the Foundations department at two male colleges, part of the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), I have made certain descriptive assumptions about male Arab learners based on my personal experiences with them, listening to their stories about family and school life as well as being cognizant of significant cultural and religious factors. In the main, these assumptions negatively describe male Emirati students as a mostly homogeneous group of learners, poorly equipped to live in the fast-moving technological world of which the UAE is rapidly becoming. Despite a huge investment in the higher education sector, on-time graduation rates are low with 90% of the high school students arriving at college without the pre-requisite English and numeracy skills for engaging in their area of program study. In short, they (and the system that is tasked to deliver high-quality tertiary education to their citizens) are failing. This phenomenon has already been identified by a number of both locally-based and international researchers (Ridge, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2011; Minnis, 2006; Hatherley-Greene, 2010; Fields, 2011; Daleure, 2011; Hourani & Diallo, 2011; Ostrowska, 2011). Why do so many friendly and respectful male Emirati students come to college but not avail themselves of the learning opportunities that await them in one of the most highly resourced post-secondary institutions in the world? Why do so many appear to have low levels of intrinsic motivation for studying and learning compared to their Western counterparts?

In answering these questions, I have observed the students, the teachers, and the learning environment in an attempt to provide some insight into the reasons for their seemingly difficult transitions from high school to college which will hopefully lead to formulating some practical and efficacious solutions for all higher educational institutions in the UAE in order to improve the attraction rate, retention rate, and successful graduation and employment rates of young male Emirati high school leavers entering higher education. There is a strong critical theory aspect of the research with the hope that improvements

in managing successful transitions of male Emirati students from high school to higher education college life will lead ultimately to increased numbers of dynamic young male citizens who will take their rightful place in their local communities. In so doing, they will achieve the vision of the country's founders, recently updated in the 2021 Vision document released by the UAE Government which foresees "...knowledgeable and innovative Emiratis [building]... a resilient economy, [thriving]... in a cohesive society bonded to its identity, and [enjoying] the highest standards of living within a nurturing and sustainable environment" (*2021 Vision*, 2010).

Who Am I?

I was born and raised in New Zealand, the only son in a family of five sisters. My upbringing was conventional by the standards of the time and I was never aware of going without as my parents always seemed to find money to buy a toy train set, a brand new bicycle or send me off to a Scout Jamboree in the South Island. After spending my growing-up years in Palmerston North and Tauranga, I moved to Christchurch (tectonically stable at that time) and completed my MA (Hons) in Geography at the University of Canterbury in 1979. In the same year, I also obtained a Diploma in Teaching, and then, I went overseas with my wife to experience the world before returning to New Zealand to start a family and build a career in education.

I have been involved in education for 30 years, teaching across the entire gamut of educational sectors - primary, secondary, and tertiary. Opting for long-term stability, I have not had many positions in my career – after I spent a year in London in the early 1980s at a secondary comprehensive school, I taught at Waihi School (a rural boarding school for young boys aged between 9-12 years) in South Canterbury for 11 years in the 1980s and 1990s, and then, after a brief period at Columba College in Dunedin, I moved to Dubai in 1995 with my family to begin a position as a Math and Computing faculty at Dubai Men's College, one of several Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) in the United Arab Emirates. In the time spent at HCT, I attained a Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) in 1999 and a Masters in Educational Technology (Dean's Commendation) in 2003.

On a personal note, I have been married to the same woman, Karen, for 33 years, and we have two grown-up children, Sarah and Tim, both of whom are now settled back in New

Zealand after spending a decade or so growing up in Dubai. I have interests in music where I play the piano and trumpet, and I have taught many tens of young trumpeters since the mid 1980s – I currently teach a student using Skype who lives in Perth, Australia. I enjoy reading a diverse and eclectic range of books, and when we can afford it, both my wife and I love travelling to the European Alps during the winter months for skiing. I resigned from my Chair position at HCT in June 2011 in order to study full-time on this research.

Reflection on my learning background

This thesis is essentially about teaching and learning. This self-reflection is an honest attempt to describe how I learn. I attended a primary school in Palmerston North where the teaching staff were predominantly Catholic nuns. Closing my eyes, I recall quite vivid memories of choralling simple multiplication tables, copying endlessly the letters of the alphabet, hearing the sound of chalk on my slate board, applying paste to paper in art lessons though I was not particularly gifted - and riding my red and black three-wheeler bicycle to and from school which was always the highlight of my day. These were typical behaviourist approaches in the classrooms at that time (early 1960s) - the use of rote memorization, encouragement of repeated behaviours until they became automatic, learning the *what?* and the *how?* rather than the *why?*, and a set curriculum containing the corpus of knowledge which was formally assessed at the conclusion of the instructional period (Buxton, 1978; Miller & Kandl, 1991; Phillips & Soltis, 1998). From a knowledge-paradigmatic viewpoint, I learnt behaviourally, passively absorbing, more or less accurately, the schemata (skills, values, and beliefs) of my teachers – I saw and experienced the world through *their* eyes, not mine. However, I left primary school knowing how to read at a level slightly higher than my age, to write accurately and legibly, to perform simple arithmetic, instantly recall my times tables up to 12, and use paste with paper to create something 'creative' which could, at a stretch, be called art. I was generally a well-behaved student, paid due homage to my teachers, and mostly completed my homework when it was assigned. Interestingly enough, my early report cards often mentioned "could do better" or "more effort" in the comments area written by my teachers. Essentially, I was happy so *I* must have felt pleased with *my* efforts, apparently measuring up quite well to some internal benchmark or criteria of success.

In trying to understand my understanding as a child up to the age of 12, my overall assessment is that I experienced bits and pieces of different kinds of learning, at different times of my young life, with different teachers, and within different classroom dynamics – in other words, "knowing is always situated in place and time..." (Treagust & Duit, 2008, p. 390). Within Buxton's linear and hierarchical system, there were definitely 'insightful' periods of learning when I really do remember saying, "Oh, I see...", perhaps akin to the 'intuitive understanding' as explained by Byers and Herscovics (1977). But the 'insightful' and 'observational' levels of understanding were usually singular and rather isolated spikes on a flat line of mostly instrumental learning (Skemp, 1976).

In New Zealand at the time, there was a two-year Intermediate school system sandwiched between the primary and secondary schools, right in the middle of our pubescent years - actually, mostly *male* pubescent years as all the girls had appeared to have impressively leapt over this hurdle in the final years of primary school. However, an outstanding personal learning moment occurred in the second half of the second year after I submitted a large project on 'Paper - The Indispensable Material' for which I received my first-ever A grade. In that moment, I understood the benefits and realized the potential of what hard work, effort, and a lot of interest could do. It was an absolute revelation. I suspect that this moment occurred as part of my natural cognitive development, described by Piaget as the *formal operational stage* where children develop abstract thought and can easily conceive and think logically in their mind (Piaget, 1964). It further indicates the presence of internal networks and representations, reflecting the growth and developing complexity of both external and internal connections between and within my mind and the world (Hiebert & Carpenter, 1992; Treagust & Duit, 2008).

Most of my teen years were scarred by the premature death of my mother at the age of 47 when I was 12, in my first year of high school. Learning and schooling were pushed back in favour of garnering emotional support from peer groups with whom I began to get into trouble. It was four years' later, around 16 years of age, after I had made friends with three stable and unique people in my age group that I re-discovered the value of learning - the joy of dictating stories recklessly to my friends too disinterested to write their own, and the simple pleasure of enjoying academic achievement and success. Despite the domestic turmoil at home, I found solace in learning; repose in reading the

set-texts of Hemingway, Montserrat, and Shakespeare, and reassurance in my cognitive ability through positive peer and teacher feedback. In Geography, I found a course and a teacher who helped me to explore conceptual change, pushing back child-based assumptions by developing more mature mental models, even sustaining contradictory views at times (Prawat, 1989).

University years came and went, and within those six years, there was a brief flowering in my paper year of the Masters - a kind of consolidation took place, a shift in Bloom's taxonomy from one level to another (Bloom, 1956). And then it stopped, not to be reawakened until the early 2000s when I started an online Masters in Educational Technology at the University of Southern Queensland. Here, my ability to express myself in the written word began to emerge strongly in the new medium of online Discussion Boards, and through collaborative group work spanning three continents. My learning was encouraged by several moderators who praised my efforts which had, in their opinion, produced innovative intellectual constructions. The *Knowing Why?* (Miller & Kandl, 1991) became all-consuming and I relished the vigorous online debates where I found my 'voice' of which I had hitherto not been aware. In that specific online learning experience, I felt I had reached the apex of learning until I met Dr. Peter Taylor at Curtin in 2004-2005 when I began my Ph.D. Peter wanted us to be on the "same page" epistemologically so I completed his Constructivism course which remains to this day as the most enjoyable and satisfying learning moment of my adult life, where my cognitive and linguistic abilities coalesced and aligned at a very high level.

Overview of the United Arab Emirates

Situated on the lower Arabian Gulf, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) shares international borders with two other countries, Saudi Arabia and Oman (see Figure 1). Formerly known as the Trucial States after Great Britain imposed a truce upon the warring tribes in 1820, the six modern emirates of the UAE became a federation in 1971 with the seventh emirate, Ras Al Khaimah, joining a few months later in early 1972. Today, the seven Emirates have their own individual rulers or *sheikhs* – being the largest and richest emirate, Abu Dhabi is the capital of the country and also provides the President, currently Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

In Figure 2, the emirate of Abu Dhabi dominates almost all aspects apart from population where Dubai retains the edge over its larger brother. The total population has grown exponentially in recent years with a 65% increase in total population from 2006 to mid-2010 (*UAE population up by 65% in four years*, 2011) but the real interest lies in

Figure 1: Middle East regional map (*Middle East map*, 2011)

Emirate	Land area[2]	Population[3]	% Local[4]	Per capita income (Dh)[5]
Abu Dhabi	67,340 km²	1,548,655	24%	267,948
Dubai	4,114 km²	1,770,533	8%	153,256
Sharjah	2,600 km²	895,252	15%	77,622
Ras Al Khaimah	1,683 km²	171, 903	55%	61,059
Fujairah	1,450 km²	137,940	45%	61,869
Umm Al Quwain	750 km²	69,936	24%	60,635

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[2] Excluding the UAE islands.
[3] Based on 2008 estimates (*Dubaifaqs*, 2011)
[4] The percentage of local Emiratis is based on 2008 population data (*National Bureau of Statistics*, 2010)
[5] Dirham is the national currency of the UAE. It is pegged to the $US at a rate of Dh3.68.

Ajman	260 km²	372,923	11%	42,522
Total	**78,197 km²**	**4,933,179**[6]		

Figure 2: Comparative statistics of the seven Emirates of the United Arab Emirates

the percentage of local Emirati Arabs within each emirate that informs much about the areas of the country which have been affected the most and the least by the recent immigration of foreign workers into the UAE (contrast Dubai to Ras Al Khaimah).

History

According to archaeological findings, people first arrived in the area that would become the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the Late Stone Age around 5500 BC when the climate was much wetter than it is today (*History and Traditions,* 2003). Since that time, the area and its peoples have remained largely untouched by the sweep of history, "for the simple reason that no one coveted their land" (Darke, 1998, p. 40). Barely surviving in conditions intolerable to most others, they "enjoyed the safety of the undesired" (Longrigg, as cited in Darke, 1998, p. 40), resulting in a diversified accommodation and utilization of the scant natural resources available to them (see Figure 3 and Figure 4). The mountains, deserts, and seas of the area afforded limited economic opportunities, and in general, people responded to these realities by choosing

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[6] The UAE had its last official census in 2005. The population in 2010 was estimated at 8.26 million.

Figure 3: Political and geographical map of the United Arab Emirates (*Political and geographical map of the UAE*, 2011)

either a nomadic or sedentary life, though often this would change over time or different circumstances (Heard-Bey, 2004). The harsh physical environment combined with its scarcity of resources engendered a strong and fierce independence and interdependence within and among different families and tribal groups – to survive, one had to be versatile, spending winter time in the desert with their flocks of goats or planting crops on hard-won terraces high in the Hajar mountains while travelling to the coast in the heat of summer to fish or take part in pearling. Though briefly interrupted by the arrival of both Islam in the 7th Century AD and the British Empire which imposed a truce upon the warring tribes in the early 19th Century, this traditional way of life continued more or less undisturbed until midway through the 20th Century when the discovery of massive oil reserves under the Abu Dhabi sands changed everything.
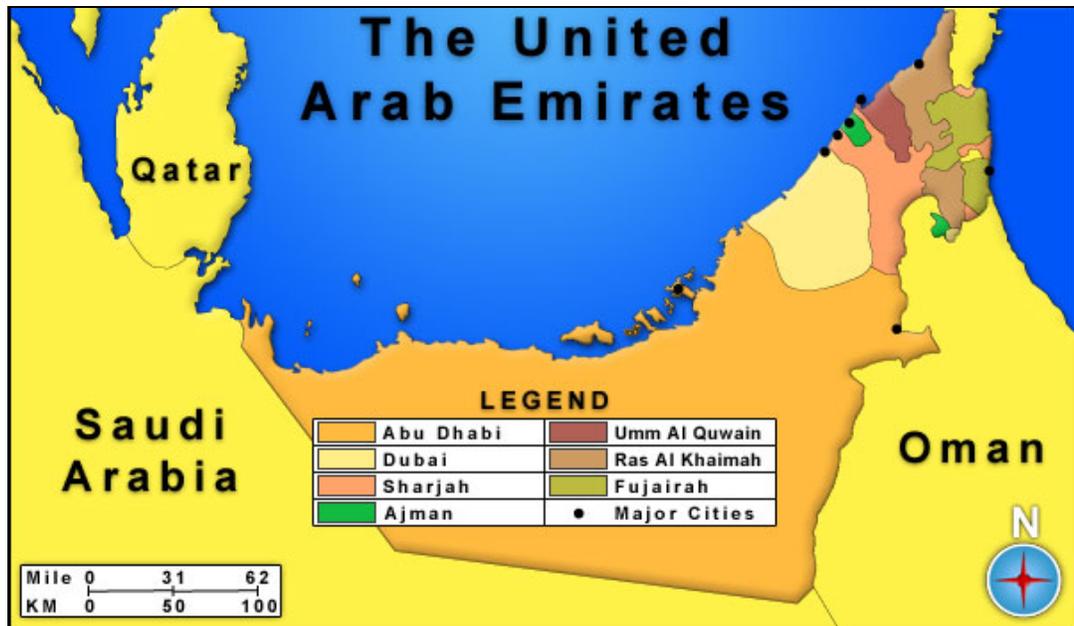
Figure 4: Geographical map showing the seven emirates of the United Arab Emirates (*The seven emirates of the UAE*, 2011)

The local Arabs had a long trading history with the Indian sub-continent going back several hundreds of years with many Indian and Pakistani families settling in the port towns such as Dubai and Ras Al Khaimah (Heard-Bey, 2004). "They left their families in India and visited them frequently; thus they did not become integrated into the society" (p. 134). However, a huge influx of expatriate workers with diverse skills and backgrounds was required to establish the oil recovery industry. The large-scale immigration of large numbers of unskilled and skilled workers from North America, Europe, and the Indian sub-continent has produced an unforeseen impact upon the cultural identity of the local Emiratis – this is observed especially in the large urban centres of Abu Dhabi and Dubai where modern skyscrapers (including the highest building in the world, Burj Khalifa), Western hotels, night-clubs, and cinemas (Western and Hindi movies) co-exist with mosques, Koranic cultural centres, and camel-racing. This cultural colonization is very evident in the population statistics. The total population of the UAE reached 8.26 million in 2010 of which 948,000 were local Emiratis, just over 11% (*UAE population at 8.26m in 2010,* 2011). There is also a huge gender imbalance due to the numbers of men involved in the construction and oil industries. It is therefore not surprising that many local Emiratis have very mixed feelings about the pace of development in their country especially when you consider

that they have moved from bedouin to banker in a little over 50 years (Heard-Bey, 2004; Pearson, 2011; Salama, 2010).

Traditional and modern life

It is important to describe the traditional way of life which dominated the area prior to the discovery of oil as it continues to both provide the cultural norms and values of modern life as well as exist in its own right particularly in the emirates least affected by modern development. The tribe is the building block of UAE society and arose as a social structure in response to the harsh physical environment and the scant natural resources. Heard-Bey (2004) provides much historical detail in establishing the link between the tribal structure and the limited economic opportunities. Individuals, families, and tribes all depended upon one another to survive first, and then, to thrive. This dependence was part of an age-old social structure (pre-dating Islam) of obligation among individuals within families and families within tribes to provide mutual assistance to the family kin group and to the tribe as a whole – it is known as *wasta* and though the term has been modified to reflect a form of mild corruption or influence in modern society, the expectation of assistance remains strong (Cunningham & Sarayrah, as cited in Feghali, 1997, p. 368). The tribal leader or *sheikh* provided strong leadership in a setting where quick and correct decisions often meant the difference between life and death. The choice of the ruler was not particularly hereditary and often depended on who emerged as a natural leader from within the ruling family (Darke, 1998). Reflecting the dominant position of males within Arab society, the *sheikh* was always a man and was expected to be financially independent (the Arabian Gulf *sheikhs* usually owned several pearling ships), to resolve disputes and mete out punishment where required, charge taxes and tariffs in order to boost the sheikhdom's fiscal position, and to provide overall political, social, moral, and military leadership to his people (Heard-Bey, 2004; Darke, 1998).

Extended families lived in houses built within a high surrounding wall and consisted of several areas such as the courtyard, the *harim* or closed-off area (only family members and close family friends were permitted here) and the *majilis* where visitors were received (Heard-Bey, 2004, pp. 143-144). Though male and female children grew up and played together, the onset of puberty resulted in Arabic women becoming protected and excluded from community life. The *harim* provided the security within the

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household which women carried with them into the public community by wearing the mask (*burqa)*, the veil (*shailah*), and the black coat (*abayah*).   As in many other communities around the world, Arabic women dominated the domestic arrangements within the household.

Economically, the pre-oil way of life centred on pearling (mainly before the 1930s when Japanese cultured pearl severely reduced the demand for Gulf pearls), agriculture (ground water was conveyed via *falaj* – small narrow watercourses – to effectively grow dates, figs, mangoes, oranges, pomegranates, grapes, bananas, and limes), husbandry (camel, goats and sheep), boat-building and fishing. Due to more favourable climatic and geographical factors, the Arabic people living along the East Coast (present-day Fujairah) and in Ras Al Khaimah tended to be more settled and less nomadic than their west coast brothers for whom "travel over considerable distances was an essential survival strategy" (*UAE Yearbook 2010,* 2010, p. 54). The traditional way of life evolved homogenously throughout the area and was further reinforced by two great cultural pillars – Islam as a common religion, and Arabic as a common language.

The cycle of the year's activities was shaped by climate and religion – the hotter summer months would necessitate travel to the coastal regions where pearling and fishing would supplemented the family's income and diet. The cooler winter months would see men (and sometimes women) working in the date palm groves or finding suitable forage in the high mountains for the animals. The Islamic calendar is based upon the 28 day lunar cycle which shifts backwards each Gregorian year – it has several religious holidays such as the two great *Eids* and other days that commemorate the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)[7]. Weddings were (and continue to be) occasions of great joy and celebration, as they strengthen the kinship bonds joining different family groups together. Finally, for each Muslim, it is their sincere wish (and religious obligation) to travel to Mecca in Saudi Arabia at least once in their lives to perform the *haj* or pilgrimage.

In 1968, there were twice as many nationals as foreigners – by the end of 2010, the national Emiratis consisted of only 11.5% of the total population (Heard-Bey, 2004, p.

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[7] PBUH – an acronym which means "peace be upon him", a common expression of respect used after mentioning Prophet Muhammad's name.

xxxiii; *UAE population up by 65% in four years*, 2011). Though originally brought in to help develop the oil recovery industry, workers from around the world now work in almost every sector of the UAE economy, particularly in the service areas. Most of the major cities throughout the UAE have been transformed by modern and sometimes futuristic architecture in the form of glass and steel skyscrapers and shopping malls. Dubai, and then Abu Dhabi, actively encouraged both local and foreign investment during the mid 2000s, resulting in an explosion of growth in the real estate industry (Augustine, 2008). The apex of the influx of foreigners occurred simultaneously as interest grew among young Arab nationals in all things "Western" such as technology, movies, and social media, resulting in obvious changes, for example, in the young Arab male preference for Western street clothes including rapper caps and baggy jeans as opposed to their traditional *dishdasha* (long white robe) and less obvious changes within the family unit where parental authority has become eroded through the over-use of foreign maids and extravagant expenditure undermining traditional Arab values (El-Haddad, 2003; Absal*, 2012). Influential local Emirati such as Dubai's Chief of Police, Lt. Gen. Dahi Khalfan Tamim, have begun voicing concerns at the effects of this cultural colonization (Hemrajani, 2010) – thousands of young Emirati nationals are unemployed (Qabbani & Shaheen, 2011), English has now become the main language of instruction in many government schools in Abu Dhabi (Ahmed, 2010a), rise in juvenile crime rates due to higher rates of Emirati divorce and dilution of traditional Arabic values (Issa, 2010), increasing rates of obesity and associated type II diabetes (*FAQS*, 2007; Kazmi, 2008), and a non-functional education system, overly-reliant on imported and pedagogically untrained non-UAE Arabic teachers from Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, that is failing young male Emiratis in droves (Ridge, 2009b, 2010, 2011). These social and economic indicators appear to highlight an 'indigenous' community in crisis.

An Indigenous Community?

According to the United Nations, "indigenous people...are the descendants of the first people to inhabit a locality and self-identify as members of a collective [group]" (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011, p. 63). In a general sense, most people understand the term 'indigenous' as additionally implying elements of colonial subjugation, marginalization, economic servitude, and oppression. Elizabeth McKinley extends this definition to describe indigenous communities where the colonial settlers or invaders became numerically dominant as well as communities where the invaders remained a

minority but left a "legacy of colonization" (McKinley, as cited in Aikenhead & Michell, 2011, p. 64). Diane Darke (1998) also uses the term "indigenous" when referring to the early subsistence days (p. 27) and Wikipedia has an entire section on Arab Tribal Societies under the heading "Indigenous Peoples" (*Indigenous Peoples*, 2011). Donna Wilson, Fujairah Men's College's Student Affairs supervisor confirmed in her interview that she finds the Fujairah cultural-educational setting "very familiar to the First Nations situation in Canada" where she worked on a regional campus located on Indian reserve land.

Given the negative socio-economic indicators highlighted in the previous section, the decision to use the term 'indigenous' to describe the local Emirati national Arabs becomes less problematic, despite some elements, mostly negative, associated with the term. Though they are in undeniable and complete political and economic control of their country, and possess one of the highest GDP per capita in the world, currently third highest at $US57,473 (*World Bank database*, 2010), the local Emiratis continue to suffer and manifest the effects of a colonial invasion. In their 2007 paper, Aikenhead and Ogawa distinguish between the terms 'indigenous' and 'neo-indigenous', citing Japan as an example of a country with "two highly heterogeneous groups whose ways of knowing nature are both non-Eurocentric and often place-based, but whose political standing in terms of privilege and colonization are quite different" (Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007, p. 556). However, I believe the UAE is a unique context, and though uninvited globalization can mirror cultural colonization, the negative social outcomes remain the same, blind to the causes and processes. The use of the term 'indigenous' will assist in correctly positioning and framing the approach to the central issue of this thesis as well as focussing on the significant pedagogical issues related to student learning and "understanding their place in the world" (McKinley, as cited in Aikenhead & Michell, 2011, p. 9). Chapter 2 has an expanded discussion on this topic.

The Educational Setting

This study takes place in one of the Higher Colleges of Technology, charged with providing post-secondary vocational education exclusively for the young Emirati men and women scattered around the country. Established in 1988 in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain with four colleges (separate male and female colleges at each location), the system of colleges has now grown to seventeen colleges in five of the seven Emirates – there are

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no HCT colleges in the emirates of Ajman and Umm Al Quwain but eligible Emirati residents residing in those two emirates may travel to Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah or Dubai to attend college (*HCT Catalogue 2010-2011*, 2010). While educating Emiratis for professional and technical careers in a "rapidly developing society" (p. 15), there is also a strong emphasis on developing key soft-skills in time and task management, self-awareness and group work, problem-solving, critical thinking, life-long learning, and striving for excellence. The system currently offers over 19,000 students a range of career programs in Applied Communications, Business, Education, Engineering, Health Sciences, Information Technology, and General Education – all HCT programs are delivered in the English language.

NAPO and CEPA

The National Admissions and Placement Office (NAPO) co-ordinates all Emirati secondary student applications for the main publicly-funded higher education institutions in the UAE. The main institutions are Zayed University for mainly female Emiratis with campuses in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the UAE University for both female and male Emiratis situated in Al Ain, and the Higher Colleges of Technology with separate men's and women's colleges. Since 2007, all Grade 12 students in their final year of secondary school may make multiple attempts at the Common Educational Proficiency Assessment (CEPA) which measures their level of English language and numerical competence (*CEPA*, 2012). CEPA consists of two tests – an English test and a Maths test. The CEPA English examination consist of three sections — grammar, vocabulary and reading, and writing. The reading and writing portion of the test uses English from practical contexts to expose students to everyday situations in which the language is used.

Figure 5 illustrates the equivalencies between IELTS (see below), CEPA and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) which seeks to validate multi-lingual competencies (*Council of Europe*, 2012). If a student applies through NAPO to study at the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), Zayed University (ZU) or study abroad, they are required to take both tests. If a student does not sit for both CEPA tests, their application to the higher education institutions will not be approved. CEPA-English is one of the important requirements for admission as students with a high CEPA-English score (CEPA>180)

may be eligible to enter career programs directly. CEPA-Maths is used for admission and placement. If an applicant obtains a CEPA score of less than 180 but greater than 150, he or she may be placed in a Foundations or bridge program in order to develop the minimum language and numerical proficiency required for successful study at Bachelors level. In 2010, less than 10% of Emirati applicants to higher education met the basic proficiency level of English level set at a CEPA score of 185, permitting them to proceed directly into their first year of their career programs. In that same year, over 90% were placed into expensive bridge programs (*UAE Yearbook 2010*, 2010).

Foundations

An academic bridge program is provided at all three federally-funded higher educational

HCT Foundations	CEPA English	CEPA Writing	Entry-Level CEFR	IELTS Score	Semesters to exit Fnds[8]
Direct Entry	180+	5.0+	B2	IELTS 5.0+	0
Level 4	170	4.0	B1+	IELTS 4.5	1
Level 3	160	3.0	B1	IELTS 4.0	2
Level 2	150	2.0	A2+	N/A	3
Level 1	140[9]	1.0	A2	N/A	4
Pre-Fdns	<140	0-1.0	A1 - A1+	N/A	

Figure 5: HCT Foundations English levels and their associated equivalencies, 2011 (*CEPA*, 2012)

institutions in the UAE to enable those students under 180 CEPA to improve their English language competency, English numeracy skills, and personal and professional development skills. Currently, Foundations is divided into four levels based on the level of English language competency measured by the students' CEPA scores (see Figure 5). Levels 1 and 2 are labelled as 'lower levels' (CEFR descriptors A1-A2 'extremely low to low English ability, beginner level') for the purpose of this research as they correspond approximately to the previous Diploma Foundations level prior to the commencement of New Foundations in 2010. Levels 3 and 4 are labelled as 'higher levels' (CEFR descriptors B1-B2 'emerging proficiency, intermediate level') for the purpose of this research as they correspond approximately to the previous Higher

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[8] Based on expected normal academic progression without course failure and course repetition.
[9] Level 1 minimum entry level will rise to CEPA 150 from September 2012.

Diploma Foundations level. A level 1 student is expected to take four semesters (two years) to reach IELTS 5.0, the minimum level for entry into the career programs.

IELTS or International English Language Testing System, is an international standardised test of English language proficiency, jointly managed by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, the British Council and IDP Education Pty Ltd, and was established in 1989 (*IELTS*, 2012). HCT students enrolled in Level 4 of Foundations must sit and achieve an overall score of 5.0 (Academic version) with no individual band (skill) below 4.5 in order to gain entry into the undergraduate programs. There is no minimum score required to pass the test with each institution setting different thresholds. The four assessed skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking are reported on a Test Report Form which is issued to all candidates. The form reports an overall score from 1 (no knowledge) to 9 (expert user) and individual scores on the four skills - the report is valid for two years from the test date. Students may by-pass Foundations at any time by obtaining an overall score of 5.5 with no individual band below 5.0 at an approved external IELTS examination testing centre. The 'new game in town' since 2010 has been Level 3 and 4 students competing with one another to gain their IELTS through repetitive testing. The entry point at which they enter Foundations is dependent both on how hard students work in the senior years of high school (impact on CEPA scores) and how hard they work in Foundations (gaining credit points), allowing for only two attempts at passing any level within the maximum two year program.

Relevant Statistics of the Study Area - Fujairah

I spent 16 years with the Higher Colleges of Technology – in the final two years, I was based at Fujairah Men's College (FMC) as Chair of Foundations. The Emirate of Fujairah offers several advantages as a location for this research. Most notably, the 700m high Hajar Mountains which form its western boundary afford a physical isolation from the rest of the country. Due to a more cautious infrastructural development policy and the absence of oil, the local Emirati community has also not experienced the effects of cultural colonization to the same degree as other areas of the UAE, and therefore, it may be viewed as an essentialist Arab community representing more traditional aspects of the Emirati way of life (see Chapter 2 for an expanded discussion on essentialism).

Geography and climate

Located due east from Dubai, Fujairah City may be comfortably reached by car in just under two hours (Figure 3). In Figure 6, the Emirate of Fujairah is seen to stretch along the eastern coastline of the Arabian Peninsula, bounded immediately to the west by the Hajar Mountains and to the east by the Indian Ocean. Book-ended by Omani territory to the north and south, the peoples of this emirate (estimated to be nearly 180,000 in 2011 though population estimates vary widely from 180,000 to 140,000. The last official census was in 2005) mostly inhabit a thin hinterland averaging only two kilometres in width. The most isolated of the seven emirates, a paved road linking the western region through the Hajar Mountains was constructed only in 1976 (Darke, 1998). The city of Fujairah (approximately 140,000) is the largest of the four main coastal towns – Dibba, Khor Fakkhan, and Kalba – and is the seat of government for the entire area. An important geo-political factor in this emirate is the presence of several enclaves belonging to other emirates, notably Kalba and Khor Fakkhan (Sharjah Emirate) and smaller areas belonging to Ras Al Khaimah and Oman (Heard-Bey, 2004). Fujairah Men's College is situated on the main road leading westwards from the city of Fujairah to Masafi, an important town famous for its function as a trading post and natural springs, located in a high valley trending SW-NE towards Dibba.

The climate of this semi-arid area differs from the rest of the country due to the cooling effect of the Indian Ocean and the blocking effect of the Hajar Mountains, both of which act together to moderate the temperatures and humidity (see Figure 7). The average maximum summer temperature (May-October) in the city of Fujairah is 37°C, some 7-8 degrees cooler than the rest of the country. However, maximum summer temperatures may exceed 45°C but the winter months (November-April) are generally mild though it
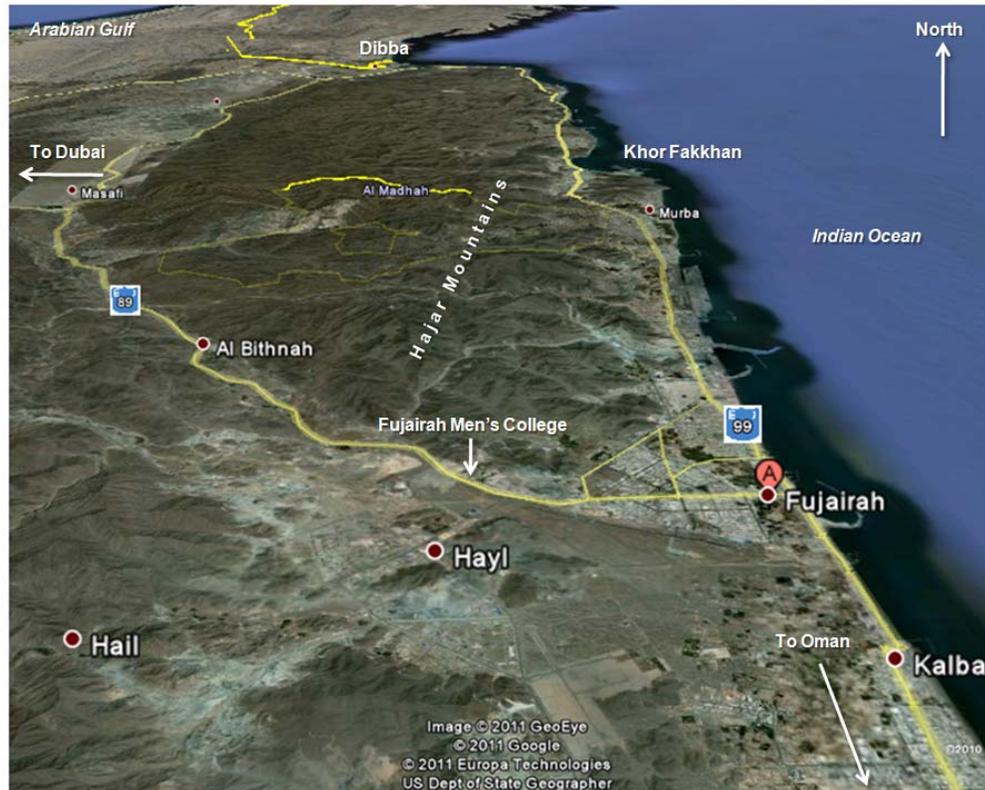
Figure 6: 3-D aspect map of the Emirate of Fujairah, highlighting key geographical features
(3-D view of the Fujairah Emirate, looking north, 2011)

can become chilly at times with minimum temperatures of around 12°C. There is a wide diurnal temperature range, a very limited amount of winter rainfall (30mm in 2010), and humidity varies from month to month (*Statistical Yearbook*, 2010, p. 36).

Demographics

The *Sharqiyin* tribe of Fujairah originated from Yemen and is the second most numerous tribal group after the *Bani Yas* tribe which dominates the western region, particularly in Abu Dhabi (Darke, 1998; Heard-Bey, 2004). The Al-Sharqi family has ruled Fujairah for over a hundred years – both the ruling family and the emirate were recognized by the British authorities in 1952 and they joined the new UAE federation in 1971. The current ruler is His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Mohammed Al Sharqi. The Emirate of Fujairah had the second highest percentage of local Emirati nationals to expatriate workers in 2008 (see Figure 2). However, according to the 2010 population estimates, there are now
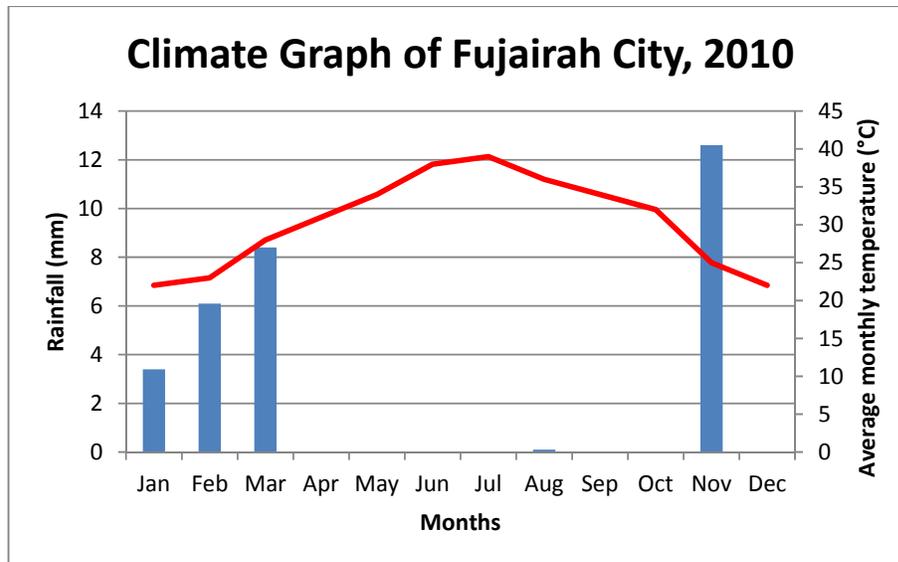
Figure 7: Climate graph of Fujairah City (*Statistical Yearbook*, 2010, pp. 33-40)

almost 177,000 people living in Fujairah, of which 64,860 are Emirati, their percentage reducing in three years to 37% (down 8%). The male gender imbalance of the expatriate population compared to the national Emirati population highlights the influx of foreign workers into the emirate due to recent economic activity and development (see Figure 8), this despite a very high birth rate among the Emirati population which accounted for 72% of all live births in 2010 (*Statistical Yearbook*, 2010, p. 48).

	Expatriate Population		**Emirati Population**	
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female
Nos.	78,062	33,903	32,486	32,374
Percentage	**44%**	19%	18%	19%

Figure 8: Gender statistics of expatriate and Emirati populations in Fujairah, 2010
(*Statistical Yearbook*, 2010; *National Bureau of Statistics*, 2010)

Nationally, the high natural increase of the Emiratis and the influx of a foreign and mostly male expatriate workforce may be further illustrated in the skewed age-sex pyramid of the UAE (Figure 9). Here the broad base of the pyramid indicative of high birth and low death rates is very evident as are the two 'spikes' of mostly male expatriates at 20-29 years and 50-59 years. In summary, the two demographic trends of a very high natural increase among the Emiratis and the male gender expatriate

imbalance look set to produce further socio-economic tension as young Emiratis grow up in a society numerically dominated by expatriate workers from other countries and cultures and where, as graduates, they begin to look for work in an employment landscape filled almost completely with foreigners.
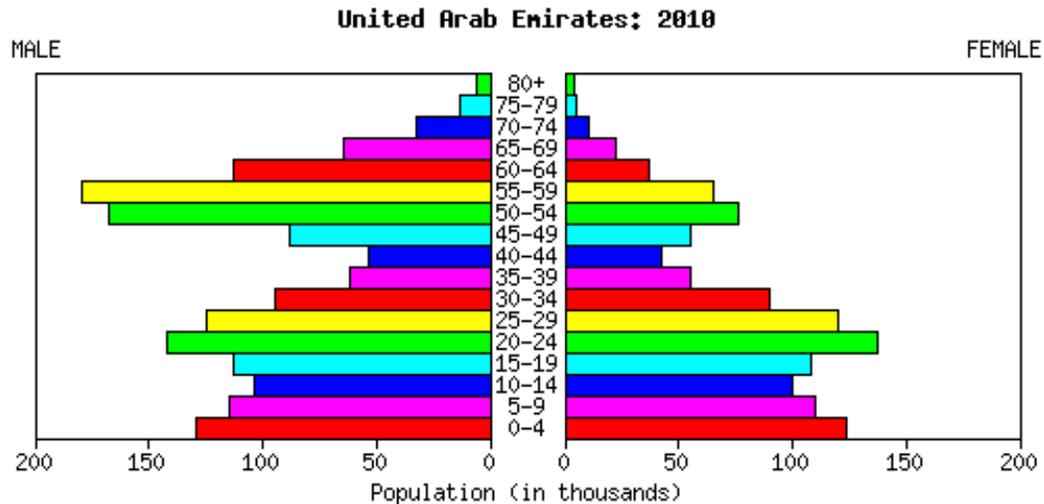
Figure 9: Age-sex population of the UAE, 2010 (*Age-sex population of the UAE*, 2010)

Economic activities

Economically, Fujairah has never possessed the 'pulling power' of the other major oil-rich Emirates such as Abu Dhabi, despite its undeniable natural beauty – Heard-Bey (2004) reports that in 1968 national census, less than 10% of the tribal population in Fujairah belonged to tribes other than the local *Sharqiyin* (p. 73). Not having access to pearling, agriculture and fishing were the main occupations of the local people, most of whom continued to live in *barasti* houses (low-standard housing built from date palm fronds) in the late 1960s (p. 74).

Today, the two traditional economic and subsistence activities contribute a very small part to the local economy which is now driven primarily by subsidies and grants from the federal government, the largest employer of the Emirati workforce (see Figure 10). Local industry consists of cement, stone crushing and mining with the construction industry feeding a renewed demand for aggregate, particularly in Abu Dhabi. There are both physical and virtual free trade zones which allow 100% full foreign ownership (restricted to 49% outside of the free zones). Fujairah is now the world's second largest bunkering (the act or process of supplying a ship with fuel oil) port after Singapore (*New*

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pipeline and refinery projects strengthen bunker port appeal, 2011) and a recently completed 370-kilometre oil pipeline will carry around 1.5 million barrels per day of crude oil from Abu Dhabi's onshore Habshan field to the port of Fujairah for exporting. This strategic decision to re- direct some of the UAE's oil exports away from the

Local Government Employees Total = 4849		Federal Government Employees Total = 8440	
Emirati	**Expatriate**	**Emirati**	**Expatriate**
1182	3667	5105	3335
24%	76%	60%	40%

Figure 10: Local and government employees in Fujairah, 2010 (*Statistical Yearbook*, 2010)

Arabian Gulf and the shipping bottle-neck at the Straits of Hormuz will also further expand the development of the Fujairah port and oil refining. Tourism has begun to make its mark on the coastline, with an unfortunate swathe of local and internationally-branded hotels now built near Dibba in the northern part of the emirate. Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort is the largest of the hotels and has begun to attract small numbers of Emirati employees.

The Rentier Society

Though Fujairah has been shown to be isolated from the rest of the country, it nevertheless enjoys the benefits of belonging to a federation of states, one of which, Abu Dhabi, has the world's third largest oil reserves in the Middle East (Heard-Bey, 2004, p. 393). The UAE owns the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, estimated to be $US627 billion in 2011 (*Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute*, 2011). First described by Beblawi and Luciani (as cited in Minnis, 2006) and then a number of researchers since (Noreng, El Ghonemy, Amuzegar, Mazawi, as cited in Minnis, 2006), the UAE has been described as a rentier or distributive state (similar to most countries in the Gulf region such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar) in that, by providing a cradle-to-grave welfare system for its citizens in the form of free education, subsidized housing, guaranteed public sector employment, and free medical care, it has unwittingly unleashed many negative social effects on the Emirati population. Some of these effects have already been mentioned in this chapter but in summary, they are "a disdain for work, a lack of interest in formal

education, and disjunction in the popular mind between work and education, and between income and reward" (Minnis, 2006, p. 976). The huge UAE federal wealth is a result of its oil reserves which, when shared among the seven emirates in the form of federal subsidies and grants, produce "high per capita incomes, affluent lifestyles, and rapid modernization, but also reinforce weak state institutions, authoritarian rule, and weak educational systems" (Noreng, as cited in Minnis, 2006, p. 976). In plain speech, the 'rentier effect' in this context means "that the reward for labour, income, is no longer connected to work, effort" (Ridge, 2011, p. 5). A recent example of this occurred in May 2012 when the UAE government ordered the settlement of defaulting personal loans of UAE citizens who owe less than Dh5 million, thereby weakening the link between actions and consequences, reducing overall personal responsibility and accountability (Emiratis 'who owe less than Dh5m can have debts settled', 2012). Further, the social consequences of the 'rentier effect' such as parental neglect, increase in juvenile crimes, lack of safety precautions in motor vehicles and around swimming pools, and over-dependence on foreign housemaids have been recently highlighted by Dr. Hoda Al Suwaidi, the Director of the Social Development Foundation in Dubai (Sherif, 2012). Additionally, a recent study by the University of Sharjah found that 42% of a sample of 193 Emirati children aged between 12 and 13 suffered neglect. Over 25% of the children reported being victims of violence in the home with one child recounting that "she feels she was born to be beaten" (Barakat, 2012).

What evidence is there in Fujairah to support the notion of the 'rentier effect'? First, the employment statistics in Figure 10 confirm that the federal government is the main employer of Emiratis in the emirate. Local Emiratis do receive substantial utilities (water and electricity) subsidies which expatriates are denied. Education and medical care are provided free. Second, another statistic from the Emirate of Fujairah Yearbook 2010 illustrates the dependence by local Emirati families on foreign housemaids – for example, of the 48,097 total employment visas issued by the Emirate of Fujairah in 2010, 13,851 visas or almost 30% of the total were issued for the employment of a foreign housemaid, usually from the sub-continent or Indonesia (*Statistical Yearbook*, 2010, p. 66).

Finally, Natasha Ridge released a series of working papers from the Dubai School of Government and Al Qasimi Foundation (Ridge, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2011; Ridge &

Farah, 2012) which have additionally highlighted the malaise and disinterest among the young Arab Emirati boys in education and learning. In particular, she has described a 'hidden gender gap' opening up between Emirati males and females, citing nationally the following statistics – Emirati schoolboys are dropping out of high school at four times the rate compared to the girls, twice as many boys fail high school compared to the girls, and only 30% of men are enrolled in higher education compared to 70% for women (Ridge, 2009b). She is not alone in describing a systemic failure in the UAE education system (Shaw, Badri & Hukul, 1995; Rugh, 2002; Gaad, Arif & Scott, 2006; Hatherley-Greene, 2010; Ahmed, 2012a).

In Fujairah, these observations are largely supported by statistics of Emirati student enrolment in the 61 Government primary and secondary schools for the year 2010 which shows boys leaving the secondary school from Grade 10 onwards (see Figure 11). At Fujairah Men's College, the withdrawal figures (see Figures 12a and 12b) tell a similar sorry story as the young men, particularly those in the lowest placement Levels 1 and 2 in Foundations who have averaged 73% of the Foundations withdrawals since 2008, turn their back on the rigours and expectations of higher education in favour of high starting salaries in Abu Dhabi with the military and police (Ridge, 2011). Part of the many reasons behind this phenomenon may lay with the values that Emirati educational planners place on instrumental and technocratic education that has reduced learning to a "production system for knowledge workers" at the expense of general human development and citizenship (van der Velden, 2004, p. 5) – she asks, "do science and technology contribute more to society than the humanities and arts?"

	Boys	Girls	Ratio of boys to girls
KG 1	605	649	1:1.07
Grade 1	661	819	1:1.23
Grade 5	622	752	1:1.20
Grade 10	670	825	1:1.23
Grade 11	583	830	1:1.42
Grade 12	558	816	1:1.46

Figure 11: Emirati Students Enrolment in Fujairah Emirate by Level of Education – 2010/2011 (*Statistical Yearbook*, 2010, p. 305)

Fujairah Men's College

The college was opened in 2004, some five years after its sister college, Fujairah Women's College, was opened in the Farseel suburb of Fujairah City. It is a modern college with large classrooms and excellent educational technology including SmartBoards, document projectors, and multimedia control consoles. Compared to other HCT Men's Colleges, the number of enrolled students has remained low (approximately 350-400) though it was originally designed to cater for 900 students. The faculty have been relatively stable except for four personnel changes in the Foundations Chair position over this period. Recent improvements and additions include a revamped

AY	Offered Count	Enrolled on 20th day	Difference	% no-shows or withdrawals before 20th day	Yield Rate[10]
2004	312	104	-208	-67%	33%
2005	283	110	-173	-61%	39%
2006	340	174	-166	-49%	51%
2007	417	146	-271	-65%	35%
2008	457	182	-275	-60%	40%
2009	446	165	-281	-63%	37%
2010	496	116	-380	-77%	23%
2011	293	142	-151	-52%	48%

Figure 12a: Withdrawal rates of HCT Foundations students, FMC, 2004-2011

Semester	Low Placement	High Placement	Total Foundations Withdrawals	Total Foundations Withdrawal Rate[11]
2008-01	90	18	108	90%
2008-02	37	1	38	83%
2009-01	80	25	105	95%
2009-02	16	13	29	83%
2010-01	96	25	121	85%
2010-02	11	8	19	56%
2011-01	33	6	39	75%

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[10] Yield rate is the ratio between number of new students at the college on 20th day of Semester 1 and the total number of high school graduates offered admission to college through NAPO.

[11] This rate is the percentage of Foundations students' withdrawals against the total withdrawals from all the programs at Fujairah Men's College.

| 2011-02 | 24 | 25 | 49 | 80% |

Figure 12b: Withdrawals by placement level and semester of HCT Foundations students, Fujairah Men's College, 2008-2011

cafeteria, a grass football field with night-time illumination lights, the re-location of the electronics workshop, and the construction of an outdoor high and low ropes course. The current College Director is Dr. Dave Pelham.

The development of students' soft-skills such as time and task management, teamwork and problem-solving, critical thinking, resilience and perseverance has always been an integral part of the HCT mission though colleges decide the content, delivery, and assessment locally (see Chapter 7). In response to the low numbers of male student enrolment and retention and a general recognition of the specific local community needs, the college management, faculty, and students came together in 2009 with the assistance of consultants from WellSpring, a US-China based experiential learning company, to led to the creation of the Dynamic Citizen Model (see Figure 13). The publication of the model serendipitously coincided with the 2021 Vision document released by the UAE Government which foresees "...knowledgeable and innovative Emiratis [building]... a resilient economy, [thriving]... in a cohesive society bonded to its identity, and [enjoying] the highest standards of living within a nurturing and sustainable
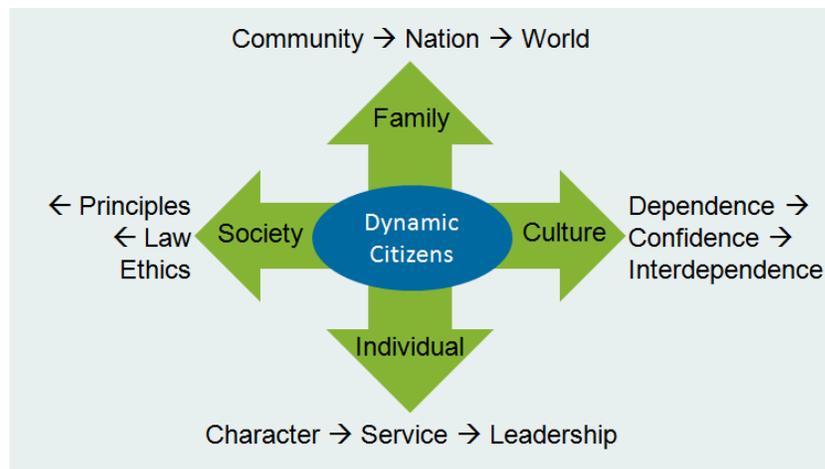
Figure 13: The Dynamic Citizen Model, HCT-Fujairah Colleges, 2010

environment" (*2021 Vision*, 2010). The model now forms the rationale for all interaction within the colleges, the training of soft-skills especially for the new

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Foundations students, and experiential and outdoor educational activities (including local and international fieldtrips) with a focus on increasing student self-awareness and Mental Toughness.

The College Preparation and Readiness program (CPR) evolved from an earlier course called Personal and Professional Development (PPDV) which was an official Foundations-level course prior to 2010-2011 academic year (see Chapter 7 for details). Appendix A contains details of the course which operationalises the principles of the Dynamic Citizen Model specifically for Foundations students and provides one of the key research variables for this research.

Research Questions

The specific research objectives are listed in Figure 14 as questions. They are intended to direct the focus of the research across a broad range of interrelated facets, each one providing both its own locus and interconnection. The prioritizing reflects the thrust of the research, beginning with an investigation of the applicability of the cultural border crossing metaphor to describe and explain the seemingly difficult transition from high school to college in the Fujairah Emirate. It then moves on to assessing and describing the interaction of three key elements – students, teachers and pedagogy, and learning environment – which contribute to a gamut of outcomes ranging from academic success, as measured by graduation and employment rates, to academic failure indicated by

1. To what extent does Giroux's (2005) cultural border-crossing metaphor explain the learning and adjustment difficulties of male Emirati post-secondary learners transiting from high school to College?

2. What do male Emirati post-secondary learners bring with them to the College that both enhance and hinder their learning?

3. What do the largely Western-educated faculty bring with them to the College that both enhance and hinder student learning?

4. What effect, if any, does the use of learner-centred teaching practices have upon male Emirati post-secondary learners?

5. What administrative, teaching, and classroom management practices are most likely to be efficacious in facilitating smoother transitions to college life?

Figure 14: The specific research questions

failing grades, high absenteeism, withdrawals, and low retention rates. Finally, the most effective best practices in terms of department administration, teaching, and classroom management will be described and assessed over the duration of the research period. The critical theory aspect of the research is encapsulated in this final objective with the hope that improvements in managing successful transitions of male Emirati students from high school to higher education college life will lead ultimately to increased numbers of dynamic young male citizens who will take their rightful place in their local communities.

Significance of the Research

The Higher Colleges of Technology has resourced a nationwide community of vocational post-secondary colleges with the best technology, best campuses and some of the finest Western-educated faculty from around the world. The investment is staggering – AED 1.2 billion ($US 326 million) for the current academic year (Swan, 2011a). However, the graduation rates, particularly for its Diploma program in recent years, have been very disappointing. The message is stark: despite the huge investment, only 20% of the Diploma program students graduated on time (within three years). The UAE has huge skilled-manpower demands particularly at the technician level.

Traditionally, this level of employment has been filled by expatriate south Asians. The drive of Emiratisation is partly fuelled through a nationalistic desire to reclaim parts of the labour force as well as the need to provide employment opportunities for the national Emiratis (Al Shaiba, 2008). These low graduation rates are therefore a double disappointment in terms of fulfilling the Emiratisation drive as well as the poor return on a massive national investment.

Based on my experience and research over the past 16 years in the UAE, it is very evident that organizations such as HCT need to attract and retain more males in higher education. The key is to better understand the cultural border crossings that these students face when attending post-secondary colleges. Scholastic enculturation appears to be highly correlated with higher English language proficiency with the result that the better students succeed and graduate while the least prepared students fail and withdraw. To avoid escalating social problems caused by a malcontent, dispossessed, and largely uneducated cadre of frustrated young male Emiratis, educators and administrators need to be better informed and more effective in managing the difficult transition from high school to college. By identifying best practices through a multi-paradigmatic research paradigm (see Chapter 3), I hope to be able to offer the Emirati students a new paradigm from which to view the world and themselves within it, to turn away from the current situation towards a new direction in which male Arab learners, firstly, become more aware of themselves as learners and individuals, and, secondly, translate this self-awareness and confidence via the implementation of best practices into personal and academic success – the country deserves no less than this.

Structure of the Thesis

After the three opening chapters that define the study context (Chapter 1 - Introduction), the theoretical basis for the research (Chapter 2 – Theoretical Perspective), and the research methodology (Chapter 3 - Research Methodology), the prioritizing reflects the thrust of the research, beginning with an investigation of the applicability of the cultural border crossing metaphor to describe and explain the transition from high school to college (Chapter 4 – Border Crossings). It then moves on to describe and assess the interaction of three key elements – students (Chapter 5 – Students), teachers and pedagogy, and learning environment (Chapter 6 – Teachers, Pedagogy and Learning Environment) - which contribute to a gamut of outcomes ranging from academic success

to academic failure. The implementation of the new College Preparation and Readiness (CPR) program and its effect upon the new students as measured by a number of key variables including Mental Toughness together with an assessment of the most effective best practices in terms of college administration, teaching, and classroom management are described and assessed (Chapter 7 – CPR and Best Practices) over the duration of the research period. The thesis will conclude by summarising the results and findings arising from the key research questions and highlighting suggestions for possible implementation from the societal to the classroom perspective to improve the cultural border crossing experiences of the young male Emiratis arriving at the door of higher education. I identify research topics that need to be further investigated as well as reflect upon my own journey during the course of this research (Chapter 8 – Conclusion and Suggestions).

The Wider Setting – The Arab Spring, Unemployment, and Social Change

2011 will mark a watershed moment in time for the Arab world scattered in countries from North Africa to the eastern coastlines of the Mediterranean Sea, the Arabian Gulf, the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. The Arab Spring, centred mainly on the disenchanted, educated and frustrated Arab youth networking effectively using social media such as Twitter and Facebook, erupted in Tunisia and then went on to remove old Arab dictatorships in Egypt, Libya and Yemen. The usually calm and stable Gulf states were also engulfed in its fury, Bahrain hit particularly hard with unrest among its Shia minority and at the time of this writing, Syria is engulfed in a brutal civil war – even the UAE jailed then later pardoned several young bloggers for posing a "threat to security" (Salama, 2011).

All across the Arab world, young Arabs have borne the brunt of failing economies, creating a huge pool of unemployed and disenfranchised labour feeling shut out of a socio-economic system riddled with corruption and nepotism. Globalisation, spread insidiously via the internet and the vast numbers of expatriate workers living within the oil-rich Gulf states, has galvanised the current generation who refuse to accept the status quo as easily as their parents' generation did. The preface of The Arab World Competitiveness Report 2011-201 produced under the auspices of the World Economic Forum may make uncomfortable reading for many political leaders across the Arab world - "political changes will have to be accompanied by structural economic reform if

the root causes of the current events in the region are to be addressed ... The recent developments have heightened awareness of key socio-economic challenges, the most important of them being creating gainful, formal employment opportunities for the 2.8 million young people who enter the labour markets every year. Reducing unemployment will have to focus on three groups that are disproportionately affected – the young, the educated and women ... Youth unemployment (15-24 years) averages 25 percent across the region (compared to 17 percent in the OECD) and reaches 30 percent in countries like Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. Moreover, the most educated segments of the population are not finding enough jobs: over 40 percent in Saudi Arabia and above 20 percent in Morocco and the United Arab Emirates" (*WEF-AWCR 2011-12*, 2011, pp. 6-7).

As if these figures are not bad enough, the preface ends with a gloomy and seemingly impossible challenge for Arab countries already struggling to cope - "in light of the region's growing population, according to the OECD MENA-Investment programme, Arab economies will need to create 25 million jobs over the next decade just to keep employment at existing levels, let alone to reduce the burgeoning unemployment rate" (p. 9). With nearly 4 million young Arabs entering the labour market every year, and the Arab economies, already under the burden of heavy unemployment combined with young population structures (see Demographics in this chapter), the outlook appears grim indeed (Al Tamimi, 2010). However, in the UAE, steps are being taken to address the issue of youth unemployment through government agencies such as Tawdheef and Tanmia – recently, the Emirate of Abu Dhabi declared that it expected to create 600,000 jobs over the next decade to meet the more than 12,000 Emiratis seeking employment each year in the emirate (Farah, 2012).

Social change within the current youthful Arab generation is compounding an already difficult socio-economic situation as evidenced by the Arab Youth Survey 2010 and its update of 2011 (*ASDAA*, 2011). The survey covers 10 Middle East countries: the six Gulf Cooperation Council states (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE), Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and, for the first time, Iraq. 2,000 young Arab men and women aged between 18 and 24 participated in the research with interviews being conducted face-to-face. The key findings of both the 2010 survey and its 2011 update are an enduring desire for democracy, anxiety about the rising cost of living, an increasing concern of the gap between rich and poor, less optimism about economic

recovery and future outlook, a perceived education gap widening between Gulf states and other Arab countries, increasing preference to work in private sector, eagerness to start their own business, the Internet and social media growing in importance, television is the most popular and trusted source of news, traditional values are paramount with parents growing in influence, and an increase in positive perception of global powers associated with a growing sense of global citizenship. The 2011 update confirmed an enduring desire for democracy but also a desire for stability. There is also a concern about the cost of living and corruption, and increased frustration with the domestic status quo. Support for the protests (Arab Spring) is high, and so is the belief in their positive impact. Finally, political views are increasingly liberal and forward-looking.

Commenting on the 2010 survey results, Dr Rima Sabban, a sociologist working at Zayed Univeristy, said "we're finding that these youth are optimistic despite all the problems they are facing compared to our generation that lost hope. Today we are finding that youth are giving Arab people, in general, hope" (Naidoo, 2011). Outlined earlier, even the rentier approach adopted by many governments wealthy enough to disperse huge sums of money to its citizens is unlikely to meet this enormous challenge – as Sidani and Thornberry (2009, p. 36) caution, "Arab oil wealth ... was used instead to purchase the products of modernization off the shelf. Modernity as outcome was confused with modernity as process". The continual drift of young male Emiratis lured from the Fujairah Emirate by high salaried starting positions in the government sectors of the military and police to the larger cities of Abu Dhabi and Dubai as documented earlier in this chapter, indicates the phenomenon is unlikely to abate any time soon.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

<div align="center">

صاحب الحق له مقام وله مقال

Ṣāḥib al-ḥaq lahu maqām wa lahu maqāl

The man who is in the right has both stature and the last word

The best argument is to be right.[12]

</div>

After several months, I bought my first 4x4 off-road vehicle. In the first few months as the weather became cooler, we would often find ourselves happily incarcerated in some noisy traffic jam somewhere on the narrow streets of Old Deira, searching for the spice or gold souk [market]. Sometimes, we never reached our intended destination, but it never seemed to matter – we engorged on the sights and smells, the people, and the architecture, tentatively beginning to enjoy the comfortable feeling of learning to live in

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[12] Arnander & Skipwith (1995)

a strange land. And as with the Bedouin Arab traders of old, travelling through the desert, often in the cool of the night, the journey for us became the destination...

The Cultural Realm

This research takes place within the realm of culture, described by Giroux as a landscape filled with "multiple and heterogeneous borders where different histories, languages, experiences, and voices intermingle amidst diverse relations of power and privilege" (2005, p. 145). Attempting to assist visitors in negotiating journeys within this landscape, various researchers have proffered 'roadmaps' in the form of cultural models and definitions (Kluckhohn, as cited in Hofstede, 2001; Kroeber & Parsons, 1958; Goodenough, 1976; Geertz, as cited in Michie, 2011a; Phelan, Davidson & Cao, 1991; Aikenhead, 1996, 1997a; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Essentially human constructs, these models and definitions have afforded cognitive and affective frameworks through which the cultural landscape emerges in defining comprehensible shapes. In responding to the question 'what is culture?' the models appear to provide reassuring answers to visitors seeking understanding, possibly insight. For example, Kluckhohn's definition of culture (as cited in Hofstede, 2001, p. 9) consisting of "patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols…" resonates strongly with Geertz (1973) defining culture some twenty years later as an "historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by which men [sic] communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life" (p. 89). Goodenough (1976) simplifies by describing culture as made up of the concepts, beliefs, and principles of action and organisation that could be attributed to a society, echoing Phelan et al.'s (1991) norms, values, beliefs, expectations and conventional actions of a group. Finally, Glen Aikenhead inadvertently extrapolates a definition of science as a culture when he describes culture as a "well defined system of meaning and symbols with which they [humans] interact socially" (1996, p. 8). Overall, I prefer Michie's definition where he describes culture as the "social environment in which an individual is raised and lives, and includes a range of concepts and beliefs that is accepted by individuals as defining their group identity" (Michie, 2011a, p. 10).

Artifacts and products
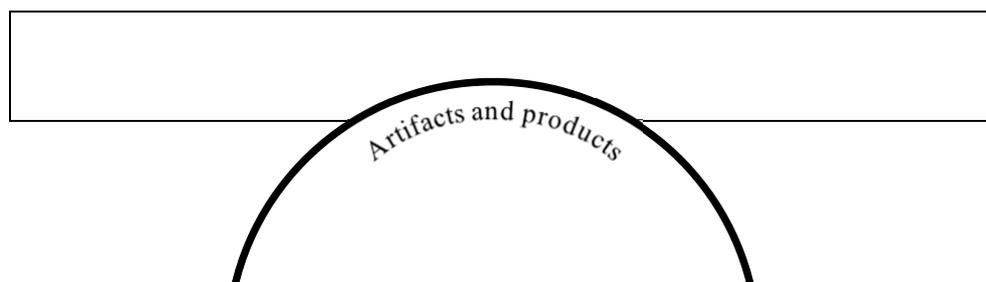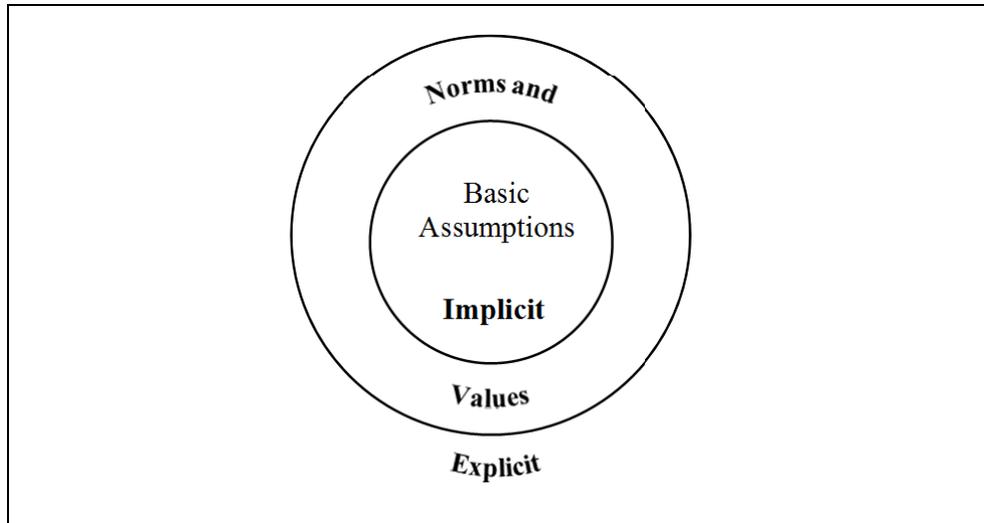
Figure 1: A model of culture (*Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner*, 1998)

A model of culture introduced by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner in their book "Riding the Waves of Culture" (1998) provides a simple but realistic framework and vocabulary from which to describe various cultural elements (see Figure 1). A culture's artifacts and products, observable by all, represent the iconic images and reality of a culture. These occur on the outer or *explicit* layer of culture and include among other elements, language, cuisine, religion, architecture, agriculture and industry, fashion, and art (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 21). This explicit layer reflects a deeper layer, the *norms and values* of a cultural group. Norms are the consensual understanding of what the group regards as 'right' and 'wrong' – they may be understood on an informal level as a form of social control or codified formally as written laws. Values closely represent the ideals of a group, the 'good' and 'bad' markers of how a cultural group determines and defines its aspirations and desires. For example, in the Arabic culture, it is considered rude and impolite to begin a business meeting with business. Being a diffuse culture, Arabs need time to build up relational and trust levels in order to facilitate the next stage of the meeting where the hard and difficult business negotiations and decision-making occur. The Arab norm is to discuss yourself and your family for several minutes before getting down to business – when you do not co-operate and attempt to start business discussions almost immediately, you offend their values.

Finally, the *implicit* innermost cultural layer represents the outcome of a cultural group's struggle for survival. Each group on the planet at one time had to grapple and then solve

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the issues posed by the environment in which they lived. In the harsh desert areas of the Middle East, Arab people have lived and survived in an extremely difficult region, both geographically and climatically, for nearly 8,000 years (see Chapter 1). In his book "Crossing The Sands" about his two epic desert journeys through the *Rub-al Khali,* or The Empty Quarter, in southern half of the Arabian Peninsula in the 1940s, Wilfred Thesiger responded to the question "why do the Bedu [sic] live in the desert where they have to put up with appalling conditions?" by replying that "they live there by choice" (Thesiger, 1999, p. 171). His Bedouin traveling companions declared that only in the desert, "could a man find freedom" (Thesiger, 1999, p. 171). The problems of daily life in all regions around the world are eventually solved in such ways that the solutions "disappear from our consciousness" and become part of a cultural group's basic assumptions about life (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 23). If you press an Arab man about his religion, the hierarchical and consultative leadership, or the status of Arabic women in his society, you will come up against these basic assumptions.

Transmission of culture in the Arab world

Culture also involves the transmission of traditions (a mixture of explicit cultural products, and the norms and values that support them) which are passed on from one generation to the next, including knowledge, belief, art, morals, norms, values, law and customs – these traditions may be perceived both as being static and unyielding, evolving and comforting, in turn (Kroeber & Parsons, 1958). In pre-oil times before the 1950's, these traditions were passed on within the family, kin, and tribal groups (Heard-Bey, 2004). Feghali (1997) investigated Arab cultural communication patterns and found that the three basic values most commonly mentioned in the literature include collectivism, hospitality, and honor. "The influence of [these] Bedouin values remains strong, despite the fact that around 90% of the population in the region presently resides in villages or cities" (Feghali, 1997, p. 352). Some research has focused on investigating Arab parenting styles, some even attempting to link these styles with a "unique" Arab personality (Al-Haj, 2003, Almajali, 2005; Alsheikh, Parameswaran, & Elhoweris, 2010; and Moughrabi, 1978).

In the recent past, young Arab males have had a higher status in the family compared to females but both genders were treated more or less equally in the home where there was

(and still remains) a high tolerance of young people's behaviour in the early years. However, both genders were encouraged to "behave like adults as soon and as well as possible" (Heard-Bey, 2004, p. 154). This account differs somewhat with the modern UAE where parenting styles are often closely associated with those traditional values reflecting Islamic culture: "respect for elders, good manners, good academic outcomes, and self-discipline" (Alsheikh et al., 2010, p. 8), resulting in very strict parenting. Studies conducted within the past five years have been mixed in distinguishing differences based on gender (Almajali, 2005; Alsheikh et al., 2010). In an interview with Mr Abdulla Ahmed Abdulla Alnaqbi who holds the title of the Wali[13] of Diftah, he confirmed that he did not raise his seven sons and three daughters any differently based on their gender.

Recently, the dependence of Emirati parents upon foreign housemaids and untrained nannies in raising the next generation of Emirati children has been described (Al Sumaiti, 2012), indirectly providing further evidence of the 'rentier effect' (see Chapter 1). In her report, Rabaa Al Sumaiti, a bilingual inspector at KHDA (Knowledge and Human Development Authority), found that "94 percent of Emirati families and only 5 percent of expatriate families employ maids and nannies to do housework as well as look after children" (p. 4). Al Sumaiti goes on to list the negative results of this recent social phenomenon including harm to the child's maternal attachment causing possible behavioural problems (housemaids typically spend between 30-70 hours caring for children), erosion of the traditional Arab values usually passed down through parenting (untrained nannies have weak English and no Arabic-speaking skills) and emotional trauma for the young child when the nanny's two-year contractual agreement ends and she returns to her home country. Having lived in the country for many years, I have frequently witnessed what now appears to be a fairly typical scene in a shopping mall with the Emirati parents, bedecked in Gucci sunglasses, Mont Blanc pens, and D&G handbags, walking nonchalantly ahead of a uniform-wearing foreign housemaid struggling to entertain and calm the children by giving sweets and toys.

Chao (2001) and Christina (2008) independently demonstrate a strong link between 'non-Western' cultures as exhibited by the extended family and overall school achievement which is supported by the study by Alsheikh et al. (2010) who attempted to assess the

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[13] Each ruler or *sheikh* maintained a permanent representative or *wali* in order to exert his authority in the more remote and populous areas of his sheikhdom (Heard-Bey, 1982, p. 81).

impact of different parenting styles, ranging from autonomy granting, demandingness, and responsiveness, upon the performance and self-esteem of a sample of 162 5th-8th grade students in the UAE public school system. Further quantitative analysis suggested that family cohesion and effort were positively related to school performance while interestingly self-autonomy was found to be negatively related to school performance. Self-esteem was not significantly related to any of the variables studied. The results showed that demandingness was found to have a significant impact on GPA scores which is additionally supported by Judith Kleinfeld's study (1975) of the indigenous First Nations people in North America. She found that demandingness is a desirable trait in teachers working in cross-cultural settings. It combines "personal warmth" with a demand for a "high level of academic work" (pp. 326-327).

Self-esteem is one of several key measures of adolescent life and is often reported as having the greatest impact on academic progress at school, personal happiness, and the family unit (Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000; Rudy & Grusec, 2006; Martinez & García, 2007; Martínez, García, & Yubero, 2007). Though several studies have explored the relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem, the mixed results appear to reflect strong cultural factors existent within each diverse research venue, indicative perhaps of the greater or lesser importance that many cultures place on high self-esteem. Adolescents in Spain with indulgent parents were found to have high self-esteem whereas those with much more authoritarian parents exhibited low self-esteem (Martinez & Garcia, 2007). This contrasts with a recent study from Egypt that found that Arab youth respond positively to authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles (Dwairy & Mustapha, 2006). Self-esteem has also been shown to be closely related to children's internalization of social values with warnings from the researchers that an absence of self-esteem may retard the internalization process (Grusec et al., 2000; Martínez et al., 2007).

It is clear that the studies above reflect the diverse value that different societies place on certain socio-cultural characteristics or traits. In so-called collectivistic societies where allegiance to a larger group (family, community, kin or tribe) suppresses feelings of standing out or individualism, too high a self-esteem is usually discouraged and self-deprecating behaviour is exhibited by adults in the familial group (Alsheikh et al., 2010). For example, the effort displayed by children at school reflects upon the good status of the family as opposed to exhibiting the child's personal achievements. Chao (1994), Martínez et al. (2007) and Alsheikh et al. (2010) independently suggest that self-esteem as viewed by

Western researchers may not capture the essence of 'respect for oneself' as understood by members of a traditional Islamic community. In the next section, I explore in greater depth the requirement to view culture and its associated explicit behaviours through different lenses or dimensions in order to more accurately describe specific cultural norms.

Cultural dimensions

Geert Hofstede produced one of the world's first exhaustive and comprehensive databases on cultural differences in the late 1970's after pioneering the use of employee opinion surveys across 70 national subsidiaries of IBM. In 1983, he published his findings in an academic journal followed by the publication of his 1991 book, "Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind." Through his study of over 100,000 surveys, Hofstede's research morphed from a focus on individual personalities to aggregating individuals as "societal units", reflecting an emerging research interest in national cultures. He identified observable differences in national cultures on four primary dimensions – power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity (Hofstede, 1983, 2001). Two further cultural dimensions have since been added – long-term orientation and indulgence – from work conducted by other researchers (Bond, 1991; Minkov, 2007). Though his work has attracted criticism from some researchers (McSweeney, 2002; Ailon, 2008), Hofstede has been widely acclaimed for providing a practical framework from which to begin to understand national and workplace cultures (*Awards and Honours*, 2011).

The six indices establish opposing cultural inclinations such as collectivism versus individualism using an index scale from 1 to 120, with the latter index indicating the maximum inclination towards the cultural dimension. The first cultural dimension is 'power distance' and is defined as the extent to which less powerful people in society accept inequality in power and consider it as normal. Cultures with low-power distance expect power relationships that are more consultative or democratic and where individuals treat each other as equals regardless of titles or formal positions. In high-power distance cultures, the less powerful accept power relations that are more autocratic, hierarchical, and paternalistic. This dimension is most strongly exhibited in the workplace environment in the form of the traditional subordinate-boss relationship.

The second cultural dimension is 'individualism' which is measured by the extent that people place their individual interests and hopes above all else. In contrast, collectivism describes individuals who place the group above individual interests or goals and feel a strong sense of belonging to a cohesive group or organization. The third cultural dimension is 'uncertainty avoidance' and describes how much members of a society are anxious about the unknown, and as a consequence, attempt to cope with anxiety by minimizing uncertainty. Cultures indicating high uncertainty avoidance tend to be more emotional and they try to minimize the unknown by planning and implementing rules and regulations. Low uncertainty avoidance cultures feel more comfortable in unstructured situations and try to have as few rules as possible.

The fourth cultural dimension is 'masculinity' which is exhibited in masculine cultures as competitiveness, materialism, ambition and power (quantity of life) compared to feminine cultures which place extra value on relationships and caring (quality of life). The fifth cultural dimension is 'long-term orientation' which arose out of research work conducted in China, a long-term oriented society which attaches more importance to the future compared to short-term oriented societies whose values are more related to the immediate past and the present. The sixth and final cultural dimension is 'indulgence' and describes cultures with a high rate of indulgence as one where people can freely satisfy their basic needs and desires. By contrast, restraint-defined societies tend to reflect more traditional and strict social norms, where the gratification of human drives is generally suppressed (Hofstede , 2001).

Cultural orientations

Two other researchers, Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner, have produced a large body of work based on surveys of over 30,000 managers from around the world. They differentiate cultural groups by the way in which they devise different specific solutions to three key human dilemmas – those which arise from our relationships with other people; those which reflect our attitude to the passing of time; and those which relate to the environment (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 8). The seven orientations begin with a dichotomy between 'universalism and particularism' or rules versus relationships. Universalism states that good and bad can be defined and always applied to all situations. This contrasts with the particularist approach which values

human relationships and recognizes unique human dilemmas. Individualism and communitarianism is similar to Hoftsede's individual versus group dichotomy.

'Neutral and emotional' seeks to explain why some cultures exhibit very controlled and calm characteristics while others are much more emotional and expressive. 'Specific and diffuse' explores the integration of personal space with public space – in many cultures, a person's private life remains separate from many aspects of their public life such as the workplace while in other cultures, private and public spaces are one and the same (diffused). 'Achievement and ascription' observes that in some cultures, what a person has achieved, regardless of their socio-economic background or educational level, is more important than their ascripted status based upon birth, family background, gender, age, connections or where they studied at school or university. 'Attitudes to time' also differ in many cultures, some of which are more future-oriented than other cultures which place a greater value on the past or present. Finally, our 'attitudes to the environment' reflect different views of man's relationship with nature. Many believe that man must control and manage the environment while others believe that man should not seek to control nature but to respect it and acquiesce to its laws and forces.

In many conference and poster presentations I have given in the UAE over the past two years, the diverse audiences consisting of both European expatriates and local or Middle Eastern Arabs have been very receptive to Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Trompenaars' and Hampden-Turner's cultural orientations. In particular, many educational managers and faculty have warmly received this insight into the behaviours of local Emirati students entering higher education. One of my minor research aims in this thesis is to assess the validity and applicability of these dimensions and orientations at the research venue by using animated scenarios to prompt culturally-defining responses from the study group of Level 2 Foundations students (see Chapter 5).

Dialectical concepts of essentialism-nonessentialism

The perspectives offered by Hofstede, and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner are premised on an essentialist concept that certain traits or properties possessed by a group are essential to them, are universal, and are independent of context. Essentialist positions on human traits such as gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, etc, are considered to be fixed while not allowing for variations among individuals or over time (Cupane, 2008). Nonessentialism views culture as a dynamic process where "the cultural position

of the observer helps construct the description of such cultural dynamics" (Semali and Kincheloe, as cited in Cupane, 2008, p. 130). The source of these cultural dynamics can be located within groups, between groups (border crossings), or in both. In this way, people "are historically constructed, always in process, constantly dealing with intersections involving categories of status, religion, race, class and gender" (p. 130). Thus, nonessentialism stands in stark contrast to the essentialist belief that there are fixed and stable identities (see Figure 2).

The goals of people who take essentialist and nonessentialist positions obviously differ. For example, in recent times, there has been an increasing use of essentialist-based arguments promulgated by Emirati members of the Federal National Council who insist on the use of Arabic at all levels in society, especially in education (see Chapter 1). Further, Indigenous societies as in Australia, North America, Africa, and New Zealand who raise the public profile of their group indigeneity take strong essentialist positions to achieve certain political and societal goals (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011). On the other hand, nonessentialists often succeed in integrating within different cultures/sub-cultures at a personal level. The entire socio-economic experiment that is modern-day United Arab Emirates may be perceived as nonessentialist in nature though the current outcomes may better serve the essentialist argument. Particularly in the larger cities such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai, many young and well-educated (often at overseas universities)

Identity is fixed	Identity is changing continuously
(Essentialism)	(Nonessentialism)
- Skin colour, place of birth, sex, religion, etc determine undoubtedly our identity	- Skin colour, place of birth, sex, religion, etc do not determine our identity
- The reality is explained by meta-narrative[14]	- Refuses meta-narratives

Figure 2: Differences between essentialism and nonessentialism (Cupane, 2008, p. 130)

Emiratis appear to have successfully found a space amid their local culture and the neo-colonialist 'world culture' that has accompanied the arrival of immigrant workers,

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[14] A meta-narrative is a story about what we believe to be true about knowledge and reality. Meta-narratives are not usually told outright, but are reinforced by other more specific narratives told within the culture such as religion (*Meta-narrative*, 2009).

consumerism, and the Internet (Moussly, 2011a). Though nonessentialism agrees with essentialism in relation to "the existence of characteristics that identify individuals, people and communities, [it] refuses the immutability of these characteristics" (Cupane, 2008, p. 136). Alberto Cupane extends this by outlining the dilemma contained within the nonessentialist position – that is, individuals, groups and communities possess attributes or characteristics yet these change over time or space. These two views – essentialism and nonessentialism – may be resolved through dialectical thinking as...

> it places all the emphasis on change. Instead of talking about static structures, it talks about process and movement. Hence it is in line with all those philosophies which say – "Let's not be deceived by what it is now as we perceive it – let's not pretend we can fix it and label it and turn it into something stiff and immutable – let's look instead at how it changes." Hence it denies much of the usefulness of formal logic, which starts from the proposition that "A is A", and is nothing but A. For dialectics the corresponding proposition is "A is not simply A". This is even true for things, but much more obviously true for people (Rowan, 1996, p. 1).

Basseches (2005) illustrates how dialectical thinking focuses on process and change which is brought about by the clash of opposing ideas. Rowan explores this tension using two principles – the interdependence principle which states that opposites need each other to exist (love requires hate, light requires darkness, etc.) and the interpenetration principle which states that opposites can be found within each other (there is some hate in every love, and some love in every hate). Therefore, opposing ideas cannot be suppressed because they constitute the very condition for the existence of the entity (Rowan, 1996). Resolving this tension produces a third option, a synthesis arising from the tension brought about by the thesis and antithesis (Spencer & Krauze, as cited in Cupane, 2008, p. 120). Non|essentialism, the vertical bar denoting the dialectical and symbiotic relationship between essentialism and nonessentialism, allows me to move strategically from a macro essentialist view when using surveys in attempting to describe the group to a micro nonessentialist view when attempting to gain individual insight using individual student conversations, narratives, dialogues, and focus groups (Ashcroft et al., as cited in Cupane, 2008, p. 120) – see Figure 3.

Identity is fixed	Synthesis	Identity is changing continuously
(Essentialism) - Skin colour, place of birth, sex, religion, etc determine undoubtedly our identity - The reality is explained by meta-narrative[15]	(Non|essentialism) Symbiosis between essentialism and nonessentialism ⬅➡	(Nonessentialism) - Skin colour, place of birth, sex, religion, etc do not determine our identity - Refuses meta-narratives

Figure 3: Resolution outcome between essentialism and nonessentialism (Cupane, 2008, p. 137)

In summary, nonessentialism declares that the characteristics of individuals, groups and communities exist but that these characteristics are not fixed, varying as they do from individual to individual over time and space. Given that cultural dimensions and orientations imply cultural spaces within which people's identities are shaped, the notion of both a physical and metaphorical cultural space further assumes meeting or crossing points or borders where individuals move up to and sometimes beyond these lines into new cultural spaces. This thesis is about young male Emiratis making a cultural journey as they move from one cultural space centred on a predominantly Arabic high school to a new cultural space in the form of a college of higher education filled with foreigners from different lands, men and women speaking a language which the students barely understand and use. It is this concept of borders and border crossing between cultures that I next explore.

Cultural Border Crossings

Henry Giroux's cultural border-crossing metaphor (expanded and applied by several different researchers) provides an appropriate framework to study a people and a society that have moved from Bedouin to Banker in two generations (Giroux, 2005; Aikenhead, 1996; Pillsbury & Shields, 1999; Mulholland & Wallace, 2003; Michie, 2011a). Giroux first used the border crossing metaphor in 1992 as he sought to describe the hardships endured by students in North America whose race and culture were different from those of the dominant group. The concept was further refined and updated in his second edition published in 2005 but his description of the metaphor remains true and powerful:

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[15] A meta-narrative is a story about a story of what we believe to be true about society and reality. Meta-narratives are not usually told outright, but are reinforced by other more specific narratives told within the culture such as religion (*Meta-narrative*, 2009).

...the concept of borders provides a continuing and crucial referent for understanding the co-mingling – sometimes clash – of multiple cultures, languages, literacies, histories, sexualities, and identities. Thinking in terms of borders allows one to critically engage the struggle over those territories, spaces, and contact zones where power operates to either expand or to shrink the distance and connectedness among individuals, groups, and places. (Giroux, 2005, p. 2)

Chang (1999) further describes three assumptions regarding culture where the presence of cultural borders may be inferred:

• A culture is a bounded system which is separate and distinguishable from others and which is often viewed as a social unit (nation, state, tribe or community)
• Each culture is homogeneous and may be considered as an idealised form
• A culture is shared by members of a society

Aikenhead asked the seminal question: "how do students make sense of their natural world?" in his 1996 investigation of the culture of science education which was echoed by Pintrich's substantive questions several years later (2003). His view is that students' understanding and learning is perceived as a cultural event – students do not learn in isolation of the cultural elements that make up the learning experience. These elements are generally understood by most people as traits that may define all cultures – the norms, customs, attitudes and values, beliefs, expectations, world-view and conventional actions of a group (Thelan et al., cited in Aikenhead, 1996, p. 7). We can extend Giroux's metaphor of the cultural borders and their crossing by conceptualizing individuals as travellers crossing borders, the ease of which is largely determined by the congruence between individuals' existing world-views and cultural comfort with the cultural space into which they are crossing (Aikenhead, 1996; Mulholland & Wallace, 2003). Aikenhead (1996) used Giroux's metaphor to describe the cultural journey experienced by young Canadian science students as they crossed the border from their known sub-cultures of peer groups and family into the cultural world of science education with its own language, norms and customs, beliefs, world-views and group-think. Similarly, Mulholland and Wallace (2003) described the border crossing of the

teacher trainees' "lived experiences of learning to teach" at an Australian university into the sub-culture of the often harsh reality-check of a teacher's first year teaching (p. 882).

The difficulties experienced during border crossings may be conceptualized as "hazards" and the degree of difficulty with which a border crossing into a cultural space is achieved may be categorized as smooth, managed, hazardous and virtually or almost impossible (Cobern & Aikenhead, 1998). Michie (2011a) further examines the 'geography' of border crossings as he seeks to understand the cultural border crossing experiences of teachers interacting with indigenous students at three diverse locations around the world – he uses terms such as borderlands and contact zones which will be more fully explained in Chapter 4. For now, let us move down into a deeper level of culture, the sub-culture, where most of our daily crossings and migrations occur.

Sub-cultures

As cited in Aikenhead (1996, p. 7), Spindler and Wolcott independently describe "students' understanding of the world…as a cultural phenomenon, and learning at school as cultural acquisition". Emirati students' worldviews are largely shaped by their experiences living in tight extended family and kin groups, enjoying leisure time activities with friends and relatives living in the same location, and collectively enduring the often difficult years in the government school system (see Chapter 1). The homogeneity of male Arab learners is a mirage, hiding the myriad gamut of human personalities, the result of different parenting styles, diverse geographical locations within the emirate, exposure to Western values through the cinema and the Internet, and their cumulative experiences at home, school and community. Within each cultural group, sub-cultural groups, identified by gender, race, language, social class, occupation and ethnicity, also exist, and they largely frame the sub-cultural domains and the border crossings from one domain to another which we all experience in our daily lives. Thus, all of us share membership with certain sub-cultural groups – females, males, middle class, media, etc.

In terms of this research, Furnham (as cited in Aikenhead, 1996, p. 8) provides additional sub-cultures that may influence students' learning and understanding at schools and colleges – family, peers, school, and mass media. Typically, a Western European expatriate working in the Middle East belongs to several sub-cultural groups

and moves relatively smoothly from one to another (see Figure 4). For example, he wakes up in the morning within his Race and Family sub-cultures (European and nuclear), interacting with his wife and children in often unique behaviours and language specific and exclusive to that particular cultural setting. He then travels to his Occupation sub-culture (Western) in a college of higher education where he teaches his Arabic students as well as interacts with colleagues from around the world. After work, he may join some of his male colleagues in a game of football or attend a gym, enjoying the delights of his Gender sub-culture (male). In each of these sub-cultural settings, the participating individuals share a defining set of norms, values, beliefs, expectations, and conventions – each group has a shared identity which provides a level of comfort to those who belong to and re-enter it.

On the other hand, young male Emirates in their first week of class are expected to cross cultural borders that to most of them resemble high walls (see Figure 5). They wake up within the confines of their Arabic Family sub-cultural group and travel to college where they meet a myriad of different, confusing, and foreign sub-cultures such as Women (no male Emirati has been taught by female teachers at high school), World-views (most teaching staff in UAE higher education are Western expatriates from North America, UK, South Africa and Australasia), Language (only English is used within the college and the use of Arabic is strongly discouraged in the classroom), Learning expectations (instructional approaches in the government high schools centre on the teacher
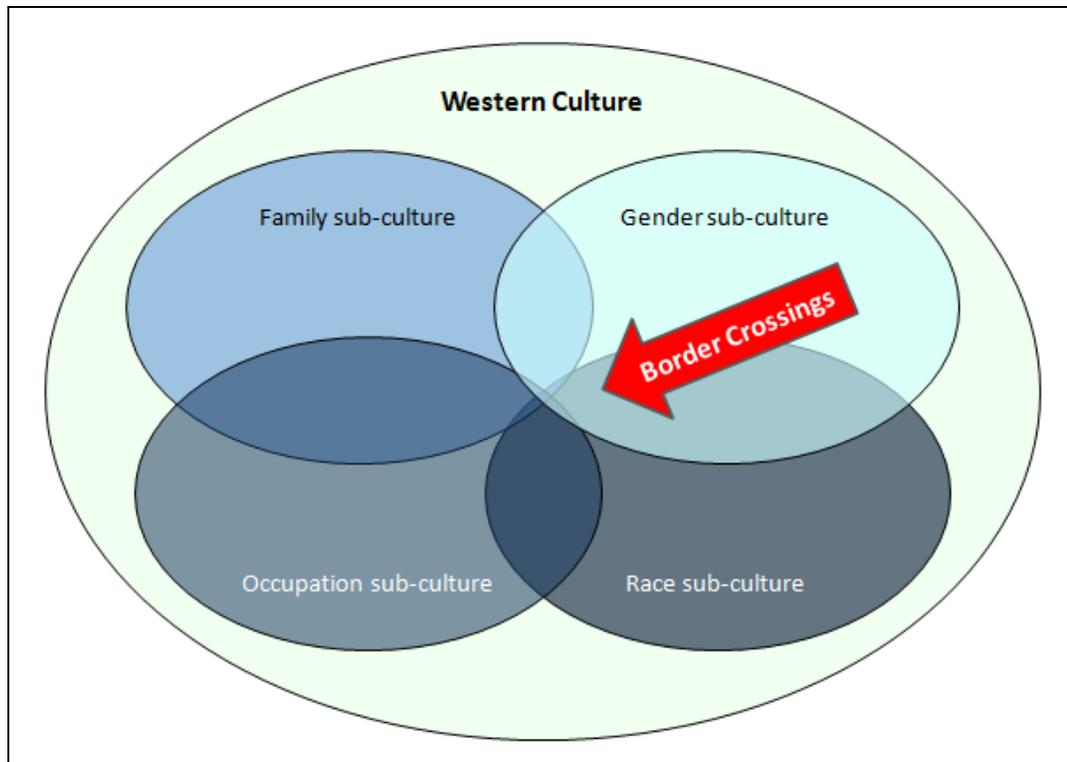
Figure 4: Typical sub-cultures associated with Western culture

encouraging their students to memorize information and repeat it accurately in assessments as opposed to constructivist-informed, learner-centred approaches widely adopted throughout UAE higher education), and Misunderstanding of Arabic cultural elements such as *wasta* (this is now perceived as mild corruption or influence in modern society, but the expectation of assistance remains strong among the young male Emiratis who have little notion of the low regard of cheating or plagiarism in a higher education setting). Their general reaction to this daily experience is to request 'tighter' timetables with no spaces during the day and to display little or no interest in extra-curricula activities – for many students, prolonging an already difficult cultural and learning experience is simply too much, the experience too alien, too raw, too different.
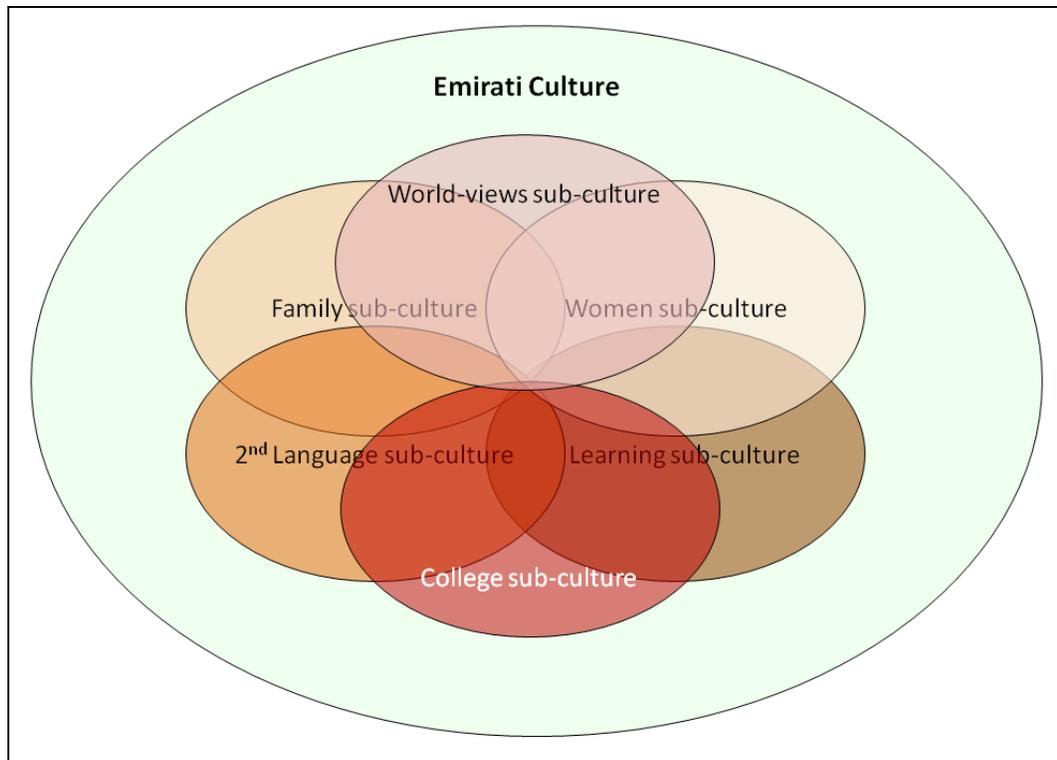
Figure 5: Typical sub-cultures associated with Emirati culture at a college of higher education

Over the past two years, I have developed a metaphor of an *Arabic student astronaut* who, early in the morning, dons his space suit at home, spends the day in an alien land at college, and returns home as quickly as possible so that he can breathe again within the comforting setting of his Arabic culture (Hatherley-Greene, 2010). One of the key aims of this thesis is to explore the appropriateness and applicability of the cultural border crossing metaphor in an attempt to explain why many male students appear to lack perseverance while on-task, the high frequency of incidences of cheating and plagiarism, and shoddily-completed written project work, devoid of a sense of ownership and pride. Outwardly, the internal drive for personal betterment appears to be largely non-existent. In their favour, the students are friendly and respectful, and providing the task is well understood and defined, they complete it satisfactorily. Why do friendly and respectful male Emirati students come to College but not avail themselves of the learning opportunities that await them in one of the most highly resourced post-secondary institutions in the world? Why do they exhibit many of the educational, social and behavioural traits most commonly associated with indigenous at-risk communities such as the Aborigines in Australia, the Maori in New Zealand, and the First Nations people in North America, despite their incredible oil-wealth and substantial progress on many

national wealth and social development indices as measured by the IMF, World Bank and other global agencies?

Indigeneity

In Chapter 1, the notion of using the term "indigenous" to describe the local Emirati Arabs was introduced, particularly to describe the current generation under 30 years of age who has experienced both the benefits and disadvantages of the UAE's oil wealth and its associated distributive social welfarism (Minnis, 2006; Ahmed, 2010b; Ridge, 2011). In order to explore this term and its applicability to the research setting, I will establish a fictionalized dialogue based on the work of the hermeneutic philosopher, Hans Gadamer (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 672) in which one may engage in a dialogical/dialectic debate of a difficult construct where holding different points of view in tension results in a higher level of understanding as opposed to resolution. Using this approach, I hope to show how both speakers "learn from each other and are jointly responsible for the outcome" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 672). This approach also echoes the ethical dilemma story pedagogy approach from Taylor and Taylor (in press, 2012) where the dilemma problem has no clear resolution. The debate centres on the usage of the term "indigenous" and its potentially controversial application to the UAE. The two speakers begin their discussion, coming with different academic statuses in the form of a doctoral student (John) engaging in a conversation with an experienced cultural researcher (Barry)...

> **John:** Having read your recent book, I posit the following query – do you think it is appropriate to use the term "indigenous" to describe the local Emirati Arabs in the UAE? Let me explain.
>
> The local Arabs were never colonized in the same way as were the North American First Nations, Australian Aborigines, or New Zealand Maori. Apart from a truce imposed on the warring emirates by the British Empire in the 19th century, they were pretty much allowed to get on with their lives with minimal interference. They enjoyed the safety of the undesired in a land that nobody wanted.

All that changed midway last century when massive oil reserves were found under the sands of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Over the past 60 years, the UAE has suffered cultural colonization in the form of huge numbers of expatriate workers (local Emirati Arabs now comprise only 11% of the total population) and there is a strong Eurocentric influence in terms of hotels, entertainment, technology, etc. Though the local Emiratis wield absolute political and economic power, they do suffer from colonial subjugation, even cultural invasion, the effects of which are very evident in the educational and social areas.

Barry: The effects of globalization on the 20th century people of the UAE sound very similar to 19th century Japan. I would suggest that the Arabs of the UAE are "neo-indigenous" people. Moreover, your statement "the local Emiratis wield absolute political and economic power" certainly does not meet the UN's criterion of subjugation and oppression. Granted, many Arabs may like to return to how life was 60 years ago; but so would many citizens of industrialized countries! I think you should distinguish between colonization and globalization, however oppressive globalization may feel.

I'm not familiar with the UAE, but there may be a group of Bedouin people who continue living their nomad culture and who do not have the political-economic power you spoke of. This group would be considered "Indigenous" just as certain isolated groups of first peoples in the Amazon valley are considered Indigenous, because colonizers have not yet got to them; but they are so vulnerable to colonizers - it's just a matter of time. The population of isolated Amazon Indigenous peoples was much greater 60 years ago and this seems to reflect in the ratio of local Emirati Arabs to the expatriate population.

John: This is indeed very thought-provoking but I would like to explain my reasons for suggesting using the term indigenous in my setting. According to the United Nations, indigenous people are the descendants of the first people to inhabit a locality and self-identify as members of a

collective [group]. In a general sense, most people understand the term "indigenous" as additionally implying elements of colonial subjugation, marginalization, economic servitude, and oppression. Some researchers extend this definition to describe indigenous communities where the colonial settlers or invaders became numerically dominant as well as communities where the invaders remained a minority but left a legacy of colonization, for example, Mozambique. Other writers also use the term "indigenous" when referring to the early subsistence days in the Trucial States.

Given the negative socio-economic indicators so evident in modern Emirati society, the decision to use the term "indigenous" to describe the local Emirati national Arabs becomes less problematic, despite some elements, mostly negative, associated with the term. Though they are in undeniable and complete political and economic control of their country, and possess one of the highest GDP per capita in the world, the local Emiratis, especially the young, continue to suffer and manifest the effects of a colonial invasion.

Barry: I believe the local Emiratis have experienced globalization, not colonization; and immigration can hardly be called an invasion, though other sources of Western culture could invade UAE culture via globalization.

John: I have spent many years in a country dealing first-hand with young Arab school leavers. Arriving in the mid-1990s, my first class contained 20 students all wearing the *dishdasha*[16] and Arabic head-gear including the *agal*[17]. Now several years later, 50% of a similar class wears Western clothes, baseball caps, etc - a globalization effect indeed but all at the surface level, culturally-speaking. When I use the term 'colonial invasion', I really mean to say 'cultural invasion' because it is

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[16] *Dishdasha* is the traditional long usually white robe that is worn by male Emiratis.
[17] *Agal* is an accessory constructed of black cord which is fastened around the *keffiyeh* (the Arab headdress) to hold it in place.

here at the hidden part of culture (like an iceberg) where the norms and values are being eroded. Globalization is simply too soft a term to describe what I have seen during these years. Further, many researchers since the 1980s have described a rentier society which predated globalization by 15 years, a society where extreme welfarism based on the huge oil-wealth in the Middle East has produced a disconnect between effort and reward, resulting in a generation of indulgence, idolatry, and entitlement. For example, many Emiratis with their new-found affluence employ housemaids from Indonesia or the sub-continent (last year, 30% of all employment visas in my study area were of this type) - with their vastly different cultures and languages, they are raising an entire generation of young Emiratis without being aware of the importance of Arabic culture transmission by reinforcing the age-old respect for elders and typical Arabic social norms.

Barry: I recognize now the unique feature of the upbringing of UAE's next generation and the potential impact it may have on UAE culture. It is an interesting view of "invasion." The expression "shooting oneself in the cultural foot" would seem to fit the older generation's decision to arrange for the social structure you describe. It would seem to be an "invasion" of UAE culture orchestrated by UAE leaders - doubly sad. However, globalization, when uninvited, is also an invasion that can easily mirror colonization. One issue is who had/has the power to invite or resist? Certainly not the Indonesian nannies! You do have a unique context.

This discussion highlights UAE's unique context, and though uninvited globalization may mirror cultural colonization, the negative social outcomes remain the same, blind to the causes and processes. Barry chose to describe Emiratis as 'neo-indigenous' peoples which, from his perspective, reflects the impact of neo-colonialism in the form of a 'cultural tsunami'. Neo-colonialism begins through the promotion by international corporations and organizations of a privileged language (English) and Western/Eastern entertainment and media (Hollywood/Bollywood/Internet). By opening up local markets

to this promotion, neo-colonialism emerges as the result of genuinely benign business practices and interests leading to deleterious cultural effects as highlighted in Chapter 1.

Given the discussion above, I will now use the term "neo-indigenous" for the remainder of the thesis as it will assist in positioning and framing the approach to the central issue of this thesis as well as focussing on the significant pedagogical issues related to student learning and "understanding their place in the world" (McKinley as cited in Aikenhead & Michell, 2011, p. 9). One of the key areas where the 'rentier effect' may be responsible in part for the general *a priori* malaise of the male Emirati students lies in their observable lack of motivation to learn, study, and progress.

Motivation

As the new Foundations-level students walk up the steps into Fujairah Men's College on their first day, you can almost hear their 'cultural baggage' trailing noisily behind them, much like tin cans banging against the road, tethered to a departing car driven at speed by the groom leaving a wedding reception with his new bride. This observation is based upon my own and other colleagues' consistent observations over many years of arranging new student orientations, greeting them at the door, and helping them to find their feet in the first few days of college. The 'baggage' is first noticed from their shuffling, slow walk and proceeds to a woeful lack of preparedness for academic study (many forget textbooks, pens, etc) - the students present themselves as having rather reluctantly arrived at college, having missed a better opportunity to go elsewhere. Of course, not all of the new students behave like this, but the overall impression one is left with after the first week may be summed up in a rhetorical question: "why did they bother to come at all?"

Thankfully, there has been a lot of research interest in student motivation in the Middle East, reflecting both the importance of the topic and the urgency of higher education administrators and faculty in trying to understand and respond effectively to improve student motivation and, as a consequence, student retention and graduation rates (Rugh, 2002; Hatherley-Greene, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2010; van der Velden, 2004; Crabtree, 2010; Dahl, 2010; Roney, 2010; Abdellatif, 2011; Gunn, 2011; Fields, 2011; Daleure, 2011; Hourani & Diallo; 2011; Ostrowska, 2011; Risse, 2011). In broad terms, the local research paints two strong opposing images. Firstly, it portrays a rather dismal picture of

a failing government education system at both primary and secondary levels that has been aware for over 20 years of systemic issues requiring urgent action and improvement. Secondly, a much more optimistic picture is evident through the brilliantly innovative instructional approaches, often involving effective use of educational technologies, brought into the classroom by an experienced and motivated cadre of mostly expatriate foreign faculty from around the globe. The key issue for many of the researchers appears intransient, intractable, and impossible to resolve – how does one motivate students who appear to have either zero or negative motivation to remain in higher education using their second language?

A sensible place to start for higher educational faculty and administrators in student services is to gain some understanding and insight into the Arabic culture and the students' background experiences and histories including school life (Crabtree, 2010; Hofstede, 2001; Roney, 2010; Hatherley-Greene, 2010; Risse, 2011). Through this deeper understanding of how their cultural norms and values frame their lived experiences, faculty may begin to perhaps contextualize learning by using local cultural examples, and administrators may be able to implement more effective student orientations. Many of the English language textbooks are culturally biased towards the country in which the author(s) live, for example in the UK. These textbooks reflect British life and social customs such as drinking at your local public house, behaviours which are far removed from a young male Emirati's life experience. As Barry Tomalin (2008) from the BBC Teaching English website writes, "the issue of de-coupling English language from cultural assumptions and background is a longstanding debate in ELT [English Language Teaching]," a sentiment echoed earlier by Phillipson (1994) as he linked cultural change with the global spread of the English language. Increasingly, textbook publishers have become more aware of producing material that is culturally sensitive to young learners in the Middle East (Muhanna, 2009; *OUP*, 2011).

Motivation and learning success are strongly linked, particularly in second language learning (Naiman et al. as cited in Fields, 2011, p. 30) where Robert Gardner (1985) along with his co-researcher Wallace Lambert stamped their mark with their seminal work (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Here they described two types of orientation which motivate second language learners to learn another language. 'Integrative orientation' describes learners who closely identify with the target language and develop a keen

interest in the cultural aspects associated with the language. 'Instrumental orientation', the weaker of the two, describes learners whose main desire to learn the target language is to achieve high marks and/or to benefit professionally. Fields' (2011) study of Emirati students learning English as a second language at the UAE University found that almost all of his students were instrumentally motivated though there was additional evidence of some integrative motivation arising from Internet usage. Observations from my own experience at HCT suggest that while students initially begin to learn English instrumentally motivated, over the duration of their 4-year degree most become more integratively motivated.

Moving away from specific second language teaching, 'intrinsic motivation' is more associated with integrative motivation in that learners tend to engage in an activity for its own sake. This contrasts with 'extrinsic motivation' which is the desire to achieve something not so much for enjoyment of mastering the skill or enjoying the activity but because it will lead to a certain instrumental outcome or result (Pintrich, 2003). Most researchers agree that intrinsic motivation consists of four dimensions, one of which must be satisfied for a student to feel motivated – competence (the student believes he has the ability to complete the task), control/autonomy (the student feels in control as they see a direct link between their actions and a result while retaining some choice about whether or how to attempt the activity, task or challenge), interest/value (the student sees some interest or value in completing the task), and relatedness (completing the activity brings social rewards or approval to the student). The interplay of these four dimensions is complex and not fully understood but most agree that the frequency and quality of meeting the dimensions results in greater motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Seifert, 2004; Murray, 2011). People who are intrinsically motivated work on tasks because they find them enjoyable (Pintrich & Schunck, 2002). It also encompasses the notion of seeking out and mastering optimal challenges (Reeve, 1996).

Emirati male students do appear to be motivated when using computers to complete task work and projects, and computers seem to provide a focus for a variety of learning activities (see Chapters 6 and 7 for details). However, several researchers have cautioned against an almost slavish adherence to constructivist-based teaching practices, especially in non-Western cultures where students' fundamental exposure in their early learning to more traditional teaching and learning pedagogies based on an objectivist epistemology

may lead to a loss of teaching effectiveness, low motivation, and increased Western cultural hegemony (Hatherley-Greene, 2010; Spector, 2001; Dahl, 2010). Additionally, there continues to be calls for an acceptance of pluralism in teaching pedagogies underlined by the antithetical epistemologies of objectivism and constructivism (Willison & Taylor, 2006). In summary, Pintrich (2003) suggests seven "substantive questions" for future motivational research efforts - (1) What do students want? (2) What motivates students in classrooms? (3) How do students get what they want? (4) Do students know what they want or what motivates them? (5) How does motivation lead to cognition and cognition to motivation? (6) How does motivation change and develop? and (7) What is the role of context and culture? In this research, much of my interest lies in responding to Pintrich's second, fourth and seventh suggested areas of future motivational research (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

Student Persistence and Retention

In Chapter 1, I described the Emirati drop-out rates from both secondary and higher education. While there has been considerable research in North America in the areas of student persistence and retention (Tinto, 1975, 1988, 1997, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977, 1979, 1980; Astin, 1984, 1993; Kuh, 2001; Pascarella, 2006; Andrade, 2006; Wolf-Wendel, Ward & Kinzie, 2009; Anderman, Andrzejewski & Allen, 2006), there have been much fewer studies conducted in the Middle East (Nasser, Nauffal & Romanowski, 2009; Daleure, 2011). Georgia Daleure completed a study of 294 male Emirati students at a HCT college and found that the key persistence factors at college were parental support, their own dreams of continuing education, and the existence of high-quality post-secondary education institutions.

Vincent Tinto has straddled the research world of North American student persistence and retention since the mid-1970s and, inspired by his work, many other researchers have contributed to this growing body of knowledge. We now know much more about the successful assimilation and integration of young college-age students into college life as well as the process and stages by which they gradually come to a decision to leave. As reported by Wolf-Wendel et al., (2009), involvement, engagement, and integration are the key predictors in a student's first year at college. The start of the new academic year is crucial to new students so an examination of these three factors is useful.

Involvement, engagement and integration

Involvement matters (Astin, 1984, 1993; Tinto, 1997) premised as it is as a responsibility of the student's energy and effort – and it matters most in the crucial first year of a new student's life at college. Astin defines involvement as the "amount of physical and psychological energy a student devotes to his college experience" (1984, p. 528). In his 1997 study of a Coordinated Studies Program (CSP) similar to HCT's Personal and Professional Development course in Foundations prior to 2010 (PPDV) and the new College Preparation and Readiness (CPR) course being implemented at Fujairah Men's College in 2011, Tinto found that increased involvement from the student increases persistence and improves learning outcomes. Other key variables in his study that were found to produce improved involvement were the CSP program, the students' GPA, hours of study, involvement in student activities, and positive perceptions by other students. Interestingly, the students also reported that they enjoyed supportive peer groups and having a voice especially in the content of the CSP curriculum.

Engagement has more to do with the college environment that provides diverse, relevant, and novel opportunities for students to become engaged. Many colleges already understand this responsibility and do their level best to provide clubs, extra-curricula activities, guest speakers, etc, for the students. It is also a key focus for new student orientations as the institution seeks to smooth the transition from high school to college by engaging the students in new and exciting activities.

Finally, integration, or as Tinto calls it "a sense of belonging", is a shared responsibility between the student and the institution. For a student to become integrated, they must first be willing to do so by adopting the norms and values of the college culture. In turn, the college must transmit and live its own norms and values so they are clearly and unambiguously received and adopted by the new students. In the UAE setting, preserving cultural identity whilst ensuring that all students are acculturated and integrated into the institution can be problematic, given the large numbers of largely Western expatriate faculty and the mandatory use of the English language for study. However, Andrade (2006) investigated whether integration means total assimilation and found that international students at a North American college saw integration as positive and had felt that they had preserved their cultural identity at the same time as meeting

the institution's goal of integration. In summary, it raises the idea of "front-loading institutional action" (Tinto, 1988, p. 15) to provide a welcome to its new students in such a way as to partly mitigate their concerns by offering an exciting, challenging but achievable vision of their future through getting them involved, engaged, and integrated...quickly.

A theoretical model

Tinto (1975) first theorized a model that could explain the processes of interaction between a student and the institution that leads some students to leave. By devising a theoretical model (see Figure 6), Tinto was able to account for a number of variables which he felt impacted a student's decision to leave. Beginning at the entry stage, three contributory factors – family background, individual attributes, and pre-college schooling – have resonance in this research at Fujairah. While Tinto linked a family's higher socio-economic background to student success, the role of the Arabic family in this part of the world in encouraging, promoting and supporting their children's ambitions to complete higher education is largely not understood. Similarly, we already know that students' academic levels are such that only 10% presently arrive at a UAE
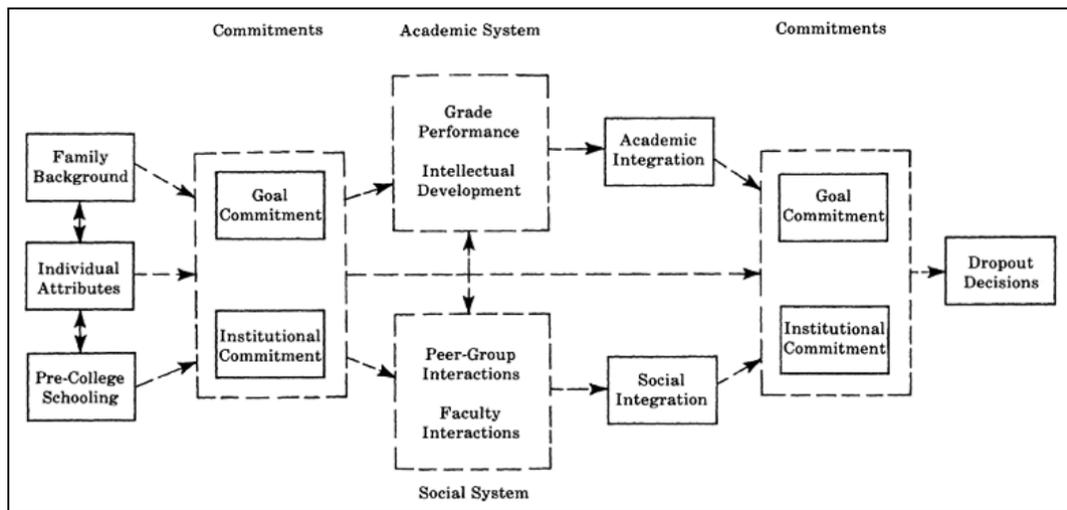
Figure 6: A conceptual schema for dropouts from college (Tinto, 1975)

higher college academically ready to study their actual program without the need for 1-2 years of Foundational remediation in English language, numeracy, and personal development courses. Low-placement level students are walking out of institutions seemingly because they perceive the journey ahead to be too difficult when other

comparatively easier options are available to them. Finally, the quality of secondary schooling in the UAE has received much criticism, both from within and outside the country (see Chapter 1). In the West, school background is highly correlated with college success, and it would seem to be no different in the UAE which explains why many Emirati parents, especially in the larger cities where there is more choice, now choose to place their children in private schools, turning their back on the free but poorer performing government schools (Lewis, 2010). One of the key aims of this research is to assess more accurately the effect of these three *a priori* factors - family background, individual attributes, and pre-college schooling - upon student academic progress while they remain in college and the ultimate effect they may have upon the decision to leave college before completing the program.

In the second phase of Tinto's model, both students and the institution make implicit commitments to one another. The lower the student's commitment to the college goal of graduate completion, the more likely they are to leave. The central phase of the model focuses on academic progress and peer-group interactions, the latter having been identified by Tinto and Astin as the single most important determinant in the students' first year (Tinto, 1997; Astin, 1993). The critical fourth and fifth phases assess the level of both academic and social integration and how the lack of integration in any one may lead to a decision to re-assess the student's commitment to the institutional goal of graduate completion and thus to leave. A minor aim of this research is to explore the importance of this social integration. As a Math and Computing faculty member at HCT for many years, I found the tone of each class to be often very different and in discussions with colleagues over the years, especially Arabic faculty, it became known that tribal kin groups, schools, and even parents' socio-economic status contribute to the forming phase of the group. If the group did not come together as a single entity, the incoherence often led to behavioural, attendance, and finally retention issues further into the semester.

Stages of student departure

Using Van Gennep's research on traditional societies' 'rites of passage', Tinto has constructed a three-stage model of student departure which may offer some insight to this setting (Tinto, 1988). One of the markers of a stable society is how groups of people move around and into the diverse sub-cultures within the main cultural group – this

orderly movement affects the long-term stability of communities and societies as groups move from one membership group (adolescent school leavers) to another (new college students). The first stage is *separation* and involves a marked decline in interactions with the former group – given that all our students travel each day to college and back again to their homes, this stage may not pose the same issues as it might in North America where students physically live away from home to study. The second stage is the *transition* and here the new students begin to become acculturated with the new membership group and learn the new ways of behaviour, rules, and expectations. Here they often realize they have a deficit of both skills and knowledge to enable them to make a successful transition to the new group – this causes anxiety, stress, feelings of isolation and weakness. Students at this stage are at their most vulnerable in terms of making a decision to stay or leave. This metaphorical border crossing finds them in a new land where they have not yet learned the new norms and values – they suffer from "normlessness" (p. 60), the consequences of which are a lack of guiding norms and beliefs, further hastening the likelihood of a premature departure. The nature and dynamics of the separation and transition stages of male Emirati students, and the interventions at an institutional level lie at the core of this thesis.

Finally, the third stage of *incorporation* is reached when students begin to live the new patterns of interaction and establish themselves as a competent member of their new group. The key factor in encouraging students to move successfully from the difficult transition stage appears to be increased social interactions through physical contact with one another and the new group members. Sustained new student orientations over a much longer period of time appear to be a key institutional commitment to their students.

Summary

This chapter has afforded me with a theoretical perspective from which to organize my research efforts. What have I learned from the literature review? Culture and its definitions were examined and potentially useful dimensions and orientations were explored from Hofstede, and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner. The ability to move back and forth between macro and micro viewpoints was supported by the discussion on essentialism-nonessentialism. A rich debate occurred over the issue of the emotive labels of indigeneity and neo-colonialism which culminated in the adoption of a new term, neo-

indigenous, to describe the transitional cultural status of the current generation of Emirati youth. The core metaphor of my research, the cultural border crossing, was introduced, its applicability to this research was discussed, and a detailed review of the border crossing referent went on to explore sub-cultures and behaviour. Finally, a detailed review, using both theoretical and empirical models from North America, of student motivation, persistence, involvement, engagement and integration offered the potential of exciting theoretical frameworks from which to study these key contributory elements in my research setting.

For those of us who live and work using their first language, crossing sub-cultural borders is relatively smooth and uneventful. However, when the language of instruction is your second language, laden as it is with cultural elements and metaphors, the border crossings become troublesome, and sometimes, impossible. A young male Emirati travelling each day from his Family sub-culture enters the College and Classroom domains where he confronts, in the form of mostly Western-educated teachers, a huge gamut of barriers and differences in terms of language, gender, world-view, religion, and occupation - scholastic enculturation appears to be strongly correlated with higher English language proficiency with the result that the better prepared students succeed and graduate while the least prepared students fail and withdraw. The difficulty of the students' transition from high school to College has prompted strong intervention strategies by faculty such as significant scaffolding in terms of instruction, modelling and assessment, raising the students' awareness of themselves as individual learners, and helping them to develop the time and task management skills as well as the critical interpersonal skills required for the workplace. All too often, however, the failure to make a successful transition to college life results in poor or no academic success which is manifested by high absence rates, failure to meet work deadlines, and low intrinsic motivation – this is unsustainable by any economic and social referent. In Chapter 3, I provide details of my research methodology encompassing the entire gamut from the macro view of research paradigms to the micro view of research methods and analysis.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

ادخلوا البيوت من أبوابها

Udkhulū 'l-buyūt min abwābihā

Enter houses by their front doors

Don't go behind people's backs.[18]

In my first year with HCT, I was invited to go for lunch at a farm belonging to the father of one of my students. I took Sarah, my 9-year old daughter, and Tim along for the day as it was the first time we had ventured out of Dubai, due east across the desert towards Hatta, nestled in the stark but beautiful Hajar Mountains that form the border with Oman. Just past the 'Big Red' sand dune, we stopped for a walk and the children scrambled up a small hill to stretch their legs. After 10 minutes, they returned, with Tim brandishing an old rusted revolver. Handling the weapon rather gingerly, I thought about how it had come into our hands, the whole randomness of it all. A few moments later, I threw it away and we continued on our journey towards the student's farm where we enjoyed a lovely lunch of hummus, tabouli, fresh tomatoes, fruit, and an entire roasted lamb placed on a bed of rice which we consumed using our fingers to create balls of meat and rice, just as the Emirati students did. Quietly I reminded the children to only use their right hand!

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand the transition of young male Emiratis living in the Fujairah Emirate as they move from predominantly Arabic high schools to a college of higher education filled with mainly foreigners from different lands, men and women speaking a language which the students barely understand and use. In the process of observation, data collection, analysis, reflection, and comprehension, I hope to establish practical and efficacious guidelines for similar higher educational institutions in the United Arab Emirates in order to improve the attraction rate, retention rate, and

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[18] Arnander & Skipwith (1995)

successful graduation and employment rates of young male Emirati high school leavers entering higher education. In formulating my research methodology, I am mindful that both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected and, while traditionally these two distinctly different types of data have provided the basis for two completely different research frameworks, the "differences are much broader and deeper than type of data" (Willis, 2007, p. 22). In fact, these differences reflect substantive belief systems called *paradigms* through which humans perceive and understand their world.

Research Paradigms

It is a sobering thought to consider the possibility that the world is perceived differently by individuals living within the same space and time on the planet. Individual perceptions of the world are shaped by certain assumptions or beliefs we hold and understand about reality – these assumptions exist upon a continuum of two opposing world-views that eventually shape our understanding of what is knowledge and how we come to know that knowledge. This "belief system, world-view, or framework" is called a paradigm (Willis, 2007, p. 8) which Guba clarifies as a "basic set of beliefs that guides action" (Guba, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 13). On one hand, there is a materialistic world-view that, for example, rejects the idea of ghosts or *jinn*[19] because they cannot exist if all that is real is physical. On the other hand, there is a subjectivist world-view that accepts the possibility that ghosts or *jinn* may or do exist as reality is perceptual and spiritual rather than material (Willis, 2007; Cresswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Gaarder, 1996). These diverse paradigms reflect an underlying *ontology* which is concerned with the nature of reality. Ontological positions form the first element of the paradigmatic base from which researchers embark upon their research journey – it is their 'home port' to which they return and which assists them to remain grounded as they explore and interpret new territory and knowledge. In summary, ontology provides answers to questions such as "what are the characteristics of things that exist?" and "what is real and what is not?"

Building upon this base, the second paradigmatic element, *epistemology*, poses questions such as "how can we know the things that exist?" and "what is knowledge?" As Willis

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[19] *Jinn* (djinn:variant spelling) or genies are supernatural creatures in Arab folklore and Islamic teachings that occupy a parallel world to that of mankind. Together, jinn, humans and angels make up the three sentient creations of Allah. Like human beings, jinn can also be good or evil (*Jinn*, 2010).

states, "epistemology is concerned with what we can know about reality (however that is defined) and how we can [come] to know it" (2007, p. 10). Epistemology also exists along a continuum between an objectivist or empirical epistemology (the traditional scientific method which reflects a materialistic ontology, ie., objects in the world are physical and real) and a constructivist epistemology (humans construct knowledge through a combination of social and individual sense-making, based upon notions of a subjectivist ontology of viability rather than 'hard' truth). In summary, epistemology is concerned with what we know about reality and how we can know it.

The third and final element of a paradigm naturally flows on from answers to epistemological questions. *Methodology* refers to the road map for conducting research, including research design, data collection, analysis and interpretation. It is the 'chosen way' to guide an inquiry to obtain knowledge which you consider to be valuable and valid based upon your ontological and epistemological assumptions or beliefs. Summarizing the inter-connection between three paradigmatic elements, we begin with ontology which asks 'what do you consider to be reality?', the answer then informing the next element, epistemology, which poses the difficult question of 'how do you know about that reality?' The answer to that question informs methodology that seeks an answer to the question 'how [can] we know the world or gain knowledge of it?' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 12). The varying contributions and emphases from the three elements have formed (and continue to form) numerous research paradigms since the early days of the Greek philosophers, but today three main research paradigms are generally accepted – postpositivism, critical theory, and interpretivism (Willis, 2007; Cresswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It will be helpful to briefly explore each paradigm and then explain the reasons why I have chosen the research paradigm underlying this work.

The three main research paradigms

It is difficult now to understand that at various times in recent history, within the lofty and usually sedate and courteous world of academia, wise and fully-grown adult men and women held their own research assumptions so dearly that academic conferences literally became battle-grounds for competing paradigms (Teddlie & Tashakkori, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 1). The so-called 'Paradigm Wars' involved three periods of conflict – the postpositivist-constructivist war against positivism from 1970-

1990, the conflict among the three main research paradigms of postpositivism, constructivism-interpretivism, and critical theory (1990-2005), and finally, conflict between evidence-based, mixed methods, and critical theory (2005-2011). Emotions run high when people's basic assumptions are questioned or defamed. Let's explore what all the fuss was about by beginning with positivism.

Researchers who adopt a positivist research paradigm believe in a materialistic ontology (a real physical world) which can only be known through an empirical epistemology based on the traditional scientific methodology. Their logic is deductive, beginning with hypotheses which are rejected or accepted based on quantitative data collected and analysed under rigorous conditions with a detached view of the researcher. Their main aim is to discover the 'true' nature of reality and how it 'truly' works, and this discovery of the 'truth' may only be achieved using the scientific method. One of the reasons for the first paradigm war was a strong reaction by many social researchers against the perceived 'tyranny' of the positivist stance. This led to a postpositivist movement which reflected a slightly softer view of reality and focussed more on the context where data are collected, with a strong emphasis on the use of natural settings. However, 'postpositivism' retains much of the essence of positivism which attracts criticism of its reductionist view of nature excluding notions of choice and freedom, its dehumanising impact on the participants through reliance on quantitative research methods, and a failure to allow participants to interpret their own experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The loudest criticism of positivist and postpositivist paradigms in the paradigm wars came from supporters of the 'interpretivist' paradigm, one that holds beliefs and assumptions that are diametrically opposite to the former. Researchers who adopt an interpretivist research paradigm believe in a subjectivist ontology (a spiritual world) which can only be known through a constructivist epistemology based on a methodology that involves the use of case studies, ethnography, and narrative. Their logic is largely inductive, beginning with data collection from which hypotheses evolve and form, the entire iterative and cyclic process conducted over a sustained period of observation, usually with an involved and participatory view of the researcher. Their main aim is concerned with 'understanding' the individual, his/her view of reality, and how he/she makes sense of the world - as such, those being studied have opportunities to say

something about the interpretation of the data, a practice considered an anathema to the postpositivists.

Having read Chapter 1, it should be clear that one of my research outcomes is to highlight the parlous unpreparedness of young male Emirati students to successfully transit from high school to colleges of higher education. Something is wrong. Most stakeholders know something is wrong and has been wrong for over 20 years. Research that identifies inequities in society or hidden power relationships is called 'critical theory' which arose from Marxist tenets about how people can free themselves from oppression (Willis, 2007). This paradigm is centered on transforming society and individuals to social democracy and equity by emancipating the disempowered, addressing inequality, and promoting individual freedoms. In particular, it may expose hidden power imbalances and how these may give rise to "habituated behaviours" of social groups (Taylor, Taylor & Luitel, 2012, p. 6). Critical theory shares features of both postpositivist and interpretivist paradigms. For example, both critical theory and postpositivism believe in a materialistic ontology (an external reality) and critical theory acknowledges how the subjects' perceptions can affect their behaviour, much like the interpretive paradigm.

In summary, the three main research paradigms take positions that are internally consistent and appropriate, given their ontological and epistemological assumptions – they are meaningful when you are working within the paradigm. However, no one paradigm can claim to be better than another and researchers today are more willing to acknowledge and respect other research paradigms, even if they do not agree with them. While there is some agreement, for example, between the postpositivists and interpretivists on the uncertainty of our knowledge based upon the fact that we cannot be 100% sure that our view of reality is correct, five key differences remain, summarised by Willis (2007, p. 21) – "[the three main paradigms] differ on the question of the nature of reality, they offer different reasons or purposes for doing research, they point us to quite different types of data and methods as being valuable and worthwhile, they have different ways of deriving meaning from the data gathered, [and finally], they vary with regard to the relationship between research and practice". The main paradigms have emerged in response to different histories in which different sets of problems were addressed differently – ultimately, the choice of one paradigm over another lies with the

researcher's basic beliefs and assumptions (Willis, 2007). Once that choice is made, however, it influences the choice of problem, the research questions, and until recently, the methodology and methods such as the type of data collected and how the data are analysed.

My unfolding journey

I began this research journey in 2004 when my current doctoral supervisor, Peter Taylor, asked me to complete his online Constructivism course to ensure we were both on the same epistemic page. After completing my first journal entry to a request by Peter to state my learning goals for the course, he replied stating we seem to have "a common belief that epistemological awareness is an ongoing project that feeds one's expanding pedagogical repertoire". At the time, I did not have any idea about how true (and difficult) that 'ongoing project' was going to be.

In Chapter 1, I laid bare my educational background in the section "Who am I?" In 1992, I experienced a revelatory moment after attending a presentation by a visiting educational technologist from Canada. Almost immediately, I changed from being teacher-centric to learner-centric, implementing a technology-mediated curriculum which was leading edge at the time. However, my positivist core, formed in pre-school years, shaped by my primary school years during the 1960s and reinforced by the triumphant achievement of positivist science in the moon landing of 1969, remained intact – I had changed my pedagogical clothes without effecting a "perspective transformation" (Mezirow as cited in Taylor & Settelmaier, 2003, p. 9). Like the science teacher Ray in Taylor's examination of the positivist/objectivist myths of cold reason and hard control, I remained a "teacher as controller", committed to delivering a curriculum "as a container", a curriculum "as a map whose terrain needs to be covered" (Taylor, 1996, p. 16). This pedagogical facade became apparent in the mid-way self-report on my progress in Peter's online course when I wrote – "This was always going to be tough for me, coming from a positivist/objectivist background. My perceptions of what reality is, the meaning of knowledge and operationalising epistemology into pedagogy have all been thoroughly shaken - it's not easy, Peter! The concepts and links are easy to understand and grasp; the difficulty lies with internalizing them as sustainable beliefs". Peter seemed less troubled, encouraging me to "use it

[constructivism] as a reflective tool or referent (amongst others), rather than as an ideology".

Eventually, I completed Peter's course, but due to work pressures, I placed my doctorate on hold only to start again in 2009. In the early writing phase of this thesis, I began to represent the realities and life-worlds of the 'other' by initially adopting a disinterested, reserved, emphatic and authoritarian tone in reporting the results and conclusions of my analysis. Again, the postpositivist core of my inner being unconsciously exerted its unreasonable influence upon my writing. This "crisis of representation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 629), their fourth 'moment' of qualitative research, began in the mid 1980s as qualitative researchers "called into question issues of gender, class, and race" (p. 630). Echoes of Kincheloe and Tobin's (2009) paper entitled "The Much Exaggerated Death of Positivism" reverberated in my mind as I struggled to find a respectful narrative voice in which to represent the lived-experiences of the students, faculty, and interested stakeholders in my research. And just as a participant in a trust-building exercise lets go and falls backwards into the supportive arms of his/her group, so I surrendered to a process where I began to feel comfortable writing in the narrative, first person voice from which, according to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), this personalized form of research can provide insight and practical wisdom. As Taylor and Settelmaier summarize the 'crisis of representation', it has "taught us [and me] to look critically at our [my] attempts to speak authentically about other people's experiences" (2003, p. 235). By adopting a more cautious, conditional and tentative voice, I have learned to write in a style which Laurel Richardson describes as "writing as inquiry" (Richardson, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 659), with the writing process becoming a self-reflective and critical exercise. It is this voice which now fills the pages of this work, the earlier chapters re-written to accommodate my 'expanding epistemological repertoire'.

A multi-paradigmatic research design
Though the paradigm wars remain but a memory for social and behavorial researchers, and commonsense has returned to the paradigmatic debate which is now much more inclusive and tolerant of dialectical tension and the "delinking of paradigms and methods" (Cresswell, 2011, p. 275), it behoves all researchers to claim their base, to state clearly where their 'home port' lies, to lay bare their basic beliefs and assumptions

– and then, unfurl their research road map that may take them into seemingly unrelated areas of methodology and methods. Willison and Taylor boldy declared that it is desirable to hold two contrasting yet complementary research epistemologies – constructivism and objectivism – in a dialectical tension so that it becomes possible to "seek unity-in-diversity without rejecting one of the parts or merging the parts into a new synthesis (2006, p. 3). Willis additionally makes it clear that researchers today "may use methods from one paradigm without adopting the core beliefs of that paradigm" (2007, p. 140). Therefore, in line with calls by cultural researchers in many different parts of the world for increasing tolerance and support of epistemological and conceptual pluralism (Driver, Asoko, Leach, Mortimer & Scott, 1994; Aikenhead, 2000a; Pallas, 2001; Taylor & Settelmaier, 2003; Pereira, 2007; Willison & Taylor, 2006; Afonso, 2007; Taylor & Wallace, 2007; Cupane, 2008; Kincheloe & Tobin, 2009; Luitel & Taylor, 2010; Taylor et al., 2012), I have adopted a multi-paradigmatic design that draws methods and quality standards from multiple paradigms, including all three aforementioned paradigms in addition to postmodernism which is suspicious of all authoritative and privileged knowledge claims (St. Pierre, 2011), to create a methodology that enables an artful, critical and interpretive exploration of complexity supplemented by a descriptive analysis of general social patterns. The latter was achieved by survey research methods governed by a postpositivist epistemology and the former by an arts-based critical auto/ethnography combining methods from interpretive, critical, and postmodern research paradigms.

Despite Ellingson (2011) claiming that "dichotomous thinking remains pervasive within methodological debates" (p. 596), the old antagonisms among the three research paradigms are beginning to be swept aside by a wave of integralism (Gergen & Gergen, as cited in Taylor et al., 2012, p. 11) and transformative research (Taylor, 2012). Now "a holarchy of paradigms, with each paradigm emerging from (and including) earlier paradigms...[creates] a multi-paradigmatic system of knowledge production..." (Taylor et al., 2012, p. 12). I am comfortable in selecting methods from a range of epistemologies as I am respectful in preserving the "epistemic integrity of research methods drawn from various paradigms" (p. 10). Figure 1 contrasts the traditional single paradigm research design space with that of the multi-paradigmatic design that draws methods from different paradigms, in my case, from postpositivism (P_P), interpretivism (P_I), critical theory (P_{CT}), and postmodernism (P_{PM}). Within my research design, I have

attempted to weave together the separate strands of research methods with which to address complex research problems much in the same way as that of a *bricoleur* who "is an artist, a quilt maker…of montages and collages" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 681). The interpretivist *bricoleur* seeks to construct a bricolage, a "pieced-together set of
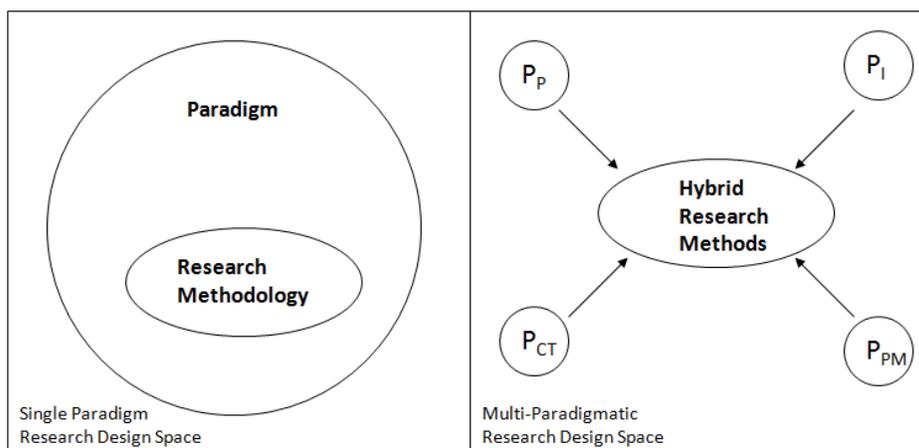
Figure 1: Paradigm research design spaces, adapted from Taylor et al. (2012)

representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" (p. 4). The final representation of the research is a result of an emergent design which continuously alters the representation, often forming new (and often contradictory) shapes as different themes, directions, and foci emerge during the study period (Kincheloe & Berry, as cited in Willis, 2007, p. 332).

In summary, beginning with an interpretivist paradigm that views the world through a subjective lens, the study began by focussing on developing a deep understanding of the world in which male Emirati students grow up – their family structures, relationships with the parents and between siblings, education and world-experience of the parents, child-rearing practices especially gender differences, peer groups, free time activities, schooling (teaching practices, resources, physical environment, and extra-curricula activities), exercise, and nutrition. Over the course of the study, opportunities to explore further emergent issues through a critical theory perspective presented themselves. Given the emancipatory outcomes that I have formerly stated, the research revealed hitherto hidden relationships among people and constructs. Some of the data was quantitative, in the form of responses to surveys and questionnaires, pre-college diagnostic academic data, college grade and attendance data, and records of responses to

the animated scenarios using cultural dimensions as described by Hofstede, and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (see Chapter 2). In analysing this data, I adopted an appropriate postpositivist stance with a view to discovering relationships between key independent variables.

Critical Auto|ethnography

During the completion of Peter Taylor's Constructivism (SMEC 706) online course in 2004, I made a journal entry in response to Peter's request for me to reflect critically on the course up to that point. In my journal I wrote: "If learning is accepted as much a cultural/social experience as it is cognitive, then I must address Arab educational andragogy as well as learning styles. I can't even begin ... without an understanding of the cultural milieu I find myself in". Peter replied: "I wonder about the extent to which your Arab students are struggling (silently) to resolve contradictions in their worldviews as they encounter the tools of Western materialism (i.e., scientism), tools that can easily inculcate a Western hegemony?" (Taylor, 2004). As previously discussed, the dilemma for a researcher working in the cultural realm is how to portray and represent "the other", the object(s) of the study, in a way that is meaningful, respectful, and helpful (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Afonso & Taylor, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

In response, I have embraced in this research a *critical auto|ethnography* to assist me in critically reviewing the influence of my own cultural identity and the potentially skewed cultural and emotional lens through which I have come to view these students after interacting with them over 16 years. Working within the cultural milieu of an Arab society in the Middle East, I have taken care to investigate and journal my own beliefs and values in an attempt to assess "the way in which [my] professional identity has been shaped (distorted) historically by hegemonic cultural, social, political and economic imperatives" (Taylor, Settelmaier & Luitel, 2010, p. 10). This type of research inquiry places the autobiographical 'self' in dialectical tension against the ethnographic 'other', with the researcher becoming critically aware of his or her own cultural situation as both a cultural insider and border crosser (see Chapters 2 and 4). Through the use of a reflective journal, parts of which I share in this research, I have situated myself in a place where my cultural and emotional identity can be stripped bare, exposing the distorted cultural lenses through which the 'other' is viewed.

To assist in this process, I have been fortunate to secure several 'cultural brokers', mainly Emiratis who have assisted me to 'bridge' the two cultures by providing the multiple functions of a helping hand, an ambassador, a sounding-board, and a translator. Three HCT Emirati personnel stand out among the many who gladly offered assistance. Ms Maryam Zeyoudi, my Emirati administration assistant from 2009-2011, played an early key role in arranging classroom visits, translations, survey distribution and collection, and cultural mentor. Mr Hussam Soliman, the coordinator of Professional and Continuing Education at FMC, has a long history in the Fujairah emirate, having lived there almost all of his life after his parents moved from Egypt. Before joining HCT, Hussam was an English curriculum supervisor with the Ministry of Education, and in that role, he has been indispensable in providing insight into secondary education services in the emirate. As a trained Arabic-English translator, Hussam has also been responsible for translating many of the surveys and other documentation associated with my research. Finally, Mr Suood Al Mansoori, the college school liaison and student recruitment coordinator, and former FMC graduate, gave freely of his time to discuss cultural issues that arose from time to time. Living in the Middle East for 16 years has highlighted some key cultural differences in terms of time, space, and communication. While I have assimilated and am aware of many of these aspects, I was concerned that I had likely developed unconscious bias and prejudice – the cultural brokers acting in the role of "middlemen" have assisted me in making these latent hindrances to my research more apparent and subject to critical reflection through observation and conversation (Michie, 2011a, p.6).

Key Research Questions

The research objectives first introduced in Chapter 1 are listed below as questions. Many additional and emergent questions arose from the results of my analysis and during the writing process. Given the time and access to the students, I have attempted to answer these within the research period – others remain rhetorical and thoughtful within the text while some will be addressed in the final Chapter 8 where they indicate themes and topics of future research. The research plan spanning from August 2011 to June 2012 may be viewed in Appendix B. In my role as Diploma Foundations academic coordinator at Dubai Men's College, I administered two surveys (VARK and Multiple Intelligences) in my department to hopefully gain a more complete learner profile of our male Emirati students with a view to improving the faculty teaching practices. In

addition, a Learning Process Questionnaire was conducted centrally from Academic Services which our students took part. The entire population of Foundations students were surveyed (no sampling was carried out). These three surveys were completed during the 2003-2004 HCT academic year, prior to the research period. In Chapter 5, I use the results to compare the Foundations students' learner profiles almost a decade later.

1. To what extent does Giroux's cultural border-crossing metaphor explain the learning and adjustment difficulties of male Emirati post-secondary learners transiting from high school to College?

2. What do male Emirati post-secondary learners bring with them to the College that both enhance and hinder their learning?

3. What do the largely Western-educated faculty bring with them to the College that both enhance and hinder student learning?

4. What effect, if any, does the use of learner-centred teaching practices have upon male Emirati post-secondary learners?

5. What administrative, teaching, and classroom management practices are most likely to be efficacious in facilitating a smooth transition to college life?

Research Methods

I have employed several multi-paradigmatic methods consisting of case studies, observation, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, reflective journals, narratives, and surveys. In the following sections, I will provide relevant details of each method.

Case studies

I have used individual case studies that typically "focus on a program, event, or activity involving individuals rather than a group" (Stake as cited in Creswell, 2008, p. 476). The case study focuses on an "individual unit of study and the setting of its boundaries, its 'casing'" (Flyvbjerg, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 301). As such, case studies allow me to contribute specific information to the overall ethnographic study. They share five main traits – they are *particularistic* (strong focus on one individual person),

they are *naturalistic* (data collection occurs in real settings and situations), they contain *thick descriptive data* (a variety of different sources and media), they are *inductive* (they rely on *inductive logic* whereby hypotheses and concepts emerge from the data itself), and finally, they are *heuristic* (they bring insight and discovery to the research setting) (Merriam, as cited in Willis, 2007, p. 239).

One of the main aims of the research is to gain insight into the lives of Arab families and the individuals, especially the male students that make up those families. Most Arab homes in the recent past follow a similar architectural pattern. Frauke Heard-Bey provides a detailed description of such a house in Dubai (Heard-Bey, 2004, p. 246). They consist of a large exterior compound where animals are stabled, surrounded by a high wall. Inside the wall, an inner courtyard is surrounded on all sides by the rooms of the house with roofed verandas opening up to the courtyard. The roof-top areas are screened and walled on the outside. In two-storey houses, galleries may overlook the courtyard and in some of the wealthier houses, a *wind-tower*[20] would have provided some cooling relief during the hot summer months. The walls are built to keep strangers out and to protect the privacy of the family's womenfolk. But the walls continue to make a bold metaphorical statement that even today, in the modern city, Emirati families and their activities are private.

To partially overcome this in a respectful manner, I identified initially three students from different geographical locations within the Fujairah Emirate and gave them a hand-held Panasonic video camera to record their daily thoughts and observations about their lives, both at college and at home. Within several weeks, two of the students had either withdrawn or changed their minds – the 'carrot' for the student was for them to retain the camera after the study period provided they submitted weekly video journals to the department administrative assistant who acted as one of my cultural guides. By mid-semester one, all had either withdrawn or re-assessed the relative allure of the 'carrot'. Twelve weeks into the semester, we (my administration assistant and myself) had managed to recruit extra two students, both of whom lived in Fujairah city, to start using the cameras. The video journals were downloaded once a week, and translated and

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[20] These 15-metre high towers were open on all four concave sides. The cool winds at higher elevations were funnelled down a chimney to a room beneath. They were closed over the winter months by closing a hatch. While many have been destroyed with the arrival of electricity and air conditioning units, a few may still be viewed in the Bastakiyah district in Bur Dubai (Heard-Bey, 2004).

transcribed into English text for narrative analysis. As the final part of the case study, I had planned to interview the students' family members in their homes, spending at least half a day observing the interactions behind the walls. This was abandoned as explained in Chapter 5.

Observations

The antithesis of postmodernism, modernism, arose in the 20th century in part due to the significant scientific advances achieved from 1930 onwards. The position may best be characterised as a "belief in the goodness of science" (Willis, 2007, p. 54). Modernism privileges the scientific method (empirical epistemology) as the only way to obtain knowledge in a knowable world (materialistic ontology). In reaction to the perceived excesses of the modernist research methodology, postmodernism "questions the benefits of progress and challenges the idea that the scientific method is the sole source of knowledge" (p. 55). In particular, it highlights the negative impact of so-called scientific progress, and esteems the interpretivist position in valuing knowledge gained in natural contexts, understanding that there are many ways of knowing, including the use of methods other than that of the scientific method.

The postmodern ethnographic approach adopted in this work challenges some major educational issues which have emerged in Emirati society undergoing radical and fast change (Cresswell, 2008, p. 475; Willis, 2007, pp. 54-57; Macpherson, Kachelhoffer & El Nemr, 2007, p. 61-62). These issues relate to eleven major problems with the UAE's education identified by Macpherson et al. (2007), the outcome of which results in many male Emirati students arriving at the doors of post-secondary educational institutions ill-prepared, de-motivated, and disenfranchised. I have applied Giroux's cultural border-crossing metaphor as used by Mulholland and Wallace (2003) to describe the "experiences of the participants [first year primary science teachers] as they make the transition from pre-service to in-service teaching" (p. 883). The authors used an anthropological methodology to analyse the experiences of the teachers as they moved across three sub-cultural border crossings. This methodology derives from cultural anthropology that focuses on "describing, analysing, and interpreting a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs, and language that develop over time" (Cresswell, 2008, p. 473).

In a similar way, I have used observations of students, teachers, and college staff to discover what is happening in this research setting as observations may detect things that escape the awareness of people who work and inhabit the setting. The outcome of observations is on developing a deep understanding of both the individual and their context (Willis, 2007, p. 195; Cresswell, 2008, pp. 482-483). Anthropology is part of ethnographic research designs which involve the researcher spending large amounts of time interviewing and observing the cultural group in order to come to understand their "culture-sharing behaviours" (Cresswell, 2008, p. 473). The main observations consisted of student observations within their formal classroom settings, in students' focus groups, and during the College Preparation and Readiness course (CPR) where they worked in teams to solve critical-thinking problems, sometimes with the use of the college high and low ropes course. My role varied from an impartial observer to a participant-observer where I interacted with the student and faculty participants in the classroom, on the ropes course, and in the focus meetings. I completed 16 observations which may be viewed in Figure 2.

Though lesson observations are a common tool used to improve teaching practice world-wide, O'Sullivan's search of five main journals in the field of Comparative Education and other journals for the period from 1993–2005 highlighted a "dearth of studies which use lesson observation to access data...for use in research and evaluation studies which seek to improve and assess quality" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 253). Consequently, I devised five types of observation focus. During a 'classroom observation', I always sat in the back, quietly observing the general atmosphere in the room, noting the interactions between the faculty and the students. In a 'student observation', I focussed entirely on the student, quietly observing them and then followed this up with a brief interview later. The 'lesson observation' centred on the lesson content, especially when the lesson occurred on the college ropes course. The 'student-faculty interaction' was a one-off meeting between all the Level 3 students and two of their faculty to address academic and behavioural issues. Finally, the 'faculty observation' was a follow-up to the teacher typology feedback I received from the faculty in the second focus meeting. I did not infer student or faculty beliefs from my observations – my main focus was to observe the interactions between students and faculty with a special emphasis in semester 2 on faculty efforts to build and maintain rapport, recorded using a new lesson/faculty observation form which I later shared with the Foundations Chair (see Chapter 6).

There are several inherent weaknesses of observations as a research method. One of the key weaknesses, often identified by postpositivist researchers, lies in the limited generalizability to other settings – however, given that the focus of this research is to produce efficacious guidelines to promote smoother transitions from high school to higher educational organizations within the UAE and possibly within the Arab world, this limitation is not applicable. Data collection and analysis is time-consuming and at times, it is difficult to balance the description, analysis and interpretation, so closely is

Date	Observation Focus	Level	Comment
Nov 2011	Classroom observation	Level 2	Typing practice to music
Dec 2011	Classroom observation	Level 2	CPR summary
Dec 2011	Student observation	Level 2	Video journal students
Mar 2012	Student-faculty interaction	Level 3	Behaviour intervention
Mar 2012	Lesson observation	Level 2	CPR – ropes course
Apr 2012	Classroom observation	Level 2	CPR – Tom and Erik (goals)
Apr 2012	Classroom observation	Level 2	Use of educational technology
Apr 2012	Classroom observation	Level 2	Rapport building
Apr 2012	Classroom observation	Level 3	Student disinterest
Apr 2012	Faculty observation	Level 4	"Knowledge is Power" game
May 2012	Faculty observation	Level 2	Rapport building
May 2012	Faculty observation	Level 3	Rapport building
May 2012	Faculty observation	Level 4	Rapport building
Jun 2012	Faculty observation	Level 4	Rapport building
Jun 2012	Faculty observation	Level 1	Rapport building
Jun 2012	Faculty observation	Level 3	Rapport building

Figure 2: Record of observations during the research period

the researcher embedded within the material. Finally, participants may alter their behaviour when being observed (Cresswell, 2008, pp. 493-494) but this has largely been

reduced due to the frequency of visits to the students which has made them more at ease and comfortable – after several weeks of visits in Semester 1, I was no longer a stranger.

Semi-structured interviews

When people think about qualitative and/or ethnographic research, they mostly think about interviews as much of the research and data collection is conducted through interviews with the participants (Willis, 2007; Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 529). Interviews permit the researcher to gain another perspective (insight?) on the different areas of perceived reality in relation to the context of the research – it is also a convenient and time-saving method. Much of the postpositivist research literature focuses on how to conduct formal, very structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, as cited in Willis, 2007, p. 246).

In this study, I used a variety of semi-structured interviews to target students, teachers, non-teaching staff, high school teachers, and external stakeholders (see Appendix C). Each interview consists of approximately thirteen questions which were asked more or less in sequence, though my main aim was to create an atmosphere which encouraged a friendly discussion in a naturally-occurring setting. The interviewees were asked their permission to record the interview as an audio file (mp3) via my BlackBerry Bold smartphone – I occasionally took notes during the process. Transcripts were made using Express Scribe and a pedal controller to allow the typing hands to remain on the keyboard. An hour-long audio file of the interview takes almost three hours to transcribe into text. The transcripts were made available to the interviewees/participants to check the accuracy of the transcript and written consent obtained to use textual references extracted from the transcript within the thesis – this member checking is fully explained later in this chapter. Finally, the completed transcripts were imported into Nvivo9, a software program that assists in the narrative analysis of text to identify themes and issues using qualitative data.

Focus groups

Focus groups are compared to a prism by Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, pp. 545-546) as they attempt to align focus group research with the multiple functions of pedagogy, activism, and inquiry. Assigning the varying multi-functionalities to the different surfaces of the prism which, in turn, either refracts or

reflects light, the viewer obtains a composite view when all three group functions work together simultaneously, though each refracts and reflects "the substance of the focus group in different ways" (p. 546). In this study, I conducted five student and faculty focus group meetings (three student and two faculty) in the second semester to more intimately explore the key border crossing elements such as gender, class and other meaningful sub-cultures, student reaction to learner-centred teaching within the college, the dynamics and structure of the Arab family, in particular, the absence of working parents during the working week in addition to investigating faculty issues of English language teaching methodologies, classroom management, and their personal perspectives concerning the students they teach and interact with on an almost daily basis. Each student focus group consisted of 15 students selected randomly from the three Level 2 sections – the discussions (mostly in Arabic and translated to me) were recorded and translated/transcribed for later analysis. Students were given the option to not join the group, in which case other randomly selected students were invited to make up the numbers. Finally, in analysing the transcriptions of these meetings, I adopted a *hermeneutic* approach where the meaning of the story must be derived from the "contextualised reading of the data rather than the extraction of data segments for detailed analysis" (Willis, 2007, p. 297). Hermeneutics is "an approach to the analysis of texts that stresses how prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretive process" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 16, note 9). As such, it sits comfortably within the interpretivist paradigm which privileges context.

Student narratives

Narratives are the "study of stories…told by people about themselves and about others…" (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 471). They capture personal experiences and memories, often allowing the researcher to develop a close bond with the participants, and additionally provide increased trustworthiness via triangulation based on multiple data sources (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Mathison, 1988). Humans are natural story-telling and story-listening animals which makes the use of narrative stories as written by the research participants potentially very powerful in terms of providing additional insight and personal perspective. Many individual students had stories to tell and I was especially interested in three areas about which I felt they would have strong feelings – their families, their high school experiences, and their initial experiences at college. I did not ask the students to write their stories until the second semester when I felt that a

good level of rapport had been established and the increased level of their written English would facilitate an easier process. The stories were mostly written in English.

Apart from the narrative contribution of the student stories, I composed a composite *vignette* of the three areas of interest, a "re-storying" of their collective experiences into a single piece of 'truthful' fiction that best represented and portrayed their individual life-worlds (Barter & Renold, 1999; Willis, 2007; Cresswell, 2008, p. 519). In Chapter 5, I compare this updated *vignette* with that of 'Ahmed's Day' written by Marilyn Dahl where Ahmed, a fictional student in a college of higher education in the UAE, portrays one of his typical days during the week, sharing along the way many of the perceived characteristics of his male classmates (Dahl, 2010, pp. 5-8).

From a postpositivist stance, problems with authenticity and truthfulness (see Quality Standards in this chapter) are often raised about this type of research method but legitimacy issues are convincingly explored and defended by Polkinghorne (2007). In both the postpositivist and interpretivist realms, researchers attempt to deliver arguments to persuade readers towards the validity of their knowledge claims. Both sets of researchers need to explain and defend validity threats in their research designs. The threats concerning narrative research relate to the connections between texts and the interpretations of those texts. Polkinghorne contends that "...if the claim is that a person's story describes the anguish that the person has experienced... then I also look to the supporting evidence and argument given by the researcher" (p. 476). In other words, researchers need to argue for the acceptance of the validity of the collected evidence and the validity of the offered interpretation. He concludes that "the confidence a reader grants to a narrative knowledge claim is a function of the cogency and soundness of the evidence-based arguments presented by the narrative researcher" (p. 484).

Reflective journals

In addition to the students producing a weekly video journal, I created my own reflective journal to document my research journey, to use as a sounding board to reflect upon issues, tensions, and insights, and to lay bare any cultural bias or unconscious prejudice that may influence the academic integrity of this research. Reflective practice is now regarded as an essential skill for teachers in higher education, and nowhere is this skill and competence more required than in a cross-cultural setting such as Fujairah Men's

College (Bell & Gillet, 1996). It became a habit after my return from Fujairah each time to write up my journal and to look back through the previous entries for signs of repetition, seeking out patterns that may indicate an emerging theme or contradicting a previous idea. I divulge an entry from the journal in the final Chapter 8.

Surveys

Survey research is firmly located in the quantitative/postpositivist arena. It is based upon a questionnaire which is administered all participants within the *total population*[21] or to a *sample*[22] of the total population of the people you are interested in studying. Typically, the questions seek to describe or assess their "attitudes, opinions, behaviours or characteristics" (Cresswell, 2008, p. 388). Surveys may serve to capture a snapshot of the research participants at one point of time or to capture trends and changes over time (longitudinal or trend study).

The responses of the participants were recorded as quantitative, numerical data which was then statistically analysed in MS Excel or SPSS[23] through a descriptive analysis of the summary statistics of a single question or groups of questions (variables) or by inferring characteristics from the sample to the larger total population, in this case, all the male Emirati students enrolled in post-secondary higher educational institutions. For all surveys, a form of back translation (translating a document that has already been translated into a second language back to the original language - preferably by an independent translator) was used to ensure a high degree of accuracy and linguistic congruency with the local Arabic dialect (Brislin, 1970). During this research, the translator verbally checked the document using his translated Arabic text, with me holding the original copy.

In this study, eight surveys were administered to various groups of students including the main study cohort of Level 2 students, a stratified random sample of Foundations students across all four levels, and the total Foundations student body (see Figure 3).

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[21] A total population is the group of individuals from which a smaller sample is taken. This is sometimes referred to as a sampling frame (Cresswell, 2008, p. 393).
[22] A sample is the group of participants in a study selected from the total population from which the researcher generalizes or predicts to total population (Cresswell, 2008, p. 393).
[23] SPSS or Statistical Package for the Social Sciences is among the most widely used software programs for statistical analysis in social science.

Please note that the sample sizes refer to the initial administration of the surveys in Semester 1 – due to student attrition, survey sizes diminished accordingly in Semester 2. For example, there were 67 responses to the Working Parents Survey conducted in mid April 2012. A Teacher Survey was administered in late Semester 1 to 10 Foundations English and CPR faculty who had formal teaching contact with the Level 2 study cohort.

Name of survey instrument	Date	Sample (*n*=88)	Study Cohort (*n*=32)	Foundations (*n*=151)
1. VARK Questionnaire	Oct 2011		Yes	
2. Multiple Intelligence Survey	Nov 2011		Yes	
3. Mental Toughness Questionnaire	Oct 2011 / Jun 2012		Yes	Yes
4. Cultural Dimensions	Nov 2011		Yes	
5. Student Survey	Nov 2011	Yes	Yes	
6. CPR Post Activity IMI Survey	Mar 2012		Yes	
7. Learning Process Questionnaire	Mar 2-12		Yes	
8. Working Parents Survey	Apr 2012		Yes	Yes

Figure 3: Surveys administered during the research study period

A brief description of each survey instrument now follows.

VARK

The VARK Questionnaire (Fleming, 1995) provides users with a profile of their learning preferences. These preferences describe the ways that learners prefer to 'take in' (input) and 'give out' (output) information. It was developed by Neil Fleming, a New Zealander formerly based at Lincoln University near Christchurch. The questionnaire has been externally validated by Leite, Svinicki, and Shi (2010). VARK is not a fully-fledged learning style. The term 'learning style' is now used loosely to describe almost any attribute or characteristic of learning but technically the term refers to all the components that might affect a person's ability to learn. Some inventories report on a number of components in a style (motivation, surface-deep approaches to learning, social, physical and environmental elements) and some personality inventories have

learning characteristics as a part of their wider descriptions. VARK deals with only one dimension of the complex amalgam of preferences that make up a learning style. The VARK questions and their results focus on the ways in which people like information to come to them and the ways in which they like to deliver their communication.

After completing the online questionnaire (see Appendix D), now available in 33 languages including Arabic, the website (http://www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp) provides the users with a feedback report from the 16 questions that describes their preferred modality – visual, auditory, read/write, kinaesthetic, and multi-modal (*VARK*, 2011). The website provides the users with practical strategies reflective of their preferred modality to assist them while they are learning, preparing for an exam, and during the exam. The reliability of the VARK scales were analyzed using SPSS19 and a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .790 (n=6, response rate = 94%) for the 2011 survey indicated good internal consistency. I initially used the VARK questionnaire when I was Academic Coordinator in the Diploma Foundations stream at Dubai Men's College to assess the learning modalities of 438 Foundations students from 2003 to 2004 in order to increase faculty awareness of their students' learning diversity, thereby improving teaching practices and learning outcomes (Hatherley-Greene, 2003). This baseline profile has afforded an interesting point of comparison, a decade apart, between the two similar sets of male Emirati students (see Chapter 5).

Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences confronted the positivist-based Intelligence Quotient or IQ test by stating that people develop intelligences across a wide gamut of skills and competences, many of which exist outside the realm of cognitive intelligence (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). Currently, there are nine intelligences – Naturalistic (aptitude for being with and respecting nature), Musical (aptitude for musical expression), Logical/mathematical (aptitude for math, logic, deduction), Existential (aptitude for understanding one's higher purpose), Interpersonal (aptitude for working with others), Bodily/kinesthetic (aptitude for being physical), Linguistic/verbal (aptitude for the written/spoken word), Intrapersonal (aptitude for working alone), and Spatial/visual (aptitude for picturing, seeing).

I used an adapted form of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences survey appropriate for Emirati students learning in their second language to assess the multiple intelligences of 438 Foundations students at Dubai Men's College from 2002 to 2003 (Hatherley-Greene, 2003; McKenzie, 1999; Appendix E). The main purpose of surveying the male Foundations students at Dubai Men's College in 2003-2003 was to raise faculty awareness of the students' different and varying intelligences, to truly get to know the students by establishing stronger rapport, to 'see' them in different contexts, and, in turn, to allow them to see teachers behaving differently, to vary the teaching and assessment approach, and to keep an eye on what is going on outside of the classroom in the bigger world. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of .921 (n=9, response rate = 97%) indicates a very good internal consistency. Both surveys, VARK and Multiple Intelligences, despite being examples of postpositivist research methods, speak strongly to the holistic approach to teaching and learning favoured by the interpretivist paradigm. It is for these reasons they are included in this research.

Mental Toughness Questionnaire (MTQ)

The third survey instrument is the Mental Toughness Questionnaire (MTQ). Mental Toughness is defined "as the quality which determines in large part, how people deal with challenges, stresses and pressures, irrespective of prevailing circumstances" (Moussly, 2011b). Peter Clough is a leader in Mental Toughness research and his programs were established at Dubai Women's College and Fujairah Men's College in 2011 (Crust & Clough, 2005; Levy, Polman, Clough, Marchant, & Earle, 2006; Marchant, Polman, Clough, Jackson, Levy, & Nicholls, 2009). Here at FMC, the programs are designed to improve the soft-skills of Emirati students enrolled in higher education including confidence, control, resilience, commitment, and challenge. The questionnaire is distributed through AQR, a British-based company which offers a range of psychometric tests, tools and development programmes (*AQR*, 2011).

The specific questionnaire which was used at Fujairah Men's College during this research period was the MTQ48 which measures four key components of Mental Toughness (see Appendix F):

Control – extent to which you feel in control of your life and emotions

Challenge – extent to which people see challenges, variety, problems and change as opportunities - or as threats

Commitment – extent to which someone makes promises and commits to deliver what has been promised

Confidence - extent to which people have self-belief in their abilities and the confidence to deal with setbacks (*AQR*, 2011)

The college pays AQR for the use of the questionnaire as well as generating a number of different reports such as the assessor and distance travelled reports. The assessor report provides detailed score and analytical information on nine items – overall Mental Toughness, challenge, commitment, control (mean), life control, emotional control, confidence (mean), confidence in abilities, and interpersonal confidence. The MTQ survey instrument is usually administered in a classic pre-test/post-test scenario. For the purpose of this research, the intervention or treatment between the MTQ tests is the new College Preparation and Readiness program (CPR) which largely replaced the old Personal and Professional Development credit course (PPDV) in 2011. Prior to 2010, the PPDV course in Foundations delivered learning outcomes associated with inner growth, self-awareness, persistence, problem-solving, critical thinking, and career information (*HCT Catalogue 2010-2011,* 2010, p. 343). A Cronbach alpha coefficient of .901 (*n*=9, response rate = 88%) indicates scales with very good internal consistency. The details of the CPR program may be read in Chapter 7.

Cultural Dimensions and Orientations

First discussed in detail in Chapter 2, the cultural dimensions and orientations as defined by Hofstede, and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner were portrayed as real-life, naturalistic scenarios involving students making critical choices (see Appendix G). The fourth survey instrument was delivered in Arabic via a Powerpoint presentation to the Level 2 study group. The students recorded their choices arising from the displayed scenes on a hard-copy response form. Eight dimensions and orientations were explored - rules vs. relationships, groups vs. individuals, affective vs. neutral, achievement vs. ascription, large vs. small power distance, weak vs. strong uncertainty avoidance, sequential vs. synchronic views of time, and long vs. short term orientation. With short

scales as used in these dimensions and orientations (i.e., scales with fewer than ten items), I have used the mean inter-item correlation to indicate the reliability as suggested by Briggs and Cheek (1986). Of the seven items (time circles and time orientation were removed due to low reliability), I obtained a correlation of .233 ($n=7$, response rate = 100%) which falls within the acceptable range. By way of example, to explore the cultural alignment between rules vs relationships, a scenario was depicted in which the students played the role of a passenger in a car being driven at high speed by a good friend. Suddenly, the car hits a pedestrian in a quiet street. There are no witnesses. Before you ring the police, your friend asks you to tell the police that he was driving at or under the speed limit. You must decide before the police arrive whether you support your friend or recognize the seriousness of the situation and tell the truth.

Student Survey

The Student Survey was adapted from a similarly named survey instrument developed by Midgley, Maehr, Hruda, Anderman, Anderman, Freeman, Gheen, Kaplan, Kumar, Middleton, Nelson, Roeser, and Urdan (2000). The Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales was developed and refined over time by a group of researchers using goal orientation theory (Pintrich, 2000; Kaplan & Maehr, 2007) to examine the relationship between the learning environment and students' motivation, affect, and behaviour. The student scales assess student perception of the transition from high school to college, the motivation to learn, self-evaluation of persistence in learning, learner-centred teaching practices, and a self-assessment of their home lives including perceptions of their parents, high school experiences, and abilities (see Appendix H). The reliability of the 50 item five-point scale was analyzed using SPSS19 and a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .840 ($n=50$, response rate = 97%) indicates a good internal consistency and well within the alpha ranges found by the original researchers (Midgley et al., 2000).

The Teacher Survey, also developed by the same research team, was administered to all Level 2 faculty which included English teachers as well as the CPR[+] team (see Chapter 7 for details). The teacher scales assessed their perceptions of the goal structure in the college, their goal-related approaches to instruction, and personal teaching efficacy (see Appendix I). The Cronbach alpha coefficient of .792 ($n=29$, response rate = 100%) of the Teacher Survey was similar to that found by Carol Midgley's team.

CPR Post Activity IMI (Intrinsic Motivation Inventory)

I measured the levels of intrinsic motivation *immediately* after students completed their first experience using the low and high ropes course (see Chapters 2 and 7). Measures such as the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) have been used extensively for over 25 years (Ryan, 1982). Strong support for its validity was established by McAuley, Duncan, and Tammen (1989). The survey was first used in Semester 2 (March 2012) after the students began to use the high ropes course at the college. The CPR trainers and faculty distributed the survey at the conclusion of the students' initial foray on to the course in order to assess the students' subjective experience related to a target activity through seven sub-scales of interest/enjoyment, perceived competence, effort, value/usefulness, felt pressure and tension, perceived choice, and relatedness. The interest/enjoyment subscale is considered the key self-reporting assessment of intrinsic motivation. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of .914 (n=20, response rate all Foundations = 48%) indicates a very good internal consistency reliability for these scales.

Learning Process Questionnaire (LPQ)

The Learning Process Questionnaire (LPQ) provides a means by which to collect inventory data on student approaches to learning, broadly characterised by Marton and Saljo (1976) as deep and surface, and later expanded upon by Biggs (1987) to include an achieving orientation. The LPQ is an alternative form of the Study Process Questionnaire (SPQ) updated by Biggs (2001) to be used with students in the latter stages of secondary education and/or early college level. The questionnaire was first translated into Arabic and administered to 3,567 HCT students in October 2002 by Jeffrey Marsh who worked in the Department of Teaching Support and Development, Academic Services, HCT (Marsh, 2003). As academic coordinator of Diploma Foundations at Dubai Men's College in 2004, I worked with Jeffrey to administer the LPQ to the new Foundations students (see Appendix J). The Cronbach alpha coefficient of .879 (n=36, response rate = 100%) was found for the 2012 LPQ conducted at FMC, indicating scales with very good consistency.

My exposure to these students from 1995 meant that it was no surprise to learn that the new Diploma Foundations students declared well over 60% for surface approaches to learning which are characterised by rote memorization associated with limited understanding of the concepts that are quickly forgotten (Marsh, 2003, p. 1). 12% of the

students declared for an achieving approach which Atheron describes as a "very well-organized form of surface [learning] in which the motivation is to get good marks" (2011). This approach involves the students adopting a strategic and tactical viewpoint in assessing the amount of "learning effort required to achieve a particular grade". Finally, almost 20% declared for deep learning approaches where the student looks for the "overall meaning of the material...[and they] construct their own meaningful interpretation of the content by integrating it into pre-existing knowledge" (Atherton, 2011). The results from the 2004 survey provide a useful benchmark for the 2012 survey given the almost identical age and academic profile of the two Foundations cohorts.

Research has found that teachers' instructional approaches to teaching matches with students' reported approaches to learning (Trigwell, Prosser & Waterhouse, 1999). Specifically, they found that students using surface learning strategies were taught by teachers adopting teacher-centred approaches aimed at knowledge transmission. It seems that changing teachers' approaches to teaching should produce beneficial academic results for the students (see Chapter 6 for a fuller discussion).

Working Parents Survey

Finally, the Working Parents Survey emerged from the results of the Student Survey and student focus group meetings which indicated that some Foundations students had parents who travelled weekly to work outside of the Fujairah Emirate. Due to the potentially sensitive nature of the information, I wrote a brief two question survey which was translated into Arabic and administered through MS Sharepoint to all the Foundations students in April 2012 (see Appendix K). Based on the results, I met a group of students who declared 'yes' to having one or more parents working outside of Fujairah for my second student focus group meeting. No scale reliability test was performed on this survey as there were only two item responses. The response rate was 56%. The results of the survey and the focus group meeting are presented and discussed in Chapter 5.

Limitations of Survey Research

Survey research comes with its own advantages and limitations. Survey designs are useful to describe trends and to assess individual opinion, beliefs and attitudes (Cresswell, 2008, pp. 387-430). Providing the sample size is large enough, it may be possible to generalize the results to the larger population or to similar populations in the

search for "universals that, when found, can be communicated to others, who can use them to guide practice" (Willis, 2007, p. 78). In using surveys, I produced a large amount of quantitative data to which I applied descriptive analytical techniques. If the reader feels the data and the analysis makes sense, especially based upon their own experiences or exposure to similar groups of people, then the reason for conducting this research, to find 'understanding' or *verstehen* of a particular situation, will have been achieved. In a reaction against the use of the positivist methodology of the scientific method, German social researchers advocated that the purpose of social inquiry in the human sciences should be 'understanding' or *verstehen* rather than absolute proof, focusing "on the particulars of meaning and action taken in everyday life" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 44).

The limitations of survey research become obvious when the terms *etic* and *emic* are considered. Essentially these terms reflect two contrasting perspectives of studying different cultures (Willis, 2007). In choosing the epistemology of survey research involving the use of questionnaires and interviews, I adopted an *etic* perspective where, as a researcher, I became an outside observer, "using structures or criteria developed outside the culture as a framework for studying the culture" (p. 100). This approach is most visibly seen in Chapter 5. However, due to the low sample sizes used in this research, I make no claims with regards to other colleges with similar populations of male Emirati students.

Contrast this approach with that of the *emic* perspective where, as a researcher, I chose the epistemology of an eclectic range of research methods including case studies, observation, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, reflective journals, and narratives. In doing so, I adopted an *emic* perspective that "looks at things through the eyes of the members of the culture being studied" (Willis, 2007, p. 100). I became an 'insider', trying to find out from them how *they* see the world, and how *they* understand the setting in which they find themselves with other people. In this way, I came to see their socially-constructed world from their viewpoint (Gergen, 1978), an approach which is employed primarily in Chapter 6.

Quality Standards

"There are many ways to use, practice, promote, and claim [interpretive and other forms of] qualitative research, and in each there is a proposed or claimed relationship between some field of human experience, a form of representation [of that experience], and an audience. Researchers and scholars in each of these areas have been grappling with issues of truth, validity, verisimilitude, credibility, trustworthiness, dependability, confirmability, and so on...What is valid for [postpositivist] clinical studies...may not be adequate or relevant for ethnography or auto/ethnography..." (Altheide & Johnson, 2011, p. 582). The *process* of acquiring information, compiling and organizing it as data, and then subjecting the data to analysis and interpretation, often through different lenses or perspectives is common to all research paradigms. The quality standards adopted in this research reflect the multi-paradigmatic research design, and thus I have incorporated trustworthiness and authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), validity-as-reflexive-accounting (this places the researcher, the topic, and the sense-making process in interaction - Altheide & Johnson, 2011, p. 585), triangulation (Mathison, 1988, p. 13; Willis, 2007), crystallization (Ellingson, 2011), self-study guidelines (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001), and the evaluation of narrative 'disjunction' (Polkinghorne, 2007). The traditional postpositivist quality standards of validity (internal and external), reliability, and objectivity apply when the surveys are being administered, analysed, and interpreted. "The general notion of validity concerns the believability of a statement or knowledge claim. Validity is not inherent in a claim but is a characteristic given to a claim by the ones to whom the claim is addressed" (Polkinghorne, 2007, p. 474). Guba and Lincoln (1989), Denzin and Lincoln (2011) have defined new quality standards for researchers working in "non-foundational" paradigms.

The quality standard of trustworthiness incorporates notions of credibility, transferability, dependability, emergence, and confirmability. Operationalizing these standards required me to conduct member checks (sharing the collated information with the participants), to gather data over a long period of time, to involve the participants in reviewing the findings for the entire duration of the study (peer review), and to establish an audit trail (Willis, 2007, pp. 220-221). While trustworthiness largely addresses methodological issues, authenticity is more concerned with the outcome, product, and negotiation criteria that respects the rights of the participants, to ensure the depicted reality is a 'faithful representation' (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The quality standard of authenticity incorporates notions of fairness together with ontological, catalytic,

educative and tactical authenticities. Operationalizing these standards involves the use of detailed audit trails, negotiation with the participants to an agreed plan of action, participants' testimonials and reflections, and a timeline to follow up on agreed resolutions.

Triangulation is frequently employed by naive researchers working within an interpretivist paradigm with a 'guilty conscience' – they know in the back of their minds they should have a hand on something more solid in order to strengthen the validity of their research. Triangulation addresses the issue of the postpositivist quality standard of credibility in that "combining multiple methods to study the same phenomenon" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 2) "reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 5). Flick (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 5) points out that triangulation is neither a tool nor strategy of validation but an alternative to validation – as such, it "adds rigour, breadth complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry".   However, at times, Willis states that if the research goal is 'understanding', "triangulation may not be desirable" (2007, p. 219).   Polkinghorne (2007) appears far more comfortable in applying validation approaches that refer to the inherent "plausibility of knowledge claims" and "judgement of worthiness" (p. 484) as it easily adapts to the huge amount of multiple sources of data.   Extending further, Ellingson (2011) proposed a more postmodern metaphor of a three-sided triangle by suggesting an arts-based 'crystal', building upon the good work of Richardson (2000 as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 605) that "combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation" (Ellingson, 2011, p. 605). I include triangulation here as a quality standard in order to highlight the role of all the multiple sources of data which contribute to the trustworthiness of the study.

The self-study guidelines suggested by Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) are "grounded in the trustworthiness and meaningfulness of the findings both for informing practice to improve teacher education and also for moving the research conversation in teacher education forward" (p. 20). The problem of how to represent the 'other' in research gave rise to a "crisis of representation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 630) in the 1980s to early 1990s, resulting in calls for self-study and other alternative modes of representation. The self-reflection in Chapter 1, the personal stories that head each chapter, and the reflective

journal have helped me to address "critical social issues shaping both the learning environment they are [I am] studying and their [my] own methods of inquiry and reporting" (Taylor & Settelmaier, 2003, p. 238), to excavate hidden bias and prejudice brought into the research setting from my previous life prior to 1995 as well as that accumulated over many years of interacting with Emirati students, and to provide interpretive insight for both the reader and myself via dramatic, authentic, and authoritative narratives (Polkinghorne, as cited in Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 16); Clandinin & Connelly, 1990)

Finally, threats to the validity of the student narratives arise because the participants' language may not accurately reflect the actual experience. The evaluation of narrative 'disjunction' occurs in two areas - the gap between the actual experience and the "storied description", and the connection between the storied texts and the researcher's interpretation of the texts (Polkinghorne, 2007). In sharing my interpretation of the students' stories with the students in a member check meeting (student focus group meeting, April 2012), they were given an opportunity to provide me with feedback concerning the validity of my representation.

Ethical Issues

Given the special circumstances of the socio-cultural context – young male Arab Emiratis living within their Arabic communities – the ethical demands on me have been complex, value-bound, ambiguous, and challenging. Having worked with these young men for 16 years, I have gained an understanding of their cultural and religious values that protect their family and personal lives from overt inspection. In the classroom, gender differences and references to the students' mothers or sisters are generally avoided. Honour and face-saving are valued attributes of these young men, often prompting them to give dishonest responses when they are interviewed in exit surveys when they decide to leave college – instead of correctly stating that the real reason for leaving is to get employment and contribute to the family income, often they will state transport issues or other non-employment reasons in the interview.

From the outset, I have obtained the students' and their parents' written permission and consent (if the students are under 21 years of age) while at the same time informing the potential participants about the purpose of the research (Creswell, 2008). I arranged a

meeting with the students along with a trusted Emirati member of staff where I presented the broad aims of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, the guarantee of privacy and confidentiality, the expected research time-line, details of student participation, the right to see drafts, make amendments and comment on the final version, and the expected benefits that will accrue as a result of the study. In particular, students were informed that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

In that initial meeting, I began to build rapport and trust early on with the students and their teachers (Meyer, 2001; Willis, 2007). At the conclusion of the meeting, I distributed an English and Arabic translation of Curtin's Information Sheet and Consent Form for students to take home and discuss with their parents and to return to the college (see Appendix L).

At a follow-up meeting, I met three of the Level 2 students and discussed the arrangement concerning the video journals. After the students' parents signed an Acceptance of Liability letter, the students were given simple instructions about how to use the camera, how to charge it, the types of video entries, and the procedure to drop off their cameras once a week to download their video recordings to the department administration assistant. In the second term, I asked permission to visit one of the student's homes and interview family members. It was apparent that the research activity might cause disruption to their learning in the classroom and may unsettle delicate family situations in the home if I entered as a foreigner with a largely unknown (untrustworthy?) agenda (see Video journal case studies in Chapter 5).

Other issues that arose during the fieldwork include participants (teachers and students) sharing information "off the record", the researcher learning information about a participant indicating risky or dangerous behaviour, and deciding upon the most appropriate form of reciprocity in return for the participants' consent to take part in the study. The relationship between the researcher and participant is an inherently complex web laid across a minefield of collaboration, trust, and disclosure. Overall, I conducted my study "in a way that honours and respects the site and participants" (Creswell, 2008, p. 485) which, in practical terms, means I minimized disruption to the research site, protected the participants' privacy, and debriefed all participants with my observations and interpretations as soon as the data were collected. In many ways, it was helpful from

an ethical perspective that I resigned from HCT in June 2011 which precluded any conflict of interest either as a Chair of the department in which the study was conducted or as a teacher.

During the research period, both the participants and the researcher came to an understanding that their lives have changed, altered in ways neither of them had fully understood. It was therefore incumbent upon me to provide information from the study to the participants in a way that helped them to understand and grow. "Researcher reflexivity" refers to this process and describes the various ways a researcher may share information with the participants, being careful not to place himself in a position of privileged power and mindful of the "tentative or inconclusive" nature of their interpretations (Creswell, 2008, p. 486). This process took place towards the middle of the research period during a series of focus group meetings and a final member check meeting in June 2012.

An important aspect for the researcher lies in the issue of vulnerability when self-disclosure occurs. Etherington (2007) cites several examples of strategies that appear to have reduced the potential of self-harm. Flattening the power imbalance between the researcher and participants may be achieved through intimate discussion, negotiating research decisions, provide on-going information as it becomes available, and describe issues, problems and dilemmas that arise during the research, in particular, how they are resolved. I implemented the use of intimate discussion and providing on-going information in the focus group meetings over the course of the research period.

Dissemination of the results in the form of the final written thesis or report must protect the anonymity of the research participants by either using pseudonyms or deliberately changing details that may identify individuals. It must guarantee that readers of the research cannot identify any participants apart from me, and it must present the results in a way that is inoffensive and respectful to the participants. The report must also acknowledge the role of the participants in the research while simultaneously retaining their confidentiality except where permission has been given formally in writing to me to partially or fully identify participants.

Finally, I was conscious of the critical focus of my research in first, making a difference in the lives of the male Emirati students, and second, in helping faculty to more richly and insightfully understand both themselves and their students. An 'ethic of care' was absolutely paramount in ensuring I remained respectful at all times and avoided an essentialist viewpoint that can sometimes arise from adopting hegemonic and culturally decontextualized ideologies (Taylor & Settelmaier, 2003). In Chapter 2, I came to the conclusion that the current generation of young Emiratis may be classified as 'neo-indigenous', and therefore I became more aware of "serving asymmetric social interests...[and instead I have tried to help to] create emancipatory learning environments in which all students [and faculty] develop a critical conscience and civic-mindedness" (p. 7). In summary, I have conducted the study ethically by showing respect for the participants, ensuring the research has both merit and integrity, safeguarding the participants' privacy, guaranteeing them no harm, and producing a final interpretation that affords a balance of "benefits and burdens", assuring fair treatment of the participants and the research itself.

CHAPTER 4: BORDER CROSSINGS

رحلة الألف ميل تبدأ بخطوة

Riḥlat al-alf mīl tabda' bikhaṭwa

A journey of a thousand miles starts with one step

From small beginnings come great things.[24]

As Tim and Sarah grew up, we felt the need to provide them with an outdoor experience similar to that back home. And so, we left our first new and spacious apartment in Karama and moved to Umm Seqeim where there was a compound of 48 identical one-storey villas with a shared communal gym and swimming pool, very near to Spinneys supermarket on Al Wasl Road. With a freshwater well dug in the backyard, I planted and successfully grew grass and other shrubs. In 1996, Karen's father and his wife arrived from New Zealand, the first of many trips to the UAE over the intervening years. On their first trip, we took Ken and Lyn over to the east coast, an area of the country through which we had not travelled. Fujairah was a small sleepy town back then, sandwiched between the deep blue of the Indian Ocean and the harsh ragged browns of the Hajar Mountains. Returning back to Dubai through Dhaid that early evening, we spotted two camels slowly ambling across the main road – one made it, the other did

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[24] Arnander & Skipwith (1995)

not, and after tumbling over the roof of the speeding car that hit it, the camel literally
exploded in a red haze as it hit the road. A tragic ending to an otherwise great day!

Introduction

In Western culture, nothing typifies a border crossing more than the rich literature of
espionage writing by John Le Carré whose trilogy "The Quest for Karla" ends in dank
and gloomy Berlin where George Smiley, an old-time British spy-master, awaits the
arrival through the Berlin Wall of his nemesis, the Soviet spy-master, Karla, the Head of
Moscow Circus (nickname for the KGB, Russia's Secret Service). Having visited
Checkpoint Charlie (the most famous of all official checkpoints or border crossings
between East and West Berlin after the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 which was
designed to prevent East Germans from freely moving to the West) at the height of the
Cold War in 1981, I understand the power and significance of such borders not only to
inspire but also to instil fear in potential border crossers. Behind the Reichstag (home of
the German Parliament), the River Spree flows past a line of white crosses placed on a
grassy knoll, symbolizing some of the many hundreds of East Germans killed whilst
attempting to cross to West Berlin. In contrast, for many tourists during the 1980s,
border crossing experiences were both common and exciting in Europe until the
Schengen Treaty established open borders without checkpoints in most European
countries in 1985 (*Schengen Visa Services*, 2012).

In Arabic culture, nothing symbolizes the image of a border crossing more viscerally
than a checkpoint at Ramallah or Gaza, iconic locations in the festering chancre known
popularly as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Now with a semi-permanent wall (it will be
760 km in length when completed) separating and dividing huge swathes of land
between Palestinians and Israelis, the conflict appears no closer to a resolution in what
has now become a 64 year-old war. No matter where or what the context, border
crossings can be difficult and very dangerous places to cross.

The powerful imagery of the border crossing was expanded by Giroux (see Chapter 2) as
he explored the relationship between language and "the issues of knowledge and
power", recognizing the powerful effect in the way that language shapes our definitions
of democracy, culture and pedagogy (Giroux, 2005, p. 13). Focussing on the difficulties
faced by subordinated cultural groups (e.g., African Americans, Mexican Americans,

female Americans, etc.) as they encounter the dominant cultural form and practices of 'White English-speaking America' in educational settings, Giroux offers the reader an opportunity to reframe his/her perspective by "building local and global alliances and engage in struggles that acknowledge and transcend national boundaries", encouraging us to enact these struggles in daily life by understanding the pivotal role of individuals in "shattering conventional wisdom" (p. 219). Other researchers (Abdulla & Ridge, 2011; Aikenhead, 1996; Aikenhead & Michell, 2011; Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007; Cobern & Aikenhead, 1998; Crabtree, 2010; Fox, Majhanovich & Gök, 2011; Michie, 2011a; Mulholland & Wallace, 2003; Phelan et al., 1991; Pillsbury & Shields, 1999; Ridge, 2009b, 2010) have extended and applied the border crossing metaphor in a variety of settings from science education to the experiences of first year trainee teachers. What we now know about border crossing experiences in the cultural sense is how remarkably similar they are to those in the physical, political sense – they have a similar geography and landscape, including the terminology used to describe areas, zones, and barriers; the movement of people across a cultural border crossing mirrors that of people passing through (or over) a fence, wall, or gate; and the politics of the crossing and arrival highlight interesting and unexpected outcomes.

In this chapter, I will first describe the physical characteristics of a political border crossing, using the Berlin Wall as a referent. Next I will theorize the metaphor of a cultural border crossing and proceed to describe the cultural border crossing model as it pertains to this research setting. Both quantitative and qualitative evidence from student surveys and focus groups, from teachers and others with relevant lived experiences, and from my observations will be introduced and discussed with a view to supporting the basis for the theoretical model of the cultural border crossing. Consequently, I will be able to answer my first key research question - to what extent does Giroux's (2005) cultural border-crossing metaphor explain the learning and adjustment difficulties of male Emirati post-secondary learners transiting from high school to College?

The Geography, Movement, and Politics of Border Crossing

In Chapter 2, I introduced the concept of the cultural border crossing and examined several key aspects, emphasizing Aikenhead's view that students' understanding and learning may be regarded as a "cross-cultural event" – students do not learn in isolation of the cultural elements that make up the learning experience (Aikenhead, 1996, p. 1).

When I think about those cultural elements, it is necessary to consider not only the cultural aspects associated with the content area (eg. science or English language learning) but also all the cultural aspects brought into the entire realm of the learning event – those aspects of the students, of the teachers, and those subtle cultural aspects reflective of the learning venue, ie., the college, its resources, its open and hidden mandates. For a more in-depth discussion of these individual components, Chapter 5 examines the aspects of the students, Chapter 6 reviews the cultural aspects of the teachers, and evaluates the learning environment of the college, and Chapter 7 explores the background and the implementation of the College Preparation and Readiness (CPR) course, and describes examples of the best administrative and pedagogical practices. For now, let us focus more specifically on the physical border crossing, its geography, movement, and politics.

Geography

Borders separate at a minimum two contiguous spaces and represent the boundary or point of contact between these spaces. Physical borders may take the form of a marine or geomorphologic feature such as an ocean, a river, a ravine or a mountain range – man-made borders are often located at these same physical features but exist more prolifically today at international airports and sea ports. The border crossing experience differs from individual to individual and from group to group, depending on the motive or purpose for the crossing. For example, a male UAE resident with an Emirates ID card containing the scanned digitized images of their finger prints engaged in his lawful business will pass smoothly through the border crossing at Dubai International Airport, incurring only the mild discomfort of inserting their ID card and placing their index finger upon a scanning surface of the machine, a proxy neutral 'Immigration Officer' without the customary suspicious scowl. In contrast, a drug 'mule' with slim packs of cocaine or heroin illegally taped to their torso will experience an altogether different border crossing reality as they tentatively and nervously approach the immigration and customs personnel at airports. For most travellers in 2012, border crossing is a necessary part of air travel, though it has become more time-consuming and irritating given the heightened security procedures adopted by most countries post-'9-11'.

Remembering back to my border crossing experiences in West and East Germany in the 1980s, the sphere of influence of the border extends well beyond the actual physical

demarcation whether that is a brick wall with a gate or a friendly checkpoint on a mountain pass. This extension is felt as heightened anticipation, a sense of 'drawing near'. In Figure 1, a diagram of the Berlin Wall system clearly displays different zones, some of which extended several hundreds of metres from the Wall itself. The whole border area was on the territory of East Berlin/East Germany. The border between East and West Berlin was known popularly as the Berlin Wall. Beginning on the right of the diagram, in East Berlin, there was a 'safe zone' (1) whereby East Berliners lived and worked, often not sighting the Wall for days. Approaching the first fence-line known as the 'backland wall' (3), people encountered the 'border area' (2) which is dominated by the presence of the Wall and its associated technology of watch-towers, foot and car patrols, trip-lines, dog-lines, land-mines, ditches, and steel barriers (5), designed to prevent (and usually kill) potential defectors attempting to cross the border via the Wall into West Berlin. The second electrified signal fence (4) was designed to persuade most to turn back or face fatal consequences. Between this fence and the actual wall on the left-hand side of the diagram lay the 'death strip' (4-11) where defectors were openly shot without warning as they negotiated a gamut of treacherous technology as mentioned above. Finally, should anyone reach the Wall itself (11), they met a formidable barrier
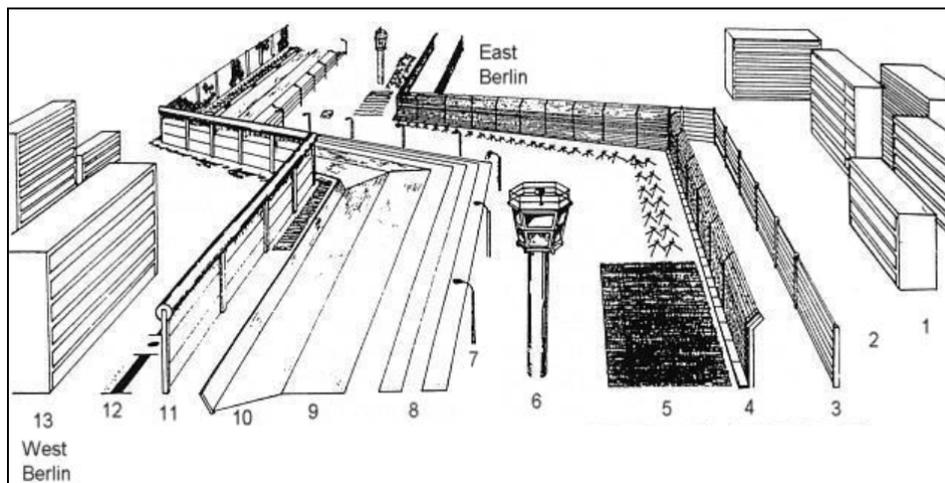
Figure 1: The System of the Berlin Wall (*System of Berlin Wall*, 2011)

built of steel-reinforced concrete standing 3.75 metres high. Climbing up to the top of the Wall, people were liable to be shot as occurred with Peter Fechter, killed in 1962 whilst attempting to cross over the Wall with a friend who actually made it to safety in West Berlin (13) (*Memorial for Peter Fechter*, 2012).

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Not all borders are as dangerous and impenetrable as the Berlin Wall once was. For example, Aikenhead (as cited in Michie, 2011a, p. 15) considers the concept of border crossing to have 'permeability' in that it facilitates relatively smooth movement by most individuals, allowing them to think differently in various cultures. In applying the system and terminology of the Berlin Wall to the concept of the cultural border crossing, I found Michie's discussion in his thesis on the concept of border crossings and its associated terminology to be particularly helpful. Though borders may be attributed different meanings by people on either side (Yuval-Davis, as cited in Michie, 2011a, p. 15), and pedantry semantics may confound a reader's grasp of the difference between a 'cultural boundary' and a 'cultural border', nomenclature used to describe the various areas, zones, and barriers of the Berlin Wall may also be broadly applied to the concept of a cultural border crossing (see Figure 2). In the model, I have included a new area called the 'safe zone' which is located on both far sides of the border though the area and perception of the safe zone varies according to the viewer's perspective. For most East Berliners, this safe zone began in the residential area away from the high security of the border area; for most West Berliners, the safe zone began immediately from the graffiti-covered West Berlin side of the Wall. For example, in this research setting, the respective safe zones demarcate areas where the Arabic students 'feel safe' (usually at home, far from the 'border' located at college) and where the teachers/staff find peace and quiet (college staff room, faculty workstations, at home).

The area between the safe zone and the border itself is called the 'borderlands' which is similar to the border area of the Berlin Wall, denoting proximity to the border crossing. The 'borderlands' is essentially a "pluralistic position" as it describes the initial
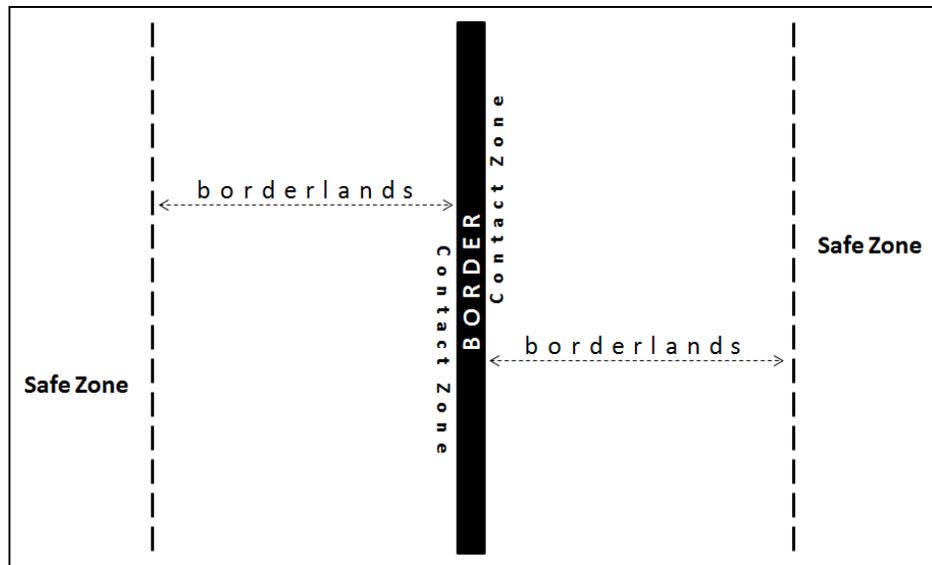
Figure 2: Conceptual model of the border crossing area including zones and barriers

interaction, dove-tailing, mixing and blending of the two perspectives – that of the border crosser and the new landscape they are approaching (Anzaldua, as cited in Michie, 2011a, p. 17). Fitzgerald (2002) described a similar notion in his study of Mexican migrant workers in the US, describing the workers' self-perception as trans-nationalism or a sense of belonging to more than two nations. The 'contact zones' occur at the actual point of contact or interaction, "a social space where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other" (Pratt, as cited in Michie, 2011a, p. 18). The opportunity for blending the two perspectives is additionally supported by Somerville and Perkins (2003) who describe 'contact zones' as "'discomfort' zone[s] of cultural contact [that are] usefully conceived as area[s] of productive tension in which differences can generate hybrid outcomes" (p. 253). Finally, the 'border crossing' is both a demarcation line that delineates the boundary between two different spaces or areas as well as the focus point of the border crossing experience. The 'hardness' of the border depends very much upon the congruency of the border crosser and the new landscape – for many, the border is smooth and mundane while for others, it resembles an impassable wall (Giroux, 2005; Phelan et al., 1991). It is the movement across the border that I will discuss next.

Movement

In the history of the Berlin Wall, there are remarkable examples of escape through its 28 year history (Hildebrandt, 1981). In the early days before the tall permanent concrete

wall was finished, escape was relatively easy though still dangerous – from simply walking across an uncontrolled section to driving at speed under the low fence barrier in a sports car. In later years, escaping became far more difficult and perilous. The Wall challenged man's creativity to the maximum - tunnels, flying foxes, and even hot-air balloons bore witness to man's desire to seek freedom. The escapes ranged from the impetuous to the highly planned, from the down-right silly to the more nuanced, from those involving subterfuge and deceit to those displaying a simple act of bravery and courage. Through the acts of escape and the strategies of the people involved, the gamut of these unofficial border crossings in many ways mirror similar experiences felt by everyone who has crossed over a cultural border, leaving the comfort of the 'familiar' for the relative discomfort and danger of the 'unfamiliar' and strange.

The ease of crossing a cultural border is dependent upon the congruence between the world-view of the border crosser and the borderlands adjacent to the border itself. Cobern (as cited in Aikenhead, 1996, p. 3) examined the world-views of students grouped into seven 'logico-structural categories' – self, other, causality, classification, relationship, time, and space. A student's world-view enables him or her to "gauge the plausibility of any assertion" (as cited in Aikenhead, 1996, p. 4) or as Aikenhead nicely summarizes, "world-views are culturally validated presuppositions about the natural world" (Aikenhead, 1996, p. 4). I have extended the border crossing experience to now include the initial forays into the 'borderlands', reflecting the interactions of young male Emiratis with Fujairah Men's College as they begin to contemplate their post-secondary school futures. In their 1991 paper, Phelan et al. describe a typical school day in a North American high school and achieve a remarkably insightful and reflective description:

> On any given school day, adolescents in this society move from one
> social context to another. Families, peer groups, classrooms, and
> schools are primary arenas in which young people negotiate and
> construct their realities. For the most part, students' movement and
> adaptations from one setting to another are taken for granted. Although
> such transitions frequently require students' efforts and skills,
> especially when contexts are governed by different values and
> norms....it appears that, in our culture, many adolescents are left to
> navigate transitions without direct assistance from persons in any of

their contexts, most notably the school. Further, young people's success in managing these transitions varies widely. Yet students' competence in moving between settings has tremendous implications for the quality of their lives and their chances of using the education system as a stepping stone to further education, productive work experiences, and a meaningful adult life. (p. 224)

As discussed in Chapter 2, border crossings need not be problematic as most adult people change their behaviours in quite subtle ways as they move from one social context to another. The unifying lubricant that smoothes and facilitates these border crossing experiences is a common culture, particularly exemplified in the form of language – Giroux suggests that "how we understand and come to know ourselves cannot be separated from how we are represented and how we imagine ourselves" (as cited in Pillsbury & Shields, 1999, p. 2).

Researchers in both science education and anthropology have successfully explored the nature and quality of student learning, particularly in developing countries whose culture and sub-cultures differ sharply to that of the largely hegemonic culture of Western science (Phelan et al., 1991; Pomeroy, 1994; Baker & Taylor, 1995; Costa, 1995; Jegede & Aikenhead, 1999). In Phelan et al.'s study, students with different cultural identities to that of Western science encounter obstacles to learning, engagement, and ultimately, enculturation. Young learners typically reported border crossing experiences ranging from smooth to impossible. In their research which was later expanded by Costa (1995), students' border crossing experiences were categorized into four transition experiences based upon the congruency between their world-views and those of science (see Figure 3). Students with world-views similar or congruent to that of the new cultural landscape in which they found themselves experienced smooth transitions; students whose world-

Movement between	Type of crossing
Congruent worlds	Smooth transitions
Different worlds	Managed boundary crossings

Different worlds/difficult transitions[25]	Difficult boundary crossings[26]
Impenetrable borders	Impossible boundary crossings

Figure 3: Movements between different worlds result in different types of crossings
(adapted from Costa, 1995; Phelan et al., 1991)

views were different were able to manage their transitions though the degree of relative difficulty and ease varied; students whose world-views were diverse (beyond 'different' and bordering on 'difficult') experienced hazardous/difficult transitions with the implication that several did not successfully (safely?) negotiate the crossing, and finally, those students with highly discordant world-views increased their resistance to transitions to such a degree that transitions were impossible to make at all (Phelan et al., 1991).

As Hennessy puts it, "crossing over from one domain of meaning to another is exceedingly hard" (1993, p. 9). Though Costa (1995) described five types of learners based upon their congruency with the sub-culture of science and their border crossing experiences, I have retained the nomenclature of these four border crossing experiences which appear to adequately describe the different types of young male Emirati that I have encountered over 16 years of meeting, teaching and managing them.

Politics

The politics of border creation reached its zenith during the 19th and early 20th Centuries when large tracts of the planet were formally and politically separated in Europe, Africa, and South America during the rise of the modern nation-state (Auer, Hinskens & Kerswill, 2005). As a result of borders cutting across unknown or hidden linguistic and cultural areas, sometimes dividing or mixing common areas, two major world wars and a plethora of relatively smaller regional conflicts have resulted in the deaths of over 100 million human lives since the mid 19th century. Borders were established to demarcate the boundary of a nation-state, often with checkpoints where border control agents inspected those crossing the boundary. Borders seek to unify and solidify a common political, social, linguistic, economic and cultural area.

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[25] This alternative terminology was introduced by Costa (1995).
[26] As all border crossing experiences apart from smooth are ultimately 'hazardous', I have renamed this category 'difficult'.

One of the world's best known symbols of a border is the Great Wall of China, built over several stages since the 7th century BC. Borders are primarily designed to protect the interests and welfare of the inhabitants residing inside but there exist many examples where borders become prison walls – the Berlin Wall separating West and East Germany built to prevent East Germans from voluntarily moving to the West, the heavily-militarised border between North and South Korea symbolizing an almost 60 year truce (not a formal end to the end of hostilities), and the borders of China and Iran, countries who seek to control the movement of some of its citizens who disagree with the national leadership. Borders today range from the fluid and informal, as in Europe with its Schengen border arrangement, to harsh and formal borders as in the border fence between the United States and Mexico designed to deter poor Mexicans seeking work in the relatively rich western and southern states of California and Texas (*Border*, 2012).

Not all borders follow political demarcation lines – some like the Peace Walls in Northern Ireland sought to separate the warring Catholic and Protestant religious communities whilst others, such as the barricade wall in Baghdad, were built to stop the escalating sectarian violence between the local Sunni and Shia communities after the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Crossing cultural borders may bring about their own form of violence ranging from the emotionally symbolic to the physically fatal. Some border crossers encounter symbolic violence when they experience situations "in which their current understandings and ways of operating, or *habitus*, are not viable" (Bourdieu, as cited in Mulholland & Wallace, 2007, p. 882). This experience is similar to that of identity learning described by Geijsel and Meijers (2005) as "the ever-changing configuration of interpretations that individuals attach to themselves, as related to the activities they participate in" (p. 423). Geijsel and Meijers argue that teachers' identities are formed in borderland situations through a process of social construction and of individual sense-making. It occurs when a person's self-concept (as in *habitus* above) has reached its limit, producing opportunities for potentially positive-learning experiences of self-development and growth, but more likely to produce "an experience of conflict, shortcoming or inability, and of uncertainty, which is coupled with negative emotions" (p. 424). Identity learning will be more fully discussed in Chapter 6.

A type of symbolic violence may also occur when students feel, rightly or wrongly, that they must put aside their current understandings/world-views/values and whole-heartedly adopt and assimilate the knowledge, world-views and values of the new culture (Aikenhead 1996). As established by Costa (1995) and Driver et al. (1994), learning is a cultural experience of acquisition, driven by the need for students to acquire a "new community of discourse, a new culture" (Driver at al., 1994, p. 11), not just in the area of science learning but in any area or context where the cultures of the students and the teacher differ. Cultural acquisition is a process of transmission of ideas, knowledge and values from one group to another (Hawkins & Pea, 1987). This process can be supportive or disruptive if the student's world-view is similar or different to that of the 'transmitting culture' (Baker & Taylor, 1995). If the transmitting (new) culture is congruent or harmonizes with the student's world-view, the new culture will support the student's world-view as a result of enculturation – if the transmitting (new) culture is incongruent or is at odds with the student's world-view, the new culture may disrupt the student's world-view to such an extent that they replace their own culture with the new culture, a result of assimilation (see Figure 4). In the context of this research, I propose that most Foundations-level students, especially those placed in the lower levels, experience extreme assimilation after they arrive at college, with only a handful of students with minimum English skills and compatible world-views able to effect a smooth border crossing transition.

Giroux (2005) lists several examples of border crossings that resulted in the death of victims from urban-based minority groups, the acts of violence arising from the "ideological poison" of racism (p. 85). Coming from New Zealand, I remember unluckily entering some public bars in certain areas of the country which 'culturally belonged' to the local Indigenous Maori – feelings of discomfort were quickly followed by fear for my physical safety, resulting in a hurried departure accompanied by nervous mumbling.

Movement between	Cultural acquisition	Type of crossing
Congruent worlds	Enculturation	Smooth transitions
Different worlds	Assimilation	Managed boundary

		crossings
Different worlds/difficult transitions	Assimilation	Difficult boundary crossings
Impenetrable borders	Assimilation	Impossible boundary crossings

Figure 4: Expanded border crossing transitional descriptions (Fig.3 authors with Driver et al., 1994; Hawkins & Pea, 1987; Baker & Taylor, 1995)

The politics of cultural border crossings are dominated by post-colonial cultural and critical pedagogy theories (Bhabha, 1994; Chinn, 2007; Freire, 2000; Giroux, 2005; Said, 1985). Post-colonial cultural theories are premised on reducing the residual effects of colonialism on minority or Indigenous cultures. Many post-colonialist theorists recognize that the forces that shaped the colonial experience are still active today. Critical pedagogy theorists such as Freire and Giroux focus on which social groups in society hold and exert power – they believe that the dominant power group can only "engage in a political and pedagogical struggle for the consent of subordinate groups if it is willing to take seriously and articulate some of the values and interests of these groups" (Giroux, 2005, p. 164). Much of the work that both types of theorists accomplish involves exploring, scavenging, and finally unearthing and exposing the 'hidden webs of power and interest' involved in people's unequal struggles to secure their futures.

And so we arrive at a key question in coming to understand the politics of cultural border crossings in this research setting - whose interests are being served (or not) by compelling first-language students to cross cultural borders into higher education colleges and asking them to study using the dominant and hegemonic second-language of English? In terms of access and rights, I ask myself if I would have been able to cope if, at the end of high school, I travelled from Tauranga to the University of Canterbury, Christchurch in New Zealand to begin studying English literature, Economics, Geography, and History *using my schoolboy French*?

The Border Crossing Experiences at Fujairah Men's College

"The young people...have their feet deeply rooted in the soil of tradition, but they sense they are being tugged out and transplanted into a new and unfamiliar landscape" (Dahl,

2010, p. 77). This sense of being "tugged out" begins much earlier than their first day of arrival at Fujairah Men's College. Though described in more detail in the next chapter, the students begin their border crossing experience to the "new and unfamiliar landscape" of college through sitting the common educational proficiency assessment (CEPA) in April of their final year of high school – for many students, this is their first interaction with the new and different culture of higher education. All Emirati students sit this examination simultaneously at HCT colleges scattered around most of the seven Emirates (see Chapter 1). This is to ensure that there is a secure and well-monitored invigilation process for the examination. Before the end of the final school year, the students are then requested through NAPO (National Academic Placement Office) to indicate their preference for one of the three main federally-funded organizations of higher education (UAE University, Zayed University, and the Higher Colleges of Technology). In the middle of summer, they are then asked to confirm their intention to study at their organization of choice, subject to meeting the minimum standards of entry (as indicated by their CEPA results in English and Math). Finally, their first day of attending their organization of choice arrives in late August or early September, and traumatic as it is for many, the border crossing experience had already begun several months' earlier. This re-imagining of the border crossing demarcation (incorporating the borderlands and the notion of chronology) differs from that previously described (Aikenhead, 1996, 1997b; Mulholland & Wallace, 2007; Phelan et al., 1991).

Assessing the border crossing experiences at Fujairah Men's College

The methods used to assess the border crossing experiences of new first year Foundations students consist of student and teacher surveys, individual student case studies, feedback from separate teacher and student focus groups, student feedback on the college orientation program held for new students, and a detailed narrative analysis of student, faculty and relevant personnel interviews.

Student survey

The student survey was adapted from the Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales (PALS) which were developed by a US-based group of researchers led initially by Carol Midgley who used goal orientation theory to examine the relation between the learning environment and students' motivation, affect, and behaviour (Midgley, Kaplan, Middleton, Urdan, Maehr, Hicks, Anderman & Roeser, 1998). The original student

scales assessed personal achievement, goal orientations, perceptions of the teacher's goals, perceptions of the goal structures in the classroom, achievement-related beliefs, attitudes, and strategies, and finally, perceptions of parents and home life. Using a five point Likert-type scale, the scales are based on research showing that a differential emphasis on "mastery" and "performance" goals is associated with adaptive or maladaptive patterns of learning (Ames, Dweck, Maehr, Nicholls, as cited in Midgley et al., 1998).

In my adaptation of the PALS student survey, I developed a tighter focus on five key groups of questions related specifically to my research agenda – the border crossing experience (Qu.1-10), motivation to learn (Qu.11-20), persistence (Qu.21-30), learning preference (Qu.31-40) and home-school-perception of abilities (Qu.41-50). The instrument was then translated into Arabic and double-checked through back-translation into English - see Appendix H to view the adapted PALS instrument. Descriptive analysis of each of the 50 survey items was conducted using SPSS19 and an examination of the variance (standard deviation or SD) of each item against the mean group standard deviation (see Figure 5) highlighted those items to which students responded with the greatest amount of dispersion (Cresswell, 2008, p. 194). Eight items with the highest standard deviation were selected from which I calculated both minimum and maximum border crossing indices by adding the individual scores of the selected items. The border crossing experience index (BCI) ranges from a minimum score of 8 (impossible border crossing experience) to a maximum score of 40 (smooth border crossing experience). Six of the eight items were reversed within the Likert scale, for example, '1' became '5', '2' became '4', and so on with '3' remaining the same.

Item no.	Item	Question Group	Group SD	Item SD	Reversed Score
1	Thinking back to your first day at Fujairah Men's College, you felt happy about starting college.	Border crossing	0.88	1.35	No
2	In the first week of college, I felt lonely and confused.	Border crossing	0.88	1.38	Yes
4	I feel troubled because my	Border	0.88	1.55	Yes

	school life and college life are like two different worlds.	crossing			
6	My transition from high school to college has been smooth and easy.	Border crossing	0.88	1.25	No
8	I will most likely leave college before the end of the academic year because it is too hard.	Border crossing	0.88	1.21	Yes
10	I will most likely leave college before the end of the academic year because I will find a job.	Border crossing	0.88	1.15	Yes
41	I don't like to have my parents come to college because their ideas are very different from my teachers' ideas.	Home-school-abilities	1.19	1.38	Yes
46	I feel troubled because my home life and college life are like two different worlds.	Home-school-abilities	1.19	1.37	Yes

Figure 5: Border crossing item selection criteria used to produce the border crossing index

My first key research goal is to explore the extent to which Giroux's (2005) cultural border-crossing metaphor explains the learning and adjustment difficulties of male Emirati post-secondary learners transiting from high school to college. Other researchers (Phelan et al., 1991; Aikenhead, 1996; Mulholland & Wallace, 2003) have described and applied the four categories of border crossing experience (smooth, managed, difficult, impossible) to their unique research settings but have not reported the *proportion* of the research participants in each category. For example, we do not know what percentage of students in a Western high school or college experience smooth or impossible border crossings into higher education. I have attempted to resolve this issue by assigning quartiles to the theoretical score distribution ranging from eight to forty based on the logic of a randomized sample of students deciding to attend Fujairah Men's College. My

theoretical prediction for the proportion of students belonging to each of the four border crossing types is therefore $p = 0.25$ or 25%. Using this proportion, the scores of 60 new Foundations students placed across all four levels were assigned to one of four interval classes based on the predicted proportions.

In Figure 6, the categories 'difficult' and 'smooth' contain nearly a quarter each of the students and best match the predicted theoretical proportion for each category. The category 'managed' comprises over half the new students (52%), a result partially confirmed in a student focus group meeting on 9 February 2012 when 11 out of the 13 (85%) randomly-selected Level 2 participants reported that their transitions from high school to college matched the 'managed' category. The final 'impossible' category contains only one student, and given the high probability that most of these students were classified as a "no-show" (confirmed enrolment but did not appear at college) or had withdrawn over the first semester (August 2011-January 2012), this is not a

Border Crossing category	Class Interval Widths	Theoretical Proportion	Frequency $n=60$	Actual Proportion
Smooth	40-33	25%	14	23%
Managed	32-24	25%	31	52%
Difficult	23-16	25%	14	23%
Impossible	15-8	25%	1	2%

Figure 6: Theoretical and actual border crossing experience categories

surprising outcome. Applying the interval classes to the students' actual scores, Figure 7 visually displays the distribution of students' border crossing experience indices against the predicted and theoretical four border crossing experience categories including their Foundations placement level. Twice as many 'managed' border crossers appear to have successfully negotiated the cultural border crossing than predicted, with 82% of the new Level 2 students saying they were generally happy ('somewhat true' to 'very true') to be starting college in September 2011. However, the apparent difficulty and incongruence of the cultural border crossing experiences is highlighted by the fact that 72% of the

Border Crossing Category	Theoretical Range	Placement Level	Border Crossing Index
'Smooth'	40	L1	38
	↓	L3	38
	33	L2	37

Category		Level	Index
		L3	37
		L1	36
		L1	36
		L2	36
		L3	36
		L1	34
		L2	34
		L2	34
		L2	33
		L2	33
		L3	33
'Managed'	32	L2	32
		L2	32
		L3	32
		L2	31
		L2	31
		L3	31
		L4	31
		L2	30
		L2	30
		L2	30
		L3	30
		L1	29
		L1	29
		L2	29
		L4	29
	24	L3	28
'Difficult'	23	L1	28
		L1	28
		L1	28
		L1	28
		L2	28
		L2	28
		L2	28
		L2	28
		L3	28
		L3	28
		L1	26
		L1	25
		L2	24
		L2	24
	16	L2	24
'Impossible'	15	L1	23
		L2	23
		L2	23
		L2	22
		L2	22
		L3	22
		L3	22
		L2	20
		L2	20
		L2	20
		L2	18
		L2	18
		L1	16
		L2	16
	8	L3	12

Figure 7: Theoretical and actual border crossing index categories with placement levels

students reported they were generally confused and lonely ('somewhat true' to 'very true') in their first week of college and 84% felt generally troubled ('somewhat true' to

'very true') because their home and college lives were so different – seven of the 13 Level 2 students who took part in the first student focus group in March 2012 reported that they felt they were "entering a strange new world".

The relatively high number of 'smooth' border crossers (23%) was surprising, given that there appears to be little correlation with their English language ability as evidenced by their assigned Foundations placement level based on their CEPA results. This border crossing group was represented by four Level 1s, six Level 2s and four Level 3s – no Level 4 students (the highest English competency level in Foundations with expectations that most will take only a semester to pass the Level 4 exit criteria of IELTS band 5.0 and enter their program of study) were represented in this category (see Figure 8).

BCI Descriptor	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Total
Smooth	4 (29%)	6 (19%)	4 (31%)	0 (0%)	**14**
Managed	8 (57%)	15 (48%)	6 (46%)	2 (100%)	**31**
Difficult	2 (14%)	10 (33%)	2 (15%)	0 (0%)	**14**
Impossible	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	0 (0%)	**1**
Total	**14**	**31**	**13**	**2**	**60**

Figure 8: Frequencies and percentages of students by level in each border crossing category

Certainly, in my experience as a teacher and department Chair, new students assigned to the pre-2010 Foundations levels of Diploma Foundations (new Levels 1 and 2) and Higher Diploma Foundations (new Levels 3 and 4), were generally quite distinguishable based on their levels of oral language, scholasticism, attitude, and world-view to the Diploma Foundations students who were generally categorized into the lower spectrum of these criteria. Looking a little deeper into the BCI and world-view/English language relationship (see Figure 8), 81% of the Level 2 students experienced 'managed' to 'impossible' border crossing experiences, the highest percentage of the four Foundations levels. Further, three other questions from the border crossing group (Qu.3, 5 and 7) in the Student Survey broadly indicate that the better acculturated students (matching Foundations levels) with stronger English competencies settled into the college culture more smoothly – see Figure 9. Many of the higher level students appear to acknowledge that their high school experiences prepared them well for study, most probably a reflection of their individual effort and hard work compared to the lower levels where

the Level 1 and 2 students reported much less satisfaction with their level of scholastic preparedness. By almost half-way through their first semester, only Level 1 students reported less than 100% in feeling a 'sense of belonging' to the college (Qu.5). Finally, almost all students were prepared to acknowledge the success of the college orientation program for new students, though lesser percentages in the lower levels were recorded.

Qu.	Statement	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
3.	My high school experiences prepared me well for study at college.	57%	47%	85%	100%
5.	Right now, I feel a 'sense of belonging' at Fujairah Men's College (Nov, 2011).	79%	100%	100%	100%
7.	The college has helped me a lot to feel settled and comfortable in my new environment.	93%	94%	100%	100%

Figure 9: Percentage of students by level generally agreeing ('somewhat true' to 'very true') to three border crossing category statements from the Student Survey

Though the design, implementation and assessment of the college orientation program will be examined in more depth in Chapter 7, it is worth noting that over 90% of the 25 randomly-selected new Foundations students were very satisfied with the program, with many students positively mentioning the *majilis*-style of seating adopted on day 1 (an Arabic *majilis* is the place or room for greeting guests to the family home. The traditional seating takes the form of carpets and low cushions where guests and their host share tea, coffee, sweets, and conversation).

In summary, the student responses from the Student Survey appear to broadly support the border crossing construct to explain the transition experiences of new Foundations students, with lower level students experiencing generally more difficult and managed border crossings that involve greater levels of incongruence and unsettlement. The expected relationship between their border crossing experiences and English language competency was not directly observed in the data. However, all students across all four levels reported varying degrees of unfamiliarity associated with their congruency with the new cultural landscape of the college.

Teacher survey

The Teacher scales assess teachers' perceptions of the goal structure in the school, their goal-related approaches to instruction, and personal teaching efficacy. While the Teacher Survey will be more fully discussed in Chapter 6, two items from this survey provide illumination on the border crossing experience from the teachers' perspective. Item 6 – 'factors beyond my control have a greater influence on my students' achievement than I do' – was supported by 100% of the teachers who completed the survey, underlining a perception that the teacher role may be undermined by factors *a priori* and/or during the teaching schedule. However, in their responses to item 24 – 'there is little I can do to ensure that all my students make significant progress this year' - 63% of the teachers disagreed, strongly affirming their role despite the perception that external factors outside of the classroom may have a greater impact on their students' achievement that they do.

Student case studies

In semester 1, two students in Level 2, 'Suood' and 'Jamal', agreed to weekly document their new college experience using Panasonic hand-held video cameras. Towards the end of semester 1, I interviewed both students separately about their border crossing experiences. Suood reported that he "felt afraid" on his first day as he is naturally shy. He was especially concerned about the teachers, whether they would be nice or horrible. After a week at college and having completed the college orientation program, Suood felt settled in college because he felt that the teachers had kept him busy with many activities. He also said that the orientation program had helped him to work in small teams and in getting to know the other students quickly. Jamal, on the other hand, found the whole range of activities to be interesting and "easy". His border crossing index of 34 was one of the highest in the study group. However, Jamal did report issues with one of his teachers as they only "gave out papers" and did not seem interested in them.

Student orientation program

Student responses to five questions in the follow-up student focus group to assess the effectiveness of the college new student orientation program appear to highlight a range of border crossing experiences (see Figure 10). Questions 9-10 clearly reflect a period of initial unease with 32% of the students reporting they were 'nervous' or 'anxious' before

the start of the orientation program – however, this reduced to only 4% (one student) at the end of the program. Over half the students responded that they found it 'neutral' to 'very difficult' in dealing with staff and teachers. In the final two questions, the *majilis* style format students was very positively supported as was the use of Arabic speakers in each classroom (40% and 68% respectively). In summary, the new students appeared to be nervous and anxious prior to the start of the orientation program and generally did not find it easy to deal with staff and teachers – however, after the end of the program, they clearly endorsed the new orientation format by confirming the importance of incorporating culturally-friendly elements such as the *majilis* seating and use of Arabic.

Questions	Responses (*n*=25)				
9. Generally, how were you feeling before the orientation program?	Nervous	Anxious	Comfortable	Excited	Other
Total	5	3	3	8	0
10. Generally, how did you feel after the orientation program?	Nervous	Anxious	Comfortable	Excited	Other
Total	0	1	17	7	0
11. Was it easy for you to deal with staff and teachers?	Very difficult	Somewhat difficult	Neutral	Somewhat at easy	Very easy
Total	2	3	8	3	8
13. Which activity gave you the best opportunity to become comfortable with other students in your section?	Majlis	Tennis Club Activities	Information Sessions	Breakfast	
Total	10	9	6	0	
14. What is your opinion about the amount of Arabic used?	Too little	Just right	Too much		
Total	5	17	3		

Figure 10: Selected questions from new student orientation feedback focus group session

Faculty, non-teaching HCT staff, and non-HCT personnel

I conducted a narrative analysis to identify themes arising from the interviews of HCT faculty, non-teaching HCT staff, and non-HCT personnel using Nvivo9 software. For

the purposes of this chapter, I explored common themes related to the border crossing experience of new Foundations students.

Most faculty understood they have a role of "supporting student learning" with only two faculty focussing solely on the program's academic learning outcomes such as "reaching a level of English competency". Several noted that they additionally have a moderator or facilitator role with one faculty stating that they "need to understand the students, especially knowing where they are and where they need to be". Almost all faculty acknowledge a 'cultural boundary' between themselves and the students, though this was less pronounced in Arabic faculty. Finally, though faculty all express empathy with their students, almost half of them report their interaction as being 'neutral to negative' with several bravely acknowledging the stress that can accompany "firm classroom management" strategies.

The non-teaching staff at Fujairah Men's College interviewed include the Supervisor of Student Affairs (Canadian), the college counsellor (American), the college school liaison and student recruitment coordinator (Emirati and ex-HCT graduate), and the administration assistant (Emirati and ex-HCT graduate) in the Foundations department. In articulating their specific roles, a strong focus was one of "support" (see Figure 11). Perceived obstacles to students attending Fujairah Men's College included a gamut of opinion posited strongly within their roles and degree/frequency of interaction with the students. With the highest frequency of interaction, the administration assistant felt that the students' focus was too much on matters "outside of college" while the Student Affairs Chair gave an insightful explication highlighting push/pull factors relating directly to student retention. A clear emerging theme was the perception that families directly or indirectly put the students under pressure to leave college and find work. Interestingly, this was negated by the students themselves in the first student focus group meeting where 100% of them denied they had ever been put under pressure to find work. Finally, each agreed that poor transitions to college resulted in students leaving Foundations though, as the college school liaison and student recruitment officer added, "they go and do not usually share their real feelings".

The non-HCT personnel interviewed included an ex-high school principal, a government representative, four high school teachers (two now employed with HCT), three local

policemen, and two employees with the Ministry of Education (Dubai and Fujairah). Despite many attempts often with the assistance of key senior HCT personnel, I was unable to secure an interview with a representative of the military or police in Abu Dhabi. However, I managed to obtain survey responses from two current military employees (see Working Parents, Chapter 5). Observations from this group in support of the cultural border crossing experience begin with the ex-high school principal and the government representative who can remember the 1960s and 1970s when Emiratis were the dominant cultural group in the region and as a result, there were no cultural borders to cross. It was a time of harsh living conditions as electricity did not make it to parts of the Fujairah Emirate until 1978 and where all the physical work such as

	Supervisor of Student Affairs	College Counselor	School Liaison/ Recruitment Coordinator	Administration Assistant
Role	Support activities outside classroom – enhance college experience	Help the students make the transition from high school to college	Act as a role model as he had been a student at FMC for 6 years	Help the students understand college and system policies such as attendance
Perceived Obstacles	'Pull factors' such as employment and 'push factors' such as foreign and unfamiliar environment esp. with using English	Their view is narrow and have little concept of career development. Family responsibilities mean many leave for work. Many students seem 'lost'	They do not want to be dependent on their families so they often feel they need to find work rather than stay at college. They have a fear of failure	Students think too much about money and salary
Poor Transition Outcomes	The college loses students	The college loses students	The students do not usually share their real feelings	The college loses students

Figure 11: Roles, perceived obstacles to student success, and poor transition outcomes

building houses and irrigation dams was done by the Emirati men themselves. Naughty young Emiratis had a "village of fathers" so there was adequate adult supervision of the children and together with assigned chores, such as helping their fathers in the small farms, young male Emiratis had plenty to do with someone usually at hand if they stepped out of line. Both men commented that television and the use of foreign maids in

the traditional Arab homes have caused problems with the boys' attitudes to life and learning, with the ex-high school principal stating that the educational experience for the young men changed from "sugar to salt" from the 1980s as cultural borders began to appear due to the influx of increasing numbers of foreign expatriate workers, marking the arrival of the 'cultural tsunami' that hit the UAE at this time.

The four high school English language teachers were Arabic in origin, and came from Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia. They taught in the final year of high school and so were in positions to assist students with their CEPA exam preparation, final school exams, and to offer advice to the departing students. Many spoke of the lack of motivation among the male students, with one teacher cheekily saying that one solution might be to "make all the Emiratis poor" as, in common with many others, he felt that their wealth encouraged "lazy thinking". They all urged their young charges to continue to learn English and develop computing skills as most jobs now require these. One teacher who has since joined HCT reported his frustration with various schemes established by the Ministry of Education to improve the standards of learning in government high schools that were poorly implemented and managed.

The first words of a department manager with the Ministry of Education in Fujairah after I introduced myself and my research topic, were, "Mr Peter, you have touched the wound", meaning that he was keenly aware of the huge problem in government high schools. When asked to comment on the generally poor state of secondary school education in the UAE today, an experienced English course supervisor with the Ministry of Education reported that the main reasons were the students' "unwillingness to learn and the unattractiveness of [the] school system", citing as additional factors, the "lack of co-operation between the school and home", the "interference effect of technology" on student learning, the "indifference of parents", and the "traditional methods" and techniques of teachers.

Finally, three local policemen in the Fujairah Emirate confirmed that social and behavioural problems, such as "forbidden relationships", school truancy, drug use, and a breakdown in the parent-child relationship exist today in Emirati families due to the "loss of family cohesion" caused, in their opinion, by "parents staying away from home for a long time" and a "lack of religious faith". These reports have recently received

further support in findings from a study into Emirati child abuse that found that almost 18% of the young 12-13 Emirati school children had been exposed to pornography (Barakat, 2012).

In summary, the weight of evidence, though at times contradictory, broadly supports the concept that young male Emiratis experience a range of cultural border crossings from 'smooth' to 'impossible' as they move from their predominantly Arabic-centred worldview based on their recent school life, community and home lives, to the predominantly English/Western-centred worldview of higher education with foreign and usually non-Arabic faculty (including females) who have different learning approaches and expectations. In two separate focus group meetings with students and HCT teachers, we explored together the border crossing experiences, the result of which was the creation of two models that seek to capture the geography, movement, and politics of cultural border crossings in the UAE.

The Student Cultural Border Crossing Model

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a student's cultural border crossing experience appears to begin long before they cross the 'threshold' into the college on Day 1 of the first semester. In Figure 12, the geography of the border crossing landscape is now illuminated with small representative figures and directional arrows. First, the Emirati
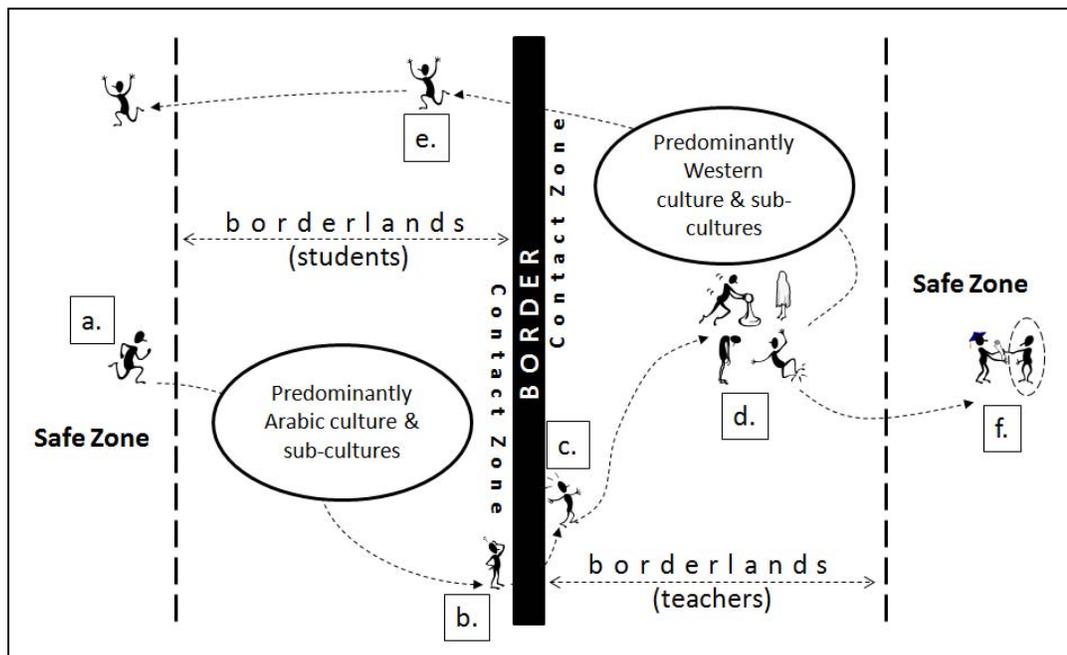
Figure 12: Model of the student border crossing experience at Fujairah Men's College

students (a) leave their Safe Zone (home and community lives) and approach the college through the borderland area which is both a physical (proximity to the college buildings) and a psycho-emotional entity (at first, students worry about what their teachers will be like, but soon, they worry mainly about time, something they never do at home). Staying in comforting groups and hesitantly ambling towards the main entrance door to the college, the students finally encounter the border crossing at the Contact Zone, their side of the border wall (b). Emerging on the other side (c), they find themselves in a new landscape where almost everyone speaks English 'at them', assuming they understand almost every word. Sticking closely together with their friends, they meet other students (d) some of whom appear shell-shocked, lost and disoriented while others appear to unfathomingly enjoy the experience. Most students remain quiet with only the confident (over-confident?) ones speaking loudly in Arabic to one another, oblivious of the instructions being given to them from college personnel. For most students, they approach their first day as they have always done at school, with a view that this new world can be 'managed' through various behaviour and attitude adjustments. It is usually at this point, at some time during the first few hours of their college experience, that many decide to leave (e), returning to the relative safety of their Safe Zone.

For those who remain and become positively engaged in the college orientation program, the initial feelings of nervousness and strangeness begin to dissipate. Many will still find the daily journey to college to be filled with concerns about time constraints and deadlines. And for far too few students who finally acclimatize to college life and its unfamiliar worldview, they remain and go on to complete Foundations, enter their program of study, and graduate 6-7 years after their first day of arrival in that strange new land (f). The dotted line surrounding the student in this final figure indicates that though they become semi-immersed in the new borderland area, they retain much of their cultural values, beliefs, and behaviours.

The Faculty Cultural Border Crossing Model

Michie's (2011a) work in describing border crossers in Australia and New Zealand has contributed much to the understanding of the experiences of cultural workers. The model in Figure 13 arose from the first faculty focus group meeting but much of the theoretical discussion will take place in Chapter 6. Like the students, faculty start within their Safe

Zone – for some, this means their 'home countries', for others it may simply be the homes in Fujairah which they share with husbands, wives and children. In practice, the Safe Zone for many teachers during the academic year is usually their faculty workstations, college cafeterias, gym or faculty lounges (a). Safe Zones do not have space for students unless it is at the invitation of the faculty themselves. During the college day, faculty leave their Safe Zone and approach the Contact Zone where they meet and interact with Arabic students in the scheduled lessons (b). For most, they do this with well-prepared, student-focussed interactive lessons filled with innovative applications using educational technology. Their lessons are delivered largely undisturbed by student misbehaviour though strong classroom and lesson management
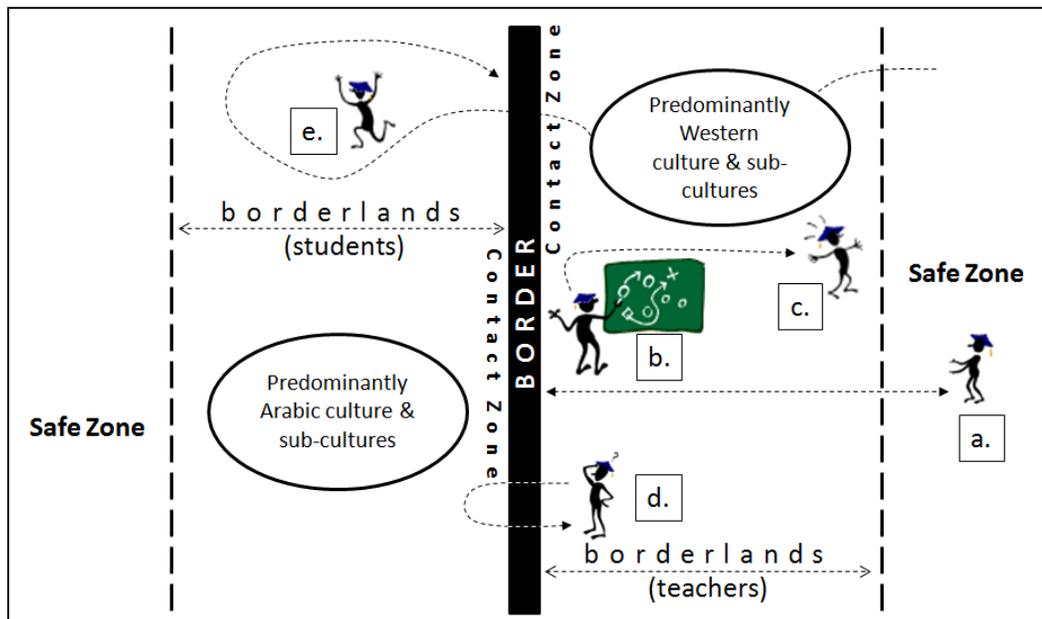
Figure 13: Model of the teacher border crossing experience at Fujairah Men's College

strategies ensure that students are kept busy with bite-sized, task-oriented activities. For many faculty, they enjoy the borderland experience with minimal discomfort – for some, the daily border crossing experiences are stressful resulting in fatigue, poor learning outcomes for the students, and often a one-time only HCT contract for three years (c).

Faculty who enjoy the cultural and educational interaction with their students may tentatively cross the border into the students' borderlands and return (d). This may happen during a lesson which is framed with an Arabic flavour or on a day fieldtrip with

the students on a bus. Finally, for some faculty who regularly cross the border, the cultural barrier appears to disappear and they remain with their students moving back and forth seamlessly between the two borderlands (e). I was an early border-crosser in the 1990s, accepting invitations to lunch and spending time with students outside of the normal contact hours. This practice was modelled by our then College Director, Norm Gray, who often spent the cooler winter months scuba-diving with Dubai Men's College students on the East Coast. Giroux (2005) highlights this final scenario when he states that "teachers become border-crossers through their ability to not only make different narratives available to themselves and other students but also by legitimating *difference* [my emphasis] as a basic condition for understanding the limits of one's own voice" (p. 146).

End Game

In June 2012, I re-assessed the Border Crossing Index to take into account the high student attrition since September 2011. I examined the distribution of BCI scores for all the new Foundations students in all levels and the Level 2 study cohort. In Figure 14, the BCI pattern of the remaining students (with their original BCI scores as of October

2011) has changed dramatically. By the end of the academic year in June 2012, there were no 'impossible' category students remaining in the program and over half of the 'difficult' category had left (23% down to 10%). Those students who were originally categorized as 'smooth' increased their percentage portion from 23% to 35%, highlighting their apparent cultural congruency and ease of the border crossing experience, facilitating their integration within the college culture which resulted in academic success. In Figure 15, the changing pattern of the percentages of each BCI category for the new Level 2 study cohort students reflects their apparent ability to manage their learning environment as the percentage of the 'managed' students increased from 47% to 62%. Over half of the new Level 2 students ended the year in Level 3. The 'difficult' students decreased by over half from 34% to 15% by the end of the academic year. Overall, the BCI appears to indicate that students categorized in 'difficult' to 'impossible' categories experience sufficient cultural dissonance to hasten their withdrawal from college.
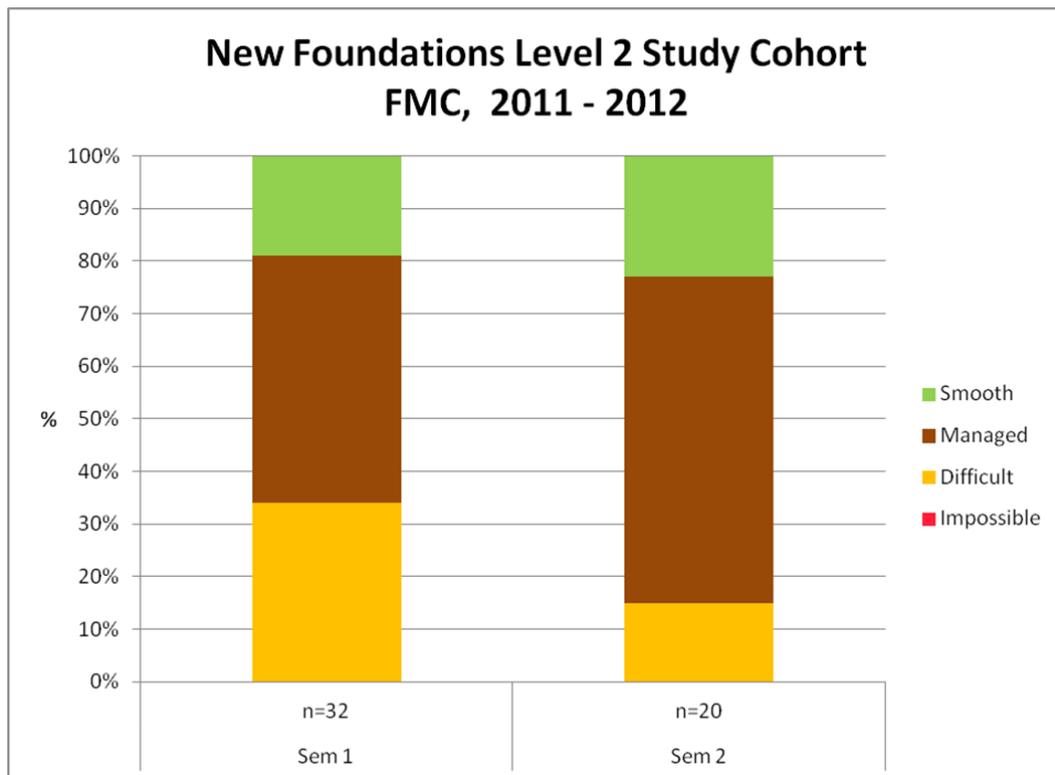
Figure 15: Comparative border crossing indices of new Level 2 study cohort students, 2011-2012

Discussion and Summary

It is clear that male Emirati students experience a range of cultural border crossings broadly based on the degree of worldview congruence – in other words, new Foundations students who enter into the higher Level 3 or 4 tend to experience smoother transitions from high school to college than do those in the lower level 1 or 2. Most students self-reported in the student focus group meeting of having 'managed' border crossing experiences, a phenomenon supported by the largest range of border crossing index scores (BCI) in Figures 6 and 7. Many arrive and leave more or less straight away, while those who remain for the student orientation program feel less worried and concerned than at the start of the program. In fact, of the 116 new Foundations students who arrived at the college door on Day 1 for the start of the first semester on 4 September 2011, only 32 students were left on last day of Semester 2 on 7 June 2012, with seven students having progressed successfully into their career programs – this means new students have just over a 25% chance of making it through the first year.

Due to the number and quality of the former HCT graduates who are now working as staff in the colleges, Fujairah-HCT is well aware of the problem of male student transition and is implementing programs to both assist students to settle-in as well as stem the tide of withdrawals and increase retention rates. However, the challenge facing most male Emiratis attending a HCT college remains one of 'fitting in' to the prevalent Western-based learning culture with scarcely any official attempt to meet the students at least halfway in terms of providing them with a learning culture that acknowledges their generally poor previous learning journey and establishes policies, guidelines and protocols to manage their difficult border crossing transitions. This "arrogance of ethnocentricity" (Maddock, 1981, p. 13) continues to undermine both HCT's grand vision as well as the country's recently adopted '2021 Vision' (Chapter 1).

While Mulholland and Wallace emphatically state that "crossing borders does not necessarily mean that new cultures are adopted and existing cultures abandoned" (2003, p. 882), it is clear that too many students feel this is simply not an option. Barba (1993, p. 1065) points out that "learning and culture are probably interdependent in that culturally familiar contexts and environments enhance learning", a view that the students overwhelmingly support as evidenced by their response to item 38 in the Student Survey "I like it when teachers use local information or Arabic examples to help me understand"

(almost 100% positive response rate across all four Foundations levels). What I am not arguing for here is a total and wholesale commitment to Vygotskian principles of learning based on social constructivism. I have strong views shared by others (Dahl, 2010; Abdulla & Ridge, 2011) that constructivism as an epistemological basis for classroom pedagogy may not be entirely appropriate for students who have just emerged from an essentially medieval education system not too far removed from religious madrasas with a teaching approach based on Koranic rote memorization techniques, teaching to the test, and an overtly intimidating teacher-centrism (*World Bank MENA ECD Report,* 2009; Ahmed, 2011; Al Subaihi, 2011; Nereim, 2012). In a report into the successes and failures of government high schools in the Sharjah Emirate, the researcher noted that "young people are supposed to acquire in school academic competencies that prepare them for college and university studies, skills and habits that allow them to live well, and the values and attitudes that enable them to compete in the labour market. This is simply not happening" (Zureik, 2005, p. 13).

What I am advocating is a commonsense recognition that the one-size-fits-all model of higher education does not fit here in the UAE. Male Emirati students for all the reasons outlined in these chapters require a culturally-familiar learning environment which respects their recent personal histories, assesses their prior learning, and establishes a launching-point for individualized learning programs enhanced with appropriate use of educational technology, challenging group-based tasks, and frequent feedback and celebration of successes. In the next chapter, we begin to move towards such a vision with a detailed description and assessment of young male Emiratis as people, and as learners.

CHAPTER 5: STUDENTS

حلم القطط كله فيران

Ḥilm al-quṭaṭ kullu fīrān

The dream of cats is all mice

To have a one-track mind.[27]

When I started at HCT in Dubai in 1995, the new Certificate-Diploma program had just started. This program offered a real choice for those less academic students and appeared to meet a need for more technician-level Emiratis in the workplace. In the Foundations program, assessment was based on competency vocational principles with students permitted numerous attempts at assessed tasks. Sometime during my first five years at HCT, I met 'Khalid', an angry young man who had a difficult family situation at home. As Academic Coordinator for Diploma Foundations students, I met him during a behavioural incident and on one occasion, I literally had to throw him out of my office. Eventually, he found his way into my term 4 Business course, and scratching my head to think of strategies to keep him on track, I ask 'Khalid' if he would like to complete the entire course using MS Powerpoint. He was delighted and promptly produced a magnificent 50-slide project with animations that I still retain today. 'Khalid' felt very proud of his achievement, especially when, in his first year in Diploma, he greatly impressed his Business teachers with his presentation. He went on to graduate and now works in a local bank in Dubai, a much happier young man who would often visit me at college long after his graduation.

Introduction

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[27] Arnander & Skipwith (1995)

In this Chapter, I begin by creating a *vignette* (see Chapter 3) featuring a fictitious Emirati student constructed from an amalgam of evidence in order to re-focus our gaze upon the individual. I then move on to examine in considerable detail the historical and current academic diagnostics of the male Emirati students studying in Foundations at FMC. Evidence from the surveys, case studies, student narratives and views of other people finally contribute to answering the second research question.

A Day In The Life

It is 7.00am and Bader wakes up in the small mountain village of Bithnah, where he lives in a huge sprawling double-storey concrete villa, consisting of numerous bedrooms and an infinite number of bathrooms, with his father and his father's second wife who is also his birth mother. He has six brothers and five sisters (four of whom are half-siblings from his father's first wife) but two brothers and three sisters live in other houses, some nearby, with their respective spouses and young children. His elderly father is close to retirement but still travels each week to Abu Dhabi where he holds the rank of captain in the UAE army, earning close to Dh30,000 a month. Bader remembers that he has a driving lesson at 7.30pm at the Fujairah National Driving Institute (FNDI) as his father has promised him a new Nissan Altima if he gets his driver's licence. Quickly showering, he puts on a crisp white *dishdasha* and ties a red and white checked *guttrah* around his head. Missing breakfast, he asks the family driver, Ali, to take him to FNDI for his lesson. Arriving late to college at around 8.10am, Bader slowly ambles through the gate and joins other Foundations students arriving at the same time, some of whom are in his class. He remembers his first day at college when he felt that he was entering an alien world full of Europeans who spoke English 'at him' after he walked through the doors into the large foyer of the college. That day remains in his memory but he now has a stronger sense of belonging as he has become more used to college life with its new, strange demands and expectations.

Walking through the classroom door at 8.15am, Bader is about to greet his classmates with a hearty "As-salāmu `alaykum" as is customary when an Arabic man enters a room but he notices that everyone is silently reading. Catching himself in time, he moves quietly to his desk placed in a group of four, opens his laptop bag to find his graded reader, "Titanic", and begins to read. He knows he will be marked 'late' by his teacher – it's already half-way through the first semester and he has almost 10% absences,

something he knows will attract the attention of the department Chair resulting in a shameful meeting with his father or older brother. Looking up for a moment from his book, Bader notices the gleaming technology in the room – the large, white Smartboard and video projector suspended from the ceiling, the teacher's laptop on a table connected to the Internet, and the clean whiteboards upon which the teacher has already written some notes. It is all so different from the government high-school where he had graduated just before summer with its chalk and blackboards, old tables and chairs in rows, and the locked library because the Principal was worried the books would be stolen. Though he loves his new college-approved laptop especially the online games and Internet Messenger (IM), he strangely likes the feel and smell of books and has promised himself to be extra diligent in reading more books for the rest of the semester.

His teacher, a blonde European female from Manchester, UK, wears different clothes almost every day – this is very different from his sisters when they leave the family home in their black *abayas*[28]. She is friendly and makes learning fun most of the time, something he is not used to after his high school days. He is now asked to look up at the Smartboard for a presentation about today's task. Though there are not as many words on the screen as there are in his graded reader, Bader still finds it difficult to 'read' the English letters and words, let alone understand what they mean. In Arabic, he asks his friends in his group what the task is but receives a stern look from his teacher who reminds all the students to view the presentation silently. Eventually, all the groups are ready to start – his teacher asks individual students to repeat the task instructions and Bader anxiously hopes she does not ask him. The group begins the task which involves them separately searching the Internet for the meanings of the key words listed on the screen. Bader notices the teacher walking around each group, squatting down to talk to the students, finding out how they are getting on with the task. When she approaches his tables, she asks Bader how many words he has found from the list. She is pleased with what he has accomplished so far in the lesson and praises him even though he arrived late to class. Before leaving for another group, she asks Bader's group what they think is the common thread linking all the words together – no one knows how to answer this question because at high school, they were always told what to do and what to think, and

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[28] An abaya is a simple, loose over-garment, essentially a robe-like black dress that is worn by all teenage and adult Muslim women over their private clothes in public places. It can be worn with the *niqāb*, a face veil covering all but the eyes. Some women also choose to wear long black gloves, so their hands are covered as well (*Abaya,* 2012).

they are not used to this type of interest or inquiry from a teacher in what students think. At school, their opinions did not matter most of the time.

10 o'clock comes around and as he missed his breakfast, he joins a few friends to drive quickly to their favourite local cafe in town where they buy their beloved *paratha* (a type of flat-bread popular throughout the Indian sub-continent) and chicken *biryani* (a rice-based dish made with spices, rice, meat, fish, eggs or vegetables). Arriving late back to college well after 11 o'clock, the group amble around to the back of the college to the changing rooms where they put on their shorts and t-shirts for their CPR lesson on the high ropes course. Only six students out of 17 in his class are wearing the required clothes. This week, Bader knows they will try the "Power Pole" – climbing a 10-metre wooden post, standing up on the top with an area not much bigger than a small side plate, and then leaping off to grab a trapeze about two metres away. He is greeted by the CPR teachers along with a good-natured joke –"did your camel get a flat tyre?" in reference to their lateness.

Laughing it off, Bader looks on as the first student puts on his safety harness and listens carefully to the safety instructions. Only a few students are looking on as the student begins his climb up the post – the other students not dressed for the lesson are chasing one another around, seemingly oblivious of the reason for the lesson. The student struggles a few times to get both feet on to the top of the post but eventually, he gingerly stands up and punches the air with delight, almost falling off in the process. Urged on by his teachers and a few students, he lunges out towards the trapeze rung, grabs it, but he cannot hold his weight and slips off, dangling in the air like a puppet on a string. He is lowered back to the ground and asks to have another try. This time, he makes it and the feeling of accomplishment and pride is very obvious as he slowly descends attached to the safety rope.

Bader's turn comes along all too quickly and at first, he feels he does not have the confidence to do it – he is worried that he will lose face in front of his friends if he fails at the task. Convinced by his teacher that he can do it, Bader puts on the harness, gets clipped to the safety rope and begins to climb the post. Like the first student he saw, he also struggles to get both feet on to the top of the post without losing his balance – even though he knows he is attached to a safety rope, he feels unsure and concerned about the

height. Overcoming his fears, he manages to stand up – nothing in his life to date apart from reaching 240 kph in his friend's sports car on the Kalba Road matches how he feels right now. Elated and proud, he focuses on the second part of the task and, gritting his teeth determinedly, he leaps off the post and firmly grasps the trapeze rung – somewhere below him, he hears some students and his teachers yelling and shouting 'mabrook' (congratulations). Letting the rung go, he feels the tug of the harness as the safety rope takes his weight and he begins his descent to the ground. As he takes off his harness and helmet, he reflects upon what he has just achieved – even though he does not quite understand why the college wants the students to attend the CPR lessons and what possible help they may have to pass his Foundations exams, he feels simply great.

After changing back into his *dishdasha*, he arrives at his Math lesson. He remembers too late that he left his Math textbook in his car and hopes the teacher will not notice. The lesson proceeds normally apart from one occasion when he is asked by the teacher what "4 times 7 equals". He does not have his calculator either and students are not allowed to use their mobile phones in class. Feeling embarrassed, he mumbles "25" which earns him a round rebuke for not doing his homework of learning his multiplication tables last week. Looking up at the classroom wall clock above the entrance door, he notices that it is almost lunchtime. After the teacher lets the class go, he and his friends rush out of the room without putting their chairs under the desks which are covered in the handouts from lesson. Running crazily down the stairs, almost bumping into one of the teachers walking up with a pile of books, Bader cannot wait to get outside and enjoy the company of his friends for an hour. He has become closer to his friends at college, united in their common experience of managing a new way of learning, a new way of life. He cannot wait to start his Engineering degree after Foundations even though he is a little worried that as an arts-stream student in high school, he does not have strong Math skills – even so, he will be with most of his friends which is one of the reasons he chose the course.

Two English classes after lunch go by without incident and at 4 o'clock, Bader walks back outside the college gates, checking to see that Ali is waiting for him. Arriving back home, he feels tired and after a small lunch prepared by the maid, he goes to sleep for a couple of hours. Waking up and finding it still light, he rushes outside to play football with the other village kids on the stony bare ground in the centre of Bithnah – Bader loves football and was very excited to learn that the great Argentinean player, Maradona,

is going to coach a famous football club in Dubai. When it gets too dark to play, he returns home around 8.00pm, showers and goes into the lounge to watch television with his family. He hears his birth mother busily preparing the evening meal with the family cook. Just after 9.00pm, Bader sits down on the floor covered with cushions and carpets to eat the huge meal of a half a roasted lamb placed on a bed of flavoured rice. Using his right hand to curl up small balls of meat and rice, Bader nosily enjoys the family atmosphere, feeling completely rested and untroubled. He tells everyone about his experience on the ropes course but most people in his family do not understand why he is asked to stand on top of a wooden post and not remain in his classroom learning English and Math from books.

After the evening meal, he visits his grandmother and has a chat with her – she seems to understand what he experienced today at college but she also urges him to work hard, reminding him of the difficult days before electricity arrived in the late 1970s, how hard everyone had to work to simply survive. Climbing into his bed after completing his *Isha'a*[29] prayer, he drifts off to sleep after remembering he forgot to do his English homework – he'll wake up a little earlier tomorrow morning and get it done before going to college.

Inspired by Marilyn Dahl's 'Ahmed and Aysha', two descriptions of a typical day in the lives of an Emirati young man and woman enrolled in an institution of higher education (Dahl, 2010, pp. 5-9), Bader's 'day' is an amalgam of experiences and observations made during the 16 years I worked at HCT together with notes obtained from student case studies, focus groups, surveys, and interviews during the research period. The vignette has also been shared with FMC faculty who have validated its verisimilitude. It also serves to update Dahl's "Ahmed's Day" by downplaying concerns such as female teachers and re-centering a rather skewed view of male Emiratis as a zombified group of unmotivated, de-incentivized and naive students, seemingly random and directionless in their behaviours (pp. 5-8). It reminds us all that this research is concerned with *individual* male Emiratis coming to a place of higher education, each with their own motivation, background, and view of the world. Bader's story is just one of many thousands of stories that reflect modern Arabic life in the UAE. Some are similar to

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[29] The five daily prayers are obligatory for all Muslims and they are performed at times determined by the position of the sun in the sky – the final prayer, *Isha'a*, is usually performed between 20:00 and midnight.

Bader, many are different because young male Emiratis today are situated at the confluence of the 'old and modern', the 'known and the unknown', the 'certain and the uncertain'. Though many of them share similar cultural values, customs, and behaviours, let us not forget the purpose of this thesis which is to improve the academic experience of *all* male Arabic Emirati high school students as they make a difficult cultural border crossing into the essentially Western-based model of higher education. Bader may not know exactly what he wants to do with his life – how many 18 year-old boys do? – but he does appear to value his college experiences as he grapples to understand and react to the new expectations and demands. Bader's cultural, emotional, behavioural, and pedagogical transition will be explored in more depth in this chapter as I seek to answer the second key research question - what do male Emirati post-secondary learners bring with them to the College that both enhance and hinder their learning?

In answering this question, I have produced detailed diagnostics of the study cohort's age, final high school grades, CEPA scores, college grades, and attendance. In addition, I have administered several surveys – Student Survey, VARK, Multiple Intelligences, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Mental Toughness Questionnaire, Intrinsic Motivation Survey, Working Parents Survey, and Learning Process Questionnaire (see Chapter 3) – to assess their border crossing experiences and their perception of college life, motivation, persistence and resilience, confidence and emotional control, multiple intelligences, learning style preferences, and cultural attitudes and values. Supplementing the survey research, students have written short stories about the school, home, and college lives which have provided insight into their individual viewpoints from each of these critical areas. Case studies have afforded an in-depth exploration of the border crossing index – two students produced video journals over the first semester which has provided additional confirmatory material. Finally, observations from teachers (Foundations and non-Foundations), non-teaching HCT staff, and external non-HCT personnel added to a rich *bricolage* of data, opinion, observations, and impressions from which I examined and assessed those elements students bring with them that both enhance and hinder their learning.

The Study Cohort

On the 4 September 2011, 271 students found their way to Fujairah Men's College (FMC) at the start of the new academic year – of this number, 82 students were returning

after having already completed a year (two semesters) or half a year (one semester) in Foundations while for 189 brand new students, this day drew a line in the sand as a demarcation point from which some of their lives would never be the same. At the start of the 2011-2012 academic year, Foundations students accounted for 62% of the total FMC student population of 441 (see Figure 1). For the purpose of this research, I decided to focus on the Level 2 cohort consisting initially of 94 students of which 24 were returning students having been either promoted up from Level 1 or repeating Level 2 due to course failure in the previous semester. Another factor that reflected the reality of Level 1 is the historically poor student retention – I wanted a reasonable sized cohort of students to remain at college for at least one academic year. Consequently, Level 4 students who generally remain for only one semester precluded themselves from this study for the same reason – they would not remain for a year. Finally, the Level 3

Level	Returning/ Promoted	Returning/ Repeating	New[30]	CEPA Placement Range for new students	Total
Level 1	N/A	0	61	140 – 149	**61**
Level 2	13	11	70	150 - 159	**94**
Level 3	10	5	40	160 - 169	**55**
Level 4	38	5	18	170 - 179	**61**
Total	**61**	**21**	**189**		**271**

Figure 1: Foundations student population by level, status and CEPA range at FMC, 4 September, 2011

students would have consisted of around 40% returning students and administratively, it would have been difficult to isolate this group from the other new Level 3 students.

75% of the Level 2 cohort consisted of new students directly from high schools in the Fujairah Emirate, the highest percentage of new students per level apart from Level 1 (100%). The decision to focus on the Level 2 students was additionally supported by the CPR team who developed the new College Preparation and Readiness course for implementation in the 2011-2012 academic year (see Chapter 7 for details). In our discussions, it was felt by all that the Level 2 students could form the 'core group' within Foundations as they remain the longest within the program (three semesters) apart

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[30] New students include UAE University students who complete the Foundations requirements at FMC.

from Level 1 students who tend not to remain at all. We felt that if we could deliver an experiential program that focussed on personal and professional development in a holistic and meaningful way, we could create a dynamic and positive group of students that would define the values of the Foundations program and provide informal leadership to new students entering the program. With this in mind, CPR$^+$ was developed specifically to provide Level 2 students with "an extra 2 hours of experiential instruction per week supplemented with interventions that will develop learners' abilities in the areas of challenge, commitment, confidence and control, vis-à-vis Mental Toughness" (Appendix A).

There are three other groups of students within Foundations that I identified as comparative groups for the purpose of this research – the first of these groups are the group of new students consisting of all the new level 2 students together with a random selection of new students from level 1, 3 and 4. The second group consists of all the Level 2 students, both new and returning while the third group consists of all the Foundations students, both new and returning. These groups provide a means for comparing key variables across all levels in order to identify level effect – a summary of these groups may be seen in Figure 2.

Due to difficulties in establishing settled sections of Foundations students, I did not visit the college (apart from a day visit on Day 1 to assess the new student orientation program) until 22 September, three weeks from the start of the semester. Firstly, these

Study Groups	Returning/ Promoted	Returning/ Repeating	New	Total
Level 2 Study Cohort	0	0	32	32
New Students all levels	0	0	61	61
Returning Level 2 students	13	11	70	94
All Foundations	61	21	189	271

Figure 2: Research study groups as at 4 September, 2011

difficulties of which I had almost always encountered in my six years as Chair, consisted of a steady stream of new students (29) who joined Foundations within the first 10 days.

61% of these late arrivals were in the lower Levels 1 and 2. These students missed the student orientation program and often arrived with a poor attitude consistent with "I'll wait here at college until something better comes along". In most cases, these late-comers do not last the first semester (see Arrive late, leave early section in Chapter 6). Secondly, another factor which exacerbates the establishment of settled sections is the 'over-stacking' of students in sections by up to 50%. Typically, Chairs want class sizes of somewhere around 21 students though English faculty in particular strongly feel that a class size of 15 students is more suitable and ideal for English lessons. In the first week of the first semester, there are sometimes sections with over 25 students though this quickly reduces due to the usual attrition along with efforts to equalize section numbers by shuffling students between large and smaller sections (it is notoriously difficult to prise Emirati students away from a group in which they have already bonded). High numbers of students in sections causes resource issues (furniture and textbooks) and may in fact contribute towards some students leaving college early due to the perception of insufficient resourcing, overcrowded classrooms, and a poor learning environment.

Finally, the third factor is the late distribution of the HCT-approved student laptops, again a planning conundrum that all male colleges face in response to the uncertainty of student enrolment and the impact of early attrition. The student laptop is a key element in HCT's marketing campaign to entice students to come to college even though it is not provided free – the laptop comes bundled with all the required software and a three year maintenance contract. Students often complain about the price as they can usually find a cheaper alternative in the marketplace. However, the cost-benefits stack up very much in the students' favour as they are given a replacement laptop if their laptop needs to be repaired and they have unfettered 24/7Internet access at college. Faculty have planned most of their lessons to be delivered through the Blackboard Vista learning management system, the local network, or the Internet so any delay in distributing the student laptops contributes not only to frustration by the students but also among faculty who need to prepare extra hard-copy lessons for the first few weeks without laptops.

In summary, the start of a new academic year is frustrating, chaotic, and unsettled due to the factors outlined above. As hinted previously, this atmosphere may contribute, at least in part, to some students leaving college earlier than expected. By the time I arrived on

22 September to meet the study cohort for the first time, the program overall had largely settled down, around thirty new students had already withdrawn, and the student laptops had been mostly distributed.

The Level 2 Study Cohort – Diagnostics

Meeting the Level 2 students for the first time as an outsider (I had resigned in June 2011 as Chair of Foundations at FMC) was a little intimidating – no longer had I the authority or position from which to persuade, cajole and encourage! However, I knew enough to know things were still settling down, that both the students and the faculty would not appreciate my presence at that time. Therefore, I focussed initially on the Foundations faculty, conducting individual interviews while obtaining diagnostic and other relevant information about the students from Student Services. By the time I finally obtained their data around mid October, the Level 2 cohort had dropped by just over a third to 62 students scattered more or less equally across three sections. Of the total Level 2 population, 32 were new students. An overview of their main diagnostics may be seen in Figure 3.

Apart from the descriptive statistics which will be discussed shortly, it is interesting to note the UAEU cohort (see Changes in Foundations section, Chapter 7) in Level 2 exceeded the HCT students across all the pre-enrolment academic diagnostics particularly in the high school English, high school Average, and CEPA math scores. The CEPA placement range for level 2 students is between 150 and 159 (see Figure 1) and the mean CEPA score for the Level 2 study cohort is 152.25 with a median of 153 and a standard deviation of 5.19. Figure 4 graphically displays their CEPA scores and it

Stream	N	Mean age (years)	HS English (%)	HS Math (%)	HS Ave (%)	CEPA (Scaled Score)	CEPA Writing (Band)	CEPA Math (Score)
HCT	20	18.76	72.38	82.67	79.67	151.67	2.07	139.67
UAEU	12	18.78	75.05	82.83	83.07	153.36	2.14	146.00
Mean		**18.77**	**73.33**	**82.73**	**80.84**	**152.25**	**2.11**	**141.84**

is evident the distribution is highly negatively left-skewed (-1.8), a direct result of a number of smaller values (a minimum score of 133) pulling the distribution mean downwards. Historically, the new Foundations students enrolling at Fujairah Men's College present with some of the lowest CEPA scores among the male colleges in the HCT system (see Figure 5) – the lowest CEPA score by college location in each academic year is highlighted in red. The disparity in English and Math proficiency between the lower and upper Foundations streams is not only highlighted in Figure 6 but also illustrates the fluctuating trends in CEPA English scores, despite the massive curriculum focus by school principals, high school English faculty, and the Ministry of Education in the high schools (*CEPA*, 2012). In fact, the percentage of CEPA scores above 180 (the minimum requirement for direct entry into the programs of study at all three federal higher education organizations) has decreased from 13.2% in 2009 to 4.1% in 2011 while those CEPA scores below 150 (the minimum acceptable level for entry into Foundations or Academic Bridge programs) have increased from 23.2% in 2009 to 30.4% in 2011 (see Appendix M). In other words, new Foundations students placed in the lower levels are severely 'at risk' from the very first day they enter the college (see Figure 5, Chapter 1). Demographically, all the new Level 2 study cohort students live within the Fujairah Emirate either in the main cities of Fujairah, Khorfakkan, Kalba and Dibba or smaller mountain villages such as Bithnah or Masafi.
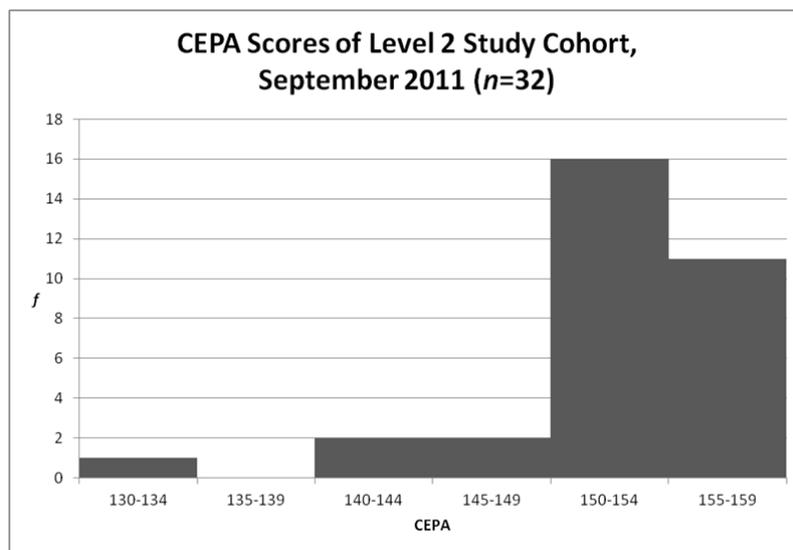
Figure 4: CEPA scores of the Level 2 Study Cohort as at 4 September, 2011

Tribally, the most dominant group in the study cohort is Dhanhani (7 students) followed by Al Yammahi (3) and Hefaiti (2). They generally live with their parents and siblings in large compounds that consist of a large central villa with several other smaller buildings such as garages, servants' quarters, and supply/storage rooms. Family sizes are large not only compared to Western families but also within the UAE itself where urban Emirati families consist of between 5-7 individuals compared to rural families that typically exceed 12 or more individuals (El-Haddad, 2003; *Analyzing the results of the household budget survey*, 2009).

Location	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Abu Dhabi	151	149	157	153	156	156	154	155
Al Ain	140	134	**145**	147	148	149	150	154
Dubai	159	159	164	151	166	167	166	167
Fujairah	**141**	**132**	**145**	**142**	**147**	**145**	**147**	**146**
Mad. Zayed	N/A	N/A	**145**	147	**141**	**144**	**144**	148
RAK	**138**	138	151	148	151	153	151	151
Sharjah	148	145	154	150	159	160	157	155

Figure 5: Average CEPA English scores of male HCT applicants, 2004-2011 (HCT internal document)

	Average CEPA		Average CEPA Math	
	Lower (LF/L1&2)	Upper (HF/L3&4)	Lower (LF/L1&2)	Upper (HF/L3&4)
2007-01	150.5	152.7	148.0	150.4
2008-01	148.5	169.0	149.9	168.5
2009-01	142.9	161.5	138.8	158.7
2010-01	143.0	165.4	131.1	152.1
2011-01	148.5	167.7	138.6	154.1

Figure 6: Average CEPA English and Math scores of confirmed students at FMC, 2007-2011 (HCT internal document)

The Level 2 Study Cohort – Evidence

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For most of the study cohort, their morning lessons begin at 8.00am. Many of them arrive on time and park their cars in the large area directly in front of the college, between the main road to Masafi and the college fence. On average they spend 19 hours a week in formal classes at college – 4 hours of Spoken English, 8 hours of Reading, and 7 hours for Writing, each with a different course outline and set of learning outcomes, course textbook, and teacher (see Appendix N). In addition to these formal contact hours at which attendance is mandatory and is recorded each lesson, Level 2 students have four CPR[+] lessons, two of which are scheduled during their Spoken English hours and the other two with a CPR facilitator in another venue such as classroom, room 145 (a much larger classroom) or outside on the football ground or on the ropes courses. The lower levels do not attempt the HCT Math courses until they reach level 3. In total, the level 2 study cohort spends 23 hours at college from Sunday to Thursday with students leaving the college most days around 2.00pm. Like 'Bader', half of them may leave college for town during the morning break to buy the food they like but for the most part, they remain in college during the day where a few will find their way into the Student Success Centre or the library to select another graded reader. A very few may go to the college gym. Most seem to spend much of their non-contact time talking and laughing in small groups either sitting outside on the outdoor furniture during the cooler winter months or on the sofas in the main foyer of the college during summer.

What the surveys tell us – VARK

The VARK learning preferences questionnaire is described in Chapter 3. The learning modalities for the study cohort and two comparative groups may be seen in Figure 7 – they range from declared preferences for visual, aural, read/write, kinesthetic and multi-modal (any combination of the four singular preferences) modalities.

Comparing the three pie charts, the returning Level 2 students declare much stronger for multi-modal learning preferences (the result of 1-2 semesters at FMC?) while the study cohort and the Arabic respondents from the VARK database consistently display similar patterns of modalities with almost identical proportions of declared modalities across the five categories. Students and respondents declaring multi-modalities consistently exceed 50% of the distributions, reaching a maximum of 91% in the returning level 2 group.

Figure 8 shows the declared modalities of the previous Diploma Foundations students (similar to Levels 1 and 2) and the total database respondents from 2011 that crudely represent an international norm of declared learning preferences. Again, these pie graphs highlight a consistently similar pattern of declared VARK modalities for Arabic learners. Overall, a major difference is noticeable between the 2011 level 2 study cohort and the Diploma Foundations stream in 2002 (comparable academic groups) - the read/write modality in 2011 (7%) has decreased by almost two-thirds from a decade ago (19%), a troubling statistic given the huge amount of effort and money expended to improve

VARK Declared Learning Modalities, Level 2 Study Cohort, October 2011 (n=32)

- V: 3%
- A: 13%
- R: 7%
- K: 17%
- MM: 60%

VARK Declared Learning Modalities, Returning Level 2, October 2011 (n=28)

- V: 0%
- A: 4%
- R: 0%
- K: 5%
- MM: 91%
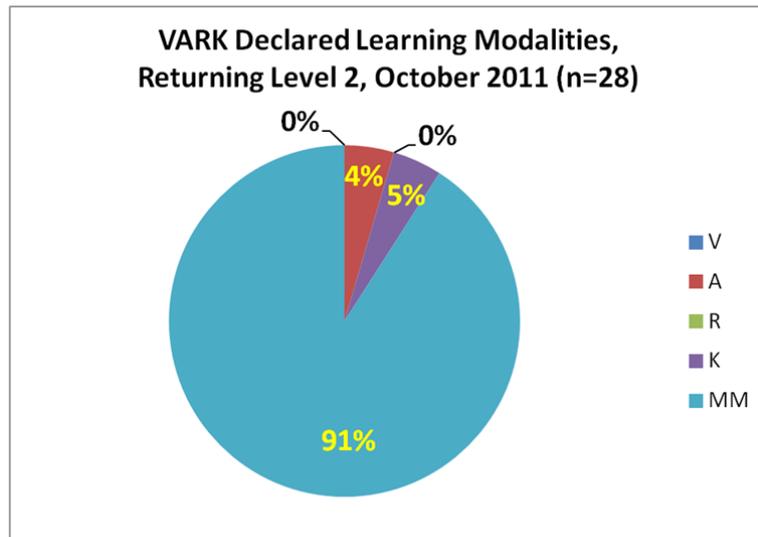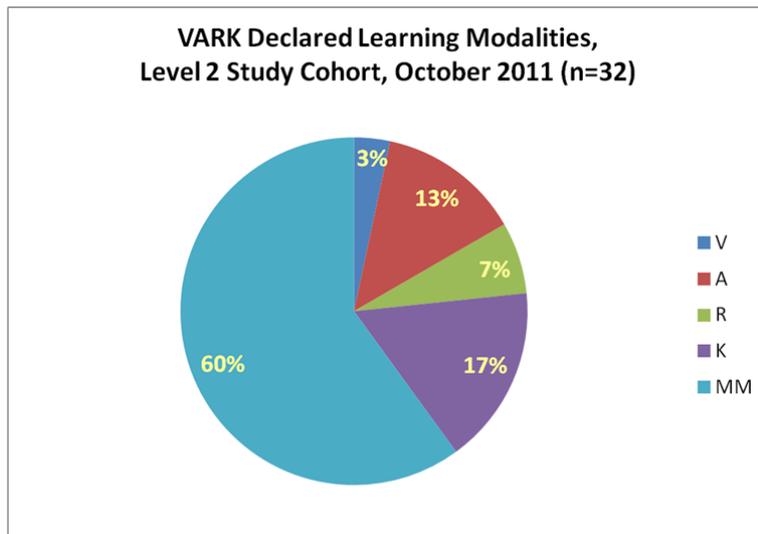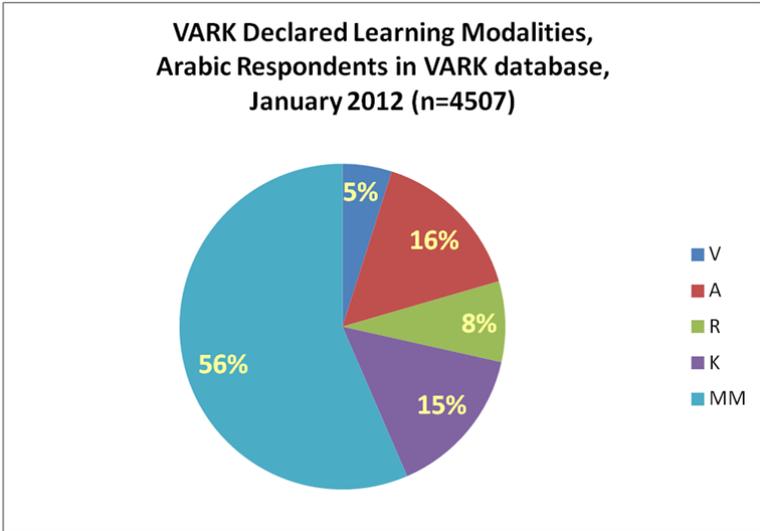
Figure 7: VARK modalities for study cohort and two comparative groups
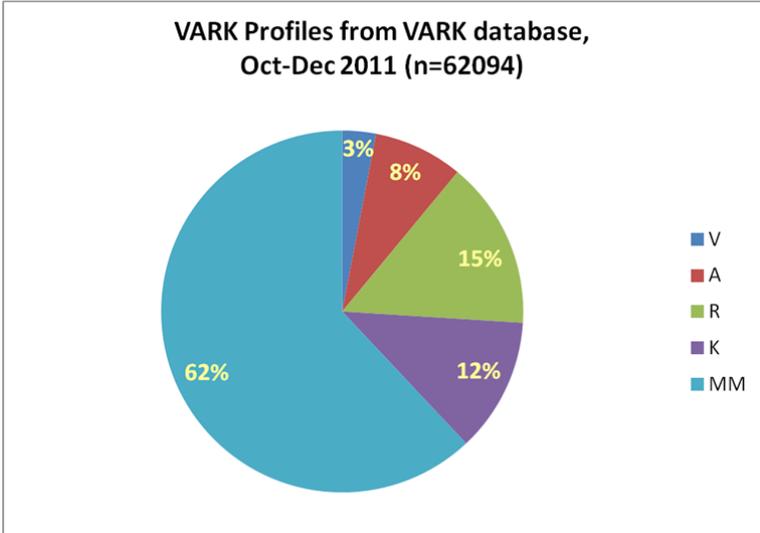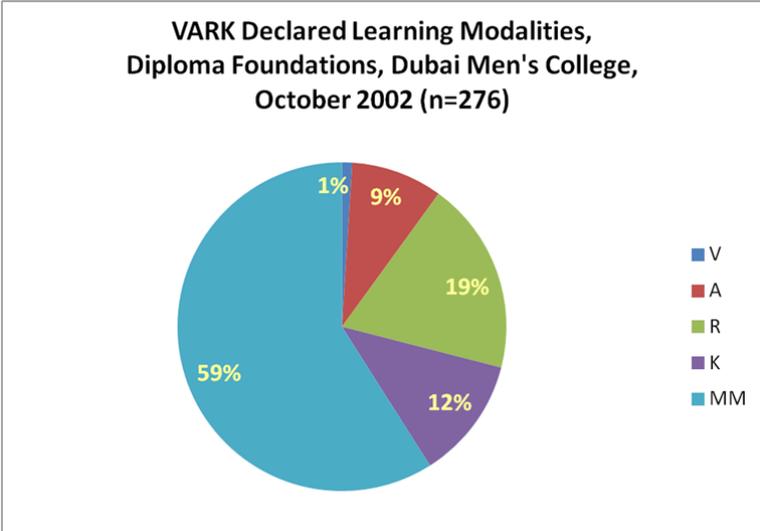
Figure 8: VARK modalities from 2002 DMC survey and online database

the quality of government secondary school education. In their research, the reliability estimates for the scores of the VARK subscales were 0.85, 0.82, 0.84 and 0.77 respectively for the visual, aural, read/write and kinesthetic subscales (Leite, Svinicki & Shi, 2010, pp. 15-16).

Implications for teaching and learning approaches are obvious – male Emirati students arrive at college with a diverse range of preferred ways to input and produce information. Male Emirati students enter a classroom largely all dressed in white dishdashas, with some form of headwear (baseball cap or *gutra*), and black facial hair on brown skin. You do not usually see the variety of dress attire that one would normally expect in a typical Western college. Therefore, it may be easy to leap to the conclusion that Emirati students are largely homogeneous and tend to act and behave in very similar ways. VARK cautions us all by asking us to consider the diversity of learning styles that consistently reflect patterns observed across the level 2 study cohort to the Arabic respondents' declarations as well as the VARK international norm as shown in figure 8. VARK especially queries the suitability of formal standard classroom curriculum delivery given the high percentage of both kinesthetic and multi-modal learners. It behoves faculty to 'mix up' the curriculum delivery formats by moving back and forth between textbooks, online, visual material, reading and writing, listening and doing, especially not remaining in any one or two modalities for long (for example, avoiding auditory overload by limiting excessive teacher talking time).

Six returning level 2 students failed the first semester and were dismissed from college for a lack of academic progress. Four of the six students had a VARK Type II learning preference and the other two had a kinesthetic and multi-modal visual-read/write modality. In an email correspondence with the inventor of VARK, Neil Fleming, he confirmed that these VARK Type II students would have needed to use *all their preferences* [my emphasis] to obtain an understanding that suits their learning needs. Neil went on to say that they "are more likely to miss out on some modes and therefore not learn as well as some others, and conversely, if they did get the inputs they required, they would have a better understanding (from at least four perspectives) than others" (personal correspondence). There were other factors at play here, of course – five of the

six students experienced 'managed' or 'difficult' border crossing transitions, most declared medium to low motivation, and all scored low to very low (<3) Mental Toughness scores (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 7). However, the probability of four out of six failed students possessing the same VARK profile is very low indeed (4%), and therefore, it seems logical to consider the teaching and learning environment as one of several key factors that may have contributed to their dismissals. A more thorough discussion of the teaching and learning implications takes place in Chapter 6.

What the surveys tell us – Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences afford a considerably broader view and assessment of an individual's potential beyond the narrow perspective of cognitive ability (see Chapter 3). The results of the survey may be viewed in Figure 9. The 32 students declared a total of 1397 intelligences (each intelligence inventory consists of ten possible behaviours to which students are invited to respond) with existential, intrapersonal, and bodily-kinesthetic declarations coming in the top three places respectively. Initially, there were only seven intelligences but two more have been added and accepted by educational researchers. Gardner himself did not want to commit to a purely spiritual intelligence, but felt that the ability to contemplate phenomena or questions beyond sensory data, an "existential" intelligence, may be a useful construct (Gardner, 2004). Given the fact that all male Emiratis are Muslim by faith, it is not surprising they declared strongest in this intelligence. The second-equal highest intelligences are intrapersonal and bodily-kinesthetic. Intrapersonal intelligence
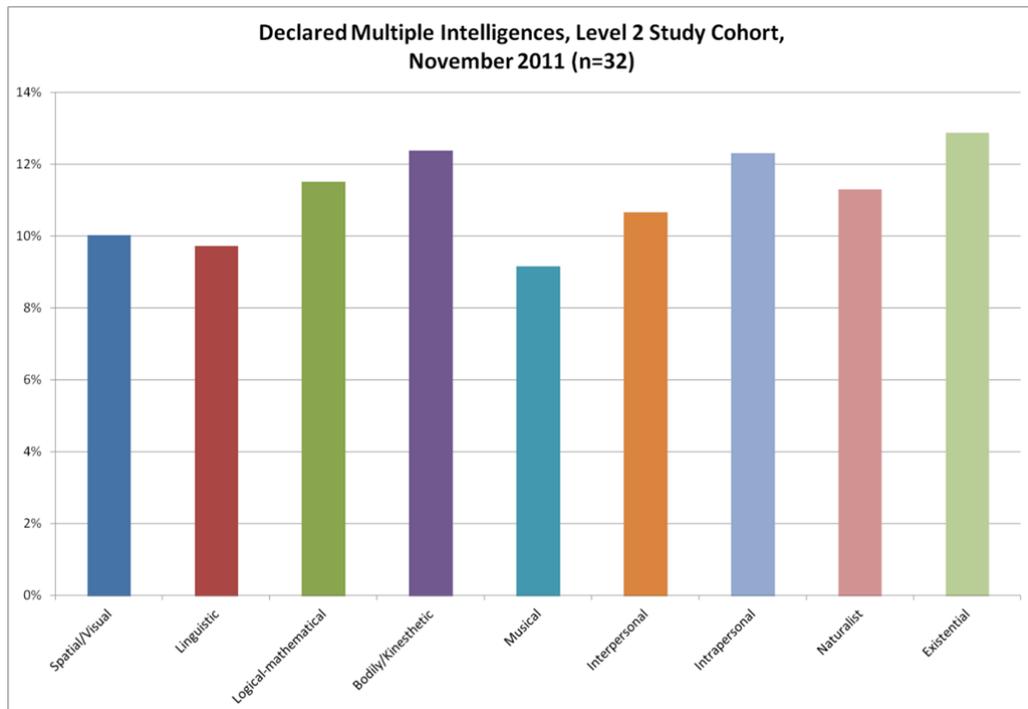
Figure 9: Declared multiple intelligences of the level 2 study cohort, November 2011

concerns an individual's awareness of one's own feelings and the ability to discriminate among them and draw upon them to guide behaviour – it is fundamentally a declared self-knowledge of "one's own strengths, weaknesses, desires, and intelligences" (Gardner & Hatch, 1989, p. 6). A high placing in bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is unsurprising given the mean age of the study group (18.8 years). Young males anywhere in the world are restless and most need to actively participate in sports and other physical activities during the week. This may also explain why many students find the classroom and "bookish" teaching approaches difficult to manage – only 25% of the students in the first student focus meeting reported they felt their kinesthetic learning needs were being met. This figure is probably higher given 16 of the 18 of the students in the level 2 study cohort who declared to be multi-modal had a 'k' or kinesthetic element in either their bi-modal, tri-modal or four-modal VARK preferences. There were negligible differences in declared intelligences between the level 2 study cohort and the returning student population of Level 2.

In 2002, I used the same Multiple Intelligences survey to provide additional and corroborative data on the Diploma Foundations students at Dubai Men's College. The

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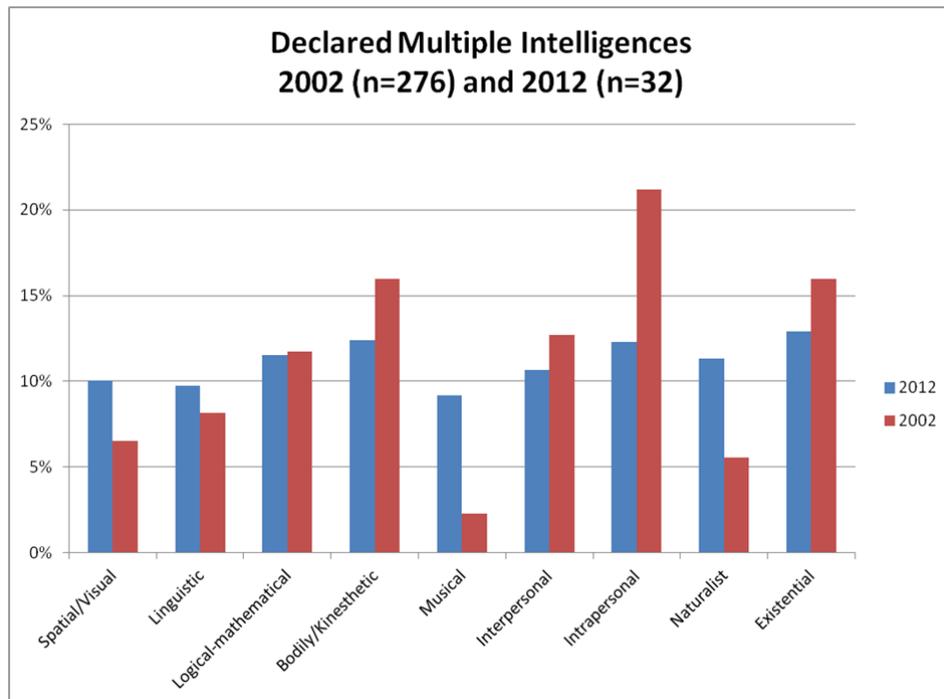
Figure 10: Comparison of declared Multiple Intelligences between 2002 and 2012

comparative data may be seen in Figure 10 – several similarities and differences are observable. First, the top three intelligences – existential, intrapersonal, and bodily-kinesthetic – retain their places between 2002 and 2012. Second, the 2012 students declared over 4.5 times more intelligences than the 2002 cohort. Third, there appears to be dramatic shifts in terms of musical and naturalist intelligences, probably in response to a greater social and parental acceptance of the place of modern music (Western and Arabic) in the lives of young Arab men as well as a growing awareness of a myriad of ecological and environmental issues facing not only local Fujairah communities but also the global community as a whole.

What the surveys tell us – Cultural dimensions and orientations

Cultural dimensions and orientations were discussed in Chapter 2 and the survey instrument reviewed in Chapter 3. Eight dimensions and orientations were explored - rules and relationships, groups and individuals, affective and neutral, achievement and ascription, large and small power distance, weak and strong uncertainty avoidance, sequential and synchronic views of time, and long and short term orientation. Apart from exploring the level 2 study cohort's responses and then comparing these to the entire level 2 student population, the aim here is to compare these results in terms of those
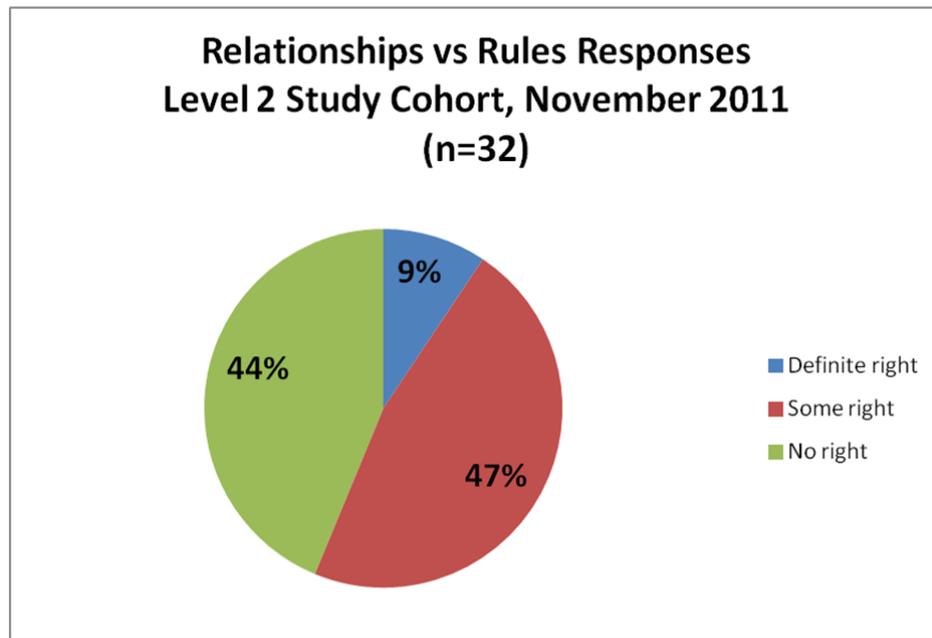
Figure 11: Responses to relationships vs rules 'car accident' scenario, November 2011

predicted for Arab countries by the three authors in their respective books – *Cultural Consequences* by Geert Hofstede and *Riding the Waves of Culture* by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner. The study cohort's responses to scenario #1 (car accident involving an injured pedestrian – see Chapter 3) may be seen in Figure 11 and indicate some unexpected cultural ambiguity (44%) with regard to the right of their friend to ask for 'protection' in an extreme situation. Communities that value rules apply them in almost all situations, however extreme; those communities that value relationships tend to focus on the particular nature of the problem or situation at hand, usually in the immediate present – individuals raised in these latter communities will generally act in ways that protect another individual, "no matter what the rules say" (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 31). For those of us who have always believed that Arabic people are very relational, these results are surprising – over 90% of the group declared that their friend had 'some right' or 'no right' to ask them for help, and when the police finally arrived, 69% declared they would tell the police that their friend was driving faster than the indicated speed limit. Based on these responses, 21% of the students displayed 'universalist' attitudes, believing that rules are more important than people, on most occasions.

Hofstede's work may assist us here in understanding these results. His uncertainty avoidance index measures how much members of a society are anxious about the unknown, and as a consequence, attempt to cope with anxiety by minimizing uncertainty. In cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance, people prefer explicit rules (for example, about religion and food) and formally structured activities. In cultures with weak uncertainty avoidance, people prefer implicit or flexible rules or guidelines and informal activities. Arab countries (Jordan, Saudi Arabia and UAE) declared medium to high uncertainty avoidance (score of 68 with a mean of 53 among 50 countries) placing them 27th in rank (Hofstede, 2001, p. 150-151). 63% of the study cohort selected for high uncertainty avoidance after viewing the animated scenario #6 (see Appendix G). This tendency to avoid uncertainty is usually resolved by respecting social traditions and customs as well as abiding by the rule of moral or legal authority.

In the second scenario where the students eavesdropped into a brief conversation between two people discussing groups and individuals, 53% of the study cohort reported that they agreed with the first speaker who spoke strongly in favour of individual rights and freedom (see Figure 12). In Hofstede's study of individualism versus collectivism, he found that Arab countries had a medium low score of 38 which denotes them as collectivist countries – this appears to contradict the study cohorts' declarations though the returning students declared 65% in favour of collectivism. When Hofstede combined the two scores from uncertainty avoidance and individualism, Arab countries were classified as "strong uncertainty avoidance/collectivist" (2001, p. 249). When the overall responses from all the Level 2 students in the individualism and uncertainty avoidance scenarios were collected, they tended to support Hofstede's view of Arab countries as described above.

When the study cohort were asked if they would tell another student at college how they felt if they were upset about the student treating them unfairly, almost 70% said they would tell the student they were upset with them (this is consistent between the study cohort and returning level 2 students). Affective versus neutral countries were measured by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) who found that while many Arab
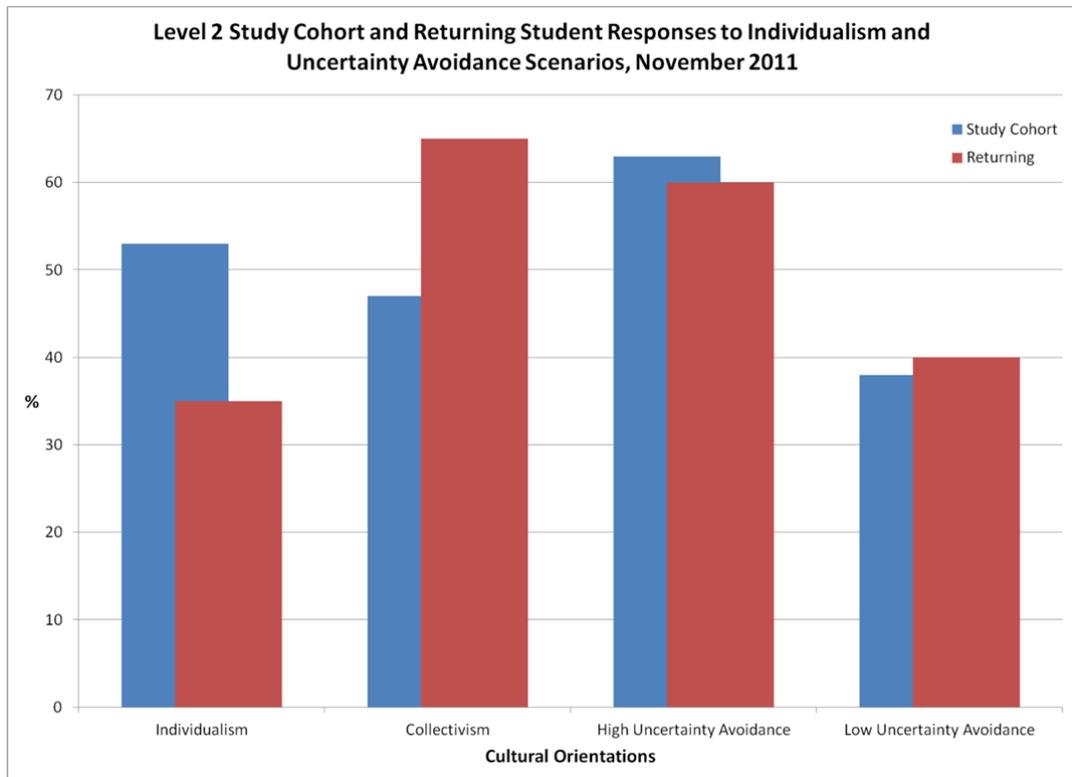
Figure 12: Individualism and Uncertainty Avoidance responses, Level 2, November 2011

countries (Kuwait, Egypt, Oman, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia) reported they would openly show their emotions (affective), the UAE clearly beat the US and the UK with a score of 48% of Emirati respondents who said they would *not* show their emotions openly (neutral). Japan came second with a score of 74%, clearly portraying their traditional cultural trait of 'inscrutability' as perceived by the outside world. Again, my research appears to provide a contradiction to what was predicted from these major studies.

"All societies give certain of their members higher status than others, signalling that unusual attention should be focussed upon such people and their activities" (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 105). In some societies and communities, status is accorded by what they have achieved, an excellent example of which is Sir Richard Branson from the UK who, as a failed academic with dyslexia, went on to build the Virgin group of companies, one of the best known brands in the world. This 'achieved' status is also lavished upon movie stars and entertainers across all cultures around the world. In contrast, societies which accord status by virtue of someone's age, class, gender, education and background reflects an 'ascribed', not achieved, status. In Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's research, they found that approximately 50%-63%

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of respondents in Arab countries (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman) disagreed that a person's status was dependent on his family background. Norwegian respondents felt very strong that the measure of a person is through what he or she has achieved (94% disagreed). My research appears to support a preferred ascribed status in the Arab
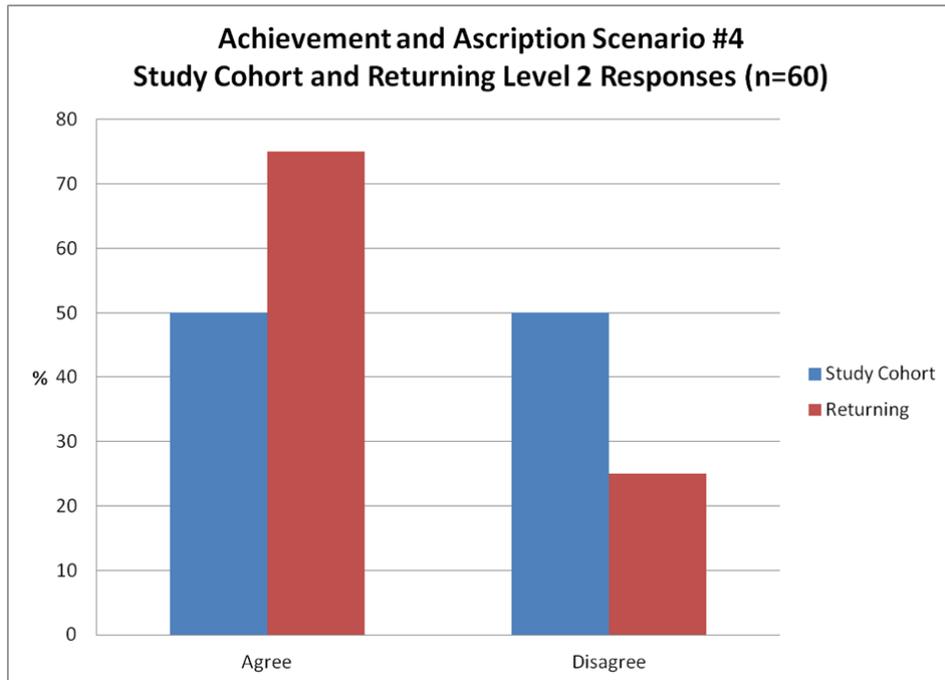
Figure 13: Achieved versus ascribed status responses, Nov 2011

world as reflected by the student responses in Figure 13 though the study cohort students declared evenly for either choice. In following this up with the first student focus group, I asked them to tell me why most level 2 students (over 60%) felt that a person's status comes from his family background. Most of the students said that the respect an individual person receives does not come from the family background. However, when I asked them what effect on their families, if any, occurs if they get into trouble at college or with the police, they all agreed that the family image would suffer. In discussion with Arabic moderator after the meeting, he offered these thoughts – "the big families especially bring up their children to behave in a way that only brings respect to the family. The child is a 'mirror' of the family." By 'big', he was alluding to the established Fujairah families that have already accrued high ascribed status within the community. Clearly, as evidenced by some students' strong declaration of a preference

for individualism (46%), there appears to be some tension in their own minds about their roles as both individuals and as a member of an Emirati family.

Following on from this discussion, Hofstede's power distance index measures the ways people perceive power differences. In societies with small power distance indices, people expect and accept power relations that are more consultative and democratic as opposed to large power distance societies where the less powerful accept power relations that are autocratic and paternalistic (Hofstede, 2001, p. 83). According to Hofstede, being human implies inequality which occurs by virtue of our physical and mental characteristics, social status and prestige, wealth, power, and laws, rights and privileges (p. 80). 94% and 100% of the study cohort and returning level 2 students respectively declared for low power distance when presented with the animated scenario #5 (see Appendix G). My observations of Arabic (Emirati and others) employees over the years suggests that the workplace environment tends to increase the awareness of power distances and the choices made from this scenario most probably reflect the context of friends at college rather the harsh realities of the workplace. However, the overall results contrasts again with Hofstede's research when he found that Arab countries declared the 7th highest ranked score of 80 which placed them in the upper high power distance quartile. Typical low power distance countries were European countries such as Austria and Denmark (p. 87).

The final cultural dimension concerns time – how we value and manage it in our lives. Attitudes to time present the most significant single factor that sets apart faculty and students in their interactions at college. Students arriving late into a class often upset the early stages of a well-planned lesson and can seriously disrupt the learning in the class for several minutes or even for the remainder of the lesson. Students who do not attend classes at all achieve little to no academic progress. HCT has a strict policy on attendance and punctuality which is entered daily online by all faculty – students who reach unacceptable levels of absenteeism (>10% of the total course hours) may receive a failing grade in that course (*HCT Catalogue 2010-2011*, 2010, p. 45).

Two aspects of time were investigated – sequential versus synchronic viewpoints of time and long-term versus short-term orientation. In the former, a sequential view of time is one where we see time as a "series of passing events" (Trompenaars & Hampden-

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Turner, 1998, p. 123). Synchronic time involves the past, present and future being interrelated so that "ideas about the future and memories of the past both shape present action" (p. 123). Cottle found four possible configurations (Cottle as cited in Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998, p. 129) which may be viewed in Figure 14. The 'Russia' configuration illustrates there is no connection between past, present and future, but the future is more important than the present which in turn is more important than the past. 'India's' present looms large but the link to the smaller future is tenuous compared to the link between past and the present. The 'Japan' configuration has all three circles overlapping considerably, indicating a strong synchronic view of time while the 'Belgium' pattern is representative of a typical northern European view of time, with all three circles having the same weight and importance.
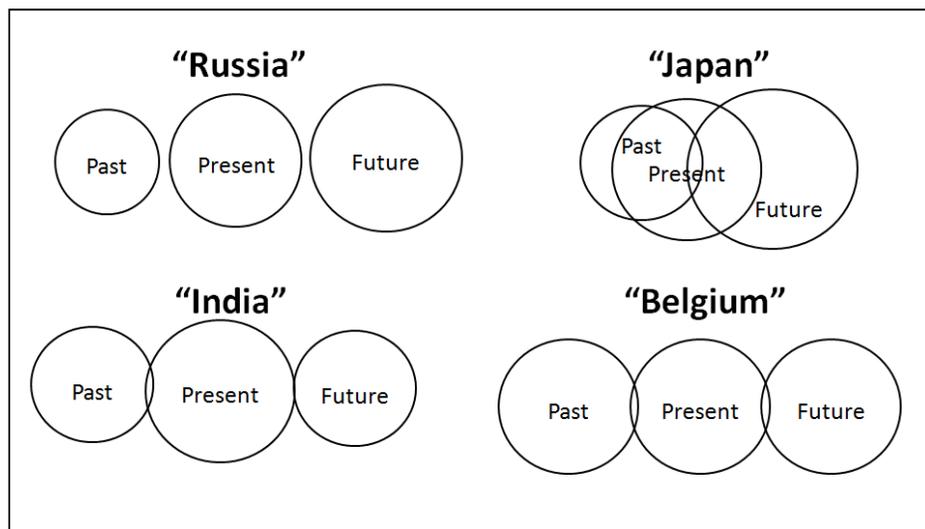
Figure 14: Time circles – four possible configurations (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998)

Students were asked to draw three circles with each one representing the past, present and future – they could draw them any way they wanted but through their drawing, they needed to show the relationship between the three aspects of time. Over half (56%) of the study cohort declared a preference for the 'Russia' configuration with a strong emphasis on the future while 19% opted for the 'India' configuration with its strong focus on the present. The 'Belgium' configuration indicative of a balanced view of all aspects of time received 9% while 16% opted for the 'Japan' configuration. Overall, 40% of all Level 2 students (new and returning) supported Japan's highly overlapping synchronic viewpoint of time.

Comments written in Arabic after the students completed their time circles provide an additional perspective on their thoughts on time. Future-oriented students wrote comments such as "I'm excited about the future" and "the past is gone – the future will be the best" while two present-oriented students said that "I'm thinking about the present now, not thinking about the future which is unknown" and "live your day and forget the bad days". As mentioned above, no time circle configuration specified the past as a preferred declaration and I went on to classify 16% of the study cohort to a 'past' configuration after reviewing both their time circles and their comments. Typical of the past-oriented comments are "I regret my past as I wasted my time" and "he who does not have a past, does not have a future". Finally, one of two comments written by 'Belgium' students who declared for a more balanced and synchronic view of time stated "for me, the past and the present are the same. I want to look forward to my future and work hard to build myself."

I reviewed their time circles to assign them by either 'sequential' (no overlap across all the circles) or 'synchronic' (three circles overlapped) viewpoints (see Figure 15). A firm preference (69% of the level 2 study cohort, a little less than the returning Level 2 student group's 75%) for a synchronic view of time is evident, a conclusion supported by the majority of students' comments which clearly illustrate they see the three elements of time – past, present and future – as being very much linked together. This explains why students simply do not turn up to college for an exam because they have an important family situation that requires attention at home – for them, the past, present and future occur almost simultaneously. For some students, the past needs to be forgotten ("what is in the past is finished") and many of the students drew past and present circles with a clear gap between them. Probably one of the most representative and insightful of this synchronic view of time is this final comment – "I remember the past to work in the present to think about the future".
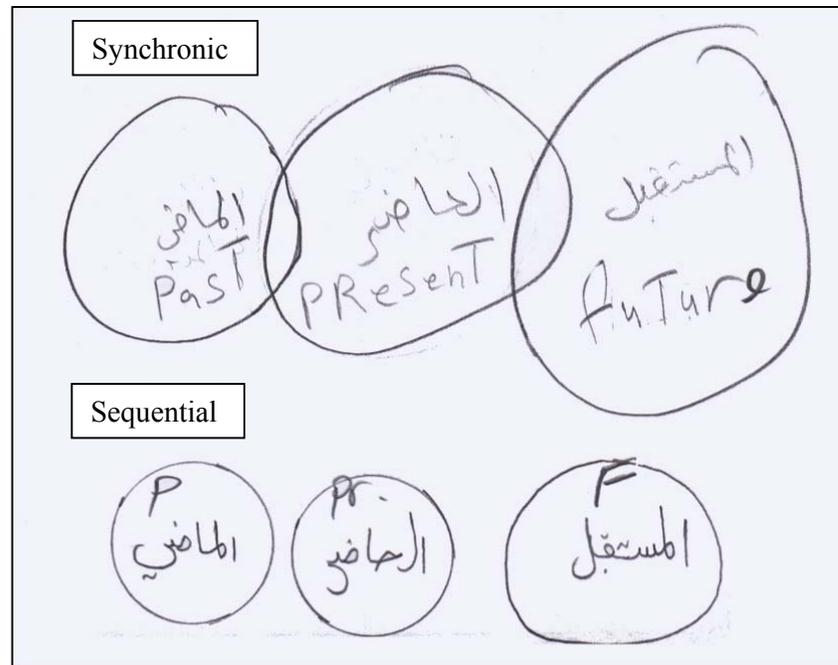
Figure 15: Examples of synchronic and sequential time circles, November 2011

The second aspect of time which I explored is Hofstede's long-term versus short-term orientation (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 351-370). This orientation reflects the importance attached to the future versus the past and present. In long-term oriented societies, people value actions and attitudes that affect the future such as persistence, thrift, ordering relationships by status, and having a sense of shame; in short-term oriented societies, people value actions and attitudes that are affected by the past or the present such as personal steadiness and stability, protecting one's own face, respect for tradition, and reciprocation of greetings, favours, and gifts (p. 354). In the animated scenario, students were asked to select one of two opposing viewpoints of time as expressed by two speakers.

As portrayed in Figure 16, these young men appear to be very focussed on their future, and while other cultural dimensions such collectivism, high uncertainty avoidance, status based on ascription, and time synchronicity point to a group more concerned with the past and present than the future, many modern Emirati students appear to be well aware of their place 'right now' along with a strong awareness of their future ahead of them. By way of caution, the reliability factor for this scale was unacceptably low, and therefore, these results should be viewed with this in mind.
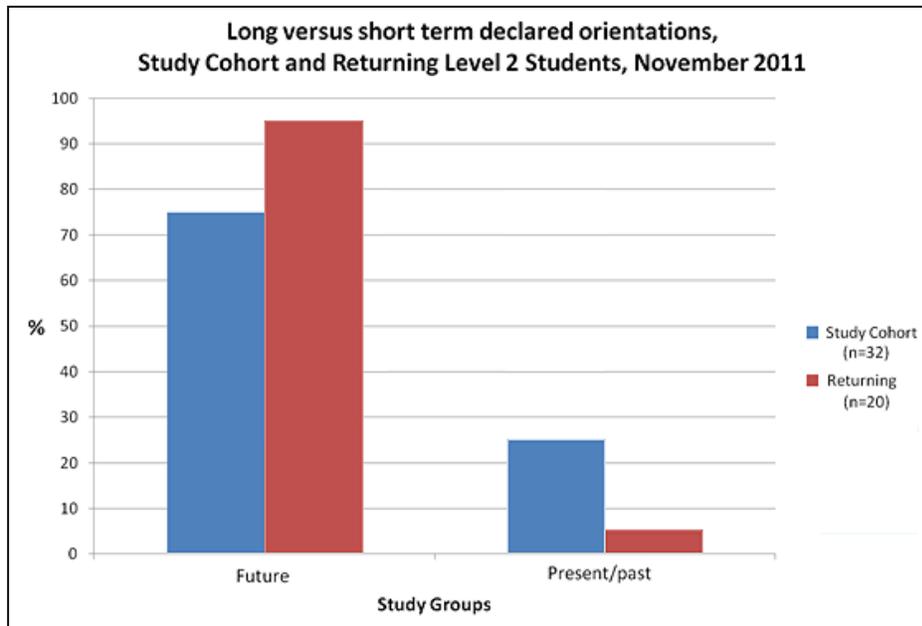
Figure 16: Long-term versus short-term declared orientations, November 2011

What the surveys tell us – Mental Toughness Questionnaire (MTQ)

This survey instrument measures the key dependent variable of Mental Toughness used in this research to assess the efficacy and outcomes of the CPR[+] program in Level 2 Foundations. The survey was introduced in Chapter 3. The MTQ reports show the pattern of results within each group (All Foundations, all level 2 students, study cohort) as a histogram of the total number of people who achieve a particular sten score. The MTQ is analysed by reference to a sten scale which represents a particular percentage of this norm group (see Figure 17). With these scales, there is a 'high' and a 'low' end where stens 1 – 3 are typically seen as 'low' scores and stens 8 - 10 are typically seen as 'high' scores. While an examination of the pattern of these scores may indicate how the group as a whole performs when faced with challenges and potential threats, I was especially interested in the individual sten scores of the study cohort as an overall measure of Mental Toughness.
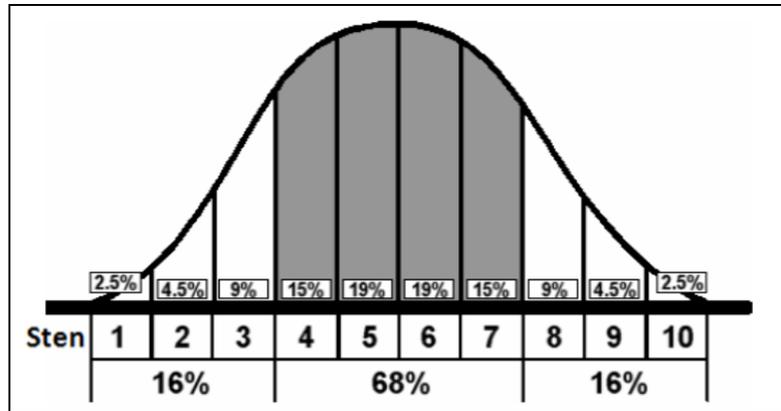
Figure 17: MTQ – normal distribution and sten categories (1-10)

Results from the pre-test MTQ administered during October 2011 may be seen in Figure 18. Given the scale, if the sample is normally distributed, the mean will be 5.5. The scale sten scores show that the FMC Foundations students may be classified as 'medium low', meaning that all the means were above 3 but below the expected norm mean of 5.5. The range of individual sten scores was around 8-9 with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 9 or 10.
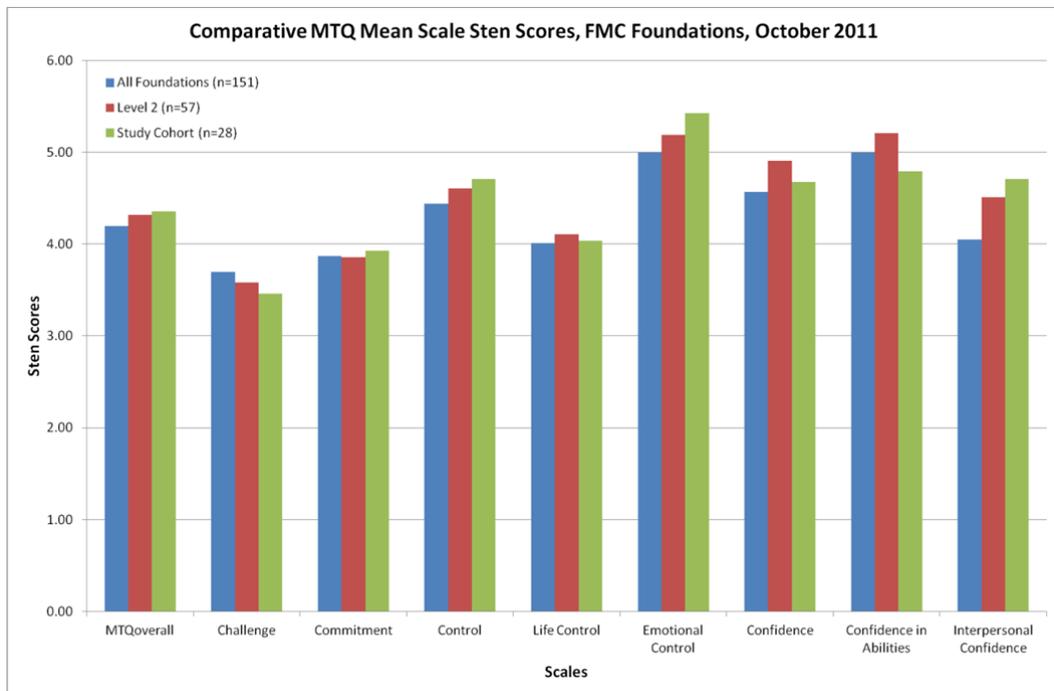
Figure 18: Comparative MTQ mean scale sten scores, FMC Foundations, October 2011

Overall, Foundations students declare the strongest in emotional control followed by confidence in abilities – they declare weakest in challenge, commitment, and life control. The study cohort in comparison to the total number of Foundations students appears to exhibit slightly stronger Mental Toughness, control, emotional control and interpersonal confidence. The gap between the students' self-perception of their high emotional control and confidence in their abilities, and their low challenge and commitment appears to present both a threat and an opportunity for faculty and college administrators – the threat lies in the perception by many that the students' lives are not grounded in reality and therefore, they may never reach the academic level required to pass Foundations until they realize their weaknesses, become more focussed and committed, and improve themselves; the opportunity lies in the potential, the self-belief that lies within all students which could be tapped by faculty to enable students to reach that potential through encouragement and development of persistence, resilience and commitment. An independent-samples *t*-test using SPSS was conducted to compare the overall MT scores of the Level 2 study cohort and all the Foundations students – no significant difference was found.

The Mental Toughness scale scores which include a section of Level 2 female students from Fujairah Women's College may be seen in Figure 19. The FMC Mental Toughness students' scores are not normally distributed, having a positive right-skewness factor of 1.0. Only the FWC (Fujairah Women's College) distribution follows the normally expected distribution of sten scores. The male Emirati students declare very strongly in stens 4 and 3 where almost 60% of the student scores reside. In May 2012, all Foundations students were administered the same MTQ48 survey used in September and October 2011 to assess the impact of the CPR program. 49 students completed the survey (54% response rate), 19 of whom were part of the original Level 2 study cohort and completed both the pre-MTQ and post-MTQ surveys. For the paired surveys, a distance-travelled report was generated, the results of which may be seen in Figure 20.

Surprisingly, the post-test MTQ results indicated a *decrease* in Mental Toughness sten scores, with the largest drop observed in the overall MT score, commitment, and interpersonal confidence. A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the CPR intervention on the students' Mental Toughness. There was a statistically significant *decrease* in the post-test MTQ scores for commitment from

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September/October 2011 (*M=4.58*, *SD*=1.90) to May 2012 (*M=3.68*, *SD*=1.20), $t(18)=2.39$, $p<.028$ (two-tailed). Further, there was a statistically significant decrease in
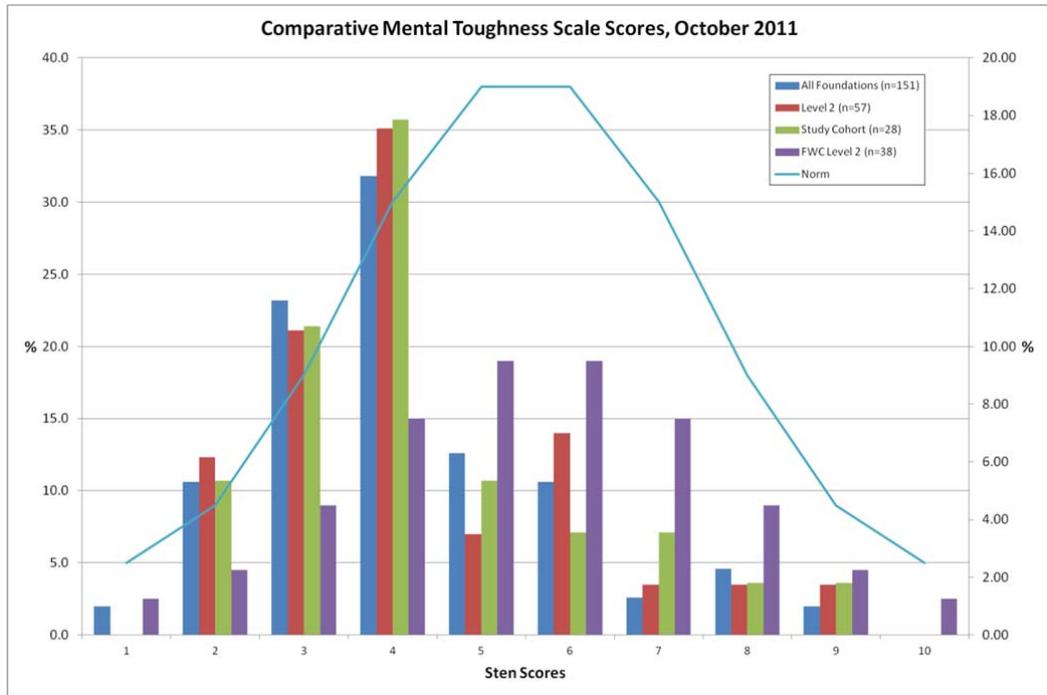
Figure 19: Comparative Mental Toughness sten scores by group, October 2011
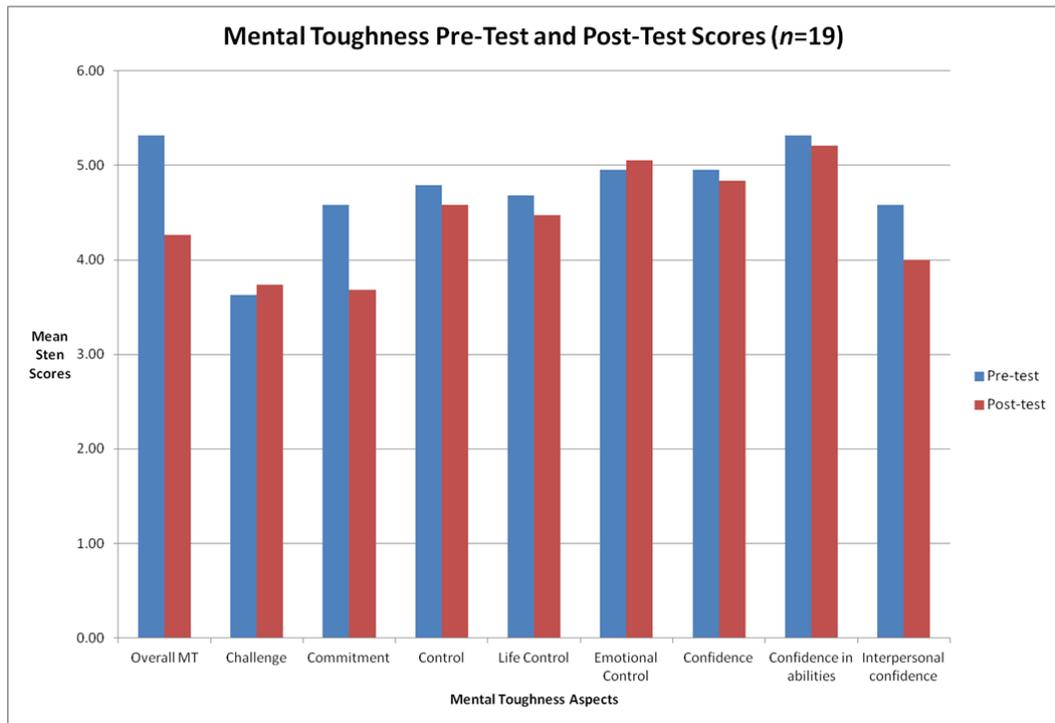
Figure 20: Mental Toughness Pre-test and Post-test scores, Level 2 study cohort, June 2012

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the post-test MTQ scores for interpersonal confidence from September/October 2011 ($M=4.58$, SD=1.26) to May 2012 ($M=4.00$, SD=0.75), t(18)=2.36, p<.030 (two-tailed). The eta squared statistic (.24 for both scores) indicated a large effect size (Cohen, as cited in Pallant, 2007, p. 240). Two aspects - challenge and emotional control - increased marginally but the differences were not statistically significant.

The comparative individual sten scores of the Level 2 study cohort from September/October 2011 to May 2012 may be seen in Figure 21. The sample sizes are quite different, reflecting the on-going attrition during this academic year. Overall, the Level 2 students who remained until May 2012 tended to move towards the mean sten score of 5.5 with the 'top and tail' scores (7-10 and 1-2) disappearing altogether.
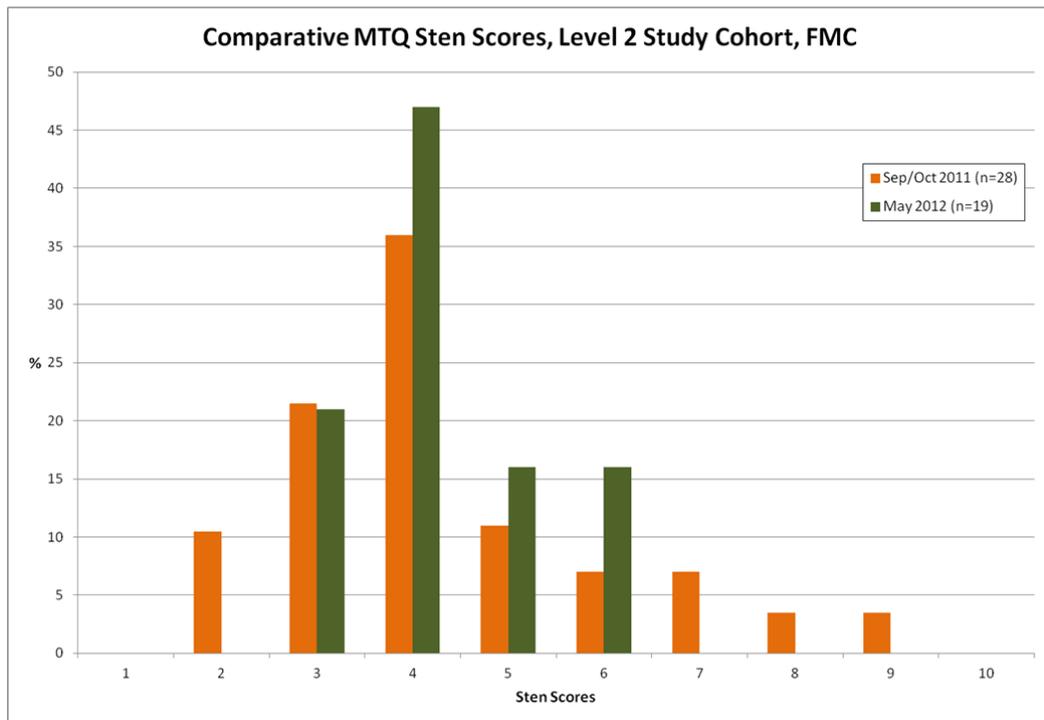
Fig.21: Comparative MTQ sten scores, Level 2 study cohort, September/October 2011 and May 2012

In discussion with the CPR faculty and facilitators, the decrease in post-test MTQ scores appeared to reflect the 'reality on the ground'. Despite growth observed in confidence and ability to face a challenge, together with an increase in overall engagement, an increased level of self-awareness may have contributed to the students' lowering their self-reported scores – in other words, the students were more honest in May 2012 in self-

appraising the various aspects of Mental Toughness. A fuller discussion on the implications of these results takes place in Chapter 7.

What the surveys tell us – Learning Process Questionnaire (LPQ)

The VARK Type II learning preference was identified as a potentially key factor in the failure profiles of the level 2 students (see earlier in this section). Arising from that analysis, I began to think about what kinds of strategies the students might adopt to cope with the stresses of learning new content in a second language. Jeff Marsh, a member of the Department of Teaching Support and Development, Academic Services, Higher Colleges of Technology, administered the Learning Process Questionnaire in October 2002 to 3,567 HCT students in the first year of the Diploma program to collect inventory data on student approaches to learning, broadly categorized as deep, strategic and surface learning (see Chapter 3). I also administered the same survey to a Diploma Foundations cohort in October 2004. Using the same instrument in 2012, the two sets of results offer an interesting comparison of two similar groups of students (see Figure 22). The results of the two LPQ surveys are an example of 'a good news-bad news' story. The 'good news' lies in the fact that declared deep learning approaches have
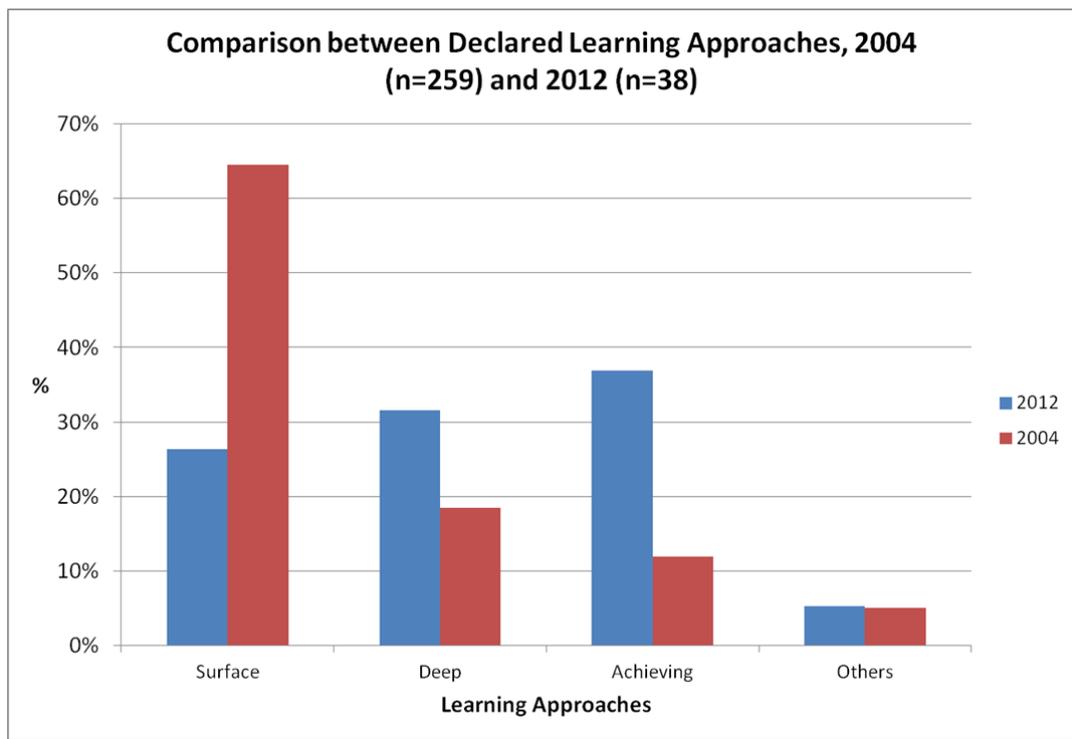
Figure 22: Declared Learning Approaches, DMC (2004) and FMC (2012)

increased since the 2004 survey from 19% to 32%. Further, surface learning approaches have fallen by over 50%. The 'bad news', apart from the increase in achieving learning approaches, is that most of the new students continue to use surface to achieving approaches (63%) at a college of higher education in 2012. Based on interviews with current and ex-high school teachers, this type of surface/achieving learning approach remains both as an instrumental legacy of the learning culture in the government high schools which is transferred with the students when they enter Fujairah Men's College as well as an indication of the academic and cognitive difficulties facing new students.

What the surveys tell us – Motivation

Within the Student Survey, items 11-20 were specifically concerned with measuring student motivation as presented and discussed in Chapter 2. I am concerned here with answering three questions originally posed by Pintrich (2003) – do students know what they want or what motivates them, what motivates students in class, and what is the role of context and culture. Do the surveys and student focus group meetings offer any evidence to answer these questions?

Students are in Foundations because they did not reach the entry level of English competence to begin their Bachelors' program of choice. As a starting point for motivation, the students had definite views about high school where over 67% felt they had wasted their time due to "disinterested teachers and students" though many were quick to point out that there were some good teachers who did show interest. Mitigating this experience, students in the focus group meeting did appear to be extrinsically motivated by their parents and somewhat intrinsically in obtaining a degree. In order to start their degree, they need to pass Foundations – 69% of the new Level 2 students understood this which was less appreciated by the new Level 1 students (64%) but very well understood by the new Level 4 students (92%). Further, 65% of the new Level 2 students reported that even if they do well at college, it will not help them to have the kind of life they want when they get older – none of the Level 4 students felt this way.

In terms of what motivates students in class, the student responses to item 13 of the Student Survey (*I study English because I want to become better at the language and learn more about the culture of those countries where English is the main language*) increase through the four placement levels from 71%, 81%, 92% to 100% respectively,

indicating increasing integrative motivation with higher English language levels (see Chapter 2).

Students definitely like technology and the appropriate use of educational technology in class produces a strong motivational effect (see Chapter 7 for a detailed discussion) – Levels 1 and 4 responded 100% positively to item 15 (*In our lessons, I like using my laptop because it helps me with my learning*) with the Level 2 and 3 students at 90% and 85% respectively. In several lesson observations over the duration of the research period, I noted innovative use of educational and media technology to which students responded positively. In particular, one English class began with Arabic music being quietly played through the room's speaker system while students practised their typing skills using an online typing tutor - the music clearly set the tone of the lesson which required quiet and sustained individual effort.

The use of groups as a learning approach by faculty appears to be well received by students despite a generally low use of groups and group taskwork in the high schools where many teachers favour students sitting in rows for more effective classroom management – in response to item 17 (*I work better if I work alone as I don't like working in groups*), almost all levels preferred sitting in groups than working by themselves. The new students at all levels enjoy working on tasks providing they are fun to do, they know what to do, and they are successful. In response to item 20 (*I feel most motivated when the task is slightly above my ability and I have to really push myself*), a mean of 82% of the lower level 1 and 2 students reported positively compared to 96% mean positive response in the upper level 3 and 4. In summary, technology, group work, appropriate and achievable tasks appear to motivate students in class – the important role of the teacher will be discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

Faculty assessment of the new Level 2 students indicated that most rated the motivation of their new students as a '3' or moderate motivation on a Likert scale from 1 (little or no motivation) to 5 (highly motivated). When asked again in the middle of semester 2 (some 30 weeks after their first assessment) whether the students who had started in September 2011 had increased, decreased or unchanged motivation over the time period, the faculty were split. A third of them felt that the new students had increased, another third had decreased, and the final third felt the students had remained the same. A

comment from a faculty who indicated that the students' motivation had increased suggested that the perceived increase in motivation was due to the large numbers of unmotivated students withdrawing in the first semester (in other words, the unmotivated students left early in the academic year, raising the overall mean motivation of the group of students). Another faculty who felt that motivation had decreased referred to a number of possible factors such as "some mixed messages from college personnel and policies, the need to 'lose' students earlier on as an example to the others, and the English skill-strand arrangement that diluted relationship building between the faculty and students". Finally, those faculty who felt there was no observable change mentioned differential motivation among different groups with one faculty describing his class full of repeaters as being "highly motivated knowing full well that this was their last chance".

Finally, how important is the role of culture and context in providing a motivating learning environment? In English language teaching, contextualization of vocabulary and themes is very important in assisting the transfer of items to the working memory of the learners. When this is done in a second language setting such as the UAE, most faculty (English and non-English) avail themselves of local knowledge to contextualize student learning. Almost 100% of new students confirmed they liked it when teachers use local information or Arabic examples to help them understand (item 37 in the Student Survey).

In summarizing motivational issues related to new students arriving at college, it appears most of them are there extrinsically because they want to obtain a degree. They declare that they have the support of their parents (though this contradicts with the college counselor's feedback concerning his student exit views which confirmed the opposite i.e., parents are putting their sons under pressure to leave college and find a full-time job) to do so even though many realize they may be ill-prepared for college study based on their previous high school learning experiences. However, there are many students who still seem not to see the 'link' between their college education and a better standard of living though this view is more predominant in the lower level students. Generally, they seem to know what they like in terms of learning activities with a strong preference for educational technology with fun, achievable tasks set slightly above their level, contextualized within their cultural setting. For most students, the gap between the task

goal and task success will require persistence (challenge) and commitment, attributes declared minimally in the MTQ survey. Let us now review the student responses in the Student Survey from items 21-30 on persistence.

What the surveys tell us – Persistence

Daleure's study of 294 male Emirati students at a HCT college found that the key persistence factors at college were parental support, their own dreams of continuing education, and the existence of high-quality post-secondary education institutions (2011). Parental support in my research was also found to be positively valued by new students with almost 100% of all new students across the four levels reporting that their parents supported and encouraged them to attend college in order to obtain a degree – this was further supported in the first student focus group meeting where no student reported they were under any pressure to leave college and find a job.

In the classroom, at critical 'stress points' of miscomprehension and/or a failure to understand and perform the assigned task, an array of factors that may include but not be limited to poor diet, lack of sleep, previous negative high school experiences, low level of English competence, and current and pressing personal or family worries, exposes many students with deficits in persistence. Academic persistence is an important quality that prevents students from giving up too easily and/or enables them to leap across the cognition or comprehension 'gap' to complete the assigned task (see Chapter 2). Many new Foundations students just give up and ask their friends for help if they cannot complete a task.

For some students, the temptation to simply cheat or plagiarize is an easy decision, given their previous experiences at high school and the difficulties they face in learning new content in their second language. Although cheating and plagiarism are extremely serious academic offences which incur immediate dismissal for life from HCT with a permanent record on the student's academic transcript (*HCT Catalogue 2010-2011*, 2010, pp. 45-46), Foundations students display a moral dichotomy in distinguishing the subtle difference between themselves cheating and helping their friend to cheat (see Figure 23). While almost all levels professed to never cheating themselves (apart from level 1), most Level 2 and 3 students would allow their own work to be copied by their friends. Level 4 students appear to understand the significance of academic honesty and

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the serious consequences of infringement. In discussion with an Arabic colleague at college after the first student focus group meeting where students stated emphatically that supporting their friends is more important than college rules, he nicely summarised this dichotomy from the student perspective in a simple phrase –"when I cheat, I am a cheater; when I let someone else copy my work, I am a helper".

n=60	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Item 22 – *I sometimes copy answers from other students when I do class or home work*	21%	3%	8%	0%
Item 23 – *I sometimes allow other students to copy answers from me to help them*	44%	81%	85%	0%

Figure 23: Responses from new students to Student Survey items 22 and 23 on cheating, October 2011

Interestingly, Ridge and Farah (2012) linked male Emirati attitudes to reading with increased plagiarism in that "the demands of higher education will seem insurmountable to students" (p. 6). In my experience as Chair of four Foundations departments (Diploma Foundations, Higher Diploma Foundations and two combined New Foundations at Dubai and Fujairah), cheating and plagiarism is very common in the first semester of Foundations. As confirmed by several high school teachers, cheating in the government high schools is systemic, fed by an institutional requirement for high pass rates. However, with consistent appropriate task and assessment management, vigilant task and test monitoring, and the use of anti-plagiarism software such as *TurnItIn*, Foundations students quickly learn that cheating is morally and academically unacceptable in higher education. Unfortunately, a few HCT students still take the risk and are dismissed each year.

The final four items in the persistence block in the Student Survey produced some interesting responses. Item 27 (*I sometimes disturb the lesson that is going on in class when I get bored or can't do the work*) showed a diminishing response rate across the four levels with 36%, 32%, 31% and 0% of levels 1 to 4 respectively reporting such

incidences of deliberate disturbance. About half the new students never think about college or work once they leave the college in the afternoon which is corroborated with a similar proportion reported in the first student focus group meeting – the higher level students appear to think less about college and work compared to the lower levels. Most students acknowledge that they will be disappointed with themselves if they do not pass, recognizing that they have everything they need (laptop, textbooks, teachers, counsellor, and Arabic-speaking staff) to be successful but accepting the fault will lie with them, not the teachers (items 29, 30 and 39).

In summary, Foundations students appear to lack persistence as evidenced by their Student Survey and MTQ responses. As a result, they appear to need personal development training to improve their levels of persistence when faced with difficult academic challenges during the year. The new College Preparation and Readiness program seems like an appropriate vehicle in association with consistent faculty management and support to implement approaches and strategies to deliver memorable student learning experiences in CPR lessons that may help to develop transferrable student persistence qualities appropriate to the classroom learning environment.

What the surveys tell us – Learning Preference

Students appear to be much more adaptable than Marilyn Dahl (2010) described in her criticism of constructivist-based teaching approaches applied to students in UAE higher education who had recently arrived from teacher-dependent, behaviourist-based learning environments in the government high schools. Porcaro conceptualizes the reactions of teachers and students to constructivist-based pedagogy and concludes that "it is increasingly important to understand how to introduce constructivist elements to instructivist learning cultures...to diminish the misalignment between the educational philosophies of teachers, students and national or institutional systems" (2010, p. 49). In response to items 31-40 in the Student Survey which focussed on how students learn in class, the new students portrayed a more nuanced Arab learner profile than previously depicted. They do become confused when teachers give them a choice and would prefer if the teacher just told them (a mean of 70% agreed with item 31 across all levels) and they acknowledge the teachers who do not give them easy work to do but make them think – this is especially true for the higher level students but much less so for the lower levels (items 32, 34 and 40). Teacher-dependence remains the highest in the lower levels

where 93% and 90% of level 1 and 2 students feel they will only be successful in college if their teachers help them a lot (compared to 77% and 50% for level 3 and 4 students – item 37). Students seem to understand that college is a different place from high school, appearing to recognize the differences as evidenced through increasing proportion of positive responses to item 33 across the four levels (*The main difference between college and high school is that the teachers in my old school taught us by memorization, reciting information, and repeating it again during the exams*) – 78%, 84%, and 100% each in levels 3 and 4 respectively. They claim to like working in groups (item 35) and over half reported that they attend the Student Success Centre to improve their weak skills (item 36).

In summary, the student responses appear to both support and contradict previous attempts to categorize Arab learner profiles. New Foundations students appear to feel some discomfort with learner-centred approaches widely adopted by all HCT Foundations faculty but this appears to decrease over time or is less problematic if students are placed in high Foundations levels (3 and 4). They seem to clearly understand the differences between high school and college, and many appear to be taking advantage of the extra support both in and outside of the classroom to enable them to achieve academic progress. Students take time to transit from one type of learning environment to another, especially the lower level students, and this may inhibit or slow their progress in the early part of their first year in Foundations (Dahl, 2010).

Video journal case studies

Three Level 2 students were originally selected in Semester 1 to produce weekly video diaries using a Panasonic Flip video camera which was issued to each student. Within two weeks, one student had left and despite numerous requests and reminders, I was unsuccessful in securing an alternate third student. At the end of Semester 1, one of the remaining two students failed his course and was dismissed from the program. The final remaining student agreed to continue making his video diaries until May 2012 when the camera and a Certificate of Appreciation were awarded to him.

The original intent in using video diaries was two-fold. First, selecting three students from different locations in the Emirate (urban, coastal and mountainous) may have offered me opportunities to discern differences in upbringing based upon the different

physical locations of their family homes. Second, I wanted the cameras to become increasingly accepted by the students' families and with this increase in trust and acceptance, I wanted more 'personal' footage from behind the villa wall, possibly extending into weekend activities where I could observe the student in his natural family setting. None of this has been possible and though I have several minutes of transcripts from two of the students, the issue of filming in the house with female members present proved to be a cultural 'bridge too far' and too difficult to cross. Interviews with family members, especially the parents, also proved troublesome to arrange and I eventually abandoned the idea.

For the most part, the journal entries read a little like "Jack and Jill went up the hill...", quite simplistic but chronologically-accurate accounts of several college days in October 2011 and February 2012. However, 'Jamal' spoke more candidly of his experiences - detailing criticism of a teacher who he felt was not "teaching us properly', a busy but enjoyable day exchanging ideas about himself and the past with his teacher, using email to send the teacher his ideas, a comical observation and hope that a writing lesson on animals, cosmetics and shampoo will help him pass his end of semester English exam, and finally, an apology to me in his last entry because he would not finish his videos as he was recently dismissed from college for poor academic progress.

'Suood', on the hand other, remained an excellent chronicler but provided little insight into his thinking or observations about his college life. Two comments from his diaries stand out for their honest reflection and emotion – Suood was delighted that he passed Level 2 and had progressed into Level 3 (Feb 2012). He was also very focussed on passing his IELTS as he really wanted to start university in Al Ain (UAEU) as soon as he could – he exclaims, "I have to study more for the IELTS and I have to get the required band".

In summary, the richness of the video journal content which I had expected did not emerge due to student attrition, disinterest in the research when I attempted to secure an alternate third student, lack of monitoring in the weeks after the issue of the cameras, and cultural taboos involving female family members which precluded home observation and interview visits by me. In the final chapter, I make recommendations for future researchers who wish to implement a similar research method.

Student narratives

In early Semester 2 (January 2012), I met with the Level 2 and Level 3 English writing faculty to request they ask their students to write about three topics – their school life, their home life, and their new college life. In early March 2012, I received 35 student stories from two faculty, the stories varying in length from one sentence to complete paragraphs. Of these stories, I conducted a narrative analysis of 13 stories of students from the Level 2 study cohort in Nvivo9 that resulted in the identification of the following themes:

Friends - they define the students' 'activity landscape' (sports and shopping) whether it was in high school or now in college. Friends are a constant and reassuring presence for young Emirati men.

Family - students find peace and joy in being with their families.

School - most students liked high school though some reported mixed feelings about their teachers and subjects. Some students felt bored and one "didn't like anything about school".

College - students enjoy college and some wrote that they are improving their social and communication skills. Though many remain focussed on marks and grades, others report that they are enjoyed learning from teachers from around the world. College seems to be a place that celebrates successes and provides a sense of community.

Future - half want to study Business after Foundations while the Army and Police beckon the others after graduation

Close friends, a supportive and loving family, largely positive memories of high school, a growing sense of comfort and interest in learning at college, and a strong vision of their future represent key stability factors in the lives of the students, providing a sense of continuity from their previous life at school to their new college life and ultimately towards their futures.

Views of students by other people

I interviewed eight people who were not involved in teaching HCT students. These people are classified into four distinct groups – employees of the Ministry of Education, current high school teachers, policemen, and two retired gentlemen who had lived in the Emirate almost all of their working lives. Each group expressed strong opinions about the current generation of young male Emirati gained from their interactions and experiences arising from their varying perspectives. As such, they provide eclectic and sometimes provocative viewpoints on a neo-indigenous generation undergoing difficult and sustained cultural change and transition.

A department head and an English curriculum supervisor, both employed by the Ministry of Education, were interviewed in separate meetings. Though they have had different experiences in two different Emirates (50 years of work experience in total), most of their responses were remarkably similar especially in areas such as the apparent lack of parental interest in their sons' educational progress and a lack of co-operation between the high school and home. Individually, they spoke about how the students suffer from a lack of practice in English which results in poor CEPA results, the students' general apparent unwillingness to learn, the negative impact of technology (echoed by one of the elderly gentlemen below), the lack of attraction towards schooling due to limited 'fun' activities and the absence of 'edu-tainment', the exam system, an unattractive curriculum, and the use of traditional teaching methods. The last four aforementioned items may well explain the students' general unwillingness to learn. One bemoaned that young Arab people had become more self-confident and more independent over his time spent in the Emirates, their personality now "completely different than ours". The most poignant comment, that "the student does not find himself in the school", captures their combined sense of frustration in working within a system that is not meeting (or delivering) the learning and emotional needs of the students.

Two Arab English teachers working within the current government high school system in the Fujairah Emirate looked beyond the classroom for reasons to explain the unmotivated behaviour of their young charges – "make them poor" said one, in reference to the apparent wealth differential between Emiratis and expatriate Arab high school teachers. Both teachers felt that wealth made the students uninterested in learning with students wanting "everything to be easy". While these comments reflect some aspects of

the rentier issue raised in Chapter 1, they also clearly represent a great deal of frustration at their own relatively low salaries and poor working conditions (as confirmed by one Ministry of Education employee, there are two different salary scales in the country – one for non-UAE Arab teachers and the other for Emiratis. For most of the former teachers who come from non-GCC countries such as Egypt, Syria, Jordan, there are almost no promotion prospects for them as male Arab English teachers). From a different perspective, Ridge described the poor quality of male teachers in the UAE when she found that "there are deficiencies in the recruitment, training and ongoing management of male, expatriate teachers which may explain, at least in part, the poor performance and retention of boys" (2010, p. 6).

Three local policemen gave separate responses to questions about their knowledge of social and family problems related to Emirati families where one or both of the parents worked away from the Fujairah Emirate during the working week. They all confirmed they were aware of these problems which took the form of "forbidden and illicit relationships" that sometimes ended in pregnancies, smoking, drugs (pills), truancy, fighting and disobeying parental instructions. In the opinion of one policeman, these problems are caused by parents' absenteeism during the week which results in a "loss of family cohesion". But another policeman spoke of a working man in Abu Dhabi who closely monitors his family in Fujairah by ringing each day and spending the entire weekend with his family.

Finally, two elderly Arabic gentlemen were interviewed in order to gain some insight into life before the 'cultural tsunami' struck the Emirates in the 1980s with the arrival of hundreds of thousands of non-Arab expatriate workers. One gentleman (aged 65 years) originally from Palestine has been involved in high school education while another held a representative government position (aged 56 years) in a small mountain village. In stark contrast to a comment uttered by the high school teacher that students want everything to be easy, one of the gentlemen remembers a time before 1980 when any work that had to be done such as building a house or constructing a *falaj* (irrigation channel) was done by the Emirati men themselves. He remembers when there was only one culture, the dominant Arabic culture – he feels now that the current generation has been 'spoon-fed with a golden spoon", echoing previous comments in this section about wealth and its impact on the young Arabic men. Both men criticise the role of television

in enabling cultural change, a process rapidly increased through the Internet. They recognize that globalization is relentless and has affected the entire planet, not just a small section of it in the UAE, though one gentleman felt its negative effects were exacerbated by the employment of foreign housemaids in the local Emirati family homes. Referring specifically to the young male Emiratis, one felt they had no responsibilities (neither given nor taken) and he remembered a time when working hard for his father on the small plots of agricultural land hard-won from the harsh rocky environment was natural and expected. Overall, both men seem resigned to changes observed in the young men. One felt that boys growing up in the small mountain villages were a little more traditional than those growing up in the main city of Fujairah although he understood the powerful symbolism of independence as represented by a car, so cherished by the young men and whose potential purchase often forces them to turn away from higher education in favour of a 'quick fix' high salary with the government.

Working Parents

I analysed the Working Parents survey which was administered via MS Sharepoint in April 2012 to all Foundations students at Fujairah Men's College (see Appendix K). 13.4% of the 67 student responses indicated that at least one parent worked away each week between Sunday and Thursday. Following the survey, I met the students in a brief focus meeting to explore the impact of an absent parent upon their lives. Out of nine students who indicated they had at least one parent absent during the working week, three showed up to this meeting. None of the students had both parents absent during the week. They agreed there was little supervision over their movements and they also told me they knew several friends with absent parents who had left school early– these young men got into trouble by driving their cars fast and by "making something not good", a catch-all phrase which the students were not prepared to expand upon. This feedback is supported by sources within the Fujairah Police.

The largest recruiter of young male Emiratis from Fujairah is the UAE military. I was able to make contact with two ex-Military Language Program (MLP) students who live in Fujairah and work in Abu Dhabi. The Military Language Program is managed through CERT - Centre of Excellence for Applied Research & Training, HCT's commercial entity - and offers instruction in several languages. Students spend a year at one of four MLP campuses based within HCT male colleges and study the Foundations

English curriculum. Both confirmed that they were married with children and travelled each week to work in Abu Dhabi. Given the option to remain in the Fujairah emirate, one declined to respond but the other agreed that he would prefer to remain in Fujairah providing he could earn a minimum of between Dh17,000 and Dh20,000 a month. One military employee confirmed that the main issues caused by his absences during the week relate to not being able to help out around the family home, the three hours it takes to reach Fujairah from Abu Dhabi in an emergency, their social life is confined to the weekend, and living expenses are higher due to eating out, car maintenance, speeding fines and petrol, and back pain. He seemed caught between two worlds as he said that "we miss out on most of the things that we could benefit from in Fujairah (land, houses, etc) because we are away living most of the time in an emirate that we don't have anything in." The other gave a more positive summation of his working circumstances by stating that "there are no problems to mention as everything is available like transport, free education, etc. Furthermore, modern communications made it easy to be in touch all the time and updated."

Factors That May Hinder Student Learning

Before the male Foundations students enter the college gate at the start of their academic journey into higher education, they appear to come largely burdened with *a priori* factors that may hinder their learning at college. I will summarize each factor in no particular order of significance. This section is essentially a synthesis of the previous sections beginning with the analysis of the results of the VARK survey.

> ***Effects of neo-indigeneity*:** observations from numerous sources, research locally conducted by Natasha Ridge, formerly of the Dubai School of Government (2009b, 2010, 2011) and Marilyn Dahl (2010), world economic and social reports (*UNESCO International Conference on Education*, 2008; *Early Human Development: Critical Path to Economic Growth. An Overview of ECD in the MENA region,* 2009; *Arab World Competitiveness Report 2011-2012*, 2011), and newspaper articles reflecting key social changes (Absal, 2012; Moussly, 2011a;) record the effects of a 'cultural tsunami' which, together, have de-stabilized the students' world-view as discussed in the section Student Narratives.

Lack of parental interest: my own observations together with those directly involved in education sound a warning to Emirati parents that their sons need their active interest and engagement if they are going to successfully transit into higher education. This neglect begins in the high school where some school principals were unable to arrange parents' meetings as many parents worked away from the area. In my experiences over 16 years as a teacher and Chair, I can count the number of times I discussed an issue *raised by a parent* on two hands.

Poor high school experiences lead to poor academic preparation for study in higher education: there is a mixed portrait here of the students' high school experiences but 67% of the new students declared that they had wasted their time at high school. The official statistics are difficult to argue with – only 10% of the new students are eligible for direct entry into their program of study (see Chapter 1). The main secondary educational governing bodies – ADEC (Abu Dhabi Educational Council) and KHDA (Knowledge and Human Development Authority is responsible for private schools in Dubai) and the Ministry of Education – realize there are serious systemic problems in the country's high schools and have begun to implement initiatives and programs to improve the quality of teaching but with limited success to date (*KHDA Dubai school inspection reports 2010-2011*, 2011; Nereim, 2011; Ahmed, 2010a; Sherif, 2011). Ridge (2010) noted the lack of adequate educational and teacher training requirements for new teacher recruitment into the government high schools while an interview with a Ministry of Education official confirmed specific teacher training credentials are not required for new teachers.

Difficult cultural border crossing experiences: as established in Chapter 4, the border crossing index (BCI) is able to broadly discriminate between smooth, managed, difficult, and impossible border crossing experiences with the lower level students generally experiencing more managed to difficult transitions. Two statistical analyses were conducted. The relationship between BCI and the end of semester 1 aggregate grades for 29 Level 2 study cohort students was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. A preliminary analysis was performed to ensure there was no violation of the assumption of normality. There was a medium, positive correlation between the two variables, $r = 0.32$, $n = 29$, $p < 0.10$, as students with smooth border

crossing experiences generally attained higher aggregate grades. Further, a standard multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the ability of the Border Crossing Index (BCI) to predict the transition experience (Qu.1-10 in the Student Survey), motivation (Qu.11-20), and persistence (Qu.21-30), preferred learning style (Qu.31-40) and the home-school-college relationship (Qu.41-50). It was found that out of five scales, three scales retained their significance. This means that the scales Transition ($p<.001$),   Motivation, and Persistence ($p<.01$), are independent predictors of individual students' border crossing behaviour.

***Unsettled start to the new academic year*:** over-stacking of the three Level 2 study cohort sections was not an issue in September 2011 ($n = 17, 21, 19$ respectively). However, of the 29 brand new Level 2 students who joined FMC on 5 September 2011, almost 60% ($n = 17$) had left by day 20. Over-stacking did occur in Level 1 with average section size of 30, and by day 20, nineteen Level 1 students had left (32%). In Level 3, 10 out of 16 (63%) new students had left while only 25% of the new Level 4 students had withdrawn. In the first 20 days (4 weeks), 27 new students arrived causing disruption to students and faculty trying to settle in with each other. For some students, especially in the lower levels, this movement, disruption, and the associated strain on human and teaching resources becomes a 'tipping point' and they withdraw (62% of the total withdrawn students who eventually go on to leave by the end of the first semester have withdrawn by Day 20) – see Figure 24.
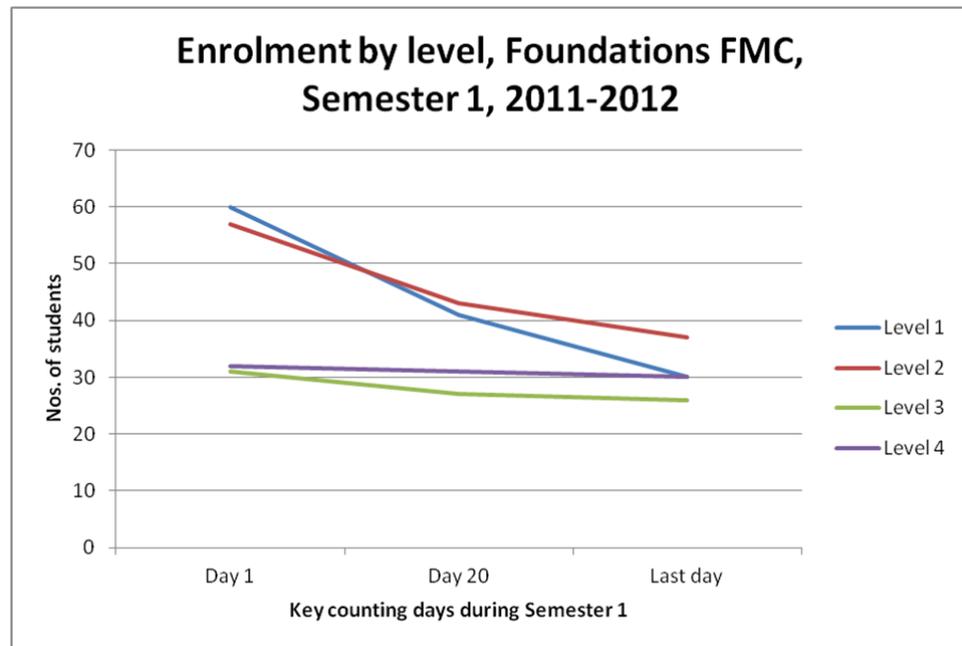
Figure 24: Enrolment decline during Semester 1, Foundations FMC, 2011-2012

High absenteeism: as much as administrators, Chairs and teachers would like to observe a strong link between absenteeism and poor learning outcomes as evidenced by the end of semester 1 English aggregate grades, the correlation is weak (r = -0.31, n = 29, $p<0.20$). Further, a trend that may surprise some is that the mean number of absent days in semester 1 *increased* from Level 1 to 4 (5.60, 7.54, 8.71 and 9.18 mean absent days respectively). Only when the Level 2 study cohort new students' absences are examined in relation to their final aggregate grade does the effect of many missed lessons become apparent – 5 out of 13 new Level 2 students who failed Semester 1 (<60% aggregate grade) had an average of over 10% absences each. Clearly, the lower level students need to attend college regularly though this alone is no guarantee of academic success.

Many Foundations students are actively seeking employment while registered and/or attending college: when 164 'no-show' students who were registered with FMC but did not attend college at all in the first semester were contacted by Student Affairs, almost 40% had already found employment (81% with the Army and Police), 20% did not reply at all, 20% said they would join HCT, 13% gave no reason for not joining HCT, and 7% said they might come after consulting with their families. Of those 139 students who officially withdrew

during Semester 1, 68% of the students notified college they were withdrawing for employment reasons.

Kinesthetic learners need active teaching approaches: the VARK results highlight the fact that 66% of all Level 2 study cohort students reported a learning style with a kinesthetic modality (K). 25% of the first student focus group felt that their learning style was not being catered to in the classroom.

Consistent multiple intelligences profiles reinforce kinesthetic preferences: by and large, the Multiple Intelligences survey results support the VARK findings with the implication that faculty may need to appreciate a greater diversity of learning styles among their students and deliver lessons that offer something for everyone's preferred learning style, with an emphasis on active learning.

Synchronicity conflicts with faculty views and beliefs about time management: time management is a major issue identified prior to this research. Synchronicity as a perspective common among Emirati students does not fit well with the dominant sequential view of time adhered to by most Westerners (see Chapter 6).

Low Mental Toughness scores indicate low resilience and persistence: while no standard Western or Arab MTQ profile has yet emerged, students generally reported low challenge, commitment, and life control sten scores. In other words, they are generally unable to respond effectively to challenges and to persist long enough to overcome challenges. They also perceive they have minimum control over their lives. These variables combined with the students' highest scores in emotional control and confidence in their abilities may result in learner anxiety and frustration.

LPQ profiles indicate that over 60% of the study cohort students use surface to achieving approaches to learning: Though it has decreased by 10% since a similar cohort of Foundations students was surveyed in 2004, new students continue to use surface and achieving approaches (26% and 37% respectively) to learning at the expense of developing long-term retention of understanding associated with deep approaches to learning. As discussed in Chapter 3, students tend to declare for surface learning strategies where their teachers adopt teacher-centric approaches aimed at transmitting knowledge, an approach not favoured (nor seen in lesson or faculty observations) by FMC faculty (see Chapter 6).

***Low intrinsic motivation*:** despite varied reports from their high school years, intrinsic motivation is low as described by faculty and as observed by me over many years, with most evidence highlighting poor high school experiences as the main culprit. Many lower level students still do not seem to see a meaningful link between college success and the quality of their future lives, a finding supported by Ridge and Farah (2012) in their recent study of male Emirati drop-outs. Emirati students appear to be lacking in most of the four dimensions of motivation as discussed in Chapter 2 – competence, control/autonomy, interest/value, and relatedness – especially in the classroom setting. By way of contrast, higher self-reported ratings of these values were evident from the CPR lessons, especially those conducted on the high ropes course (see Chapter 7).

***Low persistence*:** many students appear to enter HCT with a high school background of systemic cheating, as confirmed by the student focus group responses and faculty interviews. This behaviour combined with difficult academic and cultural transitions for many highlights low persistence which can result in 'cheating ambiguity', information 'over-sharing', and classroom disruption, especially in the lower levels.

***Lower level students take longer to transit to learner-centred teaching and learning approaches*:** due to their greater world-view divergence and weaker English skills, lower level students appear to take longer to accept learner-centred teaching and learning approaches. For example, in response to item 31 in the Student Survey (*I get confused when my teacher gives me a choice – I prefer it when they just tell me*), the Level 1 to 4 positive responses were 29%, 29%, 15% and 0% respectively. Greater care (better understanding of their previous educational background and more scaffolded, structured and teacher-directed learning approaches) may be required to successfully bridge lower level students to the greater cognitive demands of higher education.

Factors That May Enhance Student Learning

Male Emirati Foundations students appear to enter the college gate at the start of their academic journey into higher education with attributes and attitudes that may enhance their learning. These have been identified through the surveys and comments by largely

Western college faculty in interviews and focus group meetings in addition to my own observations.

Positive comments from experienced Foundations faculty: in the words of the students' teachers, largely empathetic towards their young charges despite the enormous frustration and challenges confronted and resolved in teaching them on a daily basis, the students are "genuine, friendly, relaxed, non-aggressive, respectful, courteous – they also have a great sense of humour and like to have fun". Many of these comments reflect positive comparisons to Western youths of the same age in the UK and other Arabs in Saudi Arabia and Oman.

VARK and Multiple Intelligences portray a diverse group of multi-modal learners: 60% of the new Level 2 study cohort declared multi-modalism as their main preferred learning style. Compare this to returning Level 2 students with over 90% multi-modalism. These results seemingly indicate sophisticated adult learners who are able to switch learning modes between different areas of content and content delivery formats. A high declared intrapersonal intelligence points to a possible high level of self-awareness with an implied capability of objectively understanding oneself and one's relationship to others and the world.

Several of Hofstede's beliefs about Arab cultural dimensions as 'understood' by many have been largely debunked: students do not seem to consistently conform to expected Arab cultural patterns. Are we witnessing a neo-indigenous effect produced by globalization and the UAE's own cultural tsunami? Are these *p*-waves emanating from the Arab Spring 'earthquake' or are they a result of a longer process of globalization enabled by social media and the Internet?

Highest MTQ sten scores in emotional control and confidence in their own abilities: these positive attributes indicate huge potential for faculty and administrators to 'tap' into across a gamut of activities from inside the classroom to the football ground to the top of the 'Power Pole on the ropes course.

Higher level Foundations students declare high intrinsic motivation and persistence: while the situation remains very complex, it appears that the higher level students (3 and 4) have greater world-view congruency with the college culture and in combination with their stronger English skills, they appear to find studying much easier.

***LPQ profiles highlight strengths in deep approaches to learning*:** compared to a similar cohort of Foundations students surveyed in October 2004, the study cohort declared deep approaches to learning (32%) compared to 19% in the 2004 survey. This improvement also indicates a significant shift away from surface approaches in 2004 (58%) to 2012 (26%).

***Student stories highlighted several key stability factors which the students hold dear*:** friends, family, school, college and future prospects appear to provide anchor points in the lives of the current Level 2 study cohort. If one of these cherished factors becomes diminished, their sense of personal stability might be expected to suffer.

Conclusion

Male Emirati Foundations students may all look similar but, after this analysis, they are revealed as individuals with different background stories, with different motivations for attending college, and with different dreams about their futures. They are as eclectic and diverse as any group of 18-19 year olds in any part of the world, and yet, they have been shown here also to demonstrate consistent behaviours, display common attitudes, and sometimes act within expected cultural norms (Sidani & Thornberry, 2009). Much of this seems to hinder their learning, and very little appears to mitigate it. In the words of a current HCT Foundations Chair, "we need to teach them a different game with different rules". These words contain a great truth, reminiscent of another Arab country not too far away that built pyramids in much the same way for hundreds of years until the absurdity of doing so became blindingly obvious. We really do need a different game with different rules if we are not to fall into the same 'pyramid-building trap', for to do so will condemn higher education organizations such as HCT to continuously reproduce the graphic that ends this chapter (see Figure 25). It shows the number of new male students approved in July 2011 for study at Fujairah Men's College and then the steady reduction in numbers as the academic year progresses (see Appendix O for a detailed breakdown of the 84 students who 'left' FMC between Day 1, 4 September 2011 and the final day, 7 June 2012). It is a sorry indictment of a system which appears committed to 'playing the same game with the same rules'. Foundations faculty have an enormous potential as players within the game to positively impact the lives of the students. And this is where we travel to next to explore the role of the faculty and their power to change lives.

Figure 25: Enrolment decline of new Foundations students at FMC, 2011-2012

CHAPTER 6: TEACHERS, PEDAGOGY, AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

الشاطرة تغزل برجل حمار

Ash shāṭra tighzil birijl ḥimār

The clever woman could spin with a donkey's foot

To be equal to anything.[31]

The first three-year contract quickly came to an end and I was fortunate to be offered several more contracts, extending our stay in the UAE well beyond the planned three years. By the early 2000s, I began to meet ex-Foundations students in their workplaces. They would tell me about their lives after college, when they got married and how many children they had. Two notable incidents with ex-students come to mind. On one

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[31] Arnander & Skipwith (1995)

occasion, we were having a barbeque on the Jebel Ali Beach when a white SUV roared up, two officials leaped out and began berating the group about "fires not allowed". One of them was quite rude and started to kick sand on to the small fire we had built. I was getting something from our Pajero when they arrived and as I returned, I recognized the louder person as one of my ex-Foundations students. Recognizing me, his demeanour instantly changed to one of great friendliness and smiles, and after many profuse apologies for disturbing our evening, they left us alone with our fire intact. The second incident occurred over a number of years when we were leaving Dubai during the colder winter months. We always seem to meet the same duty officer at the airport, a former student who would literally grab us and our luggage, take us to the front of long queues for the check-in and passport check, and then almost throw us on board the aeroplane. It was often embarrassing but I could never prevail upon him to stop his helpfulness – I accepted it for what it was: a grateful person whose life had been irrevocably and positively changed by attending college. In all the years that I have met ex-students, not one of them ever told me they regretted attending college, not one. I knew it to be true by the wide and generous smiles upon their faces.

Introduction

In this chapter, the teaching faculty, the pedagogy they apply in the classroom, and the learning environment in which they teach will be described and assessed. The teachers bring with them factors that may enhance as well as hinder student learning. An aggregate teacher profile will be compiled from faculty focus meetings, interviews, and surveys. The pedagogy focuses primarily on English language teaching and a careful examination of the impact upon student learning of the instructional approaches adopted by faculty will be assessed. Much of the formal learning takes place within the college classrooms so I describe the physical learning environment followed by an assessment of the different cultures from HCT to college to the classroom that may impact upon student learning. Finally, the interplay between the critical elements of students, faculty, pedagogy, and learning environment will be explored in reviewing student absenteeism in the critical first semester. The third and fourth key research questions will be addressed and answered.

Teachers

Ten teachers (nine English and one CPR) were involved at some time during the academic year in directly teaching the study cohort of 94 Level 2 students who were

enrolled in September 2011. Some of them began in Semester 1 while others joined in Semester 2 as the study cohort broke up and moved into various sections and levels based on academic progression decisions made at the end of Semester 1. Of the ten teachers, seven were formally interviewed and transcripts made. All teachers completed the PALS Teacher Survey (Midgley et al., 1998) while well over half were present both times at the two faculty focus meetings (March and April, 2012). One teacher left HCT at the end of Semester 1 in January 2012. All gave their permission to use their interview transcriptions for narrative analysis and to cite passages anonymously. Two teachers, David Edwards and Tom Earp, gave permission to use their names.

Teacher profile

Seven of the ten teachers are men and three are women. Their mean age as at 1 September 2011 is 48.4 years with a minimum and maximum of 29 and 62 years respectively. Overall, they have 145 years of combined total teaching experience with an average of 14 years six months teaching experience each (minimum and maximum of 5 and 26 years respectively). In terms of their teaching experience with male Emirati students at Fujairah Men's College, as at 1 September 2011, the average length of time is only 1 year 4 months with a minimum of zero years and a maximum of six years. This low average hides 23 years of teaching Emirati students by one male teacher though in his interview, he made it clear that in general terms, he has found Arab students in the four Arab countries in which he had taught to be "all the same". Finally, the Foundations faculty are highly qualified with most faculty possessing a relevant Masters degree together with a recognized ELT qualification such as a Certificate or Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA or DELTA) – see Figure 1. The age, teaching experience, and years at male HCT colleges are means. In creating a 'typical Foundations teacher' profile at FMC, such a faculty is a male in his late forties, most probably from the UK, and has been teaching for almost 15 years. He is very well academically qualified with a relevant Masters degree and an ELT certification such as a CELTA. However, he has limited exposure to male Emirati students, on average only just one year and a half.

Level 2 Foundations Teacher Profile, FMC, Sept 2011 ($n = 10$)	
Gender	7 men, 3 women

Age	48 years 5 months
Country of origin	3x UK, 2x Australia, 2x USA, 1x Canada, Italy, Sweden
Teaching experience	14 years 11 months
Years at FMC	1 year 4 months
Qualifications	3x Bachelors, 7x Masters, 10x ELT[32]

Figure 1: Level 2 Foundations teacher profile, FMC, September 2011

The requirements for English language teaching at HCT provide a stark contrast to those minimum requirements for the employment of teachers of English and Math in the government high schools, the main source of male Emirati students eligible for study at HCT colleges in Fujairah (Ridge, 2010). As discussed in Chapter 5, the UAE government teacher workforce is made up of two groups of teachers: expatriate teachers from Arab states, and Emiratis. As women are forbidden to teach boys upwards from Grade 10 and there is an acute shortage of male Emirati teachers due to a lack of interest in teaching as a career (Moussly, 2009b), there remains a "continuing need to bring in male teachers from nearby Arab states" (Ridge, 2010, p. 16). The main Arab countries from which the UAE Ministry of Education recruits teachers to staff its high schools are Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Palestine (Ridge, 2008, as cited in Ridge, 2010). Teacher education and certification in the first three aforementioned Arab countries is consistently poor – none of these countries including the UAE require a probationary period, a time during which training teachers are peer assessed and their suitability for a teaching career is determined. Further, there is no pre-practicum or practicum (a pre-practicum provides teacher trainees with the opportunity to observe practical teaching in the classrooms under supervision while a full practicum engages the teacher trainee in full lesson teaching under the supervision and guidance of an experienced teacher). Therefore, these male teachers have not received the same level of teacher training including the application and practice of modern pedagogical methods compared to the top-performing countries as recorded in the 2007 TIMSS Encyclopedia (*TIMSS Encyclopedia*, 2007). The poor performance of students from other Arab countries compared to Dubai in the TIMSS 2007 (*TIMSS Dubai 2007 in Summary*, 2007) bears

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[32] I have aggregated CELTA, DELTA and other TEFL/TESOL qualifications into one category called ELT (English Language Teaching).

testament to this unsuccessful approach, and should sound a warning that these very same teachers are "being imported to teach the majority of national boys, whose failure and dropout rates are on the increase" (Ridge, 2010, p. 21).

Border crossing experiences

In Chapter 4, I introduced the border crossing model, one for students and another for faculty (see Figure 15, Chapter 4). Upon presenting the draft model to faculty, their response was very positive. When I asked the Level 2 Foundations faculty to rate their overall cross-cultural or Contact Zone experiences with Emirati students along a spectrum from negative to neutral to positive, 50% rated them positively, two were mixed (not neutral – they varied from negative to positive), and one was negative. Several well-documented studies (Tinto, 1975; Astin, 1984, 1993) have found strong links between the quantity and quality of student-faculty interactions with grade performance and overall satisfaction with the college. In particular, "student-faculty interactions in the major area may be more important for males than for females" (Tinto, 1975, p. 110). From the Level 2 study cohort perspective, their 'very true' responses (4 and 5) to items 5, 7 and 29 (*I feel a sense of belonging, the college has helped me to feel settled into college, and I have everything I need to be successful*) are 68%, 65%, and 71% ($n = 31$) respectively appear to reflect similar ambiguity reported by the faculty in rating their border crossing experiences. This is additionally supported by the new student orientation feedback in Chapter 4 when half of the students reported difficulties in dealing with the staff and teachers (neutral to very difficult).

In the first faculty focus meeting, a discussion arose as to whether the boundaries as defined by the Contact Zones remain permanently in place. One group of teachers felt the boundaries come down during a lesson depending on the topic or skill being practised. The same group chat quite openly with the students after class, especially in small groups, with one teacher reporting that students "confide" in him quite regularly. On the other hand, another group of teachers felt that students always understood the teacher's role and position, implying that the boundaries remain intact most of the time, in and out of the classroom.

Two other observations are noteworthy – one faculty said that "when I'm at work, I see it as a role to play and therefore I play it." Another faculty reported that they experience

border crossings any time "you place yourself outside of your comfort zone". Finally, when asked if they considered themselves to be border crossers (location 'e' in the faculty model), all faculty agreed, though half felt that a 'distance' needed to be maintained between them and the students. A discussion followed about how best to improve the student-faculty interactions – more frequent 1:1 interactions can break down barriers, careful selection of topic choice in English language teaching classes can be beneficial, and of course, spending time building rapport remains the key for everyone.

Teacher as a change agent

Glen Aikenhead (1996) introduced the role of 'teacher as cultural broker' in the context of science education when he examined the degree of difficulty students have in crossing borders between their life-worlds and that of science. After several series of papers and books spanning almost two decades (Aikenhead, 1996, 1997a, 2000b, 2001a, b, c, 2003; Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999; Aikenhead & Otsuji, 2000; Jegede & Aikenhead, 1999, Aikenhead & Michell, 2011), he highlights several attributes that a 'teacher as culture broker' should possess and apply, particularly when working with indigenous students or in the case of the UAE, neo-indigenous students (Chapter 2). I have adapted his attributes to suit my research setting:

- they acknowledge that a border exists and motivate students to cross it by developing a relationship with them, by understanding the specific history of the students' culture, and by holding high expectations for them
- they employ the language of both the students' culture and the culture of English language learning
- they explicitly keep track of which culture comprises the context of the moment and they help students resolve cultural conflicts that may arise
- they reframe the acquisition of English language skills as an appropriation of Western culture for utilitarian purposes rather than as the correct way of knowing about the world
- they make the ontology of the Western approaches and understandings explicit in their classrooms thereby providing students more freedom to appropriate parts of Western knowledge without embracing Western values, an appropriation Aikenhead calls 'autonomous acculturation' (Aikenhead, as cited in Michie, 2001a, p. 58)

FMC Foundations faculty who were formally interviewed were evenly split when asked if they considered it appropriate to adopt the role of a cultural change agent. These two

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statements from two faculty with the same view – "I have always wanted to set a very good example for my students and if I could actually, by setting that good example, bring about some change into their lives and their perspective and make a difference, then that would be wonderful…within their setting" and "I think we have an opportunity to change their learning culture... these boys want to resign themselves to the idea that they don't have any control and I try to change that" – indicate a strong desire to effect change through example and to encourage greater self-reliance and control over their lives (this lack of control was identified through the Mental Toughness Questionnaire – see Chapter 5).

On the other hand, the comments below make it clear that the following faculty feel that the change agent role is inconsistent with their specific teaching goals and is culturally inappropriate – "I don't think our role should be to do that…..that maybe wrong" and "I think that's a very dangerous concept". To consciously implement a hidden agenda of cultural change without informing the students is manipulative and contrary to the expectations of the organization. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, English language teaching does not occur acculturally (100% confirmed by teacher interviews) and through daily exposure to Western teachers who possess different values and world-views from their Emirati students, the *unconscious* role of a cultural change agent may indirectly occur as a result of the daily interactions with students in the college classrooms, cafeteria, college social areas or standing together on top of the high-ropes course.

Differences between students and faculty

Faculty are keenly aware of the cultural differences between themselves and their students, often highlighting essentialist viewpoints on culture. Some faculty commented generally – "I think we come from [a] different values system" – while one faculty noted that the cultural stereotyping also comes from the students. Another teacher felt that there was "something missing at home for these students" in that busy parents tend to spend less time with their children and compensate by buying gifts and toys. The majority of opinions were quite specific concerning the differences - "they are fundamentally different", "honour is an important thing in the Middle East and I know that losing face is an important aspect of cultural issues or differences so I can see how they are different from me in that respect", "I would say they are different the way they all stick together", and "their total lack of not realizing that the nanny or the housekeepers [are] being kept like a slave. It's not because they are nasty, they just have no idea. They genuinely think they are helping someone" are commentaries posited on the clear existence of a cultural boundary with very much an 'us

vs. them' construction, something which has generally been reported in most education systems (Hofstede, 1986; Pillsbury and Shields, 1999; Niyozov & Pluim, 2009). Several faculty confirmed this viewpoint privately, off the record.

Finding fault and engaging in self-fulfilling prophecies build barriers between specific groups of 'they' and 'we' (note the separation of the 'other' from the 'self') but "it is the degree of inflexibility, rather than the constructions [barriers] themselves which create the greatest problems" (Pillsbury & Shields, 1999, p. 412). Perceived differences were also reinforced by perceived boundaries between teachers and students with four of the six interviewed faculty strongly describing a boundary – "I certainly like to have a barrier between me and my students", one faculty noted. Further reinforcement of the boundary concept was found in the faculty responses to a question on the power relationships between them and the students. Two faculty declared authoritative power relationships, with one noting that "somebody told me that I'd do well at the men's college because I was large and I'm 6'3" and 250 pounds". Three faculty felt they had little power compared to the students – comments such as "I feel that if the students want something, they usually win", "I feel like a servant", and "the students here have more power as a group" indicate a sense of powerlessness which is echoed in the Teacher Survey results later in this chapter.

Finally, a narrative analysis was conducted using Nvivo9 software which calculated the frequency of the pronoun "them" used in relation to the students among the interviewed Foundations faculty. This analysis produced the following result - more traditional teachers who prefer a professional relationship with more detachment between teachers and students used the pronoun "them" almost three times more frequently than those faculty who declared themselves to be more open to more informal social interactions with students in the first faculty focus meeting.

Identity learning

Interactions at the Contact Zones between Emirati students and Western teachers are intensely personal encounters. I remember well my own initial experiences with students in the mid 1990s which often resulted in post-lesson reflection and discussion with colleagues on improving our classroom management, handling difficult students, and creating more effective and culturally-situated lesson plans. Geijsel and Meijers (2005) consider that after a boundary experience, each teacher has the potential for increased cognitive and affective growth. This occurs through a circular learning process consisting of two elements – discursive meaning-giving (cognitive learning preceding emotional learning) and intuitive

sense-giving (an emotional and reflective process through which the teacher makes sense of the experience). In my early interactions with Emirati students, I needed to make sense of my immediate teaching experience by transferring the post-lesson emotionally strong feelings of frustration, anger, and shame towards a higher cognitive level of giving and sharing meaning within our small teaching group. This process was always cathartic and healing for me. Unfortunately, it was all too obvious when teachers were experiencing difficulties in managing the teaching and learning environment. Geijsel and Meijers (2005) suggest that the outcomes of boundary or contact zone experiences are more likely to be negative because the teacher experiences conflict and negative emotions from "a situation in which one is *unable to function adequately because one cannot fully identify with the new situation and its exigencies*" (p. 424, their emphasis). These events force the teacher to see themselves in a different light, often causing 'existential insecurity'.

When I asked the six Foundations faculty how they made sense of cross-cultural situations and interactions, the conversation almost always moved towards 'difficult encounters' with Emirati learners in the classroom, either individually or as a group. Half of the teachers react on an affective or emotional level - as one teacher remarked, "the reluctance of the students to engage in the lesson has deeper roots, often insurmountable – and no matter what I do in the classroom or how active or inventive I am, I'm not going to get through to them. So, I give in as there will be situations like that that cannot be resolved." Another gets to the point where "I wanted to stop them 'getting to me'." The other half react more cognitively – "some of the interactions that I have I have to share it with someone or I'll find that someone has had a very different experience with the same student so I might talk to them about it and say 'what's going on here?'" One teacher rationalizes their experiences in terms of classroom management – "It's quite interesting to see how they are behaving and why they are behaving the way they are. So, [it's] not an emotional issue but more from a management point of view where I have to set some clear lines."

These teachers appear to have developed two different coping strategies which appear to satisfactorily resolve the 'existential insecurity' caused by negative boundary or contact zone experiences. A teacher's identity is enhanced when they make sense of their experience, especially in relation to previous experiences. However, if the new experience cannot be related to previous experience and are not personalised and understood, they do not become part of the teacher's identity (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005). Faculty who are unable to develop and apply these sense-giving approaches may well then move to what Michie

calls, a "'fall-back' cultural essentialist position" (Michie, 2011a, p. 15) in which they experience culture shock in attempting to "adjust to an unfamiliar social system where previous learning informing identity no longer applies" (Pedersen, as cited in Michie, 2011a, p. 22).

Culture shock

Two faculty among those interviewed displayed symptoms of culture shock in their initial encounters with Emirati students. Pedersen (as cited in Michie, 2011a, p. 22) describes culture shock as a learning process and lists five stages that people may pass through as they continue to work in the cultural borderland:

> 1. Honeymoon stage (detachment): feelings of fascination, adventure and excitement about the other culture are followed by disappointment, inadequacy, alienation and self-blame. Interpretations are similar to a tourist, insulated in their own culture.
>
> 2. Disintegration (self-blame): the intrusion of the host culture in unexpected and often uncontrollable ways leads to a sense of confusion and disorientation. The sojourner becomes withdrawn and depressed, often avoiding contact with the host culture and embarrassed at being so different to the host culture.
>
> 3. Reintegration (hostility): the anger previously directed inwardly at being inadequate is now directed outwardly, and particularly at people in the host culture, who become "the scapegoats for all real or imagined inadequacies" (Pedersen, as cited in Michie, 2011a, p. 22).
>
> 4. Autonomy (synthesis): the sojourner becomes more self-assured and increasing warm in relations with others. They are increasingly culturally competent and relax and enjoy the host culture, often to overestimating their competence and considering themselves as 'expert' on the host culture.
>
> 5. Interdependence (bicultural identity): being "equally comfortable, settled, accepted, and fluent in both the new and old cultures" (Pedersen, as cited in Michie, 2011a, p. 22). Pedersen describes this as being "a state of dynamic tension" where new perspectives can be formulated, rather than seeing it as an endpoint.

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The third, reintegration stage is seen as a 'tipping point' at which the teacher may regress or progress - rejection of the host culture may lead to the teacher's regression to the more superficial 'honeymoon phase' rather than progression to the fourth stage where the conflict is resolved (Pedersen, as cited in Michie, 2011a, p. 23).

After I arrived in the UAE in 1995, the grounded and comfortable familiarity of having my family with me to enjoy together the new sights and sounds facilitated a quick cultural and personal journey from the 'honeymoon' phase to 'autonomy' with very little experience of the difficult symptoms associated with phases 1-3 in Pedersen's model. While I have worked for many years with Emiratis, I do not consider myself to have moved towards the bicultural identity of the 'interdependence' phase though I have met many expatriates who have. At times, I still feel as an outsider in this country, darting back and forth between Michie's 'cross-cultural' and 'expatriate' groups (Michie, 2011b), and though I have come to possess great affection for its people and their culture, I am relaxed about my cultural interactions, having moved increasingly away from an essentialist expatriate perspective to a more humanistic viewpoint that often allows me to see 'the person' beyond the explicit cultural layer of dress, behaviours and language.

The first culture shock case involved a faculty member who started in September 2011 and had taught for many years in Asia. They were regarded as an experienced English language teacher. By the end of their formal interview in early November 2011, they had definitely reached Pedersen's third stage, reintegration. Not only were the students a source of blame but also the college management and its pedagogical approach to teaching the students. Feeling undermined, unsupported, upset at the teaching approach adopted by the department, making unfavourable comparisons between the Emirati students and those students whom they had recently taught in Asia, this faculty never progressed past this third 'storming' reintegration stage and left HCT and the UAE after one semester in January, 2012.

The second culture shock case had a much happier ending in that this faculty progressed beyond the third stage by resolving the conflicting classroom management and cultural issues that were causing them to doubt their ability and skill – "I thought it was me and ... I was losing my skill" (self-blame). Through a process of reflection and support from the Chair, this faculty finally made sense of their experiences by changing their attitude and

behaviours – "I'm just more positive...now, I go in smiling, I can't wait to do the lesson and they [the students] respond in the same way back".

Teacher survey and focus group analysis

Goal orientation theory examines the reasons why students engage in their academic work. The theory has two classes of goals – mastery and performance goals (Pintrich, 2000). When students' goals are to truly understand or master the lesson or skill being taught, this describes a mastery goal. These students are very interested in self-improvement and tend to compare their current achievement against their own prior levels of achievement. On the other hand, a performance goal reflects students' goals to demonstrate their ability compared to other students. They are more interested in competition and out-performing others, and they tend to benchmark their performance against other students rather than themselves. I administered the PALS Teacher Survey (Midgley et al., 2000) to nine current or past Level 2 Foundations teachers to assess the teachers' perceptions of the mastery and performance goal structure for students, approaches to instruction, and their personal teaching efficacy. The results may be seen in Figure 2 - the means reflect the teachers' responses as recorded on a Likert scale – 1 (strongly disagree) – 3 (somewhat agree) – 5 (strongly agree) with 2 and 4 being intermediary steps.

Overall, faculty declared strongest for mastery goal perception compared to performance goal perception, reflecting an underlying professional belief and value system among Foundations faculty that the purpose of student learning is skill mastery and encouraging learner independence. In assessing teacher approaches to instruction, faculty again declared strongest for mastery goal approaches. Faculty do exploit performance-oriented students through the use of competitive games in class for skill and knowledge recycling - I have observed students enjoying these activities very much. Finally, teachers declared their lowest mean score (3.41 but second highest standard deviation of 0.95) in reference to teachers' beliefs that they are contributing significantly to the academic progress of

Perceptions of the School Goal Structure for Students	Approaches to Instruction	Personal Teaching Efficacy

This refers to teachers' **perceptions** that the school conveys to students that the purpose of engaging in academic work is to develop competence.		This refers to teacher **strategies** that convey to students that the purpose of engaging in academic work is to develop competence.		This refers to teachers' **beliefs** that they are contributing significantly to the academic progress of their students, and can effectively teach all students.	
Mean Mastery	**3.73**	Mean Mastery	**3.86**	Mean	**3.41**
Mean Performance	**3.67**	Mean Performance	**3.47**		
Std Dev Mastery	1.02	Std Dev Mastery	0.71	Std Dev	0.95
Std Dev Performance	0.93	Std Dev Performance	0.75		
Skewness Mastery	-0.42	Skewness Mastery	-0.51	Skewness	-0.24
Skewness Performance	0.24	Skewness Performance	-0.05		

Figure 2: Patterns of Adaptive Learning Scales (PALS): results of teacher survey analysis ($n = 9$)

their students, and can effectively teach all students. The contrast between their highest score in approaches to instruction and their lowest score in personal teaching efficacy is supported by their response to item 6 in the Teacher Survey (*Factors beyond my control have a greater influence on my students' achievement than I do*) where 78% agreed with this statement. When I explored this in the first faculty focus meeting (March 2012), I asked if their apparent frustration (and sense of powerlessness?) with the current *modus operandi* was caused mainly by *a priori* or concurrent factors. The faculty reported issues with both *a priori* and concurrent factors with the former being the low level of student academic preparedness and motivation combined with English level misplacement which results in too many students finding themselves in levels too high for them. Concurrent factors focussed mainly on HCT and college policies such as the perception by faculty that the HCT attendance policy "has no teeth", the "messy start" to the academic year with new students being allowed into class as late as week 5, frequent changes to student and faculty schedules, and the relatively late distribution of student laptops (these phenomena were fully described in Chapter 5). As one faculty commented, "there seems to be a disconnect between what would be ideal...and what actually is".

Summary

The cultural border crossing model makes sense to the Foundations faculty as it appears to accurately capture the entire gamut of their contact zone experiences. By and large, those experiences with male Emirati students have been mostly positive with the more

traditional faculty reporting mixed to negative experiences. Almost all faculty recognized value system differences between themselves and the students, and most were aware of some type of cultural boundary. The latter confirmed they were border crossers (elements 'd' and 'e' in the model) along with the others yet they also felt the need to maintain a distance between themselves and the students. Half the faculty considered a change agent role as inappropriate, even "dangerous" though all recognized that simply being in class as a Westerner teaching a foreign language produced an unconscious role of exposing their Arab learners to different values and world-views. In resolving difficult cultural boundary or contact zone experiences, half the faculty deal with these situations emotionally first while the other half make sense of them cognitively. Finally, Foundations faculty have a strong focus on mastery goals in terms of their teaching expectations but there is a disconnect between their mission and strategies with their ratings of personal teaching efficacy.

An underlying tension, a sense of frustration was explored in the first faculty focus meeting which was confirmed by the group. Given all the negative factors extraneous to their main role of classroom English language teacher (ill-prepared and low-no motivated students, high student attrition rates due to employment pressures and active recruitment by government military and police agencies, and issues with the constantly changing curriculum and ineffectual policies such as attendance), I am left with an overall impression of this group of faculty as one of considerable respect for the way they perform a very difficult job very well. Echoing back to a comment about the disconnect between what is ideal and what is real, Giroux (2005) reminds us that in terms of critical pedagogy, there is a "need to name the contradiction between what schools claim they do and what they actually do" (p. 125). This contradiction is further reinforced by Price and Richardson (2004) when describing the difficulty facing higher education teachers who wish to improve student learning and academic outcomes. The lack of time and constant institutional and academic demands result "in increased workloads where the strategy adopted by teachers is often one of *doing what is possible* as opposed to *doing what is desirable* [their emphasis]" (p.115). This situation plays out especially in programs such as Foundations that are undergoing rapid and frequent change – see Changes in Foundations, Chapter 7. For now, let us examine the background of young male Emiratis prior to them arriving at college with a close

examination of their pre-school upbringing within the Arab family unit and their subsequent school experiences.

Pedagogy[33] – In The Beginning...

The great Lebanese-American poet, Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931) wrote the poem "On Children" in 1923 (see below). In it, Gibran makes a plea for parents everywhere not to control their children but rather, to give their children the opportunity to succeed on their own. All that children require emotionally are their parents' unconditional support and love (*Kahlil Gibran*, 2011).

On Children

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
and He bends you with His might
that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.

As an Arab with deep roots in Lebanon, Gibran's advice does not reflect the accepted child-rearing practices that seek to instil the primary Arab family values of "obedience and social conformity, with obedience being focussed on the father" (Sidani & Thornberry, 2009, p. 40). The patriarchal father-child relationship "serves to reinforce the power distance between the two" (p. 40) and combined with physical disciplinary measures such as hitting (Barakat, 2012), the child eventually learns to give in to authority figures, supported by the encouragement of such virtues as obedience, submission, yielding, compliance and conformity (Sharabi, as cited in Sidani &

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[33] Pedagogy is defined as "the art, science, or profession of teaching" (*Merriam-Webster*, 2012)

Thornberry, 2009, p. p. 40-41). Ridge and Farah (2012) found in their study of male Emirati drop-outs that the father-son relationship has enormous impact upon the son's success at high school and the choice of career with most sons opting to follow their father into 'safe' careers in the police, army and government ministries. The father's level of education in particular had a strong effect "with more educated fathers being less likely to have a son who repeated a year of school" (p. 5). Wafta (as cited in Sidani & Thornberry, 2009, p. 41) highlights the problem of being a first-born male within the Arab family, doted on by his mother, not being able to develop self-reliance and self-confidence as everything is provided for him – his distant father has a limited role in his direct upbringing and as a result, the male child "lacks faith in his own ability to deal with problems" (p. 41).

The World Bank Overview of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the MENA region is scathing of the lack of progress in ECD specifically and educational achievement generally in the Arab world, noting that the poor performance of Arab students in international assessments such as TIMSS and PIRLS reflects an overlooked fact – "that the capability to learn (readiness for school) is set *before* children enter school" (*World Bank MENA ECD Report,*2009, p. 31). It is a brutal indictment of the Arab family system which appears to be failing its children by apparently not providing the rich array and diversity of experiences in their young pre-school lives which "influence the development of their neural circuits and mediate their cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social capacities. It is these capacities that ultimately determine the quality of a society's human capital" (p. 31). In interacting with both male and female Emiratis over a long number of years, their 'uni-dimensional' lives appear to be focussed almost entirely on activities within the physical family home interspersed by shopping trips to the malls. As a teacher and Chair, I know the depth of knowledge of young male Emiratis about the world including its geography and history, key issues and current problems is alarmingly thin.

When these young boys enter the Arab education system, the family values of social conformity and respect/submission to authority are transferred to the school, now between the student and the teacher (Richardson, 2004). Wafta lists school practices that he feels supports these values – daily military-like lining-up, singing the national anthem, wearing a school uniform, and a long list of 'do's and don'ts' (as cited in Sidani

& Thornberry, 2009, p. 42). The teacher is seen as a person who "knows everything and parents may actually encourage blind submission to teachers" (p. 42). Rote memorization (*basm* in Arabic) continues to dominate the junior and high school pedagogical approach to learning and assessment – the ability to memorize and then repeat or regurgitate the information in a test defines a student's success at school, not the ability to question, to think critically or to analyse. This success or failure reflects upon the entire extended family whose honour or *'ird* is raised or lowered by family members' behaviour and successes or achievements within the wider social community – the students feel this pressure which is indicated by their almost 100% agreement with item 44 in the Student Survey (*My parents would like it if I could show that I'm better at classwork than other students in my class*).

And so, it seems that many of these young male Emiratis arrive at the doorstep of higher education, most of whom appear totally unprepared for the new type of social, emotional, cognitive, educational, and pedagogical experiences that await them. Governed apparently by the need to maintain basic values through conformity to preferred modes of behaviour, motivated instrumentally to learn only to pass a test, blindingly ignorant of the world in which *they* feel they play a small and insignificant part, paralinguistically loud and aggressive in their speech because to Arabs, "loudness connotes strength and sincerity" (Gudykunst & Kim, as cited in Feghali, 1997, p. 368), slavishly in awe of the teacher who holds all knowledge and tells him what to do, and fearful of losing face as they attempt to learn new knowledge in a second and foreign language, they tentatively enter college with few expectations and only a vague vision of their futures (see Chapter 5 for the research support of these claims).

Background

It has been well established in previous chapters that the UAE government secondary school system is in crisis, despite several well-intentioned but poorly implemented initiatives such as *Al Ghad*[34] and those of ADEC, grabbing the media headlines in recent years (Ahmed, 2012b). Interviews with current and past high school teachers and Ministry of Education officials together with Natasha Ridge's comprehensive research on the UAE public school system since 2009 paint a bleak picture of a failed system on

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[34] Al Ghad schools (Schools of Tomorrow) began in 2005 with a cohort of 50 schools where English was introduced into grades 6, 10, 11, and 12 (*TIMSS,* 2007, p. 667).

its knees - young male Emiratis in particular are bearing the brunt from a host of poorly delivered educational outcomes (Ridge, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2011). In the larger urban centres in the UAE where there is a choice of private school education, the local Emiratis are turning their backs on the free government school system in favour of expensive but more positively-perceived private sector education. In Fujairah, the private school option facing Emirati parents is limited - Fujairah Private Academy, St Marys Catholic High School, and Our Own English High School which caters primarily for children from South Asia. For many Emirati parents concerned with the cultural and religious implications arising from sending their children to a private secondary school in Fujairah, there is, quite frankly, no choice.

The pedagogical experiences of young male Emiratis at the government high schools have been documented in this and previous chapters. In summary, the pedagogical practices of rote memorization and teaching to the test as delivered by ill-trained and poorly-paid Arabic-speaking faculty well-versed in teacher-centric instructional approaches combined with a culture of systemic cheating and grade inflation often at the behest of senior school managers results in a system where 90% of the high school graduates are unable to begin their undergraduate degrees in a college or university of higher education in the UAE without 1-2 years of a foundational or academic bridge program designed to improve their English language competence, English mathematical numeracy, and study skills through personal and professional development programs.

Instructivist vs Constructivist approaches

Marilyn Dahl and others have cautioned on the appropriateness of the current instructional approach underpinned by constructivist epistemology (often incorrectly labelled as a 'constructivist teaching approach' or simply 'constructivism') that is largely adopted at the three main higher educational institutions in the UAE (Dahl, 2010; Porcaro, 2011; Hatherley-Greene, 2010). Constructivism as an epistemology and its role in supporting the interpretivist paradigm was described in Chapter 3. From the early 1980s, constructivism as a learning and instructional theory has swept aside the old ways of teacher-centric instructivism underpinned by a collage of behaviourist and cognitivist epistemologies and championed by leading theorists such as Skinner and Thorndike (Porcaro, 2011, p. 42). With its focus on mapping an accurate structure of the world onto the learner, effective and efficient transfers of knowledge via instructivism involves the

use of memorization, advanced organizers, concept maps, and instructional design (Gagné, 1968; Ausubel, 1978; Novak, 1991). The teacher controls the entire learning process while the learner plays the role of a passive recipient of the teacher's instruction.

On the other hand, instructional approaches underpinned by a constructivist epistemology are much more focussed on the learner (hence, the labels of 'student-centredness' or 'learner-centredness' connote a positive switch away from teacher-centrism towards learner-centrism). The main theorists who supported the philosophical underpinnings of this approach were Piaget (as cited in von Glasersfeld, 1990, p. 22) and Vygotsky (1978) through a strong rationalist ontology that favours engagement with others (social constructivism) that leads to the construction of personal meaning (cognitive constructivism). In a lesson built upon constructivist meanings, the teacher becomes a facilitator and mentor (moving away from the 'sage on the stage' to the 'guide on the side') to their students who are now active, not passive, constructors of knowledge and meaning. Flexible and critical thinking skills are prized over rote learning and a huge gamut of diverse instructional approaches that include discovery learning, authentic tasks, multiple goals, cognitive apprenticeships, and problem-based learning are employed to situate the learner in the centre of the learning process as an active participant in the learning community where the teacher's role remains significant but much less visible (Bandura, 1977; von Glasersfeld, 1987, 1995; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Prawat, 1996; Jonassen, 2000).

Educational technology

With the arrival of powerful multi-media personal computers and the Internet in the late 1990s, information technology has become strongly and strategically aligned with instructional approaches supported by the constructivist epistemology. Emirati male students do appear to be motivated when using computers to complete task work and projects, and seem to provide a focus for diverse learning activities (85%-100% of the new Foundations students positively replied to item #15 in the Student Survey, "*In our lessons, I like using my laptop because it helps me with my learning*"). Academic studies and educational technology journals continue to report evidence of this effect both in the UAE and elsewhere around the world (Marttunen, 1997; Flowers, Pascarella, & Pierson, 2000; Kuh & Vesper, 2001; Hatherley-Greene, 2002; Beltran, Das, and Fairlie, 2008; Lee and Spires, 2009). Though the 'jury is out' with regard to the exact

nature of the effect of teaching with technology (Waxman, Connell and Gray, 2002; Pascarella, 2006; Price & Kirkwood, 2010), many educators today would find it difficult not to support a view that technology has produced generally positive outcomes, though at times entirely unexpected (*How Does Technology Enhance Student Achievement?*, 1995; Sandholtz, Ringstaff & Dwyer, 2002). Social media in the higher education sector of the UAE has been quickly adopted by faculty especially in the use of weblogs or blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and Edmodo. Increasingly, the lines between different types of online applications and websites have blurred with faculty keen to grab and maintain student interest by pushing the boundaries in seeking relevant and modern content in diverse learning formats (Reuben, 2008).

One of HCT's most successful examples of professional development over the past 10 years has been the promotion of educational technology skills among its faculty. Apart from local support at the individual colleges, the system rewards innovative teaching practice once a year in the form of the Nikai Award for Innovation in Teaching (Moussly, 2009a). Once the preserve of Math and computer teachers, educational technology is now used by EFL/ESL professionals around the world as an effective teaching and learning tool with organizations such as the BBC hosting diverse EFL/ESL resource websites (*BBC Learning English*, 2009). Most HCT Foundations faculty use educational technology every day whether it is the World Wide Web, Blackboard Vista (learning management system) to display pre-loaded course content or administer a formative quiz, EdModo (a free online service that allows teachers to create and share educational content, manage projects and assignments, handle notifications, conduct quizzes and events, and facilitate learning experiences among students in classes and colleagues) or MS OneNote (a popular lesson organizer used by many HCT faculty who can enter typed text via keyboard, create tables, and insert pictures. Unlike a word processor, you can write anywhere in the window and OneNote automatically saves data as it is entered). The topic of educational technology will be further expanded in Chapter 7.

Educational technology has increasingly been associated with learner-centred teaching practices over the past two decades, citing increases in self-esteem and self-confidence that has lead to increased motivation and, ultimately, success for the student (Ely, 2008; Hatherley-Greene, 1993, 2002; Jonassen, Peck, & Wilson, 1999; Jonassen & Land,

2000). However, several researchers have cautioned against this almost slavish adherence to constructivist-based teaching practices, especially in non-Western cultures where students' fundamental exposure in their early learning to more traditional teaching and learning pedagogies based on an objectivist epistemology may lead to a loss of teaching effectiveness, low motivation, and cultural hegemony (Dahl, 2010; Hatherley-Greene, 2010; Spector, 2001). Additionally, there continues to be calls for an acceptance of greater 'pluralism' in teaching pedagogies underlined by the antithetical epistemologies of objectivism and constructivism (Willison & Taylor, 2006). Further, instructional methodologies closely allied to instructivist teacher-centrism such as rote memorization have received much vilification over the years especially from higher education English faculty who often accuse government high school teachers of 'EFL blasphemy' worthy of being burnt at the stake! Strong support for targeted memorization has come recently from Scott Thornbury and Zoltan Dörnyei among others (Dörnyei, as cited in Thornbury, 2011) in recognition that learning a foreign language "seems to require possession of unusual memory abilities, particularly the retention of verbal material" (Skehan, as cited in Thornbury, 2011). It was also a technique supported by HCT Academic Central Services when it rolled out the New Foundations programs in 2010 (undisclosed documents).

"My way or the highway"

HCT's Learning Model is based upon eight graduate outcomes or developmental literacies – communication and information, critical and creative thinking, global awareness and citizenship, technological literacy, self-management and independent learning, teamwork and leadership, vocational competencies, and mathematical literacy (*HCT Catalogue 2010-2011*, 2010, pp. 20-21). The realization of those learning outcomes is premised on the academic staff "providing educational experiences that will *transform* [my emphasis] school leavers into HCT students..." (p. 21). Further insight into HCT's preferred teaching methodology may be gleaned from the HCT Recruitment website it states that "teaching methods and technology are the most modern available and focus on student achievement. The language of instruction is English..." (*HCT Recruitment*, 2012). Officially then, the 'c" word is not mentioned. However, in a series of HCT research publications (Warne, 2006; Gallagher & Bashir-Ali, 2007; Anderson & Coombe, 2010), 46% of the 35 articles on action research in English Language Teaching and Cultivating Real Writers publications were strongly aligned with constructivist

instructional approaches. Similarly, in Gitsaki's (2011) compilation of research focussed on teaching and learning in the Arab world, nine out of 21 chapters contained a strong constructivist flavour such as "*Drama as a Pedagogy in Arab Teacher Education Programs: Developing Constructivist Approaches to Teaching*" (p. 311). As Dahl found out in her research into the introduction of integrated projects based on problem-based learning in a barely-disguised HCT college in Abu Dhabi in 2004, "until they [students] understand the value of order and learn how to achieve it, open-ending learning is an exercise in futility" (2010, p. 61). Citing a lack of a unified vision, resistance to change, organizational breakdown, and a lack of learner readiness for this type of learning, Dahl felt that changing the pedagogical approach in highly complex cross-cultural situations "will most likely fall to individual teachers to persist in the effort to overcome the status quo" (p. 91).

Finally, Porcaro (2011) identified a misalignment between students' and teachers' educational philosophies, and the institutional resources, policies and culture which may cause conflict or congruence. He makes a strong plea for colleges and teachers to continuously seek improved alignment among the key factors. In an echo to Aikenhead's attributes of a 'teacher as culture broker' (Aikenhead, 2006 as cited in Michie, 2011a, p. 58), Porcaro stresses that "teachers must be explicit about their own educational philosophies" (2011, p. 49). New to HCT, rabid constructivists may initially adopt a 'bull in a china shop' approach, employing reflective practices, group work, and open-ended projects but eventually, they are likely to fall flat on their faces when confronted by intractable, unmotivated and largely unmoved students (see Culture shock section in this chapter).

English language teaching techniques

TEFL, TESL, and TESOL are acronyms that refer to the general field of English language teaching and have become a shorthand way to also refer to training courses and programs on how to teach the English language. TEFL stands for Teaching English as a Foreign Language and refers to teaching English in a country where English is not widely used, such as China. TESL stands for Teaching English as a Second Language and refers to teaching English in an English-speaking environment such as the UK, or in a country where English is very widely used such as India. Finally, TESOL stands for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and these courses provide for the

needs of all students. In practice, the acronym is unimportant and teachers with any one of these qualifications are able to find posts around the world as long as their certificate has been accredited by a professional body or the course has been conducted by a reputable institution (*TESOL-Direct*, 2012). A popular ELT (English Language Teaching) certification is the CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) which is certified by the University of Cambridge, UK (*Cambridge Assessment,* 2011*).* The training course which is made up of 120 contact hours, six hours of teaching practice and other syllabus requirements may be offered part-time from 20 weeks to a year, a 'blended' option over 10 weeks or full-time over four weeks. It teaches the principles of effective teaching and provides opportunities to learn a range of practical skills for teaching English to adult learners through practical hands-on teaching experiences. Students learn about language analysis and awareness, the four language skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing, and how to plan an ESL lesson and develop teaching resources. One of lessons during the course may involve the trainer or a guest trainer teaching an entire lesson in a language that none of the students are familiar with – it is a strikingly unforgettable experience and one I remember well as my trainer instructed me for an hour in German to complete a health form also written in German. The CELTA approach is very systematic, organized and structured, based on sound linguistic and pedagogical principles honed through many years of delivering the program all over the world.

Once the training is completed, English language teaching in the Middle East, for example, will typically see faculty applying a combination of two types of mainstream ELT approaches – communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based learning (TBL). There are several other ELT instructional methodologies such as dogme (Thornbury, 2000), silent way (Stevick, 1974), the lexical approach (Kranz, 1997) and CLIL (*European Commission: Languages*, 2012) that offer the English language teacher additional and potentially effective strategies that may be applied from time to time as various teaching and learning scenarios arise. CLT focuses on interaction as both the means and the goal of language learning. Activity types that encourage interaction include role plays, interviews, information gap, games, pair work, and peer teaching. TBL involves tasks in language learning activities that are focused on meaning, have a clear outcome, and reflect how language is used in 'authentic' contexts (Ellis, as cited in Olgivie & Dunn, 2010, p. 162; Nunan, as cited in Olgivie & Dunn, 2010, p. 162; Willis,

as cited in Olgivie & Dunn, 2010, p. 162). Much of TBL is conducted in group work where students develop fluency and confidence. CLIL or Content and Language Integrated Learning has been enthusiastically adopted by the European Commission for teacher training. It is based on principles of 'language immersion' where both the content (curricular subjects such as science) and the target language are taught simultaneously. It may be said that all subject teachers at FMC in the Business, IT and Engineering degree programs are potentially CLIL teachers in that they teach their specific subject areas in English as a second language. However, CLIL's main aim in combining subject and language teaching is "to enhance the pupils' learning experience by exploiting the synergies between the two subjects" (*Content and Language Integrated Learning,* 2012). An assessment of CLIL within the FMC program areas is beyond the scope of this research.

All three approaches have received criticism, most notably Michael Swan's 1985 attack on CLT (Swan, 1985). TBL is often criticised for its emphasis on group work where individual students can 'hide' (Livingstone & Lynch, 2000) or in the UAE, where strong individual students can dominate the group by 'informally' re-assigning workloads (personal experience). Finally, CLIL may retard meaningful content uptake by forcing learners to operate at the lower end of Bloom's Taxonomy in the target subject area (due to their weaknesses in their L2) as well as erode the value of the host language as this example of a CLIL project in Malayasia portrays (Yassin, Tek, Alimon, Baharon & Ying*,* 2010).

The key weaknesses of ELT approaches in the UAE/HCT setting are two-fold. First, ELT instructional approaches, though designed to be used in both mono and multi-lingual settings, are a challenge in a mono-lingual environment when attempting to encourage Arabic-speaking students to use English (L2) and not their L1 (Arabic). There are only Arabic-speaking students at FMC and they all speak their L1 (Arabic) whenever they can, in the lesson, around college, with their friends. Second, the other assumption is that learners come with some motivation to learn English - "...[instrumental motivation] is related to the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency, such as getting a better job or a higher salary while ... [integrative motivation] is associated with a positive disposition towards the L2 group and the desire to interact with, and even become similar to, valued members of that community" (Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p.

204). Higher level students in particular declared strongly for integrative motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972) in studying English (an average of 77% of lower level students in Levels 1 and 2 compared to an average 96% of Level 3 and 4 students positively agreed with item #13 in the Student Survey, *I study English because I want to become better at the language and learn more about the culture of those countries where English is the main language*). While HCT has gained expertise over many years in delivering effective EFL programs, the high rate of student drop-out (attrition) and chronic absenteeism at male HCT colleges means that for most male Emiratis at college, it appears they 'talk with their feet' when it comes to learning English (see Patterns of absences section later in this chapter).

What works and what doesn't

At the conclusion to this section, I will be able to provide an answer to the third key research question - what do the largely Western-educated faculty bring with them to the College that both enhance and hinder student learning?

ELT approaches

The English Foundations teachers met twice with me in two faculty focus group meetings in March and April 2012. In the second meeting held in mid April 2012, the faculty were asked to respond to the three questions focussed tightly on ELT methodology and approach – is your teaching methodology predicated on ELT, does the students' prior school history affect decisions about how you plan for your lessons, and in which ways do you moderate your teaching based on your experiential feedback with the students in Fujairah? They all answered positively to questions 1 and 2, but by the time they arrived at the third question, they had begun to moderate or expand upon the reasons for their overwhelmingly positive response – "yes [but] I have more focus on engagement and rapport", "yes [but] the basic assumptions of ELT don't work here", and "yes [but] I show a lot of respect". By the time I reached a question about learner-centredness *(Is learner-centredness as a preferred instructional approach, applicable and appropriate, given the students' previous school background?)*, they appeared to be more frank in acknowledging the impact of ELT techniques on their students – "yes but only to a limit and we need to

watch the lower level students", "yes but it is a shock to most students", "yes but slowly", "yes, definitely", and finally, a "no" because the "students are not independent learners".

ELT as described in the previous section is the official approach but most English faculty 'soft-pedal' or moderate this for the reasons given above. Certainly, a key part of ELT that is sometimes avoided is group or pair work which according to one faculty, "requires high maintenance to implement". This comment in an email correspondence from a faculty appears to highlight a kind of pedagogical tension between the formalized ELT approach and their emotional and empathetic reaction to the parlous state of the students' academic preparedness and motivation to learn – "*if the learning was going to be more effective with more teacher control (as with our Level 1s), so be it. We hear so much about learner/student-centredness and about decreasing teacher-talk etc, to me the question is: what's the best way for learning to occur in this situation? At times, learner-centredness can be counter-productive if the students haven't got a clue how to learn*".

Teacher traits and strategies

Judith Kleinfeld's exploration of the attitudes and characteristics of teachers working with indigenous students in North America highlighted two main traits that distinguish an effective teacher from an ineffective one – "the effective teacher's ability to create a climate of emotional warmth" and "after personal rapport had been established, they [effective teachers] demand a high level of academic work" (Kleinfeld, 1975, p. 318 and p. 326). The 'emotional warmth' trait is contrasted with professional distance, a characteristic encouraged in many ELT teacher training programs (Hesmondhalgh, 2012). The 'active demandingness' trait is contrasted with passive understanding, an approach implemented by "instructors who baby native students and give them only 'loving-kindness'. Where the overly sensitive teacher soon stops calling upon native students who respond to questions by mute withdrawal, these teachers continue to call on them" (p. 327). Kleinfeld created a typology of teachers using these two characteristics and their opposites, and produced four teacher types which may be viewed in Figure 3:

1. The *traditionalists* "tend to concentrate exclusively on the academic subject matter. They ignore the interpersonal dimension of the classroom, which they consider a

professionally illegitimate area of concern. These teachers generally prefer formally presented, highly structured lessons, such as lectures which permit them to maintain distance from their students" (p. 329).

2. The *sophisticates* appear very suited to "urbane, highly verbal students....Their professional distance is not coldness but sophisticated reserve. Their humour is subtle, tending toward irony. They prefer a discussion class where students can discover intellectual concepts for themselves. The sophisticate teachers tend to be highly educated and well travelled" (p. 331).

3. The *sentimentalists* "tend to be extremely warm, kindly people who find it difficult to make demands upon any students" (p. 334). "Sympathetic to the academic difficulties of native students and wanting very much to be liked, sentimentalist teachers require little, and little learning occurs (p. 335).

4. The *warm demanders* "spend a substantial amount of time at the beginning of the year establishing positive interpersonal relationships, not only between teacher and students, but also within the student group...Only after rapport has been established do these teachers become demanding. Demands, however, are inevitably accompanied by a warm smile, gentle "teasing" (also identified by Anderman et al., 2011, p. 989) and other forms of emotional support...students do not interpret the teacher's demands as bossiness but rather as an aspect of his personal concern" (p. 336).

In the second faculty focus group meeting, faculty were shown the typology below and then asked to declare which type best described them. Two-thirds of the nine faculty declared for warm demandingness though two of these warm demanders declared hybrid types of sentimentalist + warm demander and sophisticate + warm demander. One faculty declared for sophisticate + sentimentalist. Two different sources of support give these declarations importance. First, the students themselves reported strongly in favour of teachers who set tasks slightly above the students' ability, who do not let the students do just easy work but make them think, and who ensure the students understand the ideas, not just memorize them (see Chapter 5). Second, further support comes from a
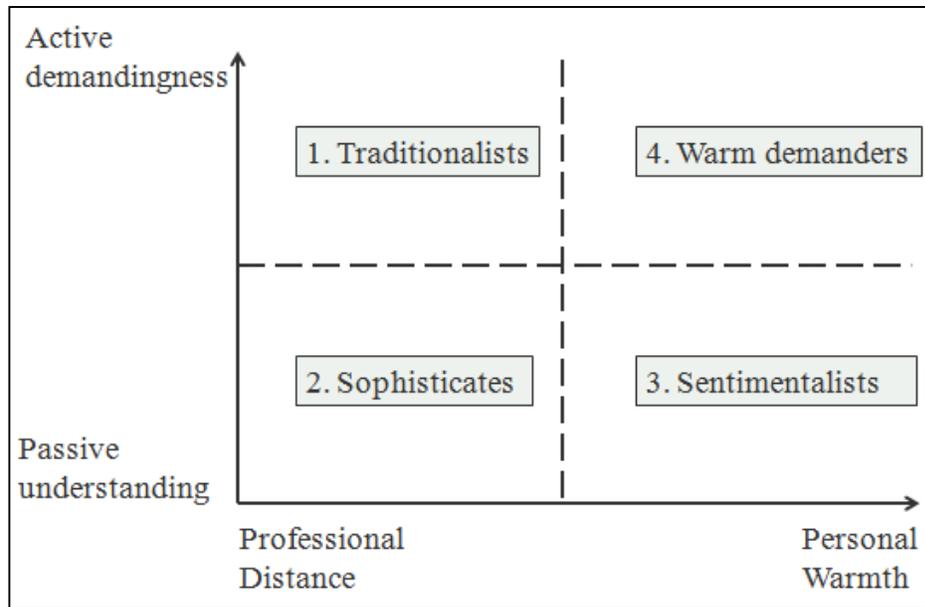
Figure 3: A typology of teachers (after Kleinfeld, 1975, p. 329)

local study of parenting styles in Dubai which found that parental demandingness has a significant impact on GPA scores (Alsheikh et al., 2010). Carol Midgley's group at the University of Michigan additionally provides support for 'warm demandingness' when they highlighted the "importance of creating a classroom environment in which students experience both high academic expectations and a supportive student-teacher relationship" (Marachi, Friedel & Midgley, 2001, p. 12). In several conversations with experienced English faculty around the HCT system during the research period, it is evident that 'warm demandingness' is a trait that works very well in Foundations.

Through his research on the critical role of motivation in second language learning, Zoltan Dörnyei with his associate Kata Csizer devised a list of ten suggestions for motivating language learners (see Figure 4). Dörnyei and others have tested the validity of a 48-item list of motivational strategies and have found general stability in the responses from diverse cultural settings in Hungary, Taiwan and Oman (Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Al-Mahrooqi, Abrar-ul-Hassan & Asante, 2012). The list displays motivational strategies that are applicable to any second-language

1. Set a personal example with your own behaviour.
2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
3. Present the tasks properly.
4. Develop a good relationship with the learners.

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5. Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.
6. Make the language classes interesting.
7. Promote learner autonomy.
8. Personalize the learning process.
9. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.
10. Familiarize learners with the target language culture.

Figure 4: Ten suggestions for motivating language learners (Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998, p. 215)

setting regardless of the subject – Math, Computing, Business and Engineering faculty would all perceive these strategies as representing effective approaches which could be applied successfully in the Middle East. In particular, the item "Show students you care about them" was rated the highest by all participants (*n*=286) in the Omani survey (2012), reflecting the same position in Cheng and Dörnyei's study in Taiwan (2007). Four other strategies were ranked second to fifth in the Omani survey – "provide students with positive feedback, show your enthusiasm for teaching, be yourself in front of students, and recognize students' effort and achievement" (Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2012, p. 19). All these studies confirm the huge motivational impact a teacher has in positively improving students' effort, interest and achievement. Chambers (as cited in Al-Mahrooqi et al., 2012, p. 20) also confirmed that "the teacher's classroom behaviour was the most influential set of factors in motivating students of a second language".

The downside of these results, especially those in Oman, is that these popular strategies seem to place the "onus of motivation on the teacher's behaviour" (Al-Mahrooqi, Abrar-ul-Hassan & Asante, 2012, p. 20), underscoring what many English Foundations faculty know to be true at Fujairah Men's and other HCT Colleges – students come to the colleges in their first year out of high school with a legacy of *heavy teacher dependence*. The upside lies in the potential that a teacher's personal behaviour, the way they interact with the students, and the professionalism and enthusiasm they bring to the teaching and learning process in the classroom can influence students "far more [here in the Middle East] than their counterparts elsewhere" (p. 21).

In the second faculty focus group meeting, I asked faculty to rank the top three strategies or factors for successful ELT teaching in the Fujairah context. They contributed the following:

1. Enthusiasm for teaching and care for students

2/3. Keep calm, stay open, use strategies that work, understand the
learning context (student, college and system expectations)

They successfully identified two of the top five factors identified in the Omani survey –
'show that you care for students' and 'show your enthusiasm for teaching'. Supporting
these findings is recent research from three high schools in the US (Anderman et al.,
2011). Three central themes – supporting understanding, building and maintaining
rapport, and managing the classroom – were found after classroom teacher observations
identified a range of teacher practices that produced a grounded model of instructional
practices (see Figure 5).   Of the sixteen teacher practices identified in the study,
'enthusiasm' and 'interest in the students' were closely aligned with building rapport.
The researchers additionally found that multiple teacher practices provided support
across the three themes "synergistically to create contexts that support students'
motivation and learning" (p. 998).

Student-faculty evaluations

One of the most uncomfortable professional experiences in any teacher's life is when
you receive feedback from your students. HCT has had a policy of providing faculty
with student feedback from its inception. Today the 18-item online form is administered
and overseen by department administration assistants while the teacher remains out of
the room. The process is conducted in complete silence to ensure no 'group-think' taints
the individual feedback. After the student-faculty evaluation period has finished (usually
a maximum of one week), the results are made available online to faculty, their Chairs,
senior College managers, and the central system. The Chairs will then arrange for
personal meetings with faculty if there is an obvious problem with the feedback. The
evaluations are retained in a teacher's file and are considered *along with other factors* in
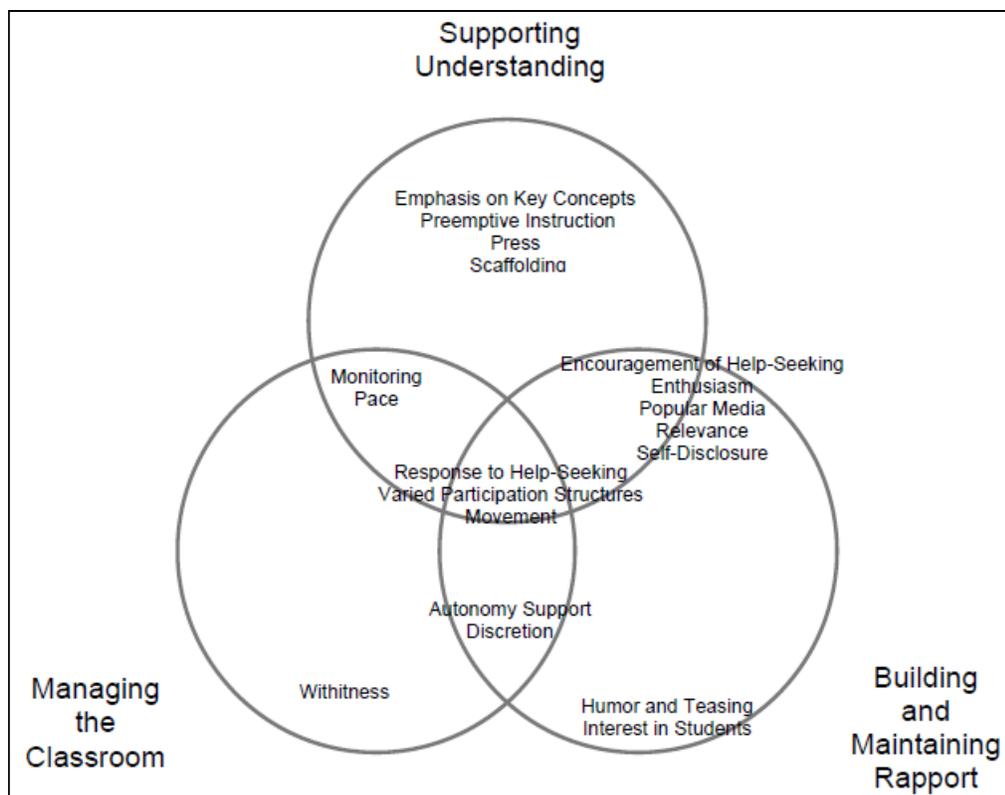
Figure 5: Grounded model of supportive motivational and learning contexts (Anderman et al., 2011, p. 984)

the annual performance appraisal and when a teacher's contract is up for renewal. However, there does not appear to be a coherent and consistent follow-up policy throughout all the HCT colleges as informal knowledge of different practices including a greater emphasis placed upon the instrument's reliability (and therefore, the negative consequences of low scores on contract renewals) is well known among faculty.

Faculty generally mistrust the evaluations partly because of a (mis?) perception that Emirati students with such limited life and poor educational experiences do not possess sufficient knowledge to assess a teacher's professional performance. I do not agree with that sentiment even though I have always found the instrument to be flawed in that it really does not focus on what the evaluations actually capture and measure from the student responses – *the extent to which a teacher has established rapport*. Publicly stated in many department meetings, I have often compared the evaluation in regard to its accuracy in seeking to achieve a reliable 'snapshot' of the whole range of a teacher's abilities, skills, personality, and competency to that of a photograph taken inside from a moving bus through a misty window of a Belgian cathedral on a rainy, late afternoon in

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February. The image will resemble a building, possibly even a cathedral, but it will lack the details that will enable the viewer to distinguish the cathedral from one in Belgium, France, Germany or England.

I wanted to explore the relationship between the teacher's self-declaration based on Kleinfeld's typology, my assessment of their typology (based on lesson observations and comments in faculty focus meetings, the Teacher Survey, and formal interviews) and the perception students have of them as measured by the student-faculty evaluations. Out of ten Foundations faculty, two denied permission to view their student-faculty evaluations. I selected nine items from the 18-item evaluation instrument as they best represented actions or indications associated with faculty's efforts to establish rapport compared to others that focussed on instructional strategies (see Figure 6). The ranking of the indicators in parentheses highlights faculty awareness of showing respect to both the student and his culture. However, students feel that faculty could do more to provide informal feedback about how well they are doing in the course and in helping them to become more independent learners.

Survey Item	Descriptor
7.	Respects me (1st)
13	Respects my culture (2nd)
2.	Helps me to understand how I can do better (3rd=)
11.	Is interested in helping me to learn (3rd=)
14.	Encourages me to participate actively in class (3rd=)
4.	Motivates me to learn (6th)
10.	Helps me to take responsibility for my own learning (7th)
9.	Always lets me know how well I am doing in the course (8th)
18.	Overall I am satisfied with my teacher (N/A)

Figure 6: Selected items associated with rapport and rankings (HCT student-faculty evaluations)

Each faculty had a mean rapport score calculated from all their individual course evaluations in Semester 1. There was little difference between the four Foundations levels in terms of the mean rapport scores apart from Level 4 which appeared lower than the other three – L1 (83%), L2 (81%), L3 (83%), L4 (75%). The overall comparison

between the self-declared typology, my assessment of their typology, and the rapport score (mean = 80%) may be viewed in Figure 7. It is clearly evident that the faculty whose teacher typology was declared (and corroborated by me) as a 'warm demander' obtained the highest rapport scores. Reviewing the student comments from the 'warm demander' evaluations, students appreciate attempts at humour but always with the

Faculty	Self-Declaration	My Assessment	Rapport Score
A	Warm Demander	Warm Demander	88%
B	Warm Demander	Warm Demander	88%
C	Warm Demander	Warm Demander	88%
D	Sent./WD	Sent./WD	83%
E	Soph./Sent.	Sent.	81%
F	Warm Demander	Warm Demander	79%
G	Soph./WD	Trad./WD	72%
H	Warm Demander	Trad.	63%

Figure 7: Comparison of faculty rapport scores with teacher typologies

important corollary of effective class management strategies to control the students and bring them back on-task, they like when teachers are kind (flexible?), and they know when teachers are putting effort into creating varied and interesting learning experiences. Faculty who demand but without obvious warmth (traditionalists) scored the lowest rapport scores - their student comments referred to a "lack of smiling" and "serious" facial expressions. Sentimentalists appear to be well liked by the students as they appear to have a more relaxed attitude in general. Some faculty experienced differential rapport feedback from one of two sections at the same level and course, indicating a problem either within the student group (lack of cohesion or natural student leader) or a lack of rapport between the teacher and the students. The least popular English skill associated with a teacher as indicated by these scores is writing followed by reading and speaking (the most popular).

Fifteen lesson observation reports were completed during the research period. The main purpose in these observations was to study the interaction between the teacher and the students, and if possible, try to identify some examples of best teaching and classroom management practices that would transfer generically to similar educational settings.

One of the most positive best practices (an example of building and maintaining rapport) that I observed was the use of quiet Arabic music being played through the classroom sound system that created a 'sound shell' which appeared to help students to settle down more quickly and to encourage stronger and longer task focus. Another nod to cultural aesthetics was wishing the students 'Eid Mubarak'[35] either verbally or written on the whiteboard. The use of educational technology, an example of all three themes (Anderman et al., 2011) is well appreciated by the students who seem to adapt with relative ease to its special demands in accessing online websites, downloading files, using the email system, and managing an organized filing system on their laptops. Some of the most innovative teaching and learning approaches using educational technology are being implemented every day in the college, a phenomenon consistently repeated in all HCT colleges around the country.

Finally, many faculty were observed in acts of 'gentle teasing' ("Wow, you're on fire today, Ahmed? Did you have a good sleep last night?"), a respectful but cheeky behaviour trait associated with 'warm demanders' (an example of rapport building that simply says to the student, "I notice you"). David Edwards develops strong rapport with his students based on an intuitive understanding of the students and the use of a keen sense of humour with irony (basically, a warm demander 'dressed up' as a sophisticate). He shared an incident with me which I repeat here as an excellent example of ironic metaphor which the students instantly grasped:

> After a dismal result on an assessment (and a similar result on a practice and revision assessment), I was spurred to ask the boys where they saw themselves in all of this. I drew an aeroplane on the whiteboard with a landing strip and control tower below it. I told them that the plane landing safely was them passing out of Foundations and achieving their IELTS requirement to attend this college or another university.
> I asked them, "Where are you on this plane?"
> They answered, "The passengers!"

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[35] There are two Eids in the Islamic religious year – *Eid Al Fitr* (Festival of the Fast Breaking) marks the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan when all able-bodied adult Muslims must refrain from eating and drinking during daylight hours. *Eid Al Adha* (Festival of the Sacrifice) celebrates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son for God and is marked by ritual animal sacrifice. *Eid Mubarak* simply means Happy Eid!

I said, "Actually you are all the pilots of your own planes, aiming for your own successful landing. I'm not the pilot, and sometimes I think you believe I'm the stewardess!" and I mimed taking drinks to them on a tray at which they screamed with laughter. I continued, "I am actually in the control tower down on the ground, and I'm seriously considering leaving my radar screen and going for a coffee 'cause I'm not sure I can bear to watch what's coming" (personal communication).

Some practices that I observed in the classroom were neither beneficial to the students nor supportive of colleagues or the teaching team as a whole. A practice that I would not recommend is allowing individual students or an entire class to leave early (in some cases, by 25 minutes) as a means of reward for extra effort or attainment in class. As a group of talkative students leave the room and walk down the corridor past other classrooms filled with students, it sends the wrong message to both sets of students and has the additional potential to cause conflict between faculty. Another practice with negative consequences is ignoring Arabic-talking students. While ignoring poor behaviour is often promoted as an effective parenting technique in the West, this sends completely the wrong signal to Arabic students who perceive teacher inattention as a lack of care - ignoring poor behaviour also weakens the teacher's stature in the eyes of the students.

On one occasion, I was invited to an intervention for an issue in the Level 3 cohort. Two faculty arranged it out of concern for the poor academic progress noted in the first half of the second semester and poor behaviour in the form of talking Arabic, not listening to instructions, not completing homework, and lack of on-task focus in class. The intervention appeared to go well with both faculty speaking frankly and honestly about their concerns to the assembled student group who were then asked to work in small groups to write down practical strategies to improve. The groups were each visited by the two faculty and several effective discussions ensued as the faculty drove home their points. A week later when I check on the intervention's impact, one faculty said, "It's ok'ish." They both agreed with me when I suggested that they were now 'just managing the situation' rather than imposing their will or clashing head-on. The tragedy of this intervention was the absence of six other Level 3 faculty who, in my opinion, should have been there, *even if they personally were not experiencing similar issues with this*

cohort. Emirati students are very quick to spot weaknesses or division among the faculty and I could narrate many episodes over the past 16 years where students successfully applied the 'divide and rule' policy upon faculty with dire results. One of my mantras as a Chair of Foundations echoed the Three Musketeers' saying – "one for all and all for one". Normally, teaching and learning do not resemble a battlefield, but at times, Sun Tzu's *Art of War* can also be handy to have in your teacher's toolkit.

Factors Related to Faculty That May Enhance or Hinder Student Learning

In answering the third key research question - what do the largely Western-educated faculty bring with them to the College that both enhance and hinder student learning? – I will bring together the two most important perspectives on student learning: those of the students and those of the teachers. Most English faculty who teach at Fujairah Men's College in the Foundations Department have taught on average over 14 years before arriving. However, in 2011, several teachers with previous ELT experience had their first exposure to male Emirati students.

Overall, what factors were identified in the teachers' approach, methods, typology, and feedback that may hinder student learning?

Learner-centred instructional approach: as indicated by the students, faculty, and other researchers, learner-centred instructional approaches appear to negatively affect lower level Foundations students. Chapter 4 highlighted the more difficult cultural border crossings associated with lower level students who are more likely to disrupt classroom lessons - 27.5% of lower level students compared to 15.5% of higher level students agreed with item #27 in the Student Survey, *I sometimes disturb the lesson that is going on in class when I get bored or can't do the work*), they leave college earlier to take up full-time employment (42.5% of lower level students compared to 18.5% of higher level students withdrew from college during Semester 1), and they declare lower motivation and persistence (Chapter 5). The faculty are aware of the students' difficulties in adjusting to college academic life with its new demands and expectations.

Traditional teachers are failing to establish rapport: those faculty who have taught Arab students for over 10 years, who prefer to keep a professional distance between themselves and the students, and who appear to be reluctant 'border

crossers' fail to establish rapport with their students as indicated by the student-faculty evaluations and my own classroom observations. Building rapport is an important part of the social integration of students into college life – students who are already pre-disposed to leaving college may quickly reach their individual 'tipping points' due to failure to bond with their peer group, their teachers, and the college.

As described in the early sections of this chapter, the Foundations English faculty bring a wealth of life experience (many have taught EFL/ESL in more than one location in the world), teaching experience, and enviable qualifications. Overall, what factors were identified in the teachers' approach, methods, typology, and experiential feedback that may enhance student learning?

Skilled, experienced, and motivated ELT practitioners: high level of ELT expertise combined with grounded knowledge of male Emiratis equals effective English language teaching in one of the ELT world's most challenging environments. These teachers can change lives, *providing the students meet them halfway.*

Empathetic teaching is important: empathy is a significant success factor and is brought into the teaching environment through the teacher's personality, their world-view, and sense of their identity. It can also be learned 'on the job' as one faculty told me that they knew they had to become more engaged and develop stronger rapport if they were going to be effective at FMC.

Innovative and creative faculty constantly seeking better learning outcomes: FMC Foundations faculty are encouraged to innovate by a system highly focussed on creative innovation particularly in the use of educational technology. Many faculty have embraced this approach which students appreciate - they appear to feel comfortable using technology within the classroom environment.

Teacher typology appears to affect rapport building which leads to more positive learning environments: earlier in this chapter, I described the 'we' vs. 'they' dichotomy evident in some faculty who declared for greater student-faculty distance and who additionally had strong views about cultural differences and boundaries between teachers and students. They seemed less open to informal faculty-student interaction outside of the formal classroom environment. The

analysis of the student-faculty evaluations appears to support warm but demanding teacher profiles with an absence of the 'we vs. them' inclination. Students prefer teachers who are emotionally warm but set high standards of classroom management and academic attainment. The lowest rapport scores came from faculty who professed these inclinations in their interviews, the Teacher Surveys (lowest personal teaching efficacy scores came from these faculty with the highest scores declared by 'warm demanders'), and feedback in the faculty focus group meetings.

Research Question 4

What effect, if any, does the use of learner-centred teaching practices have upon male Emirati post-secondary learners? This is the most difficult of the research questions to answer given the complexity of the variables involved. We know the lower level students tend to leave the college early and we know the lower level students generally have more difficult border crossing experiences though this is not fully explained by the level of English competency which they bring with them as they start college. Like a bitter pill given to a child from a firm but caring mother, the Foundations faculty almost unanimously endorse learner-centredness based on a constructivist epistemology as the favoured instructional approach for new male Emirati students at FMC despite their quiet reservations concerning the potential impact this approach may have upon student learning in the short-term. The students reported in the second student focus meeting that at the start, it was difficult studying in a second language "but it is easier now". The 'start' refers to the first 10 weeks of the first semester when student enrolment decreases markedly. How much of this student attrition in the early part of the first semester is related to learner discomfort, cultural discomfort, a need to find full-time employment or a combination of these known and unknown factors may be answered by Mackey's observation based on his research in Saudi Arabia – "one's honor determines one's image. The key to saving face is the assiduous avoidance of shame" (as cited in Feghali, 1997, p. 354). Withdrawal from college may simply be much more about not losing face when facing academic failure than it is about employment or learning discomfort.

Students appear to bond quickly during orientation as they feel they can manage their cultural border crossing experience more easily in a group, a natural and cohesive social element familiar to them as Arabs. The quicker the college can develop this 'sense of

belonging', both within the social group of the section as well as between the section and their teachers, the more likely the students will remain. Tinto's research into 'classrooms as communities' reminds us that "the academic [sphere] occurs within the broader social system that pervades the campus" (Tinto, 1997, p. 319). In the cultural setting of Fujairah Men's College, this means paying attention to building the 'social system' in which the students live and work *before* academic demands are initiated. This is further supported by student comments in reply to a question about how many of them were considering leaving college before the end of the academic year. Two-thirds of the focus group participants reported they will remain at college. When I asked them why they had decided not to leave, they unanimously replied, "we got used to college". This and other responses appear to indicate that the initial cultural and linguistic shock experienced by many in the first few weeks is quickly overcome as they bond with their group, their teachers, and the college culture.

Richardson cites John Minnis' caution from his work in Muslim-based Brunei that "educational practices must be filtered through the local culture if they are to be successfully adapted and states that a 'culture-sensitive' pedagogy...is needed, using curricula and teaching methods that take account of the day-to-day behaviour patterns at home and in schools which would be more relevant to students' understanding" (Minnis as cited in Richardson, 2004, p. 430). What would a 'culture-sensitive' Emirati pedagogy look like? What effect might this have upon student retention and language learning experiences? Should such a pedagogy be adopted at all given that FMC Foundations students eventually appear to 'get used to' college and move beyond the difficulties associated with their border crossing experience?

Some insight regarding this type of pedagogy may come from Aikenhead and Michell's book *Bridging Cultures* (2011) which contains the following suggested general advice to teachers working with (neo-) indigenous peoples. I have added my perspective on how to operationalize these suggestions in the Fujairah setting:

1. Elder involvement - we know this is very important as there appears to be a growing disconnection between the young male Emiratis and their parents/grandparents as evidenced in my research. I suggested to the FMC orientation committee in 2011 that they should try to find an effective older mentor to work with the CPR team and the

students in building the cultural and generational bridges that may have begun to collapse due to the weight of the Eurocentric cultural colonization.

2. The local community - in the frankest terms, the local Arab community do not really understand HCT or its mission. It has never been consulted and the parents generally stay away unless there is a problem. FMC really needs to build bridges outward to this community. A good start has been the outreach to the public schools which culminated in the 'Olympics of the Mind' Day held in March 2012 which was very well attended. The parents will not come to us so we need to find a culturally and socially acceptable way to reach out to them.

3. Role models – It is important that the college identifies successful local Arab mentors including college alumni and get them into college to tell their story to our students.

4. The classroom and learning environment – we need to encourage learner input into the curriculum in terms of what is to be learned, when, how and why (relevancy) and build a sense of space and belonging by assigning home rooms.

5. Instructional approaches – faculty should initially use the students' lives as the context for learning. We must honour, respect and utilize the students' prior learning, limited though it may be in our eyes. We should give students many opportunities to apply their new knowledge. As they are culturally mistake-averse, we must show them that mistakes are great learning opportunities which contribute to meaningful learning. Therefore, several low-stake formative assessments over a semester are preferred over single higher-stake summative assessments. And finally, faculty should begin each class with an attention-grabber or bridge-in that draws on student experiences, for example, "does anyone want to share what they did on the weekend?" Overall, this is an area that needs further research at a much deeper level and I will address this in Chapter 8 under Suggestions.

In summary, despite employing some of the world's most effective and empathetic ELT faculty possessing proven traits of 'warm demandingness', the lower level students, in particular, appear to take longer to adapt to learner-centred pedagogy and to learning in their second language of English. As a result, they are 'talking with their feet' in leaving

male colleges in record numbers (HCT data from other male colleges was not made available for this research but as Chair in a HCT college for six years with regular interactions with other Foundations Chairs within the HCT system, I know the attrition issue is not confined to FMC).

<div align="center">

Learning Environment – The "Hard Stuff"

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The Higher Colleges of Technology are very well resourced and offer a high level of quality in terms of buildings, technology, and the overall physical environment compared to other higher educational institutions both in the Middle East and overseas. The seventeen colleges scattered through five of the seven Emirates now offer over 90 academic programs for a current enrolment of over 18,000 Emirati men and women. The campuses are modern and spacious with mature landscaping of trees, shrubs, flowers and grass – in general, they present an attractive and open learning environment to students as they enter college on their first day.

At Fujairah, there are over 30 standard classrooms which measure 9.75m x 8.17m or almost 80m² which comfortably seats up to 25 desks and chairs. Let us now enter one of these classrooms. Located in a corner opposite the entrance door is the faculty desk which visibly contains a document projector (teachers can place a course textbook on the projector which then displays the image through the video projector), a computer monitor, and a Crestron media controller that faculty use to activate the video projector suspended from the ceiling, adjust the volume of the classroom sound system (six speakers placed in the ceiling), and control the document projector. Stored out of sight within a cupboard situated in the faculty desk is the personal computer and sound amplifier.

The front wall of the classroom behind the faculty desk has a 2m x 1m whiteboard and a Smart Board which serves both as a projection screen and as an interactive surface using touch detection for user input. A projector is used to display a computer's video output on the interactive Smart Board, which then acts as a large touch screen. The Smart Board comes with four digital coloured pens which replace traditional whiteboard markers (*SMART Board interactive whiteboards*, 2012). Only a few faculty exploit the entire range of interactive possibilities associated with the Smart Board – one feature that can be used is the ability to 'drag and drop' digital objects on the screen with a

finger in matching or cloze exercises which would appeal to many of the kinesthetic student learners. The light switching system was re-designed by me in 2009 after I had successfully introduced it to Dubai Men's College. The re-design involves dividing the room in half so that one switch controls the lower or back half of the classroom while second switch controls the upper or front half. This enables teachers to darken the front half when using the video projector but keep the back half of the classroom lit which allows the students to both view the image more clearly and to write or read content from course textbooks.

The rooms are well-ventilated with air conditioning and one entire wall has large glass windows that allow sufficient light on a sunny day to read and write without use of the classroom lighting. The window wall also has vertical blinds which may be used at certain times in the day to retard direct sunlight or to increase the level of darkness to improve the projected video image. The remaining two classroom walls have a large world map and two large cork noticeboards (2m x 1m) used for pinning department or college notices, and examples of student work. Teachers are encouraged to ask the students to put rubbish into the bin on the way out (no drinks or food are permitted during lessons) as well as place their chairs under the desks, leaving the room in a fit state for the next class.

Apart from the classrooms, the college provides informal seating around the college from the main entrance foyer to quiet study alcoves in the upstairs classroom area. A college cafeteria offers food for both college personnel and students and is managed by an outside caterer. In general, the male students prefer to drive into town (5-6 minutes away) to go to their favourite restaurants or cafes where they can buy their favourite food much cheaper than what is offered at college. There are several outdoor seating areas where students can relax and chat with their friends during the day. A college gym is additionally provided for both college personnel and students. The newly-erected high and low ropes course is located at the rear of the college buildings but may only be used by students under close supervision of a CPR facilitator/trainer. The football field is grass-covered and lit by powerful outdoor lamps sufficiently strong to permit night games (Fujaiarh Men's College won the HCT Football Trophy this year for the first time – I attended the night game which was well supported by both faculty with their families, and students). The college occasionally uses space at the Fujairah Tennis and

Country Club (FTTC) which is located just behind the college grounds – in winter, students may reach the club by walking through a gate in the rear wall of the college. The FTTC has a swimming pool and a very large sports hall, both of which have been used extensively during the new student orientation program (one year, we had students building a raft from cardboard, plastic and rubber tubes and then race them the length of the pool to decide the winner).

In summary, Fujairah Men's College offers clean, appropriate, spacious and modern amenities and services to its student body. Overall, the students seem very happy with the physical environment of the college. The bi-annual surveys of Student Satisfaction with College Facilities, Student Support Services, and the Library/Learning Resource Centre were last administered in June 2010, a year before my research began. Students indicated very high levels of satisfaction with student support services (academic program and career advice, counselling, work placement services, and health and wellness services) and the library/Learning Resource Centre (57% of the respondents replied that they use the library once a week). In terms of the college facilities, students again indicated high levels of satisfaction in all areas apart from three – sports and leisure (the same year the football pitch and lights were established), car parking (not enough though the entire front section of the campus between the gate and the main Masafi Road appears adequate enough to me), and the cafeteria (prices and lack of choice).

Learning Environment – The "Soft Stuff"

It is well known that "culture is an essential construct in efforts to improve managerial and organizational performance" (Smart & St. John, 1996, p. 219). Two areas of research are helpful here in attempting to define the typology of organizational cultures of the HCT system as a whole, Fujairah Men's College and the classroom. First, Wilkins and Ouchi (1983) proposed a typology of three culture types - clans, markets, and bureaucracies which they viewed as 'governance modes'. For example, 'clans' enable its organizational members to align their professional and personal objectives with that of the organization, 'markets' reward its members through differential salaries based upon competition, and 'bureaucracies' arrange employment contracts in which employees work for wages "in exchange for compliance with supervisory direction" (p. 220). The second line of enquiry states that for an organization's culture to contribute to

high levels of performance, it "must be both 'strong' and possess distinctive 'traits': particular values, beliefs, and shared behaviour patterns" (Saffold, 1988, p. 546). 'Strong-culture' advocates suggest that the "mere presence of a shared system of beliefs, values, and symbols is not sufficient to enhance organizational performance" (Smart & St. John, 1996, p. 220). They claim that the beliefs and values of the central organization must be closely aligned with policies, practices, and behaviours on the ground – in this way, the 'strong-culture' ensures consensus, conformity, and compliance (Dennison as cited in Smart & St. John, 1996, p. 220). The research outcome from Smart and St. John's work was unexpected - culture type (clans, markets, and bureaucracies) had a stronger effect upon institutional performance than culture strength (strong vs weak) though the differences were amplified in strong organizations rather than weak ones (Smart & St. John, 1996).

Work by both Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) and Cameron and Quinn (as cited in Tharp, 2009, p. 2) produced a four quadrant matrix or typology that reflects a range of organizational characteristics as defined by the intersection of two dimensions (see Figure 8a). The first dimension has flexibility and spontaneity at one end with stability and control at the other. This reflects that some organizations stress adaptation and change (like many small start-up companies) while others emphasize the values of stability and predictability (like most universities). The second dimension is marked by internal focus and short-term orientation at one end with external focus and long-term orientation at the other. Some organizations are effective through focusing on themselves and their internal processes through integration and unity while others achieve results by focusing on their rivals within the competitive market place. Each quadrant represents the beliefs, values and basic assumptions of the organization. None of the quadrants – clan (collaborate), adhocracy (create), hierarchy (control), and market (compete) – may be judged as better or worse than another. The key lies in the *alignment* of culture with organizational goals in order to achieve improved performance.

FORM: Clan
LEADER STYLE: Mentor, facilitator
BONDING: Loyalty, tradition
STRATEGIC EMPHASIS: Human resources, cohesion

FORM: Adhocracy
LEADER STYLE: Entrepreneur, innovator
BONDING: Innovation, development
STRATEGIC EMPHASIS: Growth, new resources

Internal emphasis
Short-term orientation
Smoothing activities

External positioning
Long-term orientation
Achievement-oriented activities

FORM: Hierarchy
LEADER STYLE: Coordinator, organizer
BONDING: Rules, policies
STRATEGIC EMPHASIS: Permanence, stability

FORM: Market
LEADER STYLE: Producer, hard-driver
BONDING: Goal accomplishment
STRATEGIC EMPHASIS: Competitive actions, achievements

Stability
Control
Predictability

Figure 8a: A model of cultural congruence for organizations (Smart & St. John, 1996, p. 221)

In clan cultures, the primary leadership style is that of "a mentor or facilitator, [where] bonding mechanisms emphasize loyalty and tradition, and the strategic approach focuses on human resources and cohesion" (Smart & St. John, 1996, p. 221) – this best represents the popular image of most Western universities. In hierarchy cultures, another organizational type also favoured by many universities, the dominant leadership style is that of "the coordinator or organizer, rules and policies are the primary bonding mechanisms, and the strategic emphasis is on permanence and stability" (Smart & St. John, 1996, p. 222). In adhocracy cultures, the main leadership type is one of an "entrepreneur and innovator..., the bonding mechanisms emphasize innovation and development, and growth and the acquisition of new resources constitute the primary strategic emphases" (Smart & St. John, 1996, p. 222). Finally, in the market culture, the "leadership style ... is that of the producer or hard-driver, while goal attainment provides the bonding mechanism, and the strategic emphasis is on competitive actions and achievements" (Smart & St. John, 1996, p. 222)

Based on my experience and interactions with colleagues and senior managers over many years, HCT as an organization established since 1988 has 'lived' all four organizational cultures at various stages of its history reflecting the evolving growth of

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the colleges, the vision of the Chancellor, and the operational impact of the various Vice-Chancellors – currently, a hybrid 'hierarchy-market-adhocracy' form of organizational culture best represents the organization in the 2011-2012 academic year with an emphasis on centralized procedural control and compliance, strong leadership, innovation, and a focus on its external competition within the higher educational market place in the UAE (see Figure 8b).

Fujairah Men's College in this academic year displays similar elements of the hybridism of its parent organization but has a stronger creative/innovative focus with a relatively larger mentoring role – its 'hierarchy-adhocracy' form of organizational culture emphasizes compliance with the centralized system but has stronger local elements of
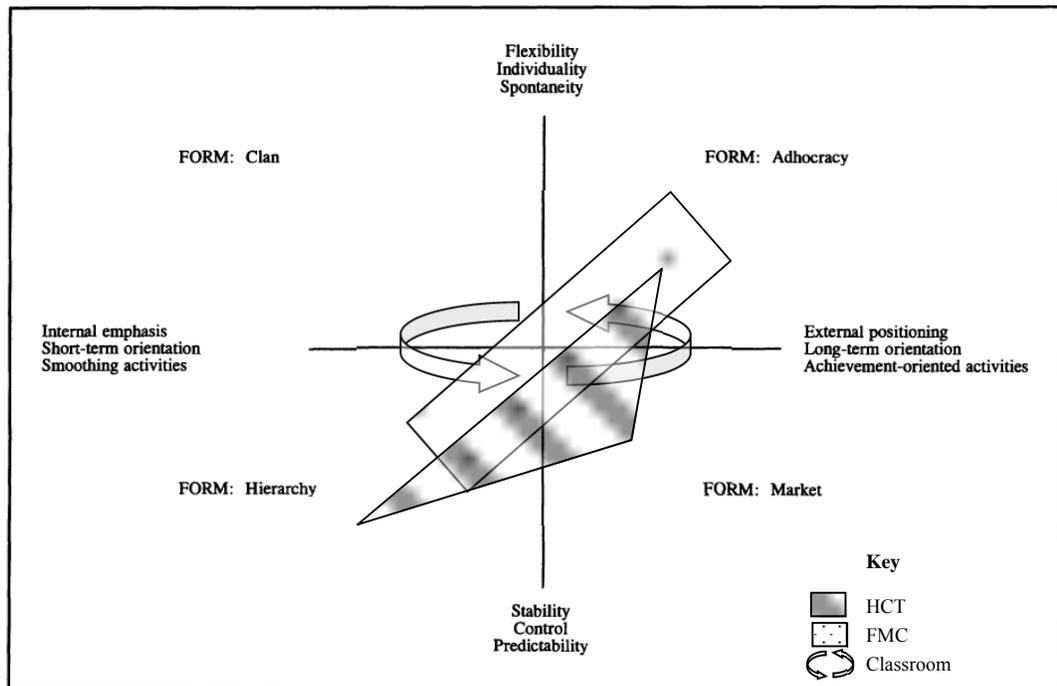
Figure 8b: HCT, FMC and classroom organizational cultures

innovation and risk-taking as it seeks to improve student recruitment, retention, learning outcomes, and graduation rates. Depending on the location of the 17 HCT colleges, this college organizational culture applies generally within most colleges across the system – the larger urban colleges in Dubai and Abu Dhabi with their more diverse and numerous range of higher education options offered by the private sector tend to be more focussed

on their competitive rivals. All colleges feel the 'weight' of the central system and therefore, many 'feel and look' the same when you visit the different campuses.

Finally, the classroom culture indicated by the revolving arrows tends to morph through all four organizational cultures, sometimes in the time of one lesson. Though each section of students will have an overall dominant organizational culture based on the strength of the group cohesion and the group's overall relationship with the teacher, it has been my experience that this changes over time as rapport increases or decreases, or if students leave or enter and change the social mix of the group. The classroom culture may also reflect the dominant hierarchical culture of the HCT system as college departments and faculty react to a flurry of curriculum and assessment changes emanating from Central HCT which may negatively impact student learning and add to faculty stress (see Chapter 7). The myriad of classroom cultures at FMC reflect the personality, strengths and limitations of the classroom teacher, the strategic and tactical awareness of the students of both HCT and college expectations of their success, and the hidden sub-cultures arising from largely unknown high school or community histories that can bind or destroy the class-group cohesion. From my perspective as a HCT faculty from 1995 to 2009, I attempted to remain in a central position mid-way between the internal vs external foci but constantly pushing towards the top end of the vertical axis. Depending on the positive bonding within the student group, I knew I had a good chance to establish rapport with the students through a mix of humour, effective lesson planning, consistent and fair application of HCT policies, and negotiation. In most semesters, these strategies worked.

The organizational culture of the government high schools also has an enormous impact upon Fujairah Men's College. As McClafferty, McDonough and Nuñez (2002) summarize, high schools exert a "powerful influence on students' college aspirations and preparation" (p. 6) through four interconnecting factors – a college preparatory program, high academic standards, committed school staff, and access to counselling/career personnel. Nine key high school characteristics were identified as representing the 'principles of a college culture':

- college talk
- clear expectations

- information and resources
- comprehensive counselling system
- testing and curriculum
- faculty involvement
- family involvement
- college partnerships
- articulation

'College talk' involves faculty and other adults talking about students attending college so that they understand what is required. 'Clear expectations' involve planning to attend college and is an essential precondition which is nurtured by faculty and parents. 'Information' about college must be readily available to high school students through the school counselling system. A rigorous 'testing regime and robust curriculum' should aim at preparing high school students for the special demands of college life. 'Parents' need to be kept informed and engaged in their son's journey to college. 'College partnerships' reflect active links between the high schools and college and may involve familiarization trips to college and other enrichment programs. Finally, students should have a 'seamless experience' transiting to college with work done in the high schools also being shared with the college. In assessing these nine characteristics, the government high schools measure up most poorly in college talk, counselling, testing and curriculum, faculty and family involvement, and articulation. Through FMC's Student and Academic Affairs, the college school and recruitment coordinator has made excellent progress in helping the local high schools to improve the development areas of 'clear expectations', 'college partnerships', and 'articulation' (see Chapter 7).

It is not all bad news though. Several years ago, an excellent example of the strong adhocracy element in FMC's organizational culture led the then College Director, Mark Johnson, to seek parental permission to allow female Emirati students to join the men in order to boost numbers in the programs – FMC was not graduating enough Foundations students nor attracting sufficient numbers of direct entry students. From a cautious start joining two separate classes at the two colleges with one teacher via a remote video link, FMC has now over 100 female students in the Engineering program sitting in class with the male students. From a personal viewpoint from where I arrived in 1995, this is a

miraculous and significant educational, social, and cultural change in one of the most conservative Muslim societies in the Gulf region. From next year, all the programs except Foundations will be co-educational. The college, like most educational institutions, believes that "the correction of one or two deficiencies in the structure and culture of a school [will] reduce attrition" (Tinto, 2006, p. 25). But the withdrawal data strongly points the finger not just towards the college culture but also to the recruitment policies of the UAE Army and Abu Dhabi Police. My research has established that students do experience a range of cultural border crossings but that once they get through week 5 of semester 1 (see next section), they have a good chance to complete Foundations and enter the programs. They 'get used to college' which provides a good range of activities, clubs, and study trips to keep them engaged and committed to their personal academic success.

Four brief observations here will complete this description of the learning environment at FMC. First, Tinto (1975) describes the role of sub-cultures in colleges and "their role in providing modes of social integration into the collegiate social system" (p. 108). The investigation of student sub-cultures will be recommended as a future line of research (see Chapter 8) but college administrators need to look beyond the visual homogeneity presented by the student body and seek better understanding and knowledge of the role of various unknown sub-cultures within the local male Arabic community. Second, Tinto again claims that "the larger institution...may enhance persistence through its ability to provide for a wider variety of student sub-cultures and, therefore, through its effect upon social integration into the institution" (1975, p. 116). In other words, larger HCT campuses may have relatively less student attrition based on the fact that their larger student numbers may provide for a more diverse range of sub-cultures through which students attach to the college social system. Third, Tinto's conceptual scheme for drop-outs from college (Tinto, 1975, p. 95) should in my opinion be modified to place academic integration *within* social integration (see Figure 6, Chapter 2) – in the FMC setting, without the latter, the former is retarded. Finally, I reflected upon Van Gennep's 'rites of passage' model which describes the stages of separation, transition, and incorporation as high school students make their journey across to college (see Stages of student departure, Chapter 2). Both students and faculty interviewed at college describe similar 'rite of passage' experiences. The experience of the students in 'running the gauntlet' in the first few weeks of the semester is matched by a surprising faculty

awareness (expectation?) that the learning journey of the students will be (should be?) difficult, even 'shocking'. Both these views are unhelpful and need to change.

Interplay Between Students, Teachers and Learning Environment

In this final section, I want to explore the result of the interplay between the three key variables in this research – the students, faculty, and learning environment – the result of which appears to increase student absenteeism and attrition as students 'talk with their feet' in reaction to their cultural and academic experiences at college. In Chapter 2, I reviewed the literature concerning student persistence and the process of student departure. Tinto (1988) and others have described the process of student departure as "longitudinal" (p. 438) and in numerous studies in the US, student attrition is "the highest in the first year of college" (p. 439) with the first six weeks identified as the most crucial time period.

Three *a priori* factors – family background, individual attributes, and pre-college schooling – have been shown in this research to be universally unsupportive of successful transitions from high school to college. The typical Emirati family has a *laissez-faire* attitude to its male offspring which may at times be interpreted as neglect. When high school principals and teachers, and Ministry of Education officials told me that "parents don't care", this statement, expressed out of frustration, hides a multitude of issues such as a lack of information through historically poor communication channels between the high schools and home, and a cultural view shared by Emirati parents that their sons have reached manhood by the age of 18 years. The students in general feel supported by their parents though this is less so for lower level students (71%) compared with higher level students (100%) when asked to respond to item #43 in the Student Survey (*My parents supported me and encouraged me to attend college in order to obtain a degree*). However, there appears to be a degree of parental ambiguity (evidenced in interviews with the college counsellor and other Emiratis working at college) supporting the expectation that their sons should leave college and find full-time employment.

Individual attributes including motivation, commitment and persistence were shown to be low for new Foundations students as measured by the MTQ survey (see Chapter 5). Finally, the pre-college schooling has been shown to produce largely ill-prepared

students who are as aware of their unpreparedness for academic study in higher education as the faculty and college administrators are (only 26.5% of the lower level new students and 73% of the higher level new students agreed with item #3 in the Student Survey, *My high school experiences prepared me well for study at college*).

Arriving at college on Day 1, students generally find the experience to be stressful. Mitigating this stress is the fact that each day, they can return home to a stress-free environment where everyone speaks Arabic – what a relief that must be for a lower level Foundations student who has spent six hours at college trying to operate in a second language environment while trying not to look or sound stupid! Tinto (1988) suggests that students living at home while studying at college may find it less rewarding and possibly may be exposed to persuasive arguments from unsupportive family and community members to leave college and find full-time employment – for students who really wish to remain at college, they may face the possibility of rejecting the values or advice of their family, something young male Emiratis generally will never do. During the transition phase, "a period of passage between the old and the new, between associations of the past and hoped for associations with communities in the present" (Tinto, 1988, p. 444), students have many opportunities to acquire the new norms and behaviours of the college beginning with a culturally-sensitive new student orientation program in the first week. This transition phase is also the most perilous in terms of student attrition as feelings of 'normlessness' and discomfort reach their maximum in the first few weeks of the semester (see Stages of student departure, Chapter 2).

Ultimately, it is the individual student's response to the cultural and linguistic stress and discomfort that determines whether he remains at college or leaves. I fear that for many of the new male students transiting into the final phase of incorporation into the college where they begin to adopt expected behaviours and to feel a 'sense of belonging', a sense of 'getting used to the college', they are pretty much "left to make their own way through a maze of institutionalized life...where [they] have to learn the ropes of college life largely on their own" (Tinto, 1988, p. 446). If they do not bond with their peer-group identified as one of the key retention factors by Tinto (1975, 1988) and others (Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977, 1979), they begin to miss classes and eventually leave.

Patterns of absences

Attendance and enrolment data collected during this research reveals interesting patterns associated with Tinto's stages of student departure. Prior to the research year (2011-2012), I was Chair of Foundations at FMC. Much of my focus was monitoring and following-up students with excessive absences. In Figure 9, the patterns of absences in Foundations prior to the research year indicate consistent trends especially in the 'vulnerable' first semester with the FMC absenteeism rate three to four times higher than that of FWC (Fujairah Women's College). There are no discernible differences in absences between Diploma Foundations (lower level New Foundations) and Higher Diploma Foundations (higher level New Foundations).
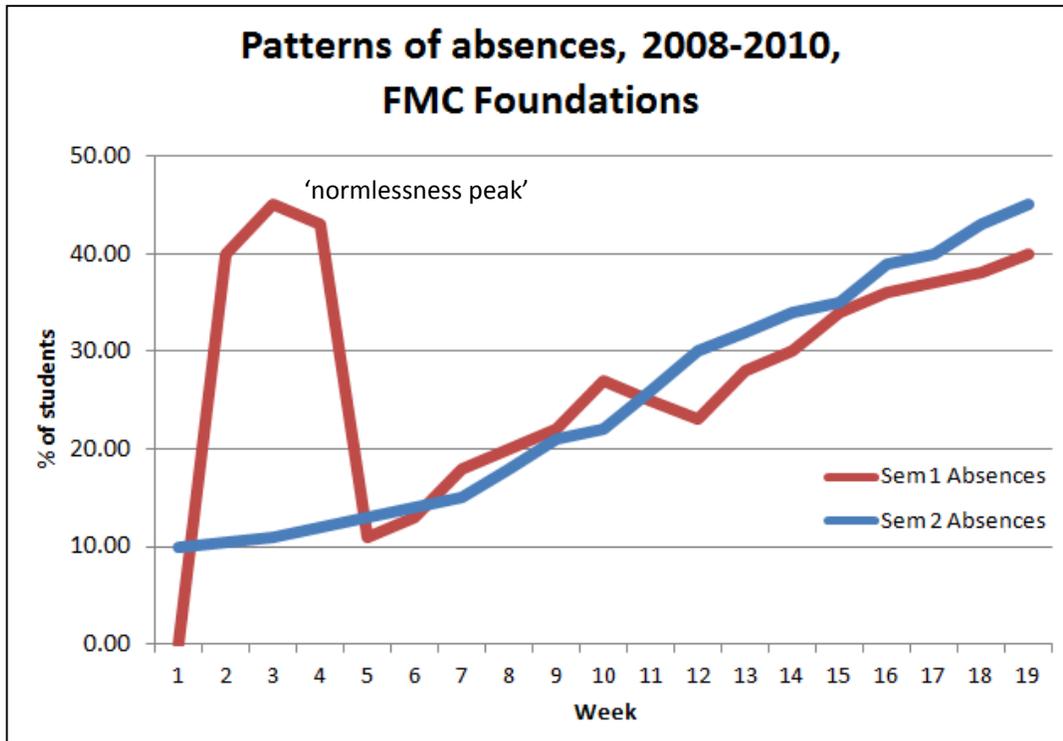
Figure 9: Consistent patterns of absences by semester, 2008-2010, FMC Foundations

A large 'spike' of absences appears in weeks 2 and 3 (peak of 'normlessness' and discomfort - see Chapter 2) followed by a sudden drop in week 4. This is then followed by a slow and steady increase in absences for the remainder of the semester (weeks 5-19). The second semester has much smoother trend-lines but continues to show slow and steady increases in absences throughout the entire semester. In 2010 when the UAEU students joined HCT Foundations, the absenteeism patterns described above

remained unchanged with no obvious differences between the HCT and UAEU students, and among the three levels of New Foundations students. Interpreting these patterns in the first four-five weeks reveals that many students begin attending college many days after Day 1 (see Arrive late, leave early in this chapter). As discussed in Chapter 5, these students appear to be waiting for better opportunities than that offered by college (confirmation of job offers with various government organizations including the military and the police forces) and as such, they tend not to attend each lesson and may skip the second class of a double lesson. There may also be some students experiencing high levels of cultural and linguistic discomfort who, in seeking respite and relief, leave college early each day or miss classes altogether.

Analysing the Semester 1 absences in Foundations, I found a relationship between absences and the Foundations placement level (see Figure 10). The good news here is the lower level students miss class less often which may assist in their academic progress. Clearly the higher level students with their higher absences feel comfortable enough with their academic progress to occasionally miss class.
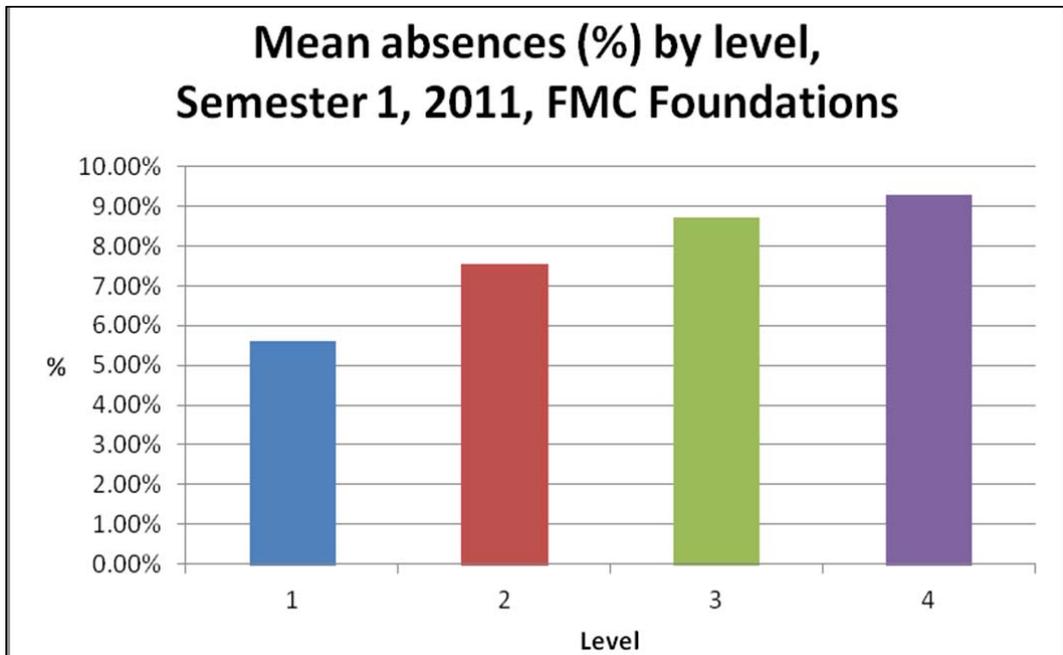
Figure 10: Mean absences in percent by levels, Semester 1, 2011, FMC Foundations

I selected 13 students in the Level 2 study cohort who had accumulated absences over 5% at the end of Semester 1 to examine closely their patterns of absences over the 19 week semester (see Figure 11). The trend-line clearly follows a similar pattern to that in

Figure 10, that is, a spike in the early part of the semester followed by a sudden drop and gradual increase of absences over the remainder of the semester (apart from two dips in week 10 and 19 - note that the mid semester break of three weeks occurred in weeks 16-18 and Eid Al Adha in week 10). 62% of the total 293 absences in this sample were recorded in the first half of the semester (50% of all absences were recorded before week 9, less than halfway through the semester). Despite students establishing a relatively committed pattern of attending class after week 4, absences grew steadily over the remaining weeks as indicated by the accumulated total absences line.

Apart from the two dips in weeks 10 and 19, three time periods stand out – week 3, weeks 14 and 15 (immediately after National Day) and week 20 (the final teaching week before the end of semester exams). When I examined the individual students' patterns of absences, a most extraordinary and consistent pattern emerged (see Figure 12). Each
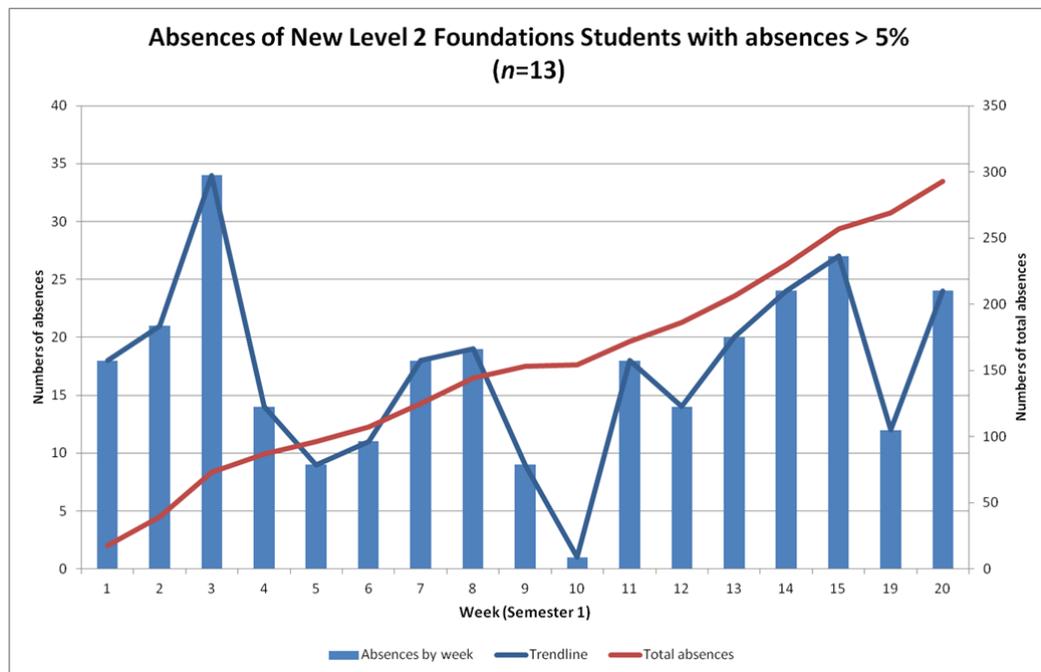
Figure 11: Absences of New Level 2 Foundations Students with accumulated absences over 5%

coloured line represents the weekly absences of one of the 13 Level 2 students selected for the absences analysis. Every 4-5 weeks, a 'hillock' of absences (sudden peaks) appears regularly over the semester (weeks 2-3, weeks 7-8, and weeks 11-13), though the pattern becomes a little more confused and less clear towards the end of the

semester. To me, it appears as if the students simply feel the need to take a break and re-energize after spending 3-4 weeks attending lessons with minimal absences. These 'rest
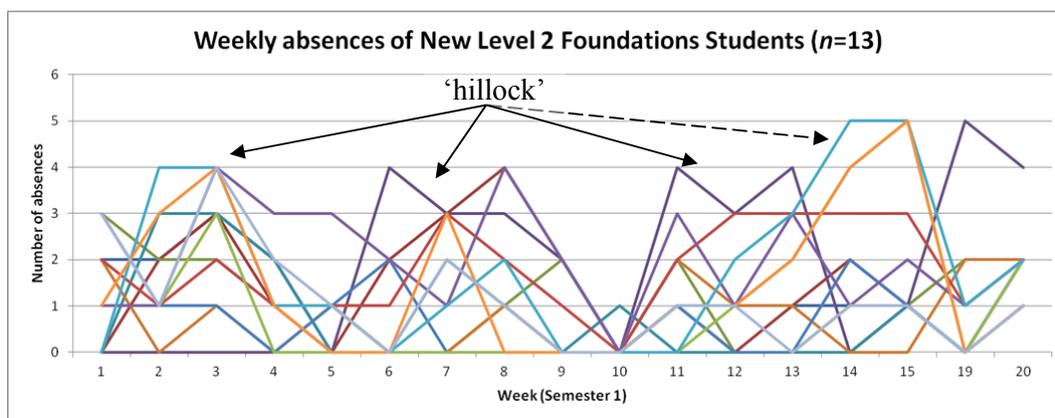
Figure 12: Weekly absences of New Level 2 Foundations Students (*n*=13), Semester 1, 2011

patterns' need to be confirmed for other groups of new students in other levels and if consistent patterns emerge, then college administrators could begin to plan college activities that 'releases' student stress in ways that minimize absences and reduce the negative impact upon learning (see Chapter 7).

Arrive late, leave early

One feature of the start of the new first semester that raises the hackles of all faculty is the late arrival of students into the classroom after day 1 (see Chapter 5). The students have usually confirmed their enrolment over the summer months but due to many reasons (mostly related to either returning late with their families from their summer holidays abroad or waiting for employment offers and related opportunities), they do not attend college in the first week, thereby missing the opportunity of participating in the new student orientation.

29 students arrived at FMC between Day 1 and 10 of the first semester in September 2011. By the end of Semester 1, 41% of them had withdrawn from college and 52% had left by early May 2012. Of the 12 students who left in Semester 1, nine students (75%) were from the lower levels in Foundations; by May 2012, of the 15 students who had left, 11 students (73%) were from the lower levels. Though the decision to allow late arrivals to enter college is usually at each College Director's discretion, it is clear that

from a student retention point of view, these students would be better off being deferred for a semester which would give them more time to re-assess their futures and commit positively to the college should they decide to attend in the second semester.

Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on faculty and the impact they have upon the academic and personal lives of the young male Emiratis fresh from government high schools. In the main, faculty are empathetic towards the students and bring everything to the table (their EFL/ESL teaching expertise, knowledge of Arabic students, and an innovative use of educational technology) to assist them in learning the English language. I have identified factors about the faculty that may enhance or hinder student learning, much of it related to the preferred pedagogical approach supported by the HCT system and reinforced by TESL training programs such as CELTA. That faculty have the power to change lives is evident from my own experiences as well as listening to the success stories narrated by faculty. In the final faculty focus meeting, my last question to them was '*If you could change one thing in your working lives that would positively impact student learning and your own sense of self-worth, what would it be*?' Their responses are grouped into two categories - 'political and strategic' and 'student-focussed'. In the former category, comments included "stop making changes to the Foundations program", "we need more time to plan and strategize", and "we want more devolution of management so that key lead faculty could run the operational aspects of the program delivery". In the second category of responses, comments included "assessment benchmarks are set too high for the students and should be more realistic", "entry levels should be higher", and "find an alternative to CEPA". As described earlier in this chapter, faculty feel undermined right now at a time when faculty morale throughout the system is at an all-time low (Swan, 2011a) and when HCT faces some tough choices in re-claiming their place and relevance within the higher education sector (Wilkins, 2010).

After reflecting on the findings from Chapters 5 and 6, and thinking further about my struggle over many years to improve male Emirati students' attitudes to learning so that they would become more academically successful, I ask myself the following question - why is it so difficult to improve learning outcomes and the quality of student learning? As Price and Richardson (2004) state in their abstract to the book chapter on improving student learning, "a fundamental requirement for improving student learning is that we

bring about *a change in behaviour* [my emphasis]. For example, changing a learner's approach from that of surface to deep approach requires students to change how they approach their learning...One lesson from previous research is that to change a student's behaviour, it is not sufficient to change their environment: one also has to change their *perceptions* [my emphasis] of that environment". An in-depth investigation of the kinds of factors which can mediate changes in a male Emirati's perception of their learning environment is largely outside the scope of this research but this will be addressed in Chapter 8 as an important topic in future research.

Attempting to summarize this entire chapter in a user-friendly catchy phrase might produce something like - "build rapport before asking for more" in a salute to Kleinfeld's plea for warm demandingness in cross-cultural educational settings. As we head towards the penultimate chapter of this thesis, we would do well to reflect upon Oscar Wilde's observation that "education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught". Perhaps Mr Wilde was referring to the soft skills in which Emirati students appear to be in so much deficit, and in the next chapter, we will examine the impact of the new College Preparation and Readiness (CPR) program upon the uptake of those skills, the historical basis for such training at HCT, and an assessment of practices in administration, teaching, and classroom management which are most likely to be efficacious in facilitating smoother transitions to college life.

CHAPTER 7: CPR AND BEST PRACTICES

<p dir="rtl">عند العقدة وقف النجار</p>

'Ind al-'uqda waqaf al-najjār

At the knot the carpenter stopped

To throw in the towel at the first count (from boxing).[36]

From the mid 2000s, Dubai began to go mad – investors began arriving at the airport literally with suitcases full of money to buy real estate which had become legal to purchase in May 2002. People flooded into the Emirate, the demand for housing sent the rental market through the roof, and traffic jams became the number one topic of conversation. It was a crazy time when the city's landscape changed on a monthly basis so that one suddenly became lost in an area that was once familiar. In the 17 years that we have lived here, we have moved seven times, twice being forced to vacate because the landlords could earn three times more rent that what we were paying. Friday brunches at expensive Dubai hotels became notorious with international headlines recording the actions of a thoughtless few. And then suddenly, in late 2008 as the US toxic debt crisis hit the Middle East, the lights went out on the building developments when the two main mortgage banks stopped offering new loans. The three shift-a-day building craze came to a halt, leaving behind a legacy of incomplete and skeletal buildings scattered around the city. Hundreds of thousands of expats returned home, many with little to show after years of an extravagant lifestyle. Dubai in 2012 is getting back on its feet with the real estate market enjoying a small boom thanks to the arrival of capital and people from countries of the Arab Spring recently returned to freedom. Emirates Airlines continues to defy economic logic as it spreads its wings across the globe. A more sedate and mature Dubai has emerged, bruised and bloodied, ready again to act as an international hub linking the great continental land masses of the planet. It will survive, as it always has, perhaps a little wiser this time.

Introduction

In this chapter, the new College Preparation and Readiness (CPR) program will be described in detail accompanied by an in-depth examination of the history of soft-skills

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[36] Arnander & Skipwith (1995)

training at HCT. Following from Chapters 5 and 6 which explored the factors that may enhance or hinder learning and teaching for students and faculty respectively, this chapter assesses the intervention (CPR) which it is hoped will lead to improvement in students' overall Mental Toughness in areas such as challenge, resilience, commitment, and confidence. In answering the final research question 5, the best practices currently been implemented in administration, teaching, and classroom management will be described and evaluated.

Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744) is widely attributed to have coined the phrase, "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing" though in his 'Essay on Criticism' written in 1709, the phrase that actually appears is "a little learning..." (*The Phrase Finder*, 2012). Knowledge as discussed in Chapter 3 (Research Methodology) is closely aligned with three central elements that form a paradigm or world-view – ontology, epistemology, and methodology or 'what is reality?', 'how do we know that reality?', and 'how do we gain knowledge of that reality?' The different types and qualities of knowledge are exhaustively enumerated and classified by de Jong and Ferguson-Hessler (1996) who took the opportunity to introduce an over-arching knowledge classification, *knowledge-in-use*, to mean that "task performance forms the basis for the identification of relevant aspects of knowledge" (p. 105). They described four main types of knowledge - situational knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge, and strategic knowledge. Of these four types of knowledge, only one refers to the traditional abstract knowledge associated with high levels of cognitive reasoning found at universities – conceptual or declarative knowledge. The other three – situational, procedural, and strategic – focus almost entirely upon learning tasks that are specific to a particular situation or context, produce an outcome arising from knowledge of how to do something, and apply a problem-solving process to reach a satisfactory outcome.

In terms of procedural knowledge and knowledge-in-use, vocational colleges throughout the world provide training similar to the TAFE system in Australia to students to acquire specific skills at a trade or craft level. Courses offered by vocational and educational training (VET) organizations may include training to become an electrician, a nurse, or a chef (Van der Linde, 2006) - there is often an additional focus on the development of 'soft skills' that contribute towards building the 'identity' of learners (Guenther, 2010). 'Soft-skills' generally refer to the personal attributes that enhance an individual's

interactions, job performance and career prospects. Vocational and community colleges as well as specific institutes offer a huge range of training in Emotional Intelligence, interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, and communication skills that are now considered by many Human Resources directors, CEOs and Company Directors as 'essential skills' of the modern workplace (Caudron, 1999). The Higher Colleges of Technology began as a vocational college that offered largely procedural knowledge skills via Higher Diploma and Diploma programs together with work placement experiences to develop students' soft-skills.

A Brief History of Personal Development Training in Foundations at HCT

In 1989 with the establishment of the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), the emphasis on personal and professional development skills acquired via work placement courses in each year of the Higher Diploma program highlighted a strong vocational training approach that recognized the importance of 'soft-skills' training for Emirati students. Ostensibly, the reason for such training lay not so much in the obvious preparation of the students for the world of work but had much more to do with improving their personal and professional development deficits as identified earlier in this thesis. In 1995 with the creation of the new Certificate/Diploma (CD) program, an entire 2 hour a week course, CARE 1110-1140 (one course for each 10-week term), was devoted to focus on this area. CARE 1110 had five learning outcomes which were designed primarily to help students learn skills that enabled them to make effective career decisions. In a nod to the Border Crossing Index, CARE was delivered only to the lower level Certificate-Diploma Foundations students, not those students with higher English competencies (and therefore, with assumed higher soft-skills?) in the Higher Diploma Foundations program.

From a locally-produced HCT booklet written entirely in Arabic and assessed with a written final exam and a satisfactory pass in the Personal Development Assessment (see below), it evolved into its current format (prior to 2010), Personal and Professional Development (PPDV 0155), which extended the learning outcomes beyond Foundations in to each year of the now-defunct two-year Diploma program. The aims of PPDV were "to develop students' work and study skills...to assist students in their transition to a new educational environment, and to develop the skills and attributes needed by students to achieve the HCT graduate outcomes" (*HCT Catalogue 2010-2011,* 2010, p. 343).

Formerly a credit-earning course within the Foundations program before the launch of the New Foundations program in 2010, the 'soft-skills' outcomes are now intended to be "developed across the entire curriculum" though colleges still have the flexibility to deliver the outcomes as "stand-alone input modules".

HCT provided another formative assessment instrument to assist Foundations departments to provide feedback to students on the status of their personal development. The Personal Development Assessment form, or PDA as it became known, was expected to be conducted twice a year, preferably in face-to-face communication with individual students. Differentially emphasized and administered throughout the HCT system of colleges, I helped Dubai Men's College Foundations department to increase the awareness of both students and faculty of personal development skills by asking interested and gifted faculty to create PDA posters that were placed in all the classrooms. Rotating once a week, each of the eight PDA posters had a weekly focus on each assessable item – importance of good attendance and punctuality, completing homework and assignments on time, bringing the correct materials to class, keeping learning materials organized in hard-copy and soft-copy formats, working effectively in teams, developing independent learning strategies, positive learning through respect, and avoid cheating (see Appendix P). Over the years, as the Foundations program became increasingly academic with higher exit levels set for entry into the programs, the course time allocated to the students' personal and professional development was gradually transferred to the higher-stakes English and Math courses, and interest in some colleges beginning to wane. At Fujairah Men's College (FMC), the course was delivered separately until 2010 when it was subsumed into the New Foundations program. The single faculty responsible for the course devised an innovative problem-solving, task-based program which often saw students engaged in activities such as dropping fresh eggs in carefully constructed cradles to cushion their fall over a the internal balcony or creating a robotic arm from metal coat hangers.

As an Academic Chair who helped co-develop the new PPDV learning outcomes in a cross-college working party for Academic Central Services in the mid 2000s, I was acutely aware of the importance of the direct training of these skills. In the academic year 2006-2007, the Foundations department at Dubai Men's College implemented a new experiential learning program partly based on the new outdoor high and low ropes

course that had been designed by a UK-based company, World Challenge (*World Challenge*, 2012). We also sent almost all the Foundations students to overnight camps with an outdoor education company called North Star based near Dibba, accompanied by Foundations faculty including myself. An international fieldtrip to Turkey in Semester 2, sponsored by a leading UAE bank, provided meaningful recognition to Foundations students who attended classes regularly and attained high grades in the previous semester. Faculty were encouraged to develop an eclectic and action research-driven approach to teaching focussed on student diversity as highlighted by the VARK learning styles and Multiple Intelligences surveys, and a re-ignition of enthusiasm for their teaching craft. Further, we strictly enforced the HCT attendance policy which resulted in some students receiving 'F' grades for courses with excessive absences. When students began leaving college due to the attendance policy, this sent a ripple of expectation and concern throughout the Foundations cohort. The following academic year (2007-2008), DMC Foundations achieved its highest ever pass rates in the system-wide English and Math exams (99% and 95% in the Diploma and Higher Diploma English exams respectively). Coincidence? None of us thought so.

When I transferred to Fujairah Men's College in 2009 as Chair of the Foundations department, I brought that focus with me. I believed that Emirati students spent too much time indoors with computers and video games, and so I wanted to get them outside where they could learn to work together in teams, participate in a range of activities from abseiling to canoeing, and enjoy each other's company around a campfire during the colder winter months. We transported most of the FMC students to Dubai Men's College to enjoy the challenges of their low and high ropes course. That year, we also managed to get almost all the Foundations students to attend a two-day overnight camp near Dibba in the northern part of the Emirate with an outdoor experiential training company called Absolute Adventure (*Absolute Adventure*, 2007). I encouraged all the male faculty to attend but given the social context of the activity including an overnight stay, female staff were given the option to decline.

That same year, I initiated a discussion with senior college managers and the College Director on providing more focussed experiential learning opportunities for all men and women students at both colleges. These opportunities would consist of three phases – phase I would involve experiential learning on low and high ropes courses either built in

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Fujairah or available in Dubai, phase II would consist of an overnight camp with associated outdoor activities, and the final phase III would be an international fieldtrip. This discussion progressed with formal presentations from two outdoor education providers based in Dubai and Dibba in late 2009.

WellSpring and the Dynamic Citizen Model

In early 2010, the college was approached by an outdoor education company called WellSpring, a US-China based company with strong links to experiential education and the use of high and low ropes courses. It was clear from the initial meetings that WellSpring was not just another provider looking for a contract. It had the foresight to work with the college in developing a unique over-arching vision of an experiential learning program that became known as the Dynamic Citizen model (see Fujairah Men's College, Chapter 1). The result of these meetings in early to mid 2010 was a Memorandum of Understanding signed on 12 May 2010 between FMC and WellSpring that outlined the following commitments:

- Curriculum Integration: Integration of Experiential Leadership/learning curricular approach - starting with Foundations and manifested through all 2, 3, and 4 year programs.

- Facilities and Program Development: Implementation of challenge courses (hardware) and program (software) development and training spanning both campuses.

- Experiential Leadership Resource Center (ELRC): Establishment of an ELRC to coordinate and deliver resources to faculty and students for all aspects of experiential learning.

- Marketing and Partnership Development: Development of a plan for 'inbound' usage in the community and beyond including 'outbound' activities (e.g., trips).

After receiving feedback from the various college department faculty, Dr. Dave Pelham, the College Director, initiated a weekly series of meetings in which he participated to explore both the theoretical as well as practical aspects of the Dynamic Citizen model. For a semester, meetings were well attended by an eclectic group of both Chairs and

faculty and went some way in assuaging teachers' fears of yet another top-down management initiative which they would have to make work! In the first semester of this current academic year, the Dynamic Citizen Model diagram was copied, framed, and placed on the walls in each classroom of FMC. As of May 2012, two permanent low and high ropes courses have been built at each college and an ELRC has been established with appropriate resources (ropes, harnesses, helmets, etc) including two US experiential learning certified faculty who are timetabled with each Foundations section at FMC to deliver the new College Preparation and Readiness course, the latest evolution of FMC's commitment to provide personal and professional development to its new students.

<center>**College Preparation and Readiness (CPR)**</center>

The genesis of this program began in early 2011 after I had submitted my resignation from HCT in order to take a year off full-time employment and complete my doctoral research. We put together a team from FMC including student affairs personnel, faculty, ELRC personnel as well as interested faculty at DMC who were embarking upon a similar project in their Foundations department to design a completely new personal and professional development program that would be both culturally-sensitive and academically robust. We wanted a program that would welcome the young men into the college and retain them by building up their self-confidence and resilience as they begin their academic studies.

Several internal and external drivers were beginning to impact the college in terms of the numbers of male Emiratis arriving and staying on for higher education. The internal driver was a concern to best utilize all the college resources including its human resources. As student numbers had stabilized over the past few years despite a strong effort by the college to increase student enrolment, the program areas had become starved of students, resulting in College Director Mark Johnson's initiative described earlier. If the numbers continued to fall, faculty could be re-assigned to its sister college or even to another HCT college in other emirates. The external drivers were the high schools and the recruitment by the Abu Dhabi military and police. The college understood the importance of reaching-out to the local government high schools and it hired an ex-FMC graduate, Suood Al Mansoori, as its first school liaison and recruitment coordinator in 2010. Suood's job description was to raise awareness of HCT

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in the schools and to provide accurate information regarding education at HCT and the diverse range of employment opportunities available in the Emirate, thereby improving high school recruitment numbers to FMC. The other driver was the withdrawal statistics that showed most students left college for employment reasons though I have suggested in this research that some may also leave to avoid academic failure. Despite discussions with senior college managers, no decision has yet been made about the best way to tackle student recruitment by government entities in Abu Dhabi, beset as it is by political, social and economic issues.

Over a series of weekly meetings, including video link-ups with the faculty at DMC, the course emerged from three separate sources - the Personal and Professional Development Course (PPDV0155) in the pre-2010 Foundations Program, the Dynamic Citizen Model that forms the basis of HCT-Fujairah's co-curricular approach adopted in 2010, and the incorporation of the key principles underlying the Mental Toughness Program that was launched in September 2011. As well as recognizing the need to instil life-skills in Foundations students to assist them in their successful transition to college life, the course additionally targeted increased student retention and academic success.

This year, the delivery of the course is embedded in the Spoken Communication course at each of the four levels in New Foundations and is taught mainly by ELRC personnel with the assistance of Spoken Communications faculty. It consists of five main themes – Problem-Solving, College Rules/Expectations, Learner Autonomy, Team Activities, and Career & Personal Skills. Personnel in Foundations, Student Affairs, Student Success Centre, the college library, and Experiential Learning have combined to ensure the learning outcomes are effectively taught and assessed.

CPR^{+} is an additional element of this course in Level 2 which received an extra two hours of experiential instruction per week supplemented with interventions that aimed to develop learners' abilities in the areas of challenge, commitment, confidence and control, vis-à-vis Mental Toughness. This Level 2 group formed my study cohort for my research but it was additionally recognized as an integral and pivotal level group within Foundations that needed to succeed for the future of the college's programs. Figure 1 displays the general organization of the CPR program during the entire first year in Foundations. The five themes along with Mental Toughness element are delivered

appropriately to specific levels with increasing "intensity" or learning depth as described in Bloom's Taxonomy. This means that in Level 1 learning outcomes are defined by the
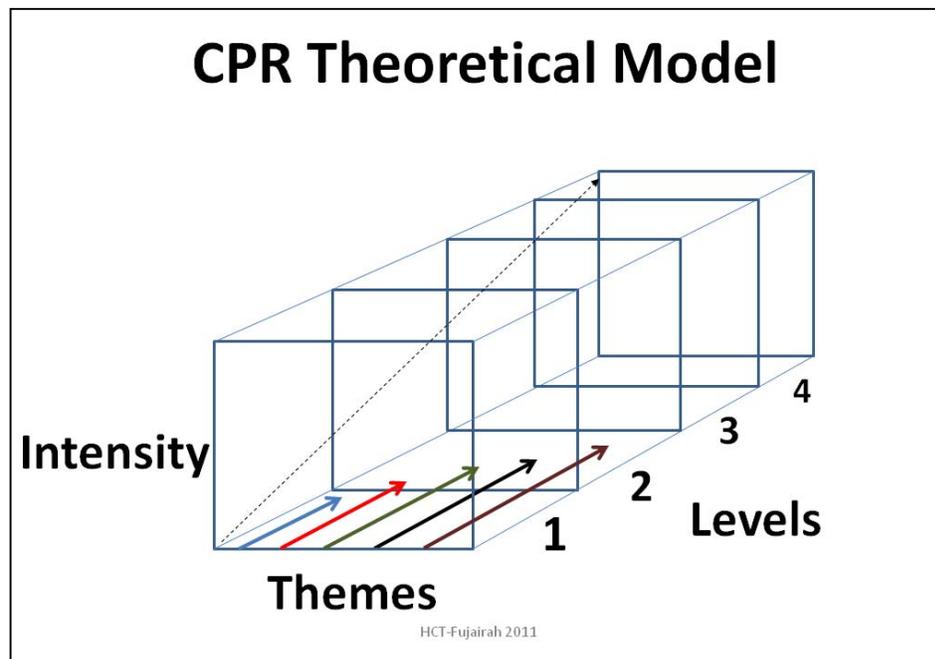
Figure 1: The CPR theoretical model

use of action verbs such as 'identify' and 'recognize' (lower end of Bloom's Taxonomy), whereas in Level 4 the outcomes use higher level action verbs such as 'self-evaluate' and 'reflect'.

The Level 2 CPR$^+$ program may be viewed in Figure 2. The CPR lessons were delivered in three locations in the college - in the classroom scheduled for the Spoken Communication course, in the large room (room 145) if extra space was required or if the activity was likely to generate a lot of noise, or outside on the ropes course or on the football field. Typical lessons could involve a hands-on activity such as the Tower of Hanoi, a logic puzzle where you move all the disks in the least number of moves from one tower to another without placing a larger disk onto a smaller disk (*Tower of Hanoi*, 2011), a discussion and reflection activity focussed on an interesting source stimulus, or a robust physical task with competitive teams. Not all the themes were addressed simultaneously and some mental toughness goals that required the college ropes course could be advanced or held back depending on the colder winter months (November – April). Assessment of CPR's learning outcomes contributed 20% towards the final

grade in the English Spoken Communication course (FND S020) which was made up of 10% participation (attendance, preparedness and participation in team activities), 5% progress portfolio (reflective journal and progress reviews), and 5% vision/story board which visually depicted the student's progressive success using MS Powerpoint slideshows, video, or online software (*Vision Board*, 2008). The component of the program that had the potential to produce the greatest positive impact on the students, experiential learning, will be explained next, with particular reference to the college high and low ropes course.
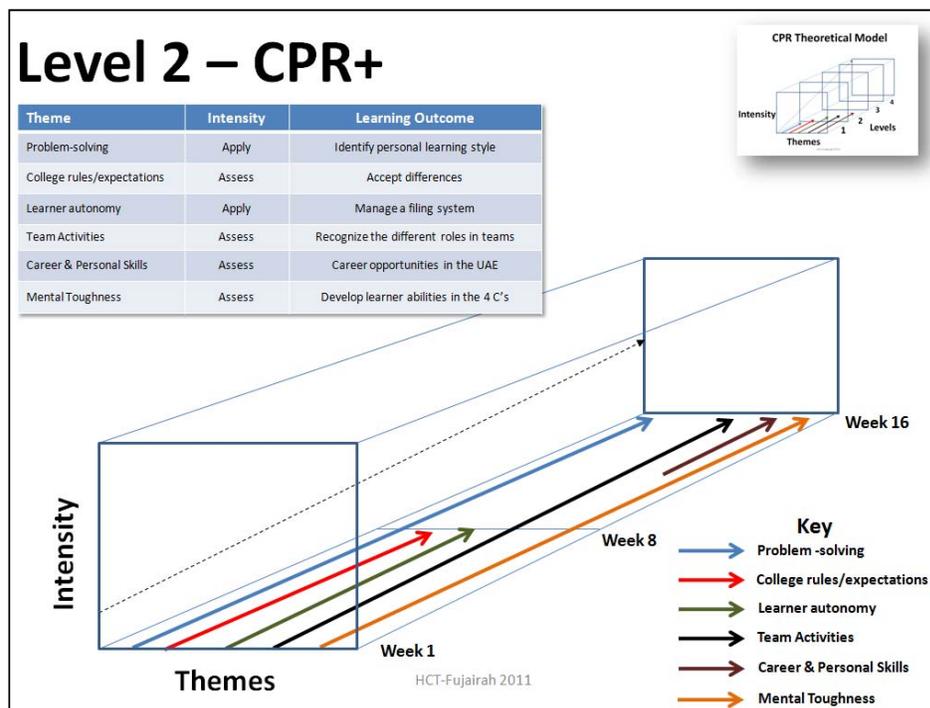
Figure 2: The Level 2 CPR[+] program

Experiential education

Experiential education began in the 1930s in the UK and then spread across to the USA and Commonwealth countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Kraft, 1990). It has always been associated with the outdoors where most of the learning activities take place (Wagner, Baldwin & Roland, 1991; Martin, 2001). First established within schools such as Gordonstoun in Scotland, experiential education has continued to evolve and move beyond schools into a myriad of formats such as Outward Bound (*Outward Bound,* 2012), World Challenge (*World Challenge,* 2012), and corporate training (*Abami,* 2010; *Absolute Adventure,* 2007). The perceived benefits of such training spread into

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the corporate world during the 1990s when CEOs believed they had found an effective method to target personal development, improve team-building skills, and enhance leadership development. Support from learning theorists is well documented by Itin (1999) and Quay (2003) though the latter felt that there remain several aspects of experiential education that "have yet to be fully theorized" (p. 111). Broad theoretical support for experiential education comes from a diverse range of philosophers from Aristotle to John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Jean Piaget, Howard Gardner, and David Kolb (Itin, 1999; Quay, 2003), and centres on principles of progressive education, critical pedagogy, youth empowerment, feminism, situated learning, and social constructivism. Researchers have found that participation in some form of experiential learning, such as rock climbing, wilderness education, and the use of ropes courses, has positive and measurable effects upon alienation and personal control (Cross, 2002), group cohesion (Glass & Benshoff, 2002), moral reasoning (Smith, Strand & Bunting, 2002), and self-esteem (Kaly & Heesacker, 2003).

Martin (2001) extensively investigated the learning outcomes delivered by several Outward Bound schools in New Zealand, Australia, and the Czech Republic. He found that of the five main learning outcomes publicly listed on the New Zealand Outward Bound website (*Outward Bound,* 2012) - Self Development (develop your self-awareness, confidence and motivation; recognise your potential; understand and assume personal responsibility), Social Development (increase your social awareness and communication skills; understand how to create effective relationships; and experience success as a member of a team), Values (consideration of your own, others and Outward Bound's values which are compassion, greatness, responsibility and integrity; develop skills to resolve conflicts of values), Environment (experience education in, about and for the environment; become a guardian of the environment), and Service (experience and understand what it means to be of service) - "the main outcomes perceived by [over 155] participants related to the course objectives of personal and interpersonal development; in particular improved self-confidence and better interpersonal relationships" (Martin, 2001, p. ii).

From my perspective, the primary learning goals in introducing an experiential learning program at both DMC and FMC were much more modest and emerged from many years of interacting with Emirati students. These goals were to: (1) enhance student personal confidence and resilience; (2) increase group cohesion within a class or section of

students; (3) improve student physical fitness; (4) develop cognitive problem-solving and critical thinking abilities among the students; (5) encourage the transfer of experiential learning outcomes to the classroom to improve student academic achievement; and (6) increase awareness and identification with the natural world.

In practice, experiential learning focuses on a cycle that starts with the trainer introducing the problem or the goal to the group (Rohnke, 1989). For example, in a ropes course designed to build the skills required by teamwork, a student team might work together to get the entire group over a 12-foot wall or through an intricate web of rope. After each challenge, the group looks at how it functioned as a team with the trainer facilitating group and individual reflection and feedback using the following question types:

- Who took the leadership roles?
- Did the planning process help or hinder progress?
- Did people listen to one another in the group and use the strengths of all group members?
- Did everyone feel that the group was a supportive environment in which they felt comfortable making a contribution and taking risks?

The experience on the climbing wall or web of rope can then become a metaphor for the classroom learning environment and life in general. While the problems and challenges of the classroom are different from the physical demands of the experiential learning task, almost all of the skills are directly applicable in both settings (Kraft, 1990; Gardner & Korth, 1997; Cooper, Bottomley & Gordon, 2004). These skills among others — listening, recognizing each other's strengths, and supporting each other through difficulties — apply equally well inside and outside of the classroom.

Ropes courses

Co-designed by FMC personnel and Dan Pervorse of Signature Research (*Signature Research*, 2012), the ropes course at Fujairah Men's College, consisting of low and high rope elements, was completed in May 2011 with the first official use by students in

October 2011 (see Appendix Q). The low elements consist of Wild Woozy, Tension Traverse, Group Skis, All Aboard, Islands, Mohawk Walk, Spider Web, and Team Wall – the high elements consist of Giant's Ladder, Power Pole, High Woozy, and the Team Enhancement Course (TEC) which consists of Multi Vines, Earthquake, Raider Bridge, Hour Glass, and Zip Line or flying fox (*Ropes course,* 2012). Students are asked to wear appropriate clothing (t-shirts, shorts, hats, and strong footwear, not their traditional loose-fitting *dishdashas* which could easily become tangled in the karabiners and ropes) and they may change in the college changing room next to the gym. On average, 75% of the students attended their CPR lessons and of those who attended, 91% turned up properly attired in weeks 3-7 of Semester 2, 2012 (see Appendix R for details). Due to the cooler weather and the Foundations program structure, the highest usage of the college ropes course occurred during weeks 3-7 (Personal communication with Tom Earp).

In general, the lower level 1 and 2 students had higher attendance and participation figures. Students who are not properly attired could join in on some of the low ropes or team activities on the field but for health and safety reasons, they were not permitted to wear a harness and attempt the high rope elements. The two-hour double lesson was usually scheduled for the last part of the day when students could drive home after the lesson. Unlike Western students of a similar age, Arabic young men are very shy about their bodies and generally do not like to change publicly even in a men's changing room. FMC has provided individual cubicles in recognition of this but, in turn, this slows down the rate of changing and students were often 10-20 minutes late arriving at the ropes course after a short two minute walk.

I observed several rope course lessons with Tom and Christine Earp over the cooler winter months of 2011-2012. One of the most memorable was witnessing the first time Level 2 students attempted the 'Power Pole' on a hot day in mid March (see Appendix Q). Tom and Christine had nine students from their section – six actually attempted the task which was to climb a 6-metre pole, stand up on the top and then leap off about 1-2m towards a trapeze rung and grab it. Afterwards, the student was lowered gently to the ground. Many of the students were not focused at all during the safety demonstration but eventually the facilitators managed to demonstrate with a volunteer how to put on the harness. After completing the safety protocol with Christine who held the safety rope,

the student climbed the pole. Urged on by his friends, he made it to the top and gingerly managed to stand up. He successfully made the leap and grabbed the trapeze rung – he was slowly lowered to the ground. His success seemed to spur on the others to try. I recorded my observations on my mobile phone – "I can't help but think that these are powerfully emotional experiences for the students but the lesson remains outside and lost unless it is transferred to the classroom. Where was the teacher? How can teachers facilitate the message transfer to academic studies if they don't witness these experiences?" (14 March 2012, FMC ropes course).

I wanted to capture these powerful emotions by adapting an Intrinsic Motivation Inventory that measures intrinsic motivation (see Chapter 3). I selected 20 items across seven sub-scales including interest/enjoyment, perceived competence, effort, value/usefulness, felt pressure and tension, perceived choice, and relatedness (see Appendix S). The interest/enjoyment subscale is considered the self-report measure of intrinsic motivation; perceived choice and perceived competence are theorized to be positive predictors of both self-report and behavioural measures of intrinsic motivation. Pressure tension is theorized to be a negative predictor of intrinsic motivation (Ryan, 1982; McAuley et al., 1989). 56 surveys were completed by 44 students from Level 1 to Level 4 *immediately* after each student's first high ropes experience, using a 5-point Likert scale with scores 1 to 5 indicating a range of responses from 'not true at all' to 'very true' (see Figure 3).

The sub-scale scores ranged between 3.95 and 4.82 indicating a very strong positive response from students to their initial high ropes experience. The highest ranking measure was the sub-scale 'relatedness' which measured the degree of interpersonal interaction, friendship, and trust between the student and the CPR facilitator. The lowest was the sub-scale 'pressure/tension' which is negatively correlated with intrinsic motivation, that is, the lower the pressure/tension score, the higher the intrinsic motivation which, in this survey, was measured by the sub-scale 'interest/enjoyment'. Pressure and perceived choice had the highest variation of responses in terms of their standard deviations of 1.2 and 1.0 respectively. In summary, the students clearly indicated through their responses that they thoroughly enjoyed the ropes experience (only one student did not enjoy the experience), they valued it, and they expended a lot

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of effort. Whether any of these positive experiences are applied back into the classroom depends on decisions yet to be made by department faculty and Chair.

Sub-scale (*n*=56)	Mean score	Ranking
Relatedness	4.82	1
Value/usefulness	4.69	2
Effort/importance	4.66	3
Interest/enjoyment	4.63	4
Perceived competence	4.54	5
Perceived choice	4.53	6
Pressure/tension	3.95	7

Figure 3: Sub-scale scores and rankings from CPR Post-Activity IMI

Student feedback

At the end of Semester 1, the CPR facilitators with the assistance of the college Quality Assurance (QA) department conducted a formal evaluation of the CPR program using a 20-item survey in which 67 Foundations student responses (54% response rate) were obtained (see Appendix T). Overall, 85% of all the Foundations students reported that they were satisfied with CPR, with Level 3 students (63%) indicating less satisfaction than Levels 1, 2 and 4 (82%, 93% and 85% respectively). The highest and lowest ranked items may be viewed in Figure 4. Students indicated the CPR activities to be engaging, practical, and helpful in their learning – 81.5% of the students reported an improvement in self-confidence, with the Level 2 study cohort attaining the highest score of 94%, reflecting the findings of Martin (2001). The items that students were less satisfied with appear to reflect a lack of linking between the CPR activity and everyday life, including classroom work. Reversing this trend, 91% and 82% of Level 1 students respectively claimed that CPR increased their understanding of the lesson to be learned and improved their ability to complete a project. Along with improvements in self-confidence, several students reported that they learned a lot of English during the CPR lessons and many would like more time to enjoy their lessons.

In May 2012, the CPR team again conducted a formal evaluation of the program in Semester 2 using the identical 20-item survey instrument used for the Semester 1

evaluations. Overall, 92% of all the Foundations students reported that they were satisfied with CPR with Level 2 students (88%) indicating less satisfaction than Levels 1, 3 and 4 (100%, 94% and 94% respectively). The highest and lowest ranked items may be viewed in Figure 5. As in semester 1, item 1 of the survey – *The activities were engaging* - was selected by the students as the highest ranked item with the higher level

Highest Ranked Items (*n* = 67)	% Satisfied
The activities were engaging.	90.0%
CPR is designed to help me learn.	85.0%
The activities in CPR were practical.	84.5%
CPR has helped me improve my self-confidence.	81.5%
Lowest Ranked Items	
CPR shows me how what I learn links to everyday life.	63%
CPR has helped me improve my ability to complete a project.	66%
The activities in CPR suit the way I like to learn.	73%
The activities in CPR increased my understanding of the lesson.	76%

Figure 4: CPR course evaluation, Semester 1 – highest and lowest ranked items

Highest Ranked Items (*n* = 52)	% Satisfied
The activities were engaging.	96.0%
The activities in CPR were practical.	96.0%
The activities in CPR increased my understanding of the lesson.	91.0%
CPR has increased my confidence in my ability to achieve my goals.	91.0%
Lowest Ranked Items	
CPR has helped me improve my ability to face a difficult task.	73.5%
CPR shows me how to take responsibility for my own learning.	75.0%
The activities in CPR suit the way I like to learn.	75.2%
CPR has helped me increase my self-awareness.	78.2%

Figure 5: CPR course evaluation, Semester 2 – highest and lowest ranked items

classes scoring this item higher than the lower level classes. Again, item 3 - *The activities in CPR were practical* - appears in the top four highest ranked items. The item students were overall less satisfied with was their ability to face a difficult task (item 18) though this was much more keenly felt by the lower level classes (mean 62.5%) compared to the higher level classes (mean 84.5%). The only item common to both semesters in the lowest ranked items was item 5 - *The activities in CPR suit the way I like to learn* - which appears to indicate students take longer to become used to the learner-centred, free-choice, experiential approach adopted by the CPR facilitators. The lack of a link between CPR and everyday life/classroom learning identified in Semester 1 remains an issue as it appeared in the lowest quartile of ranked responses in three of the four levels.

In summary, the Foundations students gave CPR a big 'thumbs-up' with two corollaries of wishing to see a stronger link between CPR and other areas of their lives, both in and out of the classroom, and a mismatch between the way they like to learn and the CPR activities (even though the CPR activities were ranked as some of the highest items across both semesters) – this area of the 'missing link' is also an area of concern for me. The impact of CPR as measured by the Mental Toughness scores is described in Chapter 5.

Best Practices

The fifth and final key research question asks: 'What administrative, teaching, and classroom management practices are most likely to be efficacious in facilitating smoother transitions to college life?' The contact between the potential new student and the college begins while the student remains in his final year of high school. It is here that the student's journey towards higher education begins.

Administrative – Student Affairs

Student Affairs at FMC covers student support services (counselling, careers, etc), registration, enrolment, and scheduling. Donna Wilson, a friendly and experienced Student Affairs supervisor from Canada, feels that her department's main goals are to "to make them [students] feel welcome, to get them engaged in their learning which is certainly more of a classroom activity, but to assist that in any way that we can, and then to engage them in the overall college experience". Donna works closely with the two

other Chairs in Foundations and the programs in supporting their academic activities through the college support services as well as scheduling student and faculty timetables including the formal end of semester examinations. She became aware of the main border crossing issue confronting the young men after arriving in Fujairah six years ago. During a panel discussion with high school counsellors and HCT-Fujairah students, the college personnel were surprised to learn "how afraid they [the students] were of entering into an English-only environment". Given this awareness, her department has been proactive in implementing a number of initiatives since 2009, many of which were coordinated with the Foundations department.

High School Principals' visits (December 2009)

After I joined the college in August 2009, I analysed the new Foundations students' CEPA scores to identify the schools with the highest CEPA scores that indicated which schools appeared to be doing something right. Donna Wilson, Hussam Soliman (Continuing Education coordinator at FMC and ex-Ministry of Education English Curriculum supervisor) and I visited three schools in Fujairah, Khor Fakkhan and Masafi where we met the principals and head teachers over a three-day period in December 2009. In seeking examples of high school 'best practice', the visits were not particularly enlightening (several spoke of collaborative learning, attempts to reward high performing students, and use of educational technology) but they did highlight the issue of low parental involvement, limited career programs, and their desire to establish stronger partnerships with HCT. One school principal was quite pragmatic – "this is not Singapore where all the students know they have to work hard at school and university to compete for the best jobs. Here, the boys know that once they finish high school, they can drive to Abu Dhabi to join the military. This is why they have such low motivation for learning". Despite this, we all felt the visits were worthwhile, but at that stage, the college did not have a dedicated person responsible to develop these important partnerships between HCT and the local high schools. That was about to change.

School Liaison and Student Recruitment Coordinator

In October 2010, Mr Suood Al Mansoori, an ex-FMC graduate, was appointed as FMC's first school liaison and student recruitment coordinator. Since then, Suood, a quietly spoken but confident Emirati, has implemented a student recruitment strategy, has visited 21 local high schools (16 government and 5 private schools) three times a year,

has set up a Student Ambassador scheme involving current students, and generally does not miss an opportunity to raise HCT's profile and to promote FMC locally whether it is at a recruitment booth or during the annual Terry Fox Run along the Fujairah Corniche. He knows as I do that the senior high school students are not necessarily being channelled towards higher education by their teachers or principals. Each school now has a HCT pop-up banner with the current entry requirements to HCT and though he has yet to establish permanent 'HCT Corners' in the careers offices of all schools, he feels he is making a difference overall in reaching out to the high schools.

Developing a partnership in this setting is a slow and relational process. By the time Suood meets local students at the important CEPA Day in May when they sit their CEPA English examination at FMC, he has met many of them in the NAPO and school visits. NAPO conducts visits to all Grade 12 students in the UAE and invites the three federal institutions (UAEU, HCT & ZU) to attend. First, NAPO informs students about how to register their institutional choice online. Then the three institutions are given an opportunity to present their academic options. At FMC on CEPA Day, Suood ensures all students view the official HCT promotional video while they wait in the classrooms for the start of their exam – brochures are distributed and he spends time chatting informally to small groups of high school students around the college.

An recent initiative that was well received was the "Olympics of the Mind" event held at FMC in late February 2012. Teams of students from the local high schools were invited to engage in an Engineering Challenge and a General Knowledge Quiz followed by a tour of the college and team building. Suood was overwhelmed with the excellent response but he knows that, in the end, the final word on the efficacy of his initiatives and hard work will be delivered through higher applicant numbers of local students selecting HCT. Unfortunately, early indications as of May 2012 indicate lower quality applicants with CEPA scores below the required minimum level of 150 for the next academic year starting in September 2012, a phenomenon experienced in many other emirates as well.

New student orientation

In Chapter 4, I examined closely the new student evaluation of the college orientation program delivered in the first week of Semester 1. The new students appeared to be

nervous and anxious prior to the start of the orientation program and generally did not find it easy to deal with staff and teachers – however, after the end of the program, they indicated that they appreciated the use of majilis-style furniture and Arabic speakers, confirming the importance of incorporating culture-friendly elements into the orientation program. Discussion in a follow-up meeting with key personnel in the Student Affairs department in May 2012 centred on its apparent short-term success in terms of assisting the new students to settle more quickly into the college. However, it did not stem the tide of attrition in Semester 1. Nevertheless, the decision was made that the new student orientation is an important part of introducing students to the college and of helping them to become familiar with a new culture of different expectations and behaviours.

The new Academic Advisor role (new students are assigned a faculty advisor who mentor them throughout their time in Foundations), which was introduced in Semester 2 2012, will receive greater emphasis in the next orientation – initial feedback from faculty about their new role is favourable. One potential role of the Academic Advisor may be to closely monitor the 'late arrivals', those students who begin attending college between Day 1 and Day 10, often missing the new student orientation program. As documented in Chapter 6, almost half had withdrawn from college by the end of first semester. As retaining high student numbers is essential to the future of FMC, this initiative seems well considered and timely.

MTQ and CPR

The only outcomes in Foundations that interest the college administration are those associated with increases in timely graduation pass rates. The CPR progam, closely aligned with Mental Toughness and the Dynamic Citizen Model, does not stand alone. It is essentially a support course for English and Math, raising students' soft-skills in clearly identified deficit areas of resilience, commitment, and challenge. Linking the transfer of these learned soft-skills in CPR lessons is critical to those overall outcomes. Faculty need to facilitate this link through reflective writing and oral discussions, 'gentle teasing' to remind students of their achievements on the ropes course, and subtle recognition of their small victories and successes. It is not an add-on but rather an integrated element that is threaded throughout all their teaching. Without linking CPR experiences to the formal classroom environment, CPR is likely to remain impotent.

Feedback from faculty about the impact of CPR has been scant but this extract from an email written in September 2011 from an English faculty to Tom Earp, a CPR facilitator, thanking him for his efforts, reflects the positive perspective of some faculty:

The class was great and they really took onboard what you said and also were thoroughly engaged with the activities. Since the class their motivation has improved and they often ask me if you'll be making an appearance in our class again.

In Chapter 5, the results of the evaluation of CPR using the Mental Toughness Questionnaire were presented and discussed. In summary, it was found that the MTQ scores decreased significantly for commitment and interpersonal confidence with only 21% of the 19 paired Level 2 study cohort students increasing their overall Mental Toughness over the duration of the CPR program (September 2011 – May 2012). Feedback from the CPR faculty and facilitators indicates that despite growth observed in some areas, it was generally felt that an increase in student self-awareness may have produced more honest and grounded responses in the post-test MTQ, resulting in lower scores compared to the pre-test MTQ. Doug Strycharczyk, the managing director of AQR which distributes MTQ, reported that this decrease in post-test MTQ scores has occurred quite often in the UK due to the reasons proffered above (Doug Strycharczyk, personal communication, June 11, 2012). After the CPR team presented the MTQ results in June 2012, the college senior management re-committed to the CPR program and the use of MTQ to assess its impact upon the students' soft-skills development. Tom Earp, the experiential learning coordinator who co-jointly oversaw the delivery of the CPR program during the year, when asked if the lower post-test MTQ scores accurately reflected the change in the students' soft-skills development, replied controversially, "ultimately, I think we simply measured the impact of our learning culture on our students".

As a result of this analysis and reflection, one of my recommended best practices in CPR for the next academic year is for teachers to become a strong co-deliverer of the CPR learning outcomes. The current CPR trainers and facilitators should train the teachers and serve as co-support in supplementing the classroom instruction only when it relates to the experiential components, especially on the low and high ropes. In this way, the link between the CPR experiences and the academic program based in the classroom

will be forged and strengthened with the hopeful result of more resilient and committed students who successfully exit Foundations ready to study.

Attendance

There was no significant statistical correlation between students' levels of absence and their end of semester grades at the end of Semester 1 (Chapter 5). High levels of absences were positively correlated with placements levels in Foundations, with the higher English level students taking more time off college. The chronological pattern of absences seems to have stabilized over the past four years. In other words, the HCT attendance policy, which engages everyone from faculty to administrative assistants to Chairs to Student Affairs, appears to have had little effect on improving regular college attendance. Lower level students may benefit from more regular attendance, but this of itself is no guarantee to higher pass rates. In the Working Parents focus meeting (May 2012), in response to a question about the differences between high school and college, the students emphatically declared that college shows it cares more about them by monitoring their attendance – this 'noticing' element is a key difference in demarcating the two worlds of high school and college. In summary, the attendance policy is administratively cumbersome and largely ineffectual in terms of achieving its aim of encouraging students to attend college regularly and punctually in preparation for the world of work – but it needs to be retained.

An absences pattern, which emerged from an analysis of the weekly absences recorded by the Level 2 study cohort, highlighted a regular 4-5 week cycle of increased absences that appears to show students simply 'taking a break' (Chapter 6). In the Student Affairs follow-up meeting, it was agreed that Student Affairs in coordination with the academic Chairs will provide college activities 'in sync' with these intervals to release 'academic stress' and avoid increases in absences.

Challenges

There are plenty of challenges ahead for FMC as it begins to finish the current year and prepare for the next. The situation does not look healthy. As with most other similar male colleges in the system, the number of applicants for HCT is down again this year. But it is the quality of student as measured by the CEPA score that is more alarming. As of May 2012, around 66% of the 250 high school applicants to HCT-FMC have a CEPA

score under the required entry level of 150. If this minimum entry requirement is maintained (there were early signs of discontent and concern among the Emirati community as witnessed in the Arabic press about the impact of the CEPA 150 cut-off. As HCT is sensitive to local public opinion, the firm line was softened in June 2012 with an 'internal HCT announcement' that applicants with scores of CEPA 140 and above would now be considered for entry into Foundations) and given the average yield rate of 37% since 2008, the college will have around 40 new students in two sections remaining by Day 20 in Semester 1, 2012. Donna Wilson understands the trade-off between student numbers and student quality but she feels also comfortable that "instead of admitting everybody, the institution is now saying, 'here is the bar' and [allow students to have conversations like] I'm here because I met the bar whereas my cousin is not because he didn't".

FMC is fighting back. Several initiatives will be launched shortly. One will target mature Diploma graduates who may be interested in returning to college to attempt their Bachelors. First reports from Student Affairs personnel following a telephone campaign are encouraging. Another initiative will examine the possibility of employer sponsorships made available to program students once they pass their IELTS. A small monthly stipend of Dh1000-2000 may make a big difference in the way students feel about themselves, their future, and the importance of the college in securing that future. Reinforcing the link between college and employment is a key strategy aimed at improving student retention and graduation rates. Student Affairs has also arranged for short presentations from the program faculty to be delivered to high school applicants up to mid-June as they visit college to confirm their enrolment. Firmly establishing the focus beyond Foundations, the college will additionally issue pre-Admittance cards to the applicants indicating their conditional enrolment in one of the HCT undergraduate programs. Within the first month of joining Foundations, this link will be further reinforced with student fieldtrips to local employers.

Administrative – Academic

Lorraine Doherty, a cheery Scot with former supervisory experience in HCT, is the current Chair of Foundations at FMC, replacing me in August 2011. In discussing administrative and academic initiatives implemented by her over this academic year, she began with the interviews of returning Foundations students in Semester 2. Having

either not shown up or withdrawn, over 70 students were contacted but less than ten were actually placed in sections. Lorraine interviewed each student individually, asking them what they were planning to do differently this time round to ensure success. Moving on to the new role of Academic Advisor softly launched in Semester 2, Lorraine had received positive feedback from faculty who appear to clearly understand the importance of a mentoring role within the program. Making it more difficult for students to resit an exam or summative test has worked well. In a clear rebuff to the 'rentier effect' which also reinforces a disconnect between actions and consequences, the message now clearly understood among the students is that simply missing a test or turning up late without *a validated and significant excuse* will result in a zero grade for that particular assessment.

Lorraine enjoys talking frequently to the students, reminding them of the 'big picture' ideas of regular attendance, good punctuality, bringing all their necessary equipment, completing homework, and staying focussed on their work. One initiative that has not worked so well this year has been the academic support provided to 'at risk' students in partnership between the Student Success Centre (SSC) and Foundations. Lorraine has an optimistic perspective on life and hopes to implement the SSC initiative again next academic year. Finally, Lorraine showed considerable interest in the new lesson/faculty observation form which I developed to focus on the efforts of faculty to build and maintain rapport with their students.

Changes in Foundations

I became Chair of Foundations in 2005. Since that time, changes to the Foundations curriculum, changes of assessment of the curriculum, and the impact of other external projects have produced major change and upheaval for Foundations Chairs, faculty and administrative assistants as well as personnel in Student Affairs. While the effect of program, assessment and other changes upon student learning is difficult to determine (given changes in both curriculum and assessment since 2005), assessing the impact of change on HCT Foundations faculty may find parallels in research available elsewhere. Change can produce stress and constant change seems to be a natural part of educational life (Hinde, 2003). A decade ago, HCT faculty had to cope with a major professional development initiative with a shift towards greater use of educational technology. Baylor and Ritchie (2002) found that "the introduction of technology and constructivist learning

philosophies into the classroom environment affects the level of teacher morale (either positively or negatively) as these factors facilitate a fundamental shift in the traditional environment, demanding that teachers alter their styles and expectations" (p. 410). But the impact of constant change through reforms (Evans, 2000) together with a rapid pace of change, especially if faculty feel the "changes are imposed rather than communally owned" (Margolis & Nagel, 2006, p. 150), may result in loss of morale as Rhodes, Neville and Allan (2004) found when 'constant change' was ranked as the fifth highest factor "most likely to lead to teachers leaving the teaching profession" (p. 75). Hargreaves (2005) calls for a greater "understanding [of] how teachers experience and respond to educational change...if reform and improvement efforts are to be more successful and sustainable" (p. 981). This is especially relevant given HCT's stable and ageing faculty who may "become resistant to and resilient toward change efforts outside the classroom, and concentrate their remaining energies and rewards on a more relaxed sense of accomplishment within it" (p. 981). As morale can be one of the first casualties of constant change, it is not surprising to find that it is linked to levels of satisfaction with organizational governance (Rafferty, 2002), a finding echoed by Margolis and Nagel (2006). The major chronological changes in the Foundations program since 2005 can be viewed in Appendix U.

Given that the organizational culture of HCT discussed in Chapter 6 is a hybrid hierarchy-market-adhocracy, it is not surprising that initiatives and changes appear especially to faculty as top-down and heavy-handed. Driving the changes centrally always was (and continues to be) a concern to get as many Foundations students through the program as quickly as possible into their undergraduate programs. At times, this has produced the most intriguing and convoluted progression criteria that would have baffled most Boolean experts as Academic Central Services sought to create as many legitimate ways as possible to enable students to progress to the programs. What appeared to be too often overlooked was the effect of sudden, rapid, and constant change upon English faculty who invest considerable amounts of time and effort in producing ELT lessons that deliver the curriculum in an exciting, interesting, relevant and pedagogically sound manner. With each change comes both revision and amendments to lesson materials as well as the creation of entire new lessons arising from a major shift in focus or a change in course learning outcomes or exam specs. A result of working in this state of almost constant change is faculty fatigue, a lowering of morale, less energy and

interest in new projects, and inevitable loss of expert personnel as they fail to renew contracts (my own personal observations and corroborated by Foundations Chairs at other HCT colleges). Most FMC faculty (80%) agreed that there are factors beyond their control that have a greater influence on their students' achievement than they do, and many mentioned several *a priori* and concurrent factors that contribute towards their sense of frustration and powerlessness. Often driving these frequent changes are a plethora of new key personnel in Academic Central Services, the department responsible for coordinating the delivery of the Foundations English curriculum (among others) across all 17 HCT colleges, which has resulted, in my opinion, in a loss of institutional memory which leaves individual colleges exposed to new pivotal people in major leadership positions coming into the system with new ideas, a strong Western-culture and ELT bias, largely ignorant of what has been tried before, unmindful of local conditions and setting, and seeking to make their mark. Three examples of changes implemented in Foundations since 2005 will now be chronicled.

My first example of the harmful and negative impact of change was the introduction of New Foundations program in 2010. The impetus for the change was the launch of HCT's new Bachelor of Applied Science which replaced the Higher Diploma in 2009. This launch also coincided with the announcement of the phasing-out of HCT's Diploma programs which historically produced its greatest numbers of graduates. In order to increase the English language competency of Foundations students to CEFR B2 level (IELTS 5.0, CEPA 180) which is the absolute minimum standard required to meet the demands of a first-year Bachelor degree, HCT devised a New Foundations program based on four levels as described in earlier chapters. A useful and appropriate metaphor to describe the overall ethos of the new program is the fractionating column of an oil refinery – students now enter Foundations at critical entry points or levels and will exit based on their performance (accumulation of course credits) over the time spent in the program. The entry point or level in which they enter Foundations is dependent both on how hard they work in their final year of high school (impact on CEPA scores). Their duration in the program depends on how hard they work in their Foundations year (gaining credit points). The program matrix was designed to facilitate rather than hinder this upward movement (see Appendix V).

The stair-casing of placement levels seemed sensible (though refer to the HEATe section later in this chapter) but the decision to break up the single integrated skills English course into five separate skill strands was not well received by experienced HCT English faculty, many of whom had gained enormous pedagogical and linguistic expertise from many years of teaching English to young, largely unmotivated male Emiratis. They believed that the breaking up of a single integrated English course into separate skill strands would make them less effective as teachers – "How can you teach vocabulary in isolation from writing?" they asked. As one experienced English faculty reported recently, "It has to be pedagogically unsound to attempt to teach skills in isolation. Language is a complex interaction of components, but if you take the engine apart and put the components in separate boxes, the students are never going to understand how the whole thing functions. Given that our students find it generally difficult to make connections, this method is a disaster".

Though faculty were generally consulted and informed by their Foundations Chairs in their role within the General Education Divisional Academic Team (GenEd DAT) responsible for the curriculum and assessment changes associated with the new program, the momentum for change and implementation was already set in motion as early as 2008. The program launch was delayed a year but it finally started in September 2010. Huge sums were spent on five sets of new course textbooks and much time allocated to the re-alignment of HCT's attendance and grade databases to accept the new structure. Hundreds of Foundations faculty received additional professional development.

The New Foundations program has two official exit points in an academic year (end of each semester) as Level 4 students attempt to pass the IELTS academic exam with an overall band of 5.0 with no individual sub-skill or band below 4.5. Students may also obtain the required level of IELTS any time at external IELTS testing centres. In Figure 6, the results and the numbers of students eligible to enter the career programs since the

IELTS Test Date	Nos. Registered	Pass Rate	Passed	External Pass	Total Passes
2010 ENGL070 results	36	76%	30	N/A	30
Jan 2011	New Foundations - no L4 students				
4 June 2011	27	59%	16	7	23
14 January 2012	9	56%	5	13	18

| 9 June 2012 | 25 | 72% | 18 | 12 | 30 |

Figure 6: Level 4 IELTS test results compared to Foundations ENGL070 results (2010)

start of the New Foundations program in September 2010 are compared to previous year's results in the old Higher Diploma Foundations final English exit exam (ENGL070), a level similar to the new exit requirements. It is clear that the New Foundations program at Fujairah Men's College provided an additional 60% of Foundations graduates to the career programs (this includes 25 students who obtained their IELTS at external testing centres during the 2011-2012 academic year) compared to the old Foundations program (based on 30 students in 2010-2011 compared to 48 students, 18 and 30, in 2011-2012). It is also noteworthy that over 50% of the total IELTS passes in 2011-2012 came from students who obtained the minimum IELTS band at external testing centres.

However, a major change occurred mid-way in its launch year – at the end of semester 1, based upon feedback from the colleges, the five strands were reduced to three (oral communications, reading and writing) - and at the time of writing (May 2012), it had been 'unofficially confirmed' that the Foundations English course will revert to a single, integrated skills course pre-2010 in September 2012 possibly due to a combination of colleges' dissatisfaction with both the implementation and ethos of New Foundations, and the potential confusion for auditors who would not understand how a student could have F grades on their transcript (from individual skills) but have nevertheless progressed up a level without re-taking the failed courses. Foundations faculty in May 2012 are tired of all the changes and as evidenced in Chapter 6, they feel increasingly disempowered and sidelined.

The second example of change concerns HEATE (Higher Education Admissions Test for English) which was introduced in early 2011. It is a new addition to the Cambridge suite of English-language exams, and is fully computer-based as well as linked to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for languages). The assessment was designed to measure reading, listening, and writing skills from Foundations English Levels 1 to 3, with Level 4 students exiting from Foundations using IELTS, the new Foundations benchmark that is used to compare individual college performance within the system. Given that all Foundations students now use laptops to learn English, it was

a natural decision to align assessment and content delivery formats. It was also seen as an obvious instrument to 'staircase' HCT's system-wide assessments (SWAs) from Foundations up into the Bachelors programs. Though it is a better fit for the IELTS test, content issues remained but these were never addressed given the scale of technical failures experienced in 2011.

Trialled at a number of HCT colleges in late Semester 2, 2011, the feedback was overwhelmingly negative as it struggled technically in the larger colleges to cope with online delivery, notwithstanding a myriad of other issues specifically related to exam installation and format. This initial technical failure was addressed over the summer and the HEATE again was trialled for the mid-semester English exams around week 10 in October 2011. Again, it failed in around a third of colleges especially when scaled up to the larger female colleges. After this second failure, it was abandoned by HCT who then needed to find an appropriate assessment in which to conduct the final exams in January 2012. In its place, HCT used a variation of the CEPA exam, an entirely inappropriate assessment given that CEPA assesses general English competencies in contrast to the discrete skills approach in New Foundations. Not surprisingly, there were considerable numbers of failures in many HCT colleges at the end of Semester 1.

Proposed as an appropriate online method for assessing English language skills, HEATE evolved into a technical and administrative nightmare. However, two positive results arose from the ashes of HEATE – first, it confirmed that Foundations students need a minimum of 150 CEPA to have a fighting chance (50/50, 30/70?) to reach the programs after passing their IELTS, and second, students with less than 150 CEPA are unable to gain the 10 additional CEPA points over a semester in order to move up to the next level.

The final example is the joint UAE University-HCT Foundations project launched in September 2010. Based upon fiscal (60% of the UAEU's budget was spent on its Foundations students, mainly on housing and transport) and pedagogical factors (HCT English faculty were perceived to have accrued ELT expertise which could be utilized to teach additional numbers of students), the UAE University located in Al Ain and HCT agreed to a pilot to send UAEU students who failed to meet UAEU entry requirements (similar to HCT) to HCT colleges within the students' emirates, thereby avoiding the costs of boarding large numbers of Foundations-level students in dormitories in Al Ain

during the week and transporting them back to their emirates on the weekend. UGRU, the UAEU's equivalent Foundations program, was largely divested of English faculty who were then re-located to HCT colleges with English faculty deficit needs based on the expected larger numbers of new students in the following year (the other pilot HCT college was Madinat Zayed in the Western Region). Fujairah re-housed around 20 former UGRU faculty, many of whom were upset at the decision to move them for a pilot. Not unsurprisingly, their dissatisfaction reached the media (Swan, 2010; Swan, 2011c). And the level of dissatisfaction was not restricted to the former UAEU faculty – female UAEU students especially missed the 'opportunity for independence' in Al Ain and bemoaned the fact they had to remain in their own emirates (though I suspect many were now well-motivated to work hard and shift to the university as soon as they passed their IELTS). Interestingly, the male UAEU students seemed pleased to remain at home to complete Foundations. The initial solid pass rates at all levels, both HCT and UAEU, appeared to justify the decision. The pilot was extended for another year in 2011 but almost all re-located UAEU faculty had by then either resigned, returned to UAEU or were not renewed. Demographics suggested large numbers of UAEU students would join HCT-Fujairah in September 2011 so a huge recruitment effort was made in summer 2011 to hire the expected shortfall of English faculty.

The decision to drop the UAEU-HCT Foundations pilot from September 2012 is therefore surprising given the unqualified support publicly stated in December 2011 by senior managers at both HCT and UAEU (Swan, 2011b). New faculty hired for the current academic year now face re-assignment to other colleges or termination of their HCT contracts. I suspect HCT-Fujairah has mixed feelings about the loss of the joint project - the 'busy-ness' associated with the project was challenging at times but the extra numbers of male students at college was certainly perceived as a bonus.

As I have asked in a previous chapter, whose interests are being best served here? If the New Foundations students were making good progress through the levels towards exiting Level 4 and 60% more Foundations students were becoming eligible to move into the programs, why will the program now revert to a single integrated course from September 2012? A computer-based test (CBT) such as HEATE seems an appropriate format to assess English language skills largely taught and learned in a technology-mediated learning environment – if the technical problems were due to scalability issues,

surely the additional advantages of CBT should have ensured a progressive and structured re-launch of HEATE after the technical problems had been addressed rather abandon the entire project altogether? Finally, if the UAEU students appeared to be achieving better results at HCT, why was the pilot dropped?

Constant change without a considered rationale and respectful consultation is something a teacher would never do to their students. After almost 20 years of delivering a Foundations program within HCT, one would think most of the issues regarding English language teaching, numeracy and information technology teaching, the use of educational technology, and improving the students' soft-skills, thereby satisfactorily bridging the gap from high school to their undergraduate studies, would have been identified, discussed, and resolved. However, the 'turnstile changes' in the program have barely impacted the overall progression rates as the quality of high school applicants drops and the entry level set by HCT into Foundations rises. Instead, the changes have added unnecessary administrative and academic stress upon the busiest and most demanding department in the organization. None of these changes – New Foundations, HEATE, and the UAEU-HCT project - reflects particularly well upon HCT and higher education in the UAE as it tries to clearly communicate entry requirements to the high schools and the wider Emirati community, to improve and maintain the morale of many of the best creative and innovative ELT faculty in the world, and to define itself as the preferred institution of choice for young Emiratis school-leavers.

Teaching and learning

HCT faculty are recruited in a robust and rigorous process that ensures only those teachers with a proven record of exemplary teaching are accepted. An annual performance appraisal system centred on the alignment and achievement of faculty and HCT goals is conducted through lesson observations, close monitoring of the centralized student attendance and grade information, and interviews at mid-year and end of the year to assess faculty progress in achieving their goals and setting new ones for the new academic year. Along with close supervision, faculty are also aware of informal 'peer supervision' that is keenly felt as most work in small teams within open faculty areas. In other words, HCT faculty understand and 'feel the weight' of the college expectation of solid learning outcomes together with contributions to educational innovation and active participation towards achieving the department mission. HCT is not an organization for

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the indolent and most teachers 'lift the bar' in terms of their levels of innovation and productivity. When I reflect on my own teaching experiences in HCT, I was enormously excited about the possibilities of working within a well-resourced college under supportive and encouraging supervision. The innovative initiatives I developed in the field of multi-media education in the late 1990s were acknowledged not only by my peers but also my direct supervisor, the Dean of Instruction, the Director and even the Vice-Chancellor himself. I felt and understood that 'weight of expectation' as many of us did when we joined the Certificate-Diploma program in 1995. And simply stated, you did try and often achieved your very best.

Building and maintaining rapport

Best practices in teaching and learning observed in HCT since 1995 as well as the specific practices observed during this research period will be grouped according to the grounded model of supportive motivational and learning contexts developed by Anderman et al. (2011) which I introduced in Chapter 6. Building and maintaining rapport is the single most important factor in facilitating smoother border crossings as well as establishing pre-conditions for academic study and achievement. Warm demander-type faculty enthusiastically implement rapport-building practices such as showing their own enthusiasm for teaching, using popular media to elevate attention-levels, self-disclosing that builds trust, asking general questions about their students' lives outside of the classroom that indicates interest and care, and teasing the students gently and good-naturedly in ways that connects them to the students who love self-deprecating jokes and have a very healthy sense of humour. Additional elements observed over the research period were strong empathy (usually observed as patience and lots of smiling) and use of culture-sensitive approaches such as playing Arabic music quietly in the background and recognition of Islamic holidays. Though the students did not think the teachers did it enough, they also appreciated teacher encouragement to become better independent and interdependent learners through greater resilience and persistence while on-task (see Student-faculty evaluations, Chapter 6).

Suood Al Mansoori, FMC's school liaison and student recruitment coordinator, told me how he came to study at HCT as a last resort after failing to gain entry into Emirates Airlines and putting his name down to join the Abu Dhabi Police. The huge difference

for Suood was the care and interest shown in him by teachers at FMC, some of whom even opened their home to him for extra language help. Happy and settled in Foundations, he eventually turned down an offer to join the police 3-4 months after he had started at FMC. As an example of building and maintaining rapport, it sends a strong message to both new and current HCT faculty - whispering to yourselves 'build rapport before asking for more' should become a daily event as you walk along the college corridors into the first lessons of the day.

Supporting understanding

Based on my experience of conducting numerous lesson observations over many years, I know that Foundations faculty have each developed their own unique teaching styles, a mix of personality, ELT technique, and their internalization of lived-experiences in interacting with the young male Emiratis under their care. Faculty tend to play to their strengths with some being more comfortable establishing rapport and relationships while others have a tighter focus on learning outcomes and maintaining sufficient classroom discipline to enable the students to learn. Whatever style they bring to the classroom, each faculty generally acknowledges students' previous school histories characterised by teacher-centrism, rote memorization, and only valuing learning to pass the test. In addition, lower level students take longer to transit from a teacher-centric to a learner-centric approach and have generally more difficult border crossing experiences, resulting in higher attrition. The teachers' internal tension with learner-centredness as an instructional approach was evident in their responses in the second faculty focus meeting. While cognitively comfortable with the need to provide a learner-centred experience in their lessons, affectively many admitted to grappling with the grounded reality of how their students respond to this approach. Spurred on by the demanding requirements of the Foundations curriculum, faculty appear to sideline their students' previous troubled school histories in favour of a pragmatic approach with an eye on time and outcomes. Academic press often comes before rapport-building, and while there is much emphasis on key concepts, empathetic response to students seeking help, and pre-emptive instruction to assist the students in avoiding common errors, the pace of lessons results in over 60% of the students declaring for surface or achieving learning approaches just to keep up. If only they [teachers and students] had more time...

Scaffolding students' learning is one way to support understanding as well as to acclimatise students to the new learning culture within the classroom (Donahue & Lopez-Reyna, 1998; Zheng, Stucky, McAlack, Menchana & Stoddart, 2005; Velliaris & Warner, 2009). Just as metal scaffolding is used when constructing a building and then removed once it is finished, instructional scaffolding involves faculty supporting student learning in direct ways such as "re-framing open-ended questions that students struggled to answer, suggesting problem-solving strategies to help students extract the underlying principle from a class demonstration, and providing advanced organizers prior to class activities" (Anderman et al., 2011, p. 985). At FMC, an example of scaffolding is the use of 'sentence heads' to provide structure for students as they write a book review using WordPress, a blogging website.

Several faculty like to create close, warm and personal learning environments by having a small group of students sitting together around a single large table or by asking students to sit together near the front of the large if there are less numbers than expected. Other faculty sit down with the students when self-disclosing or when giving assistance, they bend their knees to get their heads at the same level as the students. My observations of the student response to this type of faculty classroom and lesson management is generally very positive – they are comfortable working closely together as a group and once rapport has been established, with their teacher.

Managing the classroom

Based on my observations, FMC faculty appear to be very effective managers of their large spacious learning areas. Some dominate the classroom through their physical presence, some move energetically around the room while others control the lesson with discipline and pace. Most are very aware of what is happening in the room during the lesson and the phrase "eyes in the back of my head" comes to mind when describing the multi-tasking that occurs. In terms of supporting student autonomy, teachers allow students to select any desk which are generally kept in rows. In the main, teachers are discrete in handling individual students' request to go to the bathroom and most can discretely get a talkative or inattentive student back on track. Only very rarely did I observe a teacher calling out a student's name for some misdemeanour. Learner monitoring is constant and teachers react quickly to help-seeking from students. Lessons are often varied, switching back and forth from pair work to whole class teaching to

running dictation to viewing a video. Students are kept busy to avoid time-lags which can all too easily be filled with disruptive behaviours. My presence in the observed classes appeared to prevent most ill-considered behaviours which might have slightly made up for any disruption caused by my visits. Many teachers moved freely around the room, checking individuals, reminding the class of the task deadline, sniffing the air for potential disruption, all 'four eyes' alert and watchful. However, some teachers did appear to be rather stuck near the front of the room sitting behind the teacher's desk as they used the classroom educational technology. It is here with a discussion on the use of educational technology that we go to next.

Educational technology

One of many of HCT's strengths as a centre of higher education in the UAE must surely lie in its advocacy of the use of educational technology by both students and faculty. I cannot think of a better example of best practice than the manner in which HCT encouraged colleges to begin to explore the pedagogical uses of computers and the Internet beyond the confines of specialized IT programs. When I arrived in 1995, most English faculty were completely computer-phobic but, over the years, they have become some of the most innovative and creative users of educational technology in HCT. The arrival of Web 2.0 (Franklin & Harmelen, 2007; Grosseck, 2009) around 2005 marked a watershed moment for educational technology, unshackling learning experiences from a single multi-media PC to access from any computer linked to the Internet where one could savour an all-encompassing, immersive and content-rich environment that "allows people to collaborate, to get actively involved in creating content, to generate knowledge and to share information online" (Grosseck, 2009, p. 478). English faculty at HCT in particular were quick to utilize the potential of Web 2.0 applications to transform their teaching and thereby enhance the learning experiences of their students (Alexander & Levine, 2008).

TESOL Arabia, the annual 3-day ELT conference in the Middle East, is a major conference highlighting best practices in English language teaching, and through a diverse array of workshops and presentations, the creative and pedagogically sound use of educational technology in English language teaching is additionally showcased (*18th International TESOL Arabia Conference* 2012, 2012). The Web 2.0 applications and technologies are too numerous to list here but include blogs, microblogs, wikis,

syndication of content through RSS, podcasts, social media such as Facebook, media sharing, audio and video editing software, and presentation software such as Prezi. FMC English faculty use a variety of software with MS OneNote, Edmodo, Audacity, and blogging platforms like Posterous and WordPress enabling them to easily share learning materials with their students and to set tasks such as writing book reviews.

Almost coinciding with the explosion of Web 2.0 on the educational scene was the arrival of student laptops in HCT. Foundations students at FMC first bought laptops in 2010, several years after the early-adopter colleges such as DMC began implementing laptops into their programs. Faculty have been quick to use them across a wide range of learning experiences such as drill-and-practice software for vocabulary learning, including sound files to hear the words, blogging to enhance student interest and competency in writing, and Audacity to improve their listening and speaking skills. Students like learning with laptops and faculty are inspired by the rich range of creative and useful online applications suitable for ELT. From September 2012, Foundations students will buy iPads, and faculty are already receiving professional development in optimizing the special attributes that this new technology can bring to the classroom.

Other perspectives

Three other perspectives – from the ex-department administrative assistant, the ILC coordinator, and the college counsellor – offer additional examples of best practices not directly related to but supportive of teaching and learning at FMC.

In my experience as a department Chair at two HCT colleges, my administrative assistants (one Indian, one Emirati) have had the uncanny and useful ability (high Emotional Intelligence?) to act as informal counsellors to students. As the first point of contact, they have been able to retain those 'tipping point' students when things have become so difficult they had wanted to leave college. They can act also as a sounding-board if a student has a problem with a teacher, and they warn students (and reinforce HCT's attendance policy) of the dire consequences of excessive absences. At FMC, the Emirati assistant had good local knowledge of the students and knew the pressures many of them face from parents asking them to leave college and find a job to supplement the family income. As an example of best practice, I would certainly recommend this

informal role with the additional comment that professional training in Emotional Intelligence and inter-personal conflict may expand their utility to the department.

The SSC (Student Success Centre) coordinator works with a small team of part-time staff who support English and Math learning through an independent learning approach. Students enter the centre due to a referral from a teacher, participation in a scheduled class where the lesson is team-taught between SSC staff and faculty, or they self-refer themselves as a result of a poor test mark. Though learning gains and 'value-add' are notoriously difficult to measure, the SSC team feel they are making a difference in assisting the young men to change gradually towards greater learner independence. On one of my last visits on 4 June 2012, the coordinator reported that the centre had recorded over 800 student visits in two days during the week leading up to the final exams – over 5000 students had visited the centre since 17 April as the students appear to 'wake up' to face the inevitable (and habituated) hard study slog and cramming in preparation for their final exams.

Finally, the college counsellor has had two years as FMC's first full-time counsellor. He understands his role is to help students to feel more comfortable in college as quickly as possible. He is also responsible for conducting exit or withdrawal interviews and so has a unique view to hear students' stories about the pressure they feel from their families to leave college and find work. Aware of the differences in world-views between himself and the students, the counsellor feels more time needs to be spent on helping the students to make more successful transitions to college life rather than focussing solely on immediately receiving academic content. He admires the courage of the students in attending college trying to use a foreign language they struggle to understand.

Conclusion

In a recent meeting to review my feedback to the Student Affairs department, the college counsellor asked the following question – 'wouldn't it be better if the college got smaller but had better students? This way, FMC would have good pass rates which will attract more students'. The quantity vs. quality conundrum at FMC and other male HCT colleges is one that does not have an easy answer. Emirati people have been pulled along without having a chance to have much input as to whether they want the kind of socio-economic growth that their leadership has chosen to pursue. A result has been the

uneven and misaligned development between the secondary and tertiary education sectors in the UAE. HCT does not receive an open-ended budget and must set entry requirements that best optimize its human and capital resources. Where will sub-150 CEPA students go if HCT and other federal institutions slam the door in their faces? Though the ferocity of the Arab Spring is starting to abate, the UAE government cannot be unmindful of having a large group of young disenfranchised men doing little more than sitting around at home talking to one another on social media. Generally, the Ministry of Education does not seem to be ready to make difficult decisions about the quality of their teachers and the instructional methods they employ, and many parents appear to be disinterested in the debate.

This chapter has focussed on the soft-skills deficit of the students and examples of best practice in administration and teaching that have proven to be effective in facilitating smoother border crossing experiences. With HCT's many positive attributes – professional HR and recruitment of some of the world's best teachers, rigorous application of academic honesty protocols including strict invigilation procedures, innovative educational technology usage, and excellent resourcing – students have confirmed through the Student Survey and focus groups that they have everything they need to be successful. Those that remain in college beyond Foundations generally go on to graduate and find excellent full-time employment. However, the gap between Day 1 and that point where students decide to define their own future on their own merits with their own effort and hard work is complex – I have just begun to shine a dim torchlight into that gap. This much I now know – in Tinto's model (Figure 6, Chapter 2), academic integration needs to take place *within* social integration for without students finding their place and sense of belonging, they are likely to leave prematurely, thereby missing the opportunity for the college and students to jointly discover each other's potential.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

بكرة في المشمش

Bukra fil mishmish

Tomorrow there will be apricots

Tomorrow never comes.[37]

In 2009, I transferred to Fujairah Men's College as Chair of Foundations. Moving to Fujairah produced a second culture shock for both my wife and I for in the intervening 14 years, Dubai had evolved into a modern cosmopolitan city-state whereas sleepy Fujairah seemed to have barely changed at all. The afternoon siesta break from 2pm to 4.30pm was still enforced (largely abandoned by Dubai in the early 2000s), the mosque calls seemed louder, and the plethora of shops belied a stunning sameness. In the first few months, after the last day of the week, we drove into Dubai on Thursday evening to stay with old and familiar friends, hanging out in our old haunts, enjoying the liveliness of the big city. By the middle of the first year, we began to host our Dubai friends in Fujairah who enjoyed the rural drive over the Hajar Mountains to feast upon a city that had largely escaped the madness of Dubai. The 'indelicate' night-spots were surreal, providing a stark contrast to the pious drabness of the day. It was that tension between the normal and the improbable that our friends craved for, something that Dubai had lost years ago. The rustic beauty of the lonely beaches, the new roads carved into steep

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[37] Arnander and Skipwith (1995) – see references.

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mountains, and the ruggedness and danger of the wadis also provided us with ideal training grounds in early 2010 to become fit enough during that summer to walk over 200 kms around Mont Blanc in France, Switzerland and Italy. In December 2010, we decided together to leave Fujairah in June 2011 to start a new chapter back in Dubai with Karen supporting me to finish my doctorate which I had begun in 2004. This journey back has proven to be immeasurably more challenging, frustrating, inspiring, terrifying, exciting, and difficult than we had hoped for. At times, we miss Fujairah...

Introduction

In his opening chapter to his best-selling book entitled *The Element – how finding your passion changes everything*, Dr. Ken Robinson, an acclaimed leader in creativity, innovation, and human capacity, lambasts school systems almost everywhere that "inculcate us with a very narrow view of intelligence and capacity, and overvalue particular sorts of talent and ability. In doing so, they neglect others [talents, abilities and skills] that are just as important, and they disregard the relationships between them in sustaining the vitality of our lives and communities. This stratified, one-size-fits-all approach to education marginalizes all of those who do not take naturally to learning this way" (Robinson, 2009, pp. 13-14). I happen to know Ken had his sights set very firmly on UK and US school systems, and was of course, completely unaware that his words might resonate with me in accurately summarizing my view of the UAE school and higher education system at the completion of this research.

That marginalising government education system also appears to wreak havoc upon many male Emiratis in Fujairah who leave high school with no interest in further study and instead opt for the easy route towards financial independence by driving to Abu Dhabi to secure full-time employment with the UAE military or Abu Dhabi police. Cultural norms associated with traditional Arab parenting practices tend to produce young men with limiting and skewed views of the world and their place in it – seemingly neglected by their parents, they appear to 'raise themselves' knowing that when the time comes, they will most probably follow in their distant fathers' footsteps into similar public sector employment positions (Ridge & Farah, 2012). Arriving at the doorstep of Fujairah Men's College, the young high school graduates display a range of cultural border crossing experiences reflecting the degree of congruency between their life-worlds and the college, from smooth (high congruency) to impossible (very low congruency). Those students placed in the lower levels of Foundations are much more

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likely to leave college to seek employment compared to those students placed in the higher levels. The former students appear to take time to adjust from a teacher-centric learning environment to a learner-centric environment which places more academic demands in terms of learner independence, resilience and commitment. As a result, student attrition identified in Chapter 5 is unsustainably high and has been shown to indirectly contribute to social problems within the family and wider community as the young men (soon to be parents) seek and find employment in other emirates, leaving their families behind in Fujairah, thereby weakening the traditional social cohesion.

In this chapter, I summarize the findings associated with the main research questions. The cultural border crossing experiences of female Emirati higher education students are briefly examined and comparisons made to those experienced by the Emirati men. Following on, suggestions in terms of pedagogical and administrative practices arising from this research are offered. Topics for further research are listed with a number of potentially exciting avenues to be explored. Issues related to conducting research in this setting are raised with suggested recommendations. Limitations of the research methodology and findings are examined followed by a coda highlighting recent media stories relevant to this research. An epilogue provides a final moment of reflection. Claims made in the following research question sections are referenced in Figure 1.

Research Question	Chapter Reference	Comment
RQ 1	Chapter 4	Giroux's metaphor is introduced in Ch.2
RQ 2	Chapter 5	Additional references refer to Ch.7
RQ 3	Chapter 6	
RQ 4	Chapter 6	
RQ 5	Chapter 7	

Figure 1: Research question claims with references to thesis chapters

Research question 1

To what extent does Giroux's (2005) cultural border-crossing metaphor explain the learning and adjustment difficulties of male Emirati post-secondary learners transiting from high school to College?

The cultural border crossing experience is posited upon the degree of congruency between the students' predominantly Arabic life-world and that of the college's predominant Western-based culture. Using mostly transition questions from the Student Survey and confirmed in student focus group meetings, a border crossing index (BCI) was constructed that appears to broadly differentiate four types of border crossing experience – smooth, managed, difficult, and impossible. Over half of the new students were found to have 'managed' their border crossing experience through using coping strategies developed in high school, adopting surface to achieving learning strategies, and personal persistence, low as it is. About a quarter of the new students experienced smooth border crossings while another quarter found their crossings to be 'difficult'. Only one student was classified as 'impossible' and he did not last the first 20 days. As discussed in Chapter 4, all of the 'impossible' category students and over half of the 'difficult' category students had left by the end of the academic year in June 2012 with the 'managed' and 'smooth' groups of students seemingly coping well with their transitions.

Though their entry level of English language competency, as measured by their CEPA score, did not correlate significantly with the BCI, the lower Level 1 and 2 students in Foundations generally reported more difficult or managed crossings and had the highest rate of student attrition throughout the year. However, additional support of the English language and BCI link came in a moderately significant statistical relationship between the BCI and the end of Semester 1 English aggregated grades. Almost all students across all four levels reported varying degrees of border crossing experiences. The new student orientation program in the first week, built upon culturally-sensitive practices such as the use of majilis-style seating and Arabic translators in each class, was well received by students who felt a greater sense of belonging by the end of that week.

Interviews with high school teachers, HCT Foundations and program faculty, non-teaching support staff at FMC, Ministry of Education officials, and two retired elderly Arabic gentlemen confirmed issues related to cultural border crossings. High school teachers and HCT faculty certainly acknowledge the existence of cultural boundaries, the MOE officials admitted huge curriculum, pedagogical, and management problems/failures in the government high schools, thereby further widening the academic and cultural gap students need to cross from high school to higher education,

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and the two elderly retirees remembered a time when there were no cultural borders to cross as only one dominant Arabic culture existed. From a 'village of fathers' to the seemingly insular world of internet video gaming, the young Arabic men now face an increasingly uncertain future to which many are responding (and often urged on by their parents) in taking the easy route by leaving college and finding a job with a high-paying, government agency, usually in the military or police located in Abu Dhabi.

Two border crossing models, one for students and one for faculty, were developed after focus group consultation. Both groups agreed that the respective models accurately described and accounted for their border crossing experiences.

Questions arising from answering this research question are:

- in which specific ways have globalization, the Internet and social media, and the demographic imbalance accelerated cultural change in the UAE?
- what do Emiratis really think about the changes witnessed over the past decade? Are they ambivalent or have they become increasingly essentialist in their views?
- what are the likely long-term effects of rentier-style policies such as the large 'unearned' salary and benefit hikes awarded to government workers in 2011, the on-going 'destructive' recruitment of young male Emiratis by government agencies in Fujairah, and the deletion of private debts up to Dh5million announced in 2012?

Research question 2

What do male Emirati post-secondary learners bring with them to the College that both enhance and hinder their learning?

The students belong to a society that is strongly in transition itself between the traditional and some unknown future - this journey is culturally uncomfortable and difficult with the result that the current Emirati generation manifests many of the socio-economic ills associated with neo-indigenous people in other parts of the world. The Emirati society seems to be in trouble, though this is sometimes difficult to see through the glitz and conspicuous consumption. Suffering from the effects of neo-indigeneity inadvertently facilitated and abetted by the country's leadership driven to develop and change a traditional country into a modern economy and community, male Emirati

government high school graduates arrive largely ill-prepared for study in colleges of higher education. It is not surprising that I have identified almost twice as many factors that appear to hinder student learning as enhance it.

In general, students start college in September after a motivation-sapping educational experience which leaves most of them with little interest or motivation in pursuing higher education. Placed in Level 1 or 2 with relatively low CEPA scores, a student has a very small chance of successfully exiting Foundations within the 3-4 permitted semesters. In other words, the weaker they arrive, the greater the chances are that they will leave before the end of the academic year. This year, 66% of the new students who started college on Day 1 on the 4 September 2011 had left by 7 June 2012, with almost 90 new students leaving between the two dates. Many students arrived late and in so doing, condemned themselves to a difficult transition to college life with over 50% of those late students leaving by the end of the academic year. Overall, student transition to higher education is strongly posited on the degree of cultural congruency between their life-worlds (mostly Arabic) and the college culture (mostly Western) - the larger the gap, the more difficult the border crossing. Unsurprisingly, the highest rates of student attrition were from Levels 1 and 2 from September 2011 to June 2012.

Parental disinterest may add to feelings of isolation and lack of recognition, which in combination with difficult academic, cognitive, and emotional transitions to more learner-centred, English language-based instructional environments favoured by HCT, may result in many Emirati students reaching individual 'tipping points' which cause them to 'disengage' from college, initially visible as absenteeism. Apparently lacking in Mental Toughness qualities such as resilience, challenge, persistence, commitment and confidence, Emirati students appear to adopt surface or achieving learning strategies that enable them to cope with a new curriculum delivered in their second language. All these factors appear to contribute towards lowering their self-esteem and raising their sense of impending failure, trends apparently supported by the students' perception of a lack of control over their lives as indicated in low life control scores in the Mental Toughness Questionnaire. To avoid disgracing themselves, their parents (who appear to display an ambiguous attitude towards supporting their sons' efforts in college versus encouraging them to seek full-time employment), and their families, they eventually leave college, often to seek full-time employment in another emirate.

By leaving college to find full-time employment, students are unwittingly repeating a cycle of social movement which results in almost 15% of the students returning back home each day to families where at least one or both parents are absent due to work commitments in Dubai or Abu Dhabi - interviews with Fujairah Police confirmed related social problems such as fighting, truancy, drug-taking, and illicit relationships.

In their favour, male Emirati students are perceived as genuine and friendly by faculty, appreciative of faculty behaviours of care, respect, demandingness, and good humour. VARK and Multiple Intelligences surveys hint at an unseen potential, nurtured by high levels of emotional control and self-confidence, encouraged by high motivation and persistence especially by the higher level Foundations students. Over a decade, learning strategies have begun to tilt away from surface or achieving strategies in favour of deep learning despite a current Foundations curriculum that appears to encourage the former. Hofstede's cultural dimensions appear not to consistently capture modern Arab cultural values, attitudes and behaviours as the onslaught of globalization and the impact of the UAE's own cultural tsunami have begun to unshackle the Emirati youth from the confining cultural parameters and expectations of their parents' generation. Finally, their deep love and respect for friends, family, community and nation appear to provide strong emotional anchor points in their first difficult year at college.

Questions arising from answering this research question are:

- what purpose do a plethora of recent educational conferences in the UAE serve in identifying what already is known about the parlous state of its education system?
- who will take responsibility for making difficult decisions about the quality of teaching in the country's government high schools?
- what efforts are required to provide Emirati parents with culturally-appropriate and modern active parenting advice?

Research question 3

What do the largely Western-educated faculty bring with them to the College that both enhance and hinder student learning?

The pre-dominantly Western teaching faculty who deliver the English language programs at FMC appear representative of similar groups of faculty at other HCT colleges. There is a range of ages and experience, of positive and negative attitudes towards their students, and of their perception of their own effectiveness in securing strong learning outcomes for their students. The faculty work within a hierarchical, market-oriented, adhocratic organizational hybrid that is currently HCT. Changes in Foundations since 2005 outlined in Chapter 7 have produced a sense of frustration and powerlessness with the result that a disconnect has arisen between what the organization claims it does and what actually occurs in reality, between what is ideal and what is real. Faculty are tired of these changes, impinging as they do upon their professional expertise, their grounded experience in this setting, and good old-fashioned commonsense.

Within this milieu, faculty bring strong English language teaching skills and teaching experience, the result of HCT's strict recruitment protocols for hiring proven and highly effective English language teachers from around the globe. They are largely empathetic towards the Emirati students, and also highly respectful of both the students and their Arab culture, understanding the difficult linguistic journey they have embarked upon but also keenly aware of the curriculum demands that can produce a 'roll up your sleeves and let's start breaking rocks' approach in the classroom, though they are cognizant of the effect this approach has upon their students. Working within a highly resourced college system, the English faculty has proven to be very innovative and creative in adopting educational technology, and exploiting the functionality, accessibility, and excitement of the student laptops daily brought into the classroom.

Learner-centred instructional approaches are not appropriate for lower level Foundations students who may take at least a year to transit from teacher-dependent learning environments to the learner-independent model encouraged by HCT. Finally, it was found that those faculty with the highest evaluations from their students were 'warm demanders' who firstly built rapport at the start by showing care and interest in the students' lives outside of the classroom, and then later, set and maintained high levels of academic and behavioural standards and achievement. In other words, they built rapport before asking for more.

A strong supportive hint about the potential role of faculty in positively affecting young first-year university students has recently been released through a respected online educational newspaper. Sociologists Dan Chambliss of Hamilton College and Christopher Takacs of the University of Chicago recently concluded a 10-year study begun in 2001 of 100 Hamilton College students in the US in an attempt to discover what had the greatest effect on their college experiences. The initial report in response to a question about what the researchers found is taken directly from the press release:

> It's all about *people* [my emphasis], not programs. Colleges spend a huge amount of time and effort worrying will they have writing-intensive programs or a freshman seminar program or if a major is set up right or if their curriculum is done this way or that—all the kind of stuff about the content and information for kids and students. That's not where it's at.
>
> The problem is not access to information. The problem is *motivation* [my emphasis]. And student motivation goes up and down a lot. And the key to motivation is *face-to-face contact with another human being* [my emphasis]. That's what really works. And it doesn't take that much of it to have a big impact on a student's career.
>
> So, for instance, having a great intro teacher is incredibly important, and schools don't spend much time on that at all. Yet it's very, very doable. A single department chair can impact thousands of students' educational careers just by moving one professor. Because if they have a great experience in an intro class, that paves the whole way throughout academia. If they have a bad experience—Bam! The door slams shut. (*eCampus News*, 2012)

Questions arising from answering this research question are:

- how can HCT accurately and respectfully identify (and nurture) 'warm demanding' faculty to ensure they are placed in introductory classes in front of new Foundations students?
- when will the HCT Foundations program finally feel comfortable enough in its own skin to consistently deliver effective learning outcomes without being

subject to the latest whims and fads introduced by 'turnstile leaders' at Academic Central Services?

- how can we best harness the teaching expertise, grounded experience, and natural leadership of English faculty to locally manage and deliver the Foundations curriculum?

Research question 4

What effect, if any, does the use of learner-centred teaching practices have upon male Emirati post-secondary learners?

The lower level Foundations students (Levels 1 and 2) appear to suffer from both learner and cultural discomfort in the first one-two months of the first semester. Student attrition is at its peak during this time with many students reporting that "as soon as they enter college, they can't wait to leave again". Due to the absence of questions related to border crossing experiences or difficulties in learning and studying in their second language, the data captured at the exit interviews does not reveal the full extent of factors other than those related to employment or family/personal reasons that may contribute towards the decision to withdrawal.

From the student focus meetings, it became evident that after the initial cultural, linguistic, and cognitive shock experienced in the first few weeks following their arrival at college, the students "got used to college" due to bonding within the class, bonding with a teacher, and bonding with the new college culture. It is apparent that academic integration must take place *within* social integration, so that new students can cope with the demands of learning in their second language.

Questions arising from answering this research question are:
- whose interests are being best served (or not) by compelling first-language students to cross cultural borders into higher education colleges and asking them to study using the dominant and hegemonic second-language of English?

- how can ELT practices and learner-centred instructional methodologies more appropriately accommodate difficult cultural, pedagogical, and linguistic border crossing experiences of young male Emiratis?
- how can we capture more useful and diverse exit data from students leaving HCT in order to better inform college and system decision-makers?

Research question 5

What administrative, teaching, and classroom management practices are most likely to be efficacious in facilitating smoother transitions to college life?

The Student Affairs department has worked closely with the Foundations department on a number of initiatives to facilitate smoother transitions from high school to college. The outreach to local government schools, employing a dedicated school liaison and student recruitment coordinator, visits to high school principals of schools with the best performing students as indicated by CEPA, the support of an improved new student orientation program, the "Olympics of the Mind" event held this year, issuing pre-admittance cards to new students this summer, the design, implementation, and assessment of the College Preparation and Readiness program (CPR), and the new academic advisers (faculty mentors) all highlight a college whose personnel not only understand the problem of attracting, retaining, and graduating sufficient numbers of male Emirati students but are actively addresssing it.

In the classroom, it was found that a teacher typology of "warm demandingness" (Kleinfeld, 1975) is well received by the students who appreciate teacher efforts in showing care, empathy, respect for their culture, and interest in their lives outside of the classroom while setting high standards of behaviour, academic progress, and achievement. English language teaching pedagogy and learner-centred instructional approaches were shown to be problematic though many teachers 'soften' aspects of the ELT technique to better suit the learning styles of the students and their recent educational histories in the high schools. Rapport-building followed by academic demandingness provides the necessary structure in the lives of the students, many of

whom reveal chaotic memories of life in the high school with many students reporting that the schools simply "didn't care". Students who do not bond with their classmates and teacher, and who do not engage with the college culture 'talk with their feet' and leave to find a job. The fact that most student attrition occurred in the lower 1 and 2 levels in Foundations this year strongly hints that these students need more time to adjust to college life when experiencing difficult or impossible border crossing experiences.

The College Preparation and Readiness program was generally well accepted by the Foundations students, 85% of whom expressed overall satisfaction. As student engagement in the program grew over the year as measured by attendance and wearing the required kit, the CPR post-activity IMI survey highlighted the students' positive emotional experiences, especially on the high ropes course where they rated facilitator relatedness, value and usefulness of the tasks, and their effort and rating of the task importance as the top three motivational aspects. 94% of the Level 2 study cohort reported improvements in self-confidence. One concern identified by the students themselves, the CPR facilitators and myself was the absence of linking activities designed to bring the CPR experiences and student growth in Mental Toughness into the classroom. The impact of CPR was measured using the Mental Toughness Questionnaire (MTQ), and the lower post-test scores appear to illustrate an emerging self-awareness and honesty. The decision by the college management team in June 2012 to re-commit to CPR and MTQ next year reflects both the importance of developing student soft-skills and its faith in the current approach and assessment.

Questions arising from answering this research question are:
- to what extent should CPR be delivered by standalone facilitators or faculty assisting the facilitators to achieve the linking between student CPR experiences and their academic work in the classroom?
- who will take responsibility to improve the overall level of high school graduates' academic scholasticism and preparedness for higher education?
- should CEPA remain the only requirement for entry into higher education or is it a fundamental human right to have an education in your first language?

This research has focussed on young male Emirati high school graduates. I interviewed three Academic Chairs at other HCT women's colleges to assess the applicability of the cultural border crossing experience of young female Emirati students entering Foundations. According to the Chairs, they believed that the female Emirati students experience generally smoother transitions as the Chairs feel they have probably performed better at high school and therefore, the gap is not as wide for the girls as they enter HCT Foundations with generally higher CEPA scores compared to the boys. One Chair reported that the girls from private secondary schools are much more open as they have been exposed to male and female teachers from different nationalities and are linguistically stronger. Further, the parents probably provide more support as many pay for their daughters' education in the private school system.

While student attrition is symptomatic of difficult or impossible border crossings at FMC, this cannot be used as comparative measure due to the 'gated' college security protocol which means that female students are unable to leave the college during the day except with a family member or with prior parental or guardian approval. However, student attrition reported at one women's college is highest in Level 2. In conversation with the Chairs, the girls appear to have much fewer options compared to the boys and view education as a stepping stone to a career which may guarantee greater independence or obtain a higher calibre marriage partner. Mirroring the boys' transitions in the lower levels of Foundations, the Chairs confirmed that the girls also experience difficulties settling into college life which is manifested in petty squabbles and fights, and more discipline issues especially with repeaters (students who are immediately repeating a course in Foundations which occurs more frequently in the lower levels).

In general, the Emirati girls appear to have more highly developed expressive skills, connoting strong self-knowledge and interpersonal skills (Alanazi, 2001; Elgamal, 2012). In other words, they seem to be better able to express their feelings compared to the Emirati boys. These skills appear to be crucial as they negotiate and cope with difficult cultural border crossings, and may explain why, in part, female student attrition is much lower compared to the boys.

All the female colleges had implemented culturally-sensitive practices such as an orientation program and some have recently introduced peer mentoring of new

Foundations students using senior girls from the program areas. One college in particular delivers both explicit and implicit messages to the girls that they have arrived at a place where there is a different way of learning compared to the high schools. A Chair expressed concern that imposing a new learning culture may imply an educational imperialism (essentialism?) by not acknowledging the legitimacy of their previous high school histories and cultural background. She also considers the term 'remedial' to describe new female Emirati students placed in Foundations as 'disrespectful', referring as it does to a very narrow band of acquired linguistic knowledge in learning a second language without reference to other prior knowledge and skills learned in their first language of Arabic.

While the Emirati girls enter Foundations with generally higher CEPA scores compared to the Emirati boys, the pass rates from Foundations have favoured the boys in recent years. For example, in the academic years 2008-2010, the average pass rate for the previous Higher Diploma Foundations English course ENGL070 (equivalent to Levels 3 and 4) was 81% for the men's colleges compared to 75% for the women's colleges. This implies that the boys may have more highly developed learning and revising strategies that enable them to overcome their English skills deficits in time for the high-stakes final examinations.

Suggestions

In Chapter 3, I introduced the multi-paradigmatic methodology used in this research. My approach was compared to that of a 'quilt-maker', implying that each patch of cloth with its unique dimensions of different colours and textures contributes to the overall shape of the completed quilt. At various times, those patches of quilt were formed by adopting a post-positivist stance which enabled me to describe and explain general social patterns of behaviour based on the quality standards of researcher objectivity, construct/predictive/internal validity, generalisability, reliability, and triangulation. At other times, I created different patches through an interpretivist stance which facilitated an open, artful, and interpretive exploration of complexity based on the quality standards of immersion within the setting, member checking, listening and recording participants' voices, making tentative and cautious claims, and respecting the process of understanding through emergence. The postmodernist patches remind us all at this point in the 21st Century to disrupt the presumed primacy of any paradigm by embracing

difference, tension, and pluralism. Finally, I sought to uncover hitherto hidden and unequal relationships by adopting a critical stance that seeks to help those without power to acquire it (Willis, 2007), based upon the quality standards of critical self-reflection and self-study, and displaying and 'living' ethics of care, fairness, and empowerment. These quality standards or evidentiary warrants afford me with the opportunity to reflect upon the broader contextual factors relevant to my research findings though I am mindful that the tentative voice associated with interpretivist research restrains me from exceeding my empirical warrants. I have therefore chosen to use the word 'suggestions' over 'recommendations' in order to soften the internal logic of my warrants and make the suggestions much less prescriptive.

The sub-text title of this final chapter comes from an Arabic proverb, 'tomorrow there will be apricots', even though everyone knows there were no apricots yesterday and there is almost no chance of apricots tomorrow. If the UAE is to have 'apricots tomorrow' then it needs to start thinking and reflecting today. Further, after reflection and discussion among the Emirati constituents, it should begin to implement policies and make difficult decisions to enable its citizens, suffering under the disempowering hegemony of the current system, to achieve the vision of the country's founders, recently updated in the 2021 Vision document released by the UAE Government which foresees "...knowledgeable and innovative Emiratis [building]... a resilient economy, [thriving]... in a cohesive society bonded to its identity, and [enjoying] the highest standards of living within a nurturing and sustainable environment" (*2021 Vision*, 2010).

In the suggestions that follow, I adopt a system of "naturally occurring hierarchies called 'holarchies' in which each part (or 'holon') is itself whole and simultaneously a part of some other whole" (Taylor et al., 2012, p. 12). The holarchical relationships between key societal and academic components, thereby recognizing the broader contextual factors (political, economic, cultural) impacting the FMC Foundations program, preclude assertive generalisations from my research area to the entire country. However, based on the principle of *verstehen* or 'understanding' the particulars of a situation, many readers working in the Emirati secondary and higher education sectors may find the following suggestions make sense, resonating with their own experiences or exposure to similar groups of people. I make these suggestions not to identify fault or apportion blame, but out of a deep sense of affection and care for the country, its young

people, and their future. Beginning first with a macro societal view sweeping over the entire country and finishing with a micro pedagogical view in the classroom, I link each suggestion to the chapter(s) containing the relevant supporting data.

Macro societal suggestions

1. Restore the dignity of the value of effort and labour by re-connecting the link to reward and payment through the discontinuance of rentier-style policies such as unearned salary and benefits increases for government workers, erasing private debt by decree, and recruitment by large government agencies such as the military and police with the assistance of inflated high monthly trainee salaries (Chapter 1).

2. Equalize the salary and benefit conditions between the private and public sectors which will facilitate greater movement of Emirati employees to the private sector from which the thousands of new jobs will emerge to provide meaningful and fulfilling employment for the country's growing numbers of Emirati youth (Chapter 1).

3. Make some difficult decisions regarding the education system, in particular addressing the poor standard of teaching and teachers at the government high schools. I was pleased to note that as announced on 24 June 2012, all government teachers and staff will receive unspecified salary increases in order to "achieve social stability for employees, and [to] motivate teachers to strive towards more achievement" (Rashid, 2012) (Chapters 5 and 6).

4. Encouragement of greater participation in parenting workshops for all Emirati married couples that focuses on culturally-sensitive and active parenting techniques (Chapter 5).

5. Provide extra early childhood education centres and financial incentives for Emirati parents to enrol their children (Chapter 5).

6. Reduce Emirati parents' dependence on foreign housemaids by restricting residency visas and increasing costs. This may coincide with public information campaigns encouraging active engagement and hands-on parenting of Emirati parents (Chapters 5 and 6).

7. Re-assign federal funding away from the military and police recruitment towards higher education by raising the minimum entry requirements to the military and police to include a Diploma or associate degree (Chapters 1 and 5).

8. Establish an apprenticeship or student sponsorship scheme that would provide all Foundations students with a monthly stipend to attend colleges of higher education (dependent upon satisfactory academic progress and attendance), the costs of which

would be shared between the relevant Rulers' Offices, local employers and agencies, and federal employment organizations such as Tanmia. I met the Chairman, Mr Ghafour Behroozian, of the Fujairah Trade Centre in May 2012 to discuss and present a proposal (Chapters 5 and 7).

9. Divest centralized power to local Emirati communities by encouraging the use of survey-based decision-making such as K12 Insight (*K12 Insight*, 2012) to increase local participation and engagement of Emirati citizens in running their own education, health, and social welfare centres (Chapter 1).

10. All secondary-aged Emiratis should go abroad on state-funded fieldtrips to non-Arabic countries that may include community service in the destination countries (Chapter 7).

HCT suggestions

1. Stop making changes to the Foundations curriculum and assessment! After a final consultation with HCT English faculty, academic Chairs and Deans, ELT experts locally and overseas, decide upon a program that is grounded within this setting, flexible enough to accommodate students with different entry levels, sensible enough to allow for the varying pathway permutations associated with male Emirati student cultural backgrounds and learning styles, and achievable enough to feed HCT's programs with sufficient numbers of ready-to-go higher education students – then impose a moratorium on change for five years (Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

2. Re-introduce Certificate, Diploma and Associate-Degrees and produce a vocational curriculum (including competency-based assessment) to meet the technical needs of the country's economy, thereby reducing its dependence on foreign workers (Chapter 7).

3. Continue to recruit some of the world's best educators and encourage them to innovate and create using appropriate technologies (Chapter 6).

4. Recruit more Arabic-speaking faculty (Chapter 5).

5. Allow the use of Arabic as a classroom meta-language (Chapters 5 and 6).

6. Establish new mandatory student culturally-sensitive orientation programs in the first week of the new academic year (Chapters 4 and 7).

7. Establish experiential learning programs such as CPR to develop the students' soft-skills (Chapter 7).

8. Re-design the attendance policy to provide a new set of enforceable protocols and standards that both respects HCT goal of preparing students for the workplace and

respects Arabic cultural values of family and honour by offering greater flexibility to students to achieve their course learning outcomes (Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

9. Provide both printed (textbooks) and digital learning materials (Chapters 6 and 7).

10. Improve the entry diagnostics of new students to include VARK, Multiple Intelligences, MTQ, and the Border Crossing Index (BCI) to identify early 'at risk' border crossers and offer improved targeted mentoring and support (Chapters 4 and 5).

11. Introduce new lesson observation forms to better record faculty efforts to establish and maintain rapport as well as assessing pedagogical and classroom management skills (Chapter 6).

12. Introduce an improved exit interview form to capture indices other than employment such as the border crossing experiences (cultural, emotional, cognitive, and pedagogical) of new HCT students (Chapters 4 and 7).

13. Encourage 'softer' ELT techniques and more teacher-centric instructional approaches to lower level Foundations students (Chapter 6).

14. Begin to offer Arabic-based programs (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7).

15. Encourage greater use of handwriting versus keyboarding. The former has been increasingly linked to better compositional structure (Medwell & Wray, 2007), working memory (Olive, 2004; Medwell & Wray, 2008) and math learning gains (Anthony, Yang & Koedinger, 2007) (Chapter 7).

16. Offer a greater variety of life-skills courses such as budgeting (Glover, 2012) and child-care (Chapters 5 and 7).

17. Include a sabbatical year in the standard HCT faculty contract for those faculty who have renewed at least four times to enable them to conduct HCT-related research on half-pay while retaining all other benefits (Chapter 6).

18. Establish clearer data access protocols within the HCT research approval application process to more clearly define what HCT data is accessible and what is not (Chapter 3).

FMC suggestions

1. Work with the local Ruler's Office, Fujairah Trade Centre, and relevant local and national employers and employment agencies to implement an apprenticeship scheme for all new HCT-Fujairah students (Chapters 5 and 7).

2. Re-energize the Dynamic Citizen Model by committing to and funding a three phase experiential learning program for all HCT-Fujairah students beginning with the ropes courses, a one night camping experience, and an international fieldtrip (Chapter 7).

3. Create more outreach opportunities to engage the students' parents (Chapter 7).

4. Seek the active involvement of elderly Emiratis who could provide effective mentoring and role modelling through story telling within the college to address a growing disconnection between young male Emiratis and their parents and grandparents (Chapters 4 and 5).

6. Gradually increase learner independence through the use of supervised homework lessons (Chapter 6).

7. Encourage students to find part-time work in the local shopping malls and businesses (Chapter 7).

8. Build smaller faculty college-based teams that can unilaterally take greater responsibility for curriculum implementation and delivery using experienced and proven lead faculty as leaders (Chapter 6).

9. Establish clearer data access protocols within the local research approval application to more clearly define what college data is accessible, agree to expected data delivery deadlines, and confirm a resolution process should difficulties arise. A college-based research liaison coordinator, acting as the conduit and contact point between the researcher and the college, would assist in overseeing these protocols (Chapter 8).

10. Faculty new to FMC and/or teaching male Emiratis may need a formal bridging program to assist them in gaining a better understanding of the students' cultural, socio-economic and academic background in addition to efficacious instructional approaches and methods that have been shown to work at FMC (Chapter 6).

Teaching and learning suggestions

1. Encourage faculty to spend time at the beginning of a new course to build rapport with their students by showing care and empathy, respect for their culture, and interest in the students' lives outside of the classroom (Chapter 6).

2. Then, and *only after rapport has been established*, set and maintain high standards of classroom behaviour, academic progress and achievement (Chapters 6 and 7).

3. Encourage learner input into short-term weekly lesson planning in terms of what is to be learned, when, how and why (relevancy) and build a sense of space and belonging by assigning home rooms (Chapters 5 and 6).

4. Use the students' lives and their culture as the context for much of their early learning (Chapter 4).

5. Honour, respect and utilize the students' prior learning, limited though it may be in our eyes (Chapters 1, 4 and 5).

6. Give students many opportunities to apply their new knowledge in diverse and open-ended projects (Chapters 5 and 6).

7. As students are culturally mistake-averse, show them that mistakes are great learning opportunities which contribute to meaningful learning (Chapters 5,6 and 7).

8. Use more frequent low-stake formative assessments over single higher-stake summative assessments (Chapter 6).

9. Begin each class with an attention-grabber or bridge-in that draws on student experiences, for example, "does anyone want to share what they did on the weekend?" or show a controversial or newsworthy video from YouTube or the Internet, asking the students to share their opinions (Chapter 6).

Topics for Future Research

During the course of this research, topics emerged from the process of observation, data collection, and analysis which require further investigation beyond the scope of this study. Additionally, some topics which I had hoped to shed light upon, such as parenting styles, proved too difficult to follow through during the study. The list of research topics below is in no particular order but does indicate areas of future research which would assist in a greater understanding of the learning journeys of young male Emiratis as they transit from high school to higher education.

1. Mastery versus performance goals of Arab learners. Explore the applicability of goal orientation theory as proposed and investigated by Midgley et al. (1998), Patrick, Anderman, Ryan, Edelin & Midgley (2001), Pintrich (2000), and Anderman et al. (2011).

2. Learner motivation while learning a second language, as investigated by Dornyei (1990, 1998). His research results have shown that various learner attributes such as personality traits, motivation, or language aptitude are key reasons why many second language learners fail. These attributes have traditionally been called 'individual differences' and exist across a broad range of individual learner differences from creativity to learner styles and anxiety.

The recent Center on Education Policy report on Student Motivation (*CEP*, 2012) highlighted six areas such as why motivation matters, the effect of money or other

rewards on student motivation, goal motivation, the roles of parents, family and culture, how schools can better motivate students, and the use of non-traditional approaches to motivate unenthusiastic learners. All of these impacted upon my current study and further investigation in the UAE setting may provide rich and useful information to assist colleges of higher education to better retain and educate Emirati students.

Finally, another report previously discussed in this chapter offers future researchers opportunities to explore the 'people effect' highlighted by the researchers (*eCampus News*, 2012).

3. Confirmation of unique Arabic cultural dimensions and communication patterns, as suggested by Feghali (1997), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998), and Hofstede (2011).

4. Classroom dynamics among students and between students and teachers.

5. Transferring experiential learning experiences to the classroom to improve academic achievement.

6. Creating a 'culture-sensitive' Emirati pedagogy.

7. CLIL (see Chapter 6) in the program areas – language learning beyond Foundations.

8. Teacher morale and its impact on student learning outcomes.

9. What kinds of factors can mediate changes in a student's perception of their environment? For example, what combinations of media, tuition, and workload have an impact on how students perceive the course and might therefore affect their approaches to studying? Explore this using the presage-perceptions-process-product model as proposed by Price and Richardson (2004).

10. A socio-economic ethnography of the Fujairah Emirate to describe, quantify and assess the impact of the 'rentier effect' in the UAE with special reference to working Emirati parents, the effect of foreign housemaids, and high disposable income.

11. Arab parenting styles and child upbringing. The impact of modern Emirati parenting styles and upbringing upon children's self-perception and their awareness of their place within the world.

12. Assessing the 'cultural tsunami' impact of foreign workers and globalization upon the social and cultural fabric of the UAE community.

13. An investigation of the Arabic youth sub-cultures and the role they play in group cohesion within the classroom. Knowledge of these sub-cultures would be beneficial to Student Affairs personnel and Academic Chairs.

14. Examining the link between second language competency and cultural border crossing experiences has the potential to yield useful and practical data for college administrators and academic managers seeking to acclimatize Emirati students to the new culture of higher education.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of survey methodology have already been discussed in Chapter 3 while the effects of completing too many surveys have been well documented (Hill, Roberts, Ewings & Gunnell, 1997; Porter, Whitcomb, & Weitzer, 2004; Yu, Jannasch-Pennell, DiGangi, Kim & Andrews, 2007), highlighting survey fatigue which produces high non-response rates and survey disconnection. These effects were evident in some of the surveys with either entire pages left untouched or a repeated consistent response of 'A's being declared throughout an entire survey. The chronological length of surveys has also been shown to have an effect upon response rates with those surveys which take no more than 20 minutes to complete producing higher response rates and greater connectedness (*Questionnaire Length, Fatigue Effects and Response Quality Revisited*, 2010), though others have reported lengths as low as 13 minutes before response rates start to drop (Yousey-Elsener, 2011). The latter has suggested several techniques for improving response rates such as shorter survey lengths, pre-announcements, sending invitations, selecting the best times to administer the survey, and highlighting incentives and relevance among others.

Access to local college data including student diagnostics, levels of absenteeism, enrolment, withdrawals, and examination results was generally uncomplicated during the research period. I tried initially to set up data access protocols with FMC managers in the early stages of the research and the failure to establish these sometimes led to frustrating periods of 'data embargo' as college personnel became busy with official college business. Despite two ethics and research approvals from both the local Fujairah Men's College (FMC) and the central Higher Colleges of Technology, data access to Central HCT proved much more difficult and I was reminded frequently that having research approval did not grant me automatic access to HCT databases and business intelligence.

In fact, no data access at all was given (except for that obtained through my local research in Fujairah) despite several requests for CEPA scores for the 2011 HCT applicants, overall absenteeism rates for the male HCT colleges, and the mean age of Foundations faculty in all HCT colleges to enable me to more clearly situate the Fujairah setting within the larger organization. While I acknowledge the political sensitivities accompanying the release of such data in a higher education environment consisting of three large organizations competing for limited (and falling) budgets, the restricted data access will severely impact further research into higher educational issues from both internal and external researchers. Increasing calls by the country's leadership for greater transparency in all matters must also apply to its university and college systems (Gale, 2010; *Sheikh Mohammed's interview with CNN*, 2011). A new project, the Center for Higher Education Data and Statistics (CHEDS), is currently being set up to establish the country's first comprehensive database centre for higher education, under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. It has already identified 224 items for educational institutions to submit and it is hoped that it will provide more open access to cleaner and more reliable data within the next five years (*CHEDS*, 2012).

I was unable to establish a reliable method to assess learning gains during the year as no entry level confirmatory English assessment was conducted at the start of the new academic year in September 2011. Though CEPA scores were available for all Foundations students, and a common exam (HEATE) was conducted at the end of the first semester, CEPA scores have not been used as comparative benchmarks in a pre-test/post-test scenario.

My research failed to establish a significant statistical correlation between the new students' CEPA scores and the Border Crossing Index (BCI). Indirectly, I established a link between the new students' initial Foundations placement level (as indicated by CEPA) and their transitional border crossing experiences manifested by end of Semester 1 English aggregated grades, student attrition and withdrawal. Part of the reason may lie in the way English is taught in the government secondary schools and learned by the students in a way that does not impact their world-view – rote memorization, teaching to the test, and surface learning strategies are 'weak agents' of change to a person's beliefs and values. Accepting the basic premise of world-view congruency as established by the literature, future research in examining the link between second language competency

and cultural border crossing experiences would yield potentially useful and practical data for college administrators and academic managers.

Another limitation of this study was the general level of disinterest and disengagement among many of the Foundations students with the purpose of my research. While I generally had good response rates to the surveys, attendance at the two student focus group meetings was poor with only 50% of the invited students attending. In the student member check meeting arranged towards the end of the final semester, only two out of 32 invited students attended. The remaining student who agreed to complete the video journal showed great interest in the survey and was occasionally joined by one or two others during some of the interesting discussions in the focus group meetings. I was not surprised about the low level of interest as it was difficult for the new students to relate to the issues being raised or even appreciate the value or interest to them as individuals.

One of my disappointments during the research period was the failure to obtain good quality video journals from three new Foundations students for the entire duration of the study. The Panasonic HM-TA1 high definition video cameras simply did not provide enough incentive to guarantee sustained journaling over the time period. One student left very early on and I was unable to garner further interest from the Level 2 study cohort. Two students continued to produce journals over the first semester, with one being asked to leave due to poor academic progress. One student remained until April 2012 when he was transferred back to the UAE University when the shared HCT-UAEU project ceased. I asked this last student to 'shadow' him for a day in the early part of the second semester but his parents collectively denied me permission to enter and move around the house freely as Emirati women live there (the student's mother and sisters). As a guest, I am able to visit the student's father and brothers in the male majilis meeting room but this would not have well served my research purpose. My recommendation to any future researcher who wishes to further investigate 'behind the walls' of Emirati houses is to meet the parents early on to carefully explain the purpose of the research and the reason why intensive observation is required within the family home. It might also be helpful if you are a male researcher to have a female Emirati assistant who may have more access to most areas of the house.

Finally, a potential limitation was the scarcity of research funding available for doctoral-level research projects that have potential to provide important contributions towards UAE society. Local education and government officials and businessmen in Fujairah and Dubai, including a large research funding organization, seemed unwilling to commit funding resources despite the submission of numerous detailed proposals. My decision to return to live in Dubai was sound, based on the greater employment opportunities for my wife. In the end, Karen secured and worked three jobs simultaneously during the year and I was fortunate to find some part-time lecturing work at The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management until March 2012 when I decided to work full-time on completing the writing phase of my thesis. I would recommend that the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research coordinate the doctoral-level research funding process throughout the country to ensure a more transparent application process and clearer guidelines with regards to relevant and appropriate national research requirements.

Recent Relevant News – additional 'patches for the quilt'

Six recent items of news in the local media have relevance to this study. Firstly, members of the Federal National Council (FNC) expressed concern about the late marriage of Emirati women with one member from the Sharjah Emirate citing as many as 175,000 or 64% of Emirati women in their 30s remaining single (Salama, 2012b). As mentioned by Ridge (2009b), high enrolment in tertiary education by female Emiratis indicates that "they and their families perceive real returns to education as compared with the alternatives" (p. 5). Further, I have previously raised the educational imbalance between male and female Emiratis resulting in many female Emiratis in full-time employment today opting to remain single rather than entering an arranged marriage with a partner with much limited education and world-view. This issue is situated on the front-line of the 'rentier effect' as young male Emiratis leave Fujairah for the big paying, relatively low accountability employment options in Abu Dhabi, leaving behind an increasing pool of well-educated, financially independent and increasingly 'choosy' Emirati women.

"Neglect of vocational education in favour of poor-quality academic degrees is leading to a failure to produce a technically skilled workforce crucial to economic development", said Dr Naji Al Mahdi, head of the National Institute for Vocational

Education, as he called for a national strategy to address the issue (Swan, 2012). Dr Naji warned that employers paying premium salaries to university graduates are turning away from vocational training young Emiratis who may benefit from learning technical skills. As a result, not only are many university degrees devalued, but there is an increasing shortage of qualified staff in key sectors of the economy which are being filled by more imported foreign workers.

By way of a surprising contrast in Fujairah recently, one HCT faculty told me of his delight when he noticed one of his students working in a part-time job at the new City Centre shopping mall. More and more Emiratis are finding part-time and full-time positions in jobs formerly associated with low-skilled expat workers as the employment options for Emiratis become increasingly squeezed between a burgeoning expat workforce and reduced opportunities in the government ministries and agencies (*Dubai Employers Turn To Young Workers*, 2009). HCT's continued 'mission schizophrenia' reflected in its muddled vision to produce graduates with Bachelor degrees as its competitors do, and turning its back upon its vast forgotten constituency of sub-150 CEPA high school leavers who appear to be more suited to technical and vocational learning will have significant repercussions that will continue to reinforce the 'rentier effect' which further undermines the goals of the Vision 2021 statement introduced in Chapter 1 (*2021 Vision*, 2010).

Questions have been asked of the Minister of Education and chairman of the Federal Human Resource Authority about what he is doing to "keep pace with the high demand for jobs" (Salama, 2012a). With an Emirati unemployment rate of 4.3% reported in 2010, some 12,000-13,000 job seekers in the Abu Dhabi Emirate alone are looking for work each year. Indirectly confirming another 'rentier effect' as the Minister reported that Emiratis make up 94% of the administrative positions in the ministries with 65% in the education and 20% in the medical profession, he spoke plainly that "the onus is on the private sector to offer more jobs to citizens". In other words, the government can no longer guarantee life-time employment for Emiratis.

It was reported recently that almost 50% of secondary school students in Dubai attend after-school private tuition or 'shadow classes' offered by school teachers or private tutors (Shahbandari, 2012). "The demand itself indicates that there is an underlying

problem with the system of education", said Dr Mark Bray who has conducted extensive research on this topic. Apart from this issue, private tutorials also provide low-paying government school teachers with additional income, as identified by Ridge (2010).

Appearing on Facebook recently was a series of reports from two HCT faculty who had taken a group of young Emirati HCT male students on an international fieldtrip to visit two former Eastern European countries (Hungary and Czech Republic) and Austria in June this year (*Global Local Club*, 2012). A day after they returned, one of the students posted the following message on Facebook:

> There is so much that one comes back with, it is an experience that remains not only as a memory but as a turning point in our lives! It [has] transformed me from being a mere traveller to a person who lives the lives of those who are part of a city or country.

These types of experiences are critical in broadening the global perspectives of the young Emirati youth. As Chair of Foundations at Dubai Men's College, I facilitated several international fieldtrips of Foundations students to Turkey, Germany, and Slovenia. Most of the young men were deeply and positively affected by their trips, often becoming more confident and as a result, more academically successful as they appeared to apply the lessons from their personal and emotional journeys overseas in the form of a more committed and resilient focus on their studies.

Finally, Ryan Gjovig, head of CEPA at the National Admissions and Placement Office (NAPO), was reported saying during an educational forum to discuss the shortcomings in the UAE school system in preparing Emirati students for university education using their second language of English that UAE higher education needs to offer tertiary degrees in Arabic to give students an alternative to learning in English (Moussly, 2012). "There is a need in this country for some Arabic universities or even degrees in Arabic at English universities. There is a gap in the market here and students should have a route of tertiary study that doesn't include English." I was very pleased when I read those words, coming during the concluding phase of my research. I immediately sent off an email to Ryan congratulating him on his courage and foresight for drawing people's

attention to the 'big blue elephant' sitting in the room to which no one was prepared to acknowledge or discuss.

Epilogue

On the first page of each chapter, I disclosed a personal part of my own journey and that of my family as we acclimatised to living in the UAE. These stories provide a backdrop on which the memories benchmark my journey in the same way as the old mile posts did on the 18th Century roads leading to London. Some also serve as turning points where I gained insight and wisdom about the Emirati people and my role in helping to shape their futures. Looking back over 17 years of interacting with young male Emiratis, I continue to have mixed emotions. I described these near the beginning of my personal reflective journal dated 31 July 2011:

> "I have met the most wonderful individuals who I occasionally bump into at the airport, shopping mall or some government ministry where they treat me with great respect, deference and friendliness. On the other hand, an overall impression of them as a group could also be that of young spoilt brats with unrealistic self-views of their utility in life matched with an abysmal record of low academic achievement and personal self-growth."

I believe I have shone a torch into one of the most perplexing and sensitive areas of Emirati society, raising significant questions about culture, community, parenting, politics, education, and government. As a white European mature-aged educator who has labelled the current Emirati generation as 'neo-indigenous' whilst at the same time trying hard to adopt a non-essentialist perspective, I have had to deeply excavate my own hidden bias and prejudice through reflective journaling to ensure that when I began to 'speak' for these young men in writing this thesis, I did so with an honest heart and a sharp mind. When I reflect upon my own journey this year, words such as 'huge', 'awesome', 'humbling', and 'frustrating' come to mind as I compiled my research quilt, searching for 'truths' or relevance from which my readers could come to grasp an understanding of the world(s) in which these young men live. I no longer regard them as 'spoilt brats' and have instead developed a greater empathy, understanding, and respect for the way they try to make sense out of their ever-changing and confusing lives.

I am also reminded of some lines from Albert Camus (1913-1960), an Algerian-born French author, philosopher, and journalist who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957:

> "Don't walk behind me; I may not lead.
> Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow.
> Just walk beside me and be my friend."

These short lines speak eloquently to the fierce independence and pride of the young male Emiratis who, at the end of the day, seek only to walk beside us, to enjoy our company, to have a good laugh, to learn from us, and hopefully to become our friends.

As a critical change agent, I have demonstrated the need for change across a gamut of areas – things need to change here and they need to change very soon. Graeme Ward's (2011) recent doctoral thesis based at the Petroleum Institute in Abu Dhabi presents a strong summary of the problem in a succinct phrase:

> "Most students enter our courses as spectators or passive learners, and unless teachers (in particular) and administrators/curriculum developers *arrange things otherwise* [my emphasis] they can depart as graduate students who still do not know (in my opinion) how to learn and who do not really understand the areas they have studied except perhaps for a narrow band of exam related materials and behaviours they have rote learned and which, by means of reinforced behaviour, are ingrained in their being" (p. 127).

Restoring dignity to the Emirati people by re-connecting the link between effort and reward is a good goal worth pursuing, and begins the work of re-'arranging things otherwise'. More importantly, this goal highlights the great wisdom of its founding father, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, as he recognized the value and honoured the contribution of his country's former human inhabitants living in a harsh land that no one wanted:

"Thanks to our ancestors who challenged the adversities of time and the misfortunes of life. Due to their fortitude, our generation is living in prosperity and grace" (*Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Centre*, 2011).

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Appendices

Appendix A

HIGHER COLLEGES OF TECHNOLOGY

COURSE GUIDE 2010-2011

Course Name: College Preparation and Readiness (CPR)
College Preparation and Readiness Plus (CPR+)

Course Code: Course to be delivered within the Foundations Spoken
Communications courses -
ENGL N01S, ENGL N02S, ENGL N03S, ENGL N04S

Credits: 2 hours per week for CPR; 2 hours per week for CPR+

Course Description: CPR and CPR+ evolved from three sources - the Personal and Professional Development Course (PPDV0155) in the pre-2010 Foundations Program, the Dynamic Citizen Model that forms the basis of HCT-Fujairah's co-curricular approach adopted in 2010, and the incorporation of the key principles underlying the Mental Toughness Program which will be launched in 2011.

As well as recognizing the need to instill life-skills in Foundations students to assist them in their successful transition to college life, the course additionally targets increased student retention and academic success. Initially, the course is embedded in the Spoken Communication strands at each of the four levels in New Foundations and will be taught by assigned Spoken Communications faculty. It consists of five main themes which are delivered appropriately to specific levels with increasing "intensity" or learning depth as described in Bloom's Taxonomy – Problem-Solving, College rules/expectations, Learner autonomy, Team Activities, and Career & Personal Skills. Personnel in Student Affairs, Student Success Centre, the college library, and Experiential Learning will combine to ensure the learning outcomes are effectively taught and assessed.

CPR+ is used to describe an additional element of this course in Level 2 which will receive an extra 2 hours of experiential instruction per week supplemented with interventions that will develop learners' abilities in the areas of challenge, commitment, confidence and control, vis-à-vis Mental Toughness.

Learning Outcomes - A learning outcome signifies what a student knows or can do on successful completion of the intended learning. On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

Learning Outcome (1)
- Apply learning and problem solving strategies
    1. Display a positive attitude to learning

2. Identify personal learning style using an appropriate survey instrument
3. Recognize obstacles to learning
4. Analyze a situation and identify a problem, select and apply a solution

Learning Outcome (2)
- Demonstrate appropriate behaviors in college and community settings
    1. Develop an awareness of a transition to a new educational experience
    2. Identify and accept the differences between prior and current learning environments
    3. Apply the HCT Academic Honesty Policy
    4. Demonstrate shared values, cultural awareness and tolerance e.g. focus on global and community project work, role play, case studies

Learning Outcome (3)
- Apply time, task and self management techniques to develop learner autonomy
    1. Organize study activities to meet deadlines
    2. Manage digital and hard-copy materials to enable efficient access
    3. Plan and monitor tasks
    4. Self-evaluate their own performance

Learning Outcome (4)
- Perform appropriate roles in team-based activities
    1. Contribute to team-based activities in a fair and balanced manner
    2. Recognize the different roles in team-based activities
    3. Participate in team-based activities as a leader
    4. Reflect on own and others' contributions and roles in a team

Learning Outcome (5)
- Evaluate personal skills and identify career interests
    1. Identify own personality traits, strengths and weaknesses
    2. Develop awareness of career opportunities in the UAE
    3. Develop personal goals with the help of a mentor
    4. Match personal skills to current career opportunities

Teaching Methodology

The CPR/CPR+ learning outcomes will be delivered indirectly within the Spoken Communications course. The aim is to seamlessly subsume CPR by blending the outcomes of the Spoken Communications and CPR/CPR+ courses. The emphasis is on experiential education that increases learner self-awareness and self-reflection as both a unique individual and as a member of diverse groups and teams whose various rules and roles are respected and understood.

Assessment

In all ENGL N0_S courses, coursework is broken down into listening = 50% and speaking = 50%. There is no common assessment.

• CPR, CPR+ appears in ENGL N0_S Grade Book as CPR and comprises 20% of the final grade.

• Sub assessments include (though not limited to): Journal, Portfolio, Sketchbook, Presentations, Posters, Quizzes, etc.
• The success of the course will additionally be measured through improved attendance and punctuality, student retention, and academic success.

Student Book: No set text, though elements of Career Coach (SWC Online) will be employed throughout the 4 levels of Foundations, and excerpts from other relevant texts or resources may be issued via PDF or similar format and stored in students' e-Binders.

Teacher: ENGL N0_S Instructor and other instructors/facilitators/Arabic support as required.

Appendix B

Research Plan

Dates	Qualitative	Quantitative	Follow-up

August – December 2011	• Select three students from study group for in-depth qualitative ethnographic research
	• Begin researcher's reflective journal
	• Issue Flip videos cameras and set rules for video diary and family interviews
	• School interviews with teachers
	• College interviews with HCT faculty
	• Complete male Arab learner profile
	• Describe the intervention strategies of College Preparation and Readiness program
	• Begin to collect student narratives
		• Identification of Level 2 cohort study group
		• Arrange parents' and student meetings to distribute information and consent sheets
		• Administer five survey instruments
		  o VARK learning styles
		  o Multiple Intelligences
		  o Cultural dimensions
		  o Mental Toughness (Pre)
		  o Student Survey
		• Enter data into Excel and SPSS and start analysis
			• Twice a month meet three ethnographic study students to download video
			• Maryam Z to transcribe and translate the video footage into English
			• Discuss findings with Maryam Z
			• Begin analysis of the surveys
			• Apply inductive analysis of video transcription to identify trends and patterns
			• Meet and record reaction of the CPR faculty team to the delivery of the program after one semester

Complete Chapters 1 – 3 by 31 December 2011			

January 2012 – June 2012	• Complete all personnel interviews by February 2012
	• Transcription of interviews and analysis by Nvivo
	• Meet students and faculty in focus group meetings
		• Administer four survey instruments
		  o CPR Post Activity IMI
		  o Learning Process Questionnaire
		  o Working Parents
		  o Mental Toughness (post)
		• Begin analysis of the effect of the CPR program on MTQ scores
			• Conduct member checks with students and faculty to share initial conclusive findings – record their reaction and feedback

January 2012 – August 2012 Complete analysis and write Chapters 4-8			

Appendix C

Semi-structured interview questions – teachers

• What is your understanding of the role of a teacher in this setting?

• In terms of pedagogy, where would you classify yourself on the following continuum:

1	2	3	4	5
Instructivist				Constructivist
(teacher-centric)				(student-centric)

Do you consistently teach from this position or do you occasionally move from it? When?

• Tell me about your experience in cross-cultural situations. Do you generally find them positive, negative or neutral situations?

• How do you make sense of these cross-cultural situations and interactions? Some teachers think deeply about them, seeking ways to make cognitive sense of them (internal or external discursive process) – when do you do this? At work or at home? Or do you react on an affective or emotional level (the experience needs to make sense in your life story)?

• Do you classify yourself as "empathetic" towards your Arab students? How does your life experience lead you to assess yourself in this way?

• How do you think teachers need to behave in cross-cultural settings? Is there a role of a "cultural change agent" in this setting? Is this an appropriate role for teachers?

• What kinds of experiences do teachers need to function in cross-cultural settings? How do they get them? Is there any way of doing this?

• What do you feel about the power relationships which may be implicit or explicit in cross-cultural settings?

• Are you aware of a boundary between you and your students? Do you look at them and think "we-they" or "us-them"?

• In which ways do you think your students are different to you in terms of cultural values?

• Do you think you can teach your students acculturally ie. culture-neutral? If not, explain.

• Do you agree with the Dutch social researcher, Geert Hofstede, who said, "language is the vehicle of culture"? Explain your answer.

• What are your hopes and expectations for the new CPR program this year?

The VARK Questionnaire

How Do I Learn Best?

Choose the answer which best explains your preference and tick the box next to it. **Please tick more than one** if a single answer does not match your perception. Leave blank any question that does not apply.

Do you prefer a teacher or a presenter who uses:

☐ handouts, books, or readings.

☐ question and answer, talk, group discussion, or guest speakers.

☐ demonstrations, models or practical sessions.

☐ diagrams, charts or graphs.

You are planning a vacation for a group. You want some feedback from them about the plan. You would:

☐ phone, text or email them.

☐ describe some of the highlights.

☐ give them a copy of the printed itinerary.

☐ use a map or website to show them the places.

Remember a time when you learned how to do something new. Try to avoid choosing a physical skill, eg. riding a bike. You learned best by:

☐ diagrams and charts - visual clues.

☐ written instructions – e.g. a manual or textbook.

☐ listening to somebody explaining it and asking questions.

☐ watching a demonstration.

You are not sure whether a word should be spelled `dependent' or `dependant'. You would:

☐ find it online or in a dictionary.

☐ write both words on paper and choose one.

☐ see the words in your mind and choose by the way they look.

☐ think about how each word sounds and choose one.

You are going to cook something as a special treat for your family. You would:

☐ ask friends for suggestions.

☐ use a cookbook where you know there is a good recipe.

☐ look through the cookbook for ideas from the pictures.

☐ cook something you know without the need for instructions.

You are about to purchase a digital camera or mobile phone. Other than price, what would most influence your decision?

☐ Reading the details about its features.

☐ Trying or testing it

☐ It is a modern design and looks good.

☐ The salesperson telling me about its features.

You have to make an important speech at a conference or special occasion. You would:

☐ gather many examples and stories to make the talk real and practical.

☐ make diagrams or get graphs to help explain things.

☐ write out your speech and learn from reading it over several times.

☐ write a few key words and practice saying your speech over and over.

A group of tourists wants to learn about the parks or wildlife reserves in your area. You would:

☐ take them to a park or wildlife reserve and walk with them.

☐ talk about, or arrange a talk for them about parks or wildlife reserves.

☐ give them a book or pamphlets about the parks or wildlife reserves.

☐ show them internet pictures, photographs or picture books.

You have a problem with your heart. You would prefer that the doctor:

☐ gave you something to read to explain what was wrong.

☐ showed you a diagram of what was wrong.

☐ described what was wrong.

☐ used a plastic model to show what was wrong.

You are helping someone who wants to go to your airport, the center of town or railway station. You would:

☐ go with her.

☐ tell her the directions.

☐ write down the directions.

☐ draw, or give her a map.
You are going to choose food at a restaurant or cafe. You would:

☐ choose from the descriptions in the menu.

☐ listen to the waiter or ask friends to recommend choices.

☐ look at what others are eating or look at pictures of each dish.

☐ choose something that you have had there before.

Other than price, what would most influence your decision to buy a new non-fiction book?

☐ It has real-life stories, experiences and examples.

☐ The way it looks is appealing.

☐ A friend talks about it and recommends it.

☐ Quickly reading parts of it.

I like websites that have:

☐ interesting written descriptions, lists and explanations.

☐ interesting design and visual features.

☐ audio channels where I can hear music, radio programs or interviews.

☐ things I can click on, shift or try.

You are using a book, CD or website to learn how to take photos with your new digital camera. You would like to have:

☐ many examples of good and poor photos and how to improve them.

☐ diagrams showing the camera and what each part does.

☐ a chance to ask questions and talk about the camera and its features.

☐ clear written instructions with lists and bullet points about what to do.

You want to learn a new program, skill or game on a computer. You would:

☐ talk with people who know about the program.

☐ follow the diagrams in the book that came with it.

☐ use the controls or keyboard.

☐ read the written instructions that came with the program.

You have finished a competition or test and would like some feedback. You would like to have feedback:

☐ using examples from what you have done.

☐ from somebody who talks it through with you.

☐ using a written description of your results.

☐ using graphs showing what you had achieved.

Appendix E

Multiple Intelligences Survey

PART 1

Complete each section but putting number "1" before each sentence you think that describes you. If the sentence doesn't describe you, leave it without a number. After that, write the total of each section.

Section 1

_____ I enjoy categorizing things by common traits
_____ Ecological issues are important to me
_____ Classification helps me make sense of new data
_____ I enjoy working in a garden
_____ I believe preserving our natural areas is important
_____ Putting things in hierarchies makes sense to me
_____ Animals are important in my life
_____ My home has a recycling system in place
_____ I enjoy studying biology, botany and/or zoology
_____ I pick up on subtle differences in meaning

_____ TOTAL for Section 1

Section 2

_____ I easily pick up on patterns
_____ I focus in on noise and sounds
_____ Moving to a beat is easy for me
_____ I enjoy making music
_____ I respond to the rhythm of poetry
_____ I remember things by putting them in a rhyme
_____ Concentration is difficult for me if there is background noise
_____ Listening to sounds in nature can be very relaxing
_____ Musicals are more engaging to me than dramatic plays
_____ Remembering song lyrics is easy for me

_____ TOTAL for Section 2

Section 3

_____ I am known for being neat and orderly
_____ Step-by-step directions are a big help
_____ Problem solving comes easily to me
_____ I get easily frustrated with disorganized people
_____ I can complete calculations quickly in my head
_____ Logic puzzles are fun
_____ I can't begin an assignment until I understand how I'm going to do it
_____ Structure is a good thing
_____ I enjoy troubleshooting something that isn't working properly
_____ Things have to make sense to me or I am dissatisfied

_____ TOTAL for Section 3

Section 4

_____ It is important to see my role in the "big picture" of things
_____ I enjoy discussing questions about life
_____ Religion is important to me
_____ I enjoy viewing art work
_____ Relaxation and meditation exercises are rewarding to me
_____ I like traveling to visit inspiring places
_____ I enjoy reading philosophers
_____ Learning new things is easier when I see their real world application
_____ I wonder if there are other forms of intelligent life in the universe
_____ It is important for me to feel connected to people, ideas and beliefs

_____ TOTAL for Section 4

Section 5

_____ I learn best interacting with others
_____ I enjoy informal chat and serious discussion
_____ The more the merrier
_____ I often serve as a leader among peers and colleagues
_____ I value relationships more than ideas or accomplishments
_____ Study groups are very productive for me
_____ I am a "team player"
_____ Friends are important to me
_____ I belong to more than three clubs or organizations
_____ I dislike working alone

_____ TOTAL for Section 5

Section 6

_____ I learn by doing
_____ I enjoy making things with my hands
_____ Sports are a part of my life
_____ I use gestures and non-verbal cues when I communicate
_____ Demonstrating is better than explaining
_____ I love to dance
_____ I like working with tools
_____ Inactivity can make me more tired than being very busy
_____ Hands-on activities are fun
_____ I live an active lifestyle

_____ TOTAL for Section 6

Section 7

_____ Foreign languages interest me
_____ I enjoy reading books, magazines and web sites
_____ I keep a journal
_____ Word puzzles like crosswords or jumbles are enjoyable
_____ Taking notes helps me remember and understand
_____ I faithfully contact friends through letters and/or e-mail
_____ It is easy for me to explain my ideas to others

_____ I write for pleasure
_____ Puns, anagrams and spoonerisms are fun
_____ I enjoy public speaking and participating in debates

_____ TOTAL for Section 7

Section 8

_____ My attitude effects how I learn
_____ I like to be involved in causes that help others
_____ I am keenly aware of my moral beliefs
_____ I learn best when I have an emotional attachment to the subject
_____ Fairness is important to me
_____ Social justice issues interest me
_____ Working alone can be just as productive as working in a group
_____ I need to know why I should do something before I agree to do it
_____ When I believe in something I give more effort towards it
_____ I am willing to protest or sign a petition to right a wrong

_____ TOTAL for Section 8

Section 9

_____ Rearranging a room and redecorating are fun for me
_____ I enjoy creating my own works of art
_____ I remember better using graphic organizers
_____ I enjoy all kinds of entertainment media
_____ Charts, graphs and tables help me interpret data
_____ A music video can make me more interested in a song
_____ I can recall things as mental pictures
_____ I am good at reading maps and blueprints
_____ Three dimensional puzzles are fun
_____ I can visualize ideas in my mind

_____ TOTAL for Section 9

Appendix F

Mental Toughness Questionnaire (MTQ48)

MENTAL TOUGHNESS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete all of the following section:

Name:					Age:	
Job Title:					**M/F:**	
Ethnicity:	Black		Bangladeshi ☐	**First Language:**		
White ☐	- African ☐		Chinese ☐	English ☐	Spanish ☐	
Irish ☐	- Caribbean ☐		Other ☐	French ☐	German ☐	
Indian ☐	- Pakistan ☐		Refuse to say ☐	Dutch ☐	Other ☐	

Please indicate your response to the following items by **circling one** of the numbers, which have the following meaning;

1 = strongly disagree; **2** = disagree; **3** = neither agree nor disagree; **4** = agree; **5** = strongly agree

Please answer these items carefully, **thinking about how you are generally**. Do not spend too much time on any one item.

	◄◄ Disagree			Agree ►►	
1) I usually find something to motivate me	1	2	3	4	5
2) I generally feel in control	1	2	3	4	5
3) I generally feel that I am a worthwhile person	1	2	3	4	5
4) Challenges usually bring out the best in me	1	2	3	4	5
5) When working with other people I am usually quite influential	1	2	3	4	5
6) Unexpected changes to my schedule generally throw me	1	2	3	4	5
7) I don't usually give up under pressure	1	2	3	4	5
8) I am generally confident in my own abilities	1	2	3	4	5
9) I usually find myself just going through the motions	1	2	3	4	5
10) At times I expect things to go wrong	1	2	3	4	5
11) "I just don't know where to begin" is a feeling I usually have when presented with several things to do at once	1	2	3	4	5
12) I generally feel that I am in control of what happens in my life	1	2	3	4	5
13) However bad things are, I usually feel they will work out positively in the end	1	2	3	4	5
14) I often wish my life was more predictable	1	2	3	4	5
15) Whenever I try to plan something, unforeseen factors usually seem to wreck it	1	2	3	4	5
16) I generally look on the bright side of life	1	2	3	4	5
17) I usually speak my mind when I have something to say	1	2	3	4	5
18) At times I feel completely useless	1	2	3	4	5
19) I can generally be relied upon to complete the tasks I am given	1	2	3	4	5
20) I usually take charge of a situation when I feel it is appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
21) I generally find it hard to relax	1	2	3	4	5
22) I am easily distracted from tasks that I am involved with	1	2	3	4	5
23) I generally cope well with any problems that occur	1	2	3	4	5
24) I do not usually criticise myself even when things go wrong	1	2	3	4	5
25) I generally try to give 100%	1	2	3	4	5
26) When I am upset or annoyed I usually let others know	1	2	3	4	5
27) I tend to worry about things well before they actually happen	1	2	3	4	5
28) I often feel intimidated in social gatherings	1	2	3	4	5
29) When faced with difficulties I usually give up	1	2	3	4	5

30) I am generally able to react quickly when something unexpected happens	1	2	3	4	5
31) Even when under considerable pressure I usually remain calm	1	2	3	4	5
32) If something can go wrong, it usually will	1	2	3	4	5
33) Things just usually happen to me	1	2	3	4	5
34) I generally hide my emotion from others	1	2	3	4	5
35) I usually find it difficult to make a mental effort when I am tired	1	2	3	4	5
36) When I make mistakes I usually let it worry me for days after	1	2	3	4	5
37) When I am feeling tired I find it difficult to get going	1	2	3	4	5
38) I am comfortable telling people what to do	1	2	3	4	5
39) I can normally sustain high levels of mental effort for long periods	1	2	3	4	5
40) I usually look forward to changes in my routine	1	2	3	4	5
41) I feel that what I do tends to make no difference	1	2	3	4	5
42) I usually find it hard to summon enthusiasm for the tasks I have to do	1	2	3	4	5
43) If I feel somebody is wrong, I am not afraid to argue with them	1	2	3	4	5
44) I usually enjoy a challenge	1	2	3	4	5
45) I can usually control my nervousness	1	2	3	4	5
46) In discussions, I tend to back-down even when I feel strongly about something	1	2	3	4	5
47) When I face setbacks I am often unable to persist with my goal	1	2	3	4	5
48) I can usually adapt myself to challenges that come my way	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix G

Cultural dimensions and orientations – animated scenarios

Scenario #1

You are riding in a car driven by a close friend. He hits a pedestrian. You know he was going 25 km per hour faster than the speed limit on that street.

There are no witnesses.

You ring the police but before they arrive, your friend asks you to say that he was driving the car at the speed limit. He says this will save him from serious consequences.

What right has your friend to expect you to protect him?

1. My friend has a **definite right** to expect me to tell the police he was driving at the speed limit

2. He has **some right** as a friend to expect me to say he was driving at the speed limit

3. He has **no right** to expect me to say he was driving at the speed limit

Response #1

Based on your previous answer, what do you think you would do?

4. Tell the police he was driving at the speed limit

5. Tell the police he was driving faster than the speed limit

Response #2

Scenario #2

Two people are discussing ways in which individuals could improve the quality of their lives.

A One says, "It is obvious that if individuals have as much freedom as possible and maximum opportunity to develop themselves, the quality of their lives will improve."

B The other says, "If individuals take more care of their fellow human beings, the quality of life will improve for everyone, even if it restricts individual freedom and development."

Which of the two ways do you think is usually best, A or B?

Scenario #3

If you felt upset about another student treating you unfairly at college, would you tell him how you felt?

Yes or **no?**

Scenario #4

People were asked if they agree with the following statement:

The respect a person gets is highly dependent on their family background.

Do you **agree** or **disagree** with this statement?

Scenario #5

After starting a new job in Dubai, you notice the attitude of a colleague towards a supervisor that you both report to. The supervisor treats him poorly, often speaking harshly to him in public and being very autocratic.

When you talk to him about your observation, he is surprised and says to you, "that's just the way things are – he's my boss and I must obey him regardless of my personal feelings."

Do you agree with his comment – **yes** or **no?**

Scenario #6

At work, two colleagues are discussing about uncertainty in life. One says that he likes formal structured activities in his social life, he has life, income-protection, and household insurance policies, and has remained with the same employer for a long time.
The other colleague says that he prefers flexibility in his social life, he has changed jobs quite often, and thinks that life is for living, not thinking about death and life insurance.

In reflecting about your attitude to uncertainty, with which speaker do you most agree – the 1st colleague or the 2nd colleague?

Scenario #7

Think of the past, present and future as being in the shape of circles.

Please draw three circles on the paper, representing past, present and future.

Arrange these circles in any way you want that best shows how you feel about the relationship between past, present and future.

You may choose different circle sizes.

When you have finished, label each circle to show which one is the past, the present, and the future.

Past Present Future
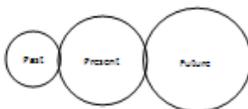
Scenario #8

Two friends are talking at college. One says he often thinks a lot about the future and is very determined to do well at college and find a good job, even if it will take several years to achieve.

The other friend does not really care about the future as he thinks he will get a job somehow, sometime. He is more concerned with respecting traditions and valuing the past.

In thinking about your attitude to the past, present, and future, do you agree with the 1st or 2nd friend?

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Appendix H

STUDENT SURVEY

The first question is an example.

I like strawberry ice cream.

1	2	3	4	5
NOT AT ALL TRUE		SOMEWHAT TRUE		VERY TRUE

Here are some questions about moving from <u>high school to college</u>. Please <u>circle the number</u> that best describes what you think.

1. Thinking back to your first day at Fujairah Men's College, you felt happy about starting college.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

2. In the first week of college, I felt confused and lonely.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

3. My high school experiences prepared me well for study at college.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

4. I feel troubled because my school life and my college life are like two different worlds.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

5. Right now, I feel a 'sense of belonging' at Fujairah Men's College.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

6. My transition from high school to college has been smooth and easy.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

7. The college has helped me a lot to feel settled and comfortable in my new environment.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

8. I will most likely leave college before the end of the academic year because it is too hard.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

9. The early days at college were difficult but I feel more positive about college life now.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

10. I will most likely leave college before the end of the academic year because I will find a job.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

Here are some questions about your <u>motivation</u> to learn. Please <u>circle the number</u> that best describes what you think.

11. I study English because I have to pass Foundations in order to start my career program.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

12. I really like to learn new things.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

13. I study English because I want to become better at the language and learn more about the culture of those countries where English is the main language.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

14. Even if I do well at college, it will not help me to have the kind of life I want when I get older.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

15. In our lessons, I like using my laptop because it helps me with my learning.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

16. It's important to me that I improve my skills in all my subjects this year.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

17. I work better if I work alone as I don't like working in groups.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

18. Generally, while I am working on a task, I think about how much I am enjoying it.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

19. I like tasks when they are fun, I understand what I am supposed to do, and I am successful.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

20. I feel most motivated when the task is slightly above my ability and I have to really push myself.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

Here are some questions about your <u>persistence</u> to learn. Please <u>circle the number</u> that best describes what you think.

21. When I find I can't complete a task, I tend to give up and ask my friends for help.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

22. I sometimes copy answers from other students when I do my class or home work.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

23. I sometimes allow other students to copy answers from me to help them.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

24. Some students let their friends keep them from paying attention in class or from doing their homework. Then if they don't do well, they can say their friends kept them from working. How true is this of you?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

25. In my class, trying hard is very important.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

26. When I find I can't complete a task, I ask my teacher for help.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

27. I sometimes disturb the lesson that is going on in class when I get bored or can't do the work.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

28. When I leave college in the afternoon, I never think about my work or college life.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

29. I have everything I need (laptop, textbooks, library, teachers, counselor, Arabic staff) to be successful at college.

1	2	3	4	5

| **Not at all true** | | **Somewhat true** | | **Very true** |

30. If I fail this year, I will feel ashamed and disappointed because I would have worked hard.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **Not at all true** | | **Somewhat true** | | **Very true** |

Here are some questions about your <u>how you learn in class</u>. Please <u>circle the number</u> that best describes what you think.

31. I get confused when my teacher gives me a choice – I prefer it when they just tell me.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **Not at all true** | | **Somewhat true** | | **Very true** |

32. My teacher doesn't let me do just easy work, but makes me think.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **Not at all true** | | **Somewhat true** | | **Very true** |

33. The main difference between college and high school is that the teachers in my old school taught us by memorization, reciting information, and repeating it again during the exams.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **Not at all true** | | **Somewhat true** | | **Very true** |

34. At college, my teachers expect me to work hard and encourage me to think for myself.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **Not at all true** | | **Somewhat true** | | **Very true** |

35. I find working in groups during class a waste of time.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **Not at all true** | | **Somewhat true** | | **Very true** |

36. I go to the Student Success Centre after class to get help to improve my weak skills.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **Not at all true** | | **Somewhat true** | | **Very true** |

37. I feel I will be successful in college ONLY if my teachers help me a lot.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **Not at all true** | | **Somewhat true** | | **Very true** |

38. I like it when teachers use local information or Arabic examples to help me understand.

| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **Not at all true** | | **Somewhat true** | | **Very true** |

39. My teachers help me but I feel that the responsibility for my success at college is mine because it will be through <u>my effort and hard work</u> when I graduate with my degree.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

40. My teachers make sure that the work I do really makes me think as I need to understand the ideas, not just memorize them.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

Below are examples of things students sometimes feel about your **home, school, and abilities**. Please be very honest and tell us how true each of these is for you. <u>No one at home or at college will ever see your answers</u>.

41. I don't like to have my parents come to college because their ideas are very different from my teachers' ideas.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

42. After school and on the weekends, I can find good and useful things to do in my neighborhood.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

43. My parents supported and encouraged me to attend college in order to obtain a degree.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

44. My parents would like it if I could show that I'm better at classwork than other students in my class.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

45. I think I am smart enough to be successful at college.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

46. I feel troubled because my home life and my college life are like two different worlds.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

47. It's important to me that other students in my class think I am good at class work.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Not at all true		**Somewhat true**		**Very true**

48. I did not enjoy my high school years as I didn't feel I learnt anything and the teachers did all the work.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Not at all true   **Somewhat true**   **Very true**

49. When I think back about my high school years, I know I wasted my time.
1   2   3   4   5
 Not at all true   **Somewhat true**   **Very true**

50. If I was speaking to some Year 7 students at my old high school, I would tell them to work much harder than I did because then they will avoid Foundations and start their career programs from their first day of college.
1   2   3   4   5
 Not at all true   **Somewhat true**   **Very true**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

TEACHER SURVEY

Your name (optional): _____ Date: _____

1. I give special privileges to students who do the best work.

<div align="center">

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

</div>

2. If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult student.

<div align="center">

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

</div>

3. In this college: The importance of trying hard is really stressed to students.

<div align="center">

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

</div>

4. I make a special effort to recognize students' individual progress, even if they are below grade level.

<div align="center">

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

</div>

5. In this college: Students are told that making mistakes is OK as long as they are learning and improving.

<div align="center">

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

</div>

6. Factors beyond my control have a greater influence on my students' achievement than I do.

<div align="center">

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

</div>

7. In this college: It's easy to tell which students get the highest grades and which students get the lowest grades.

<div align="center">

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

</div>

8. I am good at helping all the students in my classes make significant improvement.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

9. I display the work of the highest achieving students as an example.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

10. In this college: Students who get good grades are pointed out as an example to others.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

11. During class, I often provide several different activities so that students can choose among them.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

12. In this college: Students hear a lot about the importance of getting high test scores.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

13. I consider how much students have improved when I give them report card grades.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

14. In this college: A lot of the work students do is boring and repetitious.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

15. In this college: Grades and test scores are not talked about a lot.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

16. In this college: Students are frequently told that learning should be fun.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE		SOMEWHAT AGREE		STRONGLY AGREE

17. I help students understand how their performance compares to others.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE		SOMEWHAT AGREE		STRONGLY AGREE

18. Some students are not going to make a lot of progress this year, no matter what I do.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE		SOMEWHAT AGREE		STRONGLY AGREE

19. I encourage students to compete with each other.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE		SOMEWHAT AGREE		STRONGLY AGREE

20. In this college: The emphasis is on really understanding collegework, not just memorizing it.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE		SOMEWHAT AGREE		STRONGLY AGREE

21. I point out those students who do well as a model for the other students.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE		SOMEWHAT AGREE		STRONGLY AGREE

22. In this college: A real effort is made to recognize students for effort and improvement.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE		SOMEWHAT AGREE		STRONGLY AGREE

23. I am certain that I am making a difference in the lives of my students.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
STRONGLY DISAGREE		SOMEWHAT AGREE		STRONGLY AGREE

24. There is little I can do to ensure that all my students make significant progress this year.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

25. In this college: Students hear a lot about the importance of making the honor roll or being recognized at honor assemblies.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

26. I give a wide range of assignments, matched to students' needs and skill level.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

27. In this college: A real effort is made to show students how the work they do in college is related to their lives outside of college.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

28. I can deal with almost any learning problem.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

29. In this college: Students are encouraged to compete with each other academically.

1   2   3   4   5
STRONGLY DISAGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE STRONGLY AGREE

Thank you!

Appendix J

Learning Process Questionnaire (LPQ)

Learning Process Questionnaire
الاستبيان الخاص بعملية التعلم

Program:	البرنامج:	Student Number:	رقم الطالب:
Semester/Term:	الفصل الدراسي	College:	الكلية:

What the LPQ is About

This questionnaire contains a number of questions about your feeling about college and how you go about learning in college.

Remember, there is no right way of going about your learning. It all depends on what suits you and the different things you are learning.

How to Answer

Opposite each item there is a row of letters ranging from A to E:

A   B   C   D   E

Using the Response Sheet, fill in the circle of the letter which is closest to the way you want to respond.

The letters stand for the following responses:

A- this item is *almost always* true of me.
B- this item is *frequently* true of me.
C- this item is true of me about *half the time*.
D- this item is *sometimes* true of me.
E- this item is *almost never* true of me.

ما هو الاستبيان الخاص بعملية التعلم؟

يتضمن هذا الاستبيان عددا من الأسئلة حول موقفك من الدراسة والطرائق والأساليب التي تتبعها عادة في الدراسة.

تذكر أنه ليس هنالك طريقة واحدة صحيحة للدراسة، حيث إن ذلك يعتمد على ما يناسب طبيعتك والمساقات المختلفة التي تدرسها

كيفية الإجابة

لكل بند هنالك صف من الأحرف من (A) إلى (E) :

A   B   C   D   E

إستخدم ورقة الإجابة المرفقة
املأ إحدى الدوائر الخمس لكل بند لاختيار الحرف الأكثر ملائمة لإجابتك.

ترمز الأحرف إلى الإجابات التالية :
A – هذا صحيح دائما تقريبا.
B – هذا يحدث مرارا.
C – هذا صحيح معظم الأحيان.
D – هذا صحيح أحيانا.
E – . هذا غير صحيح إطلاقا أو نادرا ما يحدث.

	Always دائما	Frequently يحدث مرارا	Half the time معظم الأحيان	Some-times أحيانا	Never إطلاقا	
1. I want to study only those things in college that would help me to get a job, not those that might be more interesting.	A	B	C	D	E	١. أريد أن أدرس في الكلية فقط ما يساعدني على الحصول على وظيفة، وليس تلك التي قد تكون ممتعة.
2. I find that my college work can give me a good feeling inside.	A	B	C	D	E	٢. يسرني إنجاز واجباتي الدراسية.
3. I try to obtain good grades in all my courses because I like to beat the other students.	A	B	C	D	E	٣. أحاول أن أحصل على درجات جيدة في جميع المساقات لأنني أحب أن أتفوق على زملائي.
4. I tend to study only what the teacher says, no more.	A	B	C	D	E	٤. إنني أدرس المادة التي يقدمها المدرس فقط.
5. While I am learning things in college, I try to think of how useful they would be in real life	A	B	C	D	E	٥. عندما أتعلم الأشياء في الكلية أحاول أن أفكر في إمكانية الاستفادة منها في الحياة اليومية.
6. I have my way of keeping my books, notes and other class things so that I can find them easily.	A	B	C	D	E	٦. أرتب كتبي وملاحظاتي بطريقتي الخاصة بما يساعدني على إيجادها بسهولة.
7. When I do badly on an assessment task, I worry about how I will do next time.	A	B	C	D	E	٧. عندما أحصل على درجة سيئة في اختبار التقويم، أقلق على أدائي في التقويم المقبل.
8. I say what I think is right, even though others may know better than I do.	A	B	C	D	E	٨. إنني أقول ما أعتقد أنه صحيح على الرغم من أن الآخرين قد يعرفون الحقائق أكثر مني.
9. I really want to do better than any one else in my college work.	A	B	C	D	E	٩. أريد أن أتفوق في دراستي أكثر من أي أحد.
10. I learn best when I memorize things by heart.	A	B	C	D	E	١٠. أرى أن الحفظ هو الطريقة المثلى للتعلم.
11. In reading new stuff, I am reminded of things I already know, and see them in a different way.	A	B	C	D	E	١١. عند قراءة المواد الجديدة أتذكر المعلومات التي أعرفها سابقا، مما يساعدني على رؤيتها من منظور جديد.
12. I try to plan my work all through the college year so that I get the best grades I can.	A	B	C	D	E	١٢. أحاول أن أضع الخطط لعملي طيلة السنة الدراسية بهدف الحصول على أعلى الدرجات.
13. The only reason I can see for working hard in college is to get a good job when I leave college.	A	B	C	D	E	١٣. إن الدافع الوحيد للدراسة بجد والالتزام في الكلية هو الحصول على وظيفة جيدة بعد التخرج.

Learning Process Questionnaire   2 of 2

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	Always	Frequently	Half the time	Some-times	Never	
	دائما	يحدث مرارا	معظم الأحيان	أحيانا	إطلاقا	
14. I become interested in many college courses when I work at them.	A	B	C	D	E	١٤. أستمتع بدراسة عدد من المساقات في الكلية عندما أتعمق في دراستها.
15. I like the results of assessment tasks to be put up in class so that the others can see how much I beat them by.	A	B	C	D	E	١٥. أحب أن يتم عرض نتائج اختبارات التقويم في الفصل كي يرى زملائي مدى تفوقي عليهم.
16. I prefer learning facts and details about things to trying to understand them.	A	B	C	D	E	١٦. أفضل أن أتعلم الحقائق والتفاصيل عن الأشياء بدلا من محاولة فهمها.
17. I like to form my own ideas on a topic before I feel good about it.	A	B	C	D	E	١٧. أحب تكوين أفكاري الخاصة حول موضوع ما كي أشعر بالارتياح.
18. I try to do all my assignments as soon as they are given to me.	A	B	C	D	E	١٨. أحاول أن أنجز جميع واجباتي الدراسية فور تحديدها.
19. Even when I have studied hard for an assessment task, I worry that I may not be able to do well on it.	A	B	C	D	E	١٩. على الرغم من الدراسة والتحضير الجيد لاختبارات التقويم، إلا أنني أقلق حول عدم قدرتي على تأديتها بنجاح.
20. I find that learning some topics can be really exciting.	A	B	C	D	E	٢٠. أجد أن تعلم بعض المواضيع يمكن أن يكون شيقا.
21. I would rather do well in college than be popular with my classmates.	A	B	C	D	E	٢١. إنني أفضل أن أكون ناجحا في الكلية على أن أكون محبوبا من زملائي.
22. In most courses I do enough just to pass, and no more.	A	B	C	D	E	٢٢. أحاول أن أبذل مجهودا كافيا بما يساعدني على إتمام المتطلبات في معظم المواد، إلا أنني لا أحاول أن أبذل مجهودا إضافيا.
23. I try to relate what I learn in one course to other courses.	A	B	C	D	E	٢٣. أحاول أن أربط بين ما أتعلمه في المساقات المختلفة.
24. I review soon after most lessons to make sure I understand what was taught.	A	B	C	D	E	٢٤. أقوم بمراجعة دروسي بعد انتهاء الحصص للتأكد من فهمها.
25. Teachers should not expect us to work on things that are not going to be assessed.	A	B	C	D	E	٢٥. لا يجب أن يتوقع المدرسون من الطلبة مراجعة الدروس التي لن تطرح في اختبارات التقويم.

Learning Process Questionnaire

	Always	Frequently	Half the time	Some-times	Never	
	دائما	يحدث مرارا	معظم الأحيان	أحيانا	إطلاقا	
26. One day I might be able to change things in the world that I think are wrong.	A	B	C	D	E	٢٦. أشعر أنني قد أكون قادرا يوما ما على تغيير بعض الأشياء في العالم التي أراها خاطئة.
27. I will work for good grades whether or not I like the course.	A	B	C	D	E	٢٧. سأعمل بجد للحصول على درجات جيدة في جميع المواد بصرف النظر عن ميولي الشخصية.
28. It is better for me to learn facts and details than to try to understand general ideas.	A	B	C	D	E	٢٨. أفضل أن أتعلم الحقائق والتفاصيل عن موضوع ما على فهم الأفكار العامة.
29. I find that most new things taught in college are interesting and I may even spend extra time finding out more about them.	A	B	C	D	E	٢٩. أجد معظم المواضيع الجديدة التي نتعلمها في الكلية شيقة وأمضي وقتا إضافيا في الحصول على المعلومات الإضافية عنها.
30. When an assessment task is returned, I correct all the errors I made and try to see why I made them.	A	B	C	D	E	٣٠. عند الاطلاع على نتائج اختبارات التقويم أصحح جميع الأخطاء وأحاول فهم سبب وقوعها.
31. I only want to stay in college long enough to get a good job.	A	B	C	D	E	٣١. سأواصل دراستي لمدة كافية بما يمكنني من الحصول على وظيفة جيدة.
32. I believe that college should help me to form my own ideas.	A	B	C	D	E	٣٢. أعتقد أن الكلية يجب أن تساعدني على تكوين أفكاري الخاصة.
33. I see doing well in college as a competition, and I am determined to win.	A	B	C	D	E	٣٣. إنني أعتبر الحصول على درجات جيدة كالمسابقة، وإنني مصمم على الفوز فيها.
34. I don't spend time on learning things that I know won't be on the assessment tasks.	A	B	C	D	E	٣٤. لا أمضي وقتي في تعلم الأشياء التي أعلم أنها لن تطرح في اختبارات التقويم.
35. I spend my free time finding out more about interesting things that have been talked about in class.	A	B	C	D	E	٣٥. أمضي أوقات الفراغ في البحث عن المزيد من المواضيع الشيقة التي تم مناقشتها في الفصل.
36. I try to read all the things the teacher says we should.	A	B	C	D	E	٣٦. إنني أحاول قراءة معظم المراجع التي يقترحها المدرس.

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Appendix K

Working Parents Survey – screenshot

CONSENT FORM

Cultural Border Crossings in the UAE

By signing this Consent Form, I acknowledge that the researcher, Peter Hatherley-Greene, has met the following conditions:

- **Peter Hatherley-Greene has met me in a meeting of potential participants in which I was informed of and understand the purposes of the study**
- **I was given an opportunity to ask questions**
- **I fully understand that I can withdraw at any time without prejudice**
- **I know that any information which might potentially identify me will not be used in published material**
- **I agree to participate in the study as outlined to me**
- **I agree to sign both the English and Arabic translations of this Consent Form**

Name of participant	**Signature**	**Date**

INFORMATION SHEET
Cultural Border Crossings in the UAE

Aims

Male Emirati high school students are coming to college generally unprepared linguistically or scholastically to be successful. One of the main reasons for this may lie in cultural border crossings that may explain the difficult transition from high school to college. I will be assessing and describing the interaction of three key elements – students, teachers and pedagogy – which contribute to a gamut of outcomes ranging from academic success as measured by graduation and employment rates to academic failure indicated by failing grades, high absenteeism, withdrawals, and low retention rates.

Finally, the most effective best practices in terms of department administration, teaching, and classroom management will be implemented and assessed over the duration of the research period. I hope that improvements in managing successful transitions of male Emirati students from high school to higher education college life will lead ultimately to increased numbers of dynamic young male citizens who will take their rightful place in their local communities. In so doing, they will achieve the vision of the country's founders, recently updated in the 2021 Vision document released by the nation's leadership late in 2010.

I have received Ethics and Research Approval from Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Australia, and the Higher Colleges of Technology-Fujairah – copies of these documents are available upon request.

Role of participants

After receiving written consent, the Level 2 Foundations students will participate in this research by completing surveys about their learning styles and motivation, as well as participate in Mental Toughness, a new program which is being launched this semester which involves engaging the students in problem solving and critical thinking using the college ropes course and other activities.

Three students will be asked to complete a daily video journal, detailing their daily lives at college and at home over the period of the research (10-15 mins per day). New Flip video cameras will be issued and upon completing the academic year, the cameras will be gifted to the students. In addition, I will arrange to meet the families of the three students during the research period to discuss the role and place of their son within the family unit.

The research period commenced at the start of this semester (5 Sept 2011) and will end at the conclusion of the academic year in June 2012.

Confidentiality and Security of Information

As per the "National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research" developed jointly by the National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, and the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee in 2007, I guarantee the participants' confidentiality and security of all research information gathered during the period of study. Names will be altered to protect the real identities of the participants including their location within the geographical study area. However, at any time, participants have the right to review the information I have collected including any conclusions drawn from the data. I will be holding regular participants meetings including family members to share the research to date and to answer any issue of concern.

Information will be stored on an external hard drive which will be locked in a storage cupboard during the study period and for five years after the thesis is submitted.

Voluntary Participation and Risks

Upon signing the Consent Form, all participants agree to participate in the research on a voluntary basis. They may withdraw at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. There are no risks at all to any participant taking part in the research (see section immediately above) - on the contrary, I hope to improve the college experience for new Foundations students arriving from the local high schools to such an extent that most of them will continue towards successful graduation and employment in the local area.

Contact details of the researcher/investigator

Here are the details of the researcher/investigator:
- Peter Hatherley-Greene
- 16 years working in the UAE with the Higher Colleges of Technology
- 6 years as Chair of Foundations at Dubai and Fujairah (2005-2011)
- Apartment 306, Foxhill 3, Motor City, Dubai, UAE
- Fujairah contact work telephone number: 09 2011 641 (Ms Maryam Zeyoudi)
- Home telephone number: 04 458 8400
- Mobile telephone number: 050 779 6194
- Email addresses: phgdxb@gmail.com

Contact details of the Human Research Ethics Committee - complaints
Should participants or their families wish to make a complaint on ethical grounds, please contact:
- Secretary of Human Research Ethics Committee
- c/- Office of Research and Development

- Curtin University of Technology
- GPO Box U1987
- Perth WA 6845
- Australia

Other contact details include the telephone number 9266 2784 and email
hrec@curtin.edu.au

This project has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics
Committee, number SMEC-29-11.

Peter Hatherley-Greene
27 September 2011

Appendix M

CEPA applicant trends 2009-2011

CEPA ENGLISH

	2009	2010	2011
CEPA<150	23.2%	23.2%	30.4%
CEPA>180	13.2%	10.4%	4.1%

CEPA ENGLISH <150

	2009	2010	2011
HCT	25.8%	25.4%	35.8%
UAEU	25.3%	26.4%	30.8%
ZU	12.0%	10.7%	17.3%

CEPA ENGLISH >=180

	2009	2010	2011
HCT	10.0%	6.8%	2.6%
UAEU	11.0%	7.8%	3.4%
ZU	25.9%	23.3%	9.1%
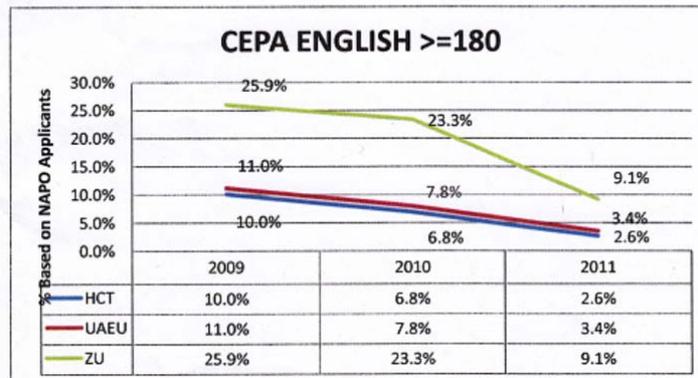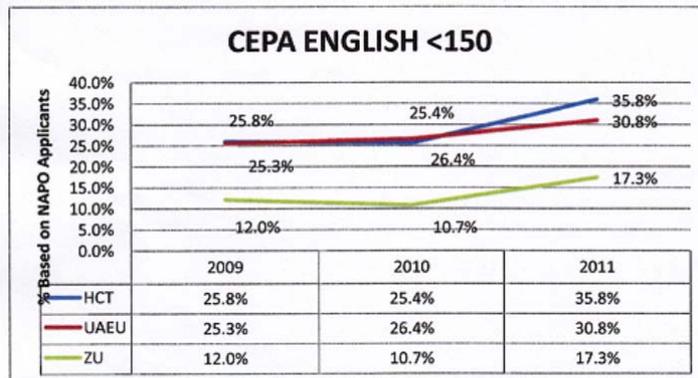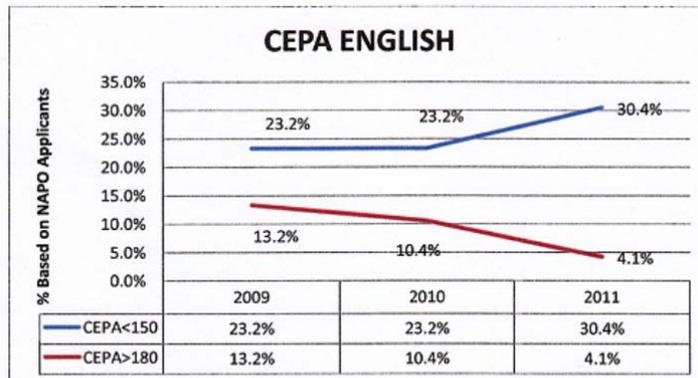
Source: Internal HCT document

Appendix N

Semester 1 Level 2 Schedule (names of most teachers have been removed)

Fujairah Men's College

Block: 09N200NF01 (FMC N Level 2 00NF Sec 01)

Effective Date: 18-Apr-2012

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
0800-0850	36501 FND R020 I01 09A 218L	36506 FND W020 I01 09A 221L	36506 FND W020 I01 09A 219L	36501 FND R020 I01 09A 218L	36510 FND S020 I01 09A 221L
0900-0950	36501 FND R020 I01 09A 218L	36506 FND W020 I01 09A 221L	36506 FND W020 I01 09A 219L	36501 FND R020 I01 09A 218L	
1000-1050					36506 FND W020 I01 09A 221L
1100-1150	36506 FND W020 I01 09A 222L	36510 FND S020 I01 09A 218L	36501 FND R020 I01 09A 218L		36501 FND R020 I01 09A 218L
1200-1250	36506 FND W020 I01 09A 222L	36510 FND S020 I01 09A 218L	36501 FND R020 I01 09A 218L	36510 FND S020 I01 09A 218L -------- 36510 FND S020 I01 09A 218L Thomas Earp Jr.	36501 FND R020 I01 09A 218L
1300-1350			36510 FND S020 I01 09A 218L	36510 FND S020 I01 09A 218L -------- 36510 FND S020 I01 09A 218L Thomas Earp Jr.	
1500-1550			31231 NCHR 0001 I02		
1600-1650			31231 NCHR 0001 I02		

Note: W=writing; R=reading; S=speaking (oral communications); NCHR = non-credit hour assigned to CPR^{+}

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Appendix O

New student attrition breakdown 2011-2012

Summary

Level	Day 1	Last Day	Comments on Last Day Students
1	59	2	L1 repeaters
2	32	10	From L1 & L2 repeaters
3	17	9	From L2 & L3 repeaters
4	8	4	From L3
BAS		7	Moved to BAS
TOTAL	**116**	**32**	**84 new students 'left' during the academic year**

Notes: **BAS** = 1st year of the Bachelor's degree; **Day 1** = 4 September 2011; **Last Day** = 7 June 2012

Attrition Statistics

Level	Day 1	Last Day	Loss	% Loss
1	59	2	-57	97%
2	32	10	-22	69%
3	17	9	-8	47%
4	8	4	-4	50%
BAS	N/A	7	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	**116**	**32**		

Attrition Breakdown of New Student Intake (*n*=116) as at 7 June 2012

Status	Numbers	%	Comments
Enrolled	32	28%	Remained until last day
Failed	6	5%	Left end of Semester 1 – all six from Level 1
WO	25	22%	Did not show on Day 1
Withdrawals	53	45%	See level details below
TOTAL	**116**	**100%**	

Level and withdrawal status details of new student withdrawals 2011-2012 (*n*=53)[*]

Status	Details	L1	L2	L3	L4
WA	Withdrawn for academic reasons	4	0	0	0
WD	Withdrawn within add/drop period	24	2	1	0
WF	Withdrawn with penalty	6	3	1	3
WW	Withdrawn without penalty	3	5	0	1
TOTAL		**37**	**10**	**2**	**4**

Notes:
WA = students who do not maintain a satisfactory rate of progress are required to withdraw
WD = students may withdraw within the first three weeks (add/drop) of the semester without penalty

WF = students withdrawing after three weeks into the semester will receive a penalty
WW = for exceptional medical or personal reasons, students may be withdrawn without penalty
*The other 31 students consist of six Level 1 students who failed at the end of Semester 1 and 25 students who did not show up at all to college within the first 20 days

Appendix P

PDA Posters

Attendance

Don't Cheat

Appendix Q

FMC Ropes Course – March 2012

CPR facilitators conducting
initial safety session

Attached to a safety harness, a student
climbs up on to the 'Power Pole'

Student stands on top of
the 'Power Pole' prior to the
'Leap of Faith' to the trapeze

A successful 'leap of faith'
towards the trapeze rung!
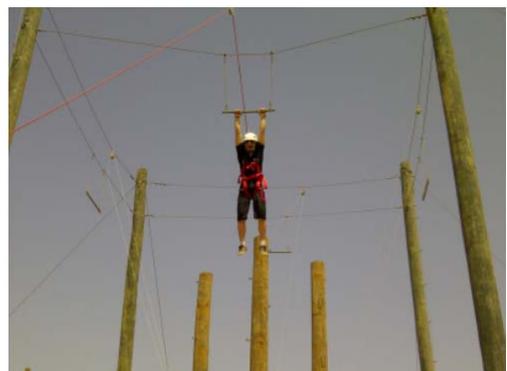
Appendix R

CPR Attendance and Participation – Semester 2, 2012

	Week 3		Week 4		Week 5		Week 6		Week 7	
	Attendance	Participation	Attendance	Participation	Attendance	Participation	Attendance	Participation	Attendance	Participation
Level 1 class size	11	11	9	4	9	7	8	7	8	8
	11	11	4	4	7	7	7	7	8	8
	100%	100%	44%	100%	78%	100%	88%	100%	100%	100%
Level 2 class size	30	20	29	23	22	15	22	15	20	17
	20	20	23	23	15	15	15	15	17	14
	67%	100%	79%	100%	68%	100%	68%	100%	85%	82%
Level 3 class size	38	28	39	39	36	23	37	9	37	35
	28	27	39	39	23	12	9	9	35	21
	74%	96%	100%	100%	64%	52%	24%	100%	95%	60%
Level 4 class size	22	19	12	9	11	7	11	6	22	21
	19	15	9	9	7	5	6	6	21	17
	86%	79%	75%	100%	64%	71%	55%	100%	95%	81%

CPR Attendance (weeks 3-7), Semester 2, 2012

CPR Participation (weeks 3-7), Semester 2, 2012
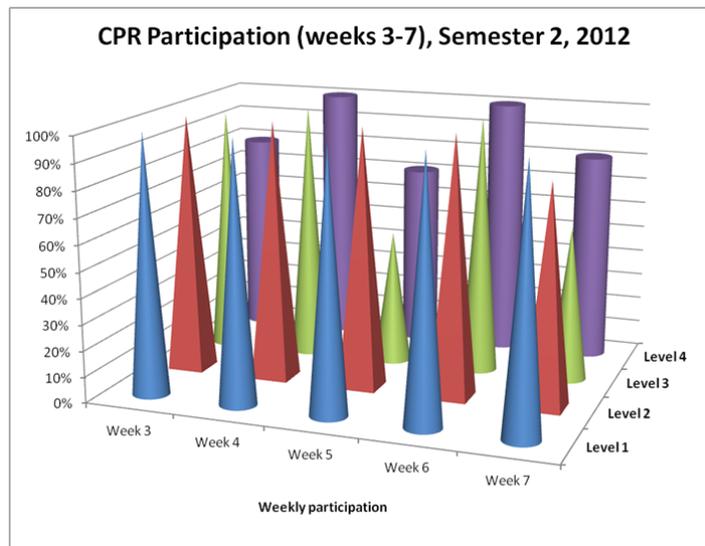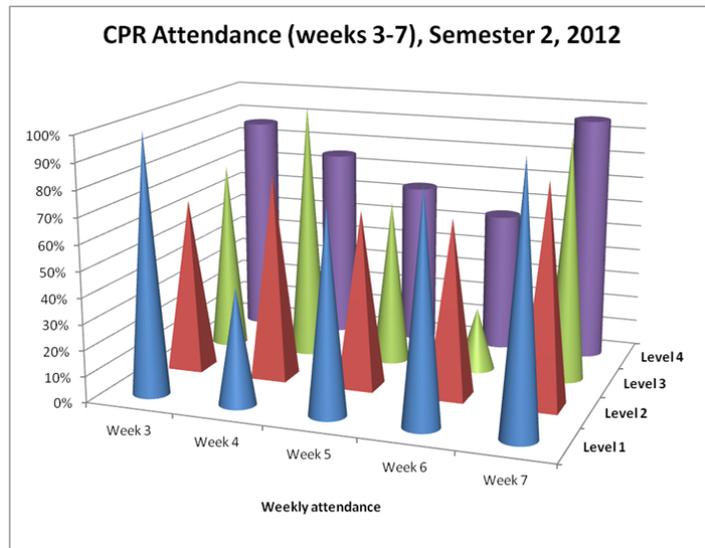
Appendix S

CPR Post-Activity IMI Survey

Student name: _____ **ID:** _____

Activity: _____ **Date:** _____

For each of the following statements, please indicate <u>how true it is for you</u>, using the following scale 1 to 5 (only tick one box per statement):

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
		Not at all true		Somewhat true		Very true
1	I enjoyed doing this activity very much					
2	It was important to me to do well at this task.					
3	I believe this activity could be of some value to me.					
4	I feel close to the trainer.					
5	I was pretty skilled at this activity.					
6	I believe doing this activity could be beneficial to me.					
7	I tried very hard on this activity.					
8	I put a lot of effort into this.					
9	This activity was fun to do.					
10	I think this is an important activity.					
11	I was anxious while working on this task.					
12	I would be willing to do this again because it has some value to me.					
13	I did this activity because I wanted to.					
14	I felt pressured while doing these.					
15	While I was doing this activity, I was thinking about how much I enjoyed it.					
16	After working at this activity for awhile, I felt pretty competent.					
17	I felt very tense while doing this activity.					
18	I believe I had some choice about doing this activity.					
19	I felt like I could really trust the trainer.					
20	I am satisfied with my performance at this task.					

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix T

CPR Course Evaluation

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about CPR by placing a mark in the appropriate box as indicated from the choices below:

SA =Strongly Agree   **A** = Agree   **N** = Neither Agree or Disagree   **D** = Disagree   **SD** = Strongly Disagree

1. The activities in CPR were engaging.
2. The purpose of the activities in CPR was clear.
3. The activities in CPR were practical.
4. The activities in CPR increased my understanding of the lesson to be learned.
5. The activities in CPR suit the way I like to learn.
6. The activities in CPR help me understand how I can do better.
7. CPR shows me how what I learn links to everyday life.
8. CPR motivates me to learn.
9. CPR shows me how to take responsibility for my own learning.
10. CPR is designed to help me learn.
11. The activities in CPR encourage me to participate actively in class.
12. CPR has helped me improve my ability to communicate with others.
13. CPR has helped me improve my ability to complete a project.
14. CPR has helped me increase my self-awareness.
15. CPR has helped me improve my self-confidence.
16. CPR has increased my confidence in my ability to achieve my goals.
17. CPR has helped me increase my awareness of my goals.
18. CPR has helped me improve my ability to face a difficult task.
19. Overall, I am satisfied with CPR.

COMMENTS: Please share your comments to the questions below:

1. What have you learned and/or gained from CPR?
2. What do you like most about CPR?
3. What do you like least about CPR?
4. How could CPR be improved?

Appendix U

Major changes to Foundations since 2005

Note: the list below is a product of my memory, old emails and documents, and discussions with current and former HCT colleagues. However, the responsibility for the accuracy of the list is solely mine.

1. Prior to 2005

    All four English skills were delivered and assessed separately. All four skills had to be passed (60%) to move into the programs (no grade aggregation). Students could resit failed skills.

2. 2005 – English aggregated skills weighting for final exam introduced

3. 2006 – major change in assessment - no resits, automatic borderline pass review process introduced

    Changes to resit exam policy for Diploma Foundations

    Changes to Math progression into Higher Diploma programs

4. 2007 – no change

5. 2008 – introduction of prior experiential learning policy

    New Foundations program structure is proposed

6. 2009 – English exit standards set by Academic Central Services (ACS);

    subjects other than English exit standards set by each campus

7. 2010 – New Foundations is launched – five new English skills strands/courses (speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar) to be separately delivered and assessed. Computing and Personal Development courses subsumed within English and Math.

    UAEU students began attending HCT Foundations programs.

8. 2011 – New Foundations – five strands become three strands (reading, writing, speaking in Semester 2)

    HEATe trialled.

9. 2012 – HEATe cancelled.

    UAEU students cease attending HCT Foundations programs.

    New Foundations – return to a single integrated course

Appendix V

The New Foundations program matrix as at September 2010 (launch date)

NEW FOUNDATIONS (23 hrs/wk)							
ENGLISH COURSES						**MATH COURSES @ 4 – 5 hrs/wk**	**COMP. LIT. @ 64 hrs total**
LEVELS	Grammar	Reading	Spoken English	Vocabulary	Writing		
4	√ 4	√ 4	√ 3	√ 3	√ 4		
3	√ 4	√ 4	√ 3	√ 3	√ 4	√ Math 2 ↑	Comp Lit
2	√ 3	√ 4	√ 3	√ 4	√ 4	√ Math 1	
1	√ 4	√ 4	√ 4	√ 6			

- all 19 English boxes have to be ticked off through
  - exemption via external equivalencies or placement tests
  - taking the course and passing it with an aggregate of 60% (coursework and common assessment)
- suggested guidelines for English course hours indicated in each cell
- exit Foundations with IELTS academic band 5.0 (no band below 4.5) and pass all Level 4 courses
- placement into the Math courses will be made through a placement test
- students may be moved between levels and out of Foundations within the 1st 20 days of the semester
- failing a course means the student must repeat the entire course again
  - possible 4-week intensive course in summer
- students may only fail any English course twice
- students must pass a lower level course as a pre-requisite to the higher level
- students must pass Level 1 English to start Math I
- maximum time to complete the program = 4-5 semesters (approx. 2 years)

Notes: in the 2nd Semester starting January 2011, the five English courses became three courses – writing, reading, and spoken English with grammar and vocabulary subsumed into the reading and writing courses.

From September 2012, Math I was only offered to Level 3 students and above, giving more English hours to the lower level courses.

From September 2012, Computer Literacy hours were largely subsumed into the English courses.