Humans of the Honors College: Using Photovoice as a Process for Developing an Ethnographic Assessment of Culture within the USF Honors College

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Introduction
The USF Honors College is a unique community of students and faculty within the University of South Florida. The Honors College identifies three distinct “pillars” or cultural foundations to its program mission: academics, global experience and community engagement. These program ideals have been presented as major aspects of the Honors College culture and identity. But does the Honors College represent the views of the students and faculty? Is the Honors College culture perceived the same by everyone? Though each of these “pillars” of the Honors College culture are represented, it is suggested that 25% of the sample identified with diversity and achieved success as a major concept. In addition, 21% identified with community and 9% identified with leadership. Though the term “pillars” may seem redundant, these cultural values were determined by students from different schools at the USF and their experiences. Asking these students to describe the Honors College culture as faculty members and previously as students could prove useful for this gap in communication to allow for these students to feel their needs are being met.

Research Question:
Do expectations of the Honors College culture align with the perceived reality of cultural identity among Honors College community members?

Methods
1. Interviews (n=23)
2. Capture Photo
3. Participant Analysis
4. Analysis
5. Creation of Photobook

Findings
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Conclusion/Implications
The results from this project show that the ideals and expectations of the Honors College culture are currently being met with varying degrees of success. Each of the three pillars of the Honors College culture are represented, but only 25% of the sample identified with diversity and achieved success as a major concept. In addition, 21% identified with community and 9% identified with leadership. Though each of these “pillars” of the Honors College culture are represented, it is suggested that 25% of the sample identified with diversity and achieved success as a major concept. In addition, 21% identified with community and 9% identified with leadership. Though the term “pillars” may seem redundant, these cultural values were determined by students from different schools at the USF and their experiences. Asking these students to describe the Honors College culture as faculty members and previously as students could serve as a bridge for this gap in communication to allow for these students to feel their needs are being met.

Impact
The implications behind this project are numerous. The creation of more photobooks using this method could prove to be advantageous for the Honors College. As a tool, this method of acquiring qualitative data provides a new vantage point for Honors College representatives to evaluate their program as well as allow students and faculty to see how other community members identify with this society. This method of cultural analysis can serve as a way to assist in Honors College recruitment and promotion. With the active participation of the Humans of New York online community and the Honors College, a more diverse population of students represented in the Honors College by major, social perspective and cultural background would be highly useful for the future of this project within the Honors College. The implications behind this project are numerous. The creation of more photobooks using this method could prove to be advantageous for the Honors College. As a tool, this method of acquiring qualitative data provides a new vantage point for Honors College representatives to evaluate their program as well as allow students and faculty to see how other community members identify with this society. This method of cultural analysis can serve as a way to assist in Honors College recruitment and promotion. With the active participation of the Humans of New York online community and the Honors College, a more diverse population of students represented in the Honors College by major, social perspective and cultural background would be highly useful for the future of this project within the Honors College.