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Organizational Perspective On Implementing The Residential Curriculum Approach: An Ethnographic Case Study

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ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON IMPLEMENTING THE RESIDENTIAL CURRICULUM APPROACH: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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DEDICATION

I proudly dedicate this dissertation to my dear family members, those by birth and those

by choice. I will forever be grateful to each of you for your love and support.

"Let us be grateful to people who make us happy.

They are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."

Marcel Proust

I eagerly share this dissertation with ACPA's Residential Curriculum Institute

community – past, present, and future. May we continue to learn with and from one

another's insights and experiences.

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I feel blessed to have the privilege to learn and grow in the company of many loving and inspiring human beings. You all know who you are, and know that I will always be ready to cheer you on in pursuit of your life's dreams.

ABSTRACT

How does a college or university housing department adopt and adapt to a new curricular approach? This qualitative descriptive case study describes how one, mid-size, co-educational residence life department in the Midwestern region of the United States adopted the residential curriculum approach based on "The 10 Essential Elements of a Residential Curriculum" (The 10EERC) that are a foundational aspect of the content discussed at the ACPA – College Student Educators International's annual Residential Curriculum Institute (RCI). This study is the first empirical research published on the residential curriculum approach. Additionally, there is a deficit in existing literature on Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations – Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic – from a qualitative perspective in campus housing departments. The goal of this study is to determine conditions that contribute to effective practice, thereby positioning housing and residence life departments to contribute to, and enhance, student gains towards learning and development in on-campus living and learning environments.

Research questions for the study address changes that occurred in the residence life unit when adopting the residential curriculum approach, participants' perceptions of positives and challenges in the transition to the approach, and how residence life staff characterize their experience of adopting the approach. Data collection included a site visit for semi-structured interviews with professional and graduate staff, focus groups

with student staff and student leaders affiliated with the department's Residence Hall Association, a photo activity, and document analysis.

Just as the human experience is complex, such is the case in organizations with competing institutional and departmental priorities, distinct staff roles and turnover, and human emotions. Findings reflect that institutional values influence the design of educational practices and tools and that participants reported positive experiences and challenges with communication. The dichotomy in participants' accounts reveals the opportunity for transparency and inclusion of student leaders in departmental changes. Implications may inform (1) practice in housing and residence life departments, (2) graduate preparation programs and assistantships, (3) functional units in student affairs, (4) divisions of student affairs, (5) ACPA's RCIs, and (6) The 10EERC. A new organizational tool incorporating Bolman and Deal's (2014) four frames is presented.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACPA .... College Student Educators International

CA ....Community Advisor

CHO ....Chief Housing Officer

CRL ....Coordinator of Residence Life

GHC ....Graduate Hall Coordinator

MSU ....Midtown State University

RAA .... Residential Academic Ambassador

RCI ....Residential Curriculum Institute

RCP ....Residential Curriculum Playbook

The10EERC ...."The10 Essential Elements of a Residential Curriculum"

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Your chief housing officer scheduled a meeting for tomorrow at 1:00 p.m.

Imagine the possibilities of what will be discussed. You have served in your mid-level

position with residential learning initiatives for approximately one month. While you

have learned much from conversations and observations, you are eager to get to work on

implementing what you know from your experience as a practitioner. Fast forward to the

next day at 1:00 p.m. Your chief housing officer shares updates from a recent division of

student affairs directors' meeting. The vice president of student affairs announced that

two new public-private partnerships[1] are scheduled to open near campus in one year and

will feature luxurious amenities such as a spa, a movie theater, and a gourmet eatery.

Managers, rather than individuals with master's degrees in student personnel services,

counseling, or related fields, may staff these facilities. Additionally, the chief housing

officer reported that the president and the provost of the institution are worried about the

explosion in online courses. They wonder about the viability of student affairs programs

and services if students become further engrossed in online environments and leave the

institution to pursue an online degree.

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[1] According to Bayless, Wilhelm, & Wills (2013), a public-private partnership, or private-private partnership for private educational institutions, is, "a cooperative venture between a public institution and the private sector to provide facilities or services to the institution through a long-term contractual agreement. Every public-private partnership involves some level of transfer of ownership from the public institution to the private sector. Likewise, there are is a transfer of risk and responsibility or control" (p. 121).

The senior leadership within with the student affairs division has been charged with demonstrating how student affairs programs and services can continue to contribute to the institutional mission and to student learning. You and your chief housing officer agree that the landscape of residential learning must dramatically change. It is crucial that residential learning demonstrate value-added to the institutional mission and provide a transformational learning environment for your on-campus students as described in *Learning Reconsidered I* (Keeling, 2004). You think that the conversation has ended, but when you learn that your travel arrangements have been made to attend the ACPA – College Student Educators International's annual RCI, you realize the dialogue has just begun. Your chief housing officer perceives the curricular approach to residential education to be a nationally emerging practice worthy of investigation, and you have been selected to be the investigator.

Background on the Residential Curriculum Approach

The residential curriculum approach originated at the University of Delaware. Dr. Kathleen Kerr, Executive Director of Residence Life and Housing, and Dr. Jim Tweedy, Senior Associate Director, authored *Beyond Seat Time and Student Satisfaction: A Curricular Approach to Residential Education* (2006), which featured the University of Delaware's journey of adopting a residential curriculum. The message at the 1996 Student Learning Institute about the potential of divisions of student affairs to adopt the curricular approach to design student learning experiences inspired the residential curriculum approach (Kerr & Tweedy, 2006). Kerr and Tweedy (2006) also acknowledged that their vision for the residential curriculum was influenced by reflecting on previous contributions to student affairs literature including, but not limited to, the

Student Learning Imperative (ACPA, 1994), Barr and Tagg's (1995) *From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education*, Bloland, Stamatakos, and Rogers' (1996), *Redirecting the Role of Student Affairs to Focus on Student Learning*, and *Learning Reconsidered* (ACPA & NASPA, 2004). Kerr and Tweedy (2006) described the observation of adopting the residential curriculum approach as:

> When we shifted our focus to what we teach, how we teach it, and how our students learn, combined with a consideration of every student's approach to and purposes for learning, and away from attendance statistics, we realized that traditional programming as the primary educational vehicle was not effective…we had focused on exposure rather than learning… The challenge to hold ourselves accountable for intentional, planned, and structured learning experiences moved us from an exposure to a learning paradigm. (pp. 10-11)

After reflection on the main points conveyed in *Beyond Seat Time and Student Satisfaction: A Curricular Approach to Residential Education* (Kerr & Tweedy, 2006), in 2009, Kerr and colleagues drafted "The 10 Essential Elements of a Residential Curriculum" (Edwards & Gardner, 2015; K. Kerr, personal communication, March 30, 2016). Herein, I use the acronym The 10EERC to reference these tenets. When asked how The 10EERC were derived, Kerr shared:

> I wrote them. In the convention center in 2009 at UNH during that RCI (Keith [Edwards] was there), based on the Kerr & Tweedy (2006) article, so that we (the 2009 RCI faculty) could clarify for participants what exactly a Residential Curriculum Model included. Gardner and Edwards began to include them

subsequently in their plenary session (K. Kerr, personal communication, March 30, 2016).

To guide practice nationally, the residential curriculum approach is undergirded by The 10EERC (Edwards & Gardner, 2015; K. Kerr, personal communication, March 30, 2016)[2]. The 10EERC are:

1. Directly connected to your institution's mission (archeological dig);

2. Learning outcomes are derived from a defined educational priority (i.e., leadership, citizenship, etc.);

3. Based on research and developmental theory – not just our intuition;

4. Learning outcomes drive development of educational strategies (mapping);

5. Programs may be one type of strategy – but not the only one;

6. Student staff members play key roles but are not the educational experts;

7. Represents sequenced learning (by-month and by-year);

8. Stakeholders are identified and involved;

9. Plan is developed through review process that includes feedback, critique, transparency (Curriculum Review Committee, etc.); and

10. Assessment is essential for measuring the achievement of the learning outcomes and can be used to test the effectiveness and efficiency of strategies for program review and accountability.

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2 Edwards & Gardner (2015) and Kerr (K. Kerr, personal communication, March 30, 2016) are cited as the primary sources for The 10EERC. The following authors included The 10EERC in scholarship, and are included in this dissertation to provide context for The 10EERC as no empirical research has been conducted on the topic to date: Brown, n.d.; Edwards & Gardner, 2015; Kennedy, 2013; Shushok, Arcelus, Finger, & Kidd, 2013.

Selected scholars referenced Kerr and Tweedy's (2006) work regarding the residential curriculum. Blimling (2015), a scholar-practitioner, acknowledged, "Among the first to write about residential curricula were Kerr and Tweedy (2006), who explored the effectiveness of traditional RH [residence hall] programming at the University of Delaware" (p. 234). Blimling (2015) offered the following perspective on the residential curriculum approach:

> One way to think about educating students in RHs [residence halls] is to consider the combined effort as a residential curriculum. In the same way that faculty design courses to meet the educational requirements of an academic degree, residence educators can create learning experiences to meet the educational goals of RHs. (p. 234)

Further, Blimling (2015) explained:

> The idea of intentional goal-directed learning experiences, designed to create a curriculum-based approach to educational engagement is grounded in progressive theory and research about student learning. (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Blimling, Whitt, & Associates, 1999; Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002; Keeling, 2004, 2006; Kuh, Kinzie, Bridges, et al., 2006; Kuh et al., 2005)

Shushok, Arcelus, Finger, and Kidd (2013), also practitioner-scholars, acknowledged Kerr and Tweedy's (2006) article, claiming it "added to the arguments made by Keeling by focusing on their application within campus housing operations" (p. 33). The *Learning Reconsidered* publication, a seminal document in the field of student affairs, is described in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Additionally, Brown (2012) cited that the

Residential Curriculum Model was first implemented at the University of Delaware and described in Kerr and Tweedy's (2006) publication.

Annual ACPA Residential Curriculum Institute

ACPA hosts the annual Residential Curriculum Institute (RCI). ACPA has proprietary rights for RCI, which is a revenue generating professional development institute offered by and "owned by" ACPA (K. Kerr, personal communication, March 30, 2016). The University of Delaware hosted the inaugural RCI in 2007 (Brown, n.d). The title of the gathering was, "From Just Residential to Resident Intentional: Developing a Curricular Approach to Residence Life" (Brown, n.d.). Brown (n.d.), a RCI faculty member currently, but not in 2007, described the purpose of the annual RCI in his blog:

> The RCI is a professional development opportunity offered by ACPA-College Student Educators International and sponsored by its Commissions for Housing and Residence Life and for Assessment and Evaluation. Initiated in 2007, the Institute provides an overview and training on how to start a residential curriculum and offers advanced tracks for schools already implementing the model [a residential curriculum based on ACPA's 10EERC]. Each year, schools are also selected as "Showcase Schools" or exemplars that have more highly developed curricula.

Kerr was serving as the Chair of ACPA's Commission for Housing and Residential Life (CHRL) at the time. The CHRL was the only sponsor for RCI 2007 (K. Kerr, personal communication, June 29, 2015).

The data on attendance at annual ACPA RCIs from 2007 to 2015 helps illustrate interest in the residential curriculum approach. The ACPA International Office staff

provided the data, in Table 1.1, that was gathered from annual RCI evaluations (C. McRoberts, personal communication, May 5, 2015 and S. Walters, personal communication, October 27, 2015). I calculated there were 288 unique institutions that attended ACPA RCIs during the period of 2007 to 2015.

Table 1.1

Participation at the Annual RCIs

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
U.S. Institutions	35	25	67	61	55	56	66	62	80
International Institutions	1	1	0	1	6	5	1	6	5
U.S. Participants	68	54	107	105	128	139	182	174	243
International Participants	6	9	0	1	15	9	1	8	8
Total Participants	74	63	107	106	143	148	183	182	251

Shushok, Arcelus, Finger, & Kidd (2013) shared that the annual ACPA RCI, "…provides student affairs professionals with the chance to discover the opportunities to connect their residential communities to the institution's educational mission and to begin to redesign their work to focus on student learning" (p. 33). The foundational question addressed by the residential curriculum model, as described in the Plenary at the annual ACPA RCI, is "What should students learn as a result of living in a residence hall community" (Edwards & Gardner, 2015)?

Summary of Residential Curriculum Approach

Although attendance at the annual ACPA's RCIs is increasing, indicating increased investment in the residential curriculum approach within institutions of higher education, the approach has not been without external critique. On July 16, 2008, The

National Association of Scholars (NAS) published a criticism of the University of Delaware's residential curriculum model and questioned whether student affairs professionals could be partners in the educational enterprise. The premise of NAS' arguments was that transformative learning was neither educationally sound nor the role of student affairs professionals. On August 17, 2008, ACPA Senior Scholars (comprised of nine individuals) issued a statement that emphasized a commitment to partnering with faculty to enhance student learning. These authors acknowledged that, "*The Student Learning Imperative"* was a progressive and controversial statement when ACPA issued it in 1994. The numerous scholarly references to "*The Student Learning Imperative*" are testament to its relevance and its influence on American higher education" (ACPA, 2008, para. 2). Further, ACPA's Senior Scholars acknowledged that, "Student affairs should continue to initiate conversation about enhancing student learning; we should listen carefully and engage our faculty colleagues so that their concerns can be addressed, resulting in more effective partnerships to enhance student learning" (ACPA, 2008, para. 4). In this spirit, residence life professionals at the University of Delaware annually present to the university faculty senate for approval of the program plan (residential curriculum) and recommendations prior to implementation (Blimling, 2015; K. Kerr, personal communication, July 10, 2015; Student Life Committee of the Faculty Senate, 2008).

In conclusion, the residential curriculum, or curricular approach to residential education, is an alternative to traditional residence hall programming (Blimling, 2015). The residential curriculum approach contrasts historic ways in which residence life units have approached the student experience in residence halls. For example, previous

approaches to residential education included, but were not limited to, the Intervention

Strategies Model from Morrill, Hurst, and Oetting (1980), which guided the following

three types of programming in the residence halls: (a) remedial programming; (b)

preventive programming; and (c) developmental programming, and Mosier's (1989) the

Health and Wellness Model, which influenced programming along the following six

dimensions: emotional, intellectual, physical, social, occupational, and spiritual

development. Additional models of past approaches to residential education are included

in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. Kennedy (2013), in a book chapter on programming and

education in residence halls, claimed, "Of all the models examined, the residential

curriculum is the emerging model in the field" (p. 68). The residential curriculum is a

proactive approach for enhancing residential students' learning and growth by aligning

the mission, goals, outcomes, and practices of a residence life department to those of the

respective institution (Edwards & Gardner, 2015; Kennedy, 2013; Shushok, Arcelus,

Finger, & Kidd, 2013; Kerr & Tweedy, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

Despite increased attendance over the years at ACPA's annual RCI, and inclusion

of international colleagues (Brown, n.d.), it is difficult to ascertain the number of

residence life departments that have adopted a curricular approach to residential

education based on The 10EERC. For the purposes of my study, I maintain that staff in

residence life units must commit to adhering to, or be working towards, The 10EERC to

constitute adopting a residential curriculum as discussed at ACPA's annual RCI. The

difficulty in ascertaining the number of institutions following the curriculum is a result of

the distribution of The 10EERC beyond participants that have attended a RCI.

Ultimately, the challenge of quantifying the number of institutions following a curricular approach to residential education, and a lack of research on the efficacy of The 10EERC, provides an opportunity for scholarship.

Despite investment from practitioners, many of whom serve as faculty for the annual RCI, there is only cursory mention of the concept of the residential curriculum in the literature (Blimling, 2015; Kennedy, 2013; Kerr & Tweedy, 2006; Shushok, Arcelus, Finger, & Kidd, 2013) and one blog (Brown, n.d. & 2012). Kerr and Tweedy's (2006) *Beyond Seat Time and Student Satisfaction: A Curricular Approach to Residential Education*, is the only literature on the residential curriculum approach in a peer-reviewed source. The content in existing publications, such as, (Blimling, 2015; Kennedy, 2013; Shushok, Arcelus, and Finger, & Kidd, 2013), is directed at practitioners and is not research-oriented; thus, there is an opportunity to examine the topic of residential curricula through empirical research. Except for portions of Kerr and Tweedy's (2006) article, there is a void in the literature about how housing and residence life departments adjust practices and resources when adopting the residential curriculum approach as defined by The 10EERC. I assert that there is a need to examine the conditions that can contribute to the effective adoption of the residential curriculum approach within a residence life unit, because effective adoption may produce positive student and institutional outcomes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to describe one department's experience with adopting the residential curriculum approach aligned with The 10EERC. The research questions for this study pertain to the types of changes in one residence life

unit at a mid-size, public university, when staff adopted the residential curriculum approach. Additionally, I seek to understand participants' perceptions of what was positive and challenging during adoption of the residential curriculum approach, and how residence life staff characterized their experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach through photos. Given my interest in bounding my study within one residence life department, I used Bolman and Deal's (2014) model on organizational frames to code and analyze data. Using Bolman and Deal's (2014) organizational frames afforded me the opportunity to analyze the data from four perspectives and to make recommendations for future research. To date, no peer-reviewed sources or research studies have been published on the implementation of The 10EERC. Thus, I intend to contribute scholarship that may influence practice within residence life organizations, thereby possibly assisting programs and services that contribute to institutional missions and student learning.

Significance of the Study

The increased financial costs of college have resulted in students, parents, taxpayers, senior administrators, employers, and others having increased expectations of the measurable return on investment for today's college graduates (Keeling, 2004). Numerous organizations, including The Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) and the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), have called for higher education institutions to produce graduates with specific employability outcomes (NACE, 2014). Given the amount and quality of time that students spend in residence halls, I argue that it only makes sense that housing units have the potential to contribute to providing students with skills that will enhance their employability.

Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991) extensive research on college students and their peers who did not attend college revealed that college had a statistically significant effect on nearly all dimensions studied. For example, research findings revealed that students, during college, make statistically significant gains in learning and cognition. In 2005, Pascarella and Terenzini published a synthesis of numerous studies published since the post-1990 research that related to the impact of living on campus. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) asserted that living on campus has a role in "maximizing the opportunities for social, cultural, and extracurricular engagement" (p. 603). Findings published in 1991 and 2005 indicated, "the residential impact is strongest in those living in settings purposefully structured to encourage students' encounters with people different from themselves and with ideas different from themselves and with ideas different from those they currently hold" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, p. 603). Additionally, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) reported, "The post-1990 research on the effects of residence on student persistence, degree completion, and educational attainment supports our earlier conclusion that students living on campus are more likely to persist to degree completion than are similar students living elsewhere" (p. 604). Regarding research on the net effects of on-campus residence, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) concluded:

> Place of residence has a clear bearing on the extent to which students participate in extracurricular activities, engage in more frequent interactions with peers and faculty members, and report positive perceptions of the campus social climate, satisfaction with their college experience, and greater personal growth and development. Abundant evidence in both of our reviews indicates that such

involvements positively influence persistence and that students who live in living-

learning centers are more likely, net of other factors, to persist than are similar

students in traditional housing arrangements. (p. 604)

Pascarella and Terenzini's (2005) post-1990s research revealed that merely living

on campus positively impacts student learning and development across various

dimensions. For example, the findings on dimensions such as students' educational

attainment and persistence support my study's significance in examining practice within

a residence life organization. Contrary to learning communities, in which only a

designated number of students participate, the premise of the residential curriculum

approach, as defined by use of The10EERC, is that that outcomes, goals, and strategies to

enhance students' learning and development are intended to benefit all students who live

on campus.

Given the cost of room and board, housing and residence life professionals must

be cognizant of how they view their roles in the academy and how resources are allocated

to contribute to the outcome of student learning (Keeling, 2004). Foundational to

contributing to student learning is that housing and residence life staff must view

themselves as educators and agents of their institution's mission. Thus, professionals'

practices must be congruent with their mental models on the role of residential education

(Senge; 1990; Shushok, Arcelus, Finger, & Kidd, 2013). Senge (1990) defined "mental

models" as,

deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that

influence how we understand the world and how we take action. Very often, we

are not consciously aware of our mental models or the effects they have on our behavior. (p. 8)

Further, Senge (1990) claimed that, "new insights fail to get put into practice because they conflict with deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting" (p. 174). Senge's (1990) notion of mental models aligns with understanding organizational practices or assumptions (Shushok, Arcelus, Finger, & Kidd, 2013). With regard to my study, knowledge about specific changes within residence life units may inform staff who are already engaged in the residential curriculum approach. Similarly, findings may provide insight into the staff members' experience, both positive and challenging, of executing changes related to adopting the residential curriculum approach. Moreover, findings may inspire staff members to adopt the residential curriculum approach. For example, chief housing officers may evaluate staff hiring and retention practices, evaluate allocation of resources such as funds and staff time, and address gaps in staff training and development. Ultimately, findings of my study can influence practices that deliver on alignment with institutional mission (Edwards & Gardner, 2015; Kennedy, 2013; Kerr & Tweedy, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Shushok, Arcelus, Finger, & Kidd, 2013) and employability outcomes (NACE, 2014), while honoring stewardship of resources.

Research Questions

Three research questions frame this study, conducted at a mid-size, public university. Each question pertains to the residential curriculum approach as discussed at ACPA's annual RCI. I assert staff in residence life units must commit to achieving, or be

working towards, The 10EERC to constitute adopting the residential curriculum approach. The research questions for the study are:

1. What changes occurred in the residence life unit when adopting the residential curriculum approach?

2. What were participants' perceptions of adopting a residential curriculum approach?

    a. What did the participants perceive as positive in this transition?

    b. What did the participants perceive as challenging in this transition?

3. In what ways did the residence life staff characterize their experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach?

Historical Context of American Higher Education and Collegiate Living

The historical roots of the "collegiate way of living" in U.S. higher education are fascinating and helpful in understanding the role of on-campus living environments today. Modeled after practice at Oxford and Cambridge, Thelin (2011) and Rudolph (1962, 1990) described the role of the early American colleges as places students would eat, sleep, pray, learn, play, and form friendships within a community environment that was intended for them to develop appreciation for serving the larger community. Thelin's (2011) premise was that the early years of American higher education, regarded as the Colonial era, emphasized the priority to transition "Christian Scholars" into "Gentleman Scholars" (p. 23), such that young men were prepared for leadership and public service. Further, Thelin (2011) argued that the American system of higher education was founded on the principles of student learning and character development.

The change in priorities within student housing since those early years revealed context for my study. Over time, the dominant role of residence halls has changed and has included foci ranging from surrogate parent to disciplinarian, to a space for community, to a hub with a captive audience that is ripe with educational opportunities (Schroeder & Mable, 1994). The four eras in student housing are:

- First, within the aforementioned Colonial era, tutors, and in later years, staff, served the role of *in loco parentis*, or surrogate parents to the young boys in all aspects of their existence while away at school (Frederiksen, 1993; Schuh in Rentz, 1996; Thelin, 2011).

- Second, the mid to late nineteenth century was the era of Germanic influence in universities in the U.S. Faculty placed emphasis on scientific expression and on research. During the mid to late nineteenth century, investing in the development of on-campus living environments was not a priority of higher education (Frederiksen, 1993; Schuh in Rentz, 1996; Thelin, 2011). Frederiksen (1993) shared that students were responsible for securing their own accommodations. The role of "housemothers" existed in the few residential units that had been established for students.

- The third era occurred towards the end of the nineteenth century and extended into the twentieth century. More private colleges provided housing for women (separate from men), and private funds afforded the expansion of on-campus housing options. The increased offering of campus activities led to a commitment to provide more on-campus housing for students (Schuh in Rentz, 1996).

- The Serviceman's Readjustment Act (1944), or the GI Bill of Rights, characterized the fourth era, post-World War II. This legislation allowed veterans who returned from war to enroll in institutions of higher education (IHEs) (Frederiksen, 1993; Schuh in Rentz, 1996). According to Frederiksen (1993), "The dormitories were built to house and feed students and to maximize the number of beds constructed for the dollars available, with little or no regard for the quality of students' educational experiences and personal development" (p. 172). Frederiksen (1993) shared that increased housing options were accompanied by increased attention from housing and student affairs professionals; they recognized that the housing options were not fulfilling the potential as living-learning centers. This era, with housing and student affairs professionals recognizing the potential of residence hall environments, represents a significant milestone in the history of the role of on-campus living environments. The mid- and late- 1990s involved the notion of consumerism. Students' and parents' expected those in on-campus housing departments to again serve as surrogate parents; this time with an increased emphasis on responsibility for monitoring students' safety with enforcement of residence hall policies (Frederiksen, 1993). Schuh (in Rentz, 1996) noted that students and parents demanded more amenities, such as cable, and more options for meals plans. Despite the divergent needs and interests of students and parents, Frederiksen (1993), offered a perspective that reflects the priority for on-campus living environments in the twenty-first century. Frederiksen (1993) claimed:

The closing decade of the twentieth century offers collegiate housing

professionals the opportunity to intentionally create residential learning

environments that will enhance the academic experience and enrich the

personal lives of the student residents. Individual student development is

now the central theme of residential living in American colleges and

universities. (p. 174)

The early years of American higher education, until the present, reflect change over time

in the role of residence halls at colleges and universities. Chapter 2 features how the

student affairs profession originated and the evolution of seminal documents in student

affairs. These seminal documents and messages influenced the role of residence life units

over time. Insight from these documents and messages will provide a foundation to

understanding why the residential curriculum is an alternative to traditional residence hall

programming (Blimling, 2015) and possibly an emerging model in the field of student

affairs (Kennedy, 2013).

Terms and Definitions

The following terms and definitions serve to orient the reader to the researcher's

lens on relevant concepts and resources for the scope of this study.

American College Personnel Association (ACPA) – College Student Educators

International: their mission statement reads, "ACPA supports and fosters college student

learning through the generation and dissemination of knowledge, which informs policies,

practices, and programs for student affairs professionals and the higher education

community" (http://www.myacpa.org/values). Thought leaders within this organization

developed the residential curriculum approach to include "The 10 Essential Elements of a

Residential Curriculum." Annually, the ACPA Commissions for Housing and Residence Life and for Assessment and Evaluation co-sponsor ACPA's RCI.

Emic Approach: the researcher centers and analyzes "people's own beliefs about their lives … words that the people use to characterize their own lives …" (Noblit, 1999, p. 12) in her research design. The emic approach allows the researcher to learn about the specifics of her participants' lives, or the case without a priori use of theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Yin, 2014).

Frames: "A frame is a mental model – a set of ideas and assumptions – that you carry in your head to help you understand and negotiate a particular "territory" (Bolman & Deal, 2014, p. 10). Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations include Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic.

High-Impact Practices: are teaching and learning practices that, "have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds. These practices take many different forms, depending on learner characteristics and on institutional priorities and contexts" (Kuh & Schneider, 2008, p. 9). "Educational research suggests increased rates of student retention and student engagement" (Kuh & Schneider, 2008, p. 9). Learning communities were one of the 10 high-impact practices referenced (Kuh & Schneider, 2008).

Housing and Residence Life: a department or unit at an institution of higher education that provides on-campus living arrangements for students and selected staff members. The structures of these departments vary based on the institutional mission, size, reporting structures, and other considerations. Typically, housing and residence life departments are auxiliaries, or revenue-generating entities. Some housing and residence

life departments report within the business services division, while others report within the division of student affairs of the respective institution.

Learning Organization: Senge (1990) defined learning organizations as "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together (p. 3). Garvin (1993) defined a learning organization as, "an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights" (p. 2, para. 11).

Living & Learning Communities: Shapiro and Levine (1999), in an effort to summarize related scholarship and to contribute to the literature, proposed the following characteristics of learning communities:

(a) Organizing students and faculty into smaller groups; (b) Encouraging integration of the curriculum; (c) Helping students establish academic and social support networks; (d) Providing a setting for students to be socialized to the expectations of college; (e) Bringing faculty together in more meaningful ways; (f) Focusing faculty and students on learning outcomes; (g) Providing a setting for community-based delivery of academic support programs; and (h) Offering a critical lens for examining the first-year experience" (p. 3).

Mental Models: Senge (1990) defined mental models as, "deeply held internal images of how the world works, images that limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting. Very often, we are not consciously aware of our mental models or the effects they have on our behavior" (p. 8).

Residence Life Staff: a concept used to refer to the staff who work, and in some cases also live, within residence life organizations. Depending on the institution where they are employed, professional staff have typically earned a master's degree in higher education and student affairs, counseling, or a related field. Professionals for this study are defined as senior administration, the chief housing officer, and mid-level residence life staff. Graduate staff are typically earning their master's degrees in higher education and student affairs, counseling, or a related field. They are serving an assistantship in residence life to gain skills for their future careers and, typically, to help offset costs of graduate school. Student staff, often referred to as resident assistants or advisors, are undergraduate students who live and work within a residence hall community.

Residential Curriculum: The residential curriculum, or curricular approach to residential education, is an alternative to traditional residence hall programming (Blimling, 2015) and "Of all the models examined [in her book chapter], the residential curriculum is the emerging model in the field" (Kennedy, 2013, p. 68). It is a proactive approach to enhance residential students' learning and growth by aligning the mission, goals, outcomes, and practices of a residence life department to those of the respective institution (Edwards & Gardner, 2015; Kennedy, 2013; Kerr & Tweedy, 2006; Shushok, Arcelus, Finger, & Kidd, 2013). Kerr and Tweedy's (2006) *Beyond Seat Time and Student Satisfaction: A Curricular Approach to Residential Education*, was the first article to define the residential curriculum based on experience at the University of Delaware.

The "10 Essential Elements of a Residential Curriculum:" (1) Directly connected to your institution's mission (archeological dig); (2) Learning outcomes are derived from a

defined educational priority (i.e. leadership, citizenship, etc.); (3) Based on research and developmental theory – not just our intuition; (4) Learning outcomes drive development of educational strategies (mapping); (5) Programs may be one type of strategy – but not the only one; (6) Student staff members play key roles but are not the educational experts; (7) Represents sequenced learning (by-month and by-year); (8) Stakeholders are identified and involved; (9) Plan is developed through review process that includes feedback, critique, transparency (Curriculum Review Committee, etc.); and (10) Assessment is essential for measuring the achievement of the learning outcomes and can be used to test the effectiveness and efficiency of strategies for program review and accountability (Edwards & Gardner, 2015; K. Kerr, personal communication, March 30, 2016). Herein, the acronym The 10EERC is used for this content.

Methodology

In this study, I use a multiple-embedded case study design that has increasingly been used to study school innovations. The context for my study is higher education and student affairs. The case is one specific residence life unit as an organization, and the embedded unit of analysis is the experiences of a variety of professionals and student leaders as they implemented a residential curriculum at their institution. To address my research questions, and to understand the layers within a bounded context, I conducted interviews, focus groups, document analysis, and used a photo and artifact activity. The multiple data collection strategies contributed to data triangulation (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014).

According to Yin (2014), a case study "investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries

between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). This qualitative study is considered a descriptive case study (Yin, 2014), as I try to describe for my reader the real life setting or context of a residence life unit and how the shift to a residential curriculum impacted the organization.

Situated Knowledge and Related Assumptions

In qualitative research, the researcher is expected to share his or her experiences, biases, and assumptions with the reader in order to demonstrate transparency and build trustworthiness (Glesne, 2011). In my current professional position at the University of South Carolina (UofSC), I am charged with leading our residential curriculum. This has been a signature hallmark of my professional experience thus far. I have learned more along the way about the students, my colleagues, and myself than I could have ever imagined would be possible.

From my practitioner's lens, and as a faculty member for the annual ACPA's RCI, I believe the implementation of a residential curriculum requires changes to professionals' general mental model (Senge, 1990) regarding the role of residence life units in the context of higher education. Previous models, within the notion of "residential education," did not emphasize the use of learning outcomes and sequenced strategies to facilitate students' learning and development (Blimling, 2015; Kerr & Tweedy, 2006). Thus, studying the lived experiences of professionals who have been involved with making the paradigm shift to a residential curriculum was new and unique.

I am particularly fond of Bolman and Deal's (2003) Four Frames of Organizations, as I believe the essence of each frame describes the phenomena within most organizations. All organizations involve and represent elements of the Structural,

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Political, Human Resources, and Symbolic Frames (Bolman & Deal, 2003). For the

scope of this study, I believe there are several practical matters related to the phenomena

of professionals' lived experience with the paradigm shift to a residential education.

Given my professional identity in my positionality, I found it was useful to consider the

implications of Bolman and Deal's four frames when coding and analyzing my data.

Study Limitations

To date, no research has been conducted on The10EERC. Practitioners who serve

as faculty at ACPA's annual RCI, many of whom are affiliated with the original pioneers

of the concept of the residential curriculum, have prioritized educating colleagues

domestically and internationally on the tenets of the residential curriculum approach.

The limited writings on residential curriculum, which are by practitioner-scholars, leave

some of the knowledge of residential curriculum as folklore; information is shared within

a community but with the risk for misrepresentation of facts. While I believe, as do other

RCI faculty, that The10EERC are undergirded by theory and research, there is no

research on the efficacy of these concepts as a model. Thus, it is inconclusive whether

this is an effective model for residential education. Additionally, there is no

accountability or assessment system to prevent institutions from following traditional

programming, or another model, while claiming they are adhering to The 10EERC.

Knowledge of organizational theory and models, such as Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four

Frames of Organizations, may help inform conditions that promote effective shifts in

approaches to a residential curriculum, such as with the adoption of The 10EERC.

Finally, qualitative research is not generalizable (Glesne, 2011), thus the findings from

conducting research at one institution cannot be assumed to hold true for all residence life departments.

Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the opportunity to contribute novel research regarding the residential curriculum approach as defined by The 10EERC. The purpose of this study is to determine the conditions that contribute to effective practice, thereby positioning housing and residence life departments to contribute to, and enhance, student gains towards learning and development in on-campus living and learning environments. Additionally, with the increase of off-campus properties luring students with expanded amenities, results from this study may inform chief housing officers and mid-level professionals of ways to increase the competitive advantage of on-campus living. Because most housing departments are revenue-generating auxiliary units, often they are expected to contribute funds for selected institutional programs and services. Thus, to maintain a competitive advantage over off-campus competitors, housing and residence life departments must be able to demonstrate value to students' learning and development. This, in turn, supports the institutional mission and contributes to the desired outcomes for today's college graduates.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There is a significant body of scholarship on a myriad of topics related to housing and residence life within institutions of higher education. The earliest writings on collegiate residential environments reflected practice in the nine colonial colleges, modeled after Oxford's and Cambridge's approaches to living and learning (Thelin, 2011). Throughout the decades, various approaches to residential education have increasingly emphasized the urgency of providing a value-added experience for student learning and development. Blimling (2015), acknowledged, "Among the first to write about residential curricula were Kerr and Tweedy (2006), who explored the effectiveness of traditional RH [residence hall] programming at the University of Delaware" (p. 234). Kennedy (2013) regarded the residential curriculum approach as an emerging model in the field of student affairs.

The purpose of this study is to describe one department's experience with adopting the residential curriculum approach aligned with the "The 10 Essential Elements of a Residential Curriculum" (The 10EERC). To date, there is no peer-reviewed-research on residential curricula, but writings of practitioner-scholars provide some context for the underpinnings of the residential curriculum approach. Except for Kerr and Tweedy's (2006) article, these writings (including one blog) debuted within the last three years. Further, no research has been published on the implementation of The 10EERC or the efficacy of these tenets within a housing and residence life department, specifically

within the residence life unit. Thus, I intend to contribute research that can influence

practice within residence life organizations and potentially enhance the contributions of

programs and services to the institutional mission and student learning.

This chapter features a review of literature to provide further context for the

relevance of my study. The following topics are featured to answer the study's research

questions: (a) the emergence of student affairs as a profession and the role of ACPA in

this study; (b) literature in student affairs that has influenced co-curricular education; (c)

the evolution of residential education approaches; and (d) organizational theory as

described by Senge's (1990) conceptual model of a learning organization and five

disciplines, Schein's (2004) description of organizational culture, and Bolman and Deal's

(2014) Four Frames of Organizations.

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The Profession of Student Affairs and
The American College Personnel Association

</div>

"Student Affairs is largely an American higher education invention" (Rhatigan as

cited in Barr, Desler, & Associates, 2000, p. 5.). Cowley (1937), as cited in Barr, Desler,

& Associates (2000), described the development of the Student Affairs profession as

dating back to 1890, when English professor LeBaron Russell Briggs was appointed a

student dean at Harvard. Briggs was an advocate for the holistic development of

students, both within and beyond the classroom. His steadfast belief in education

contributed to the shift from viewing Student Affairs professionals as service providers to

educators who play an integral role in carrying out the academic mission of the

institution. Barr, Desler, & Associates (2000) noted that the field of student affairs, and

the need for staff, more formally emerged in the early 1900s as deans of men and deans

of women assumed more responsibility for teaching within the traditional classroom

(Barr, Desler, & Associates, 2000). This departure from the notion of *in loco parentis*, or of professors focusing most as disciplinarians and surrogate parents, revealed a significant opportunity for student personnel staff to influence students' development beyond the classroom environments (Barr, Desler, & Associates, 2000) and advocated that Student Affairs staff should contribute to student learning experiences on their campuses. Additionally, the authors explained the important role Student Affairs staff had in intelligently and artfully educating faculty on student trends and learning strategies that can and should occur beyond the classroom. Rentz (1996) concurred and described how the student personnel movement combatted professors' impersonal views of the student experience by sharing,

> The Dean of Men and other "student personnel pioneers" valued the individuality of each student, were committed to the holistic development of students, and held an unshakeable belief in each student's unique potential for growth and learning. These values and beliefs would become the cornerstone of future statements of the field's mission and goals. (pp. 39-40)

This context on the emerging field of student personnel pioneers (Rentz, 1996) conveys how the student affairs profession, from its onset, valued student learning and development. Because my study involves content associated with an institute hosted by a professional association within student affairs, a brief historical account of that organization is provided below.

ACPA

The ACPA-College Student Educators International, a professional organization within Student Affairs, was founded in 1924 as the National Association of Appointment

Secretaries, retitled as 1929 as the National Association of Placement and Personnel

Officers, and then renamed in 1931 as The American College Personnel Association

(Nuss as cited in Barr, Desler, & Associates (2000). As cited in Nuss in Barr, Desler, &

Associates (2000):

> As a general rule, most professional associations perform the following functions:
> to conduct research, publish and disseminate research information, and opinion;
> provide educational training and professional development programs; advocate on
> behalf of public policy or broad professional issues affecting members; assist
> members with career development issues; promulgate standards for professional
> preparation and practice; and create opportunities for professional peers to
> interact. (American Society of Association Executives, 1988, p. 496)

Understanding this brief history of how ACPA originated, and its purpose as an

organization, reveals the underlying context for the Commissions for Housing and

Residence Life and for Assessment and Evaluation to co-sponsor the annual RCI.

Further, this background can help situate how and why practitioner-scholars have sought

to advance knowledge by creating The 10EERC. The intent of my study was to describe

one department's experience with adopting the residential curriculum; ideally, my

findings will generate interest within, and beyond, ACPA for what Kennedy (2013)

regarded as an emerging model in the field of student affairs.

In summary, this historical account on the development of student affairs as a

profession, and the development of ACPA as a professional organization, affords the

reader context for what will be reviewed in this chapter and my study. Further, the

insight gained from this research has the potential to provide context for several

foundational calls to action regarding undergraduate education reform for beyond-the-classroom settings.

Reform Literature Shaping Co-Curricular Education

Several seminal publications provided context for understanding the change, over time, in the role of residence life staff from acting as disciplinarians (Thelin, 2011) to serving as educators within the beyond-the-classroom setting (Blimling, 2015). The following brief overview of selected documents is provided to emphasize that both the evolving messages in these documents, and the continued advocacy of organizations and scholars, is important to frame the relevance of my study.

In 1937, the American Council on Education (ACE) published *The Student Personnel Point of View* (Rentz, 1996). ACE's standing as a national organization afforded its message credibility within the field of student affairs. Specifically, this report was regarded, as "the first statement of philosophy, purpose, and methods of practice that clearly established the foundation for the field's future growth and put its emphasis on students" (p. 43). In 1949, ACE revised the document to emphasize the importance of education within a democratic society, and for advanced knowledge to better social problems in society and through publications (Rentz, 1996). Both versions of *The Student Personnel Point of View* (ACE, 1937 & 1949) championed the importance of students being exposed to both within- and beyond-the-classroom experiences to enhance their learning and development.

Brown's (1972) monograph *Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education – A Return to the Academy*, "Challenged college administrators and student affairs professionals to "hold up the mirror" to each other to confront the incongruities

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between the stated goals of higher education and what is happening to students" (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 9). ACPA initiated a project titled, "Tomorrow's Higher Education Project (T.H.E) that examined Brown's (1972) perspective on student development as a philosophy of the profession (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Garland and Grace (1993) wrote how the T.H.E. project examined the student affairs profession's, "commitment to student development-the theories of human development applied to the postsecondary education setting – as a guiding theory, and the continued attempt to ensure that the development of the whole student was an institutional priority" (p. 6). In summary, Brown's (1972) stance on student learning as an institutional priority, and the T.H.E. Project promoted the notion:

> Student affairs educators take action on such issues as moving from a focus on the extracurriculum to an emphasis on the academic, improving teaching and learning experiences, reorganizing student affairs offices and functions, being accountable by conducting outcomes assessments, and developing new sets of competencies" (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 9).

These values are congruent with the residential curriculum approach as described at the annual ACPA RCI.

Chickering and Gamson's (1987) *Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education* introduced hallmark characteristics that would later provide a foundation for student affairs. These "good practices" for undergraduate education included: (1) Encourages contact between students and faculty; (2) Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students; (3) Encourages active learning; (4) Gives prompt feedback, (5) Emphasizes time on task, (6) Communicates high expectations, and (7)

Respects diverse talents and ways of learning. This work inspired the development of *The Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs* (ACPA, 1996b), which espoused that good practice in Student Affairs: (1) Engages students in active learning; (2) Helps students develop coherent values and ethical standards; (3) Sets and communicates high expectations for student learning; (4) Uses systematic inquiry to improve student and institutional performance; (5) Uses resources effectively to achieve institutional missions and goals; (6) Forges educational partnerships that advance student learning; and (7) Builds supportive and inclusive communities. Ultimately, these characteristics support the need for evolving trends in educational practices within on-campus residential environments. My study is intended to provide an understanding of how one department adopted philosophies and practices to better align with the notions set forth in literature such as these documents. Additionally, I seek to understand my participants' perceptions of these changes.

In 1994, scholars and practitioners within ACPA published *The Student Learning Imperative: Implications for Student Affairs*. This seminal document addressed the transformation of higher education, and ultimately served as a call to Student Affairs professionals to develop programs and services that would add value to the academic mission of higher education and enhance student learning and development (ACPA, 1994). *The Student Learning Imperative* advocated that student learning and development occurred within and beyond the classroom, and that the physical, psychological and interpersonal environments impacted the students' ability to learn and develop (ACPA, 1994). Additionally, this document illustrated the characteristics of learning-oriented student affairs divisions, which could then influence practice within the

various functional units such as housing and residence life departments. For the purposes of this dissertation, it is important to note that ACPA is regarded as an organization that influences the professional development of beyond-the-classroom educators in higher education. Further, ACPA's mission affirms its commitment to promoting knowledge through scholarship and sharing of promising practices such as The 10EERC. The limited writings on residential curricula reflected the influence that *The Student Learning Imperative* had in furthering philosophies and practices within housing and residence life departments. Based on daily headlines within *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, one could argue that higher education is again "in the throes of major transformation" (ACPA, 1994). Thus, scholarship on the lived experiences of one housing and residence life department's experience with adopting the residential curriculum approach could yield insight into practice that supports institutional and student learning outcomes.

Barr & Tagg (1995), in *From Teaching to Learning*, challenged the notion of the Instruction Paradigm versus the Learning Paradigm. Published one year after *The Student Learning Imperative* (ACPA, 1994), the researchers advocated that institutions and students share responsibility for co-producing learning experiences both within and beyond the classroom. Further, Barr and Tagg (1995) claimed, with the Learning Paradigm, "...a college's purpose is not to transfer knowledge but to create environments and experiences that bring students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves, to make students members of communities of learners that make discoveries and solve problems" (p. 15). Barr and Tagg (1995) concluded that the Learning Paradigm better situates practice that will contribute to the institution's objectives, including but not limited to, retention, increased graduation rates, and student preparedness for post-college

life. The foundational question addressed by residential curricula, is "What should students learn as a result of living in a residence hall community" (Edwards & Gardner, 2015). Barr and Tagg (1995) posed a related question, "What knowledge, talents, and skills do college graduates need in order to live and work fully" (p. 25). Kerr and Tweedy (2006) referenced Barr and Tagg's (1995) learning paradigms in describing the University of Delaware's residential curriculum as a method to enhance residential students' learning and development. Similarly, they regarded Bloland, Stamatakos, and Rogers' (1996) work as contributing to their vision for, and experience with, curricular approach to residential education.

Bloland, Stamatakos, and Rogers (1996), in *Redirecting the Role of Student Affairs to Focus on Student Learning*, re-emphasized the tenants of *The Student Learning Imperative* (ACPA, 1994). Their review of the history of higher education clarified how the field of Student Affairs transformed from the sole focus on human (student) development to that of promoting student learning beyond the classroom. Bloland, Stamatakos, and Rogers (1996) argued that the pendulum shifted too far, resulting in student development overshadowing commitment to students' educational development. As such, environments beyond the traditional classroom were cited as arenas where student learning outcomes could be promoted and championed by Student Affairs staff to align practices with the institutional mission. Bloland, Stamatakos, and Rogers (1996) reiterated that the role of Student Affairs staff was not to duplicate the efforts of faculty, but rather to complement the goals of the undergraduate curriculum. With regards to student learning, three aspects of any learning environment were to include the what of learning (content), the why of learning (rationale), and the how of learning

(methodology). This work would, perhaps unknowingly at that time, eventually help shape a key claim to support the development of The 10EERC. Participants of ACPA's annual RCI are encouraged to read Bloland, Stamatakos, and Rogers (1996) article prior to attending RCI because it provides a thorough description of the underpinning philosophies aligned with the curricular approach to residential education.

In 1998, the ACPA and the NASPA published *Powerful Partnerships: A Shared Responsibility for Learning* (AAHE, ACPA & NASPA, 1998) to further articulate the importance of Student Affairs practitioners' partnerships with faculty and other constituents within academic affairs. The overarching message of this report was perhaps an impetus for the increased emphasis on what would result in an explosion of research pertaining to student-faculty relationships in beyond-the-classroom environments, including residence halls. For the purposes of my study, this literature affirmed the role that residence life units could have in complementing the academic mission of the institution.

Blimling (2001), in *Uniting Scholarship and Communities of Practice in Student Affairs*, urged student affairs professionals to consider the intersections of four communities of practice in student affairs. Two of the communities, student administration and student services, were derived from management philosophy, while the other two communities, student learning and student development, were derived from educational philosophy. Blimling (2001) advocated, "that multiple communities of practice may populate the same student affairs organization at a particular university" (p. 390). Relevant to my proposed study, Blimling (2001), argued housing and residence life organizations are often confronted with the dichotomy of service versus education. This

work supports the previously cited literature that claims student affairs practice, and in this case residential curricula, must be implemented to contribute to the institutional mission and student learning.

In 2004, one decade after the distribution of *The Student Learning Imperative: Implications for Student Affairs* (ACPA, 1994), senior scholars and practitioners involved in ACPA and NASPA authored *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience* (Keeling, 2004). In *Learning Reconsidered* (Keeling, 2014), scholars regarded learning as, "a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates *academic learning* and *student development*, processes that have often been considered separate, and even independent, of each other" (p. 4). Authors of this document acknowledged much of the literature that had influenced higher education and student affairs to that point. Perhaps one of the most salient messages of this piece was the emphasis on transformative learning and placing students at the center of experiences versus simply conducting transactions with students. The authors underscored the stance that campuses are not bifurcated spaces, meaning that student learning occurs within and beyond the traditional classroom. Finally, the following seven broad, desired learning outcomes for transformative liberal education included: cognitive complexity; knowledge acquisition, integration, and application; humanitarianism; civic engagement; interpersonal and intrapersonal competence; practical competence; and persistence and academic achievement (Keeling, 2014). In 2006, *Learning Reconsidered II: A Practical Guide to Implementing a Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience* (Keeling, 2006) debuted with tools and lessons learned at numerous institutions on developing and assessing learning outcomes. Ultimately, the claims in both *Learning Reconsidered I*

(Keeling, 2004) and *Learning Reconsidered II* (Keeling, 2014) support the notion that

functions and experiences within the residence hall environment can be designed to

complement the mission, goals, and outcomes of undergraduate education. The premise

of the residential curriculum model is that it is a proactive approach for enhancing

residential students' learning and growth by aligning the mission, goals, outcomes, and

practices of a residence life department to those of the respective institution (Edwards &

Gardner, 2015; Kennedy, 2013; Kerr & Tweedy, 2006; Shushok, Arcelus, Finger, &

Kidd, 2013).

Whitt (2006) proposed that beyond-the-classroom experiences were equally

important as within-the-classroom experiences to students' learning and development.

Whitt (2006) reported 10 findings from Project DEEP (2005), a foundational, in-depth

examination of 20 four-year colleges and universities (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, &

Associates, 2005). The 10 lessons included,

> 1.) Focus on student learning. Period. , 2.) Create and sustain partnerships for
>
> learning, 3.) Hold all students to high expectations for engagement in learning,
>
> in and out of class, on and off campus, 4.) Implement a comprehensive set of
>
> safety nets and early warning systems, 5.) Teach new students what it takes to
>
> succeed, 6.) Recognize, affirm, and celebrate the value of diversity, 7.) Invest
>
> in programs and people that demonstrate contributions to student learning and
>
> success, 8.) Use data to inform decisions, 9.) Create spaces for learning, and
>
> 10.) Make every residence hall a learning community. (Whitt, 2006, p. 8)

This last lesson further states, "Institutions that foster student success offer a variety of

effective models, all of which share a common characteristic: their campus residences

augment, complement, and enrich students' academic experiences" (Whitt, 2006, p. 8).

Project DEEP's research findings, and Whitt's (2006) synthesis, has contributed to student affairs practitioners', and specifically to residence life practitioners', belief that residence life professionals have an important role in facilitating experiences to benefit students' learning and development.

While no research has been published on The 10EERC, much of the literature featured in this section is incorporated into the Plenary delivered by residential curriculum thought leaders Edwards and Gardner (2015) and subsequent sessions at, and pre-readings for, ACPA's annual RCI.

Evolution of Residential Education Approaches

The aforementioned foundational documents relating to Student Affairs provide context to evolving philosophical perspectives on the role of on-campus living environments. Several types of models, and other guiding beliefs, have influenced residential education ranging from the early residential college model begun at Harvard in 1636 (Thelin, 2011) to The 10EERC begun at the University of Delaware in 2007 (Edwards & Gardner, 2015; K. Kerr, personal communication, March 30, 2016). Following is a brief review of some models for residential education ranging from early models of community development, to more structured approaches intended to enhance students' learning and personal development. This context on previous approaches is valuable to reflect on the reason that the residential curriculum approach may be an emerging trend as housing and residence life unit personnel seek to contribute to their respective institutional mission and student learning outcomes.

Programming.

According to Schuh (in Rentz, 1996), "Providing sufficient programming, in a quantitative sense, rarely is a problem in a residence hall environment. Making programming meaningful to students, and linking residence hall programs to students needs is another matter" (p.279). In Rentz (1996), Schuh outlined several models developed by other scholars to categorize programmatic efforts. In 2013, the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I) issued a book series with chapters authored by senior housing and residence life scholar-practitioners. Kennedy (2013) authored a chapter on programming and education, which aligned with several of the models Schuh (in Rentz, 1996) featured. Both Kennedy (2013) and Schuh (in Rentz, 1996) presented Minor (1999) and Schroeder and Mable's (1994) the Six I's of Community Building Model. The model suggested that residence hall environments could promote community by emphasizing the following six components: introduction, interaction, involvement, investment, influence, and identity. Kennedy (2013) and Schuh (in Rentz, 1996) mentioned the Intervention Strategies Model from Morrill, Hurst, and Oetting (1980), which guided the following three types of programming in the residence halls: (a) remedial programming; (b) preventive programming; and (c) developmental programming. Third, Banning (1989) developed the Ecosystem Model, where programs are based on goals and values present within their environment. Finally, Mosier (1989) developed the Health and Wellness Model, which influenced programming along the following six dimensions: emotional, intellectual, physical, social, occupational, and spiritual development. All of these models have valid components and they are presented to provide perspective to how the residential curriculum differs from previous practice.

Learning communities and residence halls as learning-enhancing environments.

A variety of learning community structures, ranging from thematic clusters to major-based groupings, to linked coursework, have been extensively addressed in higher education and student affairs literature (Lenning, Hill, Saunders, Solan, & Stokes, 2013; Schroeder & Mable, 1994; & Shapiro & Levine, 1999). Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews, & Smith (1990) offered a common definition of a learning community as,

> Any one of a variety of curricular structures that link together several existing courses—or actually restructure the material entirely—so that students have opportunities for deeper understanding and integration of the material they are learning, and more interaction with one another and their teachers as fellow participants in the learning enterprise. (p. 19)

The differences in the type, ranging from the general assignment of students, to thematic, to academic and size of communities, and various aforementioned programming models, provide an opportunity to explore a possible new era of residential education. This new era reflects a commitment to enhance and add value to all residential students' learning regardless of major, year in school, personal interests, or residence hall assignment. The residential curriculum approach requires that post-Master's professionals apply concepts and pedagogy used in academia to enhance students' beyond the classroom learning and development (Blimling, 2015).

Residential curriculum.

To date, there is no peer-reviewed research on the implementation or efficacy of The 10EERC as discussed at ACPA's annual RCI. Therefore, to provide perspective on its evolution as an alternative to traditional residence hall programming (Blimling, 2015),

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and as an emerging approach in student affairs (Kennedy, 2013), next is a review of existing literature on residential curriculum.

Residence life professionals, Dr. Kathleen Kerr and Dr. Jim Tweedy, of the University of Delaware, contributed to the student affairs profession two prominent resources related to the residential curriculum approach. In 2006, *About Campus*, a publication of ACPA, featured Kerr and Tweedy's article *Beyond Seat Time and Student Satisfaction: A Curricular Approach to Residential Education*, which was an original thought piece written about the residential curriculum. Kerr and Tweedy (2006) asserted that student learning and development could not be measured by counting the number of students in attendance at residence hall programs. Similarly, student satisfaction with hall programs, for example, could not measure students' learning (Kerr & Tweedy, 2006). Kerr and Tweedy (2006) concluded that past residential programming efforts at the University of Delaware were not as directly aligned with the institution's general educational goals; thus serving as an impetus to the development of the residential curriculum. When reflecting on this shift in approach, Kerr and Tweedy (2006) concluded that undergraduate student staff members were not equipped with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to design effective student learning experiences. Therefore, professional staff members, with Master's-level education, were charged with providing leadership for residential curriculum strategies and resources. This stance on roles, distinguishing the roles of student staff versus professional staff, supported their vision that an educator must be knowledgeable about how to articulate and guide practice focused on relevant student learning and developmental outcomes. Overall, this article provided two practitioner-scholars' perspectives on how residence hall student learning

and development outcomes could be aligned with the goals of undergraduate education on institutional and national levels. Kerr and Tweedy (2006) addressed specific strategies and resources, such as lesson plans, that could be used to operationalize the residential curriculum as an alternative to traditional residence hall programming.

As another significant contribution to the profession, The University of Delaware, in partnership with ACPA, hosted the first RCI in 2007 (Brown, n.d.). Kerr was serving as the Chair of ACPA's Commission for Housing and Residential Life (CHRL) at the time. The CHRL was the only sponsor for RCI 2007. The title of this inaugural event was, "From Just Residential to Resident Intentional: Developing a Curricular Approach to Residence Life" (Brown, n.d.). The purpose of this gathering was to feature select practitioners' efforts as pioneers in the development of the residential curriculum model at the University of Delaware. Several seminal documents from student affairs literature including, but not limited to, the *Student Learning Imperative* (ACPA, 1994), Bloland, Stamatakos, & Rogers' (1996) *Redirecting the Role of Student Affairs to Focus on Student Learning,"* and *Learning Reconsidered* (ACPA & NASPA, 2004) inspired the content for this event. October, 2016, will mark the tenth annual ACPA's RCI.

Since Kerr and Tweedy's (2006) article, Blimling (2015) contributed the most descriptive explanation of the residential curriculum approach. He explained that traditional residence hall programming focused on students' interest and availability whereas the intentional goal-directed approach emphasized the priority of advancing student learning. According to Blimling (2015):

Traditional models of educational programming have a place in RHs [residence halls], but some of these approaches are no longer robust enough to capture the

interest of students and engage them in meaningful ways. A contemporary

approach to educating students in RHs needs a broader perspective than

programming. The challenge is not how to program but how to engage students

in a way that captures their energy, imagination, and commitment. (p. 233)

Blimling (2015) proceeded to describe an alternative to traditional programming in the

residence halls:

One way to think about educating students in RHs [residence halls] is to consider

the combined effort as a residential curriculum. In the same way that faculty

design courses to meet the educational requirements of an academic degree,

residence educators can create learning experiences to meet the educational goals

of RHs. (p. 234)

Further, Blimling (2015) offered, "The idea of intentional goal-directed learning

experiences, designed to create a curriculum-based approach to educational engagement

is grounded in progressive theory and research about student learning" (Barr & Tagg,

1995; Blimling, Whitt, & Associates, 1999; Hamrick, Evans, & Schuh, 2002; Keeling,

2004, 2006; Kuh, Kinzie, Bridges, et al., 2006; Kuh et al., 2005). Blimling (2015)

claimed that, "The curriculum-based approach is one type of intentional goal-directed

approach that places the responsibility for education in RHs with professionals who have

the knowledge and expertise to design learning experiences appropriate for students'

stages of psychosocial/cognitive development" (p. 235). Blimling (2015) further

described the premise of this approach through these three sentiments:

As educators, residence life professionals plan the curriculum for the academic

year in much the same way that a classroom instructor plans a syllabus. Activities

are sequenced to achieve stated learning outcomes. Some programs are designed

to encourage students to meet other students and make friends and thus advance

the goal of fostering community development. Other programs create learning

experiences designed to advance students' understanding and knowledge about

topics, such as social justice or environmental stewardship. (p. 235)

Blimling (2015) further described how the curriculum-based approach differed

from traditional programming approaches.

Another characteristic of the curriculum-based approach is that educational goals

are established for RHs collectively rather than each RH developing a different set

of learning goals. Although RDs [residence directors] may take different

approaches to accomplishing an institution's educational goals, all RDs are

working toward achieving the same goals with RH students. The parallel for this

approach in the academic curriculum is an undergraduate course required as part

of the core curriculum, such as English composition or precalculus. Instructors

may take different approaches, but each instructor must cover the same basic

material. (p. 237)

Finally, Blimling (2015) proposed that residence life professionals must use

varied techniques to engage students' learning:

Students are in class throughout the week, and few want to spend their time sitting

through another lecture or similar classroom experience. Residence life educators

must learn to use experiential learning activities, community development, the

peer environment, and their knowledge of students' contemporary interests to

engage them in light of the competing demands on their time. (p. 237)

Blimling (2015) presented the chart in Table 2.1 to distinguish features of the

passive approach versus the intentional approach to residential education (p. 236).

Table 2.1

Passive versus Intentional Approach

Features of the Passive Approach	Features of the Intentional Approach
Involvement offered to students who might be interested	Participation in experientially based learning activities are expected and encouraged
Provide information or entertainment	Focused on enhancing understanding and critical thinking
Offered without consideration of skills students may learn through their involvement	Designed to develop functionally transferable skills
Frequently feature students as audience members	Strengthens group interaction and social skills
Problems handled by staff with little or no input from residents	Solves actual problems with student involvement
Individual students learning with little support for collaboration	Collaborative and cooperative learning are a primary method of student learning
No intentional efforts made to create a sense of community	Development of a sense of community among students is a goal
Voluntary student involvement and unsolicited student participation beyond serving as audience members	Involvement and engagement is encouraged and expected
No effort made to develop programs that increase informal time with faculty	Increased student-faculty interaction is encouraged and available
No assessment of student learning	Assessment of student learning occurs regularly

In summary, Blimling's work does not discount the influence of previous efforts

such as academically-based learning communities. Ultimately, Blimling (2015) posits,

"RDs [resident directors] are the classroom instructors of the modern American RH

[residence hall]" (Blimling, 2015, p. 231), and "…efforts to engage students in the RHs should offer an educational experience that is not available elsewhere" (p. 234). To this end, Blimling (2015) concluded the five steps of a curriculum-based approach to residence hall programming include the need to, (1) identify learning goals; (2) include specific strategic learning objectives; (3) plan educational activities; (4) create program lesson plans; and (5) assess learning outcomes. Blimling (2015) asserted curriculum-based programming could be used within student organizations such as the Residence Hall Association (RHA) to achieve relevant learning outcomes. Blimling (2015) maintained residence life educators should partner with faculty to decide "what to teach and how to teach it" (p. 240). He described that residence life professionals at the University of Delaware present curriculum recommendations to a university-wide faculty committee for approval before implementing the residential curriculum (Student Life Committee of the Faculty Senate, 2008).

Blimling's (2015) claims on the differences between a traditional programming model and the curricular model complement several of the underpinnings of the distinctions between a programming model and the curricular approach that are presented at the annual ACPA's RCI during the Plenary session. Table 2.2 details the content Edwards and Gardner (2015) presented.

Summary of the Evolution of Residential Education

"Societal, as well as educational movements generally arise in response to a perceived need or as an attempt to remediate that which is viewed as a negative or undesirable situation or condition" (Rentz, 1996, p. 29). The role of on-campus housing has evolved over time. Today, increased calls for accountability require that student

affairs-based programs and services demonstrate a value-added benefit to student learning and development.

Table 2.2

Programming Model versus Curricular Approach

Programming Model	Curricular Approach
Identifies list of general priorities or categories or a buffet table of various events	Clearly defined and more narrowly focused educational goals
Translates into a list of topical requirements for RAs and Hall Directors	Based on professional assessment of student educational needs
Often based on reaction to needs displayed by students	Views co-curricular learning as learning over time and learning via sequence
Programming topic and implementation strategies often the responsibility of RAs or student organizational leaders	Clearly defined delivery strategies which include programming as only one component
Group focused	Emphasis on the individual student's learning
Delivery relies on voluntary attendance	Specific lesson plans or "scripts"
Stand-alone sessions	Outcome based
	Highly intentional
	Review and Approval process

There has been a shift in the mindset of the priorities within on-campus residential settings. Previously, residence hall programs were initiated based on the social desires of students and the interests of staff to fulfill programming requirements and standard practices adopted by residence life professionals (Blimling, 2010; Kennedy, 2013). Often, these professionals initiated programs based upon fond memories of their dated college experiences. With higher education facing increased accountability from a

variety of stakeholders, educators, within and beyond the classroom, must align student learning initiatives with measurable, specific, and action-oriented outcomes.

Finally, the literature presented in this chapter is predominantly from seminal documents and non-peer reviewed sources. The only research referenced was Project DEEP (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005). Furthermore, while existing literature has summarized the premise of the residential curriculum approach, no research has been published on the residential curriculum approach as defined by The 10EERC. The purpose of my study is to understand the changes that occurred in a residence life organization and participants' perceptions of the positive and challenging aspects of transitioning to the residential curriculum approach.

Organizational Perspective

Housing departments are often situated within the organizational umbrella of student affairs divisions. The breadth and depth of literature on organizations was paramount to addressing the research questions for my study that explored the lived experiences of professionals who adopted the residential curriculum approach. The contributions of several organizational scholars provide context for understanding how human beings function within organizations, particularly with respect to the elements of cultural change. Following is a background on organizational theory described by Senge's (1990) notions of learning organization and five disciplines, Schein's (2004) description of organizational culture, Lewin's (1951) model of organizational change, and Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations as related to the focus of my study.

Senge's Learning Organizations and Five Disciplines

Senge's (1990) widespread literature on learning organizations serves as a conceptual framework by which I view the purpose and potential of residence life units as learning-enhancing spaces for students and staff. My perspective to this end has been shaped by my experiences as a practitioner in residence life, a faculty member for the annual ACPA RCI, and through readings such as Shushok, Scales, Sriram, and Kidd's (2011) article, *A Tale of Three Campuses: Unearthing Theories of Residential Life That Shape the Student Learning Experience*. While these experiences and literature influenced the vision for my research questions, they did not have a formal role in coding or analyzing my data.

Senge (1990) defined learning organizations as, "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (p. 3). Senge (1990) presented this notion with a futuristic approach:

> For such an organization, it is not enough merely to survive. "Survival learning" or what is more often termed "adaptive learning" is important – indeed it is necessary. But for a learning organization, "adaptive learning" must be joined by "generative learning," learning that enhances our capacity to create. (p. 14)

Related to my study, I maintain that just as the residential curriculum approach is designed to influence student learning in residential environments, Senge's (1990) work affords a lens to explore how residence life staff learn and perceive their efforts within an organization while creating learning-enhancing experiences for students. In Chapter 3, I

describe how I maintained a journal during my data collection period. I documented my observations of how I perceived participants' notions of the presence or absence of the aforementioned tenets of a learning organization. I was committed to thinking more deeply about my beliefs for the role of campus housing and residence life before, during, and after my site visit.

Senge's (1990) described five "disciplines," with a discipline defined as "a development path for acquiring certain skills or competencies" (p. 10) that are essential for effective leaders. The five disciplines include systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building a shared vision, and team learning. Senge (1990) maintained that these are characteristics of innovative learning organizations. Additionally, Senge (1990) asserted, "the five learning disciplines differ from more familiar management disciplines in that they are "personal" disciplines. Each has to do with how we think, what we truly want, and how we interact and learn with one another" (p. 11). Following is a description of Senge's (1990) five disciplines.

Senge (1990) regarded systems thinking as the discipline that integrates all of the other disciplines into a framework and noted, "It is the discipline that integrates the disciplines, fusing them into a coherent body of theory and practice. It keeps them from being separate gimmicks or the latest organization change fads" (p. 12). The discipline of personal mastery emphasized the importance of an individual's personal growth with the caveat that the capacity of an organizations' learning could not exceed its individual members' learning (Senge, 1990). Mental models were identified as being integral to systems thinking and were described as, "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take

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action. Very often, we are not consciously aware of our mental models or the effects they have on our behavior" (Senge, 1990, p. 8). According to Senge (1990), "The practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared 'pictures of the future' that foster genuine commitment and enrollment rather than compliance" (p. 9). Finally, Senge's (1990) commentary on the discipline of team learning was, "When teams are truly learning, not only are they producing extraordinary results but the individual members are growing more rapidly than could have occurred otherwise" (p. 10). This outlook aligns with the value I place on lifelong learning for the betterment of others and myself. Overall, Senge's (1990) contributions, specifically his notions of learning organization and mental models, are valuable for the purposes of my study as they provided another perspective to understanding organizational and human dynamics involved when adopting a new approach to residential education.

Schein's Organizational Culture

Schein's (2004) summative literature on organizational dynamics, culture, and leadership provided relevant context for meaning making within organizations and among stakeholders. Schein's (2004) work helped me understand organizational theory associated with individual and collective team's meaning making in organizations. Specifically for my study, I believe there is an ethos of learning within housing and residence life departments that can, and should, be aligned with the institutional mission and priorities. Fostering an organizational culture of learning aligns with the priority of providing learning-enhancing environments for students. While helpful as a conceptual framework, this literature did not serve in a formal role for my data collection or with coding or analyzing my data.

Schein (2004) provided thought-provoking perspectives on organizational culture. First, he emphasized the benefits of studying an organization's culture by sharing:

> When one brings culture to the level of the organization and even down to groups within the organization, one can see clearly how culture is created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately manipulated, and, at the same time, how culture constrains, stabilizes, and provides structure and meaning to the group members. (p. 1)

Next, Schein (2004) advocated for understanding the history of an organization's culture by sharing:

> I will use as the critical defining characteristic of a *group* the fact that its members have a shared history. Any social unit that has some kind of shared history will have evolved a culture, with the strength of that culture dependent on the length of its existence, the stability of the group's membership, and the emotional intensity of the actual historical experiences they have shared. (p. 11)

Finally, Schein (2004) summarized his thoughts to present a rich description or definition of organizational culture:

> …a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation an internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 17)

In summary, Schein's (2004) contributions can help contextualize the findings of my study, particularly data that emerges from my third research question as he emphasized the value of artifacts within organizations. My third research question

addressed how selected individuals within the organization characterized their experience with adopting the residential curriculum approach. Schein's (2004) notions help convey my passion for the focus of this study and its contribution to literature and professional practice among colleagues.

Lewin's Model of Organizational Change

Lewin's (1951) Model of Organizational Change is one example from the plethora of literature on organizational change. This model includes a force field analysis approach in which there are "driving forces" (pushing for change) and "restraining forces" (obstacles to change). According to Phillips and Gully (2012), "Successful change occurs when either the driving forces are strengthened or the restraining forces are weakened" (p. 495). Additionally, Lewin's (1951) model includes four stages to the change process: (1) unfreezing the current system, (2) moving to a desired new system, (3) refreezing the new system, and (4) need for planning and goal setting (Phillips and Gully, 2012). Specifically related to adopting the residential curriculum approach, the aforementioned four phases of the change process can be observed in activities including, but not limited to, identifying an institutional priority for student learning beyond the classroom, adopting a national approach to residential education, investing in staff training and development related to adopting the residential curriculum approach, developing new organizational tools, and assessing the effectiveness of both the new tools, staffs' experiences, and impact on student learning. I did not use Lewin's (1951) model or alternate organizational change theories for the present study, but inclusion of this content in the literature review serves as a reminder that changes, in life and organizations, entail a process.

Bolman and Deal's Four Frames of Organizations

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations is the model, a synthesis of various theories and perspectives, according to Bolman and Deal (2014), by which I coded and analyzed my data. This multi-frame perspective on organizations was important given my positionality as a self-identified residential curriculum insider. I also believe the explosion of literature on organizations outside of higher education can increase the likelihood for innovative and effective practice within higher education, including within campus housing and residence life departments.

As early as 1984, Bolman and Deal (2014) consolidated major schools of organizational literature to propose four frames, or lenses, to aid managers and future leaders in navigating organizational activity. Bolman and Deal (2014) claimed that the industrial revolution served as an impetus for needing to understand human beings in the context of organizations. They argued that managers were often underprepared to understand the intricacies within their respective organizations. The following quote captures their core premise for the use of frames, or multiple perspectives (Bolman & Deal, 2014):

> Rather than portraying the field of organizational theory as fragmented, we present it as pluralistic. Seen this way, the field offers a rich assortment of mental models or lenses for viewing organizations. Each theoretical tradition is helpful. Each has blind spots. Each tells its own story about organizations. The ability to shift nimbly from one to another helps redefine situations so they become understandable and manageable. The ability to reframe is one of the most powerful capacities of great artists. It can be equally powerful for managers and leaders. (p. 39)

In summary, Bolman and Deal's (2014) four frames examine such aspects as how staff and projects are structured, how human beings contribute value to organizations and organizations to human beings, how political acts such as power and coalitions influence dynamics, and how individuals and groups perceive celebrations, traditions, and rituals. Following is a description of each frame.

Bolman and Deal's (2014) four frames are: Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic. The Structural Frame, commonly likened to "machines or factories" (p. 19), assumes organizations have goals and objectives. Rationality is the priority over personal agendas. The ideal outcome is to maximize efficiency and this is accomplished by careful examination of roles, assignments, position descriptions, committee and task force creation and related charges, and more (Bolman & Deal, 2014). The Human Resources Frame, commonly likened to a "family" (p. 19), is most focused on the people who serve as members of organizations. The premise is that organizations need people and vice versa. The emphasis is on serving the needs of organizations (i.e., employees' ideas, energy, and talents) while also serving the needs of employees (i.e., careers, salaries, and opportunities). This Frame reminds us that staffing, and thus human capital, is one of the most critical predictors of an organization's ability to maintain competitive advantage (Bolman & Deal, 2014). The Political Frame, commonly likened to a "jungle" (p. 19), assumes organizations are comprised of individuals and groups, with varying types of power, all with different and often times competing interests and priorities. These divergent interests, coupled with scarce resources, often contribute to conflict (Bolman & Deal, 2014). The Symbolic frame, likened to a "theater or museum" (p. 19), emphasizes the notion of culture. Culture is described as the glue that holds

organizations together and unites human beings towards shared values and beliefs. The premise of the Symbolic Frame is that the meaning ascribed to events is more important than what actually happens. Activities and their meaning are loosely coupled because human beings have diverse perspectives and ways in which they make meaning of their cultural world. Symbols and artifacts are tools to help human beings have a sense of predictability and to anchor hope and faith (Bolman & Deal, 2014).

Bolman and Deal's four frames and change.

Bolman and Deal (2014) provided examples from corporations, such as 3M, Coke, and Microsoft, as well as hospitals, to describe how the multi-frame approach was critical for successful organizational change and the ability for innovation that was aligned with the organizational mission. Major findings illustrated that employee-driven changes tended to succeed more than changes conceived at the top of an organization; revising roles followed by comprehensive training was essential for change to be effective; building coalitions and arenas were necessary for negotiating differences to defuse conflict; and emphasizing symbolism through traditions and rituals provided individuals with meaning and inspiration.

Bolman and Deal (1991) conducted a qualitative study including a multi-sector analysis to investigate leaders' use of the frames. They sought to understand which frames leaders used to narrate their experiences. They used three convenience samples of educational administrators, including 145 higher education administrators with 5% from outside of the United States; 48 principals and 15 superintendents; and more than 220 administrators from the Republic of Singapore. Results indicated that leaders rarely used more than two frames and almost never described situations involving all four frames.

Additionally, Bolman and Deal (1991) concluded that institutional and national context seemed to have a significant effect on the leadership challenges that managers encounter. Bolman and Deal concluded these findings were consistent with their observations of managers and leaders in organizations world-wide.

In summary, Bolman and Deal (2014) presented the chart in Table 2.3, organized by the four frames, to depict barriers to change and essential strategies.

Previous studies using Bolman and Deal's Four Frames of Organizations.

Given the scope of my study, I explored how Bolman and Deal's four frames were represented in other studies within higher education and student affairs, specifically within campus housing, and ideally within residence life departments. On April 17, 2016, I searched the Education Source and ERIC journal databases with the search phrase "Bolman and Deal" and "housing or residence life"; this identified 29 studies. Only one study cited Bolman and Deal's work once within the discussion section. None of the other studies pertained to campus housing or residence life units. On April 17, 2016, a search within the international ProQuest dissertation database using the search phrase "Bolman and Deal four frames" yielded 8,441 dissertations. Next, I narrowed my search inquiry to search for studies that addressed campus housing and/or residence life; yielding 186 results. Finally, when sorting by the subject headings "higher education" and "higher education administration," 55 studies were identified. Of these studies, there were four studies that related to campus housing and/or residence life units; these studies only briefly cited Bolman and Deal's frames of organizations in their review of related literature. Overall, results of my searches revealed that Bolman and Deal's frameworks

have been applied more to higher education than to student affairs and more in student affairs than in residence life.

Table 2.3

Barriers to Change and Essential Strategies

Frame	Barriers to Change	Essential Strategies
Human Resource	Anxiety, uncertainty; people feel incompetent and needy	Training to develop new skills; participation and involvement; psychological support
Structural	Loss of direction, clarity, and stability; confusion, chaos	Communicating, realigning, and renegotiating formal patterns and policies
Political	Disempowerment; conflict between winners and losers	Developing arenas where issues can be renegotiated and new coalitions formed
Symbolic	Loss of meaning and purpose; clinging to the past	Creating transition rituals; mourning the past, celebrating the future

While some qualitative studies exist, the majority of searches yielded quantitative studies and used Bolman and Deal's Leadership Orientation Survey (LOS). The most salient topic of study within the realm of higher education pertained to how college or university presidents use the four frames to lead their organizations. Within the realm of student affairs, the studies pertained to leadership styles of staff employed in various functional areas, their use of the four frames, and typically included the Leadership Orientation Survey (LOS). For example, Tull and Freeman (2011) conducted a quantitative study to examine how 478 student affairs administrators used Bolman and Deal's four frames. Respondents represented a variety of institutional types and many functional units within student affairs. The results of the online Organizational Frames Analysis Questionnaire found that most administrators favored the human resources

frame. While this study provides context for how Bolman and Deal's frames are used within student affairs, it confirmed a need for research from a qualitative perspective to better understand the lived experiences of student affairs professionals as it relates to Bolman and Deal's four frames.

Unlike the aforementioned four studies, which only cited Bolman and Deal's (2014) four frames, there was one quantitative study pertaining to campus housing and/or residence life that specifically used Bolman and Deal's four frames as a theoretical framework for its study. To examine the future of the university housing profession with recommendations for practitioners, McCuskey (2003) conducted a three-round Delphi Technique study with 30 chief housing officers and faculty members with research interest in student affairs or housing. Based on the results of her study, McCuskey (2003) suggested chief housing officers could increase their effectiveness by using Bolman and Deal's multi-frame approach.

In summary, a review of the literature using Bolman and Deal's (2014) four frames in student affairs confirmed that a gap exists in regards to how student affairs professionals, as educators in beyond-the-classroom settings, use the four frames when adopting changes. The limited studies, primarily using quantitative methods, revealed that most student affairs professionals favored using Bolman and Deal's Human Resources frame as it relates to their respective leadership style. My search for qualitative studies using Bolman and Deal's four frames to study residence life phenomena did not yield results of any existing studies. My study is intended to contribute to the deficit in the literature on Bolman and Deal's four frames, particularly with the focus on residence life units.

Summary of Organizational Theory

In sum, these signature frameworks on organizational theory and models provide insight into how human beings function within organizations. Bolman and Deal (2014) asserted that organizations are complex, surprising, deceptive, and ambiguous. A manager's ability to understand complex situations depends on their frames, mental models, or perspectives (Bolman & Deal, 2014). This knowledge can benefit scholars and practitioners seeking to understand employees' actions and inactions, particularly when examining change efforts. While the frameworks consider similar variables, Senge's (1990) contributions detailed elements of the ideal context of learning organizations, and five disciplines that provide a way for leaders to develop skills and competencies. Schein's (2004) reminders about the underpinnings of organizational culture provided context for meaning within organizations and among stakeholders. Bolman and Deal's (2014) model provided change agents with four perspectives to view resources and behavior. The contributions from organizational scholars illustrate the importance of seeking clarity on conditions that impact, motivate, and challenge human beings within organizations.

Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed the emergence of student affairs as a profession and the role of ACPA as the organization relevant to this study. Additionally, I demonstrated how selected reform literature in student affairs has influenced co-curricular education over time. The evolution of residential education priorities featured philosophies and practice that have changed over time to align with increased calls for accountability within and beyond student affairs. Finally, this chapter included organizational theory and models as

well as scholarship that aligns with the design of my study. Senge's (1990) notions of learning organizations and five disciplines, Schein's (2004) description of organizational culture, Lewin's (1951) Model of Organizational Change, and Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations were selected because of their relevance to my research questions.

Despite the context provided in this chapter, there has been a void in the literature on research related to the residential curriculum approach as a deviation from the traditional programmatic approach within residence life units. Evolving research on outcomes and curriculum practices afford an opportunity to translate within-the-classroom concepts to beyond-the-classroom learning environments. Similarly, the plethora of literature on organizational theory can inform how chief housing officers and mid-level residence life professionals orchestrate practices when committing to the paradigm shift of the curricular approach to residential education. Ultimately, this knowledge can influence practice for the betterment of students' learning. The purpose of this study is to understand the lived experience of professionals as they engaged in the everyday realities of adopting the residential curriculum approach that is undergirded by The 10EERC.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this qualitative case study, I describe the lived experiences, at one institution, of residence life professionals, and graduate and undergraduate student staff, who are involved in implementing a residential curriculum as defined by "The 10 Essential Elements of a Residential Curriculum (The 10EERC)," described at the ACPA's annual RCI. The residential curriculum, or curricular approach to residential education, is an alternative to traditional residence hall programming (Blimling, 2015). It is a proactive approach to enhance residential students' learning and growth by aligning the mission, goals, outcomes, and practices of a residence life department to those of the institution (Edwards & Gardner, 2015; Kennedy, 2013; Kerr, & Tweedy, 2006; Shushok, Arcelus, Finger, & Kidd, 2013).

I believe the ways in which residence life units, as organizations, function when adopting the residential curriculum approach impacts the unit's ability to contribute to desired student and institutional outcomes. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) described three decades of research findings on the academic, social, and developmental gains of students in on-campus living environments. They found that living in residence halls contributes to students' persistence and retention, and complements the academic mission of the institution. Additionally, shifts in mental models (Senge, 1990) toward residential education, and changes to practices, may impact the professionals' morale and overall quality of satisfaction with their positions.

Findings of this study may inform the hiring and retention practices of chief housing officers and mid-level professionals so that staffing, and the practices of that staff, can help on-campus residential environments to maintain competitive advantage over off-campus housing that is not owned and operated by the college or university. Perhaps of greatest significance - given accountability for higher education - this study provides a description of the nature of residential education practice that has the potential to contribute to student learning and institutional outcomes.

Research Questions

This study necessitates a qualitative approach because the purpose of the study is to describe the real life setting, or context, of a residence life unit and how the shift to a residential curriculum impacts the organization. Participants' accounts, and organizational artifacts, describe the layers of change and the human experience that I believe could not be captured in detail by a quantitative approach. The following research questions involve one mid-size, public university:

1. What changes occurred in the residence life unit when adopting the residential curriculum approach?

2. What were participants' perceptions of adopting a residential curriculum approach?

    a. What did the participants perceive as positive in this transition?

    b. What did the participants perceive as challenging in this transition?

3. In what ways did the residence life staff characterize their experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach?

Emic Approach

I am intrigued by Bolman & Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations: Structural, Political, Human Resources, and Symbolic. The assumptions germane to each frame afford lenses that I think could deepen understandings of lived experiences of residence life staff as the focus of this study. Although Bolman and Deal (2014) informed the ways I conceptualize residential housing initiatives, for this study I took an emic approach. In using an emic approach, the researcher emphasizes her participants' experiences and analyzes the ways they make meaning of their experiences. The researcher centers participants "beliefs about their lives" using the "words that the people use to characterize their own lives …" (Noblit, 1999, p. 12).

First, I collected data and coded from an emic perspective, using descriptive, in vivo, and versus codes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Saldaña, 2013). Second, I coded from a theoretical perspective using protocol coding (Saldaña, 2013). Bolman and Deal's (2014) frames informed the protocol coding I developed in my second round of coding. Finally, The 10EERC served as an interpretive layer to my analysis of the coding. As The 10EERC are not technically a model, conceptual, or theoretical framework, I did not develop protocol coding based on these notions. However, I comment in Chapter 4 on how some findings reflect The 10EERC. Finally, I chose to not code the data using The 10EERC so that I could focus on organizational changes and participants' descriptions rather than think about the actual components of MSU's residential curriculum.

Descriptive, Multiple-Case Embedded Study

According to Yin (2014), a case study "is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context,

especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). This qualitative study is a descriptive case study (Yin, 2014) as I try to describe for my reader, the real life setting or context of one residence life unit, the changes that occurred in their philosophy, and how they were interpreted when the staff shifted to implementing a residential curriculum within their organization. The descriptive case study design is appropriate for this study as the research questions require "an extensive and in-depth" description of some phenomenon (Yin, 2014, p. 4). Further, the research questions for this study, posed as questions beginning with "what," seek to describe, in rich detail, the types and nature of changes residence life staff experienced.

Yin (2014) explained, "…the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations – beyond what might be available in a conventional historical study" (p. 12). Regarding the realities of a case study design, Yin (2014) asserted "A case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion…" (p. 17). This study uses a multiple-case embedded design, which has become increasingly used to study school innovations, small group behavior, organizational processes, and various other areas of social phenomena that apply to more than one similar setting or context, thus earning the designation as a multiple-case design (Yin, 2014). The context for my study is higher education and student affairs. The case is one specific residence life unit as an organization or community. The embedded unit of analysis is the staff members' experience with

implementing a residential curriculum. This approach is considered a multiple-case study

design, because the units of analysis, or experiences of the various staff, are what I

believed to be common elements found in residence life units when adopting a curricular

approach to residential education. Further, this study is designated as a multiple-case

design, because I interviewed a variety of participants, some individually and some in

focus groups, to capture their experiences—my units of analysis. To understand the

layers within this bounded context of one department, ethnographic interviews (Roulston,

2011), focus groups (Roulston, 2011), document analysis (Yin, 2014), and photo and

artifact collection (Banks, 2007; Glesne, 2011; Yin, 2014) were used as strategies of data

collection. Using multiple strategies allows me to pursue a claim of data triangulation

(Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014) and to understand myriad changes that may inspire

recommendations for other institutions.

Unit of Analysis

For this study, I use a multiple-case embedded design (Yin, 2014). To respond to

the research questions for this study (Yin, 2014), the embedded unit of analysis is

residence life staff members' experiences with implementing a residential curriculum at

their institution. Stated another way, the unit of analysis is the types of changes

professional, graduate, and undergraduate student staff members witnessed and

experienced when adopting a residential curriculum within their organization. I believe

each participant has a unique perspective based on her or his educational and practical

backgrounds, how long she or he had worked in the department, and her or his level of

involvement with designing and implementing the curriculum. Given the importance of

participant anonymity (Glesne, 2011), I did not detail the specific position titles of those I

interviewed. The size of the unit was too small, which could have violated anonymity. Instead, I included titles such as "student staff," "graduate staff," "senior staff," and "chief housing officer" to connote the participants' respective ranks within the organizational structure.

Yin (2014) asserted that one pitfall of the case study approach is failure to return to a larger unit of analysis. For my study, it is important for me to report findings about the organizational change rather than focusing only on the experiences of individual participants because the unit of analysis for the case was the organization.

Propositions

From my lens as a practitioner-scholar charged with leading my residence life unit's residential curriculum, and as a faculty member for the annual ACPA's RCI, I believe the implementation of a residential curriculum requires changes to residence life staff members' general mental model (Senge, 1990) of their role with residential education. Further, I maintain that the residential curriculum approach requires residence life staff to consider whether, and if so how, they serve as educators versus solely as administrators. Specifically, I argue that residence life staff within a curricular approach to residential education must possess skill in understanding how to write, implement, and assess learning outcomes; teaching and learning practices, effectively applying student development theory; and sequencing of diverse learning strategies to engage students' learning styles. This knowledge is necessary given the role of residence life units in the contexts of student affairs and higher education.

Previous models, such as the traditional programming (Blimling; 2010), the Six I's of Community Development (Minor, 1999; Schroeder & Mable, 1994) or the Health

and Wellness Model (Mosier, 1989), within the realm of "residential education," did not emphasize use of learning outcomes and sequenced strategies to facilitate students' learning and development as is the case with the residential curriculum approach aligned with The 10EERC. Thus, studying the lived experiences of residence life staff who are involved with making the shift to a residential curriculum is both new and unique. There are several aspects related to the phenomena of professionals' lived experience when adopting a residential curriculum that informed the scope of this study. Examples of these aspects, or topics of changes, included but were not limited to, organizational restructuring, adjustments to position descriptions, priorities for staff training and ongoing development, staff evaluations, and modifications to marketing materials used with prospective students and campus partners. I developed this list from my professional experience in a residence life department that adopted the residential curriculum approach and anecdotes from colleagues with whom I interacted at ACPA RCIs and subsequent interactions.

I believe institutional size and type may influence the design and implementation of a residential curriculum, but I did not specifically code my data from this perspective. Similarly, institutional size and type may influence the nature of organizational change. However, I did not specifically code my data from this perspective. For example, it is possible that at small institutions, residential curricula may better align, or be a direct product of, the division of student affairs' curricular approach. From my own professional perspective in speaking with colleagues at various institution types and sizes, I believe residential curricula may not necessarily be viewed as a distinct approach or priority at mid-size or large institutions where bureaucracy and duplication of efforts may

be the reality. MSU is a public, co-educational institution spanning over 435 acres.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (http://nces.ed.gov), MSU is

classified as a "small" campus setting. According to MSU's website, total enrollment in

fall 2015, was 13,584 students, which included 2,784 first-time, first-year, students.

Students come from all 50 U.S. states and 70 countries. There are six academic colleges

with more than 100 majors. Degrees offered are bachelor's, master's, doctorate and

educational specialist. The housing and residence life department reports to academic

affairs, but there is a division of student affairs at the institution. Dr. Julius Blair

(pseudonym), Associate Dean of Academic Enhancement (pseudonym), shared during

our interview, "We're not open-access, but we're nearly so." He described,

> We have the largest proportion of African-American students of almost every
>
> campus in [the state] with the exception of, perhaps, occasionally [school 1] and
>
> maybe [school 2]. There are more African American students here than [school 3]
>
> and [school 4], and they have three times our enrollment. So about 18% of our
>
> incoming freshmen are African American. The last five years we've had a 235%
>
> increase in Hispanic students, obviously from a small base to up to there. In
>
> addition, half of our students are on Pell grants, so we have a lot of low-income
>
> students here. Half of our students are first generation as defined as neither parent
>
> has a bachelor's degree. About a third of our students, neither parent has any post-
>
> secondary education.

However, in regards to institutional size and type, neither the size of MSU, nor other

institutional demographics are generalizable in a case study (Yin, 2014).

Finally, regarding my propositions, Yin (2014) emphasized the importance of articulating rival explanations for the case study's findings. Moreover, Yin (2014) asserted, "The more rivals that have been addressed and rejected, the stronger will be your findings" (p. 36). Relevant to my study, an example of a rival argument for my findings is that some participants were newer to the organization than others. Thus, for newer participants, describing change over time with adopting the residential curriculum may have been impossible given limited knowledge of the organization prior to adopting the residential curriculum approach. Another rival argument could involve the level of professional experience and educational background of my participants. It could be that either or both factors contribute to participants feeling more confident with implementing change in the organization.

Site Selection

The site for this study is a public, mid-sized, coeducational institution located in the Midwestern region of the United States. The pseudonym "Midtown State University" (MSU) is used to protect the identity of the institution and the anonymity of the participants. I also used pseudonyms for all proper nouns including people, places, titles, and objects. According to MSU's website, total enrollment in fall 2015, was 13,584 students, which included 2,784 first-time, first-year students. My study involves MSU's housing and residence life department. I was fortunate to have two key informants (Yin, 2014), in which "a case study participant is a subject of a study but who also provides critical information or interpretations about the case and who may suggest other sources of evidence for the researcher to check" (p. 239). One of my key informants (Yin, 2014) serves as the chief housing officer. Hereafter, for anonymity, I use the pseudonym Sonya

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Matthews, and specifically her last name. After our first initial phone calls, Matthews included a staff member, herein referred to using the pseudonym Violet Thompson, herein referred to specifically by her last name, as a second key informant (Yin, 2014). Thompson's position title was altered to associate director of residential learning initiatives, to protect anonymity. Matthews shared that Thompson would be a helpful key informant (Yin, 2014) as Thompson has served in the department prior to Matthew's arrival and since Thompson has been considerably involved with MSU's residential curriculum per position responsibilities.

At this institution, the residence life department reports through the division of academic affairs, rather than through the division of student affairs, as, according to Matthews, the president of MSU wanted to formally emphasize the important role that residence life plays in student success, persistence, and completion. MSU's president emphasized the importance of residence life being "seated at the table," (S. Matthews, personal communication, April 10, 2015) with academic colleges to create more seamless collaboration. According to Matthews, the department's policy is that first-year students with less than 32 earned academic hours, are required to live in MSU's residence halls unless they live and commute from their parent's home (not to exceed 60 miles from campus), or have a valid exception. Students who have lived in MSU's residence halls for two semesters are exempt from this requirement. As of April 2015, per Matthews, approximately 2,000 of MSU's 5,000 residential students are first-year students. Approximately 1,500 are sophomore students, and the remaining are juniors, seniors, and graduate students.

Given my research questions, and case study design, my site selection strategies were based on Patton's (2002) description of both purposeful sampling and criterion-based selection. Purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) affords researchers the opportunity to study information-rich cases, which provides an in-depth understanding of the phenomena of interest. I identified one residence life department using criterion-based sampling. I know the site from my role as a faculty member with ACPA's RCI, and am aware that the site adopted the residential curriculum approach that closely aligns with national standards, or The 10EERC. According to Matthews, the chief housing officer, she decided in August 2013 that MSU would adopt the curricular approach to residential education aligned with The 10EERC. Matthews shared that MSU had a "Mini RCI," on-site with residence life staff and student affairs partners in January 2014, when staff created learning goals for the residential curriculum. She clarified the staff spent the spring 2014 semester making changes, the fall 2014 semester developing new resources, and the spring 2015 semester creating lesson plans and sequencing.

Matthews issued a letter on MSU letterhead (Appendix B) with permission for me to conduct my dissertation research within her organization. Additionally, she and Thompson agreed to help me gain access to potential participants, documents, and other artifacts at the site. Matthews also serves as a faculty member for ACPA's RCI and was responsible for leading the residential curriculum effort at a previous institution. I knew about MSU's adoption of the residential curriculum approach through our professional relationship, as we co-presented on our involvement with residential curricula at an RCI, and engaged in conversations over the years about our everyday experiences as practitioners learning about residential curricula. I believe Matthews' background and

involvement afford credibility to her department's implementation of a residential curriculum that is aligned with The 10EERC. This is an important distinction for my study as I was interested in examining my research questions at a site that was aligned with the national perspective on residential curricula.

Finally, I work in a different region of the country than where MSU is located. However, I was born and raised in the region and attended undergraduate and graduate school in the region. Attuning to both my upbringing in the Midwestern region of the United States and my current position in the southeast was important in this work. Reflecting on both had implications for the role of my positionality. The geographical distinction of the Midwest was a significant priority for my site selection as my knowledge of, and professional experience with, the residential curriculum approach had been primarily at an institution in the southeastern United States.

Participant Selection

Given that my research was conducted as a case study, the participants are not considered to be a sample from a larger population but rather as a group of people who are studied in a particular context (Yin, 2014). Per Patton's (2002) purposeful sampling selection and criterion-based selection, I narrowed my interest to interview students and staff affiliated with the selected site, who could describe their lived experiences with the shift to adopting a residential curriculum. What makes MSU an ideal site to describe professionals' lived experience with implementing a residential curriculum, is that most of the participants were involved with the previous approaches, which gave them insight into the experience of adopting the new approach, or residential curriculum.

Understanding MSU's residence life staffing structure helped me select participants for the study. Matthews shared that a departmental organization chart was not available as a new one was being created to reflect the current organizational structure. However, she shared during our first interview that the department is comprised of four "sub-units" – facilities maintenance, facilities custodial, business operations (camps, conferences, assignments, and budgets), and residence life. The residence life unit is herein referred to as the "Department of Residence Life." According to Matthews, professional staff are master's-level staff, graduate staff are students who were currently enrolled in the Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) program or a related program. Undergraduate student staff are those who were of at least sophomore standing, and who had successfully completed a course on student affairs content to prepare them for their position. Student staff serving in the traditional resident assistant role was assigned the pseudonym "community advisor" (CA) and student staff serving in another role was assigned the pseudonym "residential academic ambassador (RAA)." Finally, MSU has a Residence Hall Association (RHA), which is a student organization to promote student leadership and advocate for on-campus living. Selected RHA student leaders participated in the study.

As for identifying participants, I used a combination of purposeful sampling selection and criterion-based selection (Patton, 2002). During phone calls from summer, 2015, through September 2015, I articulated to Matthews and Thompson my interest in interviewing participants in a variety of professional and graduate roles, student staff, and RHA student leaders. Moreover, I was interested in participants who served in the organization long enough to comment on what changed, what they perceived as positive

and challenging in the transition, and how residence life staff characterized the experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach. Matthews recommended I interview her superior, the Associate Dean of Academic Enhancement (pseudonym). Both Matthews and Thompson recommended I conduct a Skype interview with a former mid-level professional who transitioned from working at MSU prior to my data collection. Thompson, using the criteria I offered regarding participant longevity, then selected professional, graduate, and student staff as well as RHA student leaders to participate. She shared that participants were selected not only on tenure in the organization but also her stance that those selected would provide a range of perspectives on various topics related to adopting the residential curriculum approach. Appendix D includes a copy of the participant invitation email I sent to request participation in an interview, focus group, or both.

Participant demographics and profiles

This section includes a brief introduction of each participant for the study. All names are pseudonyms and position titles were altered to promote participant anonymity. Each participant's background and experiences has a role in conveying the story of MSU's approach to adopting the residential curriculum because I fundamentally believe that the human element is essential to the functioning, success, and challenges of an organization. In total, I formally interacted with 30 participants for the purpose of data collection: 16 individuals inclusive of professional and graduate staff, seven third-year student staff members, and seven student leaders affiliated with MSU's Residence Hall Association. Two of the professional staff only participated in the photo activity (and four of the photo activity participants were professional staff who also participated in an

individual interview). However, I also interacted informally with countless students, staff, and campus administrators during my site visit to MSU.

I initially obtained insight about each participant's background from the survey (copy included in Appendix E) and from interaction during his or her respective interview or focus group. All but two participants completed the online survey prior to my visit. One participant completed a paper version of the survey at the conclusion of our individual interview and one participant completed the online survey after my site visit. The first question of the online survey asked participants to accept or decline implied consent to participate in the study. All participants expressed consent to participate in the study. The remaining contents of the survey included participants' demographic data including her or his preferred pseudonym (or permission for me to assign one to them), position status, highest degree earned, start date and year for position in the organization, whether or not she or he attended or worked at an institution with a residential curriculum aligned with The 10EERC, whether she or he previously attended ACPA's RCI, and the year and approximate month she or he believed MSU's department of residence life implemented the residential curriculum with students.

The following pages are divided into four sections based on position groups within the organization: (1) Professional staff participants, (2) Graduate staff participants, (3) Student staff participants, and (4) RHA student leaders. Each section includes a chart for the respective participant group based on the survey categories outlined above. Additionally, a descriptive account of each participant is shared to provide familiarity for my reader when I incorporate data points shared by participants when describing the themes for the findings of the study in Chapter 4. Each participant's account includes a

summary of content shared by the respective participant; thus, specific topics vary by participant.

Professional staff.

Table 3.1

Professional Staff Demographics from Survey

Pseudonym	Position Status	Highest Degree Earned	Started Position Date/ Year	Previously Attended or Worked at an Institution with a RC aligned with The 10EERC	Previously Attended ACPA's RCI	Year and Approximate Month Department Implemented RC with Students
Dr. Julius Blair	Senior-level, Associate Dean of Academic Enhancement	Ph.D. (2)	No response	Neither	No	Planning 2014-15 academic year, launched formally Fall 2015
Sonya Matthews	Senior-level, Chief Housing Officer	M.A.	June 2013	Yes, worked	Yes, 7	Fall 2013 (October)
Violet Thompson	Mid-level, Central leadership; Associate Director of Residential Learning Initiatives	M.A.	Assistant Director, December 2009-June 2014, Current position July 2014	Neither	Yes, 1 (2013)	2013 started the process, 2014 implementation
Rae Jae	Mid-level, Central leadership; Assistant Director of Residential Learning Initiatives	M.A.	Area coordinator June 2011-2014; Current position June 2014	Neither	Yes, 2	August 2014
Sara Weber	Mid-level, Central leadership; Assistant Director of Residential Leadership Initiatives	M.S.Ed.	August 2015	Yes, worked	No	August 2014

Table 3.1 *(Continued)*

Professional Staff Demographics from Survey

Pseudonym	Position Status	Highest Degree Earned	Started Position Date/ Year	Previously Attended or Worked at an Institution with a RC aligned with The 10EERC	Previously Attended ACPA's RCI	Year and Approximate Month Department Implemented RC with Students
Steve	Mid-level, Coordinator of Residence Life	M.S.	Fall 2013	Neither	Yes, 1 (2013)	Spring 2013
Lance	Mid-level, Coordinator of Residence Life	M.S.	July 2014	Neither	Yes, 1	August 2013
Benedict	Mid-level, Coordinator of Residence Life	M.S.	GA 2011-2013, Current position 2013	Neither	No	February/March 2014
Ell	Mid-level, Coordinator of Residence Life	M.Ed.	No response	Neither	No	August 2014
LaShay	Mid-level, Coordinator of Residence Life	M.S.Ed.	July 2015	Yes, worked	Yes, 1 (2012)	August 2012
Jim	Mid-level, Coordinator of Residence Life	M.S.Ed.	August 2015	Yes, attended and worked	No	2014
Carole	Former employee, Mid-level, Coordinator of Residence Life	M.Ed.	July 2012-August 2015	Neither	Yes, 1 (2014)	August 2014

Note: Carole previously served in the mid-level in MSU's department of residential life. She transitioned out of the institution in August 2015, but Matthews and Thompson recommended I interview Carole.

Associate Dean of Academic Enhancement

Dr. Julius Blair, Associate Dean of Academic Enhancement, has served in his

position since 2013. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Blair served in multiple senior

administrative positions at MSU since 2000. Previously, Dr. Blair served in student

affairs as a resident advisor and hall director. He is the one participant who technically does not serve within the department of residence life; however, I chose to interview him due to his tenure at MSU prior to hiring the current chief housing officer, the fact that the department of residence life reports to him, and that the chief housing officer recommended I interview him to learn his perspective on the institution and curricular approach at MSU. Dr. Blair shared that he serves as the senior strategy officer for retention and completion initiatives; he reported that he routinely meets with academic units, and each department is charged with operationalizing a student success plan. He stated that the department of residence life is the largest of the three units that report to his position; he conveyed, "It's [the department of residence life] both a business and a program, and one needs to be entrepreneurial in there." Dr. Blair stated, "I've loved it" when asked for his opinion about the residential curriculum. He followed this sentiment by saying, "To be perfectly honest, this is a better curriculum than probably at least half of the faculty on this campus are capable of doing. Unless with the exception of those colleges where their external accreditors require it."

Chief Housing Officer

Sonya Matthews serves as the Chief Housing Officer, and she reported having responsibility for 4 sub-units of the housing department. Matthews has served in her position since June 2013, and she shared the following about her attraction to MSU:

> Listening to, from the president when I met with him all the way down to the custodians when I met with them, talking about how they wanted to craft intentional learning experiences, how they wanted to provide support to students to make a difference...And so I felt like there was a culture and an atmosphere that

was ready and interested and passionate about moving forward. They just were

reaching all over the place trying to figure out where.

Matthews shared that she was the first external director to MSU's department of

residence life in more than 40 years. She conveyed the following when I asked about her

primary job functions:

> As the executive director, my primary role is making sure that I'm providing the
> resources for my team to support them in what they're doing in their different
> areas but then also to act as the advocate that reaches out to other departments, or
> external partners, our community partners, and then also making sure that we are
> telling our story to people that can advocate for what we need or people that
> would be good to collaborate with to...I guess, enhance student experience or to
> increase student retention, student success.

She spoke about being involved with ACPA's RCI for the past eight years, including

being invited to serve as a faculty member for assessment at the institute. Matthews

conveyed this professional involvement has, "...helped lend some credence to building it

[residential curriculum] here and acceptance here."

Central Leadership of Residence Life

Violet Thompson serves as the Associate Director of Residential Learning

Initiatives, and she has been in her position since July, 2014. Previously, Violet joined

the organization in December, 2009 as one of two assistant directors. Violet shared the

following about her duties in that position, "I was in charge of everything recruitment and

hiring, so student, graduate, and professional staff recruitment and hiring, and then all

student leadership initiatives, so RHA, NRHH, councils, all of that." She clarified the

duties of the other assistant director by sharing, "The other assistant director was in charge of all training, so all student staff, graduate staff, and professional staff training and then all programming." Violet elaborated on this sentiment by conveying:

I was the assistant director for basically five years. And in those five years I stepped in as an area coordinator. I ended up being the only assistant director for a time and supervising all six of our professional staff members. I, I just did a lot of different things in the five years as an assistant director. While I almost always solely worked with our recruitment and selection, I also took on training. I also took on occupancy. I took on...a lot of different things, and, as an assistant director, started with the curriculum process.

Violet shared that she was one of the staff who attended ACPA's 2013 RCI, which she and others explained to be MSU's first delegation at a national ACPA RCI. Throughout her interview, Violet offered perspective about the department from both before, and while, they were adopting the residential curriculum approach. Violet was integral to providing resources and access to me before, during, and after my visit; thus, I named both Sonya and Violet as key informants for the study.

Rae Jae serves as the Assistant Director of Residential Learning Initiatives, and he has been in his position since June, 2014. Previously, Rae joined the organization in June, 2011, as one of the area directors. He explained that, because he was at the stage of his life where he was involved in a dual career search with his wife, part of his attraction to MSU involved its fit. Rae shared that he provides leadership for a portion of residential communities at MSU, student staff recruitment and selection efforts, and

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student conduct. He conveyed that his duties changed to meet the needs of the

organization over time by explaining:

> My position has definitely...transformed over the past couple of years from when
>
> we started implementing the curriculum two years ago, to kind of where I am
>
> today. I've had times where I've been very hands-on with implementing, with
>
> writing lesson plans, with kind of you know being that thinker, some of the big
>
> picture stuff. That's...that was kind of where my role was. And then I was more
>
> of the motivator and pusher to continue having the area coordinators at that time
>
> be the ones that continued that momentum and continued pushing things forward.
>
> I've taken a little bit more of a backseat this year with the added responsibilities
>
> that I've taken on with some of the conduct roles and also the student employment
>
> components.

Throughout his interview, Rae offered perspective about the department before, and

while, they were adopting the residential curriculum approach. Finally, Rae shared he

was one of the staff who attended ACPA's 2013 RCI, which he and others explained to

be MSU's first delegation at a national ACPA RCI.

Sara Weber serves as the Assistant Director of Residential Leadership Initiatives,

and she joined the department in August, 2015. She articulated that she was seeking a

position with an institution that is following the residential curriculum approach, and

MSU's commitment to the residential curriculum was a selling point for her. Sara stated

that she provides leadership for a portion of residential communities at MSU, supervises

the Assistant Director of Curricular Enhancement, serves as the co-advisor to the

Residence Hall Association along with a campus partner, and serves on the Student Staff

Curriculum Committee. Sara said that the previous institution at which she worked had a residential curriculum, but she believes MSU's residential curriculum is different. She explained the difference as, "If I compare our booklet usage to the four-page document we had that we were calling the curriculum, this is very different. When sharing her perspective on the purpose of a residential curriculum, regardless of institution, Sara stated, "we" [referring to professional staff] can't expect 18-24-year-old staff members to be in the mindset of knowing what students need; professional staff take more of that control; "Let's direct you to make sure those learning opportunities are there." Sara frequently reminded me during our interview that she has only been with the organization since August, 2015, and my visit was during the last week of September; thus, she has some limited direct experience with MSU's journey of adopting the residential curriculum. Throughout our interview, I encouraged Sara to articulate her perspective to date and to feel welcome to share what she has observed and heard, while maintaining individual's anonymity.

Coordinators of Residence Life

Benedict serves as a coordinator of residence life, a mid-level professional position in the Department of Residence Life. Benedict earned his undergraduate degree at MSU while serving as a student staff member from 2008 to 2011. He served as a graduate hall coordinator in the department from 2011 to 2013, and then he assumed his current position in 2013. Benedict spoke about his wife, who is working towards an advanced degree at MSU, and their child. He explained that living in the same on-campus residential community with his family, enhanced his ability to relate to students with families. Benedict shared that his primary job responsibilities include supervision of

two graduate students, one of whom is not studying student affairs; developing staff; serving as a communication agent; policy enforcement; communication regarding facilities; and addressing student conduct. He described the community under his purview as, "university apartments, which is kind of our mixed bag of housing. We have a specific sophomore year experience, which is actually in its second year this year." Benedict emphasized his value of relationships, and he shared, "So, I'd probably say the work is the work, and I do like some of the work, getting the tasks done and everything. But it's probably just those genuine interactions that aren't forced because we have to." Throughout his interview, Benedict offered perspective about the department before, and while, they were adopting the residential curriculum approach. Benedict has not attended an ACPA RCI.

Carole formerly served as a coordinator of residence life in MSU's Department of Residence Life. She joined the department in July, 2012, and left the institution in August, 2015. I interviewed Carole at the recommendation of Matthews and Thompson, my two key informants, as they articulated that Carole had a significant role in developing MSU's residential curriculum. I believe Carole's insight during our interview represented not only what she experienced within the organization, but also what she has come to understand or make meaning of in hindsight. Carole explained she was attracted to MSU because of the opportunities to develop new skills, including but not limited to, assessment. She mentioned that she worked two years full time at a different institution after earning her master's degree. Carole described her primary job responsibilities, while serving as coordinator of residence life at MSU, to include managing day-to-day operations of a "couple to a few different residence halls, anywhere between 200 students

and to about 400 students, 500;" supervising graduate assistants, creating selected graduate positions for various special projects, such as faculty outreach; leading the assessment committee and assessment initiatives; serving as the Residence Hall Association advisor, supporting students, and teaching a first-year student seminar. Carole spoke about various transition points in MSU's development of the residential curriculum. Throughout her interview, Carole offered perspective about the department before, and while, they were adopting the residential curriculum approach. Carole attended ACPA's 2014 RCI.

Ell serves as a coordinator of residence life in the Department of Residence Life. Ell attended MSU for graduate school from 2009 to 2011 and served as a graduate hall coordinator in the department from 2009 to 2011. When explaining his initial attraction to, and a current motivation to stay, at MSU, he emphasized having a long-standing personal support network in close proximity to MSU. Ell shared that his primary job responsibilities include supervision of thirty-four student staff, five graduate staff, and one administrative assistant, within the realm of three residence halls. Ell mentioned the following sentiment when referencing the residential curriculum early in our interview. "I know we, and this is me talking in everybody's voice, I know we educate individuals, but this is how we really do it. So this is our way of saying, "We're giving to the students." He explicitly conveyed that he was hesitant to speak too positively in favor of the residential curriculum itself or the journey of MSU adopting the residential curriculum approach due to concerns about how the residential curriculum approach has been adopted within the department. Throughout his interview, Ell offered perspective about

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the department before, and while, they were adopting the residential curriculum approach. Ell has not attended an ACPA RCI.

Lance serves as a coordinator of residence life in the Department of Residence Life. He joined the department in July, 2014. Lance explained he was attracted to MSU because of the student demographic and, in part, because of a positive experience with MSU staff during his recruitment. Lance shared the following when describing his experience at MSU:

> I hate to use clichés or phrases, but this is the land of opportunity. I mean, I've been given so many opportunities here that I would not have thought I would have received in an entry-level position. I'm teaching a class. I'm running four residence halls, each with their very own distinct characteristics. Like the [high-achieving students] community in one, the [Veterinary] living and learning community in one, international students in the same building, and then theater and music students. I was a music major. So I mean, it's like heaven. Talking and connecting with students from various different places and backgrounds. And then I'm working with upper class students, and finding out about them and their transition to the institution. Some of them are new, yet it's upper class. So…I just enjoy all of that. I'm on staff council. I'm on the institution's event planning council. Some of these things I really don't necessarily want to be on. I "volun-told." Yeah, but I just keep getting these opportunities. I'm like, "If the department is seeing me as being as that integral part, that value, that connection, I feel valued." And I feel like this is a place where I can grow and be pulled and stretched…you know, as a professional.

Throughout his interview, Lance offered perspective about the department while they were adopting the residential curriculum approach. Lance also attended ACPA's 2014 RCI.

Steve serves as a coordinator of residence life in the Department of Residence Life. He joined the department in the Fall 2013 in his current position. Steve shared the following background during our interview:

So professionally I have been supervising staff for about four years, RAs for four years. I did a full-time hall director job before grad school, so I was looking for something different. And getting to supervise grad students has been exciting. Being able to help teach people *how* to teach others, etc., and just the relationships with the student affairs professionals, sharing my wisdom. I know that with my RAs, most of them enjoyed the leadership advice that I gave, but not all RAs. Sometimes I got a little too leadership-y, but the grads eat that up. So, I love that, and they're great people. I can make a bigger impact administrative-wide scale than I can with some people who are much better with the one-to-one relationships. I'm good at that, but I excel big picture. Big picture is anything looking at processes, looking at department organization structure, how we share resources. I have a business major, so my mind is wired that way, to think like a business. And that's kind of where that big picture aspect comes into play.

Steve also described another aspect of how he views himself, which provides insight into his perspective on his efforts:

I've always seen myself as an educator in all the places I've been. Uh and so, when we talk about, "You're responsible for student success. You're responsible

for student retention. We have to have three caring adults to help someone be

retained here," that story is always changing. I feel like that's always been core to

what our job is.

Throughout his interview, Steve offered perspective about the department while they

were adopting the residential curriculum approach. Finally, Steve shared that he was one

of the staff who attended ACPA's 2013 RCI, which he and others explained was MSU's

first delegation at a national ACPA RCI.

Photo Activity Participants

A total of six participants engaged in the focus group for the photo activity. Four

of the participants were previously introduced in this chapter, and included Matthews,

Thompson, Ell, and Lance. I did not conduct an individual interview with LaShay and

Jim, who were the other two participants in the focus group for the photo activity.

Following are LaShay and Jim's respective participant profiles, which I captured from

their respective participant survey:

LaShay serves as a coordinator of residence life in the Department of Residence

Life. She joined the department in July, 2015. While I was at the site, LaShay shared

with me during an informal conversation that her primary job duties were similar to that

of the other coordinators of residence life; she specifically spoke about supervising and

supporting a designated area of graduate staff and indirect supervision of student staff.

LaShay included in her participant survey that she previously worked at an institution

that followed the residential curriculum approach, and that she attended RCI 2012.

Jim serves as a coordinator of residence life in the Department of Residence Life.

He joined the department in August, 2015. Jim shared with me during an informal

conversation, and the photo focus group, that he works closely with the assessment of MSU's residential curriculum. Unlike the other coordinators of residence life, Jim does not directly supervise graduate staff or indirectly supervise student staff. He reports directly to Sara and spoke about working closely with Thompson, both of whom were previously introduced above. Jim included in his participant survey that he previously worked at an institution that followed the residential curriculum approach, and that he has not attended an ACPA RCI.

Graduate staff demographics.

Table 3.2

Graduate Staff Demographics from Survey

Pseudonym	Position Status	Highest Degree Earned	Started Position Date/ Year	Previously Attended or Worked at an Institution with a RC aligned with The 10EERC	Previously Attended ACPA's RCI	Year and Approximate Month Department Implemented RC with Students
Taylor	Graduate Hall Coordinator	B.S.	July 2014	Yes, attended as a student	Yes, 1 (2013)	August 2015
Logan	Graduate Hall Coordinator	B.A.	July 2014	Yes, worked	No	January 2015
Hunter	Graduate Hall Coordinator	B.A.	July 2014	"I do not know"	No	August 2015 (implementing); Developing over the past 1-2 years
Rellen	Graduate Hall Coordinator	B.S.	July 2013	Neither	No	August 2015

Graduate Hall Coordinators in Residence Life

Hunter serves as a graduate hall coordinator, a graduate assistantship in the Department of Residence Life. He joined the department in July, 2014. Hunter is also enrolled in MSU's student affairs master's program. During his undergraduate years, he

served as a resident advisor for two years and then taught overseas after earning his bachelor's degree. Hunter stated that he considered a career outside of higher education, but ultimately he realized his passion is working in higher education. He explained his attraction to MSU, for both the master's program and assistantship:

> But, like, I wanted to do it here because our [master's] program requires three practicum experiences. I knew that would be the most beneficial when I'm job searching. Because, I mean, I could have two great ones, but it's better to have three and have a diverse pool of experiences to draw on. So that was what attracted me to this school. For res life here, I really liked…well, for one, I was an RA for two years as an undergrad. I really like res life. I like the graduate hall coordinator position here. This position was much more involved than I've seen in the same position at other schools. So because there's no immediate entry-level position, there's a graduate hall coordinator. Then it jumps to a coordinator of residence life. There's no in-between level. So a lot of the responsibilities are on us. So it's much more of a rigorous…or it's going to prepare me a lot more than I think other assistantships at other schools in res life would. So I feel like when I apply for jobs and look at hall director positions I'll feel very qualified for the job and not feel like, "Oh, I need to jump another level." It will just be a little higher than where I'm at now.

Hunter described his primary job duties to include supervising five undergraduate community advisors and five undergraduate residential academic ambassadors, and serving on the departmental Student Staff Recruitment & Selection Committee. Throughout his interview, Hunter offered perspective about the department while they

were adopting the residential curriculum approach. Hunter has not attended an ACPA RCI.

Logan serves as a graduate hall coordinator in the Department of Residence Life. He joined the department in July, 2014. Logan is also enrolled in MSU's student affairs master's program. In speaking about his attraction to MSU, Logan explained that it was clear to him in the recruitment process that people in the department cared about one another and him. He described his primary job responsibilities as including supervision of 13 student staff, including one student lead desk supervisor; conducting staff meetings and individual meetings with student staff; student conduct meetings, policy enforcement, addressing "larger conflicts;" maintaining relationships with maintenance and facilities staff; developing resources; and serving on committees. Logan stated that he serves on the Graduate Assistant Curriculum Committee, focused on training and development, and the Front Desk Committee in which members created resources to streamline recruitment, hiring, and training of undergraduate front desk staff, and to maintain consistent processes at front desks within the various residence halls at MSU. Throughout his interview, Logan offered perspective about the department while they were adopting the residential curriculum approach. Logan has not attended an ACPA RCI.

Rellen serves as a graduate hall coordinator in the Department of Residence Life. She joined the department in July, 2013. Rellen is enrolled in MSU's botany master's program, and she is the only graduate assistant in the department who is not enrolled in MSU's student affairs master's program. She was attracted to the position at the recommendation of a colleague in the department. Rellen offered the following on why she remains in her position:

What has kept me is because, even though I am not a Student Affairs graduate,

this job is awesome. I say that because it's completely, it's a great experience. I

have grown a lot professionally. I have learned to supervise a staff. I've been

supervising directly a staff for the last two years. I have great connections all

across campus, which I would not have been given that opportunity otherwise.

And so my little guy is a year and a half. And this department has supported me

the whole way with the whole pregnancy, having the child, and being very

lenient, sometimes, when I need to bring him to a meeting.

Rellen serves in MSU's residential apartments area with a mixed student population. She

described her primary job responsibilities as including supervision of student staff,

overseeing daily operations, supporting student staff in their community events,

addressing student conduct, and serving on duty. Throughout her interview, Rellen

offered perspective about the department while they were adopting the residential

curriculum approach. She has not attended an ACPA RCI.

Taylor serves as a graduate hall coordinator in the Department of Residence Life.

She joined the department in July, 2014. Taylor is also enrolled in MSU's student affairs

master's program. She served as a resident advisor during her undergraduate years; she

commented, "I really enjoyed working with the students in residential life. And working

with them on crisis management and working with them in their natural environments.

That's what kind of got me interested in residential life." Taylor articulated that she was

attracted to the department based on MSU's commitment to the residential curriculum

approach and her ability to be involved. The quote following summarized this sentiment:

I came here because they were developing the curriculum. When I started looking

at grad schools, I really wanted to be part of the curriculum development. And so

coming to MSU meant that I could really be a part of figuring out what we wanted

our students to learn and how we wanted them to learn it and then implementing it

in my second year of grad school.

Taylor described her primary job responsibilities as including partnership with another

graduate [hall coordinator] to co-lead a residence hall with 20 student staff and 400 first-

year students; supervision of five undergraduate community advisors and five

undergraduate residential academic ambassadors; conducting staff meetings and

individual meetings with student staff; handling conflicts; and serving on duty.

Throughout her interview, she offered perspective about the department while they were

adopting the residential curriculum approach. Finally, Taylor volunteered at ACPA's

2013 RCI but did not attend all sessions.

Student staff demographics.

Table 3.3

Student Staff Demographics from Survey

Pseudonym	Position Status	Highest Degree Earned	Started Position Date/ Year	Previously Attended or Worked at an Institution with a RC aligned with The 10EERC	Previously Attended ACPA's RCI	Year and Approximate Month Department Implemented RC with Students
Rose	Student Staff, Residential Academic Ambassador	B.A. in progress	Student staff began Fall, 2013	Neither	No	Fall, 2015, completely, some in fall of 2014
Jay	Student Staff, Community Advisor	B.A. in progress	No response	Yes, attended as a student	No	Fall, 2015 (August, 2015)

Table 3.3

Student Staff Demographics from Survey

Pseudonym	Position Status	Highest Degree Earned	Started Position Date/ Year	Previously Attended or Worked at an Institution with a RC aligned with The 10EERC	Previously Attended ACPA's RCI	Year and Approximat Month Department Implemente RC with Students
Ivory	Student Staff, Community Advisor	B.A. in progress	No response	Neither	No	August, 2015
Katie	Student Staff, Residential Academic Ambassador	B.A. in progress	No response	Neither	No	August, 2015
Lloyd	Student Staff, Residential Academic Ambassador	B.A. in progress	Current student staff	Neither	No	2015-2016 academic year
Derek	Student Staff, Residential Academic Ambassador	B.A. in progress	Student staff beginning August, 2013	"I do not know"	Yes, 2	January, 2015
Dylan	Student Staff, Community Advisor	B.A. in progress	Student staff beginning August, 2013	Neither	"Indiana State University"	August, 2015

Note: Derek reported having attended two RCIs. The survey question referred to ACPA's RCI, but upon interacting with Derek I learned that he attended MSU's version of a RCI. Dylan wrote "Indiana State University" for this category.

Student Staff: **Community Advisors and Residential Academic Ambassadors**

Within MSU's Department of Residence Life, there were two student staff

positions, the community advisor and the residential academic ambassador. A total of

seven student staff members participated in the student staff focus group, and the

participant demographics represented both positions. All participants were, at the time of

data collection, serving in their third year as a student staff member. None of the student

staff reported having attended an ACPA RCI. Derek, introduced below, was the only student staff member who reported participating in a departmental committee related to the development of the residential curriculum.

Derek serves as a residential academic ambassador. To explain his decision to become a staff member, Derek said:

I decided to become a staff member because my freshman year I enjoyed living in the residence halls. My sophomore year I lived off campus. And when I lived off campus, I didn't feel like I was involved in anything. And so I figured that living on campus would be a great way to stay involved as well as, as others have pointed out, being a role model. And the benefits also help on that.

Dylan serves as a community advisor. He described his decision to become a student staff member as follows: "I wasn't really connected with my RA … but I started getting connected with some of the other res life members within my building. And they kind of steered me to become a res life member."

Ivory serves as a community advisor. She had a very personal reason for choosing to become a student staff member:

I had a really great community advisor and residential academic ambassador my first year. And just seeing what they did to help me adjust my first year was something that I wanted to make sure I gave back to the um other students coming in.

Jay serves as a community advisor but served the past two years as a residential academic ambassador. He chose to become a student staff member to ensure that his positive experience was available to others:

I just wanted to ensure that people were actually getting the same great experience here at the institution, the same way that I got my great experience my first year. I understand that a lot of people coming in are scared, and they're nervous. They don't understand this whole college thing. To be role models and to be that first person that we are actually in contact with them when they move into the residence hall, um hopefully we can guide them on through their first year and that will actually help them through the next three or four years of their time here… at the institution.

Katie serves as a residential academic ambassador. She chose to become a student staff member to make a difference in the lives of others:

I became a student staff member because, as a freshman, I saw my APA and my RA making changes in students' lives. And I decided that, as a student, I wanted to be able to kind of impact others while making a difference while getting my education.

Lloyd serves as a residential academic ambassador. He chose to become a student staff member because he recognized the positive impact he could have others:

I decided to do this after my first year on campus. I didn't really connect with my RA. I saw the connection he made with other residents on the floor. I wanted to give students like me who maybe didn't connect with their staff member a chance to do that because I saw how impactful it could be.

Rose serves as a residential academic ambassador. Her choice to become a student staff member was because, "I just wanted the experience of doing something different. And I didn't really know anyone here, so it was a good experience to have."

RHA student leader demographics.

Table 3.4

RHA Student Leader Demographics from Survey

Pseudonym	Position Status	Highest Degree Earned	Started Position Date/Year	Previously Attended or Worked at an Institution with a RC aligned with The 10EERC	Previously Attended ACPA's RCI	Year and Approximate Month Department Implemented RC with Students
Talia	RHA	B.A. in progress	No response	"I do not know"	No	"Unknown"
Bethany	RHA	B.A. in progress	No response	"I do not know"	No	"I believe that those working in professional positions started the RCI in August, 2015."
Keith	RHA	B.A. in progress	RHA leadership position since May 2014	"I do not know"	"Did not"	"I don't know"
Rosa	RHA	B.A. in progress	No response	Neither	No	August 2015
Jackie	RHA	B.A. in progress	No response	Yes, attended as a student	No	August 2015
Beth	RHA	B.A. in progress	President of hall council freshman year	Neither	No	"Not sure"
Jamie	RHA	B.A. in progress	No response	Yes, attended as a student	N/A	"Unsure"

Student leaders with MSU's RHA

I conducted a focus group with seven students who represented MSU's Residence Hall Association, a student organization within the Department of Residence Life. Each participant's tenure and role in the organization varied. There are various positions on RHA's executive board, and this board can be described as the core student leadership for

the organization. I altered position titles in the following profiles to protect participants'
anonymity. None of these participants reported having attended an ACPA RCI.

Bethany serves on the RHA executive board. Leadership opportunities enticed
her into becoming involved in RHA:

I, as well, was on hall council my freshman year. I was the [executive board
position] for that. So I didn't really know what I was running for. I didn't want to
be president, because I didn't want *all* of the responsibility. But I still wanted a
leadership position, so I ran for [executive board position]. And then in the spring
semester, I ended up running for [a leadership position] of RHA as a whole. And
that's just really me trying to progress as a leader and kind of step up not as a hall
individually but also campus-wide. So that's been a lot of fun for me to oversee.
So Homecoming is in a couple weeks, so it's been a little crazy. It's been a lot of
fun to oversee homecoming throughout all the residence halls and to see them
grow as well. So, I guess, seeing the impact I have on primarily freshmen students
on their hall councils.

Beth previously served on RHA's executive board and as a residential academic
ambassador. She currently works at a residence hall front desk. Beth shared the
following about how and why she became involved in RHA:

I got involved with RHA my freshman year when I was on hall council. I was our
hall council president. I went to the RHA meetings a lot because A, it was
required for our hall council to be there and B, because it was just another thing
for me to do and another way to get involved. And when it came time for
elections, I really wanted to run for a position. But I wasn't sure, because I was

only a freshman. I had talked to the executive board about it a lot, and they really

sparked my interest in running for an RHA executive board position. And so I

ended up running for president of RHA and was president of RHA my sophomore

year. That was how I got into it. And I really liked the campus-wide aspect of it

and being able to reach outside of just my residence hall and reach all of the halls

on campus.

Jackie serves on the RHA executive board. Her focus, in working with students,

"making a difference:"

I was kind of hesitant about it, actually, because my friend, he was [on the board]

before me. And he was trying to get people to run for that position on RHA. And

he told me that he thought, based on his experiences with me, that I would do

really well in that aspect because he knows that I like guidelines and I get stuff

done a lot. And so I ran not knowing what I was really getting into. And then I got

elected and shadowed him for a full semester. And then I really liked that I would

outreach to more than just our school, our university. I got to meet people from all

over the country and then, in May, from different parts of the world. And so I just

thought that that was really cool, and I like the guidelines. I like knowing that I

am making a difference on campus.

Jamie previously served on RHA's executive board and has been involved in

regional student leadership boards. She became involved in RHA to "become a different

person:"

I joined hall council in 2012, which was my freshman year, and I was [a

chair of a committee]. I joined because when I got to college I wanted to make a

name for myself. I was kind of just a run-of-the-mill high school student. I wasn't super well known or popular around my school. Then I came here and was like, "All right, so I can be somebody totally different." And so then I was on hall council, and that year I attended the NACURH conference, which is the national RHA conference in the summer, to go to Pittsburgh. So I went there. And, I met a bunch of different people from all over. Also, I got closer with our… she was [a professional staff member in the department], Violet. I got really close with her during that conference. And then when an open position occurred on our RHA exec board, so she shoulder tapped me to take it like two days before classes started my sophomore year. I have no idea what my leadership role would have been if I hadn't gotten that call.

So then I was on the RHA exec board for two years as [leadership position on the executive board] my sophomore and junior year. And then after that I ran for a regional board position for [a regional organization], which is the regional RHA group, basically, is what it is. And so I'm on that this year, so I'm still moving up in my leadership past RHA. So that's really cool. Through it, making an impact on campus and helping grow future leaders, like I'm kind of seeing myself take more of an advisor role, helping out, trying to give as much information for people in RHA with me as well. So it's kind of cool being able to make yourself somebody known and make a difference on your campus.

Keith serves on the RHA executive board. He shared the following about how and why he became involved in RHA:

I joined RHA because I was…I had started with hall council. Well, I was

instructed by my community advisor that I should do that. And I didn't really

know what it was, but I did it anyway. And um I grew to really like it. And then I

learned that there were going to be quite a few open positions on the RHA E-

board. I got encouraged to do that while at a conference, so I decided to go and try

to see if I could get a position. And I did.

Rosa serves on the RHA executive board. She became involved in RHA to "get

out of her comfort zone:"

I definitely agree with what Bethany was saying in terms of seeing my influence

on the campus and the campus' influence, especially in my leadership, on me.

And so I feel like I joined RHA to kind of get out of my comfort zone, and meet

new people, and have those leadership opportunities because I knew it was a great

way to get them. And so joining hall council was great for that. And then I knew,

in order to even expand it more, I should go for an RHA position, so that's what I

did.

Talia serves on the RHA executive board. She shared the following about how

and why she became involved in RHA:

I know, in my experience, I started, as well, on my hall council. I got a lot of

support from my graduate hall coordinator who was overseeing the hall council at

the time. And so them being able to reach out and tell us more about it, and they

also encouraged us to do it if we wanted leadership positions through Residential

Life, whether it be a community advisor or a residential academic ambassador

position or if we wanted to do RHA later on.

In conclusion, Table 3.5 is a summary of information organized by participant group. I also designated my two key informants by inserting an asterisk next to their names in the chart.

Table 3.5

Participant Group Demographic Overview

	Professional Staff	Graduate Staff	Undergraduate Student Staff	Undergraduate RHA Student Leader
Number of participants	12	4	7	7
Pseudonyms	Dr. Blair, Sonya Matthews*, Violet Thompson*, Rae Jae, Sara Weber, Benedict, Carole, Ell, Lance, Steve, LaShay, Jim	Hunter, Logan, Rellen, Taylor	Derek, Dylan, Ivory, Jay, Katie, Lloyd, Rose	Bethany, Beth, Jackie, Jamie, Keith, Rosa, Talia
Highest degree earned	2 PhD (1 person) 11 Master's	All M.A. in progress	All B.A. in progress	All B.A. in progress
Previously Attended or Worked at an Institution with a RC aligned with The 10EERC	3 – Yes, worked 1 – Yes, attended and worked 8 – Neither	1– attended 1– worked 1– Do not know 1– Neither	1 –Yes, attended 1– Do not know 5 –Neither	2 – Yes, attended 3 – Do not know 2 – Neither
Previously Attended ACPA's RCI	5 – Yes (once) 2 – Yes (more than 1) 5 – No	1 – Yes (once) 3 – No	1 – Yes (more than 1) 1– "MSU" 5– No	0 – Yes 7 –No

Data Collection

A case study does not produce generalizability. It promotes the development of an adequate description, interpretation, and explanation of the case being studied (Glesne, 2011). Glesne (2011) asserted, "The study of the case, however defined, tends to involve in-depth and often longitudinal examination with data gathered through participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and document collection and analysis" (p.22). According to Yin (2014), "…the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations – beyond

what might be available in a conventional historical study" (p. 12). Yin (2014) described

sources of evidence as including (1) documentation, (2) archival records, (3) interviews,

(4) direct observation, (5) participant observation, and (6) physical artifacts. Further, Yin

(2014) emphasized Patton's (2002) and Roulston's (2010) notions of data triangulation

such that convergence of data, or evidence, would strengthen the construct validity of the

case study and other perceived measures of quality of research. Lather (1986) defined

construct validity using the notion of asystematized reflexivity, "which gives some

indication of how a priori theory has been changed by the logic of the data, becomes

essential in establishing construct validity in ways that will contribute to the growth of

illuminating and change-enhancing social theory" (p. 191). For the case of MSU, I have

my commitment to The 10EERC to work against when collecting and analyzing data.

As a qualitative researcher, I was the primary instrument for data collection

(Glesne, 2011). I was responsible for collecting data to address the research questions for

my study. The research questions for my study guided my proposed methodology to

include four components of data collection. I was originally scheduled to conduct my

site visit to MSU from September 28, 2015, to October 2, 2015. However, my stay was

extended until October 7, 2015, due to the 1,000-year flood disaster in South Carolina. I

consulted with Matthews and Thompson, before, during, and after data collection to seek

clarification as needed.

My first data collection strategy was a survey interview (Yin, 2014). Included in

the participant invitation email (Appendix D) was a link to an online survey. I requested

that each participant complete the survey at least one week prior to my site visit. The

purpose of this questionnaire was to solicit consent from each participant to participate in

the survey (and the study), to identify each participant's preferred pseudonym, to learn

about each participant's educational and employment background, to collect various

details that did not require face-to-face interaction during my visit, and to solicit

information that may have influenced the level of detail in my interview questions. I

brought hard copies to the site for any participants who did not submit a completed form

to me prior to my travel to the site. The full content of the questionnaire is included in

Appendix E.

My second data collection strategy was ethnographic interviews (Roulston, 2010)

with the participants to whom I sent the questionnaire prior to my site visit. The

questionnaire was a way to help build rapport with my participants, gather details about

their backgrounds, and generate follow-up questions during our semi-structured

interviews. Yin (2014), claimed, "One of the most important sources of case study

evidence is the interview" (p. 110). The interviews "will resemble guided conversations

rather than structured queries" (p. 110). Roulston (2010) defined the purpose of

ethnographic interviews as, "…to explore the meanings that people ascribe to actions and

events in their cultural worlds, expressed in their own language" (p. 19). Further,

Roulston (2010) explained that this type of qualitative research requires the researcher to

go "in" to the environment to gather data. For the purposes of my study, I sought to

explore participants' descriptions and perspectives on implementing a residential

curriculum in their residence life unit in the context of their housing department. During

summer 2015, I piloted the interview questions with professional staff on my campus.

My goal in piloting the questions was to solicit feedback on the clarity of questions, the

relevance of questions to the research questions, and to practice articulating the questions

in a mock interview setting. During my visit to MSU, I conducted two, one-and-a-half hour, in-person, individual, audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews with the chief housing officer. These interviews bookended the site visit by being the first and last interviews to be conducted. I also conducted one, one-and-a-half hour, in-person, individual, audio-recorded, semi-structured interview with the associate dean of academic enhancement, three central leadership staff, four coordinators of residence life, and four graduate hall coordinators. Interviews were conducted in a private, enclosed office within the central housing office. I found this to be an optimal environment as it reduced the likelihood that visitors would approach participants or that they would receive phone calls. I used Skype to interview Carole, a former coordinator of residence life who no longer worked at the institution. Appendix C includes a copy of the informed consent form that each participant reviewed and signed prior to our interview. I also asked each participant for verbal consent at the beginning of our interview, which was captured on tape. Appendix F includes a sample of the case study protocol for the semi-structured interviews with coordinators of residence life.

My third data collection strategy was two, one-and-a-half-hour, in-person, audio-recorded, semi-structured focus groups (Roulston, 2010); one with seven undergraduate student staff members who served in their positions within the timeframe of the department's shift to the residential curriculum, and the other with RHA student leaders. Two of the student staff left approximately 45 minutes into the focus group to attend class; they were invited to send any remaining comments via email but did not do so. In spring, 2015, Matthews confirmed that approximately 60-70 student staff members had served in either their second or third year as a student staff member, thereby providing a

large pool from which to draw for the study. Thompson recruited student staff members who, according to her, would provide diverse perspectives on adopting the residential curriculum approach. I provided a meal for the student staff during the focus group as a way to thank them for lending their time and insight to the study. Appendix C includes a copy of the informed consent form that each participant reviewed and signed prior to the focus group. I also asked each participant for verbal consent at the beginning of the focus group, which was captured on tape. Appendix G includes the student staff focus group protocol.

Additionally, for this third data collection strategy, I conducted a one-and-a-half-hour, in-person, audio-recorded, semi-structured focus group (Roulston, 2010) with seven RHA student leaders. Thompson recruited RHA student leaders who, according to her, would provide diverse perspectives in adopting the residential curriculum approach. I provided a meal for the RHA student leaders during the focus group as a way to thank them for lending their time and insight to the study. Appendix C includes a copy of the informed consent form that each participant reviewed and signed prior to the focus group. I also asked each participant for verbal consent at the beginning of the focus group, which was captured on tape. Appendix H includes the RHA student leader focus group protocol. Both student focus groups were conducted in a private conference room in the main housing office. Ultimately, I believe the focus groups with students were the most productive way to collect data from students because focus groups can allow participants to feel more comfortable interacting with researchers (Roulston, 2010) – particularly as I am an outsider on their campus.

My fourth data collection strategy was document analysis (Yin, 2014) with the

intention of reviewing how philosophies and practices may have shifted when the

residence life unit adopted the residential curriculum approach. According to Yin (2014),

"Except for studies of preliterate societies, documentary information is likely to be

relevant to every case study topic" (p.105). Additionally, Yin (2014) asserted, "… the

most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other

sources" (p. 107). Beginning in spring 2015, and continuing during my site visit, I asked

Matthews and Thompson for copies of documents, from prior to adopting the residential

curriculum approach, which might show change over time. I expressed interest in

reviewing organizational charts from before and after adopting the residential curriculum;

tools relevant to programmatic approaches before adopting the residential curriculum and

their replacements with the implementation of the residential curriculum; committee

charges, agendas, membership, and accomplishments from before and after adopting the

residential curriculum; position descriptions of the various levels of residence life staff

from before and after adopting the residential curriculum; staff recruitment and selection

materials relevant to the various levels of residence life staff from before and after

adopting the residential curriculum; training and development tools relevant to the

various levels of residence life staff from before and after adopting the residential

curriculum; and any other documents that Matthews and Thompson would suggest given

the topic and scope of my study. In reality, while on-site, Matthews and Thompson sent

me various documents via email. Some of the emails included attachments with

resources, while other emails included communication exchanges on topics related to the

residential curriculum over the past two years. After leaving the site, and while

conducting member checking and early coding, I sent Thompson follow-up emails to request additional documents. Thompson and I spoke via phone on December 16, 2015, regarding the status of any remaining documents. During that conversation, Thompson stated that not all of my requested documents were available given the organization had staffing changes over the years, different colleagues were responsible for different job components related to my requested documents, and that the organization had a previous reputation (prior to Matthews' leadership) of not maintaining written sources. For example, Thompson indicated that it was challenging to find previous versions of programming forms, programming philosophy statements, guides, and tools from before adopting the residential curriculum approach. Thompson attributed this to the fact that oversight for programming was the responsibility of a colleague who had departed from the organization.

Finally, for the fifth data collection strategy, I engaged some professional staff participants in an activity to promote storytelling and presentation of artifacts, including but not limited to photos (Banks, 2007; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Glesne, 2011; Yin, 2014). Banks (2007) referred to photo-elicitation as the use of, "photographs to invoke comments, memory, and discussion in the course of a semi-structured interview" (p. 65). Glesne (2011) shared the following insight to promote the use of photos, "A more qualitative kind of analysis can be done of participants' stored photos to provide historical and cultural context for a study" (p. 82). Barone and Eisner (2012) asserted:

> A better reason for doing arts-based research may be this: to the extent that an
> arts-based research project effectively employs aesthetic dimensions in both its

inquiry and representational phases, to that extent the work may provide an

important public service that may be otherwise unavailable. (p. 13)

Specifically, for my study, the purpose of this activity was to provide a creative outlet to

encourage participants to share about their environment and lived experiences with

adopting the residential curriculum approach. To identify participants, I asked Matthews

and Thompson to help identify co-chairs of departmental committees such as for the

residential curriculum, staff selection, staff training, and staff development. In reality,

Matthews and Thompson selected professional staff based on availability and those

whose credentials were as close to my criteria as possible. One week prior to my site

visit, I sent, via email, the activity prompt to the relevant participants to afford them time

to think about what they might capture and to help them allot time in their schedules for

this activity. A copy of the prompt is included in Appendix I. I convened the

participants involved in this activity on the first morning of my visit to verbally explain

the purpose of the activity, to again share the written prompt, to provide three disposable

cameras, and to answer any questions. I encouraged participants to involve others in this

activity and encouraged "groupthink." I chose to provide disposable cameras rather than

inviting participants to use a personal cell phone. I believe disposable cameras require

participants to be more intentional in selecting images to capture, as participants cannot

delete photos captured as could be done with a digital photo technology. Participants

returned the cameras to me at noon on the fourth day of my visit. After I learned that

most local vendors no longer provide one-hour delivery for disposable cameras, the

photos were developed within one hour at a local, professional photo shop. The next day,

I conducted a semi-structured, audio-recorded focus group that lasted 50 minutes of the

allotted 90 minutes. I did not look at the photos prior to the focus group, as I wanted my participants to tell their stories rather me imposing my interpretation of what participants captured. The purpose of the focus group was for participants to conduct a "show and tell" of pictures and to learn about participant's experiences with the activity, which provided insightful data points about their perceptions of the residential curriculum, team dynamics, and various other topics. This activity provided data for the third research question, which addresses how participants characterize their experience with adopting the residential curriculum approach. Yin (2014) stated that shorter case study interviews, interpreted here as the aforementioned semi-structured focus group, are used to corroborate certain findings or to capture an interviewee's own sense of reality.

Following my site visit for data collection, I submitted all audiotapes from interviews and focus groups to a transcriptionist in my local area. My intent in using the services of a transcriptionist was to help expedite that step and afford me the opportunity to begin reviewing and coding my data as soon as possible after my visit. The transcriptionist signed a confidentiality agreement to help protect participant anonymity.

Coding and Analysis

Charmaz (2001), in Yin (2014) described the purpose of coding to be a "critical link between gathering data and making meaning of it (Yin, 2014, p. 3)." Aligned with my emic approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), I did not use Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations or The 10EERC as lenses when coding my data at the outset. However, my knowledge of this model and process outlined nationally for residential curricula, in all likelihood helped me identify key words, phrases, emotions, and types of changes.

I began by using protocol coding (Saldaña, 2013) when listening to the audio recordings of each interview and focus group; listening to the recordings allowed me to check for accuracy before sending transcripts to participants for member checking. Protocol coding (Saldaña, 2013) is, "the collection and, in particular, the coding of qualitative data according to pre-established, recommended, standardized, or prescribed system" (p. 151). At that stage, I copied and pasted data into a Microsoft Word document with a designated section for each research question for the study. Next, I moved to coding the salient points participants shared from an emic perspective. Saldaña (2013) emphasized that the purpose of first cycle coding is to take a cursory review of the data, typically in the format of transcripts, for the most salient points. For my first cycle of coding of the interview and focus group transcripts, I employed Saldaña's (2013) descriptive coding, which "summarizes in a word or short phrase – most often as a noun the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data" (p. 88). In vivo coding, also referred to as, "literal coding," "verbatim coding," "inductive coding," "indigenous coding," and "emic coding" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91) "refers to a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91). In vivo coding is particularly relevant given my emic approach and constructivist orientation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Versus coding (Saldaña, 2013) helped me to examine changes that are relevant to my research questions. Versus codes, "identify in dichotomous or binary terms the individuals, groups, social systems, organizations, phenomena, processes, concepts, etc., in direct conflict with each other" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 115). I used both handwritten notes, using four colors of pens, on each transcript to document salient codes/ideas, and a codebook created in Excel to organize data from the first cycle coding

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Saldaña (2013). Table 3.6 includes a copy of my codebook headings and the first row of

the tab related to coding the transcript for Logan's (graduate hall coordinator) interview.

Table 3.6

Copy of Codebook Headings

Type of Code	Quotes/Data	Location of quote	Explanation	Early Categories	Themes
Descriptive	[Attraction to MSU] - recruitment experience; as he sought an assistantship at MSU; clear to him that people in dept. cared about one another and him	p2, 59-63	spoke positively about his recruitment experience and fit with the people	Background; His Recruitment Experience; Relationship-Oriented; Fit w/Environment	Participant Background

I then followed this coding with writing analytic memos (Saldaña, 2013). For example, I

wrote an analytic memo about my experience as a student staff member in a traditional

resident advisor role rather than in student leadership role with RHA. Saldaña (2013)

cited writing analytic memos as a strategy to enhance researcher credibility and

trustworthiness of data. Next, still using the four colored pens and Excel codebook, I

performed protocol coding (Saldaña, 2013) informed by Bolman & Deal's (2014) four

frames (structural, human resources, political, and symbolic). After writing more

analytic memos (Saldaña, 2013), I proceeded to second cycle coding (Saldaña, 2013). In

hindsight, I would have liked to also conduct emotion coding (Saldaña, 2013), however I

can do so in the future.

For second cycle coding Saldaña (2013), I used pattern coding (Saldaña, 2013)

defined as, "…develops the 'meta-code' – the category label that identifies similarly

coded data. Pattern codes not only organize the corpus, but attempt to attribute meaning

to that organization" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 209). For example, I identified the category "analogies" to label data for how some participants used analogies to describe and characterize their experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach. As for my document analysis data collection, I used Saldaña's (2013) descriptive, in vivo, and versus coding. Merriam (2014) asserted, "Documents of all types can help the researcher uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the research problem" (p. 189).

I committed to frequently writing analytic memos, as described by Saldaña (2013), throughout the coding process so as to fully disclose my assumptions and biases, but also to critically engage with my actual data. Several memos served as a reminder that I needed to stay close to the words of my participants when analyzing the data. Early and frequent engagement with my data led me to further explore early patterns via analysis and may have helped me to accurately represent and articulate my findings.

In terms of analysis, "Our ultimate analytical goal is not just to transfer data, but to transcend them to find something else, something more" ((Wolcott, 1994 & Locke, 2007 as cited in Saldaña, 2013, p. 208)). I used Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations and The 10EERC as lenses when working to analyze further my data. My knowledge of this model and process outlined nationally for residential curricula, helped me identify key words, phrases, emotions, and types of changes.

I used thematic analysis to identify themes across multiple interviews (Glesne, 2011; Saldaña, 2013). After conducting the two aforementioned coding cycles, and creating my codebook in Excel, I was able to identify patterns and then themes to help me tell the story of my participants' perspectives regarding their unit's shift to the

residential curriculum approach. For this stage of analysis, I first printed my original

codebook and cut each row into slips of paper. I reviewed each slip of paper to sort the

slips into three piles, one per research question (change, participants' perceptions of

positives, participants' perceptions of challenges, and how residence life staff

characterized the experience). I then used an Excel spreadsheet, with one research

question per tab, to filter my early categories for another round of engagement with my

data. I anticipated this move would help me view the frequency of categories across my

data set as I used Excel's filter feature to review the frequency of categories. The results

from filtering helped me review my categories to identify patterns, or themes, across

multiple data sources (Saldaña, 2013; Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) and Saldaña (2013) argued

for the representation of themes to be compelling, data triangulation and saturation are

essential.

In summary, my priority as a qualitative researcher is to share the voices of my

participants such that their stories can inform the representation of data. In the previous

section on participants, I provided a brief introduction to each participant, categorized by

their level of position in the organization, and early patterns within their respective

ethnographic interview (Roulston, 2010). For the second portion of my analysis, I

illustrated similar early patterns across the four data collection strategies, to include the

survey sent to participants in advance of my visit, interviews, document analysis, and

focus groups from the photo and artifact activity.

Ultimately, I was prepared to adjust my approach to data analysis based on the

findings from my data collection. I committed to frequently writing analytic memos, as

described by Saldaña (2013) throughout the process of analysis so as to fully disclose my

assumptions and biases, but also to critically engage with my actual data. Early and

frequent engagements with my data helped me accurately represent, and articulate, my

findings.

Positionality

In qualitative research, the researcher is expected to share his or her experiences,

biases, and assumptions with the reader (Glesne, 2011). In this section, I describe my

personal and professional experiences, as well as my biases and assumptions that seem

relevant to my study. As an individual, I am a white, female, in my mid-thirties, and

identify as the middle-class socioeconomic class. I consider myself to be extremely

fortunate to have earned two bachelor's degrees, a master's degree, and to currently

maintain status as a doctoral candidate. My experiences within the classroom

undoubtedly complemented my growth in the beyond-the-classroom engagements that I

describe next.

During my undergraduate years, I served as a resident assistant for three of the

four years I attended a private, religiously affiliated institution. In that position, I was

expected to complete a designated number of interactions with my residents to fulfill my

eagerness to serve as a student leader and to deliver on expectations for my position.

While I exuded passion for my role, I recognize looking back that I lacked understanding

of the context for my role as a student leader within the field of student affairs. As an

undergraduate student, I was not exposed to concepts such as student learning and

development theories, sequencing intentional learning opportunities, assessing student

learning, or retention data, as examples. In graduate school, I quickly learned that the

readings and conversations from my master's-level courses were relevant to my graduate

assistantship as an assistant residence hall director. My knowledge about, and passion

for, student learning and development in beyond-the-setting classrooms intensified in my

next two professional positions. As an entry-level residence hall coordinator, for three

years I supervised student staff; advised a residence hall government; partnered with

faculty, academic staff, and campus staff to facilitate several living and learning

communities; provided in-hall support to Freshman Interest Groups, participated in a

crisis and duty rotation; served on departmental and university committees; and more. As

a mid-level area coordinator, for three years I supervised professional staff working

within one-fourth of the campus; served on departmental and university committees;

provided support for crisis response; developed policies and procedures; and more.

I am currently serving in my sixth year as the Associate Director of Residence

Life in University Housing at the University of South Carolina (UofSC). I am

responsible for leading our residential curriculum, providing vision for residence life staff

training and ongoing education efforts, supervising two mid-level professionals – one

specializing in residentially-based linked coursework and the other in residential student

leadership, and other priorities. During first cycle coding, I wrote an analytic memo

(Saldaña, 2013) about a current priority in my position at the UofSC. At present, one of

my priorities is to lead a task force with the aim of reinvigorating our Residence Hall

Association and residential student leadership opportunities, all within the context of our

residential curriculum. I wrote about how my views of student leadership have evolved

over time from my days as a student leader to now conducting this study. Additionally,

learning about residential curricula, with and from colleagues, at the UofSC and

nationally, has been a signature hallmark of my professional experience during my 12

years as a residence life professional staff member within a total of four residence life departments. I am motivated to contribute to students' learning and development as well as institutional outcomes, as I wholeheartedly believe in education for the sake of bettering individuals for their future personal and professional pursuits, as well as to improve the world in which we live.

I identify as an advocate for the ACPA's RCI. In 2013, I had the privilege of serving as co-chair of the Institute and co-presented the beginning track on writing learning outcomes and presented with two colleagues the UofSC's showcase session on our residential curriculum. I enjoyed sharing lessons learned and our opportunities for refinement, as well as dialoguing with colleagues about the strengths and areas for potential growth. At RCI 2014, I had the privilege of co-presenting the beginning track on strategies and sequencing and the beginning track of "turning concepts into action." I also facilitated a roundtable conversation on aligning staff selection, training, and development to a curricular approach to residential education. At RCI 2015, I eagerly co-presented a session on returning to RCI and making the most of the experience, how to showcase assessment data to tell the story of a residence curriculum, and how to engage stakeholders in a residential curriculum. Every conference call to date for planning RCI 2016 reminds me of how important it is to continue to be a voice in this emerging approach to residential education as I wholeheartedly believe in the approach. In the last year especially, I have been touched when colleagues at other institutions have contacted me to welcome my feedback on their institution's residential curriculum. I learn so much in those conversations that it continuously reaffirms that this is an area of passion for me. However, despite my national involvement with RCI and anecdotal conversations, I only

have cursory knowledge of other how other institutions are designing and implementing their departments' residential curriculum.

I am steadfast in my belief that student affairs programs and services, including those within housing and residence life, exist to complement and support the academic mission and priorities of the respective institution of higher education. Based on my practical experiences, I believe I possess significant philosophical and operational knowledge of residence life units within today's comprehensive university housing departments, and that I am qualified to explore an empirically based inquiry within the realm of residence life. My doctoral-level cognate courses in Human Resources and Management have inspired me to explore residential curriculum from the organizational perspective rather than seeking to research the effectiveness of the residential curriculum approach on student learning. Through informal conversations with colleagues about the residential curriculum at their respective institutions, I have learned more along the way about students, colleagues, and myself, than I could have ever imagined possible. This study helped me better understand the philosophical, operational, and other environmental factors that influence and impact implementation of a residential curriculum at an institution of which I am not personally or professionally affiliated. I believe there is merit in understanding the lived experiences, and reported accounts, of residence life staff who are involved with implementing a residential curriculum. Their insight can contribute advocacy for student learning and development in on-campus living environments, inform decisions about allocation of resources, and ultimately may illuminate areas of opportunity and general advice for colleagues in various positions around the world.

Prior to data collection for the present study, I dedicated time to reflect on The 10EERC and my positionality. I first learned about The 10EERC when attending RCI 2010, an opportunity I was presented based on the story used to begin Chapter 1 of this dissertation. I recall thinking all of the Elements resonated with me based on what I learned during my master's program and subsequent six years of professional experience. At RCI 2010, and when preparing a response related to residential curricula for my Comprehensive exam for the doctoral program in August, 2014, I neither questioned, nor thought beyond, the explicit premise of each Element. I took the Elements at face-value in my work as a professional in designing and executing a residential curriculum on my home campus. Similarly, as an RCI faculty member, I articulated the tenets of the Elements during annual RCI sessions as being foundational to the residential curriculum approach. During summer, 2015, I took the time to think deeply about the Elements in preparation for data collection. Table 3.7 shows my critique of each Element.

Table 3.7

Critique of The 10EERC Prior to Data Collection

The 10EERC	My Critique
1. Directly connected to your institution's mission (archeological dig)	Based on my education and practical experiences, this Element resonates with my professional values. I do think, however, this Element must be a priority within any department. Often, we must focus on immediate human needs such as shelter and physical and psychological safety. However, I contend that the tenets of this Element must not be dismissed as being only the responsibility of senior administrators or residential educational specialist. I believe all staff and student leaders of a housing and residence life department must frequently be espoused to the messages within the institution's mission and held accountable to demonstrating value-added to this end. As professionals, we must ask ourselves, do we want our students to simply regurgitate what we say is important within the institution, or can we get creative in involving them in the archaeological dig experience?

Table 3.7 *(Continued)*

Critique of The 10EERC Prior to Data Collection

The 10EERC	My Critique
2. Learning outcomes are derived from a defined educational priority (i.e., leadership, citizenship, etc.)	"If everything is a priority, then nothing is a priority" (Edwards & Gardner, 2015). Having an Educational Priority Statement (EPS) is valuable but only if members of an organization believe in, and can readily articulate, such EPS. I worry that some professionals might defer to inserting "buzzwords" of our field rather than take the time to apply findings of the archaeological dig from their respective campus.
3. Based on research and developmental theory – not just our intuition	What research and what developmental theory? Some professionals in our field are formally educated in disciplines outside of education. Are we assuming knowledge from all disciplines is valued? I think the emphasis on "developmental theory" is critical given the decades of literature written on student development theory. Also, as Kerr & Tweedy (2006) wrote, higher education professionals can benefit from understanding K-12 literature.
4. Learning outcomes drive the development of educational strategies (mapping)	Generationally, and in other ways, student demographics and needs change over time. What the class of 2015 needs will likely not be what the class of 2025 needs or what the class of 2035 needs. This critique is one reason that practitioners must think critically about this Element and revise residential curricula accordingly.
5. Programs may be one type of strategy – but not the only one	This Element reminds me of what I have learned about pedagogy, in my formal education, at professional conferences, and via reading. I wonder if this Element assumes that residence life professionals are educated in pedagogy or if we, and I include myself, defer to what strategies we have always used or think is best for student learning. I see a strong connection with Element 10 (use of assessment), as we must design educational strategies that can enhance student learning.
6. Student staff members play key roles but are not the educational experts	As a professional, I constantly try to remind myself to pay attention to what role student staff members can and should play in the educational enterprise. I am not perfect in my practice, but I believe professionals must not inadvertently disconnect from student staff as knowers. On the other end of the spectrum, student staff are still learning and growing. The terminology I know and use now, as a mid-level professional, is in some ways dramatically different than when I was a 19-year-old resident assistant charged with creating a bulletin board on the topic of spirituality.

Table 3.7 *(Continued)*

Critique of The 10EERC Prior to Data Collection

The 10EERC	My Critique
7. Represents sequenced learning (by-month and by-year)	Kerr and Tweedy (2006) wrote about sequenced learning within the curricular approach to residential education. I believe the term "sequencing" has become a buzzword or has become minimized for some, who believe it's "just doing things in a logical flow." Professionals must take the time to read about sequencing and must not see this Element as a standalone third Element (based on research and developmental theory – not just our intuition). Additionally, professionals must remain mindful that learning can be serendipitous – not every learning moment can or should be planned in advance.
8. Stakeholders are identified and involved	I worry that professionals often think of faculty, academic staff, and campus staff as stakeholders. Do we remember to involve students, such as student staff, RHA student leaders, and alumni in our planning and implementation of residential curricula?
9. Plan is developed through review process that includes feedback, critique, transparency (Curriculum Review Committee, etc.)	What plan? I know from involvement at the annual RCI that the plan refers, at least in part, to educational plans. Professionals cannot simply read The 10EERC and assume they have all context to implement a residential curriculum that aligns with national standards discussed at annual ACPA RCIs. Also, professionals must consider the definition of feedback and be clear on ways to engage critically with feedback.
10. Assessment is essential for measuring the achievement of the learning outcomes and can be used to test the effectiveness and efficiency of strategies for program review and accountability.	I agree with the tenets of this Element, and I appreciate that it does not solely emphasize the act of conducting assessment. The inclusion of using data to guide practice is equally as important. More clarity on what accountability means would be helpful. Accountability for what and to whom?

Additionally, I considered that some of my participants, particularly the students and

perhaps some professional and graduate staff, might not be as familiar with The 10EERC

or philosophies espoused at the annual ACPA RCI. I committed to being open to what I

heard, observed, and read to best honor the words and experiences of my participants. However, I also reminded myself that as a human being, despite my best attempts, my mind is not a blank slate.

I went to my site with experiences, ideas, and preconceptions. I believed my identities, as a woman in my mid-thirties, with a depth of educational and professional experience, could impact my data collection – particularly how participants perceived me. MSU is a primarily white institution (PWI) based on data featured from the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences' National Center for Education Statistics (http://nces.ed.gov/). However, I am aware some participants may identify as African-American or of another race or ethnicity. Some participants, for example, might interpret that I, as a white woman, do not understand the lived experience of a human being of another race or ethnicity. Similarly, other variables, such as individuals in lateral or vertical to my current position, could impact my data collection and interpretation. For example, I found myself thinking about Matthews' accounts both for the purpose of the study but also with curiosity as I intend to pursue a position as a chief housing officer in the future. Additionally, I wondered if student staff and RHA student leaders viewed me as trustworthy, or whether they questioned whether I would protect their anonymity regarding information revealed during the focus groups.

In summary, I believe it is not enough to solely disclose my positionality in this section. I also do so in Chapter 4 in the commentary section on each major finding and in the Chapter 5 in discussion of implications for my research. I continually probed my positionality throughout all phases of my study by writing analytic memos (Saldaña,

2013) and taking the time to reflect on what I was seeing, hearing, reading, thinking, and feeling.

Epistemic Orientation

I view knowledge and truths through the constructivist lens (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Guba and Lincoln (1994) explained that constructivists do not settle for a foundational stance on how knowledge and truths are generated or interpreted. Rather, constructivists celebrate the belief that participants actively and eagerly participate in expressing their ideas and truths. Guba and Lincoln (1994) described the aim of constructivism to be that of understanding and reconstruction of knowledge, the nature of knowledge coalesces around consensus, trustworthiness undergirds the quality of research, and perhaps of most significance to me is that the participants are referred to as passionate and intrinsically involved in the construction of knowledge.

I believe knowledge is socially constructed and that human beings have an innate curiosity to explore the physical, social, political, spiritual, and other domains of life experiences. My parents, grandparents, and numerous mentors have instilled the value of education and lifelong learning in me. I identify higher education as my career field of choice as I find joy in encouraging others to embrace learning with optimism and insatiable intellectual curiosity.

The notion of consensus explains why I place a strong value on achieving harmony with individuals, and in groups, while acknowledging that others possess their own opinions and beliefs. My constructivist orientation explains my appreciation for the traditional classroom environment versus online learning, as I believe learning is socially constructed through verbal and non-verbal communication exchanges. I believe

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harmony, and often group consensus, whether in groups for courses, in my professional position, in my community involvements, or elsewhere, is essential for us to develop as human beings and as organizations. I get incredible joy from interacting with other human beings and observing their verbal and non-verbal communication, which is aligned with why I chose to conduct individual interviews and focus groups. Roulston's (2010) description of the purpose and process of ethnographic interviewing is in great harmony with, and a complement to, my claims as optimistically viewing the existence of multiple realities and multiple truths. I found it was critical to maintain focus on what I shared here as I conducted my study so as to honor the perspectives of my participants and to maintain the utmost ethics as a researcher.

Pillow (2003) proposed the notion of recursive reflexivity as a form of reflection in regards to one's positionality. She asserted that one's biases and presuppositions shape how one chooses to represent one's research findings. In regards to my study, my constructivist epistemological orientation manifests in how I see the world in the context of my experiences over the years as a student and within my current professional work. I have come to realize that the stories of professionals in my field, particularly those working most closely with residential curricula, have become my stories over time. Literature and formal education on the role of residential education, as well as my direct interactions with a variety of constituents to this end, have shaped my appreciation for advancing how residence life staff can contribute to the academic mission of their institution. This reflection, inspired by Pillow (2003) helps me acknowledge that I was eager to conduct my research at an institution with which I am not personally or professionally affiliated so that I may truly learn from my participants. Also, I believe

Bolman and Deal's (2014) four perspectives on organizations helped me to deepen my interpretation of the findings.

Intersections of Positionality and Epistemological Orientation

My positionality and epistemological orientation are closely coupled. Becker (2004) urged qualitative researchers to understand that all human beings involved in a research study have their own positionality that must be considered when gathering, interpreting, and presenting findings. She explained that this must be acknowledged and carefully kept in check throughout the full research process. The act of probing my positionality is a critical aspect of my role as a qualitative researcher, but especially given my constructivist epistemological orientation and core belief that learning is socially constructed. The more I know myself, the better I can begin to understand intersections with my participants' positionality and their accounts.

As for personality, I consider myself to be a good mix of being both introverted and extroverted. It is critical that I understand that my participants identify as varying degrees of introverts and extroverts. A participant who is concise and to the point in an individual interview has as many quality data to offer as an extrovert who gets energy by telling me everything (and then some) of what they think.

Perhaps the most interesting and salient intersections of positionality that I must explore is my socioeconomic status as a middle-class woman. I recognize that I have been privileged to be able to earn two bachelors' degrees, a master's degree, and to pursue a doctorate or terminal degree in my chosen field. I absolutely must understand and value that some, or all, of my participants, may identify from other spheres of socioeconomic status or class and that perhaps this has changed for them over their

lifetime. I must remember some of my participants have varying relationships to their education. Some participants may have resented me as a being able to afford the pursuit of a doctoral degree as my life circumstances (tuition remission for full-time employment) and minimal obligations (no significant other or children) are different from those who might be single parents or have financial hardships.

Another aspect of my positionality that I can critically examine is that of my core belief, from education and practical experiences, that residence halls are powerful, beyond-the-classroom hubs for student learning and development. In my current professional position, I am charged with coordinating the development, implementation, and assessment of the UofSC's residential curriculum. I admit that this is an area of professional curiosity and passion for me. I often receive compliments from my supervisor and colleagues to this effect. I am also fortunate to serve as a faculty member of the ACPA's RCI. I had to acknowledge, during all phases of my research, that my participants may not have the same reasons for serving in their positions. Participants may work as live-in Residence Life professionals for various reasons, some seeing it as a stepping stone to the next position in residence life and others viewing the position as a stepping stone to another pursuit.

Given all aspects of my identity and background such as race, socioeconomic class, ethnicity, educational background and professional experience, I could not impose my experiences on the participants as their lived experiences may differ from mine. Ultimately, the methodology for my study aligns with my constructivist epistemological orientation, because I sought to engage participants' with questions and topics to help describe their experiences with implementing a residential curriculum. My perspective,

that knowledge and truths are socially constructed, favored my use of semi-structured interviews, with some pre-written questions, to invite perspective on the topics included in my case study protocol.

Validity and Intended Claims

Validity is the central concept, in qualitative research, when referencing the claims the researcher can and cannot make (Glesne, 2011; Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) described the case study tactic, or data triangulation, is necessary for specific claims of validity. For my study, I seek to claim construct validity (Lather, 1986; Yin, 2014) as I collected data from multiple sources to establish a chain of evidence. I also involved Matthews and Thompson as key informants (Yin, 2014) in multiple phases of my dissertation methods proposal, data collection, and member checking. Patton (2002) agreed that data triangulation, or involving multiple sources, is a way to contribute to a claim of validity by adding rich descriptions to help the reader contextualize the information. Additionally, to contribute to claims of validity, Yin (2014) described that multiple-case designs should follow a replication, not a sampling logic. Thus, the data collection strategies were employed as outlined in this chapter so that the methods for this study could be replicated in future research guided by similar research questions. The underlying logic of such a replication would require the same emic approach with a subsequent use of theory or models—in this case, Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations.

Trustworthiness

I employed several monitoring strategies, particularly given my subjectivity and positionality, to safeguard the trustworthiness and rigor of my data. This is incredibly

important in limiting researcher bias, and remaining focused on how findings are congruent with reality. Monitoring strategies, or measures, can help address potential criticisms related to my study's validity (Lather, 1986). I conducted member checking (Lather, 1986) by sending the transcript from each respective interview to each interviewee or focus group participant to invite potential changes to the data, elaboration on topics, or any general content. Of the 30 participants, all but two RHA student leaders responded to my multiple member checking attempts. Additionally, Lather (1986) addressed issues of power. As an ethical researcher, I engaged in practice as outlined in the "Confidentiality of Participants" and "Risks and Benefits" sections included later in this chapter. Also, I dedicated prolonged engagement with my data to stay close to the words of my participants and to optimize data triangulation (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014) when presenting the findings. Finally, I included a section titled, "researcher reflection" in various sections of Chapter 4 to share about my positionality in relation to the data featured in that section.

Intended Aims

Noblit (1999) asserted that qualitative research can be designed with practicable outcomes in mind – even if the outcomes are not generalizable (Glesne, 2011). Noblit (1999) referred to this concept as applied ethnography. According to Noblit (1999), applied research "… is distinguishable [from basic research] because of its intent to be useful. The manifest purpose of the understanding to be gained is that someone may be guided by it" (p. 44). In the case of my study, my goal is to inform the field of student affairs, not through replication (Yin, 2014), but through understanding the phenomena of my findings and being able to make connections to the layers of knowledge that can be

applied in MSU's campus housing departments and residence life units and used as points of reference for other institutions of higher education (IHEs). The usefulness of my study confirms my passion for this topic.

Advantages and disadvantages of choosing the type of study you have chosen

There are two distinct advantages of designing my research as a case study. First, as Yin (2014) described, the case study, "... is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). I believe this descriptive case study (Yin, 2014) allows for a rich description of the lived experiences of participants in their environment. My engaging participants in sharing their perspectives may afford for their individual and collective team's development. As no research has been published to date on The 10EERC, my study will add new perspective to the literature within student affairs and higher education.

There are, however, two distinct disadvantages of designing my research as a case study. First, I acknowledge that I am a residential housing "insider." As I clearly outlined in my positionality statement, I am directly involved in the residential curriculum at my institution and a faculty member for the national RCI. Regarding the case study design, it could be argued that it would be helpful to study this topic from the perspective of professionals at more than one institution to gain more insight more quickly on the lived experiences of residence life staff as they implement the residential curriculum approach.

Participant Confidentiality

To maintain my ethics and integrity as a researcher, I sought approval from my home campus' Institutional Review Board (IRB) as I proposed to conduct research with human beings. A copy of the IRB approval letter is included in Appendix A. I also provided an informed consent form for each participant to review and sign prior to conducting the interview, focus group, and photo activity. A copy of the informed consent form is included in Appendix C. The form outlines the general purpose of my study, my commitment to ethical research and protecting participants' anonymity (through the use of pseudonyms), and a clause about participants' ability to withdraw from the study at any time. I used pseudonyms for all participants, the institution, and other proper nouns related to the site, to maintain participant and institutional anonymity. I hope that anonymity reduced any fears participants may have had about withholding information, retaliation from employers and/or colleagues, and for general negative political or other images of people, places, or ideas. A breach of confidentiality is always a risk when conducting research. I took caution to keep my written notes, audiotapes, and any other materials organized and in a secured location. All electronic documents are saved as password-protected for only my access as the primary researcher. Ultimately, I must understand, and my actions must reflect, that it is okay for me not to find the phenomena I sought through my research questions.

Risks and Benefits

As an ethical researcher, I must consider both the risks and benefits to participants as a result of their participation in my study. I did not believe there would be physical or psychological risks to participants in my study. If real names were used in the findings,

and participants were not notified that this would be the case, outsiders could criticize select (or all) participants' perceptions or knowledge. For this reason, and others, my use of participant pseudonyms and the process of fact checking transcripts with participants was critical.

The case study approach is a benefit to participants and the larger study as it provides a contextualized examination (Yin, 2014). For purposes of this study, the participants benefit by having a "voice" in describing their individual and collective team's journey, joys, and challenges, to implementing a residential curriculum. While participants' time is a type of tangible cost, my research is a form of professional consultation, which can produce findings to be shared with my informants.

Limitations/Considerations

As with any research study, there are limitations and considerations to be identified and addressed, to the extent possible. Regarding the design of the study, one could argue the case study approach can be narrowing and too closely focused on one entity. As for participant involvement, rather than perceiving they have a "voice," they may feel the case study approach, despite the use of pseudonyms, did not afford confidentiality. There is specifically one limitation that applies to me as the researcher. Given my positionality, there is the risk of the perception that I knew what I wanted the study findings to convey. To help with this, I inserted direct quotes and other references to my data in Chapter 4. Finally, as Glesne (2011) shared, writing about qualitative research is a political act. There may be intended and unintended consequences of words used in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS – PART I

Introduction

"What should students learn as a result of living in a residence hall community"

(Edwards & Gardner, 2015)? This important, foundational question is one that more

housing and residence life staff on campuses, domestically and internationally, are

pursuing when adopting the residential curriculum approach. For this study, the

residential curriculum approach refers to the philosophies and practices discussed at

ACPA's annual RCI. The 2015 RCI had record attendance, with the highest participation

in the history of the Institute. Accountability from taxpayers, students, and employers is

just one incentive for housing and residence life departments to question whether past

practices will sustain increasing expectations for today's college student (Keeling, 2004).

This descriptive case study (Yin, 2014) describes and characterizes how one

residence life unit adopted the residential curriculum approached aligned with The

10EERC. Due to the amount of data that represented each theme, findings are presented

in two parts: Chapter 4 (Findings - Part I) and Chapter 4 (Findings - Part II). This chapter

includes the findings elicited from six data sources including an online demographic

survey, semi-structured individual interviews, focus groups (one with student staff and

one with RHA student leaders), a photo activity, and document analysis. The following

three research questions frame this study, conducted at a mid-size, public university:

1. What changes occurred in the residence life unit when adopting the residential curriculum approach?

2. What were participants' perceptions of adopting a residential curriculum approach?

    a. What did the participants perceive as positive in this transition?

    b. What did the participants perceive as challenging in this transition?

3. In what ways did the residence life staff characterize their experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach?

Both findings sections are organized into two sub-sections. The first section (Part I) provides brief background of the institution, department of residence life, and participants to complement the content in Chapter 3 and appendices. The second section (Part II) are the themes I identified from thematic analysis (Glesne, 2011; Saldaña, 2013) that address the three research questions for this study. Findings are presented in order of the research questions that frame the study. Data for each theme features a brief description, supporting evidence, a summary, and my researcher analysis and reflection. I used Bolman and Deal's (2014) four organizational frames to interpret data for each theme.

<div align="center">**Site and Participant Context**</div>

Institutional Context

The site for this study is a public, mid-sized, coeducational institution located in the Midwestern region of the United States. The pseudonym "Midtown State

University"[3] (MSU) is used to protect the identity of the institution and the anonymity of the participants. According to MSU's website, total enrollment in fall 2015, was 13,584 students, which included 2,784 first-time, first-year, students. My study involves MSU's housing and residence life department. I conducted my site visit during the last week of September into the first week of October, 2015.

Housing department context

The housing and residence life department at MSU reports to Dr. Julius Blair, Associate Dean of Academic Enhancement, in academic affairs. Sonya Matthews, the chief housing officer, serves as one of my key informants (Yin, 2014). Matthews identifies as the first external director of housing in 40 years at MSU. Matthews also serves as a faculty member for ACPA's RCI and was responsible for leading the residential curriculum effort at a previous institution. She informed me that the department reports through the division of academic affairs, rather than through the division of student affairs, as the president wanted to formally emphasize the important role that residence life plays in student success, persistence, and completion. The president emphasized the importance of residence life being "seated at the table" with academic colleges to create more seamless collaboration among campus entities. According to Matthews, the department's policy is that first-year students with less than 32 earned academic hours, are required to live in MSU's residence halls unless they live and commute from their parent's home (not to exceed 60 miles from campus), or have an approved exception. Students who have lived in MSU's residence halls for two

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[3] All proper nouns throughout this chapter are pseudonyms to promote anonymity. Proper nouns in this chapter include buildings, programs, documents, and position titles.

semesters are exempt from this requirement. As of April, 2015, per Matthews, approximately 2,000 of MSU's 5,000 residential students were first-year students. Approximately 1,500 were sophomore students, and the remaining were juniors, seniors, and graduate students. Matthews shared that MSU adopted the residential curriculum approach aligned with The 10EERC in August, 2013, and implementation began in January, 2014.

Participant Context

I formally interacted with 30 participants for data collection: 16 individuals inclusive of professional and graduate staff, seven third-year student staff members, and seven student leaders affiliated with MSU's Residence Hall Association. Two of the professional staff participated in the photo activity only (and four of the photo activity participants were professional staff who also participated in an individual interview. Each participant's profile and demographic data collected via the online survey is included in Chapter 3. Table 4.1 is a summary of information by participant group. I also designated my two key informants by inserting an asterisk next to their names in the chart.

Table 4.1

Participant Group Demographic Overview

	Professional Staff	Graduate Staff	Undergraduate Student Staff	Undergraduate RHA Student Leader
Number of participants	12	4	7	7
Pseudonyms	Dr. Blair, Sonya Matthews*, Violet Thompson*, Rae Jae, Sara Weber, Benedict, Carole, Ell, Lance, Steve, LaShay, Jim	Hunter, Logan, Rellen, Taylor	Derek, Dylan, Ivory, Jay, Katie, Lloyd, Rose	Bethany, Beth, Jackie, Jamie, Keith, Rosa, Talia

Table 4.1 *(Continued)*

Participant Group Demographic Overview

	Professional Staff	Graduate Staff	Undergraduate Student Staff	Undergraduate RHA Student Leader
Previously Attended ACPA's RCI	5 – Yes (once) 2 – Yes (more than 1) 5 – No	1 – Yes (once) 3 – No	1 – Yes (more than 1) 1– "MSU" 5– No	0 – Yes 7 –No
Highest degree earned	2 PhD (1 person) 11 Master's	All M.A. in progress	All B.A. in progress	All B.A. in progress
Previously Attended or Worked at an Institution with a RC aligned with The 10EERC	3 – Yes, worked 1 – Yes, attended and worked 8 – Neither	1– attended 1– worked 1– Do not know 1– Neither	1 –Yes, attended 1– Do not know 5 –Neither	2 – Yes, attended 3 – Do not know 2 – Neither

The Study's Themes

I used thematic analysis (Glesne, 2011; Saldaña, 2013) to identify themes for the study. Themes transcended the three research questions for the study rather than addressing each one individually. There were complex intersections of the findings when theming the data, showing that the human experience is complex, and rarely unfolds with isolated perspective on topics or events. Yin (2014) recommended a minimum of three data sources for researchers to be able to claim data triangulation. I coded and analyzed my data for saturation (Saldaña, 2013). The unit of analysis for the study was the organization, MSU's Department of Residence Life.

The two themes, or major findings, for this study include: (1) Re-framing residential education at MSU and (2) Gains and pains of structure at MSU. Both themes include sub-themes, categories, and sub-categories that are presented in this chapter. Table 4.2 depicts the theme, sub-themes, categories, and sub-categories for the first theme, *Reframing residential education at MSU,* of this study. Table 4.3 depicts the

theme, sub-themes, categories, and sub-categories for the second theme, *Pains and gains of structure at MSU.*

Themes, or major findings, are presented in order of the research questions that frame this study. For each research question: first there is an introduction to the applicable theme; second is supporting evidence; third is a summary; and fourth is my analysis and reflection on practice. A portion of each analysis section incorporated an etic approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Yin, 2014), which involves a priori use of theory to interpret findings. Specifically, I comment on how concepts of Bolman & Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations were salient within the data. Another portion of that section includes my researcher reflection. As the primary instrument for data collection (Glesne, 2011), I wrote analytic memos (Saldaña, 2013) to reflect on my positionality and interpretation of the data throughout the data collection, coding, and analysis processes.

Table 4.2

Summary of Theme 1, Sub-Themes, Categories, and Sub-Categories

Theme 1	Sub-themes	Categories and Sub-categories
Re-framing residential education at MSU	Past approaches to residential education Residential curriculum as focused commitment	• Name a model (category) • Variation in past structures (category) • Link to institution (category) • Institutional and departmental goals (sub-category) • Strategic planning (sub-category) • Language linked to curricular culture and values (sub-category)

Table 4.2 *(Continued)*

Summary of Theme 1, Sub-Themes, Categories, and Sub-Categories

Theme 1	Sub-themes	Categories and Sub-categories
		• Organizational investment and new tools (category) • MSU's Mini RCIS (sub-category) • Residential curriculum resources (sub-category) • • Residential curriculum Playbook (sub-category) • Assessment strategies and tools (sub-category)

Table 4.3

Summary of Theme 2, Sub-Themes, Categories, and Sub-Categories

Theme 2	Sub-themes	Categories and Sub-categories
Gains and pains of structure at MSU	Perceived positives of adopting the residential curriculum approach	• Departmental direction (category) • Strategic standards and structures for staff (category) • RCP as organizational tool (sub-category) • RHA (sub-category)
	Perceived challenges of adopting the residential curriculum approach	• Universal design of residential curriculum (category) • Diverse residential populations (sub-category) • Perception of stifling student staff creativity (sub-category)
	Communication Channels	• Delayed distribution of RCP (category) • Sense of voice (category)

Findings

Re-Framing Approaches to Residential Education at MSU

The first research question for the study addressed what changes occurred in

MSU's Department of Residence Life unit when adopting the residential curriculum

approach. Findings reflected the first theme of the study, specifically what past models

and approaches were used for residential efforts contrasted with changes over time when adopting the residential curriculum approach. My data collection visit was during the first six weeks of MSU's "full launch" of the residential curriculum approach.

I interpreted data from each of the data sources (Yin, 2014) as relevant to this theme. Participants describe what changed in MSU's Department of Residence Life when adopting the residential curriculum approach. I identified two sub-themes during coding and early analysis: (1) Approaches before adopting the residential curriculum, and (2) Residential curriculum as a focused commitment.

The notion of re-framing, or changing approach to residential education, was evident in participants' accounts regarding names of past models. For example, Ell, a coordinator of residence life, shared, "The programming model, the wellness wheel was [in effect when] …I came in 2009." Student staff spoke about perceiving variation in expectations across supervisors. For example, Derek, a student staff member, explained, "Our education within the residence halls… is it was basically a buffet. We tried to just give them [residents] things that they could use. And so they [residents] could come to programs if they wanted."

Past approaches to residential education.

Approximately half of the professional and graduate staff, and a few of the student staff, spoke about the ways in which there were changes within the department of residence life regarding approaches to educating residential students prior to adopting the residential curriculum. Participants' sentiments, and documents revealed that there had been varying approaches to philosophy and expectations for educational efforts prior to adopting the residential curriculum approach.

In my coding and analysis, I was able to triangulate data sources (Yin, 2014), and relevant data sources included: individual interviews, one document and an explanation of the challenge of retrieving past documents, and the student staff focus group. I believe this context on past approaches to residential education is important to contextualize why and how MSU's Department of Residence Life adopted the residential curriculum approach. Below, is my representation of previous programmatic approaches in two categories (1) name a model and (2) variation in past structures. This sub-theme most addressed the first research question for the study, "What changes occurred in the residence life unit when adopting the residential curriculum approach?"

Name a model.

Participants who served in the organization longer than others spoke most directly about previous programmatic approaches in MSU's Department of Residence life prior to adopting the residential curriculum. Some participants and data sources specified names of models or approaches, such as the wellness model, while others spoke about the focus of past approaches. Following are excerpts of data from one document, and interviews, to describe previous programmatic models at MSU.

Thompson, one of my two key informants shared a document to help me understand previous programmatic approaches to residential education at MSU. The document was titled "[Residential Academic Ambassador] Programming Model: 2011-2012 Academic Year". This 4-page resource included four topics titled: "Structure," "Categories" (divided into first semester and second semester), "[RAA]/[CA] Team Requirements," and "Expectations for Working with Outside Presenters." The essence of the section on "Structure" reflected messages similar to what Ell and Hunter described;

RAAs were expected to incorporate one planned program per month, one walkover per month, and one bulletin board per month. Program proposals were due to supervisors the first Sunday of the month by 11:59 p.m. The "Categories" sections included topical areas for programmatic efforts including but not limited to: preparing for advising appointments, academic etiquette, academic transition: college versus high school; time management; financial literacy; and balancing academics with non-academic commitments. In this section, I noticed a void in expectations for whether, and how, programmatic efforts should be sequenced over the course of the semesters and years. The "[RAA]/[CA] Team Requirements," section described that between the two student staff positions there must be three programs per floor per month. There were expectations outlined about how staff in the two positions should schedule programming without creating overlap. Finally, the section on "Expectations for Working with Outside Presenters" scripted how and when the RAAs were required to communicate plans to the appropriate supervisor, what steps should be taken leading to the event, and guidance on a thank you note or gift to the outside presenter.

During a phone conversation following my visit, Thompson shared that it was challenging to find previous versions of programming forms, programming philosophy statements, guides, and tools from before adopting the residential curriculum. She attributed this to the fact that oversight for programming was the responsibility of a colleague who previously departed from the organization. She explained that different colleagues were responsible for different job components related to my requested documents, and that the organization had a previous reputation (prior to Matthews' leadership) of not effectively maintaining written sources. Nonetheless, I decided to

feature in my findings, the one document that pertained to past approaches to residential education at MSU.

Only a few of the professional and graduate staff had recollection of the past models by which MSU's Department of Residence Life executed residential education. Dr. Blair, Associate Dean of Academic Enhancement, provided historical perspective by sharing, "about three or four years, we've been reporting up through academic affairs. So there was greater focus on the role of residence halls for retention, specific freshman purposes of retention, and of sort of alignment with the academic mission." He added, "Prior to that, it reported to student affairs in the way that it does in 95 percent of the institutions in this country." Dr. Blair shared that the department of residence life had a "fairly traditional sort of view, for example, of what programming means." He used the following description of his past experience as a RA and hall director to summarize the notion of a "traditional model of programming," when sharing, "Here's the wellness wheel. Do some programing in and around this arena on your floor, and, by the way, you're going to do one a month or something like that.... Go have fun and do it." Dr. Blair stated Matthews, Chief Housing Officer for MSU's Department of Residence Life, was a competitive candidate for the chief housing officer position because of her perspective with residential curricula. Thompson spoke about witnessing, during her tenure in the organization, different programming models prior to adopting the residential curriculum and that the department frequently changed affinity to models.

When asked about the programming philosophy in the department during her time, Thompson shared, "Educate...We had a couple different programming models. Each year I feel like it was different." Thompson reported she did not have a direct role

with programming, as that was the responsibility of the other assistant director at the time. She shared that in 2010-2011, that assistant director asked what programming model Thompson used as a previous institution, and Thompson described the [CARES] model; she could not recall what the acronym represented. In summary, Thompson articulated, "That clearly didn't work, because it wasn't well thought out. So we changed it again. So I feel like every year it just changed. Every year our programming model changed based on feedback."

Additionally, Carole, a former coordinator of residence life, described MSU's past approach to residential education more specifically:

> Pre-curriculum, the programming model involved discrete quantities of events –
> [community advisors] had to do two "activities that build community" per month,
> and [residential academic ambassadors] had to do two "group programs" per
> month. In addition, MAP-Works follow-up was strongly emphasized, with both
> [community advisors] and [residential academic ambassadors] expected to
> interact with "at-risk students" and input information into the MAP-Works
> system. The follow-ups were largely addressing alerts created by faculty
> members and academic advisors who were not able to get in touch with students.
> It felt very much like "things to check off a list", which I think in leadership's
> mind was good because it was less complicated and helped staff manage time.
> The reality was that the "checklist" format was independent of intentional
> learning – that's not to say it wasn't happening, but it wasn't the point (nor was
> learning tracked/adjudicated.)

Finally, Ell, a coordinator of residence life, also provided a cursory review of past programmatic approaches before adopting the residential curriculum; however, he conveyed that some of these approaches have not been lost with adopting the residential curriculum. Also, Ell, similar to Benedict, another coordinator of residence life, conveyed that the programming approach changed frequently in his time in the organization, "The programming model, the wellness wheel was [in effect when]…I came in 2009. That was 2009-2010. The programming track sheet was 2010-2011. You can see how we switch up every year, how we've been doing that." He went on to speak about the approach thereafter as, "This is…2011 still, but August of 2011, we did still two programs. So we were still following the 2010-2011 model. And then we jumped into curricular." Additionally, Ell shared, "During my time here we have had a programming wheel where we tried to hit all wellness, personal well-being, things of that nature. Previously, before RCI [referring to MSU's residential curriculum], we had the wellness wheel." Next, is a description of how what some participants conveyed as standards with programmatic efforts prior to adopting the residential curriculum approach.

In summary, the above representations illustrate how participants named previous models, typically universal to other colleges and universities, when describing past efforts for residential education at MSU. Participants for these points were coordinator of residence life level and above in the organization.

Variation in past expectations.

Participants, when speaking about programmatic approaches prior to adopting the residential curriculum approach, spoke about the concept of expectations. Some

participants conveyed that there was an attempt for consistent standards across the department; other participants expressed that there were inconsistencies with expectations across supervisors. Ell shared the perspective that there were consistent expectations in that supervisors would "monitor" what programs student staff were doing. He shared that student staff were required to do two programs, one active program, "...where they sit down, they plan it from start to finish with advertising and all of that nature, and a walkover program. Each month they would do a planned program, let's call it a planned program." Hunter, a graduate hall coordinator, spoke about these programmatic approaches in terms of changes in roles for the community advisors (CAs) versus the residential academic ambassadors (RAAs). He shared that before adopting the residential curriculum, "[CAs] had to do one walk over program, such as taking their floor to a campus event, and then one program that they put on for their floor, an ABC (activity that builds community)." He explained both were submitted to the graduate hall coordinator for approval, and like Ell, stated these are still the expectations now. Hunter described, "We didn't necessarily have a list of programs they could pick from. It was just whatever they felt fit their *needs* for the community." He offered examples such as "a movie night and some fun, social activity with food." Additionally, Hunter shared that the RAAs were required to do two academic outreach programs in the hall and "there were not any real criteria."

Rellen, a graduate hall coordinator, also spoke about previous expectations for educational efforts. She explained, "Before the curriculum, we tried our hardest to…create… the same standards across campus." She spoke about her first year in a community, and described, "...we called them programs then, the programs we were

putting on then, we had certain standards for our [community advisors] and [residential academic ambassadors], [CAs] and [RAAs]." In terms of consistency, Rellen said, "We tried to make those consistent across campus, however, it was more up to…the specific area, and how the [graduate hall coordinator], and how the [coordinator of residence life] wanted to run those programs. So there wasn't consistency." We didn't necessarily have a list of programs they could pick from. It was just whatever they felt fit their *needs* for the community.

Similarly, Derek, a third year student staff member, described there was variation in how student staff could approach programming. He described, "Our education within the residence halls… is it was basically a buffet. We tried to just give them things that they could use. And so they could come to programs if they wanted." Derek added, "So it was different within even each building because yes, the staff worked together, but we picked more of our own programs and did our own route with our floor." He expressed that "the more creative people usually had a little bit better programs." In summary, Derek articulated, "I guess, variation within our education is just how we used to do it. Just go with what you felt for your floor."

Additionally, Katie, another student staff member, shared that RAAs would collaborate in groups of five to do programs and that, "in doing those programs we would have kind of an outline from maybe our bosses of an *overlying* idea, topic maybe." She offered that her supervisor might suggest the topic of "test preparation," but that would be for her hall while another building's staff might program over "homesickness." She concluded by saying, "I mean it would not be uniform throughout the campus. So, it would be very hit or miss throughout each building of what people would be getting. So

it wouldn't be a uniform education for all the students. Jay, another student staff member, said, "It was kind of more of a free-for-all with us. It wasn't really…our bosses didn't give us any ideas of what we had to do…it was whatever we felt like for that month, whatever we felt like the freshman needed. He added, "We put a bulletin board up about it…. or did a program on what we felt it needed."

Almost all of the RHA leaders, at various points during our focus group, shared their perceptions or observations of previous programmatic approaches for some of their peers who served as community advisors and residential academic ambassadors. They articulated the sentiment that there used to be more student staff discretion in educational efforts. Jamie, a RHA student leader, shared, "My freshman year, RAs did programs and bulletin boards to their choosing." Additionally, she expressed, "So I thought that was really interesting, because before that a lot of them were like, "Here's cupcakes and pizza." diversity cupcakes happened all over campus basically. That was kind of normal." Finally, Carole, a former coordinator of residence life, reported that budgets for residential hall programs, prior to adopting the residential curriculum approach, were more so discretionary and less structured based on departmental priorities:

> But our budget process before the curriculum was kind of like, "If you need
> money, give us a good reason why and we'll give you money." And that was kind
> of the end of it. We had more money than we knew what to do with and little
> knowledge about where that money came from or...why we were being given so
> much of it. And so, with the curricular model, I think we have done way more to
> focus on figuring out what we're using that money for and making sure that the

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funds that we get go specifically towards student interventions to help them learn things.

In conclusion, all of these accounts were helpful to understanding change over time in programmatic approaches within MSU's department of residence life. Unlike the previous category, *Name a model*, in which professional staff named universal programming models used at various colleges and universities, *Variation in past expectations*, featured the voice of graduate-level and student staff who shared about how standards were inconsistent from supervisor-to-supervisor. Next is a summary of past approaches to residential education prior to adopting the residential curriculum approach.

Past Approaches Before Adopting the Residential Curriculum: A Summary

Several participants, during interviews and focus groups, expressed that the introduction of the residential curriculum approach was different than previous approaches to residential education. Some of the models I referenced in Chapter 2 were cited, and these were universal models or approaches rather than regarded as being tailored to an institution's mission, values, and priorities. Professional staff named specific past models such as the traditional programming model or wellness model, and most emphasized that there was change over time with the types of models that were adopted within the department. Graduate staff did not name specific models; rather, they along with student staff and RHA leaders, spoke about variation in staff expectations with previous approaches to residential education prior to adopting the residential curriculum.

Data in Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 in Chapter 3 depict how each participant responded via the online survey to the question about when MSU implemented the residential curriculum approach with students. Thus, how I interpreted participants'

responses to what changed is relative to each person. Some participants offered their

perspective on whether the previous approaches were effective or meaningful for the

student, and in some cases the staff, experience. Finally, in wishing to review past

documents related to programmatic approaches at MSU, I recognized Thompson's

message to me as described in Chapter 3 about the limited availability of written

documents within the organization. Only one document was available for this sub-theme

on past approaches to residential education.

   I believe my participants' words and tone conveyed insight about both previous

approaches as well as hints to what some believed had changed with adopting the

residential curriculum. I included several of those sentiments about participants'

comments on what has changed, and what they perceived as positive and challenging, for

the second theme of this study.

Researcher's Analysis and Reflection on Past Approaches to Residential Education

       Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations.

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations can be used to interpret

this sub-theme of *Past approaches to residential education*. The Structural Frame, which

emphasizes standards, was apparent in the fact that models, including residential

programming models, often include standards and expectations, as I heard and read was

the case at MSU. The core tenets of these models inherently become the goals,

objectives, and expectations for the human capital of the organization, which represents

the Human Resources Frame. With some past approaches, staff had the autonomy and

empowerment to design educational efforts based on choices or perceived needs of

residents. Some programming models or educational approaches are reflective of an

institutional culture and pressures such as expectations from parents and taxpayers, or the essence of the Political Frame. Finally, these past models and approaches depict the Symbolic Frame and reflect the culture of an organization and what was valued at any point in time. Some past approaches may have involved traditions that have become rituals within residence hall communities and the department.

Insights for professional practice.

Regarding professional practice, I find it useful to embrace the myriad reasons that some residence life departments embrace one of the named programming models or approaches. Expectations from senior leadership and campus values and norms, for example, could influence a chief housing officer's decision not to pursue the residential curriculum approach. Similarly, I would be fascinated to understand how often, and for what reasons, chief housing officers identify with certain approaches to residential education. Additionally, I included the only document that was available for past programmatic approaches both for data triangulation (Yin, 2014) but also to share what I believe is a reality for many student affairs departments. The notion of record keeping and maintaining artifacts is interesting to consider when understanding the past, present, and future of any organization.

Researcher's reflection on past approaches to residential education.

In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I included citations for selected previous approaches to residential education prior to the emergence of The 10EERC. I frequently reminded myself, while listening to my participants share their reflections with me during individual interviews and the focus groups, that I was at MSU to learn about that organization rather than compare and contrast to models cited in literature or my

experiences over the years as a residence life staff member. However, and despite having

fond memories of my time with previous approaches to residential education, I found this

to be challenging as I found myself inwardly favoring the rationale I stand behind for the

residential curriculum approach. After interviews, I chose instead to reflect on what I

have learned over time as a residential student, undergraduate resident advisor, a graduate

student, and a professional with progressive experience in residence life. I reminded

myself that I, too, served in several positions in residence life departments that did not

subscribe to the residential curriculum approach but rather executed what I believed, and

still do, were effective approaches for residential education.

Residential curriculum as focused commitment

The second sub-theme, *Residential curriculum as focused commitment,* in contrast

to the first sub-theme on past approaches to residential education at MSU, pertains to

how some participants believed, and other sources reflected, the residential curriculum

represented an increased sense of purpose, or intentionality, within MSU's Department of

Residence Life. The essence of this sub-theme pertains to how the values of the

institution and department were translated from concept into resource development

within the organization, and how this differed from past approaches to residential

education at MSU.

In my coding and analysis, I did not reach saturation (Saldaña, 2013) with all

participants, because the professional and graduate staff addressed the topics embedded

in the categories with representative data below more directly than the student staff and

RHA student leaders. The student staff and RHA student leaders' comments were more

reflective of what they perceived to be positive and challenging in the transition, and

representative data are included in subsequent portions of this findings chapter.

However, I was able to triangulate data (Yin, 2014) from the following data sources: interviews with professional and graduate staff, the RHA student leader focus group, photos, and documents. The student staff's accounts were less explicit about intentionality with the residential curriculum, but I believe the limited data from their perspective was important to include as I describe the case of MSU's Department of Residential Life's journey with adopting the residential curriculum approach. Nonetheless, I found this data to be relevant in understanding the case of how MSU's Department of Residence Life staff adopted the residential curriculum approach. *Focused commitment*, as a sub-theme, most addressed three of the research questions for the study: What changes occurred in the residence life unit when adopting the residential curriculum approach; What did the participants perceive as positive in the transition of adopting the residential curriculum approach; and In what ways did the residence life staff characterize their experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach?

Link to the institution.

The first of The 10EERC asserts that an institution's residential curriculum is directly connected to the respective institution's mission. The term "archaeological dig" is used at annual ACPA RCI's to describe this process. Following are excerpts of data from the documents, interviews, RHA focus group, and photos to describe how MSU's residential curriculum links to the institutional mission and priorities, thus demonstrating a focused commitment or sense of intentionality behind MSU's residential curriculum as a change from previous approaches to residential education at MSU. This category

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includes sub-categories: (1) Institutional and departmental goals, (2) Strategic planning, and (3) Language linked to curricular culture and values.

Institutional and departmental goals.

This section features data on how MSU's Department of Residence Life's residential curriculum appeared to be linked to, and aligned with, the institutional mission and goals. Data excerpts include accounts from selected professional and graduate staff, a quote from one RHA student leader, documents, and photos. Matthews, during our first interview, spoke about how the department of residence life's residential curriculum connects to institutional goals. She described how the three learning goals relate to the institutional mission:

> It does tie in with our gen eds [general education requirements], but it more ties in
> with our institutional mission. Our gen eds [general education requirements] are
> similar to most every other institution. There's a social justice or diversity.
> There's math. There's writing. There's all of those sorts of things. And, with our
> residential curriculum approach we have three goals, one of which is academic
> success, which ties into each of those, life-long learners, being able to
> communicate in writing and verbally. All of that sort of stuff is tied into that
> academic success. Social responsibility, there's a social responsibility portion of
> the gen eds [general education requirements], an ethics responsibility section
> requirement. So, it ties in there. But I think our ultimate educational priority is
> citizenship. Where it ties in the most is one of our strategic priorities is really to
> be an engaged campus. And for the third or fourth year in a row we've been
> named number one in community engagement. So, it did not surprise me one bit

when our overarching educational priority came under citizenship, specifically

self-responsibility, social responsibility, and academic success because that was

really an emphasis we put all over campus. It's in our strategic plan. It's in gen

eds [general education requirements]. They [students] have to have experiential

learning as part of gen eds [general education requirements].

Dr. Blair also commented on MSU's learning goals, and he used the metaphor of

"anchoring elements" to refer to a connection with institutional values.

For me that's a metaphor that I tend to use a lot. How do we make complicated

things easily connectable for people? So, maybe you could say these are values,

these are commitments, these are focus areas. I just used the word "anchors."

Academic success is at the core of what we do. That fits so perfectly to our role

within academic affairs. That immediately construes what are we doing

intentionally with other academic units, departments, and/or colleges in terms of

having residential communities, health and human services nursing being one key

one, for example. But then the self-awareness sort of reminds one that to be a

fully functional human being you need to be self-aware, particularly in a

community where…we had such an extraordinary heterogeneity. And we should

probably come back to that in a minute. The social responsibility, again, I think

nicely links to our commitment to community engagement and kind of the values

our students bring in themselves. They want to give back because someone cared

about them in some capacity. And how do we capitalize on those initiatives?

Dr. Blair, after sharing about previous approaches to residential life efforts, with data included in the first sub-theme, spoke about his perceptions of the residential curriculum as an intentional link to the institution:

I think we just sort of started to see how we could be more intentionally linked to the academic enterprise. To give a little bit of history, we had a Lilly grant for a number of years in the early 2000s, '98 to 2002, that enabled us to do more intentional residential communities, both in the residence halls and through linked classes on the academic side. Then that money ran out, and so we couldn't continue to do it. And then we had this hiatus, but we still had themed communities, which I'll describe in either as a cluster model where they sort of group people together in a common interest or, in fact, link specifically to academic programs and that kind of ebbed and flowed. But when [Skip Jenkins] came on board, they made this more intentional. Certainly we needed to be more focused on what we're doing in the themed community arena. As we know from the research, those things *can* be very powerful in terms of their impact on students' success. I think we kind of worked in that space for a while, and then [Matthews] helped to really sort of take it to a new level with a curriculum.

I requested that Dr. Blair expand upon this statement during member checking, and he wrote:

Yes, in the sense that we put in place an intentional educational curriculum that patterns like one might in an academic unit. However, I think the RC [residential curriculum] in residential life probably has a stronger assessment component than do at least some departments.

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In summary to his comments about the linkages to the institution, and to clarify his messaging, Dr. Blair elaborated on what he called "the idea of curricular intentionality":

I can say indirectly I think the idea of a curricular intentionality has expanded the number of learning communities we've got, intentional link to academic units. Our multi-cultural male academic community and multi-cultural female academic community kind of emerged, I think, in some parallel, mutually supportive kind of context from that. I think that really helps to enhance this notion of heterogeneity." "I think it would be a stretch to say that the RC [residential curriculum] led to those our expansion of LC's, but it has certainly provided us a framework that I think has enabled us to be more intentional in reaching out to colleges to build such linkages.

Additionally, Dr. Blair spoke about his beliefs about the potential of residence hall environments to enhance students' learning and development, particularly with respect to increasing student retention. Dr. Blair described what he called an "intrusive commitment" to students:

But everybody, I think, has recognized that college is more than about access. It's about success in there. That's been a relatively recent phenomenon. Within residential life, sort of the paradigm of students as how do we make them fully functioning, independent, …persons and the… said or unsaid assumptions that they sink or swim on their own, they have to own their choices, that's not necessarily limited to a sort of perception of higher ed in residential life. I think it's more broadly felt. But I think now we've moved to more a model of what I call "intrusive commitment" to students. Then residential life, that means, "How

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do we meet students where they are, who have, for example, not been taught how to study, how to do homework, how to...live with somebody in their room?" So how do we be intrusive in those regards to say, "Hey, we know what you need in this sense.

Ultimately, the aforementioned excerpts from Dr. Blair were the most saturated (Saldaña, 2013) messages from our interview, and this insight aligned with other data as I identified the sub-theme of *Focused commitment*, or a sense of intentionality for student retention and student learning. His insight was helpful in understanding how MSU's residential curriculum aligned with, and espoused, institutional values.

Jamie, one of the RHA student leaders, spoke about what she learned through completing research for her honors thesis. She described the intentionality of education beyond the classroom and posed the question whether the residential curriculum will help with student retention.

> I like that it's resident focused. I've done research on this for my honors thesis, too. But they're trying to take education out of the classroom as well and into the residence halls. They're trying to make it more personal education, too, on you, on how your acceptances, on health issues, on anything like that. They're trying to make the student completely well-rounded. And it helps with retention. That's a big thing. Seeing the retention levels on campus will be interesting, too, to see if that helps, because we do have a lower retention rate on our campus. It's just traditional. That's part of it, and especially in the residence halls, too. We see people leave those throughout. And there's always empty beds by second semester. That will be interesting to see those numbers after this, because it's so

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intentional and so in the residents' lives. To see if that helps with the retention

rate is kind of cool.

Ell, a coordinator of residence life, spoke about the residential curriculum's

alignment with MSU's institutional mission, specifically emphasis on academics, when

he described a photo (Figure 4.1) during the focus group for the photo activity. Ell

described the picture of an academic resource center, and claimed the residential

curriculum reflected the institution's mission of promoting students' academics.

Figure 4.1: Academic Resource Office

During our phone call for member checking, Ell said, "We're doing the residential

curriculum to increase the academic enrichment of our residents." He also clarified this

academic resource building is located next to MSU's central housing office.

Matthews, the chief housing officer, during the photo focus group, also spoke

about a picture (Figure 4.2) she captured of MSU's Residential Curriculum Playbook

(RCP), which is what I interpreted as an organizational tool to help staff execute the

residential curriculum. The RCP is featured in the subsequent section of *Focused commitment*. Matthews' message was similar to the aforementioned sentiment from our first interview, when she spoke of how MSU's residential curriculum aligns with the institutional mission. She alluded to the importance of sharing messages with campus partners to demonstrate the residence life staff's commitment to the institutional mission and priorities.

Figure 4.2: RCP with Memo to External Partners

The photo features a memo to campus partners, and Matthews explained:

> It's a memo to the dean of University College, our provost, our president, the VP for student affairs, I think that's it, just basically saying, "Here is a copy of our curriculum plan for this fall…, here's the story of how we got here, and this is why it's important. And I would encourage you to take a look and then check in with our students on how it's going." "And, because I think it's important, particularly, to get into our new provost's hands. We've talked with him a little bit

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about what we're doing, and he got really excited. He said, "This seems more organized than a lot of the classroom curriculums I've looked at, at a college level."

This concludes the excerpts of representative data to capture how MSU's residential curriculum appeared to be linked to, and aligned with, the institutional mission and goals. The sub-category *Strategic planning,* that follows, provides data on the department's strategic planning efforts that represent how departmental priorities are linked to the institutional mission.

Strategic planning.

This sub-category, for the category *Link to institution* reveals how MSU's Department of Residence Life's strategic planning efforts align with the institution's strategic planning priority. During our second interview, Matthews explained that one of MSU's institutional values, per MSU's President [Smiley], is that of strategic planning; she explained:

> We're a campus where we don't just write the strategic plan. We work it, and there's a lot of push from the president all the way down on working that plan. And part of the incentive to work the plan is that there's money available to work the plan. And so, each year each division has an opportunity to put in a request for money that's above their departmental allocation for initiatives that fall in line with one of our strategic goals.

Matthews, Dr. Blair, and Sara Weber, assistant director of leadership initiatives, explained that MSU's Department of Residence Life was awarded a grant (amount undisclosed) for some initiatives that were connected to residential education efforts, and

decided upon by Matthews' senior leadership team. Funds were allocated for supplies related to a residential academic ambassador initiative, training for two staff to use StrengthsQuest to improve MSU's sophomore learning community, and an annual residence hall-wide program that was developed prior to Matthews' arrival and the introduction of the residential curriculum.

Matthews also shared three documents, in particular, that reflected the notion of linking MSU's residential curriculum concepts to the institutional mission and priorities. First, the document "[MSU Res Life] Goals 2014-2015 Initiatives" featured, in list form, the benchmarks for the goals outlined in the second document. Goal 1: "Further develop a curricular approach to residential education," included the following topics listed as "Actions:"

> Further develop a curricular approach to residential education.
>
> Actions:
>
> - Develop educational plans for our three learning goals
>
> - Develop and pilot a series of lesson plans for the elements of our educational plans
>
> - Send a team of professionals to the annual ACPA RCI
>
> - Develop an assessment plan to provide benchmark and progress data on our learning goals and educational priority
>
> - Develop more intentional relationships with the Colleges and Faculty Partners
>
> - Develop more intentional academic themed communities through national benchmarking of strong living-learning community programs

This information, from the first document, related to the second document, "[University Housing] Annual Report 2014-2015," which included:

- an introduction paragraph about the department;

- six bullet points under "Key Accomplishments;"

- five goals with a summary of efforts including campus partnership;

- and a section titled, "Progress Towards Benchmarks for 2014-2015, with five topics described.

MSU's Department of Residence Life's residential curriculum was explicitly named in the document twice. First, the first bullet point of "Key Accomplishments" read: "Developed educational plans for first-year students, sophomore year experience students, and upper-class/graduate students. Second, as Goal 1: "Further develop a curricular approach to residential education:"

> During the fall of 2014, a team of residential life staff attended the RCI at Virginia Tech to increase the core team of fully trained staff working to develop a culture and buy-in of a residential curriculum model. This group then acted as the leadership team to spearhead efforts to develop the curricular approach on campus.

> In January, a second mini-RCI was held on campus for the entire Residential Life Programmatic team, again utilizing the skills of [Ms. Madeline Pleasant]. This 2-day workshop allowed our team to further refine our learning goals, outcomes, and rubrics, and to begin to develop a sequenced educational plan. From this launching point, the programmatic team separated into three sub-committees; first-year, sophomore-year, and upper-class teams. These teams

prepared a sequenced educational plan and then developed lesson plans for each component in that plan.

Finally, the educational plans, lesson plans, and assessment pieces were coordinated into the [Residential Curriculum Playbook] for student staff and professional staff within the unit. These [booklets] become the primary resource materials for intentional learning experiences in the buildings for fall 2015.

Finally, the document "[University Housing] 2015-2016" outlined five goals, each with action items, and five bullets under "Benchmarks 2015-2016." The residential curriculum was listed in Goal IV:

Further develop and implement a curricular approach to residential education.

Actions

- Refine educational plans for first-year, sophomore, and upper-class students using assessment data.

- Send a team of professionals to the annual ACPA Residential Curriculum Institute...in fall 2015.

- More firmly align our Academic Learning Communities and Academic Clustered Communities with our residential curriculum.

- Continue to refine training and development activities with staff including mini-RCI, article discussions, and utilizing faculty on campus for further skill development.

MSU's Department of Residence Life' strategic planning goals reflected the residential curriculum and departmental priorities as one department that is affiliated with

the institutional strategic plan. As discussed in the next section, these goals influenced

shifts in language that aligned with the mission of academic affairs and the institution.

Language linked to curricular culture and values.

Some participants described how language within MSU's Department of

Residence Life changed to reflect the institutional and departmental values of learning.

While this was the underlying message, participants shared distinct examples.

The residential curriculum approach seemed to influence language choices that

espoused the institutional and departmental missions and priorities. There were changes

to names for some departmental committees. For example, Steve, coordinator of

residence life, and Logan, graduate hall coordinator, shared that "Graduate Hall

Coordinator" training changed to "Graduate Hall Coordinator Curriculum Committee".

Weber, assistant director of residential leadership initiatives, shared that the student staff

training committee is now referred to as "Student Staff Curriculum Committee." I

interpreted the name changes to reflect the presence and priority of the residential

curriculum. Weber described how staff considered messages inherent in word choice, "It

was really trying to sell it to the staff in a different way and getting out of some of the

traditional language to have a different level of intentionality behind things. And, you

know, did programs sound too casual..." Similarly, Rellen, a graduate hall coordinator,

stated her staff uses the words "community events" or "community initiatives" rather

than "programs."

Other participants described how language change impacted the culture within the

department. Hunter, a graduate hall coordinator, spoke about an increased use of learning

outcomes to articulate what students and staff should learn within the residence halls. He

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shared the following, "I would say there's much more…like an emphasis or focus on…first identifying what we're trying to get students or anyone to learn from it." He also explained about introducing the residential curriculum to student staff, and the impact of language in an organization:

> Student staff felt like a RC [residential curriculum] would mean they were going to have to do more work, so we explained that we aren't doing more work, we are simply putting words to what we are doing and connecting it to educational mission and goals.

Jae, assistant director of residential learning initiatives, shared an example about how intentional language intersected to initiate a change to practice. He spoke about how the department reevaluated the message about hosting banquets:

> It signified the ending of something, or the completion. With a curricular approach, you are never actually "done" so this is something that we have moved away from. Instead of the 3-4 banquets a year, we now have one at the end of the year.

Finally, Ell explained he believes the department, per the residential curriculum, is changing language with other departments, but not necessarily with students. He spoke about Matthews' interactions, "I know that our director goes to different meetings…and speaks about us having this curriculum and us following this program to give individual students what they need. She will go around and promote what we're doing in our department." Ell also conveyed that language did not change with students, "To them they're just coming to a program. Know what I mean? For them it's, "OK, yeah, we're going to learn about whatever today in this program."

Finally, Matthews used an analogy when speaking about how she conveyed the residential curriculum to some external constituents. The picture featured a PowerPoint slide with complicated math (Figure 4.3). Matthews explained much of her role on the journey of adopting the residential curriculum approach has been "telling the story" with external partners.

Figure 4.3: PowerPoint Slides for External Partners

Matthews explained that President [Smiley] asked Dr. Blair to invite Matthews to explain MSU's residential curriculum at President [Smiley's] National Advisory Summit with business leaders from around the country. Matthews shared the following account during the photo activity focus group:

> In the presentation I said, "You wouldn't ever walk into a classroom on the very
> first day of college or the very first day of elementary school and see a problem
> like that and expect students to do it. And the next slide was like 3+2=5 before

you first start with the basics. And so, really what we're trying to do is help

students get the basics so they can go to more advanced.

This photo and explanation mirrored what Matthews shared during our individual

interviews in terms of her role with communicating about the residential curriculum with

external partners. I inferred from her accounts that these outreach efforts were a

symbolic way of showing partners, both in academic affairs and student affairs, that

MSU's Department of Residence Life Staff were committed to complementing the

institution's academic mission.

This concludes the data on some participants' perspectives on how language

within the department of residence life changed to reflect the institutional and

departmental values of learning. The data in the following section describes how the

residential curriculum approach initiated and required the development of organizational

tools that would serve to help MSU's residence life staff execute the tenets of the

residential curriculum, aligned with The 10EERC.

Organizational investment and new tools.

Organizational investment and new tools was the second category for the sub-

theme *Focused commitment*. All professional and graduate staff, using varied examples,

articulated that developing resources was an integral part of how MSU's Department of

Residence life adopted the residential curriculum approach. Several documents from

Matthews and Thompson, as well as some photos from the activity, contributed to how I

identified organizational tools as a relevant category of data to represent. These newly

developed resources represented change in the organization, and contributed to the notion

of focused commitment, or intentionality with adopting the curricular approach to

residential education. Additionally, and featured in subsequent portions of this chapter, the student staff and RHA student leaders spoke about how the residential curriculum resources were both positive and challenging in their experience of implementing the residential curriculum approach. Following are excerpts from participants to describe how developing resources helped the organization transition to adopting the residential curriculum approach. This category includes sub-categories: (1) MSU's "Mini RCIs;" and (2) Residential curriculum resources.

MSU's "Mini RCIs."

As noted in the previous category, *Link to institution*, MSU's residence life professional and graduate staff participated in "Mini RCIs" on campus in January, 2014, and February, 2015. I interpreted the "Mini RCI" events as an influential milestone for the department in adopting the residential curriculum approach from what I learned from professional and graduate staff's accounts, documents, and photos.

Ms. Madeline Pleasant, an external consultant, facilitated the sessions at both Mini RCIs. Matthews captured a photo (not featured to protect anonymity) of Ms. Madeline Pleasant, and shared the following quote during the focus group.

> I have a picture of [Ms. Madeline Pleasant], because she came and did a mini-RCI with us for two years in a row. We would not have moved forward. I could have talked all day long with my team. And it's not that they don't listen to me, but sometimes things are just better when you hear it from *outside* of your unit. And not only did she come and help our team, and the team really connected with her, I feel like, and had really good conversations with her, but she was the one that kept me sane when I was like, "I don't think I can do this. I don't know if

we're ever going to get where you are." She brought me back to, "Baby steps, one

thing at a time. It will be OK. Here's some examples. Try it out."

I found Matthews' sentiment helpful to understanding why she committed departmental

funds to host an external consultant. This was particularly insightful given that Matthews

serves as a faculty member for ACPA's RCI.

Matthews and Thompson shared several documents that featured content for

MSU's January, 2014, Mini RCI, held on-campus over two days. Matthews sent the

documents via email to MSU's professional and graduate staff in preparation for the two-

day Mini RCI. The first document was an agenda for the day, which started at 9:00 a.m.

and ended at 3:30 p.m. The following topics were listed: Welcome, Introduction, and

Announcements (Sonya Matthews and Ms. Madeline Pleasant); Plenary – What is a

Residential Curriculum? (Ms. Pleasant); Break and Assessment #1; Report Out and Q&A

(Ms. Pleasant); Article Discussion (Ms. Pleasant); Lunch on own; Educational Plans,

Strategies, and Sequencing (Ms. Pleasant); What are we currently doing at MSU? (Sonya

Matthews and Ms. Pleasant); and Reflections (Ms. Pleasant). The topics listed for day

two, scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. included: Welcome and Announcements

(Sonya Matthews); Writing Effective Lesson Plans (Ms. Pleasant); Overview of Rubrics

(Sonya Matthews); Writing Workshop I (Ms. Pleasant); Lunch on own; Writing

Workshop II (Ms. Pleasant); and Now What? Developing an Action Plan for Next Steps,

Commitments, and Celebrations (Ms. Pleasant and Sonya Matthews). In response to my

request for documents that reflected MSU's journey of adopting the residential

curriculum, Matthews shared three PowerPoint presentations for Mini RCI 2014. These

materials pertained to the aforementioned sessions on Educational Plans, Strategies and

Sequencing; Writing Effective Lesson Plans; and the Plenary – What is a Residential Curriculum. Matthews also sent the staff Ms. Madeline Pleasant's biography (and photo), which described her credentials for professional experience (15+ years) and four institutions; professional involvement in regional and national organizations; and professional interests. Another document featured a list of The 10EERC (as cited in Chapter 1 of this dissertation). Finally, Matthews attached four articles and mentioned these were for discussion at Mini RCI. The four articles, all cited in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, included: *Are All Your Educators Educating* (Whitt, 2006); *Beyond Seat Time and Student Satisfaction: A Curricular Approach to Residential Education* (Kerr & Tweedy, 2006); *Maps and Inventories: Anchoring Efforts to Track Student Learning* (Maki, 2004); and *Redirecting the Role of Student Affairs to Focus on Student Learning* (Bloland, Stamatakos, & Rogers, 1996). Matthews also provided a copy of the *What, So What, Now What* document used for the article discussions. Data to resemble MSU's February, 2015, Mini RCI were presented during the photo activity focus group.

I also learned about MSU's Mini RCI 2015, as an organizational investment, during the photo activity focus group and during interviews with all but two professional and graduate staff. I understood from my participants' that the Mini RCIs were a shared learning experience for residence life professional and graduate staff, but also a milestone for developing MSU's Educational Priority Statement (EPS), or the mission statement for MSU's residential curriculum. Based on The 10EERC, the EPS is developed through a process termed the "archaeological dig" (Edwards & Gardner, 2015), whereby staff apply concepts of their institutional mission and priorities to develop a statement that serves to represent the efforts, and develop resources to operationalize, a residential curriculum. I

believe Dr. Blair's aforementioned metaphor of an "anchor" is accurate to describe the importance of the EPS for an institution's residential curriculum. The EPS is the philosophical commitment and foundational content for all resources used to operationalize the residential curriculum because of staff's commitment to align with and execute the institution's mission and priorities.

Several professional and graduate staff, during individual interviews, spoke about the Mini RCIs and engagement with Ms. Pleasant. For example, some individuals spoke about the Mini RCI events as providing clarity about residential curricula nationally. Logan provided a summative quote:

I think that it cleared up a lot of the mystery that we had with the curriculum as far as, "OK, we've heard and we've talked about it with a lot of people about what is the curriculum, what's the purpose of the curriculum." Having her come and really go through it and say, "Ok, this is really, not even from a university standpoint but from a larger scale, this is what a curriculum does, and this is what a curriculum can do," really cleared up kind of why we're using the curriculum and why it's a good shift for us.

While most professional and graduate staff conveyed the Mini RCIs were a positive experience, some participants mentioned some challenges with the events. For example, Taylor shared that graduate staff missed the January, 2014, session on writing effective lesson plans and that graduate staff had yet (citing my visit at the end of September, 2015) been taught how to write lesson plans. Ell shared that it was an intense experience and that staff had to work into the evenings to finish work or school work that would have been completed if staff were not attending Mini RCIs.

In summary, the Mini RCIs were, based on my interpretation of the data, a milestone for developing MSU's core philosophies based on institutional and departmental values. Matthews, during the photo focus group, spoke about a picture she captured to reflect how the MSU professional and graduate staff conducted the "archaeological dig" (Figure 4.4) to develop MSU's EPS.
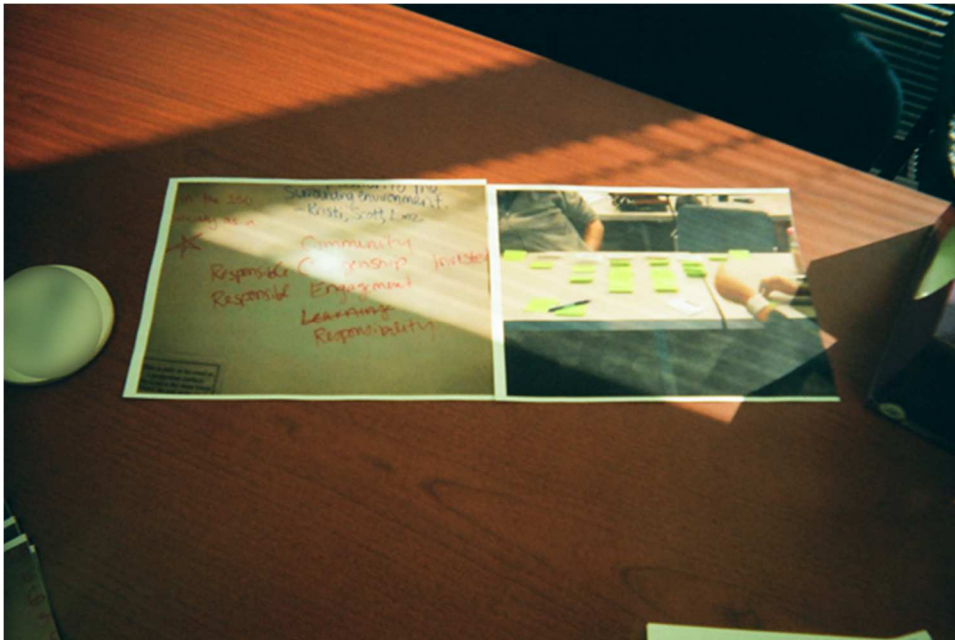

Figure 4.4: Archaeological Dig at MSU's Mini RCI

In her words, Matthews explained, "The purpose of the "archaeological dig" activity was for staff to write words and phrases to answer the question, "What do we want our students to learn as a result of living in our residence hall?" Regarding a link to the institutional mission, Matthews commented, "And they wrote words and phrases from who our student were, from the articles and some of the language, from our mission, vision, and strategic plan management, all of those things." Similarly, Lance captured photos about the "archaeological dig" process (Figures 4.5 is one). He described these

photos as modeling the "archaeological dig" process he learned by attending ACPA's 2014 RCI:

> I personally had an opportunity to go with the team to [ACPA's 2014] RCI last year, and that's where I learned about the archeological dig and what we had already done here at this institution. And so this showcases like us researching it, looking things up, to symbolize that process.
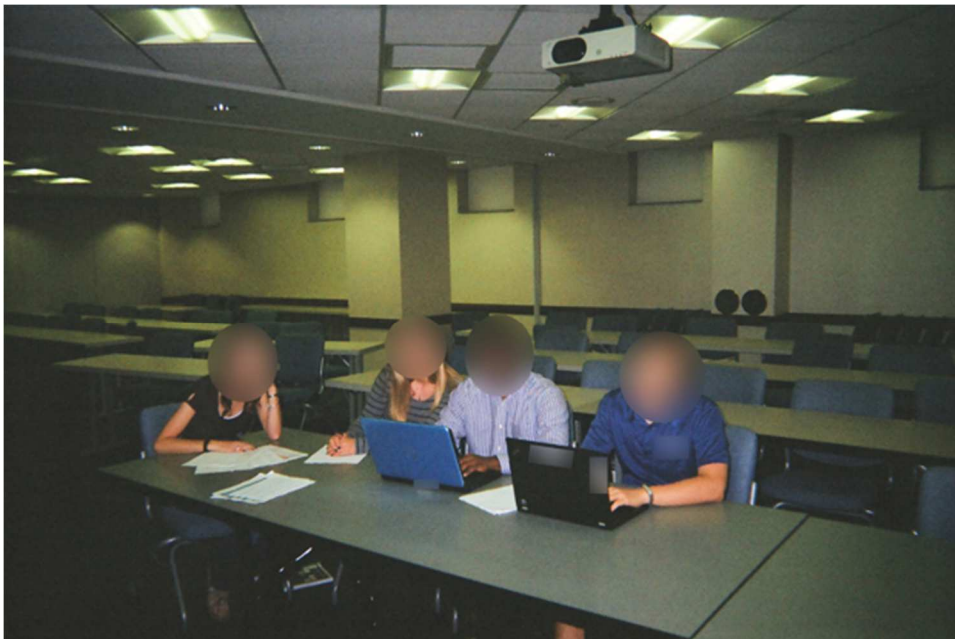

Figure 4.5: Archaeological Dig Process

Some professional and graduate staff shared that the "archaeological dig" became a common activity, as it was facilitated during graduate and student staff trainings. The premise of the activity was that the residence life staff, within their respective trainings, wrote words and phrases on Post-It notes to respond to the prompt, "What should students learn by living in our residence halls?" The central leadership staff then facilitated conversations about how what the staff generated was aligned with what other residence life staff shared. Most participants described that in all cases, there were more

commonalities than not about vision for what could and should be accomplished in MSU's residential learning environments. For example, Hunter, a graduate hall coordinator, explained:

The only thing I think of when I think of training…that's really changed, we're trying to explain what a residential curriculum is without necessarily using that type of language. So I think they did the same activity that was explained to head staff, so [graduate] hall directors and [coordinators of residence life], at one of our meetings last year.

They [a former assistant director Jae, and Carole] were like, "What do we do in res life?" And so they had some pieces of paper, and they wrote down, "We talk with residents. We put on programs." They kind of wrote on these three pieces of paper. They kind of categorized them without us saying which paper to write on, the facilitator, one of the assistant directors, writing them on the papers. And at the end they were like, "This is what residential curriculum is." We looked them over. "This is academic success." We already are doing it. We're just putting a name to everything we're doing. We use that same activity in student staff training to introduce what residential curriculum is and why we're doing it. Everyone, when they hear it, I feel like many students feel like, "We're doing more work." We're not necessarily doing more work. We're just…using words to explain what we're doing and telling people…Yea so I think a lot of them had like an ah-ha moment in student staff training. "Oh, that's what residential curriculum is. That makes sense"… rather than feeling like it's a whole new thing.

It's not a whole new thing. We've already been doing it. We already are

residential curriculum. We just didn't call it academic success. These things you

do go in this category. We didn't categorize things. It was just all a part of

Residential Life. Now in student staff training there's a big session around

residential curriculum, what it looks like.

Hunter's account suggests that the leadership team was committed to residence life staff,

at all levels, having a voice in developing the learning goals and other tenets of MSU's

residential curriculum. However, while some professional and graduate staff spoke about

how the "archaeological dig" activity was conducted during student staff trainings, the

student staff did not explicitly speak about participating in this activity. The RHA

student leaders did not mention participating in this type of activity.

Finally, Matthews captured a photo to represent the staff's experience with

writing MSU's educational priority during MSU's February, 2015, Mini RCI (Figure

4.6), which I know, based on my knowledge of residential curricula, to be a product of

the archaeological dig" process. Matthews described the photo as follows:

The next pictures, then, are pictures of the next several *hours* as we tried

to write our educational priority statement. And there are different versions that

you can see in the pictures as we…each group wrote their own sentence, and then

we tried to collapse them together. And I can remember we were arguing over

different words and…

We were going back and forth on, "What is our word? What is our word?"

And we finally said, "Screw it, we don't need to know our word right now. Let's

just write something down." But, I can remember being so excited watching

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our….our entire team having this conversation. Then she asked if there were a few people that wanted to stay afterwards to continue to tweak the language. And the number of people that stayed just blew my mind. I still get shivers just thinking about…listening to people have that conversation, get excited again, and kind of re-fall in love again with what they were doing.

Figure 4.6: Writing the Educational Priority Statement

The photo in Figure 4.6 is symbolic of the MSU's Mini RCIs but also that writing the EPS served as a foundation for the organizational tools that MSU professional and graduate staff developed to implement the residential curriculum approach. On documents I found, MSU's EPS reads, "[Residence Life] prepares students to assume responsibility for their individual experience and to actively engage in their community." Next, are representative data on selected new organizational tools at MSU.

Residential curriculum resources.

The category *Organizational investment and new tools* includes a second sub-category, *Residential curriculum resources*. When MSU adopted the residential curriculum approach, Matthews and Thompson provided several documents to represent new organizational tools and that reflected alignment with the tenets of MSU's Educational Priority Statement. Given that MSU staff have provided detailed descriptions of MSU's residential curriculum and core tenets at annual ACPA RCIs, I did not believe it would be ethical to include excerpts from these documents in my dissertation as this might violate the anonymity of the institution. Ultimately, the majority of the documents I received were representative of a comprehensive resource called MSU's Residential Curriculum Playbook.

Residential Curriculum Playbook.

The Residential Curriculum Playbook (RCP) was the culminating product of several documents that MSU professional and graduate staff created when adopting the residential curriculum approach. There are three versions of MSU's RCP to cater to the demographics of the campus' residential student populations: first-year, sophomore, and upper-class students. My key informants, Matthews and Thompson, shared that all professional, graduate, and student staff were provided a copy of the RCP for the population within their residential community. Upon my review, the elements of each RCP appeared standard with the following type of content.

Each RCP, approximately 492 pages, contained a welcome letter addressed to "Residential Life Staff" and was signed "Your Residential Life Team." The letter included an overview of MSU's residential curriculum basics (Educational Priority,

Learning Goals, Learning Outcomes, and Rubric); structure for gathering feedback and assessment related to the curriculum components; monthly calendars with dates, including but not limited to, first day of classes, hall council meetings, and the various residential educational efforts or strategies; and chronological (by month) lesson plans and workbook pages for the educational efforts or strategies.

Following are excerpts from the RCP's welcome letter (standard across all three versions) to describe how MSU's residential curriculum is described:

Two years ago, Midtown State University, embarked upon a journey to transform the [Residence Life] program into one that aligns with President [Smiley's] Strategic Plan, the [Adventure to Excellence]. The residential curriculum approach calls for housing and residential programs across the country to reconsider how students learn, develop, and evolve. It challenges us to rethink what we do and how we do it. A residential curriculum does not take away or change what we do; it simply restructures what we do and explains the who, what, where, when, and how. It also calls for us to have specific learning goals and outcomes for student learning, based on an overarching Educational Priority. It is a call to action, to set a culture of continuous assessment of our services, initiatives, and daily work.

While our work to build an effective Curriculum is most definitely not over, the progress we have made so far culminated in this [Playbook]. Within these pages are helpful tools and information, which lay out learning opportunities for our students. The [Playbook] is your "Res Life Syllabus", your year-at-a-glance; it has everything you need to facilitate community meetings, individual

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interactions, and group events that get people thinking, talking, connecting. When we take time to plan ahead, we can be proactive about our engagement strategies, instead of always feeling like we are being reactive, feeling "a day late and a dollar short."

In addition to the RCP, as a comprehensive resource, three types of resources that were featured in the RCP were also shared as separate documents. First, MSU's residential curriculum rubric depicted each learning goal that Dr. Blair and Matthews previously described as links to the institution's mission. The rubric detailed the intended learning outcomes for students in "stages" over the course of their experience living in a residence hall at MSU. Second, were samples of MSU's respective educational plans for first-year, sophomore, and upper class students. Each of these documents revealed how MSU's learning goals, linked to the institutional mission, framed intended learning plans for MSU's residential student populations. Third, was a generic lesson plan template that included the following categories: basic information about dates, time, facilitator(s), target audience, and community involved; rationale and purpose for the lesson; applicable learning goals and outcomes; lesson outcomes; materials/preparation; detailed outline for before, during, and after the lesson; and assessment instructions. Some specific lesson plans were provided for hall councils, for example.

In summary, Thompson, captured a photo of one version of the RCP, and described this organizational tool to illustrate how the development of organizational tools were foundational to MSU's journey of adopting the residential curriculum approach:

I feel like this very much defines where we've gotten to in this journey. It's the…you know, the symbol of the fruit of our efforts. Right? It's the symbol of getting stuff done. It's what we physically can touch and see and use. And I think that was really important to everybody involved, and especially just because it had been done, and we tried to get it printed, and then so we kept talking about it at training. And when it finally got here it was like a celebration.

In addition to the aforementioned resources, I received templates for individual meetings tailored to each level of staff in the department of residence life: student staff, graduate hall coordinators, coordinators of residence life, and central leadership. These templates included topics that were grouped by the learning goals for MSU's residential curriculum that were spoken about and shared in other documents. Thus, the learning goals of the residential curriculum were intended to benefit staff as well residential students.

Assessment strategies, tools, and staffing.

The sub-category *Residential curriculum resources* encompassed a second category, *Assessment strategies, tools, and staffing*. The use of consistent assessment tools in the department of residence life was another aspect for how the residential curriculum approach introduced changed. Following are representative data to illustrate documents, photos, and accounts from professional, graduate, student staff, and RHA student leaders about how new organizational tools changed communication in MSU's Department of Residence when adopting the residential curriculum approach.

Two types of documents were provided to me, which most participants described as newly created assessment tools when MSU's Department of Residence Life adopted

the residential curriculum approach. First, the RCP contained a section titled,

"Curriculum Structure," and within this content was included for the heading "Feedback

v. Assessment." Definitions were included in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

MSU's Curriculum and Structure Section of RCP

Feedback	Assessment
Feedback consists of the general reaction to the lesson plan and educational activity. This is important so that we understand on a practical level if the lesson plan was an effective educational opportunity. Some methods of producing feedback include asking the following questions:	Assessment consists of identifying what learning has happened, if any, as a result of the educational activity. An assessment plan exists for each educational activity as part of the lesson plan. As this information is collected, the residential curriculum steering committee will examine the data received, and report out how much/what type of learning occurred as a result of the educational activity. Additionally, the following questions will be asked within the steering committee as well as at monthly curriculum review meetings:
• What did the staff members like about the lesson plan? • What was frustrating about the lesson plan? • Were the lesson plan's instructions clear, or do they need to be modified? • Was there any grammar or spelling errors? • Did residents enjoy the activity? • Did staff enjoy implementing the activity? • Would you implement this activity again? If not, is there a different activity you might suggest that could increase satisfaction for both residents and staff?	• What was learned? • Did what was learned support the learning outcomes? • Was it the best assessment method? • Is this activity the best way to reach these learning outcomes? If not, is there a different way to do so? • Overarching assessment • Are the lesson plans supporting all learning goals? • Where do residents fall on the residential curriculum rubric?

Additionally, within the RCP, were "Workbook" pages in which professional, graduate,

and student staff, were required to reflect on prompts related to the corresponding lesson

plan for that particular "Workbook" page, which includes space for reflective notes and a

reminder about the due date for assessment information to be submitted to a supervisor.

Table 4.5 includes the "Feedback and Reflection" prompts:

Table 4.5

Workbook Page "Feedback and Reflection" Prompts

Workbook Page

- How much did you know about the subject before we started?
- What process did you go/we through to produce this plan?
- In what ways have you gotten better at this kind of work (interactions, events, group work, etc.)?
- In what ways do you think you need to improve?
- What problems did you encounter while you were working on this strategy? How did you solve them?
- How do you feel about doing this lesson plan? What parts of it did you particularly like? Dislike? Why?
- What was especially satisfying to you about either the process or the finished product?
- What did/do you find frustrating about it?
- What were your standards for this program? Did you meet your standards?
- What were the learning outcomes for your residents who attending this program? Did you meet your outcomes?
- What does that tell you about your students and how they learn?
- What does this experience reveal about you as a learner? As an educator?
- What did you learn about yourself as you worked on this program?
- What's the one thing that you have learned about your teammates' work or process?
- What would you change if you had a chance to do this piece over again?

The second document for MSU's newly created resources included the "Monthly Area Assessment" template, a newly developed resource that Matthews shared with me via email. She also captured a photo of the monthly template for the photo activity. The following content listed at the top of the first page described the purpose of this tool:

> The monthly area assessment report is designed to make sure that we are continually participating in the assessment cycle. This means that we are continuing to ask questions about (1) whether our students are achieving/learning what we hope it is that they are learning (2) how our lesson plans are effectively (or not effectively) engaging students in learning around our specific learning goals. We are then using the data we obtain while asking these questions to guide our work and decision-making. Essentially answering the questions (1) What do

we hope students learn? (2) What did students actually learn/not learn? (3) What actions do we need to take as a result of what we have discovered? And (4) What additional questions do we have as a result of what we have already discovered? The template included sections that outlined roles of various staff and groups in regards to the roles with assessment. Individuals and groups listed were: Community Advisor/Residential Academic Ambassador, Graduate Hall Coordinator, Coordinator of Residence Life, Coordinator of Residence Life for Assessment/Assessment Committee, Associate Director of Residential Learning Initiatives and Coordinator of Residence Life for Assessment, senior leadership team, and the chief housing officer. The remainder of the template outlined what monthly assessment data should be submitted for the respective month.

The aforementioned documents, related to Jim's responsibilities in the organization. As of August, 2015, Jim served in MSU's Department of Residence Life as the Coordinator of Residence Life for Assessment. Some of his primary job responsibilities included compiling information feedback and assessment data to propose recommendations, along with others, about changes to resources such as lesson plans for the future. Carole, former coordinator of residence life, when serving in the department, reported having leadership for assessment initiatives relating to the residential curriculum. However, Matthews explained in our second interview that Carole's position was changed to allow Jim, the incoming staff member, to focus on the curriculum, among other duties, rather than the "day-to-day" functions of residence life, on which the coordinators of residence life are focused. Matthews described that Jim's position is now central within the organization and is a dual report to Thompson, who oversees the

residential curriculum, with Weber as his direct supervisor. She described Jim's responsibilities as:

> And the biggest change with that is that person used to have a building and graduate student. We pulled that person out that can focus 40 hours a week on curriculum, assessment, strategic planning, processes, the administrative stuff that we were struggling to get done in the past.

Jim captured a photo of himself and Thompson, and he explained:

> This was a meeting between [Thompson] and I. We had a very in-depth conversation about the model in which it's progressing. Because, with our curriculum I am here to kind of edit, to kind of go over…To kind of go over the information, kind of edit it, kind of make sure that if something doesn't make sense that we're making it make sense.

To summarize, Jae reported Jim's work is helpful to know "if what we're doing is working or not."

Professional and graduate staff during interviews, and some student staff during the focus group, described how these new organizational tools related to assessment changed communication within the department of residence life. Carole stated, these tools "systematize staff efforts" and that "the assessment is as important as doing the actual lesson plan itself." Ell explained, "...for every month we send feedback and assessment to our head of staff. That's where we have the opportunity to have our voices heard." Lance, described past approaches to gathering feedback from staff and what changed when the staff transitioned to using a newly developed template to facilitate the collection of staff feedback:

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So, last year it was all like...once a month we would have, or maybe twice

a semester, we would tell the [graduate hall coordinators], our grad students,

to...get general feedback from their student staff on curriculum things. So they

would sit in staff meeting, and they would say, "OK, so what did you like?"

They'd write it down. "What didn't you like? What went well? What didn't go

well? What could we change?" Then they would type all of that up and send it to

us as area coordinators. We would send that on to central leadership last year.

Well, this year we have a monthly curriculum assessment and feedback

report that details. "[Coordinator of Residence Life], here's the thing we need

from you. [Graduate Hall Coordinators], here's the assessment and feedback we

need from you. Student staff, here's the assessment and feedback from you.

[Coordinators of Residence Life], you need to make generalized themes of all of

the assessments that you're given and then send that all into us along with all of

the assessment that you've collected from them and send that in."

Lance's comments were helpful for understanding change over time in the residence life

department – from before and after adopting the residential curriculum approach. Steve

concurred that using data to guide practice, when adopting the residential curriculum

approach, was a change in the organization and he stated, "Whether it's article research

or data and what's actually happening in the halls, we're using that feedback to better

inform should we be doing this initiative in the future."

The four graduate hall coordinators, as direct supervisors to the student staff,

expressed the idea that the residential curriculum approach has introduced new ways to

capture feedback and assessment related to residential education efforts. Taylor spoke

about the Workbook pages in the RCP, "I think that the staff are being asked to use their time to reflect a lot more... Student Staff complete a workbook page at the end of every lesson plan." Hunter, in an interview, reported that assessment is now incorporated into the staff's practice:

> I would say there's much more…like an emphasis or focus on…first identifying what we're trying to get students or anyone to *learn* from it. But then the second piece of how we know whether or not they learned it. So there's a big push on assessment, evaluation. Are we just doing programming and all these different initiatives, and we're not…looking at did it work? What can we change?

Hunter also shared about the change to include student staff in having a voice in evaluating programmatic efforts; he described the following about the past:

> And they [student staff] would do a program, and then they would do an evaluation. I would have a Google Doc or something. They'd be like, "It went well. This could have been better," but that data went *nowhere*, because it never was centralized through our campus. So now it's like more…Everything we do we're like, "OK, well, of course we're going to ask for feedback on how we can improve the [campus event] the [residential academic ambassadors host].

In summary, Rellen provided a summative quote about how Matthews' arrival created a sense of change regarding staff communication in the department:

> And then that's where, I think, it opened up a lot more group think and allowed…and actually we had a voice that year as well. They [central leadership] started reaching out to student staff, the undergraduates, to get their feedback. They reached out to the [graduate hall coordinators] to get their feedback. "What

do you think of this?" And a lot of the other grads that came from prior

institutions, "What did you do at your *old* institution? Where do you think we're

lacking? Where do you think that we're doing awesome? Where do you think we

can improve?" And so that first year was a lot of assessing feedback. And then

with like having [Matthews] be new to the department, and her coming with all of

her views, that really helped put us…having us look towards the right path.

This concludes the data I represented from selected professional and graduate

staff interviews about perceived changes to staff having voice with adopting the

residential curriculum. The student staff and RHA student leaders did not speak directly

to these newly developed assessment resources, but they did address the concepts of

changes to communication. The majority of the student staff and RHA leaders' accounts

of these changes spoke most poignantly to perceived positives and challenges, which are

included in the subsequent portion of this chapter to maintain the ways in which they

described their experience. Included here, however, are representative data on how

students perceived their communication to change with the professional and graduate

staff when the department adopted the residential curriculum approach.

Derek, a student staff member, for example, shared that he was one of two student

staff members on the original residential curriculum committee, "There were two student

staff members, that I know of, that were on a group in which…it was nowhere near what

it is now. It was a lot of the, "Students will be able to do this and then… do this." And so

it was very, very, very light backbone, I guess, of what the curriculum was or would have

been. But, after that we met maybe a couple times. More of Derek's sentiments about his

belief that student staff were not included in later stages of the residential curriculum

development are included in the challenges portion of this chapter. However, this insight addresses his perspective on change over time in the department in terms of student staff voice. Similarly, Rose, a student staff member, spoke about experiencing a change in supervisor over her tenure in the organization, and she included commentary about the residential curriculum.

> I know last year my [graduate hall coordinator] wasn't really invested too much into Residential Life because she was a different major. So this year I have a first year, and he's really, really understanding. And he helps us a lot learning, but he's still learning himself. He, honestly, asks me questions or some of our older staff questions when it comes to residential curriculum sometimes.

RHA student leaders articulated that they were not directly informed, as an organization, about the residential curriculum approach when the department started the journey. Talia conveyed that RHA had not been directly involved in residential curriculum conversations with professional and graduate staff:

> If there is a section pertaining to us, I haven't seen. I really don't think that there is… one. It's just more of like a common theme, student staff or [graduate hall coordinators] are required to have something done by this time so we need to like help enforce that or help them get the timeline so that it ends up ending up on that time instead of it affecting what we do as an organization.

However, Jackie, a RHA student leader, described her belief that RHA had more contact with graduate hall coordinators because of the need to communicate on deadlines and conference opportunities for student staff members; she explained:

I know that like last year I served on the RHA exec board for one semester, and I really didn't have contact with the [graduate hall coordinators] at all. This semester, because of the curriculum with the deadlines and stuff, we've had more contact with the [graduate hall coordinators]. Also, with the conferences, they're wanting me to reach out to the [graduate hall coordinators] so they can reach out to the student staff members to push applying for conferences.

Additionally, Keith, an RHA student leader, spoke about his belief that the student voice had changed when MSU's department of residence life adopted the residential curriculum approach; he explained:

I don't know if it's necessarily RHA, as an exec board, voice that's changed, but because of the added representation, because of the focus on hall councils and things like that, we're seeing our guest speakers, like a lot more discussion, I think, with guest speakers we bring in who are professional staff as well as hall councils seeming to get really involved with wanting to reach out and network throughout the campus to use different resources that never were even brought up last year when I was in hall council. I think that, because the folks on hall council, RHA's…I don't know if RHA's voice is changing, but it's definitely the student voice that's changed.

Keith's comments described dynamics within RHA and with the broader campus community. Additionally, Keith's sentiments helped convey that change within MSUs Department of Residence Life was complex and perhaps not always directly related to adopting the residential curriculum approach.

Finally, some photos illustrated professional and graduate staff's sentiments, and details of the aforementioned documents, for how assessment resources functioned and new organizational tools when MSU's Department of Residence Life adopted the residential curriculum approach. For example, LaShay captured a photo of the RCP and the *Classroom Assessment Technique* (CAT) book (Figure 4.7), and she explained:

> And we've been doing a lot of stuff with assessment this week, trying to figure
>
> out how it best fits within our use of the curriculum and how to best explain….
>
> what…we are learning in [HALL] and what we are seeing with our students.

Figure 4.7: RCP and CAT Book
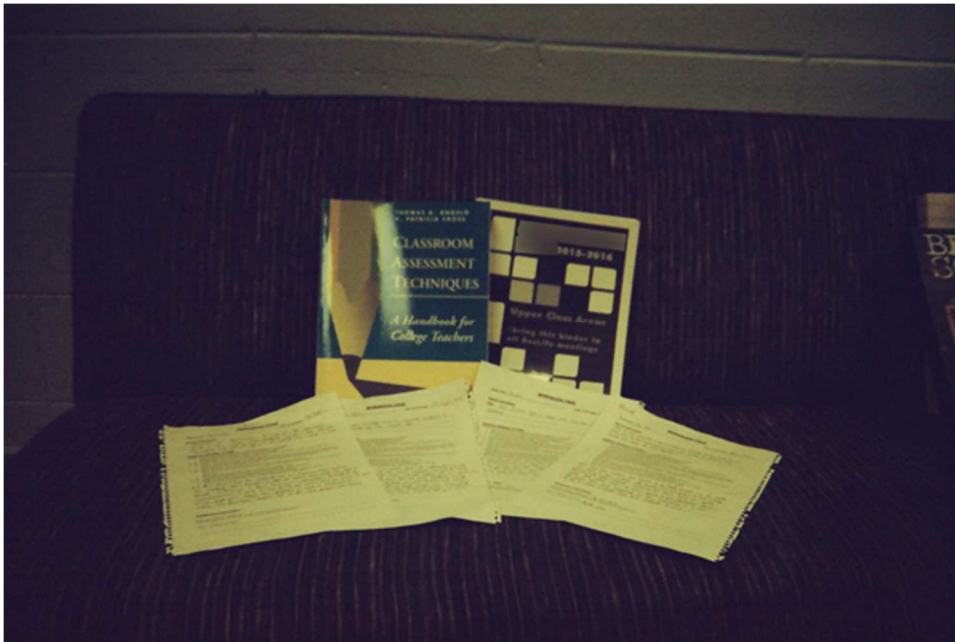
Similarly, Matthews captured a photo of index cards (Figure 4.8), and she explained:

> Because we went from not doing a lot of assessment here to, I feel like, we
>
> buy index cards and notecards in bulk, whether it be for one minute
>
> activities we do in staff meetings, to what we're doing with our students,
>
> to… taking the show on the road and having others do [laughs] classroom

assessment techniques. It feels like we're writing index cards all the time, sorting them, practicing them, and developing themes for them.

Figure 4.8: Index Cards

This concludes selected representative data regarding resources as organizational tools while MSU's Department of Residence Life adopted the residential curriculum approach. Ultimately, these resources instituted standards and structures that participants perceived as positive and challenging in transitioning to the residential curriculum approach. Data to represent both perspectives are included in the following sections of this chapter.

Residential Curriculum as Focused Commitment: A Summary

The data for *Focused commitment*, as the second sub-theme for the first research question of the study addressed how the approach to residential education was re-framed in MSU's Department of Residence Life based on The 10EERC. In first section, *Link to the institution*, Dr. Blair, associate dean of academic enhancement, and Sonya Matthews,

the chief housing officer, described how the institution's values and priorities became the foundation for MSU's residential curriculum. Excerpts from documents, such as strategic planning documents, reflected how the departmental goals were aligned with that of the division of academic affairs and the institution. Examples of how some language changed, for example names of departmental committees, were included to feature changes based on the curricular values of the institution and residential curriculum approach.

In the second section, *Organizational investment and new tools*, data illustrated how the philosophies and selected resources changed with adopting the residential curriculum approach. Residence Life professional and graduate staff, with an external consultant as a facilitator, crafted the Educational Priority statement, or the mission statement, for the department's philosophies and practices based on the curricular approach to residential education. Residence Life professional and graduate staff created new organizational tools, with concepts aligned from institutional values, for professional, graduate, and student staff to implement the residential curriculum approach. The Residential Curriculum Playbook (RCP) was the culminating product of resources, and it included components related to assessment. The monthly assessment template was described as a new organizational tool. Both the RCP and the assessment tools undergirded much of the accounts from participants across the study and the documents from key informants.

Finally, data for *Focused commitment* were primarily shared by professional and graduate staff rather than by student staff and RHA student leaders. The student staff and RHA student leaders' comments were more reflective of what they perceived to be

positive and challenging in the transition, and representative data are included in subsequent portions of this chapter. In summary, the residential curriculum, as a change to philosophy and practice, provided a structure for MSU's department of residence life staff to design, facilitate, and assess student learning based on The 10EERC.

Researcher's Analysis and Reflection on Residential Curriculum as Focused Commitment

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations.

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations can be used to interpret this sub-theme of *Focused commitment*. The Structural Frame, commonly likened to "machines or factories" (p. 19), assumes organizations have goals and objectives. In this case study, the Structural Frame is reflected in the departmental strategic plan, the Educational Priority Statement (EPS), and new organizational tools such as the RCP, lesson plans, and assessment documents. These resources served as standards by which expectations were communicated to staff for the priority of operationalizing the residential curriculum approach. The roles of professional and graduate staff in creating the EPS, lesson plans, and other resources reflected the Human Resources Frame, or an engagement of human skills both for the tangible products and to provide human beings with the opportunity to contribute and develop skills. The distinction in staff roles, as student staff and RHA student leaders reported not having a role in resource development, also represents the Human Resources Frame; in this context, human capital was not maximized for the benefit of organizational goals. Additionally, the diverse backgrounds and experiences of my participants served as a reminder that some participants have committed their professional careers to residential education while some, such as graduate and student staff, may view their graduate assistantship or

leadership role as a means to an end, financially or otherwise. The Mini RCIs, for example, were designed as shared learning experiences for the staff. Human nature is such that staff will likely be more invested in the output when they have been involved from the onset of developing ideas and products and relatedly, when staff feel competent in performing their job's functions. The introduction of an external consultant to facilitate the Mini RCIs reflected the Political Frame, or an external influence on the organization that had an intended benefit; to help Matthews' staff learn about the residential curriculum approach from an expert other than herself. The assessment tools were political tools for communication and accountability per the strategic plan, expectations from MSU's President Smiley, Dr. Blair, students, parents, taxpayers (particularly because MSU is a public institution), and other constituents. The Symbolic Frame, likened to a "theater or museum" (p. 19), emphasizes the notion of culture. Culture is described as the glue that holds organizations together and unites human beings towards shared values and beliefs. Symbols and artifacts are tools to help human beings have a sense of predictability and to anchor hope and faith (Bolman & Deal, 2014). The Symbolic Frame was evident from the perspective that the residential curriculum approach, aligned with a national association's efforts, represented the priorities, values, and "culture in action." The residential curriculum was intended to serve as a unifying force within the organization towards the express purpose of enhancing students' learning and development while contributing to institutional priorities, such as student retention. Additionally, the numerous documents I received were organizational artifacts, or, per the Symbolic Frame, important elements of MSU's culture when adopting the residential curriculum approach.

Several of Bolman and Deal's (2014) Frames were dually relevant, or "at play" in any given scenario, to the changes associated with MSU's Department of Residence Life when adopting the residential curriculum approach. I provided examples of how the frames can be viewed together for two examples. First, the Mini RCIs represent all four frames. The "archeological dig" activity to create the EPS, which was conducted with staff at levels of the organization, was facilitated with institutional goals, values, and documents (Structural Frame). The human capital (Human Resources) of the organization was both required, yet encouraged, to learn about the residential curriculum approach from an external consultant (Political Frame), and the application of institutional values and priorities because the department reports through Academic Affairs, where there are cultures and norms associated with higher education and college-level learning. For the Symbolic Frame, the "archaeological dig" activity, for example, is a way to nurture the culture toward a common mission, to integrate the values of the institution and department into the organization's thoughts, practices, and artifacts. The second example for how the frames can be viewed collectively relates to the RCP. For the Structural Frame, the RCP provides specific, consistent details via lesson plans that include goals, expectations, and procedures. The RCP was designed to fit MSU's organization based on the institutional values, goals, and priorities. The Human Resources frame is evident in that the staff has tools to perform their jobs, some staff's time and talents made the final product possible, and staff now has ways to send and receive communication within the department (assessment and feedback). Politically, as Matthews mentioned, the RCP was shared with stakeholders in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, regionally, and nationally to communicate MSU's commitment to

student learning, retention, and development. The Symbolic frame is evident in that the RCP is an artifact of the organization by which the organization's culture is evident to insiders and outsiders. Moreover, Bolman and Deal (2014) assert that there are multiple frames by which events can be interpreted, and it is often productive to "re-frame" based on a myriad of factors.

Insights for professional practice.

Change is a familiar concept in organizations and society at large. Typically, there is an impetus for change. In this case, Matthews was the first external director to MSU's Department of Housing in over 40 years. Dr. Blair cited that Matthews was an attractive candidate based on her experience with residential curriculum, among other skills and experiences. In her first year, 2013, Matthews initiated steps towards developing the residential curriculum approach by sending a delegation to ACPA's annual RCI. The reality is that in most university housing organizations, no person will remain in a position, such as a chief housing officer, longer than the existence of the organization. Similarly, changes in senior administration, either staffing or beliefs, and external pressures, such as competition with private developers, may serve as an impetus for initiating change in a university housing department. While MSU's Department of Residence Life reports through Academic Affairs, the first of the 10EERC (directly connected to the institution) is achievable regardless of institutional size, type, or reporting structure.

Findings from this case study relate to literature included in Chapter 2 beyond Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations. For example, Senge's (1990) concept of mental models, or, "deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even

pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action"

is foundational to the residential curriculum approach. Residence life staff must view

themselves as educators and agents of an institutional mission. In the case of MSU,

participants had varying educational and practical backgrounds, and everyone had

perspective regarding their experiences within the organization. Additionally,

participants had diverse exposure to concepts such as student learning, retention, learning

outcomes, and assessment. Thus, Matthews operationalized her vision of adopting the

curricular approach with specific actions such as bringing together the professional and

graduate staff for Mini RCIs, or shared learning experiences. Senge (1990) described

learning organizations as:

> organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results
>
> they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured,
>
> where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning
>
> how to learn together. (p. 3)

While I interpreted the Mini RCIs, creation of the EPS, RCP, and assessment resources as

being intentional towards the commitment of the residential curriculum approach, I

question why students and student leaders were not invited to participate in those events.

This question lends perspective on the sixth of The 10EERC, which states, "Student staff

members play key roles but are not the educational experts." Often, I believe this sixth

Element is criticized by some as implying student staff do not have knowledge and skills

to contribute to vision or "higher order" priorities within a department. I assert, to the

contrary, that all members of the organization have valuable perspective. In the case of

MSU's adoption of the residential curriculum, perhaps involving selected student staff

and RHA leaders could have alleviated some of the concerns represented in the second theme of the study about students' perception of hierarchy and "top-down processes." Why wouldn't professionals talk with our student staff and student leaders about institutional values and departmental priorities? Doing so can benefit student staff's performance in our organizations and can invest in their knowledge and competencies for future employment and/or civic engagement. An opportunity for ACPA's RCI would be to increase formal dialogue about engaging student staff in the curricular approach to residential education. Topics to explore may include how to effectively train student staff and student leaders on institutional values, priorities, and goals and how these translate to philosophies, resources, and efforts within a department of residence life. We can start integrating this knowledge into conversations, trainings, and development opportunities with our student staff and student leaders effective immediately. Ultimately, there are multiple reasons that institutions cannot send all residence life staff to an annual ACPA RCI in any given year, or send a team in full to one or more RCIs. The need for campus coverage and the registration and travel expenses are just two reasons. Thus, hosting a "Mini RCI" can provide the environment for a full residence life staff to immerse in learning about The 10EERC and begin the art of crafting a residential curriculum to the mission, values, and priorities of the institution and department of residence life. Additionally, an on-site Mini RCI lends the opportunity to invite campus partners (as MSU staff invited Student Affairs partners because the department reports through Academic Affairs) and possibly selected student leaders, such as a RHA executive board leaders and student staff.

In regards to physical artifacts in the organization, there were several documents available for the residential curriculum, unlike the sole document that was available for the previous sub-theme on past approaches to residential education prior to adopting the residential curriculum. I believe representing selected documents pertaining to MSU's residential curriculum can help legitimize, or show the department's adherence to The 10EERC. A contrast would be that MSU would refer to their efforts as a residential curriculum when in actuality, absence of such documents could indicate more of a traditional programming approach or other model. I acknowledge this interpretation does not consider how staff are held accountable to executing the residential curriculum resources, nor does this insight consider when students' learning is enhanced with the residential curriculum approach. Additionally, it is possible that certain documents do exist in the organization, but they may not have been organized in such a way as to be easily accessible or perceived as relevant. This is a point to ponder when examining organizational culture. In 10 years from my visit to MSU, would these and other seminal documents be accessible within the organization? Would this matter for the organization's history and culture? Would new leadership, or others in the organization, benefit from understanding past philosophies or efforts within the organization? These are some questions for any departmental leader to consider, regardless of functional unit within or beyond the field of student affairs.

Beyond housing and residence life departments, the tenets of the residential curriculum approach have potential value to all functional areas of student affairs. Data for this study featured how MSU's residential curriculum reflected MSU's core value of strategic planning. Every student affairs unit or program must operationalize, often in

annual reports, how philosophies and practices translate to the institutional mission. The

concepts of designing measurable and relevant learning outcomes, situating strategies to

execute outcomes, and an assessment plan to measure learning outcomes, are some

examples of the transferability of the curricular approach beyond housing and residence

life. As more institutions adopt the residential curriculum approach, or divisions of

student affairs adopt curricular approaches to beyond-the-classroom learning, findings

from this study and others may be valuable as points to consider.

Researcher's reflection on residential curriculum as focused commitment.

Despite a "soft" launch during the previous year, fall, 2015, marked the full

launch according to Matthews, Thompson, and several other participants. One of my first

analytic memos (Saldaña, 2013) during data collection focused on the fact that MSU staff

were in the early stages of implementing the full residential curriculum. I was both

excited to learn what changed, what my participants perceived as positive and

challenging, and how residence life staff characterized the experience of adopting the

residential curriculum. My writings grounded me in worrying that I was there too early,

only six weeks into the full launch. I realized that I needed to remind myself of the

definition of the word "adopt." I was, in certain thoughts, taking the notion too literally.

I later recognized that adopting a new approach is often not an immediate action, rather it

is a process. In our interview, Lance used the phrase, "during the formative years of the

residential curriculum." He referred to MSU having a new chief housing officer in 2013,

various competing priorities within the department, and the development of the

residential curriculum. Lance's and others' accounts, along with my reflections, served

as reminder that I must do my best to distinguish data on specifics of the residential

curriculum; recognizing organizational changes are not isolated in time, development, or execution.

I was acutely aware of my positionality when collecting, coding, and analyzing these data. As an undergraduate student leader and resident advisor, I did not think about institutional outcomes or even student learning. Sure, I felt connected to my residence life department, mostly through my relationships with my peer student staff and hall director, but my priority/goal was ultimately to "help" my peers make friends and feel happy at school. I later learned the *why* behind this in my master's program coursework and have since advocated for this in my professional positions. As I shared in Chapter 3, I believe the residential curriculum approach is undergirded by the concept of intentionality. The 10EERC create a framework to execute educational intentions with the institutional and departmental mission, learning outcomes, learning goals, development theory and research, strategies to facilitate student learning, situated roles of staff, sequential learning, stakeholder involvement, review and critique, and assessment. I chose to name the sub-theme *Focused Commitment* rather than "*Intentionality*," as I believe "intentionality" has become a buzzword. I have a precise motive in the language I chose for the sub-theme. Based on my experiences as a student leader, resident advisor, graduate student, and professional residence life staff member, and observations of others around me over the years, I believe a master's-level professional and a student leader have diverse perspectives.

Thompson provided me copies of all three RCPs on my first day at the site. I flipped through the documents, initially telling myself, "Hilary, remember your study is about the organizational perspective on adopting the residential curriculum approach.

Resist the urge, as much as you can, to minimize "intellectual seduction" in trying to learn the ins- and –outs of MSU's residential curriculum." Despite being pleasantly overwhelmed by the amount of data I collected before, during, and after my visit to MSU, the topic of the RCP seemed to ground and reassure me that I was indeed learning about MSU's journey of adopting the residential curriculum approach. Interestingly, as all participants and data sources educated me on the RCP, I had no doubt that it would be important to share with my reader. I was pleased when I returned to the data months later, after member checking and coding, and realized the topic of the RCP emerged as I conducted thematic analysis (Glesne, 2011; Saldaña, 2013). I was particularly intrigued when I determined that the most saturated data points, which became the two overarching themes of the study, aligned with the aforementioned message of the RCP welcome letter.

Finally, I had a revelation during my site visit when I went to develop the film in the disposable cameras for the photo activity. I was in eager anticipation all week to see the photos and hear about my participants' experiences both in what photos they captured and what those photos meant to them. I learned, upon delivering the cameras at a local retail store that same-day processing was no longer available for disposable cameras. Fortunately, I was able to find a local photography shop where the film could be processed for the following day's focus group. That night, I wrote an analytic memo (Saldaña, 2013) titled, "*Picture This! The Disposable Camera Saga,"* in which I wrote about parallels to adopting the residential curriculum approach. First, using disposable cameras was a classic example of "doing what we've always done for years!" Second, my experience of eagerly anticipating the photos and then encountering what was, I

realized, a temporary barrier to development, reflected the emotions involved in adopting

change. Some of those emotions included: excitement, anticipation, regret, hope, fear,

patience, and trust. Finally, that photo development saga reminded me, much like the

sentiment shared at ACPA RCI, "it's not revolutionary, it's obvious." In my case, the

advent of iPhones and other modern technologies could have been an option in contrast to

what I *thought* would work best given my goals.

Theme 2 (Part I): Gains of Structure

The second research question for the study addressed participants' perceptions of

adopting a residential curriculum approach. The first sub-question was, "What did the

participants perceive as a positive in this transition?" and the second sub-question was

"What did participants perceive as challenging in this transition?" Data to answer these

questions was identified as the second theme for the study, *Gains and pains of structure*

in MSU's Department of Residence Life. This portion of the findings chapter focuses on

the participants' positive perceptions of transitioning to the residential curriculum

approach. Findings reflected that the organizational tools featured in the data for the first

research question were mechanisms for residence life staff to operationalize MSU's EPS

and implement a residential curriculum.

Data to address this research question most aligned with the positive aspects of

structure provided by the residential curriculum tools. All participants described, and

other data sources reflected, the Residential Curriculum Playbook (RCP) directly, as the

most commonly referenced new organizational tool, or its contents as previously outlined

in theme one. However, some data represented in this theme did not explicitly relate to

the RCP but shared the commonality of pertaining to how residence life staff and student

leaders perceived positive aspects of structure when adopting the tenets of the residential

curriculum approach and the organizational tools, some of which were included in the

RCP as the master resource, or content, for MSU's residential curriculum. Data on

communication channels, participant's "sense of voice," and staff dynamics were also

reflective of this theme. In my coding and analysis, I interpreted data from all data

sources which were relevant to this second theme; thus, I claim data triangulation (Yin,

2014) was achieved. Additionally, my participants' accounts reached saturation

(Saldaña, 2013).

One of Ell's photos, and his description, poignantly addresses the nature of

Theme 2, *Pains and gains of structure in MSU's Department of Residence Life*. Ell

captured a photo of a foundation (Figure 4.9) to share an analogy that I interpreted as

representing the second theme of the study. He explained, in the focus group and during

a phone call for member checking, that Figure 4.9 depicts what it was like for the

organization to navigate the process of adopting the residential curriculum approach. Ell

described the picture and the journey of adopting the residential curriculum with the

following quote:

> This picture right here, wonderful fountain construction that's going on right now.
>
> When looking at it you can see the map. And reflecting that into… [MSU's
>
> Department of Residence Life], like being under construction but still having a
>
> little map of where we would like to go and where we plan on being. So that was
>
> the kind of the things I was looking at. Here in the picture where you see the
>
> smooth gravel and a rough patch, I think that speaks for itself. [laughs] The
>
> smooth…even though the smooth still has some of the kicked-up rocks from the

rough patch, that was tough. Doing RCI [referring to residential curriculum at MSU] was tough. I guess I would be the first to say, because y'all wasn't here, all of the extra meetings and things of that nature and what was going on at the time. As you can see, I got more of the smooth patch in the picture than the actual rough patch, but you can still see some of the rocks still kicked up on the smooth patch. So, that's what that picture kind of identifies. All right, so then, as you can see, it gets a little bit greener. [laughs] Don't be crying. [referring to a fellow participant in the focus group] We are in the green-ish area now.

Figure 4.9: Fountain under Construction

The foundation, featured in the photo, is near the academic resource center that was featured in Figure 4.1 (Academic Resource Center) in the first theme for the study. Fellow participants' accounts, and the data from documents and other photos, reflect that adopting the residential curriculum approach entailed gains and pains for the organization, staff, and RHA student leaders.

The findings for the second research question represent the "green" and "smooth path" that Ell's photo depicted. The data for this sub-theme, *Perceived positives of structure and standards*, includes three categories: (1) Departmental direction, (2) Strategic structure, and (3) Sense of voice.

Departmental Direction

The notion of having newfound direction in the department of residence life, synonymous with structure, was cited as a positive in transitioning to the residential curriculum approach. These sentiments were reflected most by professional and graduate staff and RHA student leaders. Additionally, some photos, and one document, captured the notion of a new departmental direction. Following are excerpts from participants and other data sources to describe how they perceived that the residential curriculum approach helped to foster departmental direction.

Most of the professional staff, during interviews, explained that past initiatives in the department typically did not last longer than a year and that the culture was stagnant prior to adopting the residential curriculum approach. For example, Benedict shared his belief that the department had a change in direction from previous efforts when stating, "I think I'm probably a better judge than most because I've seen, for the past eight years, everything. I think this is probably the first time we've actually had a solid direction." He added to this idea and captured it as a positive aspect of adopting the residential curriculum when describing:

> I was here when we started the RCI [referring to MSU's residential curriculum], and we're still doing it. I don't think anything as far as a departmental goal or any sort of curriculum has ever lasted more than about a year. So the fact that we are

still doing it and you know, it sits in its various forms, I think having that

direction finally is definitely a positive thing.

Benedict proceeded to explain, "I do think this department probably wasn't too proud of

itself a couple years ago. You know, yes, we did the job. Yes, we put heads on pillows

and everything. It wasn't necessarily a sense of pride as a department. Ell, who generally

spoke about challenges of the residential curriculum approach, shared the following

positive perception:

> Reaching our goal, seeing and reaching it. I'll be the first to say that for years we
>
> have, as a department …been stagnant. And now moving and doing something
>
> that's beneficial is what, I would say, we have completed. As a grad, I felt, there's
>
> always room for improvement. And I felt that we were just doing things to do
>
> things…in regards to…and there are only so many programming models that you
>
> have. Being able to step away … get a new, fresh breath of air with a new director
>
> and go this route, is where I would say we're starting to move.

Matthews spoke about a photo (Figure 4.10) that she captured when thinking about Mini

RCI 2015 and the department's reputation (prior to her arrival in 2013) or not

maintaining momentum with efforts.

> ...on the other side is the timeline that I wrote down, because I think one of our
>
> roadblocks is that, as a department, we would often get really excited about a new
>
> initiative and then three months later, after we had dumped a ton of work on our
>
> folks, we would say, "Oh, thanks for doing all this work. We're going to do this
>
> instead." And so there was, I think, still after a year, some disbelief that this was
>
> going to be what we were going to do. And, and so for me, standing up there and

saying, "This is my commitment. This is what we're going to accomplish this semester. This is the timeline we're going to do it, and we're going to follow through on getting it done," that was an important, I think, symbol for us as a department. And we might have been a week or two behind here or there, but we pretty much made these deadlines so that we could get the book done over the summer.
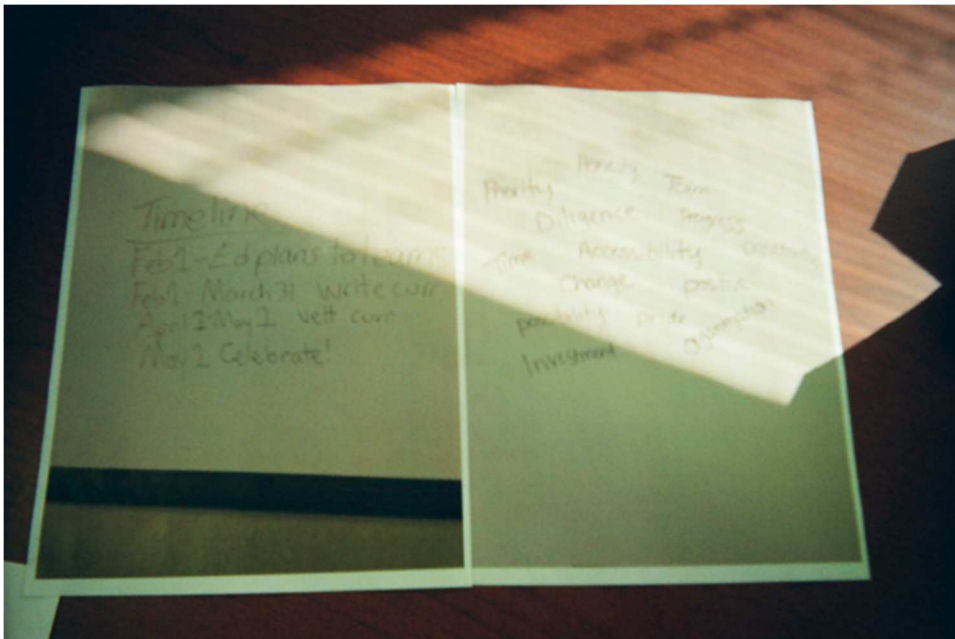

Figure 4.10: Staff Commitments and Timeline at MSU's Mini RCI

I interpreted Matthews' photo as representing newfound departmental direction. Steve shared a point that complemented Matthews' vision for committing to the curricular approach to residential education, and he explained that the residential curriculum approach is "an innovative practice nationally" and that he was glad MSU was following the approach. In speaking about positives of adopting the residential curriculum approach to further the department's mission he stated, "We are going to try to do something that's nationally being adopted at a quick rate. So, I really enjoy that." He

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added, "We're trying to think harder about what we want to do with our students. How we want to…how we want to plan out things to help them succeed." Finally, Steve shared, "We're not just another department that houses people." These accounts, and others, provided a contrast perspective to what most believed was different in the organization and positive with adopting the residential curriculum approach.

Participants' perceptions of this newfound direction in the department's culture were reflected in comments about attempts to unify efforts in the organization. Jackie, a RHA student leader stated, "Res Life is more involved in RHA and students' lives." Jamie, a RHA student leader, explained, "I just think that's the underlying curriculum in the minds of our professionals with their advising style." Similarly, she shared that student staff seem to be more involved in residents lives, and she explained, "Before it was like, "We're putting on this fun program." Now they're focused, but they don't tell the students that's what's happening." Jamie concluded with stating, "They [residents] just see it as an interaction. I think that's kind of cool." Beth, another RHA student leader, articulated that she would not be surprised if RHA became more integrated into the residential curriculum: "…RHA is such an integral part of Residential Life. I wouldn't be surprised if they are going to try to make curriculum a part of RHA and make it a departmental-wide thing." An unidentified female in the RHA student leader focus group stated, "I think it's [RHA] becoming more understood because RHA is built into the curriculum. They [student staff] see RHA in their curriculum." Related to hall councils, Talia, a RHA student leader, spoke positively about increased attention to hall council constitutions, "I also know on the hall council level that like they redid the hall council constitutions to make sure that students were being more intentional about what

they were doing, giving like students in hall council more guidelines." She contrasted this to the previous year, "Last year, from my personal hall council experience -- I don't know if it's a universal thing – like I never saw hall council constitution. It was kind of, "Do what you want to do." Carole, as one of the advisors of RHA during her tenure at MSU, shared the following about how the RHA student leaders' efforts were influenced with the residential curriculum, "RHA was able to better focus some of the things that they did instead of just saying let's just have a pizza party. So I think it gave them a little more direction and a little bit more solid footing." Weber, an assistant director, spoke about how adopting the residential curriculum approach helped redefine the staff's approach to educating upper-class students. She explained, based on her experience in the organization, and from insight from her staff, that, "We are redefining what living the apartment's community means." She went on to explain,

> And it's not you move off the traditional residence hall side of things, so you
> don't have to learn anything from us anymore, cause you're a junior. It's
> educating our staff on, "No, we want to continue to elevated opportunities for
> upperclassmen as well."

In summary, Taylor, a graduate hall coordinator, conveyed how the residential curriculum approach afforded direction for the department's culture:

> I believe we are changing the culture. We are creating a more inclusive and
> supportive environment for our students to succeed. We have looked at the
> student demographic at [MSU] and established the needs of our students. We
> have then looked at what we want our students to learn from living in the
> residence halls. We have shifted the way everyone in the department thinks. We

have moved from a "Make sure your residents are doing something to stay active and involved" to "we need to be intentional about how we are reaching our students and focus on what we want our students to learn from these interactions." Taylor went on to say that the residential curriculum refocused staff on executing the department's mission. She described, "I think at the beginning it brought us all together and allowed us to take a look at what the department is doing as a whole, revisit what our mission is, and make sure that we're all on the same track." Jae provided a summative quote to capture how some participants perceived that the residential curriculum approach provided direction in the department:

I think bigger picture, definitely for our department it's an organization thing... in terms of organizing, organizing our thoughts, organizing our materials. It's made a huge impact. And we're not always recreating the wheel. I have seen a lot of motivation with our staff because we have this stuff and we're not constantly…When you constantly recreate the wheel, there tends to be a lot of burnout.

As I learned his perspective as a member of the central leadership team, Jae's account of the benefits of adopting the residential curriculum approach was particularly insightful. His comments reminded me of the organizational resources I reviewed including, but not limited to, the RCP and feedback documents.

Thompson captured a photo that resembled this notion of the residential curriculum approach providing a common sense of purpose, and a focus on learning, within the department. She claimed that professional learning was not previously an emphasis in the organizational culture prior to adopting the residential curriculum

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approach. One of the photos she captured featured books (Figure 4.11), including, *35 Dumb Things Well-Intentioned People Say, The Strengths Finder, Students Helping Students*, and Thompson's results from the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI).

> I think this, to me, represents how our department in general shifted its focus to development… and to education. I wouldn't have had any of these books on my desk four years ago. The dedication to professional development wasn't there. It wasn't encouraged. In terms of continuing our own learning."

Figure 4.11: Books for a Culture of Learning

A final artifact for representative data on departmental direction is a document that Matthews shared and Thompson referenced in her interview. To help convey Matthews' beliefs to MSU's housing staff, she distributes annually to her departmental staff a document titled, "We Believe" (referenced in conversation as "Who We Are"). This document is featured in Appendix J of this dissertation. During member checking, Matthews explained that she discusses the document with her senior team and

coordinators of residence life, and these staff are able to tweak some language. She then

shares the document with: graduate hall coordinators, coordinators of residence life, and

the senior leadership team (assistant directors, associate directors, tech manager, and

central administrative assistants), and she mentioned that she believes the document was

verbally shared with the maintenance and custodial team and pieces summarized for

student staff. Matthews wrote, "I distribute during training each year and typically revisit

1-2 other times throughout the year to keep us focused on who we are aspiring to be as a

unit." When this document was first shared, in relation to developing the residential

curriculum, Matthews wrote:

> It was shared about the same time as we were working on our curriculum. There
>
> was a ton of change going on with the reorganization and the curriculum, morale
>
> was low, people were exhausted, and I needed to get back into focus regarding
>
> where I was trying to lead my team to. What were we aspiring to be and why was
>
> this important? What made us different from other res life programs, from who
>
> we were before I arrived, from where we were yesterday. It was my effort to
>
> create a roadmap for my leadership, and a vision that my team could get on board
>
> with. It was also to inspire, to develop a sense of tradition and symbols, and to
>
> create some boundaries and standards. It has served with all of that since I
>
> introduced it 2 or 2 ½ years ago.

In conclusion, professional and graduate staff, and most RHA student leaders,

described that the residential curriculum approach provided departmental direction.

However, the most common sentiment among the student staff, when asked about

positives of adopting the residential curriculum approach, centered on having standards

that most closely related to the RCP. Data to represent their accounts are included in the

following section of this chapter.

Departmental Direction: A Summary

The data for *Departmental direction*, as the first section for the sub-theme

Perceived positives of structure and standards, included participants' accounts from

when I asked about positives in transitioning to the residential curriculum approach. The

newfound departmental direction was synonymous with structure as data excerpts

featured testimonials and selected resources for how MSU residence life staff began to

operationalize the organizational tools described in the first theme of the study about

change. Some participants' explained that past initiatives in the department typically did

not last longer than a year and that the culture was stagnant prior to adopting the

residential curriculum approach. Others, particularly RHA student leaders, spoke about

the ways in which newfound department direction, based on adopting the residential

curriculum approach, unified efforts in the organization. For example, RHA student

leaders reported that there was increased awareness of RHA's mission and priorities.

Finally, others stated a positive perception that adopting the residential curriculum

approach contributed to unity and cohesiveness around the notion of learning, for

students and staff in the department.

Researcher's Analysis and Reflection on Departmental Direction

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations.

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations can be used to interpret

the data for *Departmental direction*. The Structural Frame most notably addresses

Matthews' timeline, as featured in a photo, and participants' perceptions that there are

clear goals and objectives in the organization. Change within the organization, previously described for the first research question, were perceived by some participants as contributing to personal and collective performance. The Human Resources frame can be interpreted by the fact that staff in the organization feel a connection or affinity with the organization and feel valued because of opportunities to learn and contribute. The organization benefits by having staff who perceive a positive direction for their contributions. The Political Frame is relevant because Matthews and her staff are held accountable by Blair, President Smiley, and others, to contribute to institutional priorities including, but not limited to, student learning and retention. The Symbolic Frame is represented in the fact that some participants identified the residential curriculum approach as a new method to invest in the organizational culture. The organizational resources, for example, were reflective of priorities and values within the department.

Researcher's reflection on departmental direction.

I had to monitor my positionality carefully when coding and representing these data about the notion of departmental direction. Initially, I perceived this concept to be related more closely with the definition of intentionality, which was a component of the previous sub-theme *Focused commitment*. However, upon frequent reflection, I recognized my obligation to stay close to my participants' accounts. They spoke about departmental direction as a positive aspect of adopting the residential curriculum, which aligned with an element of the second research question (participants' positive perceptions).

Strategic Structure and Standards

The second category for the sub-theme, *Perceived positives of structure and standards*, includes data excerpts to represent participants' positive perceptions, and how I interpreted some documents and photos as positive, regarding new standards and structures associated with MSU's Department of Residence Life's transition to the residential curriculum approach. These data described how residence life staff navigated new structures while implementing, and developing plans to assess the impact of, the residential curriculum for student learning.

Jae, an assistant director and member of the central leadership team, offered a quote I interpreted to be summative of subsequent data for this sub-theme. He articulated that the residential curriculum approach, and written resources, provided structure for residence life staff. When asked what was positive about transitioning to the residential curriculum, he said:

> We are in a day and age where individuals need structure. Student staff need structure. Our [graduate hall coordinators] and even our [coordinators of residence life] need structure. And so this is kind of spelling out a little bit more, I think, of, "These are some things that you should be doing. These are some trends that experts have identified, especially here at MSU, Hey, these are some things that individuals are going through at this point in time. Here are some tools. Here are some resources. Here are some programs. Here are some conversations to have with individuals to kind of combat some of those items. Here are some things that we can strategically put into place to help individuals grow because we

know where they're at, and we know where we want them to be. And here's kind

of that map to get them on that path.

Jae went on to share a similar sentiment about new student staff members in the

department: "The structure was something that the new staff really liked. Our millennial

student staff members want to know exactly what is expected of them. Taking a

curricular approach to what we do allows for that structure."

Finally, while student staff and student leaders were not directly involved with

MSU's Mini RCIs, described in data for research question one, data for research question

two, reflects how the values of the department and residential curriculum were translated

to the student staff and student leaders. Following are representative data excerpts with

examples from other participants and data sources.

Tangible resources for student staff.

The RCP, a new organizational tool, was a mechanism for communicating the

values of the department via structured resources. All participants spoke about, directly

or indirectly, and photos depicted, that the RCP provided structured guidance for

residence hall staff to implement residentially based learning experiences for students. In

fact, several participants referenced their positive perception of the RCP when I asked

"What did you perceive to be positive in transitioning to the residential curriculum

approach?" Following are representative data as examples.

Nearly all participants, at all levels, commented on how the RCP provided

positive structure and resources for the student staffs' efforts to foster residential

environments that were aligned with the residential curriculum approach. Katie, a

student staff member, regarded the RCP as a helpful resource in knowing, and having

access to, what information to deliver to her residents. She articulated, "I think what has been really positive about transitioning is *with* the structure it's been a lot easier to really know what they want me to get across to my first year students." Katie referenced the RCP when stating it makes it easier for her to know, "OK, educationally they want me to teach them this" and "...so with the transition and everything it gives just a lot more structure on what you need your first year students to really know to help them be successful." Jay, a student staff member, concurred, "I'm sure most of us can agree that the curriculum [RCP] has helped out…because I love it, especially at a glance, and it has week- by-week like what you should be focusing on in this particular week." He added, "Now that we can all be on the same ship and on the same page, we understand better. It's more of a structure now. I like it." In summary, Dylan, a student staff member, articulated that the RCP afforded helpful structure for himself and some of his friends on staff, and he expressed, "Most people who had been on staff before were excited that there was a little bit more structure and clarity on what exactly we were supposed to be doing with our jobs." He added, "I know that all my friends on staff were glad that they didn't have to scramble back and forth between emails to check and see what was due when, since the guide has all the due dates in it." Finally, Dylan concluded in this sentiment, "The [RCP] brought a more positive attitude to the whole staff as one big unit." Beth, a RHA student leader, articulated her perception that the RCP benefitted student staff, and that "a lot of student staff members adapted to it very well." She shared, "I think it kind of provides more focus as a whole. A [community advisor], like you say, has more focus where their bulletin board matches their program, which matches their res chats for the whole month." Further, Beth claimed, "There's that continuous

theme throughout the month, which isn't a challenge. It's kind of like a benefit." In

speaking about her experience last year as a RAA, she shared, "...it was really cool to

have those guidelines and have those purposes to talk to the residents. You learned a lot

more about your residents than you ever would have thought to otherwise."

Two student staff reported contrasting perceptions on the level of details for the

community advisor (CA) position versus the residential academic ambassador (RAA)

position. For example, Katie claimed the RCP provided more structure for CAs than

RAAs: "There are things like it [RCP] tells *[community advisors]* what to do for bulletin

boards, however there are no bulletin boards for [residential academic ambassadors]. She

added, "...it is more uniform, but some things still need to be worked out. I think it's a lot

more focused towards [community advisors] right now and *not* [residential academic

ambassadors] as much." On the contrary, Lloyd shared his perspective that the

residential curriculum helped clarify job expectations for RAAs, "I think the curriculum

has been able to really clarify, at least for [residential academic ambassadors], their job. I

can personally attest that last year we were held to standards that did not exist." He

added, "I and other [residential academic ambassadors] were faced with our jobs" and

"basically, saying, "You don't fulfill your roles." Our response was, "How can you

expect us to fulfill anything that isn't given to us?" Additionally, Lloyd stated, "If we

don't know what we're supposed to meet, how can we actually meet that standard?" In

summary, Lloyd continued, "I think that the curriculum has actually helped all of us, as

[RAAs] at least, realize what our role is, how we can do it, and what we need to do to

stay in our positions and do it well." Some professional staff, such as Ell, Taylor, and

Hunter, spoke about how RAAs were required to host "outreach hours" where they would

be available in their community, but now RAAs host "study initiatives" to be promote time on task with academics in the residence halls.

The majority of professional and graduate staff shared the above sentiments from the students. For example, Benedict, a coordinator of residence life, in speaking about student staff, described, "What is nice about the curriculum itself is it's always there. By that I mean we've given all the student staff a copy of it." He emphasized, "I definitely think having something physical that they can look at and is tangible to them makes a *huge* difference." Ell said, "I think the benefit is in regards to our student staff. It saves them that time of not having to think." Taylor, a graduate hall coordinator, asserted, "The guides are positive in a way that many of our student staff members like to plan. They need a detailed outline of what needs to be done so they can plan ahead and stay organized." She offered the example, "Many of the staff need to know what they need to do in September in order to be productive in December. The [RCP] means all staff members have the information and are able to move along at their own pace." Steve, a residence life coordinator, and Logan, a graduate hall coordinator, articulated that the residential curriculum resources provided student staff with structure to have one-on-one conversations with residents. For example, Logan stated, "We've given them guidelines of, "During this month of October, this is what we really want you to focus on when you have discussions with them." He added that students could talk about general topics such as academics and clubs, but he concluded with this point about providing specific prompts for these interactions, "Giving them those clear expectations has helped them to be more intentional as well." In terms of helping student staff feel prepared for this position, Logan offered the following about the RCP, "Definitely from student staff

perspective and talking to them, they feel much more prepared this year, especially giving them the [RCP]. They know what is expected of them. They know when they need to be doing things." He added that returning student staff have had a "better experience this year than last year," and he reported, "...now that we've kind of solidified and created some things that allow them to have those interactions with them." Finally, Rellen reported, "Another thing that is great about the book is, just like I was talking about earlier, so the standards…if you look at the lesson plans, the lesson plans are detailed." When speaking about the student staff she claimed, "The staff appreciate, and they know the hard work that went into that. And in a meeting we talked about the curriculum, and we allowed them to provide open feedback....And they all love the idea of having the book."

Lance's photo (Figure 4.12) captured the sentiments of several professional and graduate staff. According to Lance, selected photos feature "staff being really happy that we have something tangible."

Figure 4.12: Staff Excitement for RCP

RCP structure promoted RHA.

Despite not having received a copy of the RCP, the RHA student leaders' accounts conveyed positive sentiments that the residential curriculum, through expectations for residence life staff (including student staff), provided structured expectations that contributed to an increased student participation in hall councils and more awareness of RHA in the residence hall communities. Keith initiated this topic during the focus group by stating, "I know now a requirement of them [student staff] is that they pick floor reps for their hall council...from what we recently heard, it sounds like that's going relatively well." Talia concurred that floor representatives were being implemented this year versus last year when she expressed that general board meetings consisted of three people and the executive board, "...The idea of making sure that every floor has representation and making sure that students get a better say in what's happening within RHA and their hall councils, through the curriculum has been really great." She also reported a perception that more upper class students were participating in RHA this year than in the past, "Then this year, because of the curriculum, making sure every hall was participating, our three major like upperclassmen halls have full exec boards in their hall council, have been doing programs, and that's something that's really helpful with the [RCP]." Beth spoke about being pleased that more upper class students were involved in hall council, and she stated, "I know that my year on RHA as [executive board position], it was a struggle to keep those upperclassmen halls with like having a full exec board. At times, I think, they [upper class halls] were the most inactive hall councils." She added that with the residential curriculum, "...through RHA, developing on campus a lot more, they've seen the benefit and impact of that. So it's really cool to

hear that you guys are having like full exec boards on your upperclassmen halls, because that's like unheard of." Rosa concurred with the aforementioned sentiments of her peers, "From an RHA perspective, the curriculum has been great because it has pushed for a greater involvement in hall councils and RHA as a whole." Also, Rosa spoke about her perceptions regarding the expectations from graduate hall coordinators, who supervise student staff, "I think that it's mostly built in… regarding hall councils more than maybe RHA because now [RAAs], and [CAs], and [GAs] have to support hall councils more than they have in past years, I think." She added, "...they're being more held accountable to making sure that their hall council is putting on programs every month and giving community service opportunities to the halls." She concluded by offering, "So I think they're supporting the hall council so that the hall councils can then support RHA as an organization." Jackie provided a summative quote about how the RCP resources promoted students' attendance at RHA meetings, "I think the biggest thing that I would add is that, because of the curriculum, there are more, not student staff members, as we've already addressed, but students involved with RHA." She and her peers conveyed outward enthusiasm when Jackie stated:

> I know I haven't seen the room as full of students, like our general council room, than I have the past two meetings we had. All the seats are taken, and people are actually participating in discussion. I do think that's part of the curriculum because of the encouragement of RHA. I think that's a good benefit of it.
>
> The student staff participants did not address the comment of hall councils or

RHA. However, some professional staff spoke about perceived positives for how the residential curriculum provides positive structure for student leaders and RHA as an

organization. Steve shared about taking initiative to create a lesson plan for hall councils,

"Hall council is our best chance to have focus groups all the time, so why not have a

good one for that?" Ell, a coordinator of residence life, conveyed, in terms of advising

residential hall council student leaders, that there was more focus, within the department,

on hall councils than in the past, and when asked why he shared, "I would say it has to do

with the curriculum. It is structured now [referenced advisor books], which I

enjoy…about it." Carole, who previously served as an advisor for RHA, explained that

RHA student leaders adapted to the residential curriculum by using learning outcomes to

develop a cultural awareness program. She contrasted the student leaders' use of learning

outcomes with previous efforts of "just saying let's have a pizza party," and "Oh, we'll

just hang out and be friends with everyone." Finally, Weber, assistant director of

residential leadership initiatives, who joined the organization in August, 2015, explained

that she was made aware of past conversations about integrating RHA details such as

dates and deadlines within the residential curriculum but that there is more work to be

done in this area for the future.

Overall, the student staff members' and selected RHA student leaders'

descriptions conveyed that the RCP, as a resource, provided structure and standards for

student staff while adopting the residential curriculum. Jackie, a RHA student leader,

succinctly summarized these sentiments by offering, "Some positives are that the

curriculum allows the students across campus to get access to the same information at the

same time and it gives structure to how the halls are ran." This goal of providing

consistent resources was represented in some accounts about broader residence life

operations.

Structure for residence life operations.

Some participants mentioned that the structured resources for the residential curriculum inspired the development of processes or resources in the broader residence life unit. For example, when I asked what has been positive when adopting the residential curriculum approach, Logan stated, "I think that we have solidified…a lot of procedures that happen within Res Life." He described resources related to helping students navigate roommate conflicts. He said, "so it's giving us a lot clearer guidelines of what to do and who is supposed to be handling it so we can be a lot more effective." Steve talked about taking the initiative to develop tools to help students navigate roommate relationships, and some of these resources included lesson plans and flow charts for ways to address roommate conflicts. Capturing the sentiments that he and others shared about trying to uphold the tenets of the residential curriculum approach, while navigating every day realities or needs in residence hall communities, he said:

> Just when we're creating a culture of writing things and everything does have a
>
> structure, our processes effect what we try to do in the hall. So when we don't
>
> have resources, we say, "Well, we can't do this program if we don't have this
>
> resource," and then, "OK, well, let's get this resource." Or, you know, if the
>
> [coordinators of residence life] have always said – and, true, there is a curriculum
>
> component to the roommate moves and all that – "We have roommate conflicts.
>
> We're moving people all the time. How are we going to do this curriculum too?"

Lance captured a photo of the lesson plans for roommate conversations (Figure 4.13), and he stated:

Two of the biggest things I think we are benefiting from now is the lesson plan, so

it's a snapshot of one of the lesson plans in the book and a snapshot of the

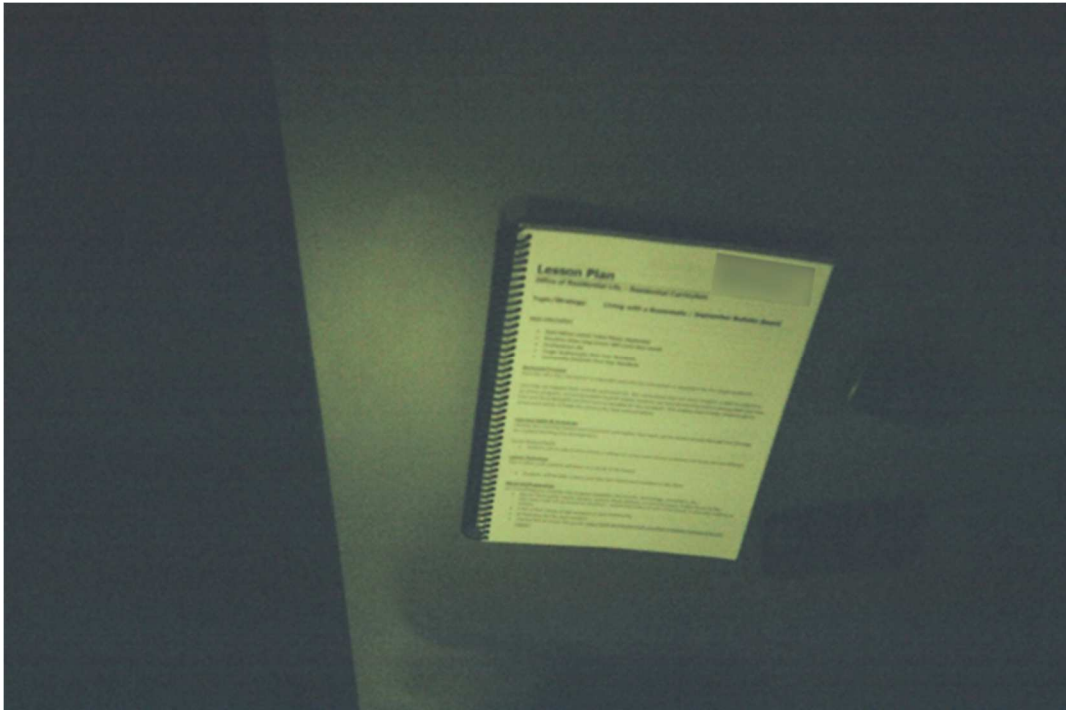roommate, like conversation piece that they have in there.

Figure 4.13: Lesson Plans for Roommate Relationships

Thompson, shared a similar sentiment to Logan and Steve on the topic of examining

procedures based on the curricular approach to residential education:

I don't really know if this was because of the curriculum or just because we

hadn't written things down in ages. It was needed for us to move forward. Moving

to a curricular approach also gave us good reason to critically look at things. I will

say one of the things we looked at is how we handle roommate conflicts and

moving people. We created a more laid out step-by-step lesson plan. The overall

approach of writing lessons plans helped us to look at everything we do and try to

create step-by-step instructions instead of just expecting people to use their gut or

instincts. This was also helpful because what we assume is common sense isn't these days for our student staff, graduate staff, and even some of our professional staff.

Thompson's comments illustrate how changes were beneficial given variation in staff's competency. As for an additional example of change within the department, Beth, a RHA student leader, and Logan, a graduate hall coordinator, articulated that the residential curriculum learning outcomes and concepts, influenced the development of procedures for residence hall front desk operations. Beth described her experience as a desk manager:

Another area that residential curriculum, I think, has affected that I've seen this year is actually a new position we have within [Residence Life] called desk managers, which is what I am this year. And I think not a lot of people realize it, but residential curriculum actually affects them too. Not in that we have residential curriculum but we are also a part of making residential curriculum function.

So like I do a lot of behind-the-scenes work at the front desk of the halls, working with [graduate hall coordinators] and student staff members in that way. It [residential curriculum] puts deadlines on people other than student staff members as well. I have deadlines I have to meet in order for the [community advisors] to be able to meet their deadlines. It's menial tasks, but it like adds up. I think residential curriculum trickles all the way down to even the desk workers in the residence halls and the desk managers in the residence halls. That inadvertently affects them as well.

Hunter, a graduate hall coordinator, explained there was an increase in staff being more explicit about intended learning outcomes. Regarding residence life professional and graduate staff weekly professional development meetings, he said:

> We make sure that when we have professional development you know clearly in the first PowerPoint we're doing…Like when we talked about professional conferences and all those things, and how to apply for our development funds, the first or second slide had like learning goals and outcomes for this two-hour block of professional development.

Logan concurred with Hunter's statement about using learning outcomes in departmental meetings. Logan shared varied examples of how he believes the tenets of the residential curriculum have influenced the creation of resources and processes within the residence life unit. During our interview, Logan stated, "I think as a whole…, not even really focused on the curriculum itself, but in the way of adopting the curriculum, we have become more intentional with everything that we do." Logan specifically mentioned a change to the departmental approach to front desk operations based on adopting the residential curriculum approach:

> I know when we were first creating some of the new procedures, we really wanted to incorporate those curriculum outcomes, so making it so that desk managers and desk workers aren't just working the desk but they're also gaining skills and they're also growing as a leader from these positions. And so we really wanted it to be more intentional, and I think that is part of the curriculum and making things more intentional with the learning that's happening.

Finally, in addition to providing standards for the residential communities, and hall staff, the positives of structured resources was present in some templates Matthews shared for individual meetings (called 1:1s) and selected departmental leadership staff meetings. During my visit, Thompson stated in passing that these templates were a way to help promote structure and consistency in meeting topics. Benedict explained that staff uploaded updates and announcements via "Base Camp" technology prior to departmental leadership meetings so that more time could be devoted to discussing the residential curriculum. I interpreted these resources as a way the professional and graduate staff modeled the structure of the residential curriculum in their practice; thus the residential curriculum was intended to influence staff as well as students.

In conclusion, all participants cited the RCP as a helpful tool for providing structure and guidance for how to execute the residential curriculum approach at MSU. Jim presented a photo of lesson plans for bulletin boards (Figure 4.14), and he explained that the lesson plans included specific learning outcomes to sequence student learning:

> That's what I'm taking note of in this picture, making sure that the information that we're looking at for the learning outcomes, that the learning outcomes that we're using for bulletin boards are actually matching what we want for the students to learn at that level. So, kind of sequencing our freshmen, sophomore, and upper class experiences…. We want to make sure that, at the freshmen level, sure, they're going to have some basic knowledge if they need to move up to an intermediate a little bit. We'll have that kind of information or be able to share that information with them. Sophomore level is going to be more intermediate

information. And then the advanced level will be the upperclassmen information. That's what this other picture is right here.
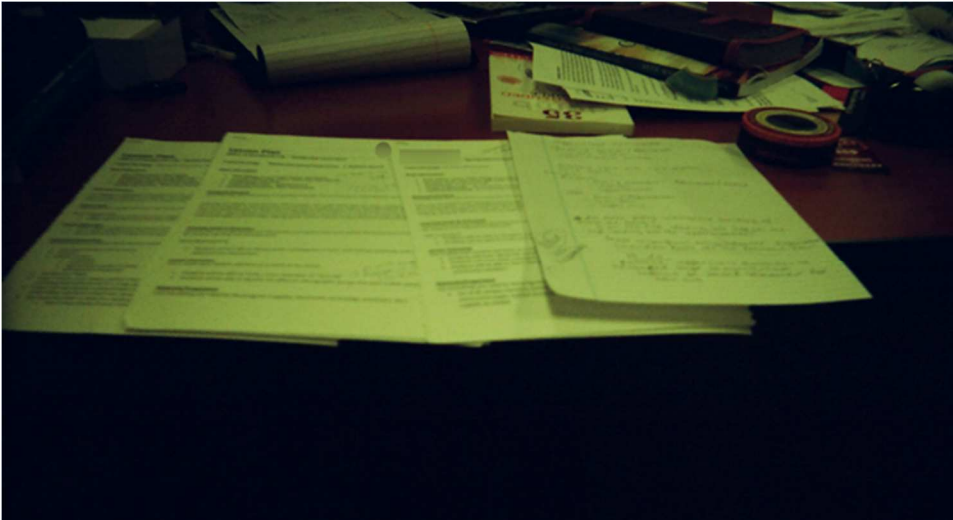

Figure 4.14: Lesson Plans for Bulletin Boards

LaShay captured a photo that I interpreted as summarizing the data excerpts for this theme and Jim's photo about providing structure to promote student learning. LaShay described Figures 4.15 and 4.16, and how student staff were able to be creative in designing bulletin boards with a designated "broad topic." She said:

I took pictures of those because, even though we were given such a broad topic

for that...the particular month, my staff did a really good job of breaking those

apart and really being able to pull in different kinds of information that our

different students have, because we have upperclassmen students. They could be

sophomores, juniors, seniors, whatever it may be. So it was interesting to see

those.

Figure 4.15: Student Staff's Bulletin Board 1
"Be" - encouraging our students to be authentic and be themselves and to really explore who they are.

Figure 4.16: Student Staff's Bulletin Board 2
"Tree w/Healthy Eating" - encouraging our students to adopt some new behaviors while living here

This concludes the selected data excerpts for how some participants mentioned that the structured resources for the residential curriculum inspired the development of processes or resources in the broader residence life unit. Following is a summary of *Perceived positives of structures and standards* and my analysis and reflection.

Strategic Structure and Standards: A Summary

The data for *Strategic structure and standards*, as the second section for the sub-theme *Perceived positives of structure and standards*, included participants' accounts from when I asked about positives in transitioning to the residential curriculum approach. Participants' accounts, and other data sources, reflected that the residential curriculum approach provided positive gains for structure within the organization. Personal testimonials from student staff, RHA student leader's observations of student staff, and several professional and graduate staff accounts reflected how the RCP provided structured content for dates, deadlines, and expectations. The student staff spoke about how the RCP introduced changes and increased structure for what was expected of them as staff and what resources they were to deliver to residents. Some student staff reported that the structure seemed more apparent for community advisors rather than for residential academic ambassadors. The RHA student leaders spoke about their perception of the impact of having positive structures for student staff's efforts and how having increased structure with the residential curriculum approach improved awareness of, and resident and staff participation within, RHA. While the student staff and RHA student leaders did not use the word "proactive," I interpreted several of the examples they mentioned to be aligned with this notion of having more purpose and intention with efforts than prior to adopting the residential curriculum. Finally, some participants expressed that the residential curriculum helped the residence life department to be more proactive with efforts by using learning outcomes, (e.g., translating concepts of the curricular approach to residence hall front desk operations). In conclusion, despite the common sentiment that the residential curriculum approach, and RCP, contributed

structure that was perceived positively, no data were available on whether this structure either improved staff efficiency or effectiveness of efforts for student learning.

The following quote from Dr. Blair effectively summarizes how the RCP was a positive source of intentionality and structure for MSU's residence life staff when adopting the residential curriculum approach.

> With the curriculum, the intentionality is, there's actually a structure. There is some guiding principles and notions about what we're trying to do here, and… then how that comes together in some practical ways in terms of what we are actually going to be doing, when are we going to be doing, and how are we going to be doing it. So how are we using the bulletin board spaces, for example, as educational opportunity? How are we using some of our lounge space to have activities; or within the broader community, facility spaces and classrooms downstairs? Those sorts of things would be examples of more of the intentionality. People know what's coming, how it's coming, and how it links to learning outcomes.

Researcher's Analysis and Reflection on Strategic Structure and Standards

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations.

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations provide useful lenses to interpret how the RCP provided structure for residence life staff to implement the residential curriculum approach within the residence life unit, residential communities, and in support of RHA. The Structural Frame is the most obvious for this sub-theme. The RCP, as a new organizational tool, provided a mechanism for staff to execute the tenets of MSU's Educational Priority Statement and application of The 10EERC.

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Participants, during interviews and focus groups, frequently used the word "structure" which mirrors what Bolman and Deal (2014) regard as standards, procedures, and systems within organizations. The structure is mechanisms to promote achievement of organizational objectives. The human resources, or staff and student leaders within an organization, were able to use organizational resources to execute the mission and in some cases fulfill their individuals or group's goals. The Political Frame was relevant in that there were multiple priorities in the organization, and it is possible that some view residential education with hall communities as aligned with the mission of RHA while others view RHA as a standalone organization. For the Symbolic Frame, participants recognized the RCP as an integral organizational artifact that had value towards executing the mission. However, just as organizations and the human experience are complex, so too are the structures that are either long-standing or newly introduced. The structure that some participants enjoyed also contributed to frustrations that will be presented for the third research question of the study, regarding participants' perceptions of challenges in transitioning to the residential curriculum approach.

Insights for professional practice.

It is valuable to consider that increased structure is not synonymous with increased efficiency or effectiveness. While student staff, and others, perceived positives with having the RCP while transitioning to the residential curriculum approach, I did not collect data on whether student learning, development, or retention were improved based on MSU adopting the residential curriculum approach. Additionally, it is important to recall that I collected data during MSU's first six weeks of the "full launch"

of a residential curriculum, thus, participants could have had positive first impressions that may or may not last once the structure becomes part of the norm of the organization.

The data excerpts for *Strategic structure and standards* provide useful insight for institutions that may consider adopting the residential curriculum approach. Additionally, similar to the data for the first research question, these findings are applicable to any functional area of student affairs. It is practical to acknowledge that some of my participants' positive perceptions of increased structure could be the same in any unit that has adopted a new approach, regardless of whether on the macro or micro levels.

Researcher's reflection on strategic structure and standards.

When coding and analyzing these data, I monitored my positionality by recognizing that the specific documents and resources at MSU were not the focus of my study, rather the unit of analysis was the organization. I frequently reflected on my experiences with adopting the residential curriculum approach on my home campus and my role as an ACPA RCI faculty member contributing knowledge about the residential curriculum approach to colleagues nationally. I reminded myself that my participants' experiences were unique to MSU, and that qualitative research is not generalizable (Glesne, 2011). However, throughout my process, I cannot help but be grateful for the many "points to ponder" in what I learned at MSU. One of the most tangible takeaways for me is how RHA leaders offered positive perspective on adopting the residential curriculum approach. While my home campus has implemented a residential curriculum approach for years, we are currently exploring how to reframe opportunities to improve our RHA to better serve students and align with the curricular approach.

Sense of Voice

The third category for the sub-theme, *Perceived positives of structure and standards*, includes data excerpts to represent some participants' positive perceptions of communication in MSU's Department of Residence Life when adopting the residential curriculum approach. These data described how professional and graduate staff described positive aspects of communication such as being able to provide feedback and have a "sense of voice." It should be noted that these perspectives are in contrast to the most saturated messages from the student staff and RHA leader students on the topic of sense of voice, which will be featured in the next portion of this chapter on perceived challenges of adopting the residential curriculum approach. Below, are representative excerpts on how professional and graduate staff spoke positively about communication.

Most professional and graduate staff, who were employed in the organization prior to August, 2015 (save Weber, Jim, and LaShay), talked about themselves or others having a positive voice in developing residential curriculum resources. For example, Steve spoke about how he perceived his own voice to be valued by others in the organization when developing the residential curriculum, "So every single iteration of this group, I've been involved with it, whether that's been creating the educational priorities, sticking around, I feel that my decision making is trusted." Weber, an assistant director who joined the organization in August, 2015, described having a positive perception of how residence life staff were involved in developing MSU's residential curriculum. When describing how MSU staff approached the development of residential curriculum resources, she said, "I think, from my perspective, what I liked about that, though, and having seen a different curriculum being created [at her previous institution],

that there was a lot more broad involvement from a variety of levels." Regarding staff

buy-in, Weber explained:

> Their format here of really having all that buy-in was it was putting a lot of that
>
> different angles and different perspectives from the start. And then they were able
>
> to tighten it up as opposed to pushing something out and thinking they had what
>
> they wanted and then realizing there was all these different areas they were
>
> missing as a result. And so I think that level worked well. Having seen the two
>
> ends of that, I think they found a structure that worked better for the depth of a
>
> stronger curriculum.

Dr. Blair described how he conducted feedback sessions with Matthews' residence life

staff during the Spring, 2015, semester. He clarified that he spoke with staff in a few

combinations: central office team, "the front of the house, back of the house," all

coordinators of residence life, and all graduate assistants. He recounted that the staff

offered positive feedback about the residential curriculum. Dr. Blair shared his approach

as, "I sought to make it low threat in the sense that I want to have a conversation. They

knew the questions I wanted to ask in advance. Everybody would be anonymous in what

they were sharing." He stated, "it was extraordinarily helpful both to me and, I think, to

[Matthews]." He proceeded to relay:

> One of the things that was a theme that came up fairly regularly was the
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> curriculum. My sense was that they had a very positive response to it. It was
>
> something that they were doing, and it gave them a sense of identity and how it
>
> was making them unique.

They also saw that they were unique as being part of academic affairs

nationally, but having a curriculum seemed to be particularly unique because it

was something that had an additional level of newness. I don't think they were

just saying it because they wanted to impress and manage me. I'm sure there's

some level of anxiety in the background because there's an accountability that

goes with this. How are we actually delivering on these elements? And someone

is actually ostensibly going to be asking you about it, and you're going to be

evaluated on it.

Dr. Blair's "feedback tour" with residence life staff was one example of how residence

life staff reported positive perceptions of their experience with adopting the residential

curriculum. Finally, Carole used the term "creative control," to describe her positive

impression of how staff were involved in developing MSU's residential curriculum. She

related this term to perceptions of how staff viewed their job responsibilities differently,

but positively, with adopting the residential curriculum. Carole stated that there was a

saying in the department prior to the residential curriculum to the effect that, "people

only care about what they are directly involved in," meaning that if they weren't involved

in a project they were likely to not be as invested in it. She offered the example of

partnerships with faculty, and that some staff did not believe it was their responsibility to

interact with faculty since there were "specialty" positions in the department that worked

closely with faculty outreach. Carole said, "We had to work very hard to get staff to

believe that they should contribute to things that were not directly listed in their job

description – including curriculum, when it first began." She talked about the

"exploration team" that went to ACPA's 2013 RCI and that upon returning to MSU they

were perceived as "responsible" for the curriculum in the eyes of other staff. However, Carole explained this concept of "creative control" coming into play when she recounted, "By the time we reached Fall 2014, as a result of the area staff creating strategies on their own and having that 'creative control,' it became something they felt more directly responsible for, and therefore, more invested in."

Other professional and graduate staff reported that communication with and from central leadership improved, and they attributed changes to the process of adopting the residential curriculum approach. Rellen, a graduate hall coordinator, spoke about how central staff reached out to various levels of staff for feedback in 2013 when Matthews joined the organization, "They started reaching out to student staff, the undergraduates, to get their feedback. They reached out to the [graduate hall coordinators] to get their feedback." Rellen stated that some of questions that central leadership staff asked were, "What do you think of this? What did you do at your old institution? Where do you think we're lacking? Where do you think that we're doing awesome? Where do you think we can improve?" Similarly, Logan, a graduate hall coordinator, spoke positively about communication within the department, "Each month we give feedback to central office, and, they in turn, use that for the future and knowing what works and what doesn't. And so we can constantly start shaping what the next phase of the curriculum looks like." Logan then stated, "I think it's helped us to be more cohesive and more connected because we're constantly communicating with each other." Finally, Benedict, a coordinator of residence life, said that he is very comfortable with sharing his feedback with central leadership and that, "I've known these people, some in central leadership, way longer than others. So obviously I have a much different level of comfortability than

some others do." Benedict clarified, "But I don't think that's just me. I think everybody's feedback is absolutely welcome." Additionally, Benedict shared his perception that communication improved in MSU's department of residence life when adopting the residential curriculum, and he explained, "They have actually, as a central leadership, been *waaay* better about trying ahead of time to get things planned and scheduled, getting us information, getting us schedules, you know getting us expectations, answering questions." He attributed this improved communication to in-person meetings and said "...emailing works and that kind of stuff and casual conversation too, but when we can all, 10 or 11 of us, sit around a table and have conversations and make decisions as a group, it makes it so much better."

Finally, some professional and graduate staff talked about student staff having a positive voice in adopting the residential curriculum approach, despite the overarching sentiment from student staff and RHA leaders that communication was a challenge while adopting the residential curriculum. Weber, an assistant director, offered her perspective of the organizational culture on the topic of allowing staff to have voice, "I feel like the department has made it fairly clear that we do want them to have a voice and have feedback." She described the monthly assessments that were featured in the data to address research question one. Weber also shared that Matthews and Thompson promote staff sharing both anecdotal feedback and formal assessment. She explained that messaging has "kind of been pushed out to the [coordinators of residence life] to then make sure it's being done in each of their individual buildings that they oversee." Weber mentioned that she is aware that some coordinators of residence life are hosting meetings with all area staff (graduate hall coordinators and student staff) to provide space to

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complete the monthly assessment. Lance confirmed that his area staff requested to meet

as an area team to complete the report, rather than hall staff completing it individually,

and he found this to be an efficient way to "get everyone's voice." Rellen, a graduate

hall coordinator, reported that student staff's voices are weighed heavily based on their

direct interaction with residents. She reiterated that her sentiments within this data were

intended to convey a positive milestone of MSU's adoption of the residential curriculum.

Rellen explained that previously, professional and graduate staff would collect

assessment, but that student staff voices were not included. She stated that with the

residential curriculum, "We realized we're not the ones that are living on the floors. Yes,

we do live in-house, but we're not the ones that are necessarily talking with the residents

every day, talking with the students every day." Rellen stated, "...their feedback, I think,

is weighed more heavily than the [professional and graduate staff] feedback." She

explained that professional and graduate depend on student staff voices to suggest

changes that would be better for students. One of her summative comments to this point

was, "This honest feedback from the student staff is vital for creating a successful

curriculum that actually meets the needs and differences of our students." Finally, Carole

expressed her perception that RHA student leaders had a positive experience with having

voice in the development of the residential curriculum, specifically as it relates to their

organization. She mentioned that during the fall, 2014, and spring, 2015, semesters, she

and the other RHA advisor introduced the EPS, outcomes, and educational plans. Carole

told me that she charged the RHA student leaders, based on ongoing revisions to their

organizational mission with, "OK, now that we have this curricular model and we have

these things, you know, that we want students to learn outside of the classroom, how do

you contribute to that? How do you do that?" Carole said there were retreats with the RHA executive board to discuss these types of prompts. She concluded this sentiment by stating, "The Residence Hall Association really, really got on board with that and said, "This is our jam. This is exactly what we are here to do. Here's how we do that**."**

This concludes the data I represented from selected professional and graduate staff interviews about their positive perception of having voice in adopting the residential curriculum. These data contrast what student staff and RHA student leaders shared regarding the notion of communication, or "sense of voice" when MSU's Department of Residence Life adopted the residential curriculum approach. Data to capture their sentiments are included in the next portion of this chapter on challenges. However, Rose, a student staff member, shared what I interpreted as representing the notion of positives with sense of voice. Similar to Lance's point about the area staff completing the assessments, Rose stated, "We actually do our, what's the word, evaluations together, for each month. And so, at the end we review it, and that helps a lot, just to know what our [graduate hall coordinator] put down and what we all said." Previously in this chapter, I related that the RHA student leaders described some positive reactions to the residential curriculum approach with regards to communicating with graduate hall coordinators. However, I chose to include the data in that previous section as the spirit of their comments related more to perceived positives of structure related to the RCP. Next, is a summary of participant's positive perceptions of "sense of voice" when MSU's Department of Residence Life adopted the residential curriculum approach.

Sense of Voice: A Summary

The data for *Strategic structure and standards*, as the third section for the sub-theme *Perceived positives of structure and standards*, included participants' accounts from when I asked about positives in transitioning to the residential curriculum approach. Most professional and graduate staff, who were employed in the organization prior to August, 2015, (save Weber, Jim, and LaShay), talked about themselves or others having a positive voice in developing residential curriculum resources. Other professional and graduate staff reported that communication with, and from, central leadership improved, and they attributed changes to the process of adopting the residential curriculum approach. Finally, some professional and graduate staff spoke about student staff having a positive voice in adopting the residential curriculum approach, despite the overarching sentiment from student staff and RHA leaders that communication was a challenge while adopting the residential curriculum.

Researcher's Analysis and Reflection on Sense of Voice

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations.

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations provide useful lenses through which to interpret how some participants perceived positives in communication within the department when adopting the residential curriculum approach. The Structural Frame, similar for previous data in this chapter, was evident in that the RCP outlined goals, objectives, and expectations. The Human Resource Frame was evident in how various participants spoke about being involved in gathering feedback from others, developing resources, feeling trusted to contribute personal talents, and to afford opportunities for professional and graduate staff to engage student staff and student

leaders in the experience of implementing the residential curriculum. Bolman and Deal (2014) refer to this concept as "participatory management." The Political Frame did not seem as relevant to these data. The Symbolic Frame was represented in that Bolman and Deal (2014) contend that what is most important in an organization is not what happens but what it means. Related to this study, some participants attributed positive perceptions of having voice to a positive organizational culture.

Insights for professional practice.

I believe Dr. Blair's feedback sessions with residence life staff was an exemplary practice to learn about the lived experiences of staff who implemented the residential curriculum. I recommend this practice, but would add that student staff and RHA student leaders should be invited to provide feedback. While somewhat skeptical, conversely, I think it is useful to consider why some participants might share the positive perceptions contained in these data. It is plausible to consider a fear of repercussions, or retaliation, despite measures to protect participants' anonymity.

Researcher's reflection on sense of voice.

One of my core professional values is harmony; yet, I recognize and respect that there is value to conflicting or divergent points of perspective. I had to carefully monitor my positionality with these data to stay close to my participants' verbal and non-verbal cues.

Theme 2 (Part II): Pains of Structure

The second research question for the study addressed participants' perceptions of adopting a residential curriculum approach. The second sub-question was, "What did participants perceive as challenging in this transition?" Data to answer this question was

identified as the second theme for the study, *Gains and pains of structure in MSU's Department of Residence Life.* This portion of the findings chapter focuses on the participants' perceptions of what was challenging in transitioning to the residential curriculum approach. Findings reflected concern with perceived universality of the residential curriculum approach, specifically regarding certain student residential populations. Additionally, some participants expressed challenges concerning the distribution of the RCP and communication within the department when adopting the residential curriculum approach.

Data for this research question most aligned with the "pains" of structure that I identified as the second theme for the study. Many of the findings contrast with the data I presented for research question two (participants' positive perceptions). In my coding and analysis, I interpreted data from all data sources were relevant to the second theme; thus, I claim data triangulation (Yin, 2014) was achieved. Additionally, my participants' accounts reached saturation (Saldaña, 2013) regarding the RCP, or organizational tool that undergirded the essence of the data in the findings for research question two. The two categories of data for this sub-theme, *Perceived challenges of structure and standards* are: (1) Universal design of residential curriculum and (2) Communication channels.

Universal Design of Residential Curriculum

Several participants, across interviews and the student focus groups, and including in a letter from an anonymous student staff member, communicated about perceived challenges of having a universal framework to facilitate residentially based learning environments based on the RCP and other resources used to operationalize MSU's

residential curriculum. There were distinctions in how participants described the challenge of a universal framework, which are represented in four sub-categories for *Universal design of residential curriculum*: (1) Diverse residential student populations, (2) Physical space challenges, (3) Challenges with language, and (4) Perception of stifling student staff creativity.

Diverse residential student populations.

One challenge some participants described was the perception of having a universal framework to facilitate residentially based learning environments with diverse student populations, or demographics of students ranging from first-time, first-year students to graduate students with families. This challenge was mentioned despite there being three versions of the RCP: first-year, sophomore, and upper-class. The professional and graduate staff, student staff focus group participants, and an anonymous letter from a student staff member conveyed this challenge using varied examples. Following are representative data to illustrate the challenge of a diverse residential student population.

Several participants reported that it was challenging to facilitate residential curriculum initiatives, based on the RCP, within residential populations that house varied student populations. The most common aspect of this challenge was the perspective that different student populations, particularly within MSU's "apartment community," have different needs. Ivory, a student staff member, mentioned, "...[we] are having a hard time implementing anything that's in there [RCP] because it doesn't fit with the residents we have there, being grad students, families, single students that are going through their junior or senior year." Dylan, a student staff member, commented, "the things that

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they're trying to teach within the [RCP] don't necessarily go along with what the families need." He explained differences in student needs, "Because the families already know how to do laundry, how to clean, how to cook, how to take care of things… the Playbook is a great concept, but it's a great concept for actual on-campus facilities." Dylan continued, "They don't want to come answer the door. They're thinking, you know, "I'm 27 years old with a family. Why do I need to go talk to some 21 year old who thinks they know what I need?"

Rellen, a graduate hall coordinator, expressed a similar point, and articulated a challenge with communicating intentions to residents, "I think one of the biggest issues is we do not communicate with our residents you know prior to living at the apartments." She added, "I think students that do not want to live on campus, that want that independent *home*, and especially a lot of the families that cannot live on campus, that is the next best alternative to still be connected with campus." She stated those residents tend to think, "I'm going to be left alone," and that this creates challenges when staff attempts to interact with residents. Rellen explained that there are cultural differences involved. For example, "A lot of our Saudi Arabian population there, if the male is not present, the female cannot answer the door." She also described that graduate students are in their labs on campus late into the night, which makes it challenging for student staff to initiate conversations with residents.

Weber, an assistant director, shared an email she received from a community advisor who works in MSU's apartment community, as the student expressed similar concerns about implanting the residential curriculum in an apartment community. Weber redacted the student's personal information to protect the students' identity. The student

started the letter by explaining s/he had worked in residence life for four years as of writing the letter, and served during their tenure as a community advisor and residential academic ambassador. When addressing challenges, the student wrote:

> On campus the majority of the residents are freshman now, and I understand the importance of structure and curriculum, however, the [apartments] is a completely different beast than campus. Comparing last year to this year, the workload has increased immensely and it feels like I am back on campus because of the types of requirements we are supposed to complete. Members of the [apartment] community come to the [apartments] to get away from the typical "RA infested communities." Graduate students, families, doctoral students, upperclassmen, and international students create a very large and diverse community. I wholly agree that creating a sense of community is important in helping everyone feel safe in their residential area, however, all of these students have lives, jobs, families, different sleep schedules, rituals, and classes that might not match up to ours.

The student concluded this portion of the letter with stating, "Let's be honest, because we know our residents better than any other staff, because we live in the community with them, so we know the issues and what NEEDS to be discussed versus what is told to be discussed."

In speaking about knowing student needs, Derek, a student staff member, described, "Yes, it says upperclassmen, but I still feel it's kind of tailored to maybe the upper classmen as in a sophomore and a transferring junior and not a late junior to early senior to almost a fifth year senior" and "It's missing the mark when it's trying to get those upperclassmen." Derek suggested that seniors getting ready to graduate have

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different needs and that programmatic efforts should be geared more towards, "How to balance a checkbook, how to properly cook and plan out meals so that you're not being wasteful, and how to get the most bang for your buck on your cooking and purchasing of your different items." In addition to expressing concerns about the apartment communities, Derek reported that the RCP also provides challenge for staff in other types of communities. He asserted that the RCP could be challenging in some of the first-year communities that house international students. He explained that the RCP, "has no help to, not only upperclassmen, but also some first year communities in which they have maybe international students that are upper 20s, maybe even 30s. And so they don't really need what traditional freshmen need." He concluded, "So to them they almost just want to throw it out the window."

Finally, Rellen also reported, a similar challenge in her community that housed international students, international families, and families in general. She stated, "It's a lot different talking with families that are already, more or less, established about budgeting and finances versus talking to our sophomores about budgeting and financing." She concluded that the content of the three versions of the RCP is "more or less the same," but "what is expressed in the book and detailed in the book does not necessarily apply to our population, so the staff is finding it difficult to figure out ways to tweak those expectations to where they're still meeting those expectations."

In summary, Jay, a student staff member voiced, "I understand that they try to make the curriculum more of a universal thing, however it's not supposed to be universally used throughout the different communities." He added, "It needs to be curriculum geared to each community instead of here's one book that applies to all of the

residence halls, including apartments." Moreover, Thompson, as the associate director of residential learning initiatives, acknowledged it was difficult for the staff to create a "comprehensive plan" for the various student populations, but she believes it was "figured out." She reported in our interview and the photo activity focus group that the process of assigning students to specific residential communities will continue to need attention in the future given the goals of the residential curriculum.

Physical space challenges.

Three staff introduced the perspective that there are physical space challenges that create issues when implementing the residential curriculum. For example, Benedict, a coordinator of residence life, spoke about a lack of common space in the apartment community and stated, "...some of our buildings do limit what we can do." Hunter, a graduate hall coordinator, stated, "The curriculum doesn't necessarily acknowledge that some communities only have one bulletin board. Some have four. Some have two small ones. Some have all these different things...and there's not a consistent." Hunter also stated "It's not realistic to have a crossword puzzle with your students' names if you're in an upperclassmen building and they're never going to walk by that bulletin board. That lesson plan may not be the best for your community." Derek, a student staff member, described that he works in a new building and that "it's complete apartment-style with really no… attributes that a normal residence hall will have. There is not really a meeting area for us." Derek also described challenges with staffing, "There are a lot more residents than student staff. We have a ratio of, it's about 1:85-87 residents. So, with the 260 residents, we have 3 residential assistants trying to…. trying to put the curriculum into place in the building."

Challenge with language.

The student staff focus group participants described perceived challenges with how language was structured within the RCP. The overall sentiment was that the language included in lesson plans, for example, was perceived as jargon or unfamiliar to the student staff. For example, Derek, stated, "I'm a business major. And the language used within the curriculum is not always clear because I don't really have any student affairs and higher education training." He also referenced the use of "different theories… or things that people that have been *in* student affairs are learning right now." Katie, concurred with the concern about use of theories. In discussing the lesson plan for the September community meeting, "...it's talking about is…is this being designed to foster safe and comfortable living space between roommates and the community based on Maslov's [Maslow's] hierarchy of needs." She explained that as an exercise science major, she has some knowledge of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, but "That's not something that's going to be common knowledge." Additionally, in reference to lesson plans, Katie also mentioned the words, "learning goals and outcomes." She explained some of her peers do not understand the difference between the two. Lloyd, agreeing with Derek and Katie, reported, I am lucky enough to be best friends with an education major who specializes in writing lesson plans, and reading lesson plans, and evaluating lesson plans and with assessment." He added, "Without that knowledge coming into this year, I would feel completely lost with reading the curriculum itself."

The student staff explained that the language used in the RCP could be to the detriment of student staff using the materials. For example, Katie mentioned, "I think because they're confused and don't know what to read into." Derek shared, his confusion

with the resources can be a "turn-off." He offered the example of the following language in the RCP, "How does this inform practice across the residence hall?" He followed this by saying, "Just the "inform practice" made us sit there and just stare at each other and say, "What in the world are they even trying to ask in this question?" Derek concluded this sentiment by stating, "And it kind of pushes me to do more of my own thing with a slight structure related to the curriculum." One of Lloyd's examples of getting confused with the language was, "Lesson plan, lesson plan, lesson plan, lesson plan." It's very easy to get lost in the lesson and not actually see what you're supposed to be doing." In summary, Jay offered the recommendation of adding a glossary of "terms" to the RCP. He also stated, "Or, completely just throw these terms out and replace them with *easier* terms. And although we're [CAs] and [RAAs], we're still learning. There's nothing wrong with learning new terms."

Some of the professional and graduate staff described their perception that the language of the residential curriculum was challenging for student staff, and two provided examples of general confusion surrounding language associated with the residential curriculum. For example, Lance mentioned that some student staff "feel like someone with a master's degree cannot speak the language of the students." Taylor articulated that sometimes the "educated wording" is a challenge. She stated, "The way that they're [RCP materials] phrased sometimes, our student staff don't understand, and they don't want to ask questions." Rellen, conveyed a challenge with understanding residential curriculum "terminology" early on in the process of adopting the approach. She described, "The term RCI was thrown at us before we had a good understanding of what was actually happening and the overall changes that were to come." In describing

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the process of developing residential curriculum resources, Carole stated "...we spent too much time trying to make the language perfect instead of thinking about the process and our goals and where we wanted to go."

Perception of stifling student staff experience.

Some professional and graduate staff, as well as RHA student leaders, spoke about their perceptions of how student staff reacted to the perceived standard approach within the residential curriculum resources. Ivory was the only student staff member who spoke to the concept of creativity, and she shared the following advice for other schools looking to adopt the residential curriculum, "Be more straightforward with student staff on the goal and task - this could increase student staff creativity." Following are representative data to illustrate the points professional and graduate staff, and RHA student leaders, shared about student staff's experience in terms of the concepts of creativity and time.

The RHA student leaders described perceptions of how student staff encountered challenges with the structure of the RCP in terms of believing student staff had less creativity and that general expectations for the student staff were unreasonable. Talia stated, "They [student staff] want to make a difference for students. This curriculum is so hard pressed that they feel like they're just trying to meet their guidelines and do what they're supposed to do so they don't get in trouble." She added, "It's not giving them the opportunity to do what they signed up for." Talia mentioned the topic of the conversations student staff are required to have with residents. She explained, "One thing that's great in the curriculum but not done well are res chats where the [community advisors] are required to ask students certain questions each month." She added, "The

deadlines are pushed so hardly, and they need to be pushed, I completely agree with that, but just seeing how they're so stressed out from pressure from all sides that they end up not taking out the interaction piece." Beth reported a perception that student staff no longer had the opportunity to be creative as they did prior to the residential curriculum, and she stated:

Going into it and having this residential curriculum thrown on you was very difficult for a lot of student staff members, I think it's safe to say. It was different to adapt to going from something that was rather unstructured and just kind of like a, "Make sure you get this done, but here's your opportunity to be creative," to a lot of people felt like, when residential curriculum came along, their creativity was stifled because it was, "OK, here is exactly the bulletin board you have to make this month. You can do it how creatively you want, but here's the topic it has to be.

Beth mentioned her first year that student staff were, "The happiest people ever. They were so fun to be around. They loved their jobs. They were always there. They were really, really active and involved and like passionate." On the contrary, she described the current student staff position as being, "I'm just trying to get this done. This is like a full time job now, and I just have to get all these requirements done." Jamie added, "Now it's like so crazy structured," and Jackie articulated, "it is now like a full time job." Jackie wrote during member checking, "We [RHA student leaders] felt that it was too strict too quickly. It was also stated that we feel like the curriculum doesn't allow for a lot of creativity for the student staff."

The RHA leaders, in addition to speaking to the topic of creativity, mentioned the

perception that the residential curriculum standards posed challenges for the student staff

in terms of time and having the opportunity to become involved in organizations or

commitments beyond residence life. Bethany expressed the concern that student staff not

being able to be involved on campus has an impact on incoming students. She shared,

"Incoming students benefit from witnessing student staff members' involvement on

campus, and, "I think that's really sad, because when you come to school and you move

in, your [student staff member] is kind of like the first person that you interact with. And

that's kind of your first friend." She continued to say, "To see them in other

organizations makes you want to join other organizations and kind of be like them and

get involved. You see what they're doing and how much fun they're having, and you

want to be like that." Bethany explained that the time constraints she perceived for

student staff impacted her interest in applying for a student staff position. She stated an

RHA advisor told her she would have to "drop something else" in order to be a student

staff member, and that she is now making a choice about "Do I want to take an office in

this organization that I'm really trying to be more involved in, become a leader in that

organization, or do I want to continue in res life and develop further there?" Similarly,

Jackie shared about needing to consider her options about possibly applying for a student

staff position. She said despite currently being able to balance three jobs, serving on two

executive boards, being in a sorority, and a full-time student did not cause her stress.

However, she stated, "Even thinking about trying to follow all the guidelines I've heard

about, that stresses me out. I do not think that I could have another outside job or be in

the sorority without like freaking out about time and guidelines." In regards to outside

employment, Beth, shared, "a lot of student staff members have had to quit other jobs or other organizations because the residential curriculum is so extensive." She added, "They have so many other deadlines within res life to complete and so many other requirements that they have had to drop other things in order to be able to meet those requirements. I think that's kind of unfortunate." She claimed, "Yeah, I don't know how to say this nicely. It's just kind of like they're owned now with it." An unidentified female participant reacted by stating, "That's unfortunate, because there are so many amazing opportunities that could come your way, to be president of an organization. I've been president of two different organizations on campus, and they've both been *super* impactful in my life." This person added, "I hate that you don't get the best of both worlds anymore. They both develop you and change you in so many different ways." Jackie shared that a friend who served as a student staff member had to leave the position because, "with all of the tasks brought on now from being a [community advisor], it made it hard for him to be involved in other organizations that he liked." In summary, Jackie described, "The professional staff in Res life seems to be in full support of the curriculum. They developed it and feel like it is sufficient. It seems like the student staff members do not like it because it is focused on giving them several deadlines and rules. These don't allow for the freedom that was once there in the student staff position." Next, are excerpts from some professional and graduate staff about perceptions of student staff adopting the residential curriculum.

Approximately half of the professional and graduate staff conveyed varying observations about student staffs' experience, in terms of beliefs about creativity, with transitioning to the residential curriculum approach. Jae described, when asked about

challenges of adopting the residential curriculum approach, that some student staff perceived the residential curriculum resources to limit their creativity. He shared his perception that some returning student staff became "complacent" with the traditional wellness wheel type programmatic approach and that they expressed such sentiments about the residential curriculum, "Why are you holding me accountable to these things? I did perfectly good bulletin boards last year. Now why are you making me do them this way?" He added, "I think because there's that need for structure they have. They see the structure and it's outlined and say, "This is what you do," that's all they see. They don't see where their creativity falls into play." Jae offered the example of community meetings and said student staff read the lesson plan "word for word" and say, "Nobody wants to come." Jae commented, "No kidding. Would you want to come to that?" "No." Well, that's why."

Lance, a coordinator of residence life, described that student staff "crave structure," but he has heard varying reactions from them about the residential curriculum resources. He reported, "...there are some that are like, "Tell me what to do, and I'll do it." And there are others that are like, "You've wiped out all the creativity out of me, and I just have to do what you say." Lance continued, "It's been a challenge in that regard, especially for the student staff and me trying to rephrase those conversations so they can understand we want to make this easier for you."

Ell, another coordinator of residence life, reported, "I think some of our student staff thinks that it takes away from the creativity that they're able to have in the programming." As direct supervisors to student staff, Taylor and Rellen, expressed similar observations. Taylor stated, "The structure itself is appreciated, but I think

student staff often times feel that their creativity is being taken away from them." She

added, "They can't just go and make a bulletin board for what their floor needs anymore.

They have to follow the lesson plan and include the information that we're asking them

to."

Finally, Rellen described that initially, the student staff felt there was no room for

creativity and that they felt they were being told, "This is what we have to do." Rellen

suggested, "I think it would have helped if the student staff had more of a

background…and had more information on what other schools were doing and why

we're adopting RCI. Why are we doing this? How has it benefited other schools?"

A few, but not all, professional and graduate staff spoke about how they conveyed

to student staff that changes could be made based to residential curriculum resources.

However, these staff reported that student staff typically did not take advantage of this

opportunity. Benedict, a coordinator of residence life, spoke about how he encourages

student staff to voice their ideas that may not already be included in the RCP. He shared

some student staff were, "scared to do this because they think that the curriculum binders

that we gave them are "law" and cannot be changed." Weber, an assistant director,

explained, "Sometimes because they see, "Oh, it's in a book. Oh, it's in print. Oh, I'm not

able to make those changes," yeah, you are. No, you just need to verbalize that to your

supervisors and get that approval." Rellen shared that student staff, "at first until it was

cleared up felt restricted." She described their sentiment was, "Basically this takes away

all of our creativity." Rellen stated, "Well, no, actually, that's not true. This is just

providing…a structure where expectations are the same. However, you [meaning student

staff] are completely free to tweak it however you want to benefit your specific floor or

your specific building." Rellen reported that student staff had not yet acted on this opportunity to make changes. Finally, Jae explained, "You have these individuals that really *enjoy* bulletin boards and some of those things. And they go, "Well, if I'm identifying that there's something that I want to be doing for my community…" He added, "They don't feel like they can do it anymore. Even though we said, "You can," they don't…"

This concludes data excerpts from interviews with professional and graduate staff participants about their perceptions of how student staff was challenged by the standard resources inherent to the residential curriculum. Next, is a summary for the perceived challenges associated with a universal design of the residential curriculum.

Universal Design of Residential Curriculum: A Summary

The data for *Universal design of residential curriculum*, as the first section for the sub-theme *Perceived challenges of adopting the residential curriculum approach*, included participants' accounts from when I asked about challenges in transitioning to the residential curriculum approach. Data were presented in four sub-categories including, (1) Diverse residential student populations, (2) Physical space challenges, (3) Challenges with language, and (4) Perception of stifling student staff creativity. One challenge some participants described was the perception of having a universal framework to facilitate residentially based learning environments with diverse student populations, or demographics of students ranging from first-time, first-year students to graduate students with families. The apartment-style communities, particularly with graduate students and student with families, were most commonly cited with this challenge. Three staff introduced the perspective that there are physical space challenges, such as lack of

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common space in residence halls and varied number of bulletin boards, created

challenges when implementing the residential curriculum. The student staff focus group

participants described perceived challenges with how language was structured within the

RCP. The overall sentiment was that the language included in lesson plans, for example,

was perceived as jargon or unfamiliar to the student staff. Finally, some professional and

graduate staff, as well as RHA student leaders, spoke about their perceptions of how

student staff reacted to the perceived standard approach within the residential curriculum

resources.

Researcher's Analysis and Reflection on Universal Design of Residential Curriculum

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations provide useful lenses

through which to interpret how some participants perceived challenges when

transitioning to the residential curriculum approach. The Structural Frame related to the

challenge associated with RCP resources and standards. The structure that was

appreciated by some participants was revealed to be a perceived challenge for other

participants who served what they believed was a unique population of residential

students. The Human Resources frame is relevant in understanding that some

participants, based on perceived challenges such as implementing the residential

curriculum in the apartment community, did not feel as productive in their roles as they

had hoped would be possible. Additionally, the RHA student leaders' perspective that

student staff seemed to be "owned" and were limited in creative approaches represents

the tenets of the Human Resources Frame. The Political Frame is useful in understanding

MSU's student demographic and the institutional expectations to house upper class

students, students with families, and visiting scholars. Additionally, some of the physical

space challenges referenced are an example that resources are scarce within

organizations. The Symbolic Frame accounts for the notion that the residential

curriculum tenets and resources served as organizational artifacts that were expected to

serve the organization as a whole well, regardless of nuances.

Insights for professional practice.

Anecdotally, from my experience as a RCI faculty member, I find it useful to

remember that each campus has specific circumstances such as student demographics,

institutional priorities, and perhaps factors that are unknown to external constituents. Just

as designing a residential curriculum based on institutional values and priorities is

important, equally so is that staff can stand behind the approaches. Insights from these

data from MSU offer considerations for the importance of referencing, explicitly citing,

and adopting findings from research and literature on student development theory.

Regarding the RHA student leaders' perspectives, about feeling student staff are now

"owned," I think serves as a reminder that one's perception is one's reality. Change is

hard for many people. While it is plausible to think that incoming staff will not "know

any differently" as some RHA student leaders expressed, actively listening to current

staff is imperative as current staff serve current residential students.

Researcher's reflection on universal design of residential curriculum.

Similar to my reflection for perceived positives of structure, I frequently reminded

myself during data collection, coding, and analysis that my study addressed the

organizational perspective on adopting the residential curriculum approach rather than

focusing on the design or perceived quality of MSU's residential curriculum. I was

intrigued to hear my participants' perception of implementing a residential curriculum based on their designated residential student populations as my home campus houses primarily first-year students. Additionally, I frequently reminded myself that no organization is perfect and that my colleagues, if interviewed for a similar study, would share distinct challenges of our approach to adopting the residential curriculum. I can cite several challenges, and using higher education terminology such as "*Classroom Assessment Techniques*" with student staff, without rationale or explanation of meaning, was just one example. I believe having an opportunity to safely express perceived challenges in an organization is a sign of a healthy, productive organizational culture. Then again, I hold the view that solution-oriented insight is always favorable to sheer criticism.

Communication Channels

The second category for the sub-theme *Perceived challenges of structure and standards* pertains to communication in MSU's Department of Residence Life when adopting the residential curriculum approach. Two sub-categories of data include: (1) Delayed distribution of the RCP and (2) Sense of voice.

Delayed distribution of the RCP.

Professional and graduate staff, student staff, and RHA student leaders described that the delay in distributing the printed RCP to the student staff was a challenge. Matthews explained, "We ran into an issue because our printer was running behind schedule. We printed them about two days before [graduate hall coordinator] training on curriculum happened. And then the students got theirs, the color versions, towards the end of training." She stated as an alternative to the printed version for student staff

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during training, "we sent them out electronically so they could plan until the books came." Weber articulated that the delay in distributing the RCP was a "physical boundary" and challenging due to student staffs' diverse learning styles, "we wanted to refer to stuff but for them to have it, see it, and be able to live it a bit more and start some of the planning process by being able to see it in front of them." She added, "...to have more intentional discussion off of it, [and] that was prevented." Similarly, Hunter shared that it was challenging for student staff not to have a physical binder to reference, and Ell said the challenge was, "picture what this was looking like without actually having a physical book in front of them." He added, "We didn't set them up for success." In speaking about August, 2015, student staff training, Lloyd provided a summative quote with which his peers seemed to agree, "We did not have them [RCP] yet. So, that was a hindrance, I think, first of all, because we didn't get them until *after* residents moved in, even though we were here for three weeks of training." Derek, another student staff member, said, "About six months of completely being in the dark, thinking that they had almost ditched the idea. Then out of nowhere came in with the curriculum. At that time it was all online." He added, "Nothing was in print, and so nothing was tangible for us" and "It was just a very out-of-the-blue thing in which we were given these different...I guess, lesson plans." Keith, a RHA student leader, shared a perceived challenge regarding the delay in hall council advisors receiving information. Keith said, in speaking about a retreat approximately two weeks before school started, "I think a challenge that I kind of noticed was during the retreat. I don't think the curriculum was quite finalized 100 percent. Because I know there was talk about it." Keith added a perceived challenge was that gradate hall coordinators would need to share the details

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with the community advisors and residential academic ambassadors, which "might have been kind of rushing them." Jackie, a RHA student leader, said graduate hall coordinators asked her such questions during move-in, "When exactly is this supposed to be done, this supposed to be done, and this supposed to be done?" She explained, "I feel like if it was more put together, it wouldn't have been as big of an issue as it was." In summary, Talia, a RHA student leader, said, "I know that, in general, the student staff, it's caused a lot of conflict just because it seems like it's very…just the way that it was presented to them, people didn't take it well.

Delayed Distribution of the RCP: A Summary

The data for *Delayed distribution of the RCP*, as the second section for the category of *communication channels*, included participants' accounts from when I asked about challenges in transitioning to the residential curriculum approach. Professional and graduate staff, student staff, and RHA student leaders described that the delay in distributing the printed RCP to the student staff was a challenge. The most common aspect cited for this perceived challenge was that student staff could not visualize the RCP materials during August, 2015, training. RHA student leaders reported that graduate hall coordinators, as hall council advisors, were lacking details related to hall council or RHA as a result of the delay in distributing the RCP to staff. RHA student leaders reported having not seen an actual copy of the RCP.

Researcher's Analysis and Reflection on Delayed Distribution of the RCP

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations.

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations provide useful lenses to interpret how some participants perceived challenges within the department when

adopting the residential curriculum approach. My interpretation of the four frames is similar in many regards to what I shared for participants' perceived positives of the RCP. The Structural Frame was relevant in recognizing the RCP provides specific details, goals, and expectations for staff. In this case, for the Human Resources frame, staff did not feel fulfilled without having the RCP during training. Staff training is a core element to developing staffs' knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics. Thus, not having adequate materials to supplement training could conceivably be a challenge. The Political Frame is evident in regards to the time professional and graduate staff spent creating the RCP, and in depending on the services of a print shop, resembles scarce and competing resources. The Symbolic Frame is evident in that part of the organization's culture, as an essential artifact to execute the mission, was not available.

Insights for professional practice.

I believe this data point, about delay in communication, resembles a reality for most organizations. I believe organizational communication is a challenge in every organization, simply based on the notion that human beings are unpredictable, as are extenuating circumstances, such as emergencies and scarce resources. I learned from some participants that an electronic version of the RCP was made available to staff, and I interpret that as a proactive solution to the dilemma of not having the copies printed in time for training. I would have liked to hear, and I recommend for professional practice, specifics as to how MSU professional and graduate staff invested in student staffs' knowledge of the RCP and residential curriculum beyond the August, 2015, training period. Were there in-services or student staff council meetings where this learning could occur? Were online modules available to the student staff? Overall, I believe this data

point serves as an excellent reminder that staff need and deserve varied approaches to learning new information.

Researcher's reflection and analysis on delayed distribution of the RCP.

It was evident to me during data collection that this topic of the delayed distribution of the RCP would emerge in my final representation of data. While accounts were more disparate than similar across interviews and the two focus groups, this topic was one of the most common in all three sources, with most, but not all, participants in the study.

Sense of voice

The second aspect for *Communication channels*, as a category, includes data on what some participants perceived as challenging regarding departmental communication, having a sense of voice, or being able to provide feedback. The following data excerpts contrasted with what some participants shared for positive perceptions of these concepts when adopting the residential curriculum approach.

Approximately half of the graduate hall coordinators, and most of the student staff, reported that perceptions about hierarchy within the organization made it challenging to have a voice with the residential curriculum. Taylor, a graduate hall coordinator, indicated that she gets to provide feedback about the curriculum during one-on-one meetings with her supervisor but that, "there's no guarantee that it's [her feedback] is going to make it to the leadership team." Hunter, a graduate hall coordinator, spoke about working on developing the residential curriculum resources. He stated that during the experience he thought, "We're making decisions about student staffs' jobs and how they're going to be interacting with residents...yet they're not here in the conversation." One of the most discussed topics among the student staff focus group

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participants was the notion of what Lloyd described, "top-down approach." He stated, "I think that it should be the other way around. It should be much more bottom-up based instead of top-down. Because the top-down approach hasn't worked for a couple years, and it's still continuing not to work." In terms of experience over time, Lloyd stated, "So, first year being an RA, throw information at residents, hope and pray it worked. Second year on staff we were *given* standards and what we want our residents to learn." He added, "Like our personal feedback never reached central office, because it was filtered by graduate hall coordinators, coordinators of residence life, and assistant directors until it reached the executive director." Lloyd concluded by stating, "it was pretty much made for us without any of our feedback." Similarly, Katie, a student staff member, reported, "I also think that there have been times where our feedback might actually reach head staff, but it's not exactly what we say because it goes through so many *people* that it gets misinterpreted. It gets a little bit changed." She provided an example to this point in sharing what student staff might say, "We thought this worked because of this," but really we thought it worked because of something else but so-and-so told so-and-so, who told so-and-so." She concluded by stating, "And then by the time it reaches the top, how it really was didn't even work because, like [Jay] said, they don't directly talk to us." Jay, another student staff member, concurred and said, "Most of the time it really doesn't get past our [graduate hall coordinators]. And if it gets past [them] to the [coordinators of residence life], it may not get past them." He finished by saying, "So eventually it probably won't get past them. The idea is just up in a cloud, but it's never brought down to central office." Derek explained that he was one of two student staff members who served on the early residential curriculum committee during the

spring, 2013, semester. He said, "It was a lot of the, "Students will be able to do this and then… do this." And so it was very, very, very light backbone, I guess, of what the curriculum was or would have been." However, Derek continued, "...but after that we met maybe a couple times. But then, to the best of my knowledge, there was no student interaction below the graduate level." He shared, "Then we heard about it during winter training when they said, "Hey, we have a curriculum. Follow the lesson plan, and do the assessment." Jay offered a sentiment that seemed to capture the essence of what other participants also shared about being able to provide feedback. He spoke about wanting to "pay it forward," and "...you don't want to leave the place the same way when you came in. You want to make it better. That's how we create our legacy here, helping other people who will fill our roles in the future." Additionally, Jay shared, "I believe the department will learn so much more when they receive feedback or ask for feedback from us. If they were in the room with us right now, they would learn so much."

While the RHA student leaders did not use the phrase "top-down," the most common sentiment among their accounts was similar to what the student staff reported. RHA student leaders perceived that neither student staff had a voice with the residential curriculum, nor did RHA leaders. Beth explained, "I think it was almost a little bit abrupt and told this is what was happening. I feel like it would have been beneficial if they kind of like had asked the opinion of [community advisors] and [academic peer ambassadors]. For example, she added, "What do you guys think about this transition?" I feel like it was just a, "Here you go. Here's our new way of doing everything." Beth concluded by saying, "As students, I think we may sometimes have a hard time adapting to such abrupt changes. I think it would have been better accepted by the student staff members had they

had a bigger voice in the changes." Talia shared, "the idea of them not asking students what they wanted and instead telling them what they wanted, bringing that RHA aspect into it with our mission to advocate for students. She added, "I think that idea of advocating for student staff, who are definite students and definite leaders on campus, they can't be advocated without them giving their input and them being on that committee to do it." Finally, Rosa, provided a summative quote about RHA student leaders' perception that they did not have a voice with developing the residential curriculum. "From an RHA perspective, I think that student staff didn't get a ton of preparation, but they got way more preparation on the residential curriculum than RHA did."

Only a few of professional and graduate staff, spoke about experiencing challenges with providing feedback about the residential curriculum. Taylor was an exception, as shared previously, that she was not certain her feedback would reach central leadership. Also, Ell, a coordinator of residence life, was an exception, and when asked about being able to provide feedback said, "Due to the hard work, I shall say, you don't talk bad about the curriculum." He added, "You don't want to ruffle the feathers of someone who may have done some hard work. Or, you don't want to look as an individual that's not supportive of the department." Hunter explained it takes more time to gather student staff feedback during staff meetings and that he did not want to "waste" time during weekly one-on-one meetings. However, the majority of the other professional and graduate staff spoke about their voice changing over time. Matthews described the challenge associated with knowing, as a new director to the organization as of two years ago, when to step in and voice opinions versus when to allow staff to

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proceed with their course of action. She articulated, "Sometimes I have to get on board with a different direction than my vision and other times I need to get them back in line with where we are going." She added, "It has been challenging as a new director to know what are those things I'd fall on my sword for, and where can I step away from my vision and let the team truly take ownership." Matthews summarized this sentiment as, "How do I stay involved enough to be perceived as invested, engaged, and supportive, and where do I step back so that they feel ownership and responsibility for continuing the work?" Jae, described his view that some staff in the organization find it challenging to voice their feedback about the residential curriculum. He stated, "...individuals that haven't been to an RCI [ACPA RCI] really struggle with having a voice...here." He added, "You look at some of those individuals that are very comfortable providing feedback, and...not the sole reason, but I think one of the big reasons for that is that they understand. They get it. And they've seen it." Jae offered, "I think that really has something to be said about one's level of comfort and really being able to like, "Yes, I can fully share my feedback of this,"...As opposed to, "These are my feelings on it." Steve, articulated what I coded as "varying levels of voicing reactions" and "discernment with giving feedback" when sharing about how staff in different positions within the organization seem to have a sense of voice, and he said, "Grads will speak up all the time in the areas, making it their own, anything. They are very much on the feedback thing." Regarding coordinators of residence life, he said, "yes and no. Just in general going through change, it's always going to be bumpy. And so we've seen a lot of staff turnover with people saying, "This is not what I want to be a part of." He concluded by stating, "I think that we try to appropriately pick our spots to provide feedback, because if we're

talking too much then it becomes like overwhelming. Because there are already is so much change going on." In summary, the professional and graduate staff reported less challenges with providing feedback in contrast to what the student staff and RHA student leaders shared.

Sense of Voice: A Summary

The data for *Sense of voice*, as the second section for the category of *Communication channels*, included participants' accounts from when I asked about challenges in transitioning to the residential curriculum approach. Some participants, namely two graduate hall coordinators, and student staff reported that perceptions about hierarchy within the organization made it challenging to have a voice with the residential curriculum. While the RHA student leaders did not use the phrase "top-down," the most common sentiment among their accounts was similar to what the student staff reported. RHA student leaders perceived that neither student staff had a voice with the residential curriculum, nor did RHA leaders. Only a few professional and graduate staff talked about experiencing challenges with providing feedback about the residential curriculum.

Researcher's Analysis and Reflection on Sense of Voice

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations.

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations provide useful lenses through which to interpret how some participants perceived challenges within the department when adopting the residential curriculum approach. The Structural Frame was relevant in how student staff and student leaders perceived there to be a "top-down" hierarchy in communication from central leadership. This sentiment reflected a perceived order in which communication was disseminated in the organization. The

Human Resources Frame represents how student staff and student leaders interpreted their "place" in the organization. Several students reported feeling frustrated and devalued by some of the challenges they presented. These accounts were valuable in remembering that there are both risks and benefits of communication, and that a void in communication is a form of communication itself. The Political Frame was relevant in speculating whether time, a scarce resource, prevented professional and graduate staff from interacting with the student staff and RHA leaders differently than the way in which the students reported their experience. The Symbolic Frame is a reminder of how organizational norms, such as communication channels, impact the culture and values of any organization. These customs become part of the organization's fabric and can exist in the minds of returning staff, especially.

Insights for professional practice.

I would like to address the topic of some data points I shared from the student staff focus group. Most of the student staff focus group participants discussed the notion of feeling like they do not have a voice with the residential curriculum; specifically, as residential curriculum resources were developed. I recall thinking during the focus group, later in reflection, and in writing this chapter that anecdotally speaking, this is a tension point for some colleagues in the field. Some colleagues have expressed concern that the residential curriculum approach does not honor student staff member's voices. While I do not believe this is the intention of Element 6 of The 10EERC, I understand that in reality student staff members' voices may not be honored as they should. I believe master's-level professionals, and those with terminal degrees, can intuitively understand that the concept of students having a voice should not be a dichotomy but rather a balance

of involvement. I propose that there can be a healthy dose of inviting every staff members' voice in an organization. This practice should be accompanied by communication on how decisions are made. I fundamentally believe there is a difference between engaging student staff appropriately and delegating "tasks" or "perceived priorities" to undergraduate students who are, first and foremost, at our institutions for more than the opportunity to serve in co-curricular experiences.

I was impressed that several of the student staff posed solution-oriented feedback for how student staff could be more involved with the residential curriculum beyond solely executing the approach by using provided materials. For example, student staff cited the opportunity to help train incoming student staff members on the residential curriculum. Additionally, they suggested a bi-monthly meeting where each residence hall would have a student staff representative. The group would provide feedback to central leadership on student staffs' perceptions of what was working well and what could be improved. I think both suggestions are useful for any school that has adopted, or would consider adopting, the residential curriculum approach.

Researcher's reflection on sense of voice.

The contrast in perspectives between the students, including student staff and RHA leaders, to that of professional and graduate staffs' accounts became explicitly apparent to me when coding and analyzing my data. I recognized a that tension point was that professional and graduate staff spoke about the *process* of developing the residential curriculum in contrast to the student staff who shared more about their experience with implementing the residential curriculum resources they were given. The RHA student leaders spoke most about their perceptions of how the student staff

experienced the adoption of the residential curriculum. I believe these varied

perspectives illustrate one of the major findings of the study, the mission of an

organization is only as effective as the multiple perspectives and contributions of the

human capital that comprise the team.

<center>FINDINGS – PART II</center>

<center>**Characterizing the Experience**</center>

The third research question for the study was, "In what ways did the residence life

staff characterize their experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach?"

Data to answer this question was identified as addressing both themes of the study,

Reframing residential education at MSU and *Gains and pains of structure in MSU's*

Department of Residence Life. The findings for this research question were evident in

analogies and photos. First, some professional, graduate, and student staff used analogies

during interviews and the focus group, respectively, to characterize their experience with

adopting the residential curriculum approach. Additionally, the findings for this research

question were related to the photos selected participants captured for the activity and

described during the subsequent focus group. Following are representative data for this

research question.

<center>**Analogies**</center>

A few of the participants' characterized MSU's journey of adopting the

residential curriculum by using analogies. An analogy is, "a comparison of two things

based on their being alike in some way" (Analogy, n.d., para. 1). Analogies represented

both themes of the study, including *Reframing residential education at MSU* and *Gains*

and pains of structure in MSU's Department of Residence Life. The accounts using

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analogies did not reach saturation (Saldaña, 2013) as I interpreted the essence of analogies in only a few of my participants' accounts. However, I believe these insights were impactful in describing how some residence life staff characterized their experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach. I found that selected participants offered these types of descriptions when sharing accounts on various topics during individual interviews or focus groups. Similarly, I believed these insights were helpful in understanding data for the first and second research questions. The analogies most represented the notion of staffing, and are organized below by the categories: (1) Staff mindset shift and (2) Staff challenges.

Staff Mindset Shift

Some analogies from participants represented how adopting the residential curriculum approach was a change to past philosophy and practice in the organization. Participants shared distinct analogies to represent this sentiment.

Derek, a student staff member, spoke about changes to one-on-one meetings with his supervisor. He explained that prior to adopting the residential curriculum, "I would sit and talk to Dr. Phil for a little bit, and then I'd be done. They weren't always the most productive." He stated that in comparison, this year, his meetings are "not as much Dr. Phil." Other student staff participants concurred with Derek's comments.

Logan, a graduate hall coordinator, shared a story about shifting away from old programmatic approaches. His staff's roll call during student staff training involved a *Wizard of Oz* theme. The house fell on the old programming model and the "curriculum road" saved the day. He explained, "It was us symbolizing, "OK, we're done with that stuff. Now we have this new curriculum, and we follow the curriculum road to get to the

end and to meet the wizard to go home." He added, "...OK, this new curriculum is here. The old curriculum, the old way of doing things is kind of gone. That was my building's way of saying, "We're going to embrace this. This is how things are going to be done."

Lance related his background as a musician to his experience with adopting the residential curriculum approach. He spoke about his observations upon joining the organization; specifically regarding the use of lesson plans to facilitate students' learning:

It was like I had never seen a lesson plan basically telling me what to do. Versus me being able to look at the students, engage what they need, and design it all together. I'm a musician, too, so our minds are always like grasping. And it's very abstract. There's metaphors and all of these things to help you get the three things we all look for as musicians, beauty, energy, and placement.

In contrast to his experience as a musician, Lance described, "This concreteness that they were giving me was presenting a challenge. I was like, "I don't think in a concrete way."

Benedict shared a profound quote about one of his supervisees who was initially skeptical about the residential curriculum and how she had a "light bulb" moment.

She saw it as a lot of busy work for being busy's sake. I think the 'a-ha' moment came when she saw, especially since she was a former student staff member, how this kind of consistent curriculum for the betterment of the student could make a much larger impact than throwing pizza parties because we had to.

Matthews also used an analogy, during her closing remarks at the focus group for the photo activity. She described her perception of how the residence life staff navigated the process of adopting the residential curriculum approach:

I use this analogy with you guys a lot, we often are looking up and seeing how far

we have to climb to get out of the hole we're in, whatever hole we decide. And

we look up and think, "Oh my gosh, we've got 10 more stories to go." But we

don't often stop and look back and see how far up we've already climbed. We

don't. We just look up and think, "Gosh, we're never going to get there."… It was

cool. It was a nice activity, Hilary, because we did get to look back a little bit and

see the climb.

In conclusion, these selected analogies represented the notion that for some,

adopting the residential curriculum process involved a shift in mindset. Next are

analogies that relate to staff challenges.

Staff Challenges

Some analogies from participants represented how adopting the residential

curriculum approach was challenging. Participants shared distinct analogies to represent

this sentiment.

Matthews spoke about the analogy "get on the bus" that she used to convey a

message to staff that either they could choose to buy-in to the approach or leave the

organization. She mentioned referencing the "We Believe" document, shared previously,

when speaking with staff. Matthews described, "I had some very real conversations with

some staff and said, "You're not on this bus with us. I need you to either get on it,

because this is where we're going, or let me help you find another bus." Lance,

referenced the "get on the bus" analogy and said there were some staff who expressed,

"I'm on the bus, and in the front seat," you know. And some people are like, "OK, I'm on

the bus, but I'm chillin' in the back." We have people that are like [knocking], "Back door please, let me out!'"

Lloyd, a student staff member, described perceived challenges to student staff having a voice with the residential curriculum, and he used cookies as an analogy. He mentioned having asked his supervisor for opportunities, for himself and other student staff, to "help" with the residential curriculum. Lloyd stated, "Basically doors just keep getting shut in returner's faces. We're here. We want to be heard. We want to help." He concluded this point by sharing, "None of us want to just keep getting half-baked ideas and turning them into half-baked cookies. No one wants a half-baked cookie. We want a full baked cookie."

Ell shared concerns about feeling pressure to make sure his staff was prepared to implement the residential curriculum. He offered two sports analogies to convey his points. First, Ell described, "It takes more time than what people assume." Ell also shared, regarding his supervisory style, "I don't want to send you out into the game if you don't know the play." "What good would they be to the team?" Additionally, Ell expressed there were challenges with time and the message of "get it done," in relation to having the residential curriculum resources ready for full implementation. He stated, "So now we're running, and as a team, we buckle down as a team. When I say "team," [coordinators of residence life]. 'All right, let's get this done.' You know what I mean? We were running, running, running." Ell concluded by sharing, "Honestly, that's where I feel some of that poor quality, in regards to some of the things that's in here, like, for example, errors and things of that nature, come from us running...rushing to get it done."

In conclusion, these selected analogies represented the notion that for some, adopting the residential curriculum process created challenges for staff. Next is a summary of data on analogies.

Analogies: A Summary

A few participants characterized MSU's journey of adopting the residential curriculum by using analogies. Two student staff, and some professional and graduate staff, shared distinct examples of analogies that reflected two categories: (1) Staff mindset shift and (2) Staff challenges. Examples of analogies involved concepts of being a musician, sports, and a bus.

Researcher's Analysis and Reflection on Analogies

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations.

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations can be used to interpret the analogies some residence life staff used to characterize the experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach. While all four frames were inherently present in the descriptions, the Human Resources and Symbolic Frames were the most relevant to the categories I interpreted during coding and analysis. The Human Resources frame acknowledges that human capital within an organization have diverse types of motivation, needs, talents, and skills that benefit the organization towards the execution of a mission. In the case of MSU, several analogies depicted staff involved in the process of adopting the residential curriculum approach experienced changes and challenges to past philosophy and practice. The notion of the residence life "family" or team was implicitly or explicitly apparent for these analogies. The Symbolic frame acknowledges that organizations have culture, traditions, rituals, and artifacts. Moreover, participants'

use of analogies reflects the stories and culture of the organization. These accounts convey the organizational priorities to insiders and outsiders.

Insights for professional practice.

Regarding professional practice, the use of analogies is one way for staff to personalize their experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach. In Lance's case, for example, relating his background as a musician was a unique way for him to express points during our interview. The ability for staff to make meaning of their experiences with adopting the residential curriculum, or any organizational change, can be powerful and positive in helping staff embrace a sense of familiarity when embarking on organizational change. Additionally, I believe analogies may be helpful, as pedagogy, in engaging learning styles. For example, Edwards and Gardner (2015) in delivering the annual Plenary address "*What is a Residential Curriculum?"* used analogies, metaphors, and stories to convey points for attendees new or returning, to understand the residential curriculum approach. Finally, the messages shared by participants, via analogies, may serve as "points to ponder" for readers who may have already adopted a residential curriculum approach or for those considering the approach.

Researcher's reflection on analogies.

I found participants' analogies were a helpful way for me to stay close to the words of my participants, in an attempt to try not to impose my professional experiences with adopting the residential curriculum approach or anecdotes from colleagues beyond MSU. I wondered, when hearing the analogies during the interviews and student staff focus group, and when coding, whether some participants used analogies as humor, or ways to assert points while perceiving a need to be "politically correct."

Picture the Experience

Six participants captured a total of 49 useable photos, with some duplicates, for the prompt, "Tell the story of/characterize how Midtown State University experienced the change to transitioning to/adopting the residential curriculum approach." I encouraged participants to photograph such aspects including, but not limited to, people, places, experiences, symbol, emotions, documents, and other resources. I also asked participants to consider the successes and accomplishments, challenges, and lesson's learned – individually and collectively, of the team's journey of adopting the residential curriculum approach. The six staff who participated in the focus group, and thus described the pictures, included: LaShay (Coordinator of Residence Life), Ell (Coordinator of Residence Life), Jim (Coordinator of Residence Life for Assessment), Lance (Coordinator of Residence Life), Matthews (Chief Housing Officer), and Thompson (Associate Director of Residential Learning Initiatives). I decided, during thematic analysis (Glesne, 2011; Saldaña, 2013), to group the photos with descriptive quotes in two categories: (1) Staffing and (2) Organizational tools. TK Fowler, a graphic designer at my home institution, modified all photos after signing a confidentiality waiver, to protect the anonymity of participants and MSU. Following are the photos and participant descriptions by category.

Staffing

There were several photos I interpreted for this category related to the human capital of the organization. The notion of staffing was present in diverse ways, including but not limited to, staff experiences as well as emotions. Below are photos and

descriptions, based on participant's words. Photos are organized by the categories (1) staff experiences and (2) staff emotions.

Staff experiences.

The following photos represent images that focus group participants described, and I interpreted, as residence life staff being involved in the process of adopting the residential curriculum approach at MSU.

LaShay shared two photos of bulletin boards that student staff created based on designated learning outcomes (Figure 4.17 and Figure 4.18), and she explained:

> The first two pictures that I took were of bulletin boards that happened within my building. I took pictures of those because, even though we were given such a broad topic for that…the particular month, my staff did a really good job of breaking those apart and really being able to pull in different kinds of information that our different students have, because we have upperclassmen students. They could be sophomores, juniors, seniors, whatever it may be.

LaShay also shared a photo of a graduate staff member who was reviewing assessment reports (Figure 4.19) and she explained:

> My last picture is my grad going through the assessments. I think for us it's a big piece. My grad and I spend a lot of time talking and kind of picking through the curriculum. Our journey is seeing this wonderful document that's come through and then try to not only understand it from our view but also into the view of our students and our student staff members.

Figure 4.17: Student Staff's Bulletin Board 1

Caption: "... a bulletin board that has the word "be" in the middle. And then there's a bunch of different other words like "available, exciting, everywhere, yourself, open." And that one is really encouraging our students to be authentic and be themselves and to really explore who they are" (LaShay).

Figure 4.18: Student Staff's Bulletin Board 2

Caption: **"**a tree that is talking about different forms of being healthy within eating. It's both eating on campus, eating off campus, eating when you're home, things like that, so really encouraging our students to adopt some new behaviors while they're living here" (LaShay).

Figure 4.19: GA Reviewing Assessments

Ell captured a photo of MSU's academic resource office (Figure 4.20). He explained, "We're doing the RC to increase the academic enrichment of our residents." Ell also captured a photo of graduate staff (Figure 4.21) and he explained:

This is a picture, even though it's far away, of some of our [graduate hall coordinators]. The reason why I took this picture is because these particular ones…well, some of our second years who are not here, and our first years helped us coming up with all of the lesson plans and all of their hard work. And so, I thought you've got to give back. I know all the hard work that they did…and I felt that they should get a pat on the back or some credit.

Finally, Ell captured a photo of the institutional marketing logo (Figure 4.22) that he described as:

We were trying to brand ourselves with that slogan where individual residents feel like they found their spot. They're here. They're at MSU. Finding your spot in

regards to the academic resource building as well, it's bringing the ties to the

residential curriculum.

Figure 4.20: Academic Resource Office

Figure 4.21: Graduate Staff

Figure 4.22: Institutional Marketing Logo

Jim captured two photos, one of himself (Figure 4.23) and one of Thompson

(Figure 4.24) to depict a meeting they had to discuss his role with assessment of the

residential curriculum and sequencing of learning based on the lesson plans for bulletin

boards. He explained:

This was a meeting between [Thompson] and I. We had a very in-depth conversation

about the model in which it's progressing. Because with our curriculum I am here to

kind of edit, to kind of go over…To kind of go over the information, kind of edit it,

kind of make sure that if something doesn't make sense that we're making it make

sense. And so this is kind of what we're talking about here. In this first picture with

[Thompson] in it, it was talking about bulletin boards and what the purpose of them

are, kind of making sure that we're hitting that purpose and taking that into account.

And then this other one…This is [Thompson]. With the bulletin boards, we were

really talking... Jim had brought up the topic of…I think we see that we've got a thing

for the bulletin board, but the intention was there to sequence the learning, I think, to make it all tie together. So we got into this conversation about, "OK, now that we're looking at this from a different lens after it's all compiled, how do we take a look at what the bulletin board is and then everything else and how that ties in but is not a repeat of the information.

Figure 4.23: Jim Meeting with Thompson

Figure 4.24: Thompson Meeting with Jim

Lance captured two photos to depict the "archaeological dig" process (Figure 4.25). Only one is featured, as they were fairly similar. He shared:

I personally had an opportunity to go with the team to RCI last year, and that's where I learned about the archeological dig and what we had already done here at this institution. And so this showcases like us researching it, looking things up, to symbolize that process.
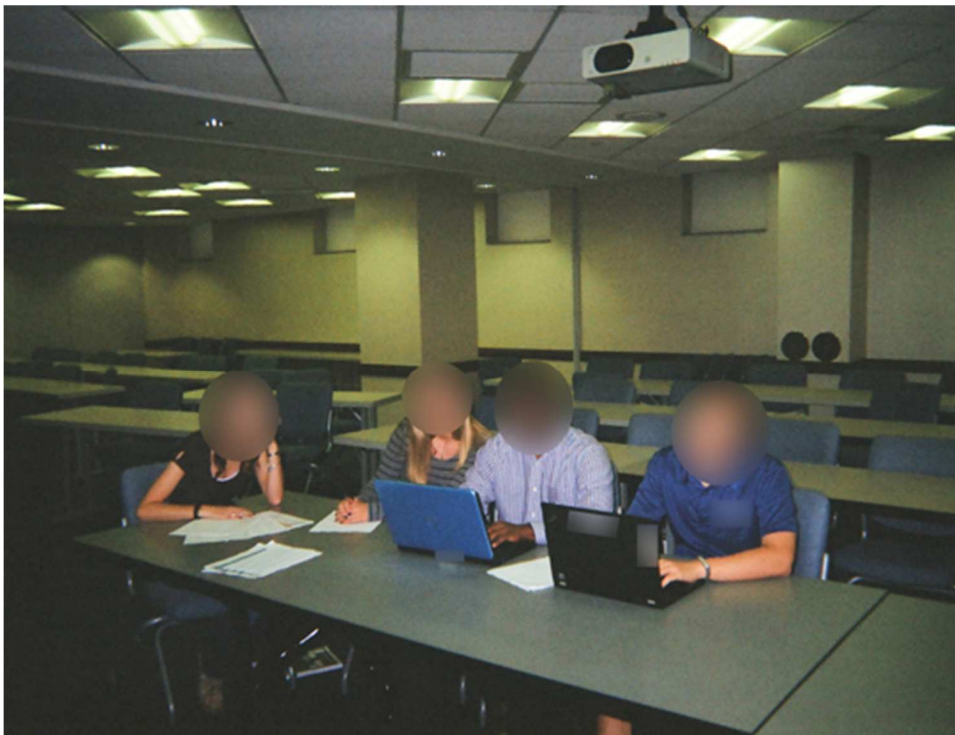
Figure 4.25: Archaeological Dig Process

Lance also captured eight photos to depict student staff engaged in conversation with one other. First, he described two aspects for these photos, one that student staff interacted with one another to share ideas (Figure 4.26). Only one picture is featured below, as the pictures were fairly similar. Lance explained:

Then the rest of these pictures is just our staffs putting it into use, trying to figure

it out. There are some shots of them really intensely looking and listening. And

then there are some shots of them goofing around. Then there are some shots of

them just trying to understand where we're at, how we apply it, you know shifting

through it, going through the lesson plans. Some pictures of staff being really

happy that we have something tangible and then staff, how they're helping one

another, particularly with the assessment.
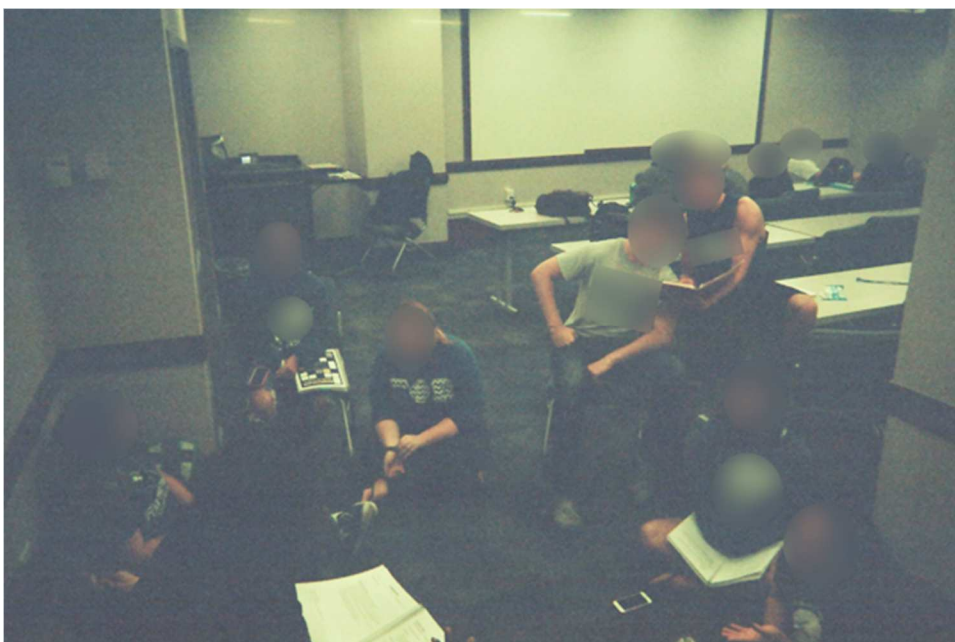
Figure 4.26: Student Staff Sharing Ideas

Next, is one representative photo to feature how Lance conveyed that student staff

gathered to provide feedback for the monthly assessment report (Figure 4.27). He

explained:

What we've found beneficial, particularly in my area, is that when we have all

staff meetings…cause what we do is the last Wednesday of the month is our all

staff meeting. And we all get together and share things about the curriculum. And

we also do the monthly assessment template that's due. And we found that it's

beneficial when the staff are together so they can hear what others are doing,

what's working, and what's not. That sharing of information is really important

and collecting all of that information.

Figure 4.27: Student Staff Gathering for Assessment Report

Next, Matthews captured a picture to depict the experience of MSU's delegation

to ACPA's RCI in 2013 (Figure 4.28), and she explained:

I started with a picture of the RCI binder, because when I came I kept saying,

"We'll start the process after RCI. We'll start the process after RCI." And I think

this was actually last year's, but it's supposed to represent two years ago, the first

team we took to RCI.

Next, Matthews shared a photo of the book *Switch: How to Change Things When Change

Is Hard* (Figure 4.29), and she explained:

Because I knew that came after RCI. That came in the summer between year one

and year two. It was because not only were we trying to launch this curriculum,

but there were 15 million other changes that all happened at once. While it wasn't
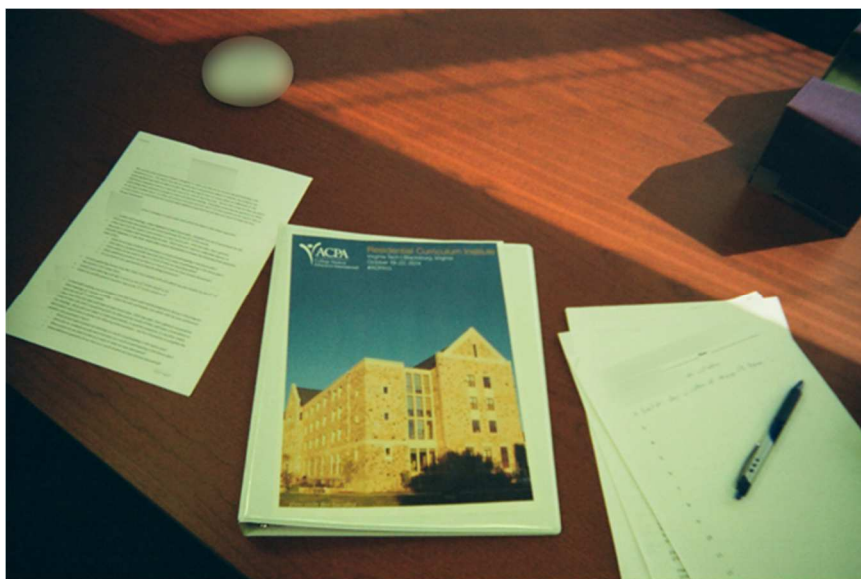

Figure 4.28: RCI 2013 Binder

directly related to curriculum, I knew that the curricular changes were something

that, along with everything else, I'm not going to say intimidating staff, but it was

causing a great deal of anxiety. And so this was one way to help us think through

and talk through all the changes and change management in the organization.

Matthews also captured a photo to represent MSU's first "Mini RCI," specifically the

"archaeological dig" process (Figure 4.30) and she explained:

And this was during our first mini RCI when we did our archeological dig

and asked, "What do we want our students to learn as a result of living in our

residence hall?" And they wrote words and phrases from who our student were,

from the articles and some of the language, from our mission, vision, and strategic

plan [inaudible] management, all of those things.

We put them all over the board and then tried to condense them. And then the one picture… are some of those words as we were trying to figure out what really are those key themes, just trying to break it down into, "What are our educational priorities going to be and what our narrative might be." So this is just the very beginning step.
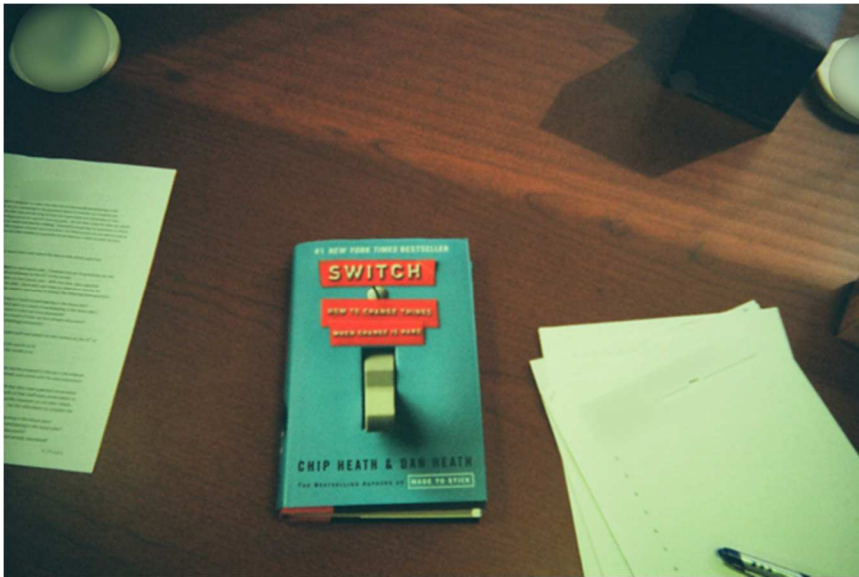

Figure 4.29: The Book Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard

Figure 4.30: Archaeological Dig at MSU's Mini RCI

Matthews shared a photo to depict the staff's experience with writing the Educational

Priority statement (Figure 4.31) and she explained:

> The next picture, then, are pictures of the next several *hours* as we tried to
> write our educational priority statement. And there are different versions that you
> can see in the pictures as we…each group wrote their own sentence, and then we
> tried to collapse them together. And I can remember we were arguing over
> different words and…
>
> We were going back and forth on, "What is our word? What is our word?"
> And we finally said, "Screw it, we don't need to know our word right now. Let's
> just write something down." But I can remember being so excited watching
> our….our entire team having this conversation. Then she asked if there were a
> few people that wanted to stay afterwards to continue to tweak the language. And
> the number of people that stayed just blew my mind. I still get shivers just
> thinking about…listening to people have that conversation, get excited again, and
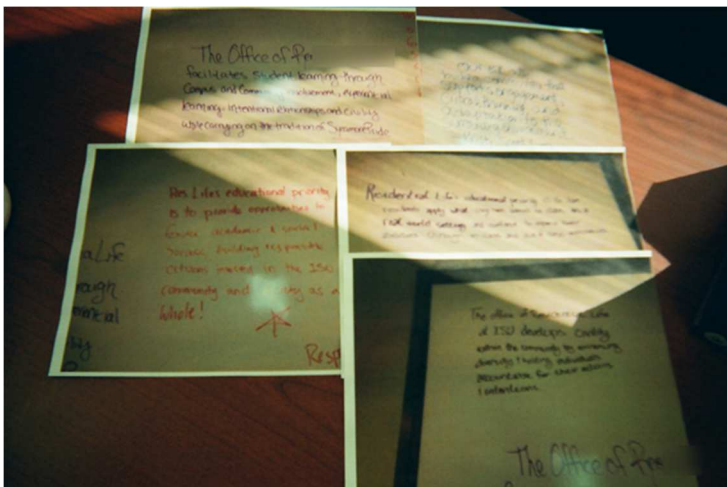> kind of re-fall in love again with what they were doing.

Figure 4.31: Writing the Educational Priority Statement

Finally, Matthews captured a photo of staff commitments and the timeline she shared at MSU's Mini RCI (Figure 4.32). She described:

This is really hard to see, but it's two pictures I took during last year's RCI. To me it represents commitment. The first one is words that we wrote down about how people were feeling about the curriculum at the time… and how they were feeling about where we were going to go, things like investment, priority, commitment, that kind of thing.

But then on the other side is the timeline that I wrote down, because I think one of our roadblocks is that, as a department, we would often get really excited about a new initiative and then three months later, after we had dumped a ton of work on our folks, we would say, "Oh, thanks for doing all this work. We're going to do this instead." And so there was, I think, still after a year, some disbelief that this was going to be what we were going to do.

And so for me, standing up there and saying, "This is my commitment. This is what we're going to accomplish this semester. This is the timeline we're going to do it, and we're going to follow through on getting it done," that was an important, I think, symbol for us as a department. And we might have been a week or two behind here or there, but we pretty much made these deadlines so that we could get the book done over the summer. So even just looking back now and seeing that we hit all those deadlines was pretty big.
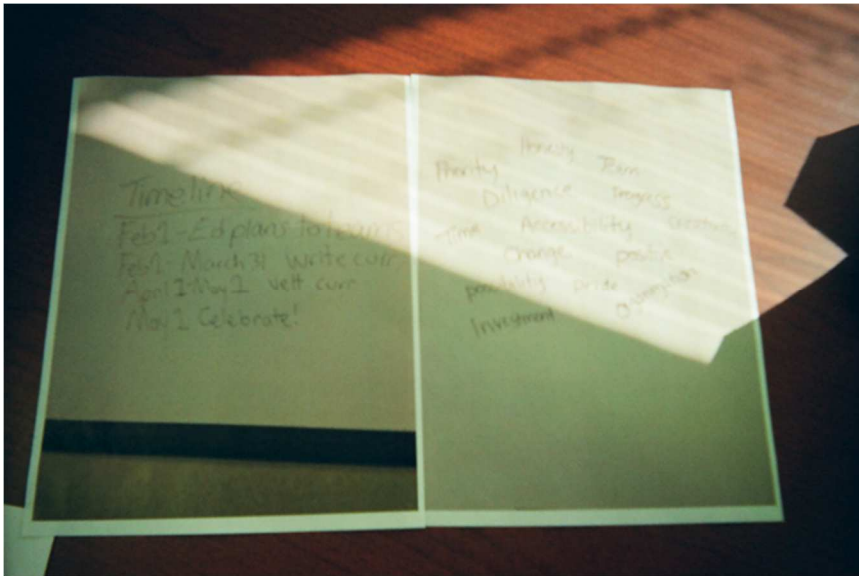
Figure 4.32: Staff Commitments and Timeline at MSU's Mini RCI

Next, Thompson, shared a photo of books to represent a culture of professional

learning (Figure 4.33), and she described:

This picture right here is a picture of a couple different books. We've got the

Students Helping Students book, *The Strengths Finder*, my results from the IDI

that we just did, and then *35 Dumb Things Well-Intentioned People Say*. And to

me, on the side there are a bunch of other books of… common reads and just

professional development books. I think this, to me, represents *how* our

department in general shifted its focus to development… and to education. I

wouldn't have had *any* of these books on my desk four years ago. The dedication

to professional development wasn't there. It wasn't encouraged. In terms of

continuing our own learning. For me, the *Students Helping Students* book is the

book we use for our [student staff class], which is any of the students who want to

be student staff members for us. It was a very intentionally picked book because

it's all about peer educating. And we start off with any student who wants to work

for us helping them start seeing themselves as educators. And I think that sets the tone. It sets the tone for what we're trying to do and what this curriculum is all about *The Strengths Finder* I put in because it's part of our sophomore year curriculum. I think it's a great tool. We started to really utilize. I think we're going to continue to utilize it in other ways and expand what we're doing with it. But I think it's something that really values… that holistic approach to yourself. So like for me *The Strengths Finder* is you've got five of these strengths that really kind of represent, but the philosophy behind it is looking at your whole self and how those interact. Whereas if you were to do just a personality type…to me it just really represents looking at the whole student and looking at our whole selves as individuals and how we develop. The other two, the IDI and *The Dumb Things People Say*, is just kind of further demonstrates our commitment to bettering not only our students but ourselves and our department.

Figure 4.33: Books for a Culture of Learning

Staff emotions.

The following photos represent images that focus group participants described, and I interpreted, as emotions residence life staff felt during the journey of adopting the residential curriculum approach at MSU.

Ell captured a photo of a fountain on campus that was under construction to convey feelings about the process of adopting the residential curriculum (Figure 4.34). He explained:

This picture right here, wonderful fountain construction that's going on right now. When looking at it you can see the map. And reflecting that into… Residential Life, like being under construction but still having a little map of where we would like to go and where we plan on being. So that was kind of the things I was looking at. Here in the picture where you see the smooth gravel and a rough patch, I think that speaks for itself. The smooth…even though the smooth still has some of the kicked-up rocks from the rough patch, that was tough. Doing RCI was tough. I guess I would be the first to say, because y'all wasn't here, all of the extra meetings and things of that nature and what was going on at the time. As you can see, I got more of the smooth patch in the picture than the actual rough patch, but you can still see some of the rocks still kicked up on the smooth patch. So, that's what that picture kind of identifies. All right, so then, as you can see, it gets a little bit greener. We are in the green-ish area now.

Figure 4.34: Fountain Under Construction

Lance shared three pictures of two staff standing at a white board to describe his feelings when joining the organization. Only one photo is featured as all three were similar (Figure 4.35). Lance explained:

The first picture I have is just a blank bulletin board and two staff members looking at one another saying, "What's going on?" I think when I first arrived here I was like, "OK, great. This is Res Life. We do programs." I was like, "Wait? We're doing curriculum?" I know we talked about it in the…in my interview and things like that. But I didn't have any idea what it would really look like in place, so it was kind of a blank slate first walking in for me. Then as we started to try to spell it out, we got more confused. Curricu-what? Really? Is this what it really entails? Like lesson plans and things of that nature?
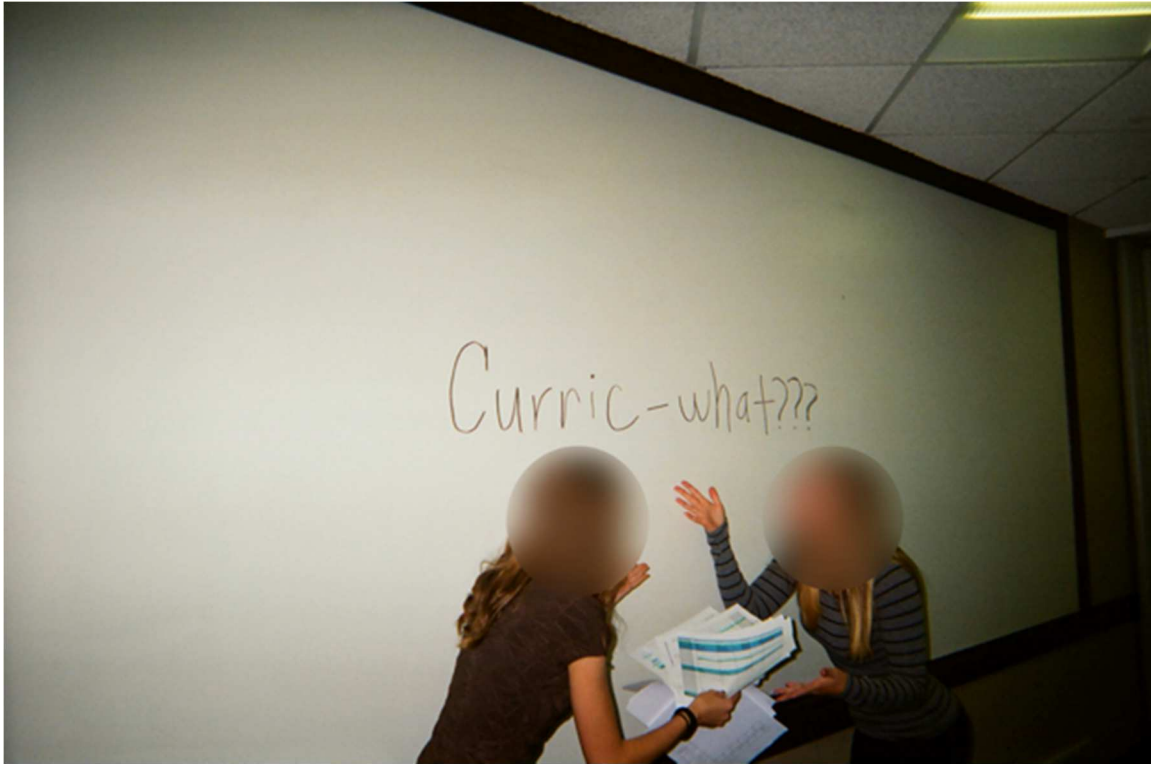
Figure 4.35: Curric-what?

Next, Lance shared three photos to capture staff's feelings about different points on the journey of adopting the residential curriculum. Below, are photos to illustrate staff conflict (Figure 4.36), frustration and staff leaving the organization (Figure 4.37) and confusion with sequencing (Figure 4.38) Lance described the following about staff conflict:

> Then coming back to campus and saying, "OK, everything is great. I understand it all." And then the fights happened. So, some folks getting at each other's throats, trying to figure it out, trying to figure out what are actually doing, what actually needs to be asked of us, what lesson plans. And are we at full implementation, half implementation? When are we rolling out all of the details?

Figure 4.36: Staff Conflict

Next, Lance shared Figure 4.37 to describe staff's frustration and how some left the organization:

> At some points we threw everything up in the air and said, "We just don't have time for it." Then folks said, "Yeah, we do. We actually have time for it. We're going to make time for it." Then, some folks, as you can see, this picture is simulating someone throwing it up and walking out. We lost some people along the way not just due to curriculum but it's a part of our journey, so to speak.

Lance shared Figure 4.38 to capture staff's confusion with sequencing:

> Then we had some staff members kind of stop in their tracks, particularly like me when I submitted a lesson plan and it didn't go through. I was like, "Oh…., I need to figure out how sequencing works." That's a staff member being stopped in their tracks.

Figure 4.37: Staff Frustration and Departure from Organization
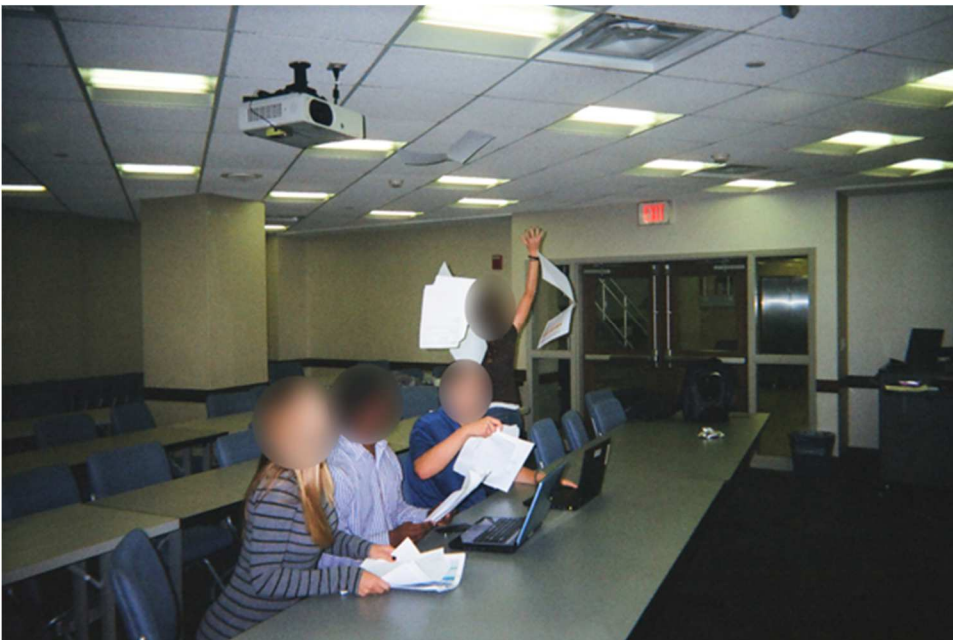

Figure 4.38: Staff's Confusion with Sequencing

Finally, Lance captured a photo to illustrate staff's excitement with receiving the

Residential Curriculum Playbook (Figure 4.39), and he explained, "This is one of our

staff members, [Taylor], holding up the curriculum. So we're like, "Yes…, thank you!"

So it's finally here.

Figure 4.39: Staff Excitement for RCP

Thompson shared a photo of herself and explained the purpose was to convey

frustration (Figure 4.40). She explained:

This picture, while funny…of myself in my weird, strange frustration face…I

think it really, to me, symbolizes this whole…whole process for us. I know…I got

frustrated at times. It seemed overwhelming. It seemed…like we didn't know

where to go sometimes. It was like there's this thing that I believe in, and I see the

benefit and the value of it… but in the face of everything that we deal with day-

to-day, in the face of the fact that we probably should have twice as many

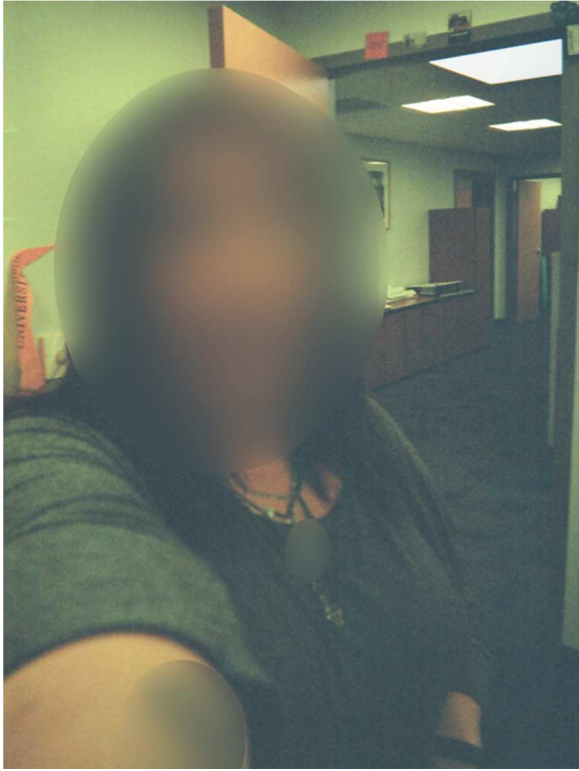professional staff as we currently have in our department…

Figure 4.40: Thompson's Frustration

Additionally, Thompson captured a photo of herself and Matthews (Figure 4.41), and she described:

> This picture is [Matthews] and I. You know, if [Jae] was here, [Jae] would have been in this picture, too, because the three of us went to RCI together with a couple of other staff members who are no longer here. So that really kind of just…Oh, [Steve] should be in this picture, too, shouldn't he? You know, starting that journey and…but when we started this journey [Matthews] and I were in the central office together and…knowing the blood, sweat, and tears our team has put into this, knowing the blood, sweat, and tears we've put into this, those moments when we looked at each other said, "Are we doing the right thing?" [Matthews and Thompson displayed tears and laughter during this comment]

Figure 4.41: Thompson and Matthews

Organizational Tools

The second category I interpreted for the photos was related to physical documents and resources within the organization that helped staff implement the residential curriculum approach. Below are photos and descriptions from my participants.

LaShay captured a photo of the Residential Curriculum Playbook and *Classroom Assessment Techniques* (CAT) book (Figure 4.42). She described:

> And we've been doing a lot of stuff with assessment this week, trying to figure out how it best fits within our use of the curriculum and how to best explain…what we are learning in [HALL] and what we are seeing with our students.

LaShay also shared a photo of assessment documents (Figure 4.43). She shared, "...then I have a picture of all of the assessments that I've received from staff members.
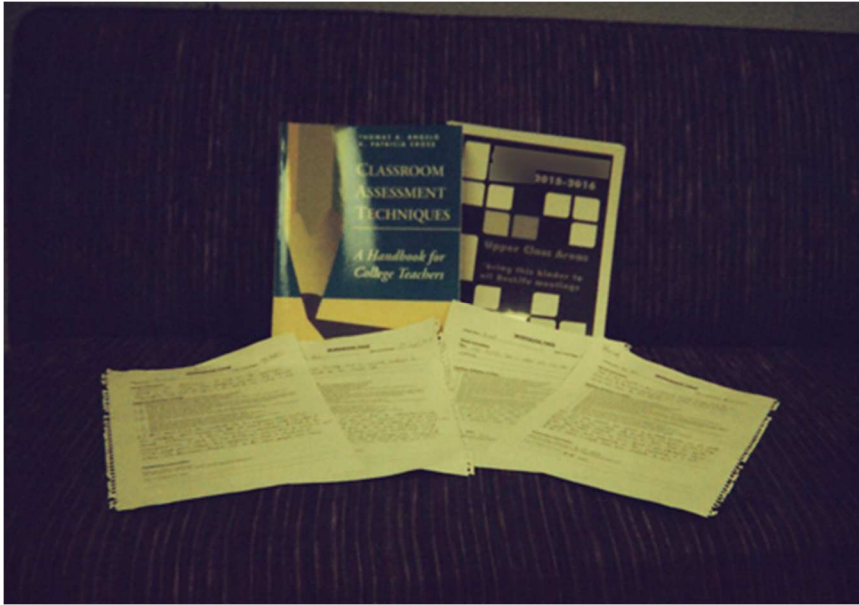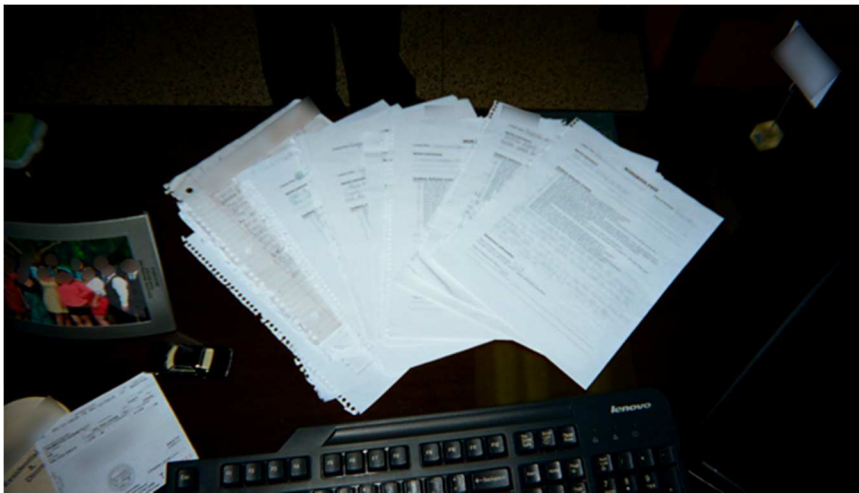
304

Figure 4.42: RCP and CAT Book

Figure 4.43: Assessment Documents from Staff

Jim captured a photo of the residential curriculum rubric (Figure 4.44), and he

explained:

> That's what I'm taking note of in this picture, making sure that the information
>
> that we're looking at for the learning outcomes, that the learning outcomes that
>
> we're using for bulletin boards are actually matching what we want for the

students to learn at that level. So, kind of sequencing our freshmen, sophomore,

and upper class experiences…. We want to make sure that, at the freshmen level,

sure, they're going to have some basic knowledge if they need to move up to an

intermediate a little bit. We'll have that kind of information or be able to share

that information with them. Sophomore level is going to be more intermediate

information. And then the advanced level will be the upperclassmen information.

That's what this other picture is right here.

That's what the rubric is right here. So kind of making sure that we're

hitting that progressive model for the residents because we want to make sure that

they are progressing in the knowledge base that we have, so that when they leave

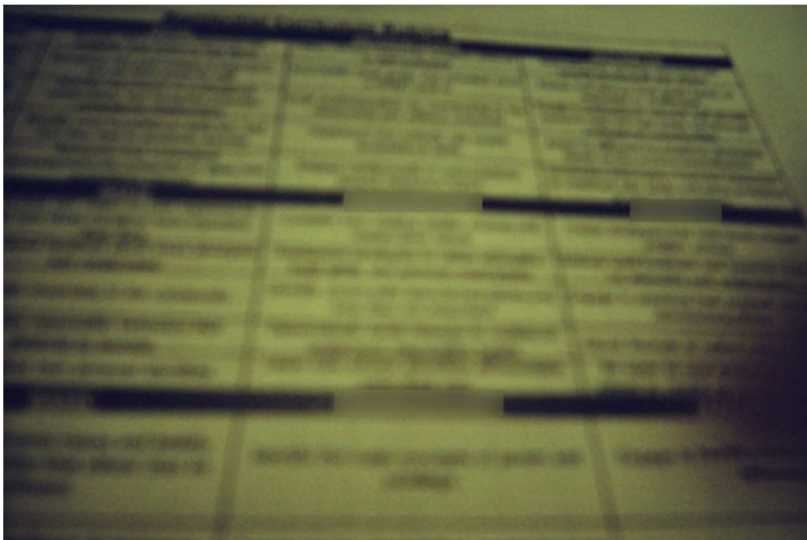they actually have gotten that knowledge and have actually learned from our

curriculum.

Figure 4.44: Residential Curriculum Rubric

Additionally, Jim photographed various documents that are used to implement the residential curriculum (Figure 4.45), and he shared, "...This last picture here is just the parts of the curriculum itself that I tore out of the book, actually."
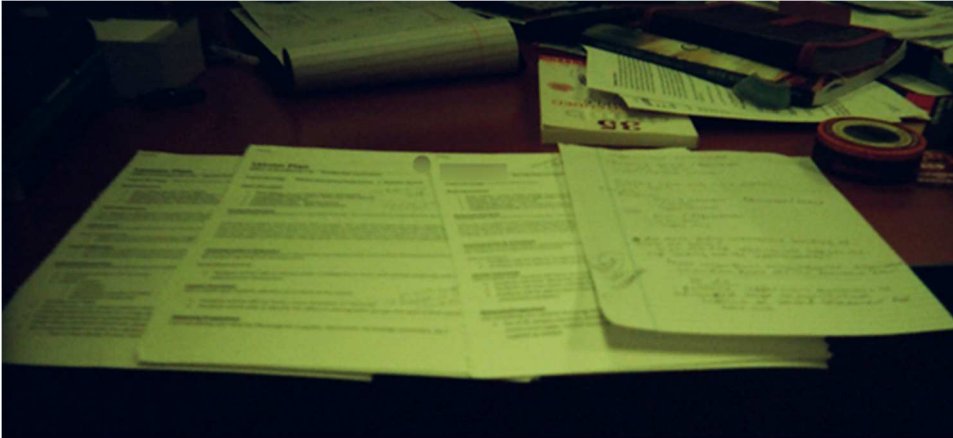
Figure 4.45: Documents Used to Implement the Residential Curriculum

Lance also captured a picture of lesson plans, specifically some for roommate relationships (Figure 4.46), and he explained:

> Two of the biggest things I think we are benefiting from now is the lesson plan, so it's a snapshot of one of the lesson plans in the book and a snapshot of the roommate, roommate like conversation piece that they have in there.

Figure 4.46: Lesson Plans for Roommate Relationships

Next, Matthews captured a photo of a binder with resources that staff used prior to MSU's first Mini RCI (Figure 4.47), and she explained:
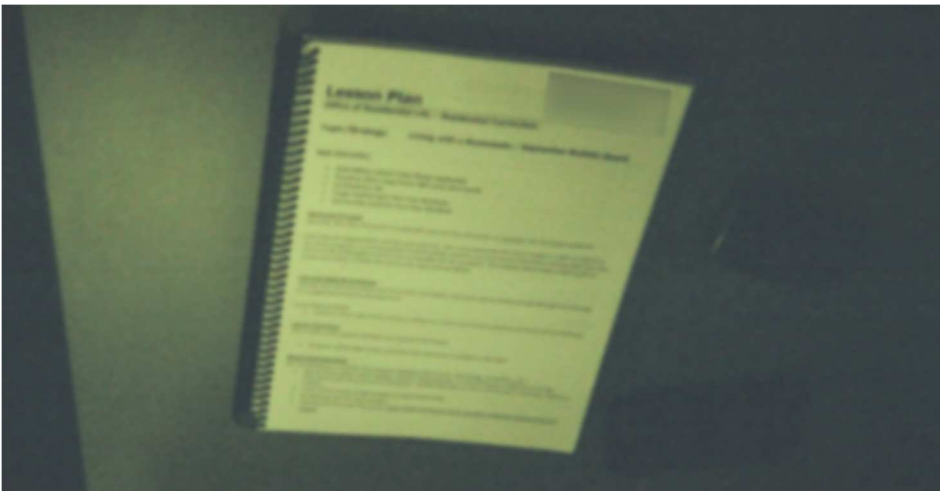
...our first curriculum binder. And we created that right before the first time [Ms. Pleasant] came. It had a section for each of the 10 Essential Elements. Some of it had nothing, no content behind it. It was stuff that I knew we would be developing. Some of it was articles that we were going to discuss, templates, sample learning outcomes, sample educational priorities, things that our hope was, that staff would pull up as we went through this process and be like, "What's in this part? What do we need to add here?"

Sometimes we used them. Sometimes we didn't. But it was at least something that I could hand to them and say, "Here's the road map. Here's where we're going. And here are each of the different steps of the process," to kind of break it up for everybody.
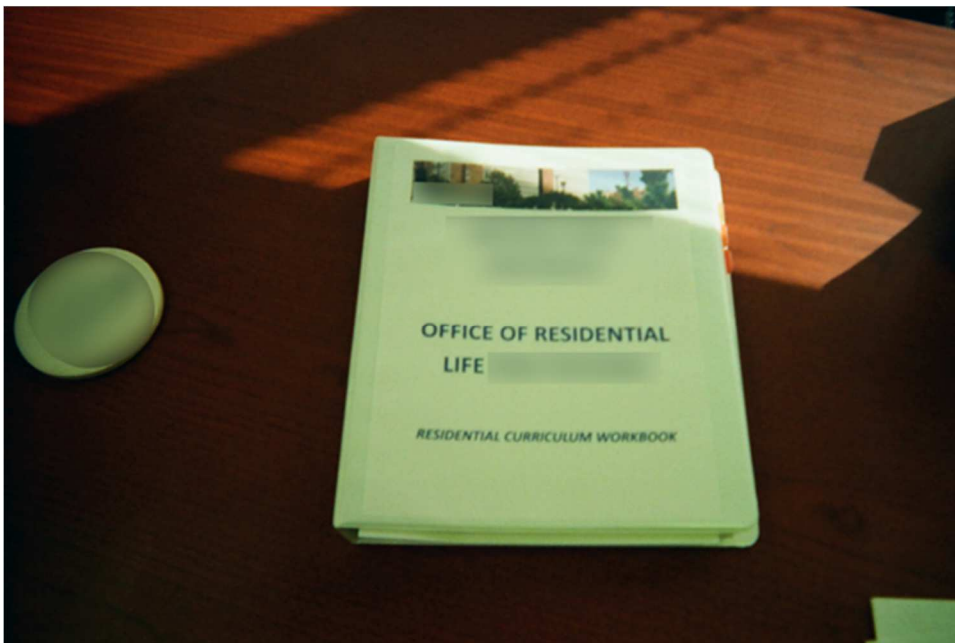

Figure 4.47: First Curriculum Binder

Matthews captured a photo of PowerPoint slides used to describe the residential

curriculum to external partners (Figure 4.48), and she explained:

> The next one is a picture of a PowerPoint slide, because I feel like a lot of
> this journey for me, as the director, has been telling the story of our journey with
> our *external* partners. I had an opportunity to go talk to the President's National
> Advisory Council. It's business and leaders from all over the country who he
> goes out and meets with about once or twice a quarter, or semester, to try and find
> out what the current trends are.
>
> He had called [Dr. Blair] and asked if I would be willing to come and talk
> about what we were going to be doing with the residential curriculum. The picture
> is like really complicated math. Because in the presentation I said, "You wouldn't
> ever walk into a *classroom* on the very first day of college or the very first day of
> elementary school and see a problem like that and expect students to do it. The
> next slide was like 3+2=5 before you first start with the basics. So, really what
> we're trying to do is help students get the basics so they can go to more advanced.
> That was a really powerful presentation for me because I also was able to engage
> them, the participants a little bit. "When you hire my students, what do you want
> them to be able to do? When you hire my students, where are the gaps? And how
> can we partner together to make sure that, as they're living with us during their
> two or three or four years here, that they're the obtaining the skills, and the
> practice, so that when you hire them they're ready to go?"
>
> That was a pretty exciting conversation. *After* this presentation there were
> two or three folks who *actually* used to be directors of residential life or RAs who

came up to me and said, "*Oh my gosh. This makes so much sense.* If only we had

done this years ago. Wow, this is so much easier to understanding why we're

doing than the programming wheel." That was a kind of nice affirmation.
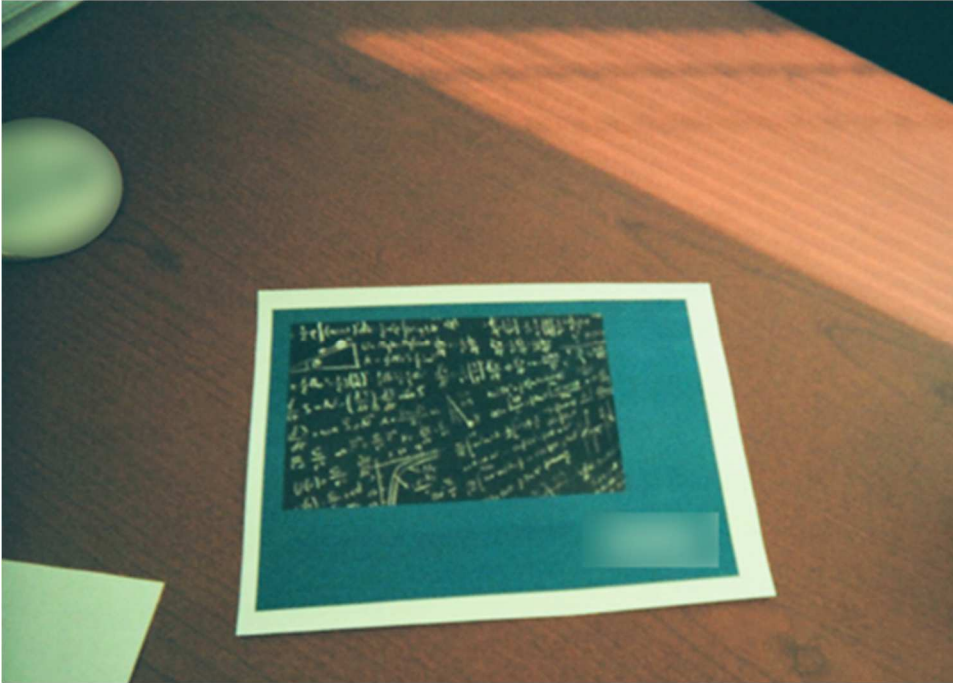
Figure 4.48: PowerPoint Slides for External Partners

Matthews also captured a photo of the RCP with a memo to external partners (Figure

4.49), and she explained:

> ...the three [RCP]. The top is a letter or a memo that I'm working with [Dr. Blair]
>
> to craft. He wants me to tweak it. It's a memo to the dean of [MSU's Academic
>
> Center], our provost, our president, the VP for student affairs, I think that's it, just
>
> basically saying, "Here is a copy of our curriculum plan for this fall…here's the
>
> story of how we got here, and this is why it's important. And I would encourage
>
> you to take a look and then check in with our students on how it's going.

Because I think it's important, particularly, to get into our new provost's hands. We've talked with him a little bit about what we're doing, and he got really excited. He said, "This seems more organized than a lot of the classroom curriculums I've looked at a college level." I'm excited that [Dr. Blair] and I are continuing to tweak this so that it's very individualized for that particular administrator.

Figure 4.49: RCP with Memo to External Partners

Next, Matthews shared a photo of the monthly assessment template (Figure 4.50), and she described:

...this is the first time in our curricular journey where I feel we can actually start focusing some attention on what students are learning. But all the pieces are there. Now we can not only implement and practice the lesson plans, but we can really see what fruit might be growing as a result of our efforts.
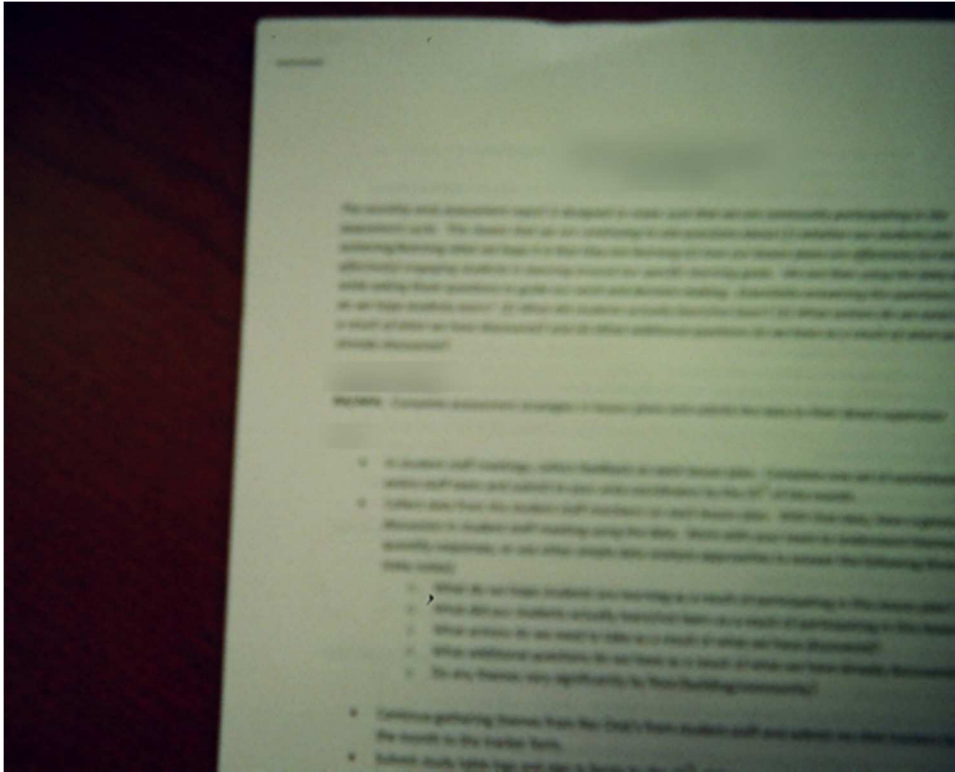
Figure 4.50: Monthly Assessment Template

Finally, Matthews captured a photo of index cards (Figure 4.51), and she explained:

> I took pictures of index cards…because we went from not doing a lot of
>
> assessment here to, I feel like, we buy index cards and notecards in bulk, whether
>
> it be for one minute activities we do in staff meetings, to what we're doing with
>
> our students, to… taking the show on the road and having others do classroom
>
> assessment techniques. It feels like we're writing index cards all the time, sorting
>
> them, practicing them, and developing themes for them.

Finally, Thompson shared a photo of the RCP (Figure 4.52), and she described:

> A stack of our curriculum guides. And for me that was just kind of…I feel like
>
> this very much defines where we've gotten to in this journey. It's the...you know,

the symbol of the fruit of our efforts. Right? It's the symbol of getting stuff done.

It's what we *physically* can touch and see and use.

Figure 4.51: Index Cards

Figure 4.52: RCP

This concludes the representative photos shared during the photo focus group.

Next are a summary, and the analysis and reflection, for how MSU's residence life staff

used photos to characterize the experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach.

Picture the Experience: A Summary

Selected participants used creative imagery to describe how some residence life staff characterized the experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach. The photos represented both themes of the study, *Reframing approaches to residential education at* MSU and *Gains and pains of structure in MSU's Department of Residence Life.* Participants were encouraged to involve others in capturing photos over the course of four-and-a-half days. The photos that participants captured, and discussed during the focus group, were organized in this section by two categories: (1) Staffing and (2) Organizational tools. The category for staffing included photos and descriptions for staff experiences, or ways in which staff was involved in the process of adopting the residential curriculum approach, as well as staff emotions, or how staff felt during the journey of adopting the residential curriculum approach. The category for organizational tools included photos and descriptions for physical resources that were developed and used to implement the residential curriculum approach.

Researcher's Analysis and Reflection on Picture the Experience

   Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations.

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations can be used to interpret the photos and participants' descriptions. While all four frames were inherently present in the photos, the Human Resources and Symbolic Frames were the most relevant to the categories I interpreted during coding and analysis. The Human Resources frame acknowledges that human capital within an organization have diverse types of

motivation, needs, talents, and skills that benefit the organization towards the execution of a mission. In the case of MSU, several photos depicted staff involved in the process of adopting the residential curriculum approach and included, but were not limited to, conducting the "archaeological dig" process, reviewing assessment reports, and working in teams. Additionally, some photos illustrated staff's emotions during the journey of adopting the residential curriculum approach and include, but were not limited to, conflict, frustration, and confusion. Finally, the language most participants used such as "we," and "us" conveyed the Human Resources frame, or the notion of a "family" or team within the organization. The Symbolic frame acknowledges that organizations have culture, traditions, rituals, and artifacts. The organizational tools, including but not limited to, the RCP, monthly assessment template, and resources to communicate with external partners, were examples of the Symbolic frame, as each conveyed the organizational priorities to outsiders. Each of these resources, and others, reflected MSU's Department of Residence Life's culture during the journey of adopting the residential curriculum approach.

Insights for professional practice.

Regarding professional practice, the photo activity was one method to engage participants' in sharing, with me, as the researcher, their experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach. I found it was useful to invite participants to describe and characterize the journey of adopting the residential curriculum approach rather than me making assumptions based on my professional experiences or anecdotes from colleagues at other institutions. Staff in departments already following the residential curriculum approach, or for those with staff considering the approach, can benefit from

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knowing the topics these participants addressed; these topics may become "points to ponder" or aspects to evaluate when implementing a residential curriculum. Finally, the photos that represented emotions served as a reminder that changing paradigms and practices in organizations typically involves both joys and challenges for the staff and constituents.

Researcher's reflection on picture the experience.

I was particularly pleased with the photo activity, as I found it enjoyable to listen to how participants involved other staff in the process of capturing photos. I was glad that graduate staff and student staff were represented in some of the photos and descriptions. However, I regretted that I did not invite graduate staff, student staff, and RHA student leaders to either participate in the photo activity with the professional staff representatives or that I did not design one or more similar photo activities for the graduate staff, student staff, and RHA leaders. I acknowledge this reflection as a limitation of the study.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to report the findings from this descriptive case study (Yin, 2014) of how staff and student leaders in one residence life department adopted the residential curriculum approach. The two themes, or major findings, for the study were: (1) Re-framing residential education at MSU and (2) Gains and pains of structure at MSU. Both themes included sub-themes, categories, and sub-categories. The findings indicated complex intersections, showing that the human experience is complex, rarely with isolated perspective on topics or events. Additionally, participants' perspective tended to be different based on position or role in the organization. In

Chapter 5, I comment on the similarities and differences of participants' perspectives.

Finally, Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations were useful as an

interpretative lens for how participants' experiences, and organizational tools, reflected

the Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic Frames.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Residential Curriculum approach calls for Housing and Residential programs across the country to reconsider how students learn, develop, and evolve. It challenges us to rethink what we do and how we do it. A Residential Curriculum does not take away or change what we do; it simply restructures what we do and explains the who, what, where, when, and how. It also calls for us to have specific learning goals and outcomes for student learning, based on an overarching Educational Priority. It is a call to action, to set a culture of continuous assessment of our services, initiatives, and daily work.

This quote, from the opening letter in MSU's Residential Curriculum Playbook (RCP), conveys the proactive nature of the emerging residential curriculum approach. The RCP serves as an organizational tool for practice, and from what I interpreted, as a source of messaging to departmental staff and external partners about priorities for facilitating opportunities for student learning in MSU's residence halls.

This descriptive case study (Yin, 2014) describes and characterizes how one residence life department at a mid-size, public university adopted the residential curriculum approach congruent with "The 10 Essential Elements of a Residential Curriculum" (The 10EERC) as discussed at ACPA's annual RCI. The research questions address what changes occurred in the residence life unit, what participants perceived as

positive and challenging in transitioning to the residential curriculum, and how residence life staff characterized the experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach. The housing and residence life department at MSU reports to the Associate Dean of Academic Enhancement (pseudonym) in academic affairs; this was a unique factor impacting the department's adoption of the residential curriculum approach. Nationally, how housing and residence life departments report within institutions varies based on institutional factors[4].

I aimed to contribute novel research regarding the residential curriculum approach as defined by The 10EERC. The goal of this study is to determine the conditions that contribute to effective practice, thereby positioning housing and residence life departments to contribute to, and enhance, student gains towards learning and development in on-campus living and learning environments. Additionally, with the increase of off-campus properties luring students with expanded amenities, results from this study may inform chief housing officers and mid-level professionals of ways to increase the competitive advantage of on-campus living. Because most housing departments are revenue-generating auxiliary units, often they are expected to contribute funds for selected institutional programs and services. Thus, to maintain a competitive advantage over off-campus competitors, housing and residence life departments must be able to demonstrate value to students' learning and development. This, in turn, supports

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[4] Fotis (2013) wrote about organizational structures. He asserted, "When it comes to the organization of campus housing departments and their placement within the administrative structure of colleges and universities, the variety of options is equal to that of athletic team mascots. Some of them are unique, while some closely resemble others. They can change and evolve to meet changing conditions. There may even come a time when they need to be overhauled entirely.

the institutional mission and contributes to the desired outcomes for today's college graduates.

The following three research questions frame this study, conducted at a mid-size, public university:

1. What changes occurred in the residence life unit when adopting the residential curriculum approach?

2. What were participants' perceptions of adopting a residential curriculum approach?

    a. What did the participants perceive as positive in this transition?

    b. What did the participants perceive as challenging in this transition?

3. In what ways did the residence life staff characterize their experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach?

Summary of Literature

The literature review for the present study includes content from higher education and selected literature on organizations. Higher education literature pertained to the emergence of student affairs as a profession, influence of co-curricular education, and evolution of residential education approaches. Several seminal publications provided context for understanding the change, over time, in the role of residence life staff from acting as disciplinarians (Thelin, 2011) to serving as educators within the beyond-the-classroom setting (Blimling, 2015). Additionally, seminal documents, such as *The Student Learning Imperative: Implications for Student Affairs* (ACPA, 1994), addressed the transformation of higher education, and ultimately served as a call to Student Affairs professionals to develop programs and services that would add value to the academic

mission of higher education and enhance student learning and development (ACPA, 1994). This document illustrated the characteristics of learning-oriented student affairs divisions, which could then influence practice within the various functional units such as housing and residence life departments. Brown's (1972) stance on student development beyond the classroom and ACPA's T.H.E. Project were also influential works.

Several types of models, and other guiding beliefs, have influenced residential education ranging from the early residential college model begun at Harvard in 1636 (Thelin, 2011) to, for example, what Kennedy (2013) and Schuh (in Rentz, 1996) wrote about regarding Morrill, Hurst, and Oetting's (1980) Intervention Strategies Model, which guided the following three types of programming in the residence halls: (a) remedial programming; (b) preventive programming; and (c) developmental programming, Banning's (1989) Ecosystem Model, where programs are based on goals and values present within their environment, and Mosier's (1989) Health and Wellness Model, which influenced programming along the following six dimensions: emotional, intellectual, physical, social, occupational, and spiritual development. All of these models had valid components and they were presented to provide perspective on how the residential curriculum differs from previous practice.

Housing departments are often situated within the organizational umbrella of student affairs divisions. The breadth and depth of literature on organizations was paramount to addressing the research questions for my study that explored the lived experiences of professionals who adopted the residential curriculum approach. Senge's (1990) widespread literature on learning organizations served as a conceptual framework by which I view the purpose and potential of residence life units as learning-enhancing

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spaces for students and staff. Schein's (2004) work helped me understand organizational theory associated with individual and collective team's meaning making in organizations. Lewin's (1951) Model of Organizational Change served as an example of how organizational change is a process.

Specifically for my study, I believe there is an ethos of learning within housing and residence life departments that can, and should, be aligned with the institutional mission and priorities. Fostering an organizational culture of learning aligns with the priority of providing learning-enhancing environments for students. Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations is the theoretical framework by which I coded and analyzed my data. Bolman and Deal's (2014) four frames are: Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic. According to Bolman and Deal (2014), managers often benefit from multi-frame perspectives.

In summary, to date, writings on the residential curriculum approach are limited to practitioners-scholars' writings that describe the residential curriculum approach and The 10EERC. No empirical research has been published on the residential curriculum approach. Kennedy (2013), in a book chapter on programming and education in residence halls claimed, "Of all the models examined, the residential curriculum is the emerging model in the field" (p. 68). The residential curriculum is a proactive approach for enhancing residential students' learning and growth by aligning the mission, goals, outcomes, and practices of a residence life department to those of the respective institution (Edwards & Gardner, 2015; Kennedy, 2013; Kerr & Tweedy, 2006; Shushok, Arcelus, Finger, & Kidd, 2013).

Conclusions from Findings

Findings of the study include two main themes as described in Chapter 4: (1) Re-framing approaches to residential education, and (2) Gains and pains of structure at MSU. Additionally, Bolman and Deal's (2014) four frames were useful in interpreting these findings. Before elaborating on the meaning of the study's findings, following is an analogy one participant shared that eloquently summarizes the findings of the study. Lance, a coordinator of residence life, likened the notion of navigating the process of adopting the residential curriculum approach to beginning a new relationship:

I would tell a friend or colleague that when thinking of the curriculum, think about it as a relationship. That would be my best advice. In a relationship it's a new person, something new, something foreign.

You have to meet that person. You know, start and have some common ground with them. It's always going to be that, "Oh, I'm going to keep it professional or hide certain things from them." And you know, and then you get to know them a little bit more and a little bit more. You become a little bit more comfortable and more relaxed with one another. Then the not-so-good tendencies come out.

Then you're challenged at that point. Is this someone I really want to continue on with or not? Based on what it looks like for you, if it's a long-term relationship, it's something you go into it, you have to embrace that person and all their good, bad, ugly. Talk through it. Communication is so key, talking about the little things.

Talking about just your little feelings and experiences, communicating it

all to the other person so that they start to understand who you are, how you think, how you operate, how you view the world based on your experiences. And you two can start to make those connections. Then at some point you'll be best friends or you'll be in a relationship. You'll get married, or you'll be lifelong friends. You know, so that can happen for you if you don't fear that first initial, "Hey, how are you? What's your name? Where are you from?"

So, it's a bit of a process. I look at it like a relationship. You have to have a relationship with curriculum. You have to learn that language.

Lance's analogy addressed such aspects as building trust, communication, navigating decisions, affinity or commitment to a cause, drawing on past experiences, and navigating uncertainty. This analogy also supports the assertion that organizational dynamics, especially surrounding changes, are complex as is the human experience. I found each of these ideas in the findings for the study. Next is a synthesis of the meaning of each theme of the present study.

Re-framing Approaches to Residential Education

This theme of the present study illustrated how staff in MSU's Department of Residence Life utilized different models, with differing expectations by supervisor, to educate residential students prior to adopting the residential curriculum approach. Additionally, data for this theme reflected how departmental learning outcomes and educational priorities were related to MSU's institutional mission and priorities. This alignment with institutional mission and priorities is in contrast to universal programming models used nationally, where specific congruence with the institution is often not the case.

One of the most meaningful takeaways from this first theme was that participants'

perspective differed by their role in the organization. For example, professional staff and

graduate staff participants named specific models of past educational approaches, such as

the wellness model, whereas students spoke about implementing educational approaches

and supervisor expectations. Additionally, for the sub-theme *Focused Commitment*, Dr.

Blair, Sonya Matthews, and selected other professional staff, spoke about how the

learning goals for MSU's residential curriculum approach were connected to institutional

priorities. One example of this linkage was the institution's value on community service,

which translated to MSU's residential curriculum goal of "social responsibility."

Students did not speak about the notion of alignment with MSU's mission or priorities.

Similarly, students did not provide much insight into how and why the department

adopted the residential curriculum approach. As Senge's (1990) notion of mental models

suggested, participants seemed to have differing perspectives on the philosophical

underpinnings of residential education. These findings reveal that all members of an

organization have access to different information. Moreover, just as the human

experience is complex, such is the case in organizations where there are often dynamics

including, but not limited to, competing priorities, distinct staff roles and responsibilities,

scarce resources, human emotions, and evolving technologies.

The changes that occurred in MSU's Department of Residence Life were not

exclusively related to adopting the residential curriculum approach. It is important to

acknowledge that the reality of multiple changes in the organization may be a rival

argument (Yin, 2014) to some findings. Naming rival arguments, or circumstances

beyond what may be readily apparent in the data, is useful given Yin's (2014) proposition

that case study findings are most compelling when researchers acknowledge rival explanations. Some changes were related to hiring a new chief housing officer in 2013, the first external director of the department in 40 years. Professional and graduate staff participants were more apt to distinguish potential intersections of changes with adopting the residential curriculum approach from changes related to new leadership, institutional or external expectations, or other outside forces. For example, some professional and graduate staff conveyed that the organization was understaffed and that imposed challenges on adopting the residential curriculum approach. Additionally, some professional and graduate staff shared that processes such as front desk procedures and staff evaluations changed during the period of adopting the residential curriculum approach. On the contrary, student participants did not speak about new leadership, staffing levels, documenting processes, or competing priorities within and beyond the department. Instead, student staff and RHA student leaders spoke about perceived changes in their sphere of influence. For example, student staff participants shared about increased emails from supervisors, and RHA student leaders shared about a perception of increased awareness of RHA. There are myriad reasons why student participants did not mention certain topics. The reasons may include, but are not limited to, student staff having distinct position responsibilities and duties that are not the same as those of professional and graduate staff, lack of knowledge about decisions, changes, and efforts at the professional and graduate level, and that student staff typically are motivated to serve in their positions to offset room and board costs and/or to seek a student leadership experience – whereas professional and graduate staff, with distinctions between those groups, are often motivated to engage in their positions for career stability, career

advancement, and other considerations. Change is ever-present in society and organizations, thus any new initiative and what is required for it to thrive is subject to being judged as adding-value or detracting from existing success.

Gains and Rains of Structure at MSU

Participants discussed the pains and gains associated with new organizational resources related to adopting the residential curriculum approach. Several participants conveyed that the RCP, and resources such as lesson plans, helped provide consistent expectations within the organization. These findings represented how all participants, regardless of role in the organization, benefitted from the structure and clarity of written resources. On the contrary, most participants shared the challenges associated with the notion of structure, and examples included, but were not limited to, implementing certain educational strategies with upper class and other student populations and inconsistent space availability across residential facilities. Moreover, these findings indicate that organizational changes can impact staff morale, resources, practices, and cultural norms.

Communication, or Sense of Voice, was perhaps one of the most prominent tension points in the data. Professional and graduate staff spoke about creating MSU's Educational Priority Statement and resources included in the RCP. Additionally, several of these participants expressed, and documents such as feedback "workbook" pages in the RCP portrayed, that student staff had avenues to provide feedback related to implementing the residential curriculum. Student staff and student leaders instead spoke about the perception of lacking voice in terms of how the residential curriculum was designed and reaction to implementing the residential curriculum. This dichotomy in participants' experience again reinforces that members of an organization are often

tasked with unique roles or functions. However, communication about the rationale for efforts, and ongoing feedback from all members of an organization about the realities, both positives and challenges, of espoused priorities can be valuable. Morale, and how individuals perceive their contributions or role in an organization can be to the benefit or the detriment of the success of new initiatives.

Bolman and Deal's (2014) Four Frames

Findings from the present study underscored Bolman and Deal's (2014) assertion that effective managers recognize all four frames – structural, human resources, political, and symbolic – are at play in any organization. The data revealed that all four organizational frames (Bolman & Deal's, 2014) were represented in how MSU's Department of Residence Life staff adopted the residential curriculum approach. Chapter 4 includes my interpretation of how the four frames were related to each theme, sub-theme, category, and sub-category of data. Additionally, the following quote captures Bolman and Deal's (2014) core premise for the use of frames, or multiple perspectives:

> Rather than portraying the field of organizational theory as fragmented, we present it as pluralistic. Seen this way, the field offers a rich assortment of mental models or lenses for viewing organizations. Each theoretical tradition is helpful. Each has blind spots. Each tells its own story about organizations. The ability to shift nimbly from one to another helps redefine situations so they become understandable and manageable. The ability to reframe is one of the most powerful capacities of great artists. It can be equally powerful for managers and leaders. (p. 39)

Ultimately, the residential curriculum approach exemplifies the essence of Bolman and Deal's (2014) four frames. The Structural Frame is apparent in that the

residential curriculum approach uses learning outcomes, student development theories, and relevant literature to envision and create standards for educational resources and efforts. Resources, such as the RCP and the monthly assessment template, became cornerstone resources for staff to operationalize the residential curriculum. The Human Resources Frame is related to how staff roles are situated within a residence life organization. Master's-level professionals assume different roles than undergraduate student leaders who serve as peer-to-peer mentors for residential students. Additionally, findings indicated that most participants appreciated when their ideas and talents were engaged for the betterment of the organization. On the contrary, other participants, particularly students, reported that they did not feel they had a voice with developing or implementing the residential curriculum. The Political Frame is relevant in what Dr. Blair described as "curricular intentionality." This notion affirms a commitment to faculty, institutional partners, and future employers that staff in housing and residence life departments can have a role in the educational enterprise. The Symbolic Frame is relevant in that the residential curriculum approach resembles and champions a specific campus' values, customs, and priorities. A residential curriculum, to be designed and implemented to the tenets of The 10EERC, requires the creation of documents that reflect the culture of the organization and serve as artifacts.

Study's Limitations and Generalizability

To date, no research has been conducted on The 10EERC, or how residential curricula aligned with The 10EERC, have been implemented. The limited writings on residential curriculum, which are by practitioner-scholars, leave some of the knowledge of residential curriculum as folklore; information is shared within a community but with

the risk for misrepresentation of facts. While I believe, as do other RCI faculty, that The10EERC are undergirded by theory and research, there is no research on the efficacy of these concepts as a model in practice. Thus, it is inconclusive whether this is an effective model for residential education. Additionally, there is no accountability or assessment system to prevent institutions from following traditional programming, or another model, while claiming they are adhering to The 10EERC. Knowledge of organizational theory, such as Bolman and Deal's (2014) four frames of organizations, may help inform conditions that promote effective shifts in approaches to a residential curriculum, such as with the adoption of The 10EERC.

For the present study, there were at least four limitations. First, faculty and campus partners within academic affairs or student affairs were not invited to share perspective on how MSU's Department of Residence Life staff adopted the residential curriculum approach. Second, I did not include mitigating factors or rival explanations (Yin, 2014) in my interview or focus group protocols. A third limitation is that I did not include student staff or student leaders in the photo activity. Thus, the findings from the pictures may have been different if student participants had the opportunity to capture and describe photos to characterize the experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach. However, participants for the photo activity were encouraged to serve solely as representatives who could engage others in capturing photos based on the provided prompt. Fourth, I did not request that participants not speak with one another about the content of our interview or focus groups. Thus, not explicitly asking participants to keep information from interviews and focus groups private could have contributed to

groupthink for examples about changes, positives, and challenges associated with adopting the residential curriculum approach.

In conclusion, qualitative research is not generalizable (Glesne, 2011), thus the findings from conducting research at one institution cannot be assumed to hold true for all residence life departments. This assertion about the inability to generalize findings is congruent with one of the principles espoused during the annual ACPA RCI Plenary and subsequent sessions. A residential curriculum must be uniquely tailored to its institution's mission, priorities, culture, and norms. However, Yin (2014) proposed that analytic generalization, or findings similar to theoretical concepts or principles from the literature, could be relevant beyond the bounds of the case. For the present study, interpretation using Bolman and Deal's (2014) four frames, as outlined in Chapter 4 and earlier in this chapter, provide insight about each frame for organizations beyond that of MSU's Department of Residence Life.

Implications for Practice

The present study, as the first empirical research published on the residential curriculum approach, contributes novel scholarship on understanding how organizations function to fulfill a mission and achieve goals. Implications are not isolated to housing and residence life departments but rather may inform practice for (1) staff in residence life departments that have adopted or might adopt the residential curriculum approach, (2) graduate preparation programs and graduate assistantships, (3) functional units in student affairs other than housing and residence life, (4) divisions of student affairs, (5) ACPA's annual RCIs, and (6) The 10EERC.

Residence Life Departments

Residence Life departments that already have adopted the residential curriculum approach, or departments that are considering the development of a residential curriculum, could benefit from the following implications for practice. Foundationally, chief housing officers are responsible for regularly communicating to all departmental staff how and why philosophies, programs, initiatives, and services of the housing and residence life department must be congruent with, and situated to add value, with the institutional mission and priorities as well as the department's respective Educational Priority Statement (EPS). Involvement from partners within student affairs and academic affairs is imperative when developing the EPS. This dialogue and shared effort with partners is often congruent with similar conversations in provost's offices where academic deans and faculty are encouraged to explore curriculum changes. Frequent engagement with how the EPS and educational strategies related to a residential curriculum aligns with an institution's general education outcomes are paramount to how a housing and residence life department can contribute to the institution's mission and priorities. Additionally, within housing and residence life departments, there are opportunities to examine how services of housing and residence life departments, such as housing assignments and marketing services can be integrated into the residential curriculum approach. Educational practices with, and messages to, students and constituents can be tailored to underscore a department's designated learning outcomes, learning goals, and educational strategies.

The residential curriculum approach can be most impactful to students and constituents when all staff and student leaders of a housing and residence life department

can communicate the educational outcomes, goals, and strategies for what students should learn by living in a residence hall at any given institution. Housing and residence life staff should talk with student staff, and student leaders, as learners beyond the classroom rather than solely as individuals performing functions without knowledge of context. Student staff and student leaders may be better equipped to articulate and act on an organizational mission in their chosen careers based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities professionals nurture during students' undergraduate tenure. Ultimately, we should teach students and student staff about learning outcomes and findings from literature in ways that can inspire and engage them rather than exclude students or imply that they are not worthy of, or interested in, such teachings.

Chief housing officers should evaluate staff hiring and retention practices, allocation of resources such as funds and staff time, and address gaps in staff training and development for staff at all levels of the organization. Staffing levels, structures, and accountability measures must be considered when adopting a paradigm change and should be communicated to staff prior to instituting changes. Forums for staff at all levels to express joys, challenges, and ideas related to adopting the residential curriculum or any new endeavor signify a culture of care, growth, and learning. Additionally, just as some institutions like MSU host "Mini RCIs" with ACPA RCI faculty as consultants, housing and residence life departments should consider utilizing expertise of campus faculty, particularly in the business or organizational studies departments, to consult on the organizational implications of adopting the residential curriculum approach or other new organizational change that influences philosophies and practices.

Staff in residence life departments frequently turnover. When staff change, roles within the organization change, but more commonly when staff leave the organization. Chief housing officers, and mid-level staff who are responsible for staff training and development could benefit from generating meaning from the findings of this study. For example, a yearlong training and on-going development plan, for professional, graduate, and student staff should be designed to mirror the residential curriculum approach. Staff competencies, inclusive of competencies tailored to responsibilities and duties within a specific housing and residence life department, should influence outcomes for training and developments. The content of the residential curriculum should be integrated into all facets of onboarding and training as well as developments through the use of relevant literature and readings, pedagogy on teaching and learning techniques, and assessment practices to gauge learning. Current staff, at all levels of the organization, must be responsible for integrating new staff members to the organizational culture and specifically a respective department's residential curriculum approach. Chief housing officers, and mid-level managers, must do more than clearly communicate expectations, verbally and in performance evaluations, for what staff must know and do to implement the residential curriculum. Finally, the findings of the present study relate to a need for increased communication with housing and residence life organizations and reflect an opportunity to designate practices and timeframes for facilitating individual, group, and written feedback about the residential curriculum for all levels of staff within the organization.

Finally, the effective adoption of the residential curriculum approach, or any new initiative, requires that organizational philosophies and practices be documented.

Documenting practice is important to contribute legitimacy, accountability, and historical perspective. Resources such as MSU's RCP and other similar artifacts communicate the departmental priorities and values to insiders and outsiders to the organization, and are especially critical when recruiting candidates for student, graduate, and professional staff positions. Having these artifacts are just one way to add dimension to opportunities for dialogue within organizations. I assert members of nearly all organizations benefit from, and value, the act of communication – before and at various stages of employment.

Graduate preparation programs and graduate assistantships.

Graduate preparation programs curricula should be congruent with tenets of the curricular approach to beyond-the-classroom learning environments. For example, master's program curricula should require that students learn and apply knowledge from literature such as *The Student Learning Imperative* (ACPA, 1994), *Learning Reconsidered I* (Keeling, 2004), *and Learning Reconsidered II: A Practical Guide to Implementing a Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience* (Keeling, 2006). Additionally, the literature review for this present study could be a useful reading within graduate preparation program courses and in assistantships. The content features seminal literature in student affairs and higher education as well as the underpinnings of the residential curriculum approach; with tenets that can translate to any functional area in student affairs. Specific courses should teach graduate students how to write and assess effective learning and behavioral outcomes. Additionally, findings of the present study support that graduate preparation program curricula include teachings on organizational theories including, but not limited to, organizational change, organizational dynamics, and promising practices in disciplines beyond student affairs and higher education.

There should be increased expectations for, and accountability within, graduate assistantships for application of classroom knowledge. Professional staff must provide specific opportunities, both project and interaction-based experiences, for graduate students to apply coursework to everyday encounters and efforts. For example, graduate staff learning about student development theory can be integral to developing timely resources such as lesson plans used to operationalize the residential curriculum or another beyond-the-classroom initiative. Such involvement of graduate students is critical to improving efforts for undergraduate students and serves to socialize graduate students who will soon become entry-level professionals. Finally, learning the intricacies of the "archaeological dig" process, for example, is far more useful for graduate students than simply conducting a future job search. Learning how to critically interpret, and consume messages within an institution, is critical for professional success in any functional area of student affairs. A similar parallel is true for the other Elements. Teaching graduate students about The 10EERC can influence their efforts in an assistantship. This can help prepare them with skills and knowledge to excel for students through efforts in various functional units in student affairs.

Functional units in student affairs beyond housing and residence life.

Findings from the present study are not exclusive to housing and residence life departments. The 10EERC are principles that could be applied to any functional area where the organizational mission is to enhance students' learning and development in beyond-the-classroom environments. Nearly all functional units in student affairs espouse a mission, which typically is inferred to be congruent with the mission of a division, generally student affairs but in some cases academic affairs. For example, data

for this study featured how MSU's residential curriculum reflected MSU's institutional core value of strategic planning. Every student affairs unit or program must operationalize, often in annual reports, how philosophies and practices translate to the institutional mission. The concepts of designing measurable and relevant learning outcomes, situating strategies to execute outcomes, and an assessment plan to measure learning outcomes are some examples of the transferability of the curricular approach beyond housing and residence life. Moreover, the data presented in the previous chapter are relevant in any organization that adopts changes to the mission, staff roles, and organizational resources such as budgets, records, artifacts, and partnerships. Staff in all functional areas should be challenged to evolve and assess practices such that departments and units maintain competitive advantage for the betterment of the student experience. As more institutions adopt the residential curriculum approach, or divisions of student affairs adopt curricular approaches to beyond-the-classroom learning, findings from this study and others may be valuable as points to consider.

Divisions of student affairs.

Findings of the present study reveal how organizational dynamics and practices can influence change efforts related to the curricular approach to beyond-the-classroom learning. Organizational communication, development of artifacts, and values and norms impact how organizations add value to student learning and the institutional mission and priorities. Findings of the study complement the messages of *The Student Learning Imperative* (ACPA, 1994), specifically that student learning ought to be the priority of divisions of student affairs. The curricular approach to beyond-the-classroom learning affords leaders of divisions of student affairs with an opportunity to advocate for

division-wide outcomes. Each department, program, or functional unit can be held

accountable to demonstrating how practice aligns with and contributes to such division-

wide outcomes. Just as communication was a topic in the findings of the present study,

communication among departmental staff within a division, as partners for student

success, is critical to implementing effective beyond-the-classroom learning experiences

for students. Transparent and timely communication, for example, can help reduce

duplication of programs, initiatives, and services. Additionally, findings of the present

study lend support to campus initiatives that recognize students' learning in settings

beyond the traditional classroom. The emphasis of such student distinction could focus

on what skills students gained by participating in efforts undergirded by the residential

curriculum approach, or application of The 10EERC in other functional areas beyond

housing and residence life departments.

ACPA's annual RCI.

Findings of the present study can influence the developing curricula at the

ACPA's annual RCI. In 2014, a round table session was added to facilitate dialogue on

how the residential curriculum approach influences staff recruitment, hiring, training, and

development. Data presented for this study can influence the learning outcomes and

content for a similar session. In recent years, there has been increased dialogue about

communicating the principles and practices of the residential curriculum approach to

campus partners. Findings of the present study suggest there is a need to expand on such

dialogues and to emphasize how student staff and student leaders can have a voice in the

development and implementation of a residential curriculum. For example, specific

strategies to invite student leaders to Mini RCIs should be explored by RCI faculty and

participants. Insight from using Bolman and Deal's (2014) four frames of organizations

should be incorporated into an article for attendees to read prior to RCI. Findings may

influence criteria for institutional showcase presentations and poster displays.

Consultations with RCI faculty at, and beyond, the annual RCI can be informed by the

present study's findings. Ultimately, findings of the present study can begin a dialogue

about the development of a new institute that focuses on how the curricular approach to

beyond-the-classroom environments can be applied to all functional areas within student

affairs.

The 10EERC.

Findings of the present study may impact The 10EERC in regards to clarifying

and adding to the existing Elements. If we first consider the current Elements, we can

draw conclusions about possible changes. The current Elements include:

(1) Directly connected to your institution's mission (archeological dig);

(2) Learning outcomes are derived from a defined educational priority (i.e.,
     leadership, citizenship, etc.);

(3) Based on research and developmental theory – not just our intuition;

(4) Learning outcomes drive development of educational strategies (mapping);

(5) Programs may be one type of strategy – but not the only one;

(6) Student staff members play key roles but are not the educational experts;

(7) Represents sequenced learning (by-month and by-year);

(8) Stakeholders are identified and involved;

(9) Plan is developed through review process that includes feedback, critique,
     transparency (Curriculum Review Committee, etc.); and

(10)　Assessment is essential for measuring the achievement of the learning

outcomes and can be used to test the effectiveness and efficiency of

strategies for program review and accountability (Edwards & Gardner

2015; K. Kerr, personal communication, March 30, 2016).

Although findings from the present study are not generalizable (Glesne, 2011),

data from MSU's journey of adopting the residential curriculum approach provides an

opportunity to clarify some of The 10EERC. To begin, the first Element (Directly

connected to your institution's mission) can be modified to include the values and

priorities of the division of student affairs or academic affairs, dependent on the

respective campus. The added emphasis on division priorities could increase

accountability for practitioners to remain attuned to how departmental philosophies and

practices add value to priorities of the umbrella division. Thus, the newly worded

Element would read, "Directly connected to your institution's mission, division's

priorities, and strategic plans of both."

Second, Element 3 should be modified to champion the notion of multi-discipline

learning. This adapted Element could read, "Based on research, developmental theory,

and literature within and beyond higher education," and could include the application of

concepts from K-12, business, and behavioral sciences. This change would promote

increased accountability for practitioners to cite and apply concepts from literature, rather

than relying on the recollection of knowledge solely from what could be dated lived

experience or reference to outdated literature. Additionally, referring to literature beyond

higher education would layer commitment with purpose through multi-discipline

learning.

Next, Element 6 should be changed to clarify what roles staff should play. For example, the new Element could read, "Residence Life staff roles should be situated based on educational and lived experiences of professional, graduate, and student staff. Student staff and student leaders have knowledge that should be incorporated and developed by participating in the development and implementation of a residential curriculum." The current landscape in higher education, with resurgences of student protests, indicates that students want to be heard and often participate in solutions and opportunities. As shared in the previous section on implications for ACPA's annual RCIs, teachings at the annual ACPA RCI could better educate participants on how staff and student leader roles can be situated based on a curricular approach to beyond-the-classroom environments. Content in these teachings would need to address the roles of professional, graduate, and student staff. For example, some ways to engage student staff (based on the newly proposed Element 6) are to invite selected student staff (perhaps representatives from a campus's student staff council and RHA) to participate in Mini RCIs, the departmental residential curriculum committee, project teams, trainings of new and returning peer student leaders, and activities to promote feedback and assessment. Gaining early buy-in from students can have immeasurable paybacks to any organizational change or new initiative – particularly recognizing that student leaders serve as peer-to-peer agents of learning and development with residents who are not serving in student leadership positions.

Next, based on the findings of the present study, the order of Elements 9 (Plan is developed through review process that includes feedback, critique, transparency) and 10 (Assessment is essential for measuring the achievement of the learning outcomes and can

be used to test the effectiveness and efficiency of strategies for program review and accountability) could be inverted, and the Elements refined. The practice of formal and informal assessment was present in multiple data sources, but the practice of written records was less standardized at MSU. Changing the order of these two Elements, and adding to current Element 9 could potentially translate a message about The 10EERC. The 9th Element could read, "Assessment is essential for measuring the achievement of the learning outcomes and can be used to test the effectiveness and efficiency of strategies for program review and accountability." Finally, the current Element 9 could be expanded to emphasize written records and artifacts, and could read, "Educational plans are developed, critiqued, and modified based on assessment findings." That newly written Element could then be regarded as initiating the cyclical effect such that practitioners would use assessment findings – departmentally, institutionally, and nationally to revise the residential curriculum.

In addition to the aforementioned proposed changes to the existing Elements, findings of the present study afford an opportunity to add to The 10EERC. An Element is needed for the topic of conducting an annual organizational scan. This new Element could read, "Conduct and document an annual organizational scan based on Bolman and Deal's (2014) four frames." Such a tool affords the opportunity for staff at all levels of the organization, and student leaders, to participate in assessment and reflection that can contribute to personal learning and growth as well as organizational change, celebration, and improvement. Further, the written record serves as an additional artifact that conveys a sense of purpose within the organizational culture and could be saved for historical purposes. An organizational scan should include components that examine the structural,

human resources, political, and symbolic elements of an organization's culture. Table 5.1

shows an example of what such an organizational scan reference tool could include.

Table 5.1

Residential Curriculum Annual Organizational Scan Tool

Residential Curriculum: Annual Organizational Scan Tool
Based on Bolman & Deal's (2014) Four Frames of Organizations

Structural
- What documents were created in the last year related to the residential curriculum?
- What messages are included in the documents for the residential curriculum? Why?
- Who has access to documents for the residential curriculum? Where are such records stored on a daily basis?
- What is the process and timeframe for revising documents related to the residential curriculum?
- What were the most salient informal and formal assessment findings? How will these data be shared with internal and external constituents to inform practice?

Human Resources
- What roles did student leaders, such as with student staff council and RHA, have with implementing the residential curriculum?
- What did the departmental residential committee accomplish this past year?
- What education was provided to staff and student leaders regarding The 10EERC? What education was provided to staff and student leaders regarding national promising practices related to the residential curriculum approach?

Political
- What strategies were used to communicate intentions and results of the residential curriculum with external partners this past year?
- What feedback was solicited from external constituents, and how might it influence the future development of the residential curriculum?
- What new priorities emerged nationally this past year that should be included in the residential curriculum?
- What new priorities emerged on campus this past year that should be included in the residential curriculum?
- What new priorities emerged in the department this past year that should be included in the residential curriculum?
- What level of input and involvement do stakeholders within student affairs and academic affairs have with the residential curriculum?

Symbolic
- In what ways are tenets of the Educational Priority Statement espoused in the department?
- How were successes related to student learning and the residential curriculum approach celebrated in the department?
- How were challenges related to student learning and the residential curriculum approach addressed in the department?
- What practices were used to understand the organizational culture surrounding the residential curriculum approach?
- What organizational artifacts were created to espouse the tenets of the department's residential curriculum to current and incoming students, to faculty and campus staff, to the senior administration, to national colleagues?

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research on the residential curriculum approach can be envisioned by type of study design, methodology, coding and analysis, and topic. Following are examples for each category.

Design

Future studies on the residential curriculum approach can be designed differently based on such considerations as the research questions, topic of the study, and researcher's interest. Examples of future study design could include phenomenology (Glesne, 2011), action-based research (Patton, 2002), grounded theory (Charmaz, 2002), or in-depth interview study (Seidman, 2013) involving staff by distinct positions such as student staff, entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level. Additionally, there could be variation in the role of theory, emic (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Yin, 2014) or etic (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Yin, 2014). One example of an etic approach, or use of existing theory, could be to use Tinto's theory of social and academic integration (Tinto, 1993) to understand how the residential curriculum approach influences student learning and development. Finally, future research could involve a longitudinal study of MSU or another institution's experience with implementing the residential curriculum approach.

Methodology

Future studies can include qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approaches. Methodologies should be congruent with the nature of the research question(s), the design, and unit of analysis. For example, future qualitative studies could employ the use of interviews, focus groups, document analysis, activities such as the SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats), and photography. Quantitative approaches could

include surveys whereby data could be interpreted, for example, from statistical tests or analysis of resource allocation such as staff time and monetary resources. Mixed-methods approaches could incorporate methods used in both qualitative and quantitative research.

Coding and analysis

Researchers could employ various coding procedures and analysis techniques as described by Saldaña (2013) and others scholars. Future coding procedures for the present study, for example, could include emotion coding (Saldaña, 2013) or protocol coding (Saldaña, 2013) using The 10EERC. Narrative analysis (Glesne, 2011, Saldaña, 2013) could be used rather than thematic analysis (Glesne, 2011; Saldaña, 2013).

Topics

Ideas for future research on the residential curriculum approach are organized below based on distinct categories.

Student learning.

The unit of analysis for the present study was the organization, with the participants' experiences as the embedded unit of analysis (Yin, 2014). Future studies could address what residential students' report about how the residence hall environment enhanced their learning based on the curricular approach to residential education. A comparative study could explore or describe, based on design, how assessment of residential programs and services differed prior to, and after, adopting the residential curriculum approach. Additionally, a theoretical framework, such as Baxter Magolda's self-authorship (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004) could inform the focus of a future study. For example, a researcher could use self-authorship (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004) to

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code transcripts from individual interviews with international students living in residence halls in which staff in the residence life department adopted the residential curricular approach to residential education. Finally, another study could investigate how principles of community development, such as the Six I's of Community Development Model (Minor, 1999; Schroeder & Mable, 1994), is related to an institution's residential curriculum efforts.

Organizational perspective.

In addition to replicating the design of the present study, future research could undertake how a housing and residence life department transitioned programs and services beyond the residence life unit to reflect The 10EERC and residential curriculum approach. Similarly, a study could examine changes to resources within residence life departments when implementing the residential curriculum approach. Another study could examine how the paradigm shift to a residential curriculum influences staff training and ongoing development. A separate study could investigate how student leaders, such as those involved with a RHA chapter are educated about, or involved in, the residential curriculum approach. Relatedly, a study could examine how, or to what degree, ascribed staff competencies are related to the learning outcomes and learning goals of a departments' residential curriculum.

Future research could relate to factors beyond a housing and residence life department. Topics could vary based on reporting structures and might include a comparative study of adopting a residential curriculum in a housing and residence life department that reports through student affairs, in contrast to a department that reports through academic affairs. Relatedly, another study could describe how the residential

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curriculum approach in a housing and residence life department changed when institutional reorganization occurred, such as changes to reporting structures for specific departments. One study could investigate perceptions of constituents who are external to a housing and residence life department as to how an instituted residential curriculum relates to institutional mission and priorities. Another study could describe the experiences of a residence life department at an institution where the division of student affairs has committed to a curricular approach with unified learning outcomes for all departments, programs, and services to align. A study could examine how an institution's general education requirements are embedded into a departments' residential curriculum; thus, this could help examine or describe, depending on the design, what should all students gain by attending a particular institution of higher education. Finally, another study could investigate how the tenets of a residential curriculum, or a curricular approach within a division, changes when new institutional leadership is appointed, such a new provost.

ACPA's RCI.

October, 2016, will mark the 10th annual RCI. Since Kerr and Tweedy's (2006) article, the literature on the residential curriculum approach has been limited to writings of practitioner-scholars rather than findings on empirical research for the residential curriculum approach. Nationally, a future study could measure, by designated criteria, how residential curricula vary by institutional size, type, and geographical location. Future research could investigate the moments and structures that bring people together to think deeply about residential curricula. Such studies could involve participants before, during, and after the annual ACPA RCI, with "Mini RCIs" on campuses, and

interactions with consultants such as ACPA's RCI faculty. Another study could examine the residential curriculum within a department that did not send staff to an annual ACPA RCI. Finally, a study could involve national consultants' perspectives, regarding services provided on multiple campuses, of perceptions regarding common challenges, lived experiences, and advice from staff at various institutions.

Conclusion

This descriptive case study (Yin, 2014) describes and characterizes how one department of residence life adopted the residential curriculum approach congruent with The 10EERC as discussed at ACPA's annual RCI. Findings of the present study reveal that change and participant's perceptions in MSU's Department of Residence Life are both related to, and isolated from, adopting the residential curriculum approach.

Organizational dynamics are fascinating and ever changing, as are circumstances beyond the mission or walls of any department. At the time of data collection for the present study, the state of South Carolina was under a state of emergency with the unexpected 1,000-year flood. This served as a reminder that priorities change rapidly in our lives and organizations. The human experience, organizations, and the world in which we live are complex, unpredictable, and ever-changing. Staff in residence life departments constantly experience change in staffing, legal mandates such as Title IX legislation, facilities, and partnerships. Regardless of the functional unit within Student Affairs, changes in philosophy, initiatives, and resources, impact members of any organization directly and, as a result, likely impact constituents as well.

Despite the unpredictable nature of change in organizations, the writings of two authors affirm the mindset organizational leaders should embrace when developing

conditions that serve staff and constituents. Garvin (1993) defined a learning

organization, or, "an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring

knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights" (p.2,

para. 11). This notion is a powerful reminder of the potential within any organization

that is committed to fulfilling a mission. Additionally, Ansberryy (2000) wrote in the

Wall Street Journal an article titled, *Older and Wiser,* about the trait of wisdom. She

asserted:

> Ironically, as we grow older and stockpile more experience, we can view more
>
> things with a blank slate. We don't muddy our observation with as much
>
> knowledge. We can let go and fly by intuition, guided by a wealth of experience.
>
> (p. 3, para. 18)

Ansberryy (2000) concluded by sharing, "Perhaps with the accumulation of years, we

will increasingly cherish that humanity, growing not just older, but truly better." Her

insights about wisdom are meaningful when considering that adopting new approaches

can be empowering and incredibly rewarding if one commits, or better yet if members of

an organization, commit to embracing the possibilities.

In summary, engagement with participants at MSU and subsequently with the

data was a reminder that every organization has a story to tell. Every member of an

organization has a story to tell. There is never one story, and I believe stories become

memories, milestones, and ultimately fabrics of an organization's culture. These stories

and the outputs of an organization impact students. The messages that live within an

organization translate to the quality of the co-curricular efforts we implement for the

betterment of our students' experience.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL FROM UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN RESEARCH
DECLARATION of NOT RESEARCH**

This is to certify that research proposal: **Pro00045712**

Entitled: *Organizational Perspective on Implementing a Residential Curriculum: An Ethnographic Case Study*

Submitted by:

Principal Investigator: Hilary Lichterman
College: Education
Department: Educational Administration
Address: Wardlaw
                            Columbia, SC 29208

was reviewed on **06/19/2015** by the Office of Research Compliance, an administrative office that supports the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB), and has determined that the referenced research study is not subject to the Protection of Human Subject Regulations in accordance with 45 CFR 46 et. seq.

No further oversight by the USC IRB is required; however, the investigator should inform the Office of Research Compliance prior to making any substantive changes in the research methods, as this may alter the status of the project.

If you have questions, contact Arlene McWhorter at arlenem@sc.edu or (803) 777-7095.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Johnson
IRB Manager

APPENDIX B

REDACTED LETTER OF APPROVAL FOR DATA COLLECTION

August 25, 2015

IRB Approval Board University South Carolina

To Whom It May Concern,

Ms. Hilary Lichterman, a doctoral student completing her dissertation research at your institution, has my permission to use the [Department of Residence Life at "Midtown State University"] as a data collection/participant site for her dissertation research.

As the [Chief Housing Officer], I give her permission to conduct surveys, interviews, focus groups, and other research activities as outlined in her IRB proposal with members of our [Residence Life] team.

If you need any further information about this approval, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time. My contact information is***-***-****or*********@****.****

Sincerely,

(Sonya Matthews)

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT
You have been asked to participate in a study conducted by Hilary Lichterman, PhD candidate at the University of South Carolina. The goal of the study is to describe one residence life department's experience with adopting the residential curriculum (residential learning) approach aligned with the national "10 Essential Elements of a Residential Curriculum" as presented at the annual American College Personnel Association's (ACPA) Residential Curriculum Institute. I am interested in learning about changes that occurred from transitioning to the residential curriculum as well as your perceptions of what was positive and challenging about that process.

There are no known or potential risks associated with this study. Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw consent or may choose not to answer a particular question at any time without any recourse or obligations to the researcher or the University of South Carolina. Please note that all responses will remain anonymous and all data collected will be confidential. If any time you do not feel comfortable with this project please feel free to stop.

Thank you for your participation. If you have questions or concerns, please email me at hilaryl@sc.edu.

Please initial below if you agree:

_____I agree to participate in an audio-recorded interview

_____I agree to participate in an audio-recorded focus group

With my signature I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent form.

_____
Signature of Research Participant   Date

_____
Printed Name of Research Participant   Date

_____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent   Date

Questions and concerns about the research and/or your rights may be directed to:

Office of Research and Compliance at the University of South Carolina: (803) 777-7095
Doctoral Student: Hilary Lichterman; hilaryl@sc.edu; (573) 864-7989
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Christian Anderson; christian@sc.edu; (803) 777-3802

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER

Subject Line: Invitation to participate in research study

Monday, September 14, 2015

Dear _____,

My name is Hilary Lichterman, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Administration in Higher Education PhD program at the University of South Carolina. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that I am conducting in partial fulfillment of the requirements of my doctoral program. The title of the study is *Organizational Perspective on Implementing a Residential Curriculum: An Ethnographic Case Study.* Leadership within your department identified you as a possible participant for this study given your experience with adopting the residential curriculum approach in your department.

The purpose of the study is to describe one residence life department's experience with adopting the residential curriculum (residential learning) approach aligned with the national "10 Essential Elements of a Residential Curriculum" as presented at the annual American College Personnel Association's (ACPA) Residential Curriculum Institute. I am interested in learning about changes that occurred from transitioning to the residential curriculum as well as your perceptions of what was positive and challenging about that process. This is a qualitative study using interviews, focus groups, document analysis, and a photo and artifact activity to explore this research topic. Your interview will be one of 14 I will complete for the study. The findings of the study will add to the limited body of knowledge about implementing a residential curriculum; this scholarship can influence practice within residence life organizations thereby assisting programs and services to contribute to the institutional mission and student learning.

As a participant, you will be asked to complete a brief online demographic survey via Survey Monkey to capture biographical information prior to an individual interview. The interview, conducted during my site visit to your institution from September 28, 2015 to October 2, 2015 should last approximately 1-1.5 hours. I will ask your permission to audio record our interview so that I can accurately reflect on what we discuss. Audio recordings will only be reviewed by a professional transcriptionist and myself. For clarification I may request a follow-up interviews or email exchange.

There are no known or potential risks associated with this study. Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw consent or may choose not to answer a particular question at any time without any recourse or obligations to the researcher or the University of South Carolina. You will be given the opportunity to select your pseudonym (fake name) if you choose to participate. Only I will know your real name. The interview transcripts and all files pertaining to your participation in this study will be stored in a locked cabinet and destroyed afterwards if no longer needed. All computer files will be kept on a secure server. I will also maintain a copy of the data on a password-protected computer. The professional transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality agreement before accessing the recordings. Excerpts from the interview or subsequent communication may be included in the final dissertation, other later publications, and conference or institute presentations. However, your name or identifying characteristics will not be revealed in these writings or presentations or to your university.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please take approximately 8-10 minutes to complete a short online survey via the following link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V9MPXH3

Please complete the survey by 5:00p.m. on Monday, September 21, 2015.

I will bring a printed copy of the consent form, including the above content, to the interview for you to review and sign.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this invitation. I hope you will consider participating in this study and have a part in contributing knowledge that will impact how institutions adopt a residential curriculum. I would be happy to answer any questions about the study and may be contacted at hilaryl@sc.edu or (573) 864-7989. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research and Compliance at the University of South Carolina at (803) 777-7095.

Sincerely,

Hilary Lichterman

APPENDIX E

CONTENT FOR ONLINE PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Q1: By participating in this survey and clicking "Yes" below, you will give implied consent to participate in the study.

    Yes

    No

Q2: Please provide your first and last name, preferred email address, and preferred phone number.

    First & Last Name: _____

    Email Address: _____

    Phone Number: (   ) ____ - _____

Q3: Preferred pseudonym

    Preference 1:_____

    Preference 2: _____

    No Preference (Place "X" on line): _____

Q4: Graduate Students and Professional Staff: List degree(s) earned and institution(s). Student Staff and RHA Leaders: List academic major(s) and minor(s) and indicate whether you are possibly interested in a career in student affairs.

    _____

    _____

    _____

Q5: Please list your previous and current professional position(s) and the respective institutions(s). Please also list the year and date you started your position in Residential Life at MSU.

    Previous & Current Professional Positions:

    _____

    _____

    _____

    Year and Date Started Current Position: _____

Q6: Have you attended and/or previously worked in another department that followed the residential curriculum approach (as defined by "The 10 Essential Elements of Residential Curriculum") when you were at that institution? Please select all that apply.

Yes, I attended such a school: _____

Yes, I previous worked at such a school: _____

Neither: _____

I do not know: _____

Q7: Please specify whether or not you attended RCI and if so, how many.

_____

Q8: What year (and approximate month) did your department begin implementation of a residential curriculum with students?

_____

Q9: In a few sentences, describe your role with implementing the residential curriculum at MSU.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q10: This concludes the survey portion of this study. By clicking below you provide consent for me to audio record our interview or focus group (after which I will send you a transcription to you for review) and to use any artifacts you may provide to me during the study (including, but not limited to, photographs, documents, etc.).

Yes
No

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR COORDINATORS OF RESIDENCE LIFE

Fake Name: _____   Day/Time: _____

<u>Opening</u>:
Good morning/afternoon/evening! Thank you for taking the time to meet with me for this interview. My name is Hilary Lichterman, and I am a doctoral student at the University of South Carolina.

The purpose of this interview for my study is to learn from you what it was like for your department to make the transition to a residential curriculum. I am interested in learning about changes that occurred over time in transitioning to the residential curriculum as well as your perceptions of what was positive and challenging about that process.

Information gathered during this interview, and my visit, will remain confidential. Your responses will remain anonymous. I will send you a copy of the transcript for review and any additional comments. I ask that you be open and candid with what you share.

Just a couple of things to get started:
- I'm audio recording this interview for accuracy. I will transcribe the interview as part of my data collection and will only include your fake name.
- Content shared during this interview will be coded as part of the data analysis.
- May I have your verbal consent to use this focus group/interview as part of my study?
- This should take up to 90 minutes. Many thanks again for your time.
- Give copies to the participants:
    1. Participant invitation email– outlines project and expectations
    2. Consent form – can you please sign a copy for me and keep one for you.

<u>Questions</u>:
1. Tell me a little about your background and what attracted you to work here.

2. What do you enjoy most about your position?

3. Describe your current position and primary responsibilities.

4. Let's now transition to you sharing about the successes, accomplishments, and joys as your department has been adopting a residential curriculum.

   a. Tell me about some positives you have encountered in your position when adopting the residential curriculum approach.
   b. Tell me about the biggest success your department has had in adopting a residential curriculum.
   c. What are some other examples of positives as your department has adopted a residential curriculum?

5. How are these successes with adopting the residential curriculum celebrated in your department?
   a. What are some traditions, rituals, and/or symbols that have been used to characterize the positive aspects of adopting a residential curriculum?
   b. How are successes affirmed or positively reinforced?

6. Let's transition to you sharing about challenges as your department has been adopting a residential curriculum.
   a. Tell me about some challenges you have encountered in your position when adopting the residential curriculum approach.
   b. What has been the biggest challenge you encountered?
   c. How have these challenges been addressed?
   d. Tell me about some challenges your department has encountered when adopting the residential curriculum approach.
   e. What has been the biggest challenge your department encountered?
   f. How have these challenges been addressed?

7. How are these challenges with adopting the residential curriculum celebrated (or symbolized) in your department?
   a. What are some traditions, rituals, and/or symbols that have been used to characterize the challenging aspects of adopting a residential curriculum?
      i. Language/wording/jokes/slogans?
      ii. Symbolic removal of resources and/or processes?

8. As you know, my study is describing your department's journey of adopting a residential curriculum. I would like to talk about changes you have witnessed your team and department navigate when adopting the residential curriculum approach. I am curious to know about changes over time, what your journey has been like, etc.

   a. Tell me about changes you have observed as your team/organization has adopted the residential curriculum approach.
      i. (How did your responsibilities change when your department adopted the residential curriculum approach?)

   b. Now, I'll share general areas, such as staff training, and would like your perspective on these topics.

Let's talk about any changes to:

    c. How expectations of your position are articulated
    d. How you use your time in your daily work. (Meaning, has time in meetings changed? Have there been changes to the amount of time you spend with committees? Have there been changes to the balance of thinking/strategizing and creating/implementing?)
        i. For Entry-level: What does this look like for:
            1. Graduate staff
            2. Student staff
        ii. For Graduate-level: What does this look like for:
            1. Student staff
    e. How you supervise your student staff
        i. Your supervisory style overall
        ii. How student staff have understood the shift to a residential curriculum
        iii. 1:1 meetings
        iv. Staff meetings
        v. Performance evaluations (accountability)
    f. The departmental staff structure and/or position responsibilities.
        i. Was there any restructuring in adopting the residential curriculum?
    g. Staff recruitment and selection.
        i. Professional
        ii. Graduate
        iii. Student staff
    h. Staff training and development programs
        i. Professional
        ii. Graduate
        iii. Student staff
    i. How student conduct is addressed
    j. How you advise student leaders in your hall (GRADS)
    k. Student leadership opportunities within your department
    l. Marketing efforts directed at:
        i. Prospective students
        ii. Their parents/supporters
        iii. MSU campus partners
        iv. External audiences (via website, publications, presentations, etc.)
    m. Partnerships with faculty at MSU
    n. Partnerships with campus staff at MSU
    o. How resources are allocated

9. What opportunities do you get to provide feedback about adopting the residential curriculum?
    a. Tell me about how feedback is received with regards to the residential curriculum here at MSU.
        i. What has been positive about this?

      ii. What has been challenging about this?
    b. What does this look like for student staff?

10. What advice would you offer another entry-level professional or graduate student whose department is considering the shift to a residential curriculum?

11. I now welcome any additional thoughts you have at this time related to what we have been discussing today.
    a. Would you like to offer any other observations you have had with adopting a residential curriculum and of students or staff here at MSU?
    b. Have there been major turning points or milestones in your department's journey?
    c. What are some of the stories told in your department about your journey of adopting a residential curriculum?
    d. Overall, what have you enjoyed about this journey of adopting a residential curriculum?
    e. Overall, what have you *not* enjoyed about this journey of adopting a residential curriculum?

If time permits:

12. Tell me about how adopting a residential curriculum has impacted your professional development.
    a. How have you changed by the fact that your department adopted a residential curriculum?

13. How do you think adopting a residential curriculum will impact your search for your next position?

APPENDIX G

STUDENT STAFF FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Day/Time: _____

<u>Opening:</u>
Good morning/afternoon/evening! Thank you for taking the time to meet with me for
this focus group. My name is Hilary Lichterman, and I am a Ph.D. student at the
University of South Carolina.

The purpose of this focus group for my study is to learn from all of you what it was like
for your department to make the transition to a residential curriculum. I am interested in
learning about changes that occurred over time in transitioning to the residential
curriculum as well as your perceptions of what was positive and challenging about that
process.

Information gathered during this interview, and my visit, will remain confidential. Your
responses will remain anonymous. I will send you a copy of the transcript for review and
any additional comments. I ask that you be open and candid with what you share.

Just a couple of things to get started:
- I'm audio recording this focus group for accuracy. I will transcribe the interview
  as part of my data collection and will only include your fake name.
- Content shared during this interview will be coded as part of the data analysis.
- Quick reminder – each of you were specifically nominated/selected for this study
  given your role in transitioning to the residential curriculum and your impressive
  length of service in your positions.
- I'd love to hear about your experiences directly, but please feel welcome to share
  sentiments you've heard from your peers on your staff and elsewhere in your
  department. Reflect on your memories of serving in your position for multiple
  years and how you have experienced all that your department has done and how
  this has translated to your position.

- May I have your verbal consent to use this focus group as part of my study? (all
  must say YES).
- This should take up to 90 minutes. Many thanks again for your time.
- Give copies to the participants:

3. Participant invitation email– outlines project and expectations
4. Consent form – can you please sign a copy for me and keep one for you.

- Please state your fake name when speaking so that we can accurately capture everyone's thoughts. This will also help with the transcribed document that everyone will have a chance to review.

Questions:

1. Please introduce yourself with your preferred pseudonym (name other than your own to protect your anonymity) for this study.

2. Why did you become a student staff member?

3. What has kept you returning as a staff member (MSU)?

4. Tell me about the typical responsibilities of a student staff member at your school?
   a. How does your role fit in the larger department?

5. If I were to talk to the professional and graduate staff in the department, what would they tell me in regards to why your position is important?
   a. In what ways have these messages changed since the department adopted a residential curriculum?
   b. Please share some specific examples with me.

6. Let's now transition to you sharing about the successes, accomplishments, and joys as your department has been adopting a residential curriculum.
   a. Tell me about some positives you have encountered in your position when adopting the residential curriculum approach.
   b. Tell me about the biggest success your department has had in adopting a residential curriculum.
   c. What are some other examples of positives as your department has adopted a residential curriculum?

7. Let's explore some challenges as your department has been adopting a residential curriculum.
   a. Tell me about some challenges you have encountered in your position when adopting the residential curriculum approach.
   b. What has been the biggest challenge you encountered?
   c. How have these challenges been addressed?
   d. Tell me about some challenges your department has encountered when adopting the residential curriculum approach.
   e. What has been the biggest challenge your department encountered?
   f. How have these challenges been addressed?

8. How are (or have been) the successes with adopting the residential curriculum celebrated in your department?

a. What are some traditions, rituals, and/or symbols that have been used to characterize the positive aspects of adopting a residential curriculum?
b. How are successes affirmed or positive reinforced?

9. How are these challenges with adopting the residential curriculum celebrated (or symbolized) in your department?
a. What are some traditions, rituals, and/or symbols that have been used to characterize the challenging aspects of adopting a residential curriculum?
    i. Language/wording/jokes/slogans?
    ii. Symbolic removal of resources and/or processes?

10. Tell me about how the change to the residential curriculum was conveyed or presented to student staff. What did this look like?
a. What was this messaging like for student staff?
b. Was this more subtle or overt? Why?
c. How did you feel when you heard your department was going to shift to a residential curriculum? Describe what this was like from your gut, head, and heart.

11. As you know, my study is describing your department's journey of adopting a residential curriculum. I would like to talk about changes you have witnessed your team and department navigate when adopting the residential curriculum approach. I am curious to know about changes over time, what your journey has been like, etc.

Tell me about changes you have observed as your team/organization has adopted the residential curriculum approach.

How did your responsibilities change when your department adopted the residential curriculum approach?

a. Now, I'll share general areas, such as staff training, and would like your perspective on these topics.

   Let's talk about any changes to:

b. In thinking about your position responsibilities before and then after the residential curriculum was implemented?
    i. What is different?
    ii. What has stayed the same?
    iii. Tell me how you feel about this overall.
    iv. What has been your number one positive?
    v. What has been your number one frustration?
    vi. Any changes to how you use your time in the position? If so, please describe.

c. How about interactions with your residents?

i. What's been similar?
ii. What's been different?
iii. How do you feel about this>

d. How did training change after the residential curriculum was started?
 i. Has the focus or content of your trainings changed? If so, how?
a. What was positive about this change?
b. What was not challenging about this change?
 ii. Has the frequency of your trainings changed? If so, how?
a. What was positive about this change?
b. What was not challenging about this change?
 iii. Have there been any changes to staff development sessions when your department transitioned to a residential curriculum?
a. What was positive about this change?
b. What was not challenging about this change?

e. Expectations from, and interactions with, your direct supervisor
 i. How have 1:1 changed?
 ii. How have staff meetings changed?
 iii. Have you been given new duties?
 iv. Have some of your previous duties been taken away?
a. Been different?
b. Stayed the same?
c. Tell me how you feel about this overall.

f. How has recruitment and hiring processes for student staff changed? This could include messaging, philosophies, processes, etc.
a. What is different?
b. What has stayed the same?
c. Tell me how you feel about this overall.

g. How did the departmental mission and vision change?
 i. Do you think how this has been conveyed to you as a student staff member has changed? If so, how? Please describe.
 ii. (In what ways is this articulated differently now that your department has a residential curriculum?)
 iii. Did you witness any changes in how your mission (or on-campus living experience) was marketed to students? If so, how?

12. Let's transition to the topic of feedback or you have a "voice" in your department.
a. What opportunities did you get to provide feedback about transitioning to or adopting the residential curriculum?
 i. What has been positive about this?
 ii. What has been challenging about this?
 iii. Can you think of specific resources/documents, expectations, etc. that you provided feedback on? Please tell me about this.

       iv.   What structures or forums do you have for this? Is there a student staff council?

       v.   Overall, do you feel your feedback is valued? Tell me more about this.

13. Overall, how has the residential curriculum approach impacted your job?
14. What advice would you offer to:
    a.   Another residence life department that considering the shift to a residential curriculum? What specifically would you tell them about the student staff position on their campus?

15. I now welcome any additional thoughts you have at this time related to what we have been discussing today.
    a.   Would you like to offer any other observations you have had with adopting a residential curriculum and of students or staff here at MSU?
    b.   Have there been major turning points or milestones in your department's journey?
    c.   What are some of the stories told in your department about your journey of adopting a residential curriculum?

If time permits:

16. Tell me about how adopting a residential curriculum has impacted <u>your</u> experience as a student leader.
    a.   How have you changed or grown by the fact that your department adopted a residential curriculum?

17. How do you think adopting a residential curriculum will impact you after you graduate and pursue your next steps?

RHA STUDENT LEADER FOCUS GROUP PROTCOL

Day/Time: _____

<u>Opening:</u>
Good morning/afternoon/evening! Thank you for taking the time to meet with me for this focus group. My name is Hilary Lichterman, and I am a Ph.D. student at the University of South Carolina.

The purpose of this focus group for my study is to learn from all of you what it was like for your department to make the transition to a residential curriculum. I am interested in learning about changes that occurred over time in transitioning to the residential curriculum as well as your perceptions of what was positive and challenging about that process.

Information gathered during this interview, and my visit, will remain confidential. Your responses will remain anonymous. I will send you a copy of the transcript for review and any additional comments. I ask that you be open and candid with what you share.

Just a couple of things to get started:
- I'm audio recording this focus group for accuracy. I will transcribe the interview as part of my data collection and will only include your fake name.
- Content shared during this interview will be coded as part of the data analysis.
- Quick reminder – each of you were specifically nominated/selected for this study given your role in transitioning to the residential curriculum and your impressive length of service in your positions.
- I'd love to hear about your experiences directly, but please feel welcome to share sentiments you've heard from your peers on your staff and elsewhere in your department. Reflect on your memories of serving in your position for multiple years and how you have experienced all that your department has done and how this has translated to your position.

- May I have your verbal consent to use this focus group as part of my study? (all must say YES).

- This should take up to 90 minutes. Many thanks again for your time.
- Give copies to the participants:

5. Participant invitation email– outlines project and expectations
6. Consent form – can you please sign a copy for me and keep one for you.
- Please state your fake name when speaking so that we can accurately capture everyone's thoughts. This will also help with the transcribed document that everyone will have a chance to review.

<u>Questions:</u>
1. Please introduce yourself with your preferred pseudonym (name other than your own to protect your anonymity) for this study).

2. What attracted you to become involved in RHA?

3. Tell me about what RHA does/is about here at your school. What are some priorities of the organization?

4. How have priorities in the department been changed since you have been involved in RHA?

5. How was the residential curriculum presented to/conveyed to you as RHA?
   a. Was this subtle or overt? Please describe.

6. What would you say are some successes, accomplishments, and joys of how your department has been adopting a residential curriculum?
   a. Tell me about what you perceive to as positive in this transition to a residential curriculum.
   b. What has gone well as your department has adopted a residential curriculum?

7. What have been some challenges as your department has been adopting a residential curriculum?
   a. Tell me about some challenges you have encountered in your position when adopting the residential curriculum approach.
   b. Tell me about some challenges your department has encountered when adopting the residential curriculum approach.
   c. How have these challenges you mentioned been addressed?

8. As you know, my study is describing your department's journey of adopting a residential curriculum. I would like to talk about changes you have witnessed your organization and department navigate when adopting the residential curriculum approach.

   I am curious to know about changes over time, what your journey has been like, etc.
   b. Tell me about changes you have observed as your organization has adopted the residential curriculum approach.
   c. What about your department overall?

      Some <u>additional prompts</u> might include:

    d. How have RHA's priorities or initiatives changed since your department transitioned to a residential curriculum?
        i. Has this been similar? Different? Why?
    e. RHAs' voice with professional and graduate staff
        i. Has this been similar? Different? Why?
    f. The overall departmental mission
        i. Has this been similar? Different? Why?
    g. RHA's mission
        i. Has this been similar? Different? Why?

9. Let's transition to the topic of feedback or you have a "voice" in your department.
    a. What opportunities did you get to provide feedback about transitioning to or adopting the residential curriculum?
        i. What has been positive about this?
        ii. What has been challenging about this?
        iii. Can you think of specific resources/documents, expectations, etc. that you provided feedback on? Please tell me about this.
        iv. What structures or forums do you have for this? Is there a student staff council?
        v. Overall, do you feel your feedback is valued? Tell me more about this.

10. What advice would you offer other RHA student leaders whose department is considering the shift to a residential curriculum?

11. I now welcome any additional thoughts you have at this time related to what we have been discussing today.

12. Would you like to offer any other observations you have had with adopting a residential curriculum and of students or staff here at MSU?
    a. Have there been major turning points or milestones in your department's journey?
    b. What are some of the stories told in your department about your journey of adopting a residential curriculum?

APPENDIX I

PHOTO ACTIVITY PROMPT AND WORKSHEET

Dear Photo/Artifact Activity Participants,

First, thank you for hosting me for this study! The purpose of this photo/artifact activity is to provide each of you with an opportunity to help ***tell the story of/characterize*** how "Midtown State University" (the fake name for your school for anonymity purposes) experienced the change to transitioning to/adopting the residential curriculum approach. As you engage in this activity, I encourage lots of "group think" and soliciting ideas from your colleagues who are not directly here or taking the actual photos.

I have three disposable cameras available for this activity.

Please dedicate time (designated by "Sonya" and "Violet") to work in your committee teams to capture photos of MSU's journey to adopting to a residential curriculum, including but not limited to:

- People
- Places
- Experiences
- Symbols
- Emotions
- Documents
- Resources
- Anything else that may be relevant given this prompt I am sharing with each of you

Specifically, please consider the:
- Successes and accomplishments
- Challenges
- Lessons learned from your individual and collective team's journey to adopting the residential curriculum approach.

On a date next week when I am there (TBD), I will ask each of you to come to a brief semi-structured focus group where I would like to hear briefly about your experience capturing the photos. I will then proceed with developing the photos that evening.

On the designated date (TBD) and at the designated time (TBD), I will ask everyone to come to a 90-minute semi-structured focus group where we will create space for a "show and tell" experience. Each of you will be asked to describe the photos and artifacts you captured with explanation of how the photos address this prompt.

Finally, I am providing an *optional* worksheet if you choose to capture notes as you take pictures if this may be helpful for jogging your memories and structuring our conversation.

Thank you very much for your time and creativity with this activity!
Hilary

PHOTO/ARTIFACT REFLECTION SHEET (optional for participants)
Please complete this reflection sheet for each photo (1-27)

Participant's fake name: _____ Date: _____

Brief description of photo (1-27):

Why did you select this photo? What does this photo/image mean to you in how you/your team characterizes the experience of adopting the residential curriculum approach? (1-27)

APPENDIX J

MSU'S "WHO WE ARE" STATEMENT [Reformatted]

Who We Are
[Department of Residence Life]
Vision and Philosophy

WE ARE:

1. a program that acts like "one team" between our programming, custodial, facilities, administrative, and fiscal operations in all that we do.
2. a program where every action and every decision we make is focused on moving our program towards being known as "the premier residential education program in the country."
3. a unit that operates under the philosophy that we are not going to permit ourselves or our team to allow a student (or a team member) to not be successful here at [MSU]. Success does not mean the same thing for every person but we are going to choose to not give up on a single student (or team member).
4. a team who values students as our top priority and values our team as a close second priority. We need to take care of them both priorities and demonstrate strong, significant, and regular support for both our students and our fellow team members. If our team is not doing well, we cannot support our students' success.
5. a program that is known on campus for being a unit that wants to successfully collaborate for student success. That does not mean we allow ourselves to be walked all over, but it means we are willing to stand up for the areas we deeply value, and compromise on the areas that do not sacrifice our values and that we hold up our end of the bargain in a timely manner.
6. a program that is creative, innovative, and ever-evolving. We are a team that is future focused while still successfully meeting the needs of the moment. We learn from past mistakes and then let them go so that we can focus on the current and future needs of our student and our team. a program that encourages professional development, continued learning, and a growth mindset.
7. a program that listens carefully to the needs around us and responds courageously and compassionately.
8. a program that celebrates the milestones and accomplishments of our program and the people within our program. We encourage, thank, support, and celebrate the achievement of our campus and community partners.

9. a team that demonstrates enthusiasm and joy for the important work that we do. We come to work to be physically, emotionally, and intellectually present in our work and have a positive attitude about our work, our team, and our institution.