EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: COLLEGE STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN SHORT-TERM INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMS

by

DAVID M. BROOKING

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the Department of Education in the Graduate School of The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2010
ABSTRACT

The literature discussing the benefits of involvement in study abroad programs has mostly focused on length of program as having the most impact on positive student outcomes. However, a majority of all college students who participate in study abroad activities today do so on a short-term basis. The incorporation of service-learning into short-term study abroad programming has been proposed as a way to enrich the student experience. These short-term international service-learning programs have received very little attention in the literature. The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences and perceptions of college students involved in short-term international service-learning programs. The programs included in this study represent a variety models within this category of study abroad.

Qualitative methods were used to conduct this study. Data were collected in the form of individual interviews with student participants and program leaders as well as program-related documents, which were then coded and examined. Themes emerged during data analysis that provided a narrative of the student experience in short-term international service-learning, from their activities, to their thoughts, and finally to how they perceive the experience affected them.

This study emphasizes the need to conduct more research on this category of study abroad, considering the growth of short-term programming in recent years. The findings of this study will aid study abroad program providers in designing activities that offer more opportunities for student development through the use of service-learning pedagogy and other avenues to encourage student engagement. Recommendations are also given concerning the overall administration of international service-learning programs.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandfather, Stewart A. Smith, Sr.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to the following people: my committee chair, Dr. Nathaniel Bray, and the other members of my committee who took the time to review this document in its many incarnations and provided much needed guidance and encouragement; to my good friends and colleagues in the executive cohort who were my companions on this journey and made it bearable and even fun; to the many students and administrators who took the time to be interviewed for this study; to my friends and colleagues Dick Conville and Linda Pierce Allen, from whom I learned the value and the power of service-learning pedagogy; to Dr. Jennifer Jones, who lit a fire under me when I needed it most; and most of all to my wife Layle and our children, who had to do without their husband and father for many nights, weekends, and holidays so that this degree and dissertation could finally be completed--Thank you.
CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................................... ii
DEDICATION ............................................................................................................................... iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ............................................................................................................. iv
LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................................... ix
LIST OF FIGURES ......................................................................................................................... x
I INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................ ..1
  Background .................................................................................................................. ........5
  Statement of the Problem .................................................................................................... .5
  Purpose of the Study ........................................................................................................ ....6
  Significance of the Study ................................................................................................... ..7
II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ..................................................................................9
  Study Abroad .......................................................................................................................9
    Historical Background .....................................................................................................9
    Student Participation in Study Abroad ........................................................................12
  Study Abroad Program Destinations and Types ..........................................................14
  Study Abroad and Student Development .....................................................................18
  Study Abroad and Global-mindedness ........................................................................21
  Program Length and Student Development .................................................................23
  Study Abroad Homestay ..............................................................................................24
  Service-learning ................................................................................................................26
Historical Background ........................................................................................................ 26
Reflection, Focus, and Quality in Service-learning .......................................................... 29
Service-learning as Pedagogy ............................................................................................ 32
Paradigms of Service ...................................................................................................... 36
Service-learning and Student Development .................................................................... 41
International Service-learning ...................................................................................... 42
Conceptual Framework .................................................................................................... 43
Astin's Theory of Involvement .................................................................................... 45
Kolb's Learning Cycle and the Importance of Reflection ........................................... 47
Student Experiences ....................................................................................................... 49
Convergence of Elements in the Conceptual Framework ........................................... 50
Conclusion ....................................................................................................................... 51

III METHODOLOGY ............................................................................................................... 53
Research Questions ........................................................................................................ 53
Research Design and Rationale ..................................................................................... 54
Site Selection and Rationale .......................................................................................... 56
Selected Institutions and Programs .............................................................................. 57
River State University .................................................................................................... 57
Hill State University ....................................................................................................... 58
Hawk University .......................................................................................................... 60
Participant Selection ..................................................................................................... 62
Access ............................................................................................................................. 63
Data Collection ............................................................................................................... 63
LIST OF TABLES

1 Research Methods Used in Dissertation .................................................................66
LIST OF FIGURES

1 Conceptual framework Venn diagram ................................................................. 44

2 Emergent Themes and categories ........................................................................... 73
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime. (Clemens, 1929)

We live in an increasingly global society. As of 1997, the United States made up 5% percent of the world’s population and consumed about 26% of its resources (Energy Facts, n.d.). In the 11 years since, America’s connection to the global economy has not weakened. We import petroleum from various parts of the world: Venezuela, Russia, Nigeria, and Iraq, to name a few (March 2008 Import Highlights, 2008). Despite our economic connections to the rest of the world, the average American citizen knows very little about the world outside of the United States. According to a survey conducted by Roper and National Geographic (2006), nearly 90% of Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 cannot find Afghanistan on a map, and 63% cannot locate Iraq. What is most disturbing about this is that these locations are mentioned nearly every day in the news.

American college students come in contact with different aspects of global society in their everyday lives. Many of the products they purchase come from overseas, which is evidenced by the U.S. trade deficit with China (Trade in Goods with China, n.d.). Those in need of customer support are just as likely to be served by a phone bank in India as one in the United States (Lakshmi, 2005). While exposure to these things is an everyday occurrence, it is also
exposure in a disconnected way. Most students have no connection to the country where their cell phone or car was made (Martinez-Fernandez, 2006).

It is important that today’s college students, our future leaders, are exposed to this global society from a perspective other than that of a consumer. Martinez-Fernandez (2006) suggested that a lack in “international cultural fluency . . . will hurt Americans both individually and as a country.” Student participation in a study abroad program is an excellent way to build this fluency. Study abroad programs differ in many ways. The duration of time spent abroad can range anywhere from 1 week to a full calendar year (Duration of U.S. study abroad, 2006). Additionally, study abroad programs can be built around one academic course or discipline, such as a foreign language, or include a variety of options within a large program that may include courses in literature, history, and the arts. These programs may also range from a full semester class on the home campus that includes a short sojourn abroad, known as an embedded program, to programs of study that occur completely overseas (Spencer & Tuma, 2002). The area of study abroad is diverse in its academic disciplines, locations of study, length of study, and cost.

Research on study abroad has shown that students who engage in these programs experience multiple benefits, including increases in academic learning (Shames & Alden, 2005), cultural interest (Dwyer, 2004; Hadis, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004), foreign language proficiency (Carlson, Burn, Useem, & Yachimowicz; 1990; Isabelli-Garcia, 2003), and personal development (Ingraham & Peterson, 2005; Lindsey, 2005; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). Gains in self-efficacy (Hadis, 2004; Kauffmann, Martin, Weaver, & Weaver, 1992; Milstein, 2005) and career development (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005; Shames & Alden, 2005) are other documented outcomes of study abroad programs. Study abroad participants have also been shown to increase
in their global-mindedness following a program that was one semester or longer in duration (Golay, 2006; Kehl, 2006).

The number of study abroad programs that last for a semester or longer has been dropping over the past several years. In fact, the number of students studying abroad for less than a semester has shown a gradual and steady increase to include over half of all study abroad participants (Duration of U.S. study abroad, 2006). These short-term study abroad (STSA) programs are quickly becoming a preferred means of international education for American college students (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). The reasons for this growth in STSA over semester-length and longer programs are wide-ranging.

Financial considerations keep many students from choosing to participate in traditional semester-long student abroad programs (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). A typical semester spent studying overseas can easily cost a student two or three times the cost of attendance at their home institution. A student’s major, especially the more regimented fields, may also lead students to forgo a traditional program (Lewis & Niessenbaum, 2005). Reluctance to venture far from home for such a long period of time may also prevent students from enrolling in a semester or full-year program.

The factors mentioned above are less of an issue to students when considering short-term study abroad programs. A study conducted by Lewis and Niesenbaum (2005) found that students enrolled in a STSA program found it more attractive than a semester-long program, due to its length. The students indicated that the program’s length allowed them to avoid conflicts with their academic fields of study and athletic obligations as well as spend less time away from home. Additionally, STSA programs tend to cost much less to run than their traditional
counterparts. This can put a study abroad experience within reach of modest and lower income students.

The length of study abroad programs has been shown to affect the level of student development, with longer programs being more successful in producing positive results (Dwyer, 2004; Ingraham & Peterson, 2005; Kauffmann et al., 1992; Nash, 1976). As more students today study abroad on a short-term basis, they are receiving fewer benefits compared to their long-term study counterparts. Lewis and Niesenbaum (2005) conducted a study on a STSA program that included a variety of strategies to enhance the study abroad experience for the students. One of the key strategies that they implemented was student involvement in service-learning.

Service-learning is a form of experiential education that links community service with the academic objectives of a course through the incorporation of a reflection component. The integration of service-learning into coursework can have a number of benefits for the students. Studies have shown that service-learning courses can increase students’ academic learning (Kendrick, 1996; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Strage, 2000), interpersonal communication skills (Gallini & Moely, 2003; Moely, McFarland, Miron, Mercer, & Ilustre, 2002), and self-efficacy (Kendrick, 1996; Sedlak, Doheny, Panthrofer, & Anaya, 2003; Toews & Cerny, 2005). Greater cultural awareness and sensitivity in students as a result of participation in service-learning has also been documented (Moely, Mercer, Ilustre, Miron, & McFarland, 2002; Toews & Cerny, 2005). Service-learning has also been shown to improve students’ views of social responsibility and citizenship (Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997; O’Hara, 2001).
Background

Incorporating a service-learning component into a study abroad program transforms it into an international service-learning (ISL) program. These programs have the potential to give student participants the benefits of both study abroad and service-learning programs. Considering that STSA programs have been shown to provide fewer positive outcomes for students compared to long-term programs, the infusion of service-learning into them seems logical. Service-learning has been shown to improve students’ views of social responsibility and citizenship as well as increase their cultural awareness and sensitivity. This experiential component of these classes also has the effect of connecting service-learning students to the local community. An essential component of an ISL program is the use of reflection to connect experiences with program objectives. Student perceptions of the effects of reflection during and after ISL programs, short-term or otherwise, have not been examined. This study focused on the experiences and perceptions of students who have been involved in short-term ISL programs.

Statement of the Problem

Research on study abroad has consistently shown that there are more benefits for students who are involved in programs that last for one semester or longer (Dwyer, 2004; Ingraham & Peterson, 2005; Kauffmann et al., 1992; Nash, 1976). As short-term study abroad programs increase in number, faculty and administrators will need to find ways in which to enrich student experiences and encourage student development. One strategy that merits further investigation is the use of service-learning pedagogy to enhance the experience of students involved in short-term study abroad (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). There are no data available on the number of international service-learning programs offered each year across North America. The Institute of
International Education, which compiles statistics on study abroad participation, does not track international service-learning programs. The International Partnership for Service-Learning (IPSL), a program provider, reported that over 4,000 students have participated in its programs since its founding in 1982. In addition to providers such as IPSL, a number of institutions offer their own international service-learning programs, many of which are classified as short-term (Williams, 2007).

The literature on short-term study abroad, in general, and short-term international service-learning in particular is very sparse. Research on STSA covers a number of topics including its value as a precursor to additional travel for college students (Hadis, 2004; Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005), its positive effects on student intercultural sensitivity (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005; Shames & Alden, 2005), and its potential to increase academic learning (Dwyer, 2004; Shames & Alden, 2005). The available literature on short-term international service-learning is very limited. There is only a small amount of research in this area, the majority of which are case studies or brief descriptions of individual programs (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005; Roberts, 2003; Smith-Pariola & Goke-Pariola, 2006; Wessel, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences and perceptions of college students involved in short-term international service-learning programs. At this stage in the research, short-term international service-learning programs are defined as any study abroad program of 8 weeks or less that incorporates a service-learning component into its design.
Research in this area is sparse, with no currently available studies on student experiences across an assortment of short-term international service-learning programs.

I seek to expand the literature on international service-learning in general, with a special focus on short-term programs. Short-term programs are now the most prevalent type of experience in study abroad (Duration of U.S. study abroad, 2006). As more students take part in these programs it becomes important to document the student experience. While short-term international service-learning programs are not as prevalent as regular STSA, they can be found at many universities (International Service-Learning Conference 2008, n.d.). An examination of student experiences in short-term ISL programs may be beneficial to the growth of the program genre in addition to adding to the literature on the subject.

Significance of the Study

This study will add to the literature on study abroad and service-learning by analyzing the experiences of students involved in short-term international service-learning programs. The study is unique to the literature in that it involves the examination of several short-term international service-learning programs administered by a number of different institutions. Previous studies have either focused on a number of international service-learning programs administered by one provider (Tonkin & Quiroga, 2004) or have spotlighted individual programs (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005; Roberts, 2003; Smith-Pariola & Goke-Pariola, 2006; Wessel, 2007).

There has been a small amount of research done on international service-learning programs compared with the larger quantity available on academic service-learning and study abroad. Short-term programs of this type are relatively new and only a few examples can be
found in the literature. This study will provide new research on international service-learning, specifically on short-term programs in this category.

Previous research on student development and study abroad has shown that there is a positive relationship between length of sojourn and the degree of development experienced. Consequently, STSA programs are on the lower end of the scale concerning student development. If service-learning can be shown to have an impact on STSA participants, then it may become a widely accepted strategy for producing outcomes identical to that of long-term programs.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The belief that all genuine education comes about through experiences does not mean that all experiences are genuine or equally educative. Everything depends upon the quality of the experience. (Dewey, 1938)

This chapter presents a review of research and literature related to the areas of academic service-learning and university-sponsored study abroad programs, which are the key elements of short-term international service-learning. The first part of this literature review will focus on the historical developments, student development outcomes and current trends in American study abroad programs. The historical background of academic service-learning, along with its benefits for student participants will be examined in the second section of this chapter. Section three will focus on the emergence of international service-learning programs.

Study Abroad

Historical Background

Until the early 20th century, study abroad in the United States was an unorganized affair. American institutions of higher education were not involved in educational programs outside of their campuses. Instead, any travel abroad, educational or otherwise, for people of college-age was sponsored by individuals. During the Colonial and Antebellum periods this usually meant Southern planters sending their sons to Europe for the “Grand Tour” (Dulles, 1966). Still, the practice of sending young men to Europe was not widely conducted, and was even met with disapproval (Fraser, 1966).
This trend of discouraging education in Europe continued following the American Civil War. Many of higher education’s leaders of the time, including the presidents of Harvard, Columbia, Yale, and Princeton, reiterated Jefferson’s comments. They also added that an education in the United States was far less expensive than one gained in Europe (Schwaneger, 1970). Still, American college students are known to have gone to Europe to study during this time, despite the opposition from these institutions. According to Dulles (1966), the number of Americans studying in Europe “greatly increased” during the Post-Civil War period. What is most interesting about this trend is where the students were going to study.

German universities were the primary institutions of choice for American students during this time. This interest in German higher education was not solely confined to the students. Back home the first American “university” based on the German model was established in this period. Johns Hopkins University, founded in 1876, represented “the German ideal of advanced scholarship, professors as experts, doctoral programs with graduate students, and a hierarchy of study,” in the United States (Thelin, 2004). The appeal of Europe and its universities continued to attract American students up until the beginning of World War I (Dulles, 1966).

Study abroad up to this point was organized on an individual basis. American colleges and universities were not known to sponsor educational programs overseas and had little interest in doing so. This reflected the isolationist manner in which the United States conducted itself up until this point. All of this would change, however, following the end of the First World War.

Two events occurred during this time that would serve as the foundation of university-sponsored study-abroad in the United States. In 1919 the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace awarded a $30,000 grant to Dr. Stephen P. Duggan to establish the Institute for International Education (Schwaneger, 1970). Four years later, in 1923, the University of
Delaware sent eight students and one faculty member to study in France for a “Junior Year Abroad” (Hullihen, 1928). The creation of the Institute for International Education (IIE) and the University of Delaware’s Junior Year Abroad program initiated growth of study abroad and reflected its beginnings in the international peace movement.

Study abroad programs were on hiatus during the Second World War. Following the war, the proponents of foreign study received a significant boost from the United States government. Two pieces of legislation passed by the U.S. Congress between 1944 and 1946 gave study abroad programs national backing and enabled students from across the nation to participate.

The first of these laws, the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (G.I. Bill), provided access to higher education for all veterans of WWII. The G.I. Bill gave veterans a number of benefits including the funds to attend college for up to 4 years. The original law provided up to $500 per year for tuition and books and a living allowance of between $600 and $900 per year (Cohen, 1945). This increased access to higher education flooded colleges and universities with new students. Within 6 years of the law’s passage over 2 million veterans had taken advantage of the education benefits.

The other major piece of legislation that aided in the growth of study abroad was the Fulbright Act of 1946. J. William Fulbright, a U.S. senator from Arkansas, conceived this program, “to assist the development of peaceful relations through the exchange of . . . scholars, teachers, students, and lecturers with those of other countries” (Fulbright, 1961, p. 22). In many ways the creation of this initiative was related to the Junior Year Abroad programs developed in the 1920s. Both programs grew out of the need for international understanding following a worldwide conflict and education was used as the means for this exchange. Fulbright (1961), a Rhodes Scholar himself, knew the value of international study and saw the program as a way of,
“breaking down the barriers of isolationism,” which had been a contributing factor in bringing about the Second World War (p. 22).

With the inception of the G.I. Bill, the Fulbright Act of 1946, and the continuation of Junior Year Abroad programs, study abroad began to grow steadily. In 1970 there were an estimated 10,000 students involved in around 300 study abroad programs (Schwaneger, 1970). In the early 1990s the number of students had grown to over 76,000. The 2006-2007 academic year, the latest year from which statistics are available, had over 241,000 college students involved in study abroad on some level (U.S. study abroad, 2009).

Student Participation in Study Abroad

Since its inception, student participation in study abroad has been dominated by upperclassmen. The once pervasive “Junior Year Abroad” that began in 1924 has left its mark on education abroad in that college juniors continue to make up the bulk of study abroad program enrollment (Hullihen, 1928; U.S. study abroad, n.d.). While year-long, or long-term, study abroad programs are in decline, only attract 4.4% of students, college juniors make up 36.6% of all study abroad participants (U.S. study abroad, n.d.). When the number of college seniors studying abroad is combined with college juniors they represent nearly 58% of U.S. students taking part in education abroad (n.d.).

College sophomores, freshmen and unspecified bachelor’s degree seekers make up an additional 28.7% of study abroad participants, with college freshmen only accounting for 3.3% of the total U.S. student population involved in study abroad (U.S. study abroad, n.d.). The remaining 13.2% of college students studying abroad are enrolled in various graduate programs (master’s, doctoral, and professional degrees) and at associates-granting institutions (U.S. study
abroad, n.d). This data illustrates the predominance of undergraduate participation in education abroad.

It should be noted that while junior-level college students are the largest classification group represented in study abroad, they have been slowly losing ground to other groups over the past decade. Since academic year 1996-1997, the percentage of college juniors studying abroad has dropped from 41.3% to 36.6%, a total reduction of 4.7% (U.S. study abroad, n.d). The population with the largest increase in study abroad participation is college seniors, whose numbers grew by three percentage points since the 1996-1997 academic year. During this same time period, graduate students pursuing master’s degrees increased their participation in education abroad by 1.7% (U.S. study abroad, n.d). The number of college freshmen and students attending Associates colleges who study abroad also grew by 0.9% and 0.8%, respectively (U.S. study abroad, n.d). The growth in study abroad participation has trended toward older students, seniors, and graduate students, while slower growth has been documented among underclassmen.

Much like student classification, the gender and ethnicity of study abroad students is dominated by a single group. In the last 10 years, the amount of study abroad participants who are female has hovered around 65%. In addition, nearly 82% of those who study abroad are Caucasian. Over the past decade racial/ethnic minorities have made only small gains in study abroad participation. Since the 1996-1997 academic year Asian/Pacific Islanders increased their share in education abroad activity by 1.7% to a total of 6.7% of the total U.S. students studying abroad. Other minorities have also made slight gains increasing 0.9% to a total of 6% and African Americans increasing by 0.3% for a total of 3.8% (U.S. study abroad, n.d). According to
the data, the average study abroad student is a Caucasian female who is most likely a college upperclassman.

The academic majors of study abroad participants are varied, although three areas are predominant. Students who major in social sciences, business and management, and humanities comprise 53.7% of study abroad participants. No other field of study makes up more than 7.7% of the study abroad population. Additionally, the area that has seen the most growth since the 1996-1997 academic year is business and management, which increased participation by its majors by 4.5% over 10 years (U.S. study abroad, n.d). Participation growth was also documented in the health sciences and engineering, which increased by 1.4% and 1.2%, respectively. Interestingly, the number of foreign language majors has experienced a decrease in study abroad participation over the past decade, dropping from 9.3% to 7.2% (U.S. study abroad, n.d). It should be noted that the data only reflects the majors of study abroad students and not the courses in which they were enrolled during their participation. It is quite possible that a larger percentage of students engaged in education abroad are enrolled in foreign language coursework. The Institute for International Education does not publish statistics on study abroad course subjects.

Study Abroad Program Destinations and Types

The most common destination for early U.S. study abroad programs was Europe, specifically France (Hullihen, 1928). Since that time Europe has been the primary destination of study abroad programs. More than 80 years after the advent of these programs, Europe still attracts over 57% of study abroad students. Latin America is a distant second as a destination,
with 15% of students traveling to the region for education abroad (U.S. study abroad, n.d). Asia, Oceania, and Africa follow with 10.3%, 5.7%, and 4.2%, respectively, of study abroad students.

Despite the continued dominance of Europe as a study abroad destination, the continent has lost some of its students to other regions over the past decade. Asia has seen the largest increase as a destination, gaining an additional 4.2% for an overall share of 10.3% of all study abroad students. Africa and Oceania have also experienced gains in the 10 years following the 1996-1997 academic term, growing by 1.6% and 1.3%, respectively (U.S. study abroad, n.d).

The growth of education abroad outside of Europe could be attributed to shifts in the types of study abroad programs that are being implemented. Engle and Engle (2003) classify education abroad programs into five categories: “the branch campus or study center, the integrated model, mixed models, independent study, [and] experiential programs” (p. 5). The models are distinguished from each other based on program administration, the origin of instructors, instruction location, and the language of instruction. Other factors that contribute to programs but do not affect classification include student housing, length of study, and host country.

A branch campus model is defined by Navari and Soneson (1993) as a study abroad program that “provide[s] instruction via courses specifically designed for program participants by their home college or university” (p. 175). Branch campuses are also called “island” programs, which refers to their tendency to cater to students from a single American institution and to not involve any students from the host country. Academic instruction within the branch campus model is usually carried out in English. More often than not, island programs are located in Europe and provide housing that is exclusive to the program participants and rent spaces for classroom use (Navari & Soneson). In other instances an institution may acquire facilities
overseas, including buildings for classrooms and living space (Navari & Soneson). Examples of these programs include the University of Southern Mississippi’s ‘Abbey’ campus in Pontlevoy, France (USM Abbey, n.d.) and Miami University’s Dolibois European Campus in Luxembourg (MUDEC, n.d.).

The integrated model of study abroad, also called immersion or direct enrollment, involves the enrollment of American students in foreign institutions of higher education. Students participating in direct enrollment models often are part of an exchange program between the host institution and their home institution (Navari & Soneson, 1993). Instruction is normally in the language of the host country, although “a limited number of classes may be taught in English, along with a full range of language classes” (p. 179). Enrollment in an integrated model study abroad program usually requires upperclassman status and competency in the language of the host country. Programs such as this are more attractive to students majoring in a foreign language, as it provides them with an experience in language immersion. At the same time, students who do not have a sufficient background in the language of the host institution are discouraged from getting involved in integrated model study abroad.

A study abroad model exists that attempts to hybridize the branch campus and integrated models. The mixed model of study abroad shares some characteristics with the previous models. Most mixed model programs take place “on a foreign university campus or draw on foreign university resources” (Navari & Soneson, 1993, p.182). Students are given the option of enrolling in separate “tracks” based on their level of foreign language competency. One track will usually be taught in English with courses focusing on “language instruction and on the history and culture of the host country” (p. 183). Students with language competency are allowed to enroll in the other track with regular courses at the host institution (Navari & Soneson). Mixed
model programs are administered by a resident director from the home institution. In order to provide a more intercultural experience these programs often plan “social, recreational and language mixing of American and foreign students” (Navari & Soneson, p. 183). In this way, mixed model programs try to offer a balance of comfort for students away from home with opportunities to engage in intercultural education abroad.

The independent study model of study abroad is just that, an “institutionally sponsored, approved and directed independent study” that a student enrolls in under the supervision of a faculty member at the home institution (Navari & Soneson, 1993, p. 184). Within this model the student is responsible for all logistical matters including arranging for housing and meals. In many instances, students involved in independent study model study abroad are completing internships with overseas organizations or carrying out research at a foreign university. Navari and Soneson (1993) pointed out that “few students will be attracted to this type of opportunity” due to the difficulty in setting up such a project and the isolation that students can experience (p. 185).

Examples of an experiential programs model of study abroad usually include a “professional internship or service-learning project” (Engle & Engle, 2003, p. 3). Many times these programs are built around a small to medium-sized group of students with one or more faculty leaders. The administration of experiential programs model study abroad involves making arrangements for housing, transportation, meals, and sites where the service-learning project or internships will be carried out (Sternberger, Ford, & Hale, 2004). Similar to the other models of study abroad, experiential programs vary in length, location, and housing arrangements.
Study Abroad and Student Development

According to a 1957 report released by the Institute of International Education, colleges and universities sending students abroad at that time wanted to, “Aid in the educational or professional development of outstanding individuals” (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1958, p. 369). Four other goals listed by IIE pertained to developing foreign countries economically and politically, and creating a positive opinion of the United States throughout the world. Today, study abroad offices at institutions such as Michigan State University have conveyed student outcome goals, stating that, “Study abroad should facilitate students’ intellectual growth, and contribute to students’ professional development” (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004, p. 83). While in 1957 the goals of study abroad were mostly aimed at the world outside the United States, 50 years later the area is seen as a catalyst for students’ intellectual, personal, and professional development.

The intellectual growth and learning outcomes of students engaged in study abroad programs have been established in several studies. A qualitative analysis done by Ingraham and Peterson (2004) reflected, “the belief by both faculty and students that they, the students, learn more and more deeply while studying abroad” (p. 93). The potential for increased learning through study abroad has been given further evidence through a study of learning disabled and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder-affected college students participating in a STSA program. The students in this program showed an, “Increased curiosity and interest in their coursework,” and a, “growing interest in topics outside of their courses as a result of study abroad” (Shames & Alden, 2005, p. 8). The transformative nature of study abroad experiences on students’ learning, or interest in learning, can possibly be attributed to the small class sizes that normally occur during these programs. Another explanation could be the integration of
coursework and setting (i.e., a foreign language course taking place in a country where the language is spoken).

Hadis (2005) tied students’ increased sense of learning while involved in study abroad to their, “disposition to worldwide international mobility,” and their sense of global awareness (p. 68). In short, a student’s personal growth and intellectual growth outcomes in study abroad are linked. Studies completed by Black and Duhon (2006) and Ingraham and Peterson (2004) found significant links between a student’s study abroad experience and their reported level of personal growth. According to Hadis (2005), increases in academic learning can be seen in study abroad students by exposing them to situations in which they develop their “open-mindedness and . . . sense of independence” (p. 68).

The effects of study abroad experiences on career development are not as easily, or regularly, measured. Durrant and Dorius (2007) found that less than 10% of universities survey their study abroad students on “career-related outcomes” (p. 34). This may be due to lower than expected measures in study abroad students’ career development compared with personal and intellectual growth. In Ingraham’s and Peterson’s (2004) study, the career development measure showed that study abroad had a much lower impact compared to personal and intercultural growth, as well as language learning. However, it did increase when the length of time spent studying abroad was considered. Students who studied for a full academic year scored much higher than those who studied for less than 3 weeks. Despite this, the mean score for career development was by far the lowest of all the variables measured.

Participation in study abroad may have a diffusing, instead of focusing, effect on career development. Dwyer (2004) found that students who studied abroad were more likely to change their career plans following their travel. This effect was proportional to the length of study, as
students enrolled in a year-long program were two to three times as likely to experience changes in career plans compared to those involved in short-term programs. Carlson, Burn, Useem, and Yachimowicz (1990) claimed that the lack of substantial career development effects from these programs was because “study abroad students tend to be somewhat less committed to specific, clearly defined career goals than students who do not participate in study abroad” (p. 69).

Increases in foreign language proficiency are another benefit experienced by many students who study abroad. Isabelli-Garcia (2003) documented improvements in foreign language fluency over a semester. Students participating in a year-long study abroad program also improved their language abilities, with many progressing from mid-level proficiency to a more advanced level (Carlson et al., 1990; Nash, 1976). In addition, Dwyer (2004) found that studying abroad can lead students studying one foreign language to learn a third language. These developments, however, are mainly seen in students involved in foreign language-themed abroad programs, which do not make up a majority of existing study abroad programs. Today, many of these programs are built around courses taught in English.

The personal development of study abroad participants is widely documented. Various studies have reported increases in maturity and self-awareness (Lindsey, 2005; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005) after participation in study abroad. Students have also reported having new perspectives on their beliefs, values, and political concerns (Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Hadis, 2004; Lindsey, 2005) following a study abroad experience. These students subsequently reported being more open to new ideas and perspectives as a result of their time spent abroad. Along with these reported measures, many participants describe immeasurable benefits, describing themselves as changed by the experience, a better person, etc. (Hopkins, 1999; Ingraham & Peterson, 2005; Milstein, 2005; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005).
Increases in self-efficacy are another widely reported benefit of participating in study abroad. Milstein (2005) defined self-efficacy as, “one’s perceived capability to organize and execute the actions required to manage prospective situations and produce given attainments” (p. 222). Self-efficacy can also be recognized as self-reliance, self-confidence, or autonomy and is also associated with decision making by the individual. Student participants have associated increases in self-confidence with their study abroad experience (Ingraham & Peterson, 2005; Kauffmann et al., 1992). Growth in personal autonomy, self-reliance, and decision-making ability have also been attributed to participation in study abroad (Hadis, 2004; Ingraham & Peterson, 2005; Kauffman et al., 1992; Milstein, 2005; Nash, 1976).

The understanding of other cultures is integral to these concepts and has been shown to come out of participation in study abroad programs. Cross-cultural competence and sensitivity are two demonstrated effects of studying abroad (Dwyer, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004; Lindsey, 2005; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). Students have also exhibited a better understanding of their own culture following an international educational experience (Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Dwyer, 2004; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). Additionally, Kauffmann et al. (1992) described the concepts of world-mindedness and global understanding, which develop from the international perspective gained by those who study abroad. Several studies have also shown that many alumni of study abroad programs reported a greater interest in international affairs (Hadis, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004; Nash, 1976).

Study Abroad and Global-mindedness

Participation in study abroad has also been shown to increase students’ global-mindedness (Golay, 2006; Kehl, 2006). Hett (1993) defined global-mindedness as “a worldview
in which one sees oneself as connected to the global community and feels a sense of responsibility to its members” (p. 143). Evidence of global-mindedness is shown in the “attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors” of the student. While developing her instrument to measure global-mindedness, Hett described five separate dimensions of global-mindedness: responsibility, cultural pluralism, efficacy, globalcentrism, and interconnectedness. The effects of participation in study abroad programming on students’ global-mindedness have only been studied very recently. Two dissertations were published in 2006 that sought to measure the effects of study abroad on global-mindedness. One study set out to measure growth in overall global-mindedness and in its five dimensions by following student participation in a semester-long study abroad experience. The second study compared levels of overall global-mindedness between participants in semester-long and short-term study abroad programs and those who intended to study abroad.

The study by Golay (2006) found significant growth in the dimension of cultural pluralism. Growth in overall global-mindedness was also documented, although the four other dimensions did not show a statistically significant change. All of the students involved in this study were involved in semester-long programs. Golay suggested that different “modes of learning,” including service-learning, could be used to increase scores in the dimensions of responsibility, efficacy, globalcentrism, and interconnectedness.

The second study, conducted by Kehl (2006), found growth in global-mindedness in students who had participated in semester-long study abroad programs. Kehl also found that students who enrolled in short-term study abroad scored significantly lower on the global-mindedness scale compared to their long-term counterparts. In fact, short-term study abroad participants had the same level of global-mindedness as students who “indicated that they intend
to study abroad” (p. 57). This is the only study found that measures global-mindedness in short-term study abroad participants.

*Program Length and Student Development*

As more students have begun to study abroad, fewer of them have chosen to enroll in traditional Junior Year Abroad programs. In fact, more than half of all study abroad programs currently being administered last for 8 weeks or less (Duration of Study Abroad, 2006). Despite the prevalence of short-term programs, most of the literature on the effects of study abroad on student development focuses on year-long or semester-long programs.

Dwyer (2004) found that students who had studied abroad for a full year were more likely to be influenced in their career choices compared to those who studied on a short-term basis. Ingraham and Peterson (2005) found a positive relationship between the length of time spent abroad and a number of student development factors including, “personal growth, intercultural awareness, career development, language learning, and academic performance” (p. 87). In addition, Kauffmann et al. (1992) surmised that a study abroad program should last for at least 6 months in order to produce positive outcomes in student development.

Despite the large amount of literature in favor of long-term study abroad, many see the value of short-term programs. Chieffo and Griffiths (2004) found that students involved in a 5-week study abroad program showed positive changes in personal growth and development. In their study of learning disabled and/or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder-affected students participating in a short-term study abroad program, Shames and Alden (2005) found that such programs can increase individual academic development. Dwyer (2004), a proponent of year-long study, conceded that short-term study abroad programs that are 6 weeks long “can be
enormously successful in achieving important academic, personal, career and intercultural development outcomes” (p. 162).

As in more traditional study abroad programs, career development is seldom found as an outcome of short-term study abroad. Lewis and Niesenbaum (2005) found that following the completion of the short-term program, about 20% of the students took courses outside of their major area of study because of their involvement in the program. Shames and Alden (2005) found that involvement in short-term study abroad aided participants in deciding on a major and/or profession.

Participation in short-term study abroad has also been shown to affect students’ perspectives on other cultures. Lewis and Niesenbaum (2005) found that connecting the academic course to the community where the program was taking place had the effect of changing the students’ worldview. This also resulted in the students’ examination on the effects of globalization. Students who studied abroad on a short-term basis have also been shown to increase in their intercultural awareness and sensitivity (Anderson et al., 2006; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004).

Study Abroad Homestay

In many study abroad programs the students are placed in the homes of local families for the duration of their sojourn. These homestays are seen as an essential component of language and cultural immersion in international education (Smartt & Scudder, 2004). The homestay experience provides a number of benefits that are not realized in international programs served by dormitories, or “island programs.” This “homestay advantage” is manifested in increased student learning in the areas of language and culture and has served as an integral part of
successful international programs (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002; Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002; Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004). The inclusion of a homestay component in a study abroad program creates an opening for student learning and development that does not exist in non-residential international programs.

The area that is influenced the most by the homestay experience is exposure to the host country’s culture and subsequent cultural learning. Living with a host family gives students “an immediate entrée into the cultural and linguistic environment while protecting them in a smaller, ‘caring’ unit” (Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004, p. 254). Students are involved in the culture through interactions with their host family including, “meals, religious observances, or other activities common to the host culture” (Golay, 2006, p. 53). The cultural aspect of the homestay often motivates students to learn more about the host country and its culture (Smartt & Scudder, 2004). Overall, these cultural motivations contribute to the success of international programs by fostering student learning (Boyle, Nackerud, & Kilpatrick, 1999; Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004).

Language learning is another area that is seen as a by-product of the homestay experience. Many students who are entering into a study abroad program that includes a homestay component see it as essential to their goals of learning a new language (Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004). A study conducted by Rivers (1998) compared language acquisition of students who lived in dormitories and those who had a homestay experience. Surprisingly, the homestay students demonstrated increased language proficiency in reading, but not in writing or speaking, compared to their dorm-stay counterparts. Despite this, the homestay experience is still viewed as a positive influence on improving linguistic proficiency (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002).
When homestays are set up properly they can serve as an integral part of the overall study abroad experience. This component provides students with more than a place to sleep and eat. The homestay experience is one of cultural and linguistic immersion. It is through this experience that many study abroad participants say that they learn the most (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002; Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002).

Service-learning

*Historical Background*

Service-learning is a form of experiential education that links community service with the academic objectives of a course through the incorporation of a reflection component. The origins of service-learning can be found in the Morrill Act of 1862, which established land grant institutions. These institutions of higher education developed programs that provided an early model for service-learning.

At one time, many land grant institutions included what they called a “service bureau” as part of the extension office, which provided programs for the public. The service bureaus were involved in a variety of activities including, “offering technical information on community problems, inciting public interest, and, when necessary, helping the community to organize for action” (Reber, 1916, p. 191). The involvement of university faculty and staff in programs such as this shows evidence of the beginnings of service-learning on college campuses.

After community service another key component of service-learning is reflection and reflective thinking. Educational philosopher John Dewey discussed the use of reflection in education in 1933 in his book *How We Think*. Dewey discussed both reflective thinking and reflective activity and their ability to aid in learning. This recognition of reflection as a key
component of learning helped to establish it as an important aspect of service-learning. Giles and Eyler (1994) identified Dewey’s, “principles of experience, inquiry and reflection as the key elements of a theory of knowing in service-learning.” The work completed by Dewey set the stage for the growth of service-learning later in the century. Still, it would be over 30 years after Dewey’s mention of the uses of reflection that the term “service-learning” would first be used.

The first time the term “service-learning” appeared was in 1967, and it was defined as “the combination of conscious educational growth with the accomplishment of certain tasks that met genuine human needs” (Titlebaum, Williamson, Daprano, Baer, & Brahler, 2004). This was the first definition of many. Giles and Eyler pointed out that a 1990 study found 147 different definitions for service-learning (1994).

During this period, there were several key occurrences that illustrate the development of service-learning on the national level. In 1969 the Atlanta Service-Learning Conference was sponsored by the Southern Regional Education Board, the U.S. Department of Housing, Education and Welfare, and the Peace Corps, among others. In 1971 the National Student Volunteer Program was created and subsequently began publishing *Synergist*, a journal that promoted the linking of service and learning. Several government-sponsored service initiatives were also started in the 1970s, including the California Conservation Corps and the Young Adult Conservation Corps (Titlebaum et al., 2004).

Support for service-learning continued to grow into the 1980s. In 1985, Campus Compact was formed by the presidents of Brown, Georgetown, and Stanford in order to, “help students develop the values and skills of citizenship through participation in public and community service” (Titlebaum et al., 2004). As of 2006, Campus Compact had over 1,000 member institutions in 31 states and is continuing to grow (History of Campus Compact, n.d.). Today,
Campus Compact is one of, if not the most, influential organization in the field of service-learning.

Following the establishment of Campus Compact, service-learning maintained its progressive growth in education. Additionally, there were several occurrences in the early 1990s that aided in the development of the field at the national level. In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the National Community Service Trust Act into law, thus establishing the Corporation for National and Community Service (Titlebaum et al., 2004). The corporation oversees all national service programs including AmeriCorps, VISTA, and Learn and Serve America. It also serves as a primary funding agency for community service and service-learning initiatives emanating from higher education institutions.

The study of service-learning also received a boost in 1994 with the creation of the Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning. Up to this point there were very few research articles on service-learning and no publications devoted solely to the field. Since its establishment, the Michigan Journal has published peer-reviewed articles, “on research, theory, pedagogy, and issues pertinent to the service-learning community” (Michigan Journal, n.d.). It continues to be the leading publication in the field of service-learning.

Since the early 1990s, service-learning has continued to develop within higher education. It is now an established pedagogy that is recognized both nationally and internationally. Several nationwide conferences are held each year on different aspects of service-learning, and an innumerable number of regional and state conferences are also put on by different associations, agencies, and universities. This amazing amount of growth has been accomplished in a relatively short amount of time.
Reflection, Focus, and Quality in Service-learning

Most service-learning programs share a set of common characteristics. First, in order for it to be considered service-learning the course must include a reflective component that connects the academic objectives of the class to the service being carried out. Additionally, service-learning projects tend to focus their efforts on communities that are underserved and that are more likely to benefit from the project than other areas. Successful service-learning projects also concentrate on ensuring quality at both the service site and in the classroom.

The reflection component is an essential part of a service-learning course. Werner and McVaugh (2000) defined reflection as “the process of thinking about one’s service activities and their relationship to course content” (p. 123). According to this definition, reflection connects the service to the learning in service-learning. Eyler and Giles (1999) emphasized the importance of reflection as a key factor in service-learning because it serves as a “connection between the affective and the cognitive” (p. 10). Furthermore, Dewey (1997) stated that reflection is “the heart of intellectual organization and a disciplined mind” (p. 87). Reflection serves as a link between experience, or service, and learning, which is why it is so important to the concept of service-learning.

Besides the overall connection between the course concepts and the service project, instructors can use reflection to achieve a number of goals in their classes. Fostering a deeper understanding of the academic principles behind the coursework is one goal that is often attained through the use of reflection (Cone & Harris, 1996; Hatcher, Bringle, & Muthiah, 2004; Motiff & Roehling, 1994). Many times reflection is used to enhance the activities being carried out at the service site (de Acosta, 1995; Cone & Harris, 1996; Strage, 2000). Reflection has also been used to aid in the development of students’ cultural and self-awareness, analytical skills, and
civic and social attitudes (Cone & Harris, 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Hatcher et al., 2004).

Within a service-learning course, reflection can serve as a medium for student growth in personal development in addition to connecting academic concepts to service.

Service-learning instructors have a variety of tools at their disposal in order to cultivate reflection in the classroom. Reflection is normally carried out in an oral or written format. This can be done either within the classroom or outside of it. Reflection activities may also be completed in electronic formats, such as through email, listservs, and discussion boards (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Mills, 2001). These different tools allow for diversity in reflection techniques.

There is an array of ways in which service-learning can be conducted in written form. One of the most common methods used are reflection journals, in which students respond to prompts given by the instructor that pertain to the service experience and/or academic objectives of the course (Cone & Harris, 1996; de Acosta, 1995; Kellogg, 1999; Moely, McFarland et al., 2002). Written reflection is also used in short writing assignments, essays, papers, and reflection portfolios that students contribute to throughout the length of the course (Braun, 2001; Kellogg, 1999; Litke, 2002). Written reflection is most effective if used on a continual basis over the course of the service-learning project (Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 2000; Strage, 2000). These different forms of written reflection allow the instructor some flexibility in conducting reflection activities.

Reflection can also be conducted in an oral format. Oral reflections usually take place during classroom discussions or in small groups (Cone & Harris, 1996; Moely, McFarland et al., 2002). The open format of oral reflection during class time fosters a feeling of shared experience among the students and allows for adjustments at the service sites (Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 2000; de Acosta, 1995; Dunlap, 1997). The sharing of experiences during classroom oral
reflection, “helps students test their thoughts in a marketplace of ideas” (Cone & Harris, 1996, p. 39). Oral reflection has also been carried out through end-of-semester presentations, which allow for the experiences of the service-learning project to be shared outside of the class (Pompa, 2002).

Many of the outcomes attributed to service-learning are, in fact, linked to the reflection component of the course. Classes that have included a service component, but lacked reflection, showed lower rates of learning compared to classes that included a reflection component (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Godar, 2000). The use of reflection has been shown to increase students’ understanding of course concepts and allows for broader and deeper learning (de Acosta, 1995; Hatcher et al., 2004). Reflection also creates “key opportunities to debunk stereotypes and question social conditions” (Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 2000). Another outcome of reflection is an increase in retained learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Godar, 2000). Reflection is the key component of a service-learning course. It establishes the connection between the academic and the experiential components of a service-learning class.

The communities where most service-learning projects are carried out tend to be identified as low-income areas (Green, 2001; Kellogg, 1999). One such locale being served was described by Kellogg as “typical of many older urban neighborhoods, with problems of disinvestment, crime, abandoned housing, vacant land parcels, high poverty rates, and high unemployment.” At the same time, many of the students involved in these programs are predominantly White and are from the middle or upper-middle class (Cone & Harris, 1996; Green, 2001; Moely, McFarland et al., 2002).

Successful service-learning programs pay close attention to the quality of the experience for the students. John Dewey (1938), a pioneer of experiential education, once said of education,
“everything depends upon the quality of the experience . . . as . . . every experience lives on in
further experiences” (p. 26). This is especially true in service-learning because a lack of quality
in either the classroom or the service site can create a negative experience for the student
(Moely, McFarland et al., 2002). Service-learning projects that provide high quality service sites
and reflection produce rich experiences for students, who have been shown to exhibit more
benefits than students in regular classes (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Service-learning as Pedagogy

Service-learning has been regarded as model to encourage social responsibility, to
promote student moral development, and as a way to advance leadership development (Howard,
1998). While these areas can be connected with service-learning, the prime focus that it has
within higher education is as a pedagogical model. Callahan, Davis, and Hill (2001) defined
pedagogy as “the art or profession of teaching” (p. 261). Service-learning is a pedagogy that is,
“grounded in experience as a basis for learning and on the centrality and intentionality of
reflection designed to enable learning to occur” (Jacoby, 1996, p. 9). For a service-learning
course to be successful it must balance the goals of giving students a quality educational
experience while also providing a service to the community.

Dubinsky (2002) described service-learning pedagogy as having the three axes of
learning, serving, and reflecting. Within the learning axis, it is important for the service-learning
facilitator to establish academic goals that are clearly defined. This ensures that the process is
academically oriented as well as being service oriented. The service being conducted provides an
opportunity for learning as well. Thus, service-learning pedagogy can work toward the
“integration of the two kinds of learning, experiential and academic” (Howard, 1998, p. 22).
Combining these two types of learning creates a deeper educational experience for the student that transcends the classroom and the community.

As an axis of service-learning pedagogy, academic learning also serves to inform the actions of the service axis. Much has been made of what students get from their service experience. Students participating in service learning often exhibit increases in self-efficacy (Kendrick, 1996; Toews & Cerny, 2005), cultural awareness (Sedlak et al., 2003), and political awareness (Eyler et al., 1997; Kellogg, 1999), just to name a few of the pedagogy’s benefits to students. The serving axis, however, is directed at the student’s potential to apply “what one learns for the communal/societal benefit” (Dubinsky, 2002, p. 64). The students are entering the community to offer a service that would otherwise not be provided. As this service is connected to the academic objectives of the course, the students should be in a position to increase their understanding of academic concepts while sharing that knowledge with the community.

The reflecting axis of service-learning pedagogy serves to connect the other axes through “thoughtful engagement” (Dubinsky, 2002). Reflection is central to the pedagogy, as it is, “designed to enable the learning to occur” (Jacoby, 1996, p. 9). This is accomplished by inserting reflection into the educational process. Students engage in academic learning while serving with the designated community partner. The students are then encouraged to reflect on and connect their experiences in and outside of the classroom. This reflection in turn leads the student to conceptualize new thoughts and ideas based on their experiences, which leads to further action. This is, in effect, a version of Kolb’s experiential learning cycle.

Kolb (1984) described his learning cycle as, “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38). This learning process consists of four stages through which an individual moves. As an individual passes through the stages they acquire,
“new knowledge, skills, or attitudes (that) are achieved through confrontation among (the) four modes of experiential learning” (Kolb, 1984, p. 30). These four stages, or modes, are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.

The first stage in the learning cycle is concrete experience, upon which the other three stages build. Concrete experience refers to the personal experiences of the student: their physical surroundings, what they hear, see, smell, etc. To maximize their learning potential during these experiences Kolb (1984) said that they “must be able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias” (p. 30). Concrete experience in a service-learning program would include time spent at the service site and time spent in the classroom. Through concrete experience individuals construct the base over which the other three stages are encountered.

The second stage, reflective observation, builds on concrete experience through contemplation. Within this stage an individual “must be able to reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives” (Kolb, 1984, p. 30). In an academic setting this stage can lead to better understanding of course-related concepts (Cone & Harris, 1996). This includes the organized reflection that is part of a service-learning experience, and can be carried out in oral or written form. The reflection completed in this stage prepares the student to connect those concepts to the experiences from the first stage.

The third stage, abstract conceptualization, develops out of reflective observation through the construction of ideas based on earlier reflections. Kolb (1984) believed that students moving through this stage “create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories” (p. 30). Within a service-learning program this would involve the students in connecting academic objectives with their experiences in the program through reflection and then forming
new ideas and attitudes. After these new attitudes have been shaped, the individual is ready to put them into action.

The fourth stage, active experimentation, involves the use of the newly formed attitudes, ideas, and theories that came about from abstract experimentation. Individuals engaged in active experimentation “must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems” (Kolb, 1984, p. 30). This stage can be recognized within a service-learning project when students use the praxis that has occurred in the earlier stages to bring about change. Students experiencing active experimentation take what they have learned and create outcomes that are possible because they have connected their experience in the community to their academic knowledge and developed possible solutions.

Service-learning can also be considered an active pedagogy, as it incorporates the connection of, “theory and practice, schools and community, the cognitive and the ethical” (Butin, 2003, p. 1675). This concept corresponds with the educational ideas of Paolo Freire. Freire’s (1997) ideas on pedagogy focused on the concepts of praxis and liberation, or social change, through education. The process he described in Pedagogy of the Oppressed shares similarities with Kolb’s learning cycle.

Freire’s (1997) pedagogy begins with a “concrete situation which . . . must be transformed” (p. 32). The pedagogy is built around the idea of creating change through education. Similar to Kolb’s (1984) concrete experience, Freire (1997) begins with a “concrete situation” or “reality” in which the individuals exist (pp. 32, 51). Reflection on that situation follows, which allows the individual to know their reality critically. This critical reflection leads to action that is focused on transforming the situation. Because Freire’s (1997) pedagogy is focused on the
elimination of oppression, it can be incorporated into service-learning pedagogy as they both can concentrate on eliminating barriers for underserved populations.

Paradigms of Service

Service-learning is a pedagogy that incorporates diverse and varied practices in linking academic objectives to community service. No two service-learning courses are exactly the same. Differences exist in their subject matter, course objectives, the service performed, and the type of connection that exists between the course and the community. Many of these variations can be attributed to the instructor’s concept of service-learning.

Morton (1995, 1996) placed service-learning courses within a continuum, or a set of three paradigms, that is directly related to the instructor’s understanding of service-learning pedagogy. These paradigms are charity, project management, and social change. The three paradigms can also be seen to exist along a continuum that flows “from charity to advocacy, from the personal to the political, from individual acts of caring that transcend time and space to collective action on mutual concerns that are grounded in particular places and histories” (Morton, 1996, p. 20). Each of these paradigms has benefits and shortcomings when one considers the stakeholders involved: the students, faculty and the community being served.

The charity paradigm is defined by Morton (1995) as “giving of the self, expecting nothing in return, and with no expectation that any lasting impact will be made” (p. 20). Service-learning courses that fall under this paradigm are usually conducted with little to no collaboration with the community being served. Instead, these courses tend to be focused on academics, with the service component serving as a requirement for students and not a fully integrated element of the course (Eyler & Giles, 1999).
The benefits derived from a service-learning course in the charity paradigm are unequally balanced between those being served and those providing the service. In Morton’s (1995) study of service-learning paradigms, he found charity from the student/service provider as “an act of faith or an ideal way of being in the world” (p. 26). Those being served are given services that they are perceived as needing, such as food from a soup kitchen or tutoring services for underprivileged children. From this perspective, charity benefits providers by meeting their personal needs while serving to the perceived needs of others. The benefits for those being served are built solely on the services provided by the students.

The drawbacks of service-learning conducted within the charity paradigm are much more evident than the benefits. The impact of charity-themed service-learning on the individuals involved is minimal at best (Morton, 1995). Practicing service-learning within this paradigm also has the tendency to “humble the receiver, reinforce the advantages of the giver, and fail to address the root causes for social inequality” (Einfield & Collins, 2008, p. 96). The charity paradigm fortifies the unequal relationships that exist between underserved communities and institutions of higher education, which can be perceived as bastions of power and privilege. In strengthening the inequality of the relationships between universities and communities, the charity paradigm can lead to the failure of potential partnerships between these two entities (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kendall, 1990).

Resistance by communities to being served under the charity paradigm is resistance to maintaining the status quo. This stance is exemplified by a quote attributed to Lila Watson, an Australian Aboriginal activist. It states “If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together” (Drexler, n.d.). The quote calls for an end to paternalism in favor of equal participation toward
common goals. This idea is connected to the social change paradigm that will be discussed later in this section.

The second service paradigm described by Morton (1995, 1996) is the project paradigm. Service-learning that is carried out as a project model tends to “focus on defining problems and their solutions and implementing well-conceived plans for achieving those solutions” (Morton, 1995, p. 21). The service component of a project-themed service-learning program is usually focused on bringing about change (Kahne & Westheimer, 1996). While this emphasis on change could be seen to affect the community being served, the target of this change is frequently the student. According to Kahne and Westheimer (1996), past education reformers such as John Dewey believed that “the transformative potential of this approach was of prime importance” (p. 94).

Benefits associated with project-based service-learning are dependent on the strength of the relationship between the university and the community. Establishing a mutually beneficial university-community partnership is essential to carrying out a successful service-learning project (Dorsey, 2001). The project method does not “target community problems as research topics, but takes a two-sided approach to community service by eliciting direct involvement from the community” (p. 127). In this sense, service-learning using the project paradigm provided benefits to the students in the form of valuable experience and personal development while also serving community needs that are identified by community members. Engaging members of the community leads to greater participation and may secure their participation in future initiatives (Oldfield, 2008; Waddington, 2001). Service-learning within the project paradigm functions best when it is a transparent partnership between the university and the community.
Project-themed service-learning has also been the target of criticism. Morton (1995) identified three areas that can lead to criticism of this type of service-learning: “unintended consequences, the role of experts, and the relationship between planning and action” (p. 22). Unintended consequences of a service-learning project are almost always unforeseen, but can bring a project and the expected community benefit to a halt. An example of this might be a home refurbishing project that comes to a halt because of outside scrutiny (necessary city permits) brought about by the university’s publicity efforts. The “role of the experts” refers to the university’s perceived expertise in areas that may be of benefit to the community. Problems arise when the experts decide what community needs should be addressed without consulting community members. This can damage the possibilities of true collaboration between the university and the community (Eyler & Giles, 1999). The relationship between planning and action can become a problem when one side of the partnership either does not meet its obligations or believes this of the other partner. Most if not all of these difficulties can be avoided by promoting full transparency in the partnership.

The social change, or social justice, paradigm differs from the charity and project paradigms in that it involves empowering, instead of serving, the community partner. Morton (1996) defined service-learning in the social change paradigm as involving “educating people to act in their own interest and empowering those who have been socially disenfranchised” (p. 282). Use of this method entails a, “critical examination of the structural inequalities that create unjust and oppressive conditions” (Rosner-Salazar, 2003, p. 65). The partnerships formed in a project-based service-learning program are taken up a level in a social change-themed program.

Service-learning carried out within the social change paradigm, because of its integrated partnership, should be nearly devoid of negatives for the participants. This delivery method
encourages student-participants to “consider those they work with as partners, as co-investigators of their conditions of inequality” (Artz, 2001, p. 243). Social change initiatives are aimed at identifying and ameliorating the root causes that have put the community partners at a disadvantage in the first place (Artz, 2001; Morton, 1995). Rosner-Salazar (2003) maintained that work in this area can be carried out in several different ways that act to

(a) eliminate or reduce disparities based on various social categories such as race or ethnicity; (b) promote equality in educational, health and legal services; (c) advocate for disenfranchised and underserved groups, and (d) promote and evaluate the delivery of culturally competent services and systems of care. (p. 64)

While advocacy is often mentioned as a component of the social change method (Morton, 1995; Rosner-Salazar, 2003), the partnership and educational aspects of the paradigm are more significant. These social change characteristics contribute to the creation of a learning environment in which the community partners and the students come to better understand the origin of problems facing the selected community (Artz, 2001; Morton, 1995). Identification of the core problems aids in the creation of strategies to ameliorate those problems. This serves as a learning experience for the students and means to better a situation for the community partner.

The paradigms of service-learning described by Morton (1995, 1996) and others serve to categorize both the delivery methods and the possible outcomes of these undertakings. Much of the outcomes are dependent on the strength of the relationship between the university and community. This includes any power differential that may exist between the partners. The goals of each partner also decide which paradigm will be instituted. No matter which method is employed, for it to be considered service-learning it must include academic objectives, a service venture that is needed by the community, and organized reflection to aid the students in processing the experience.
Service-learning and Student Development

The infusion of service-learning into academic coursework has many benefits for students, not the least of which is aiding in their knowledge acquisition and learning outcomes. Students enrolled in service-learning courses have had the benefit of using course-related concepts in a community setting (Moely, McFarland et al., 2002; Toews & Cerny, 2005). General academic learning for students also has been touted as a benefit of engaging in service-learning (Kendrick, 1996; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Strage, 2000). Service-learning students have been shown to score higher on exams than their non-service-learning counterparts (Strage, 2000).

Beyond the positive academic outcomes, students who participate in service-learning have been shown to achieve personal and interpersonal development benefits. These students reported better interpersonal engagement, including problem-solving and leadership skills (Gallini & Moely, 2003; Moely, McFarland et al., 2002). Service-learners were also able to identify with the community that they were serving (Gallini & Moely, 2003; Simons & Cleary, 2006). Students involved in service-learning have also been shown to experience increases in self-efficacy (Kendrick, 1996; Sedlak et al., 2003; Toews & Cerny, 2005).

Service-learning has also been shown to increase students’ cultural awareness. Those students enrolled in a service-learning class have reported increased tolerance and reductions in prejudice (Moely, Mercer et al., 2002; Toews & Cerny, 2005). Service-learners have also demonstrated growth in cultural competence as a result of their experiences (Gallini & Moely, 2003; Sedlak et al., 2003). Students involved in a service-learning course are also more likely to be open to new ideas and perspectives (Eyler et al., 1997).

One of the more highly touted benefits of service-learning is that it can help to encourage citizenship in students. Involvement in service-learning can serve as a predictor of students’
increasing interest in social responsibility (Kellogg, 1999; Kendrick, 1996; O’Hara, 2001; Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000). Students have also been shown to have increased political awareness and participation (Eyler et al., 1997; Kellogg, 1999). Additionally, service-learning participants are more likely to believe that communities can be successful in resolving their problems and take on leadership roles in those communities (Eyler et al., 1997; O’Hara, 2001).

International Service-learning

As both service-learning and study abroad have been expanding their reach, we have seen the emergence of hybrid programs. In 1982 the International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leadership (IPSL) was founded in order to “create conditions in which colleges and universities could operate programs of academic study combined with meaningful community service across the world,” (Tonkin & Quiroga, 2004, p. 131). This organization operates independently of U.S. higher education institutions and instead partners with universities in host countries to provide service-learning programs. All of these programs are at least one semester in length, and many last a full academic year. Since its establishment, IPSL has served over 4,000 students who have studied in service-learning programs throughout the world (Sternberger, Ford, & Hale, 2004).

Following the establishment of IPSL and the continued growth of service-learning in higher education, many colleges and universities began establishing their own international service-learning programs. Growth in international service-learning can also be attributed to increased student interest in study abroad and especially interest in new and innovative international programs. International service-learning programs often provide access to locales and experiences that are not available in conventional study abroad programs. This area is also
growing thanks to the interest of educators, “who appear to share a growing conviction that international experiences promote responsible citizenship, moral leadership, and professional preparation for life in a global and interdependent world” (Sternberger et al., 2004, p. 81).

One demonstration of the growth of international service-learning is the existence of an annual conference devoted to the subject. In February 2008, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis’s Center for Service and Learning hosted the Third Annual Conference on International Service-Learning. The conference was attended by faculty and administrators representing 59 institutions of higher education and six service-learning organizations. In addition, universities from Kenya and South Africa were also in attendance (ISL Conference 2008, n.d.). The establishment and continuation of this conference provides evidence of a growing interest in international service-learning on the national and international level.

Most of the international service-learning programs managed by universities are conducted as short-term programs, although some are a semester in length (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005; Smith-Pariola & Goke-Pariola, 2006; Wessel, 2007). The prevalence of short-term international service-learning programs reflects the overall trend in study abroad, with more students choosing to participate in programs that last 8 weeks or less (Duration of Study Abroad, 2006). As service-learning continues to be integrated into study abroad, its primary area of growth will be in short-term programming.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework for college students’ perceptions and experiences in short-term international service-learning programs can be formulated using Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement and Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle. Outcomes associated with the student experience
in service-learning and study abroad programs were also incorporated into the framework. In addition, Paolo Freire’s (1997) ideas concerning the importance of reflection in bringing about change are also touched on. Together these connected areas within experiential education serve to guide the study.

Figure 1 demonstrates how Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement and Freire’s (1997) ideas on reflection overlap with Kolb’s learning cycle to for this study’s conceptual framework. The area where these ideas overlap represents the analytic lens that guides this study.
**Astin’s Theory of Involvement**

Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement is incorporated into this conceptual framework because of its emphasis on both the quantity and quality of student participation and their relationship to student development. Student involvement theory is relevant to both academic and extracurricular activities in that they have the potential to produce positive change in the individual. It is essentially a theory of active learning. This makes the theory applicable to this study as the students involved in international service-learning programs are involved in active experiential learning.

According to Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement, “a particular curriculum, to achieve the effects intended, must elicit sufficient student effort and investment of energy to bring about the desired learning and development” (p. 301). In order for service-learning courses and study abroad programs to be successful in educating their students, they must fully involve those students in their respective activities. International service-learning programs are in a unique position in that they require a large investment of the student’s time during the program’s duration.

Astin (1984) referred to student involvement as “the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience” (p. 297). Student development derived from involvement is directly related to the amount of time and energy that students invest in activities aimed at advancing student development (1984). International service-learning programs, by virtue of their nature, immerse their student participants in program activities. The amount of time these students devote to the program is largely controlled by the program’s set duration. The amount of energy devoted to ISL program activities is largely dependent on the student.
The quality and quantity of student involvement is a significant aspect of the theory of involvement. Astin (1984) stated, “the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in the program” (p. 298). Both quality and quantity of experience are central to this study of the student experience in short-term ISL programs.

The quality of short-term ISL programs is dependent on the program leader/instructor’s administration. Aspects of short-term ISL programs that lend themselves to quality are the delivery methods used for reflection, the service site placement, and the involvement of the program leader/instructor. Organized reflection within a short-term ISL program must be present throughout the duration of the program to be considered effective. Fully integrated reflection is a sign of quality within any service-learning program. The selection of a service site also speaks to the quality of a short-term ISL program in that it can demonstrate which paradigm of service is being employed. The instructor’s level of engagement within the program can also demonstrate its quality, as a fully-involved instructor is in a better position to make minor changes to the program in order to facilitate a responsive learning environment. Within this study the idea of quality will be dependent on the opinions of the student participants.

The quantity of student involvement within short-term ISL programs can be examined in two different ways. First, the program’s length can be designated as a quantitative measure of the student’s involvement. A drawback of this approach, when considering short-term programs, is that they can never compare with traditional semester-long study abroad programs. Instead, the percentage of a student’s time engaged in educational activities during the program can serve as a measure of involvement. Considering the amount of time students spend engaged in related activities during ISL programs, such students will likely have high rates of involvement.
Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle is incorporated into this conceptual framework because of its relevance to service-learning pedagogy. The four stages of the learning cycle (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation) are integrated into the educational process of service-learning. It is also relevant to study abroad experiences, as they are also another form of experiential learning. Knowledge of this learning cycle was used to inform the study, both in conducting individual interviews and in analyzing data.

The concrete experience that the students in this study had gone through affected the formation of their perceptions later in the process. According to Kolb (1984), it is very important that the students are “able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences” (p. 30). While a student’s readiness for new experience largely rests on the individual, within international service-learning programs the instructor/program leader also shares some responsibility in preparing the student for the experience. Service-learning instructors commonly get their students ready for serving in the community using various methods to familiarize them with those in the community. Likewise, an essential part of any study abroad program is the pre-departure orientation. While these orientations often focus on safety and health in the host country most also include information on intercultural competence (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). Informing students on the cultural norms of the host country should have some effect on their readiness to fully experience their study abroad program.

The students in this study went through reflective observation as a part of their international service-learning program. The reflection activities allowed the students to “reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives” (Kolb, 1984, p. 30). Formal reflection
is an essential component of a service-learning course (Werner & McVaugh, 2000). While formal reflection activities are not normally present in study abroad programming, they are included in international service-learning programs (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). The formal reflection activities that the students participated in were considered within this study due to their importance in Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle and their general place within service-learning pedagogy.

According to Freire (1997), reflection is essential to action and activates “the subsequent development of experience” (p. 35). Reflection makes individuals aware of their reality and gives them an opportunity to change that reality. This change cannot happen without reflection. Freire (1997) stated that the connection between reflection and action is so great that, “if one is sacrificed—even in part, the other immediately suffers” (p. 68). The transformation of an individual’s perspectives, beliefs, values, etc. is driven by reflection. The use of reflective activities in international service-learning should be expected to have a transformative effect on the student participants.

The reflection component is an essential part of any service-learning program. It serves to connect the service conducted in the community to the academic objectives of a course. In essence, the use of reflection within service-learning programs is “designed to enable learning to occur” (Jacoby, 1996, p. 9). The learning process that is begun through reflection is carried on through abstract conceptualization.

Student views concerning the impact and outcomes related to their experiences and reflection activities are also important to the study, as they form the basis for the abstract conceptualization stage of the learning cycle. An individual who has gone through the abstract conceptualization stage should “be able to create concepts that integrate their observations into
logically sound theories” (Kolb, 1984, p. 30). The perceptions of students related to the aftereffects of their experiences and reflections in this study will demonstrate the movement of the student through the abstract conceptualization stage of Kolb’s learning cycle.

The actions of students following the first three stages of the learning cycle are valuable to this study because they provide confirmation of the cycle’s completion. Individuals who are in the active experimentation stage are able to use the ideas and theories formed during abstract conceptualization to “make decisions and solve problems” (Kolb, 1984, p. 30). Students who have completed the active experimentation stage may have experienced transformations in their personal opinions and act on them.

**Student Experiences**

Students participating in experiential education, including study abroad and service-learning, often report some aspect of personal transformation. In the area of study abroad, students have returned from their travels with increased levels of self-confidence/self-efficacy (Ingraham & Peterson, 2005; Kauffmann et al., 1992; Milstein, 2005; Nash, 1976) and intercultural sensitivity (Anderson et al., 2006; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Dwyer, 2004). Many of these students also report more intangibles, such as changes in self-perception (Ingraham & Peterson, 2005) or have found themselves, “challenging their own values, biases, beliefs, and ways of thinking” (Lindsey, 2005). Service-learning participants have been shown to develop new leadership skills and enhanced interpersonal skills (Moely, McFarland et al., 2002). Students also expressed additional personal development including, “moral, political and intellectual transformation” (Kellogg, 1999). These reported transformations are based on the experiences and self-perceptions of the students.
Student experiences within an international service-learning program may exhibit characteristics that are typical to experiences drawn separately from participation in service-learning and study abroad. Changes in self-perception, personal development, and political and moral outlook are brought about through experiences in combination with personal reflection (Freire, 1997). The combination of the study abroad experience with the reflective elements of service-learning may drive personal development in the student participants of a short-term ISL program.

*Convergence of Elements in the Conceptual Framework*

The three separate elements of this study’s conceptual framework could all be employed separately to study student experiences in short-term international service-learning programs. However, the addition of Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement and Freire’s (1997) ideas regarding reflection provides a more contextual view of the student experience within Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle. The learning cycle describes an individual’s movement through an experience, reflection, and personal change. Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle was incorporated into this conceptual framework due to its association with the pedagogy of service-learning.

The conceptual framework in this study enhances Kolb’s concrete experience with Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement, placing more emphasis on the student participant’s engagement in the short-term ISL experience. This connection was made in order to further study Astin’s ideas on quantity and quality of student involvement and investment of energy. Quality is also related to the overall program experience as perceived by the student participants. Through the joining of Kolb’s learning cycle and Astin’s theory of involvement, this conceptual framework sought to view concrete experience as an idea made up of layers that include the
quality and quantity of the experience and the student’s effort and investment of energy into that experience.

Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle is also reinforced by Paolo Freire’s (1997) ideas on reflection. Within the learning cycle, movement from reflective observation on to abstract conceptualization is further supplemented by Freire’s description of the importance of reflection and its subsequent effects on action. From this perspective, reflection is present in Kolb’s stages of reflective observation and abstract conceptualization. Reflection is an essential component of this conceptual framework because, according to Freire, it drives “the subsequent development of experience” (p. 35). In this way, the idea of reflection is expanded to include half of Kolb’s learning cycle.

This study’s conceptual framework examined the student experience within short-term ISL programs through an adaptation of Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle. The students’ concrete experience was further analyzed through Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement. In addition, reflective observation and abstract conceptualization were examined as they related to Freire’s (1997) thoughts on reflection and subsequent action, which drive active experimentation. This framework guided the study in the collection and examination of data.

Conclusion

Within this study, the experiences and perceptions of students are examined following participation in a short-term ISL program. Student experiences are affected by several factors present within such a program. The quality of the experience provided by the program leader is directly related to the program’s developmental impact on the student. The student’s perception of quality is important as well, because this can affect student growth within the experience
(Astin, 1984). Reflection activities within the program experience provide a vehicle for student transformative learning. Reflection drives student transformation, and so is a key factor in the international service-learning experience. Other student experiences related to service-learning and study abroad are also included in order to provide insight into the experiences and perceptions of students in an ISL program.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter highlights the research methodology, research questions, procedures for data collection, and data analysis techniques for the study. The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences and perceptions of North American college students involved in short-term international service-learning programs. This research project used a qualitative approach to better understand student perceptions and experiences through the lenses of reflection and experiential learning. The study’s qualitative nature supplied an assortment of data sources from which conclusions were inferred.

Research Questions

This study examined the student experience in short-term international service-learning programs in an effort to better understand how these programs affect student attitudes and perceptions. The research questions that guided this study follow:

1. What are the experiences of college students in short-term international service-learning programs?
2. How does the use of organized reflection affect student perceptions?
3. How does the difference in perceived program quality affect student experiences?

These questions served to guide the study as I attempted to better understand the experiences and perceptions of students involved in short-term ISL programs. Focusing on the
use of reflection and length of program enabled me to concentrate on aspects of the student experience that are distinctive to short-term ISL.

Research Design and Rationale

The characteristics of this study justified a qualitative approach, as the research questions focused on student experiences and perceptions. The goal of the study was to understand and describe these experiences in a comprehensive manner. Consequently, quantitative methodology did not lend itself to this study. The research that was conducted in this study focused on the, “individual lived experiences” of the students involved in short-term ISL programs (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 60). This study sought to describe and understand the experiences of those students.

The research methods used in this study can be best described as a general qualitative study, in that it sought to better understand the perceptions and experiences of students involved in short-term ISL programs (Merriam, 1998). The study drew from the concepts of reflection and experiential education put forth by Alexander Astin (1984), David Kolb (1984), and Paolo Freire (1997). General qualitative studies “are probably the most common form of qualitative research in education,” and normally focus on the processes and perspectives of individuals relevant to the study (Merriam, 1998, p. 11). Studies such as this are normally conducted outside of a bounded system and do not involve theory building.

This study followed the guidelines of a general, or basic, qualitative study in that it examined student experiences in several different short-term ISL programs. The use of a basic qualitative study permitted programs of varying lengths to be included in the study as well as programs sponsored by different institutions. The focus of the study was on the experiences and
perspectives of the students. While the study cannot be generalized, it does provide insight into the shared experiences of students in similar programs.

The rationale for this study is partly based on my own experiences within the fields of service-learning and study abroad, where I have seen college students benefit from their involvement in these two areas. In my readings on study abroad, I have repeatedly been made aware of the idea that students involved in short-term study abroad programs are benefiting from their international experience less than their long-term counterparts. This discrepancy runs the gamut from personal growth to language learning and academic performance (Ingraham & Peterson, 2005). Short-term study abroad programs are now the most prevalent type of international education programs. According to the literature, our study abroad programs are producing more internationally-experienced students, but those students are not reaching their developmental and academic potential.

As a student affairs practitioner involved in the field of service-learning, I see the benefits of incorporating service-learning pedagogy into short-term study abroad programs. Students engaged in service-learning have been shown to benefit in the areas of academic learning, cultural competence, leadership abilities, and self-efficacy. These developments have been drawn from service-learning experiences that lasted for as little as 15 hours. If the benefits that are evident in service-learning involvement can be carried over into short-term study abroad, then the discrepancies between short- and long-term programs can possibly be lessened or eliminated.
Site Selection and Rationale

A multiple-site study was chosen for several reasons. Short-term ISL programs can differ in a number of ways, including institution of origin, destination, student characteristics, and service project focus. Including multiple sites in the study allowed for the emergence of themes that were shared among the separate programs.

A multiple-site study also allowed for the inclusion of short-term ISL programs that vary in duration. To be classified as short-term, a program may last for up to 8 weeks (Duration of U.S. study abroad, 2006). Short-term programs vary in their length anywhere from 1 week up to the maximum of 8 weeks. Studying short-term ISL programs with various durations allowed for the identification of common experiences among student participants across the spectrum on program length.

In order to identify multiple programs for this study, the following parameters were used:

1. *The program’s home campus has institutionalized service-learning.* Campus institutionalization of service-learning is significant because it suggests that those involved in the program are familiar with service-learning pedagogy.

2. *The program has a duration of 1 to 8 weeks.* In order for the program to be classified as short-term, it must take place within this timeframe.

3. *The program has an integrated reflection component.* The reflection component is the key to the service-learning designation. Without it, there is nothing to connect the service to the learning.

4. *The program must take place outside of the sponsoring institution’s home country.* In order for the program to be considered international it must take place outside of the sponsoring institution’s home country. Home institutions in this study are based in the United States.
Selected Institutions and Programs

Three universities that sponsor short-term ISL programs were identified that met these criteria. Each of these universities has institutionalized service-learning on its campus. Institutionalization is demonstrated by the existence of an administrative unit that is dedicated to the promotion of service-learning and civic engagement on its campus. Short-term ISL programs at these institutions fall within the duration requirement of 1 to 8 weeks. Integrated reflection components have been confirmed in at least one program per campus. All of these programs take place outside of the universities home country.

River State University

River State University (RSU) is a state supported comprehensive doctoral and research extensive university located in the Southeastern United States. As of the 2006-2007 academic year, RSU had an enrollment of over 15,000 students (Fast Facts, n.d.). Of those students, about 500 annually participate in study abroad programs sponsored by the Office of International Programs (F. Sudduth, personal communication, May 22, 2008). Nearly half of the study abroad opportunities offered by the Office of International Programs (OIP) are considered short-term programs (RSU International Programs, n.d.).

Service-learning on RSU’s campus is supported by the Office of Community Service-Learning (OCSL). OCSL sponsors a number of initiatives on campus including faculty training in service-learning, service project support activities, and general advocacy for the pedagogy. The office has been in operation since 1992 and has made a significant contribution to the growth of service-learning on campus and across RSU’s state (B. Ross, personal communication, May 10, 2008).
This study examined one short-term international service-learning program at River State University. This program is sponsored by OCSL during the spring semester and is made possible through a partnership with the RSU Department of Social Work and OIP. The students interviewed for this study represented two cohorts who participated in the program over a 2-year period. These programs had durations of approximately 1 to 1.5 weeks, depending on the year, and took place in Canada during RSU’s spring break.

RSU’s Canada program was faculty-led and followed the embedded model of study abroad, which involves a semester-long course with an integrated short-term study abroad component. Over the course of the program, student participants engaged in an average of 30 hours of service-related activities. Program service sites were designated social service organizations in the host community. A modified home-stay arrangement was incorporated into the program, which involved student participants living with college students in the host community. Reflection was integrated into the program on a daily basis and included both oral and written reflection activities. Formal assessments of student outcomes related to program participation were not conducted.

**Hill State University**

Hill State University (HSU) is a state-supported Masters-granting university located in the southeastern United States. As of fall 2007, HSU had an enrollment of nearly 16,000 students (About HSU, n.d.). Of those students, over 450 participate annually in faculty-led study abroad programs sponsored by the university’s Hill Overseas Education Programs (HOEP). All of these programs are considered to be short-term, as they have a duration between 1 and 8 weeks (HSU International Education, n.d.).
Service-learning on HSU’s campus is supported by Hill & the Community Together (HCT). HCT is an extension of the Department of Student Programs at HSU and serves as a “clearinghouse for community service, service-learning and community-based research opportunities” in their region of the state (HCT homepage, n.d.). The program is jointly supported by HSU’s divisions of Student Development and Academic Affairs. With this support HCT is able to provide a number of services related to service-learning, including general advocacy for the pedagogy, a faculty training seminar, and regular campus-wide workshops focused on service-learning (HCT service-learning, n.d.).

HSU has a number of short-term ISL programs that were conducted in the past academic year. Four of these programs were conducted during the university’s spring break and two took place during the summer. The programs varied in length from 1 week to 4 weeks. Program sites included Costa Rica, Jamaica, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, and Wales. The programs being studied incorporate reflection primarily through group discussion activities (HSU International Education, n.d.).

HSU’s Bolivia program was a faculty-led, modified cohort-based course with a duration of approximately 2 weeks. The program focused on leadership and social change in the host country. Service activities were primarily focused on social services and education. Student participants engaged in an average of 25 hours of service-related activities. Home-stay experiences were incorporated into this program, which involved six nights with a host family out of the 2-week duration of the program. Students met with program leaders on an informal basis or communicated by phone during the home-stay experience. Reflection was conducted in both written and oral formats on a regular basis. Formal assessments of student outcomes related
to program participation were conducted; however, they were not conducted by the program leader.

The second program included in this study from HSU was a 4-week long, faculty-led course held in Wales. The program focused on sustainable development and included four day-long home-stay experiences at small farms specializing in sustainable agriculture. Service activities were spread throughout the program’s duration, with a significant portion being completed over the home-stay experience. Formal reflection was conducted in both written and oral formats. Although formal assessments of student learning outcomes were not conducted, student reflection journals were reviewed by the program leaders.

This study also included four week-long programs that were conducted during HSU’s spring break. Each of these programs is part of HSU’s annual alternative spring break initiative. The individual programs in this study took place in Costa Rica, Panama, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic and were organized and led by students. Each of these programs incorporated home-stay experiences that spanned the entire length of the activity. All four alternative spring break programs included a significant focus on service activities and cultural exchange. Service activities were conducted on at least 5 days of the week-long programs. Formal reflection was carried out in an oral format for each program. Formal assessments of student learning outcomes were not completed for these programs.

Hawk University

Hawk University (Hawk) is a state-supported comprehensive doctoral and research extensive university located in the Midwestern United States. As of fall 2007, Hawk had an enrollment of nearly 16,000 students (Quick Facts, n.d.). Of those students, over 1,500
participated annually in study abroad programs sponsored by Hawk’s Office of International Education (Hawk Study Abroad, n.d.). Over half of the Hawk students who study abroad each year do so on a short-term basis. Many of these programs are offered through the university’s Office of Lifelong Learning (C. Young, personal communication, May 21, 2008).

Service-learning on Hawk’s campus is supported by the Office of Community Engagement and Service (OCES). This office seeks to enhance student learning through the promotion of community engagement. The university also provides an optional extra hour of course credit in any core curriculum course if the student is involved in extended study or service-learning (Hawk Service Learning, n.d.). The institutionalization of service-learning at Hawk is also demonstrated by a faculty learning community that focuses on the pedagogy (Faculty Learning Community, n.d.). Service-learning at Hawk is encouraged among both the faculty and the students.

The Office of Lifelong Learning (OLL) at Hawk oversees a number of short-term ISL programs. OLL staff identified several programs that met the criteria to be included in the study. The programs vary in length from approximately 1.5 weeks to 4 weeks spent abroad. The programs included in this study took place in Dominica, Tanzania, and Kenya. The programs being studied incorporated reflection activities, although delivery methods varied from program to program (C. Young, personal communication, May 21, 2008).

Hawk’s Kenya and Tanzania programs were a faculty-led, cohort-based course and had a duration of 2 weeks, with all coursework and activities being completed in the designated time period. The courses were offered through the institution’s geography department and focused on biodiversity of the host country with an integrated service-learning component. The Kenya program is well established, having been in existence for nearly a decade. The Tanzania program
was implemented due to social unrest in Kenya, thus taking the place of the course in that country. The program structure and curriculum were nearly identical. However, the program was carried out without the benefit of established community partners that were present for the Kenya program. Program service sites were in rural areas in the host country and focused on education and agriculture. Service activities were completed over a period of 2 days. Written and oral reflection was conducted on a daily basis. A home-stay experience was not incorporated into the program. Formal assessments of student outcomes related to program participation were conducted by the program leader but they were not made available for this study.

The third program included in this study from Hawk University took place in Dominica. This program was faculty-led and the students were organized as a cohort. The Dominica program had a duration of 10 days and included a 2-day home-stay experience. Formal reflection was conducted through journaling while oral reflection occurred informally. The program’s service activities were related to eco-tourism and agriculture and were carried out on local farms and eco-lodges. Programmed service activities were completed over a period of 2 days. Formal assessments of student outcomes related to program participation were conducted; however they were not conducted by the program leader.

Participant Selection

Study participants were drawn from all levels of program involvement. The faculty/administrators of these short-term ISL programs were included in this study in order to understand their perspectives on student experiences. These individuals were also incorporated into the study to provide information on program activities, including reflection. Additionally, the program leaders were utilized in the identification of student participants.
College students who had participated in the short-term ISL programs already mentioned were asked to volunteer for this study. These individuals’ experiences and perceptions related to their participation in a short-term ISL program made them essential to the study. The student population that was interviewed included one graduate student and 17 undergraduates.

Access

Access to participants was gained through connections with ISL program administrators and faculty. Through my work in the areas of service-learning and study abroad I have made connections with program leaders at two of the institutions included in the study. Additionally, I oversee the short-term ISL program at RSU and contacted potential study participants from that institution. I sought the assistance of program administrators and faculty at HSU and Hawk in identifying potential study participants. The program leaders were asked to aid in arranging a space for conducting interviews. Additionally, I asked for their assistance in organizing an interview schedule. In the process of gaining access, I presented myself as a researcher investigating the subject of this study. Each program leader and student participant was fully informed of my actions and objectives.

Data Collection

For the purposes of this study, the primary method of data collection was individual interviews. Focusing on individual interviews provided insight into the experiences and perceptions of the short-term ISL participants. Document analysis was used to supplement the individual interviews. The combination of these methods of data collection provided a more complete representation of student experiences and perceptions from the programs being studied.
Individual interviews were digitally recorded and followed a semi-structured protocol (see Appendix A). Open-ended questions were asked in order to include as much of the students’ and program leaders’ views on their experiences as possible. Follow-up questions were asked during the course of the interviews in order to build a complete representation of student experiences and perspectives concerning participation in a short-term ISL program.

In addition to interviews, a number of documents were used in the interpretation and analysis of data. Whenever possible, student participants’ reflection journals were examined. Additional document data were collected from program websites and program-related course materials.

Interviews

Individual interviews served as the primary method of data collection in this study. The use of individual interviews was essential to the study because I was unable to observe the student participants during the course of the short-term ISL program in which they were involved. The interviews were conducted in order to, “collect data from a large number of people representing a broad range” of experiences (Merriam, 1998, p. 72). Although the programs included in this study were similar in design, differences existed in program duration, focus area, sponsoring institution, service site, and country of origin.

A semi-structured interview protocol was utilized for the individual interviews to ensure that particular themes were touched on during data collection (Merriam, 1998). The questions within the protocol reflect the research questions that guided this study. Using this type of protocol allowed for a certain amount of uniformity across the interviews while also providing
opportunities for the emergence of data. Follow-up questions were used during the interviews to build on emerging themes.

**Documents**

Documents served as a supplementary source of data for this study. Gathering documents in qualitative research is considered comparable to conducting interviews or focus groups in the field (Merriam, 1998). Within qualitative research, documents can be found in many forms including letters, brochures, newspapers, and policy statements (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Merriam, 1998). According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), document analysis is “an unobtrusive method, rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting” (p. 116)

Personal documents such as journals can be very informative to the research process (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Merriam, 1998). The use of journals and/or papers as a reflection tool is a common practice of service-learning pedagogy (de Acosta, 1995; Godar, 2000; Litke, 2002; Mills, 2001; Strage, 2000). Whenever possible, copies of reflection journals and papers were acquired in order to collect data related to student experiences and perceptions.

Program-related materials and websites were also examined during the research process. Analyzing these documents provided insight into the perceptions of students prior to their involvement in a short-term ISL program. Including program-related materials in the study was also beneficial to the research by aiding in the creation of an overall picture of the short-term ISL program experience. In Table 1, I have provided a summary of the research methods that were used in this study, the frequency in which they were conducted, and the timeline for data collection.
Table 1

Research Methods Used in Dissertation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Targeted Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>18 students</td>
<td>Single interviews,</td>
<td>September-November 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recently involved in a short-term ISL program</td>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>2 short-term ISL program leaders</td>
<td>Single interviews,</td>
<td>September-November 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Reflection journals and papers, websites, program materials</td>
<td>As available</td>
<td>September-November 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis

Conducting qualitative data analysis is a decidedly intuitive process that requires attention to detail when studying the gathered information. Data, including interview transcripts, reflection journals, and program literature, were analyzed as it was collected throughout the study. Merriam (1998) noted that “analysis becomes more intensive as the study progresses, and once all the data are in” (p. 155). This was especially true within this study as the number of interview transcripts grew during the ongoing analysis.

The interviews conducted with student program participants and program leaders had an average duration of 1 hour, although interview times ranged from as short as 25 minutes to as long as 90 minutes. Each interview was digitally audio-recorded with permission from the individual. Each interview was transcribed word for word; I transcribed the first five interviews while the remainder of the interviews was completed by a hired transcriptionist. This allowed me to revisit the interviews conducted at the first institution included in this study and adjust the interview protocol before continuing data collection at the two additional institutions. Following
transcription, the study participants who elected to review their transcripts were sent a copy via email. I did not receive any comments or edits from interviews after sending out the transcripts.

During the course of this study, the constant comparative method of data analysis was implemented, allowing for the continuous examination of data as it was collected. According to Merriam (1998), within this method subjects that occur within the data are collected and compared with other occurrences in the data. Subsequently, “these comparisons lead to tentative categories that are then compared to each other and to other instances” (p. 159). In this way, the data were analyzed as it was collected, guiding the emergence of themes from within the data.

Trustworthiness

This study was built around the recalled experiences and perceptions of college students related to their involvement in short-term ISL programs. Within qualitative research, reliance on individual interviews opens the possibility for distortion or exaggeration on the part of the study’s participants (Merriam, 1998). By including student participants and leaders from multiple programs and three different institutions, this study minimized the effects of any distortions in collected data. Additionally, the perceptions of the student participants are a key element in this study, as they were used to construct an image of the short-term ISL student experience.

Trustworthiness of data in this study relied on its concentration on a core group of students and through the interpretation of data from multiple perspectives. The participants of this study were all involved in short-term ISL programs as either a student or a program leader/administrator. Their experiences are the focus of the study and the interviews with them were intended to collect data on those experiences. Member checks were conducted in order to
prevent the biased interpretation of data by myself and any additional readers of data. This was accomplished by providing interview transcripts to the study’s participants and asking them to authenticate the data.

In addition, this study accomplished triangulation of data by collecting information from multiple sources. Guba and Lincoln (1984) described triangulation as “exposing a proposition to possibly countervailing facts or assertions or verifying such propositions with data drawn from other sources” (p. 107). Triangulation is used to confirm findings as they emerge from multiple sources of data. The triangulation of data in this study was accomplished through the use of individual interviews with program participants, program leaders, and the analysis of documents including reflection journals and published program materials. Triangulation was also verified by the emergence of analogous descriptions of student experiences in the individual interviews and similarities drawn from the review of reflection journals and papers.

Replication of the Study

The collection and analysis of data was documented over the course of the study in order to provide opportunities for further examination of the data. The cataloging of this data also allows for the possible reproduction of the data analysis by other researchers. It should be noted that while an audit of the study could confirm that the study was carried out in a proficient manner, it could not actually replicate the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1984). A chart outlining the research methods used in this study is made available as Table 1 and the semi-structured interview protocols used for student participants and program leaders are provided in Appendices A and B, respectively.
Researcher Positionality

As a college administrator who has worked in the areas of service-learning and study abroad, I have an interest in learning more about the results of combining these two areas of experiential learning. I have designed and conducted short-term ISL programs twice and have worked with faculty and administrators who are involved in similar programs. Some of the students included in this study have been involved in the program that I conducted. Grades associated with this program have already been reported and are not connected to my research in any way.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are directly related to the research methods used. Conducting individual interviews requires the researcher to become a research instrument. Personal experiences and biases of the researcher become infused into the research itself. This can occur through the interpretation of the data and the manner in which questions are phrased (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Conversely, qualitative research enables the researcher to “build rich descriptions of complex circumstances” (p. 33).

Besides the limitations associated with qualitative research in general, this study has limitations related to the number of institutions that are included in the research. The experiences of students from the three institutions within the study may not be generalized to institutions of similar size. It should be noted that there are significant differences between the institutions within the study, including the number of students who annually study abroad as well as institutional mission. Differences between programs also exist, including duration, focus area, number of participants, and service site. Despite these differences, the experiences of the
students were informative and provided evidence of similarities between the short-term ISL programs.

Conclusion

In this chapter I outlined the methods that were used in order to examine the experiences and perceptions of students involved in short-term international service-learning programs. The aspects of qualitative research outlined in this chapter served to guide the study. This ensured consistency of research methods throughout the study. Data collection was primarily in the form of individual interviews with student participants and program leaders. This was supplemented by document analysis of reflections journals, and papers along with other available program materials, including websites. The institutions included in this study were chosen using the search parameters presented in this chapter. Study participants at each of the selected institutions were identified by faculty and administrators at those sites. The experiences and perceptions of these participants were central to this study.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

If you have the idea right now that you are going to really help them, and make their lives better just by being there a week, you’re wrong. But if you go in with the idea that you’re learning something from them and that you’re working side by side from them, you get a lot more out of it. (Selma, 1 week, Panama)

The concept of organized study abroad has been present within the American higher education system since 1919. The use of service-learning pedagogy at the postsecondary level is first seen in the literature in 1967, nearly 50 years after study abroad. International service-learning, a combination of these two types of experiential education, appeared 15 years later with the creation of the International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leadership in 1982 (Tonkin & Quiroga, 2004). International service-learning has continued to grow alongside more traditional study abroad programming, with most of this growth occurring in short-term programs. The actual number of short-term ISL programs that are carried out each year is not known, but the number of organizations and international programs offices offering such programs is on the rise. An indication of this growth is the attendance at the 2008 annual conference on international service-learning. What began 2 years earlier as a small symposium attracted over 120 attendees representing 59 organizations and institutions of higher education (International Service-Learning Conference 2008, n.d.). As short-term ISL grows it will be important to not only document the programs, but also the experiences of the students involved in those programs.
The students interviewed for this study represent three universities and 10 short-term ISL programs. Each program was its own unique experience, and this was reflected in the conversations held with the students. The programs varied in a number of ways including duration, host country, the type of service conducted, living arrangements, and the amount of academic credit awarded for participation. Despite the differences, these short-term ISL programs affected their student participants in similar ways, which are reflected in the themes in this chapter. Each category and its subsequent themes build into the story of the students’ experiences in and perceptions of the short-term ISL programs in which they participated, building finally into how they were affected by their association with these programs.

Figure 2 illustrates each emergent theme and the categories into which they have been placed. Each theme falls under a specific category, although some of the themes could be placed under more than one. In some instances, information that is used in one theme is repeated in the explanation of another. Despite the appearance of data in multiple themes, the analysis of the data yielded six unique themes. These themes are separated into three categories because of connections between them that became apparent during analysis of the data. Emergent themes were recognized as certain subjects came up during the interviews on a repeated basis. The six themes that are outlined in this study were discussed the most by the individuals who were interviewed. As an example, significant discussions related to perceptions of personal change were documented in the interview transcripts a total of 27 times. For the purposes of this study “significant” means more than a cursory mention within a discussion. Interview subjects placed particular emphasis on these topics through either length of discussion or a personal declaration of importance.
The first section of this chapter focuses on the student experience within the short-term ISL programs. Included in the category of student experiences, the themes of homestay experiences and service experiences are discussed. The second section is centered on student perceptions of program characteristics. Within this category are the themes of student perceptions of program quality and student perceptions of program duration. The third section focuses on student perceptions of reflection and personal change. The themes within this category focus on the students’ perceptions of the effect of reflection and their perceptions of personal change following their participation in a short-term ISL program.

Each participant, both students and program leaders, referenced in this chapter is listed in Appendix D. False names have been used to conceal the identities of each individual. In addition to the pseudonym used for each participant, individuals are also identified by their program’s host country and that program’s duration. Program leaders are identified as such.
Student Experiences in Short-term International Service-learning Programs

This section describes the experiences of students involved in the short-term international service-learning programs included in this study. The students’ discussions of their experiences went much deeper than cursory overviews of program activities. Instead, the experiences of the students served to open doors to cultural exchange and emotional response. The program participants described personal connections and learning opportunities fostered through service activities and their living arrangements. The value that students ascribed to these experiences was apparent in their personal accounts of the programs.

Theme 1: Homestay Experiences

“I think the interactions with the locals were what really make the trip meaningful” (Jean, 1 week, Jamaica).

This section details the role that homestays played in the experiences of students involved in most of the short-term international service-learning programs included in this study. There was a homestay component in 8 of the 10 programs in which the students in this study had participated. The length of time spent in a homestay environment varied from program to program, with some students spending as little as 2 days with a host family while others stayed for an entire week. Programs also differed in the percentage of program time that included a homestay. All of the 1-week programs included a homestay experience that spanned the duration of the program. The longer programs, which varied in duration from 2 to 4 weeks, included homestays that lasted for as little as 2 days to as long as full week. No matter the length of the homestay the students all reported a significant impact from the experience.
The students’ placement with host families gave them access to experiences that are not available to study abroad participants who are housed in dormitories, hostels, or hotels. The personal connections established between the host families and the students allowed them to encounter the destination country’s culture at ground level. The students described their homestays as welcoming environments where they were quickly accepted by their families. The welcoming atmosphere created by the host family often led to cultural exchange between them and the student. Many of the students spoke about their exposure to the local culture through their relationship with the host family. Jean, who spent a week in Jamaica, talked about the ease in which she was able to speak with the host family’s father, who went by the name of Viking:

Father Viking and his brothers were kind of always around. We could talk to anyone of them. They were just very—well, Jamaican people in general, almost as a rule, are incredibly welcoming, accepting, will talk to you, given a moment’s opportunity. So that was really evident in our interactions with the family, I think.

Jean’s description of her relationship with her host family was repeated again and again by the study’s participants. Students were comforted by the environment created by the host family. At the same time, many of the students discussed the differences that they noticed in both the culture and the living situations of the families.

In many instances, the communities and families that hosted the students would be considered well below the poverty level in the United States. Kate (1 week, Panama) commented on the impact of her family’s situation:

Some of my strongest memories are just eating breakfast with my family and knowing that they had put themselves in a bit of a strain to have us there. Like, there were only two bedrooms in the inside portion of the house, and the whole family piled into one room so that me and Jane could have the other one. And just like seeing that and that they didn’t mind at all, and that they wanted us there was incredible.

The students’ exposure to family life in the host country, especially a very low income lifestyle, brought about realizations on the cultural and economic circumstances of their temporary homes.
Abigail, who spent a week in the Dominican Republic, talked about how homestays impact students on international service-learning programs:

I think as far as homestays go, it’s definitely a greater impact on that student for culture and to realize that those people are so just humble, and they are very less fortunate than we are, but they make do with that so much better than we do.

The economic situations of the host families were to be expected, as service-learning programs most often are carried out in communities that are determined to be in need of assistance. International service-learning operates differently in that the program participants live in the community that is being served. This was evident in the students’ comments about their host families’ living situations.

Living with host families did more than expose students to the local economic circumstances. They also learned about the cultural differences that exist between the United States and the host country. Conversations involving politics, especially American politics, came up frequently. Many students were surprised at how knowledgeable their host families were concerning politics in the United States. Janice (2 weeks, Dominica) commented on the balance of political knowledge between her and her host family:

We engaged in a very interesting conversation about American politics because it was during the time where Hillary was running, and there was a lot of campaign, I mean everybody’s involved in the campaign, and just really made me aware of how aware people are of our culture and how unaware I am of other cultures. And that was really powerful to me.

The students’ introduction to differences between their culture and that of the host country’s culture extended beyond the realm of politics. Having access to a host family in many ways eased the transition between cultures. Beth (2 weeks, Bolivia) talked about the benefit of homestay within an international service-learning program:

If you and I were walking, and you’d see dead animal fetuses hanging, we’d be like, “Oh, my gosh. What kind of society are we in? Who are these people? What are they doing?”
And so actually being with people that live that certain way kind of opened your eyes to the fact that there’s a lot more in the world than we know here in the United States, and opened your eyes to realize that there’s a lot more learning that you can be doing, which is I think one of the great things about service-learning is that you learn and you integrate it as you’re learning.

The learning that Beth speaks about is integrated into every aspect of an international service-learning program. Service-learning expands the learning environment outside of the classroom to include the community. In international service-learning, this environment encompasses everything that the student is exposed to: academics, service, community, and living space. In addition, the activities in which the students participate are included, for the most part, to encourage learning in both the academic and personal spheres.

Theme 2: Service Experiences

“It was such good, hard, physical labor that at the end of the day, you’re sweating, and you’re dirty, and you know you made a difference” (Abigail, 1 week, Dominican Republic).

Much like the homestay experience, the service components of the international service-learning programs included in this study varied from program to program. All of the programs with a duration of 1 week had service experiences throughout the students’ time in the host country. Within these programs the scheduled activities (service and reflection) took up an average of 8 hours per day. The programs of longer duration, 2 to 5 weeks, had service experiences intermingled with cultural activities. The cultural experiences took precedent over service experiences in the longer programs, specifically the programs conducted in Tanzania, Kenya, Dominica, and Wales. The manner in which the students carried out their service activities also varied among the programs, although the majority had the participants working together on one project, or service site, at a time. In some instances, the students would work in
groups of two or three at separate service sites. Specifically, this occurred during the programs in Wales and Bolivia in which the students were involved in homestays that were scattered about the communities being served. In all the programs included in this study, the service component was intentionally chosen by program leaders as an element of the overall experience.

The type of service carried out by the students also varied among the programs and was usually tied to the individual program’s theme. For example, a program held in Canada that focused on homelessness and healthcare issues included service activities in a homeless shelter and local health center. Likewise, a program in Costa Rica that centered on ecotourism and sustainable agriculture included service activities such as planting banana trees and building a biogas converter. Most of the service involved manual labor or educational activities. Other programs included service projects related to social services, such as the programs in Canada and Bolivia.

No matter what the service involved, the students talked about the physical and emotional toll that their experiences took. In many instances the students spent long days, upwards of 10 hours, engaged in service. Selma (1 week, Panama) described the amount of work that her group did in the village:

The first thing we did was start to build classrooms, and we went to the edges of a river, and we helped them chop bamboo and prepare it and carry it up the hill to the school. And we were building walls and leveling out floors because they were outdoor classrooms basically. And we also cleaned the ditches along the sides of the roads and did trash pickup, and they started on the health center project while we were there, so we went into the rain forest and got these big, like, fifty-pound leaves and hauled them down out of the jungle. It was pretty intense because you had to cross a river and then go up a mountain and get them on your back and then do all the same thing, going down with an extra fifty pounds. And the leaves were taller than I was; it was definitely really physically grueling.

While the amount of effort and time that Selma’s group invested in their host community was not typical of all the surveyed programs, several of the students described their service experience as
“intense.” This intensity extended to both the physical labor and emotional investment of the student. The strength of the students’ feelings related to their service was often related to the amount of time spent on site and with the individuals being served. Abigail (1 week, Dominican Republic) talked about her experience working on a Habitat for Humanity project with residents of the community:

It was a whole community of Habitat houses and so other people would come and help work, as well. And the language barrier was very tough but it was such good company, and there’s, I mean, it’s a common background as far as serving and building these houses that the language barrier wasn’t really as tough as we thought it would be.

Abigail’s connection to the community she served in was fostered by her connection with the individuals who worked beside her. Other students created these connections by providing service to others, such as schoolchildren in Jamaica and homeless youth in Canada.

The connections fostered through the intense service experiences in this study spilled over into intense emotional reactions for some of the students. Emotional responses to service most often occurred when direct service, working directly with those being served, was being carried out. Jean, who spent a week in Jamaica serving in a local elementary school, commented on student reactions:

I remember the first day we were in the schools; we had a lot of education majors on our trip. And we had people crying because they just were blown away by a fifth-grader who couldn’t read, and a school system that didn’t appear to care about the fifth-grader not reading.

In many instances, students talked about the joy they experienced from working with the recipients of the service. From building houses to organizing clothing donation closets and cleaning shelters, students expressed the sense of accomplishment that they felt in completing the tasks that they had traveled there to do.
In addition to emotional connections, the service opportunities also fostered cultural connections with community members. Selma (1 week, Panama) talked about the relationships built from the service:

We also like had time to kind of interact with the kids in the area too. Some of the guys organized a soccer game with the kids, and the kids were totally beaten, of course, but just aside from the physical labor, it was mainly cultural interaction experiences.

In other instances, the interactions between the students and community members led to awkward moments. Billy (1 week, Canada) talked about his group’s experience at a youth homeless shelter:

I enjoyed talking to the people. I think some of the other people were able to bridge that gap better for whatever reason, but there were some uncomfortable moments. I know when one of the girls asked why we were there, not in a confrontational way, just out of curiosity, one of the other team members responded that we were there to study poor people and the girl sort of left hastily.

In either case, the dealings between the program participants and the community members served as learning experiences. For Billy’s group it was a lesson on what not to say. For Selma, her group was able to find a culturally appropriate outlet to have fun with community members. Cultural preparation for participation in these international service-learning programs was provided by program leaders, although every instance of cultural faux pas cannot be anticipated.

On occasion, the local culture dictated how the students provided service to the community. Pamela (2 weeks, Tanzania) talked about how her group was divided for service by gender:

The girls helped cook, and we painted, and we got to sit in on a classroom, which was really interesting, a math class actually. But the guys really liked it, I think, because they actually built a building with clay bricks that they made and whatnot, so it was kind of cool for them because they really got to see a real result, I guess, like a physical result.

Program leaders viewed situations like this as opportunities to “reposition” the student’s perspective. Dr. Morris, who led the Tanzania program, said that her “big objective in that course
is to reposition and re-center how a student is in relationship to the country that they’re in and the people that they’re with.” The repositioning is not always effective, but the effort on the part of the leader is usually there.

The service experiences of the students in these short-term ISL programs served a variety of functions. In addition to being a prime component of the program, the experiences that students received from their participation in the service activities provided connections to the host community on the emotional level. Involvement in service also created opportunities for students to learn about the culture of the host community.

The emergent themes in this category centered on student experiences related to the programs’ homestay and service components. I was able to connect the students’ encounters related to these components with their thoughts and reactions that emerged during interviews. Cultural exchange and connections with the host community were an outgrowth of the students’ homestay and service experiences. Informal learning related to cultural and economic situations also occurred and was directly related to the participants’ interactions with their host families and during service activities. Student participation in these experiences gave them context on which to form perceptions of their program’s characteristics.

Student Perceptions of Program Characteristics

This section describes the student participants’ perceptions of short-term ISL program characteristics and is divided into two themes. The third theme of the study, student perceptions of program quality, involves student discussions related to their ideas on learning, leadership, and host community relations within the context of short-term ISL. The fourth theme, student perceptions of program duration, includes the student participants’ perceptions of appropriate
program length. The data the students provide within this thematic category continues the narrative of the student experience within short-term ISL. In addition, the narrative sets the stage for the students’ self-perceptions later in this chapter.

**Theme 3: Student Perceptions of Program Quality**

“It was extremely well done, and it had a lot to do, I think, with changing my life in a positive way” (Travis, 2 weeks, Bolivia).

Student perceptions of program quality were mentioned throughout a number of the interviews conducted for this study. Indicators of quality within the short-term ISL programs in the study were centered on student learning, group dynamics, program preparation and leadership, and host community partnership. When asked about program quality the students discussed subjects that were grouped into the indicators listed above.

The subject that was mentioned the most when students were asked about program quality was learning. The students’ perceived their learning to happen in an experiential, non-classroom setting. Andrea (1 week, Canada) commented on the learning environment during her program:

It was a lot more laid-back than any class, which I felt like it was easier to learn. It wasn’t so much like, “You have to get this fact in your head, or you have to know this, and this is what you’re going to be tested on.” It was just such an open atmosphere and everyone talking to each other and participating that it was easier to learn things and to really get the information in your head.

In addition to the idea of the community as the classroom, students also talked about other characteristics of the learning environment. Janice (2 weeks, Dominica) said of her experience “When you’re in Dominica, Dominica’s the teacher.” This extends the idea of the community as the classroom to the program being the classroom with the host community as the teacher.
When the topic of learning was discussed by the students the idea of academic learning was not at the forefront of the conversation. Harrison (Dominica, 2 weeks; Kenya, 2 weeks) commented on his perception of learning from his experiences: “Most of what I learned through those programs was, it was, most of the learning that took place was nonacademic. And I would say that’s probably true of most of the people.” The learning that the students described was broad in nature and was not specifically tied to coursework. Lana (4 weeks, Wales) said of her experience “I learned more in a month than I learned in eighteen years of regular education.” Statements such as Lana’s were common among the students in this study.

In addition to learning, the group dynamics within the program were also linked to perceived quality. Travis (2 weeks, Bolivia) described his experience within the group:

I think it’s safe to say that we were all, at the end of the trip, we were all pretty amazed at how close we all became and how we all worked well together and were all willing to learn. And we’ve gotten together a few times this semester to kind of get back together and visit. And so it was a pretty good group.

The familiarity that Travis talks about was repeated by a number of the students. Carmen (1 week, Canada) described her group as “intimate,” while Nancy (1 week, Costa Rica) said of her group, “we were like best friends.” The feelings of closeness that existed in the student groups provided a certain level of comfort that may have contributed to perceptions of quality.

Much of this feeling of closeness was facilitated by the programs’ leadership. Kate (1 week, Panama) said of her program’s leadership,

On my trip the co-leaders did a really, really good job in reflections and free time while they were working to foster good group dynamics. And I think the pre-trip classes helped a lot because you know everybody before you go. But good group dynamics definitely help you bond with everybody you’re there with and just get the most out of your trip.

The leaders provided the framework in which the students experienced the program. This required preparation of the group through pre-program meetings and an engaged manner during
the time in the host country. There were a couple of instances in which students felt that the
preparation or facilitation efforts by the leadership were not up to par. This was attributed to
inexperience on the part of the leaders. Selma (1 week, Panama) had the most glaring example of
how the experience can be adversely affected by the leadership:

   My issue with it sometimes was that the leadership kind of made things feel like it should
   be a kind of summer camp experience, I guess, if that makes sense. Like everybody is
   brothers and sisters, and we’re all going to bond immediately, and we’re all going to have
   a super awesome time, and everybody’s going to adjust to the culture right away. And
   that wasn’t the case, and I felt like it got better as it went along, but I felt at first, like, me
   and some other people had some qualms about certain things that we were experiencing
   and kind of had a culture shock thing going on, which I felt was legitimate because it is a
   completely different situation than what we’re used to in the United States. And I felt like
   maybe that conversation was excluded at first because it wasn’t a sort of joyous, “Oh,
   we’re here. It’s great. We’re doing service,” kind of atmosphere.

Selma’s experience was by no means the norm within the programs included in this study. It
should be noted that this was the first year this program was held in Panama. However, her
account illustrates the power that the program’s leadership can have on the overall experience
and perception of quality for the student.

The perceived quality of the short-term ISL programs was also affected by the state of the
relationship between the program facilitators/participants and the host community. Janice (2
weeks, Dominica) commented on the importance of that relationship, especially in short-term
programming:

   The relationship is built over time, and if you don’t have that, then you don’t have a
   service-learning experience. And so, so long as there are relationships that are maintained
   over time, there can be some short-term aspects to it. I think that is imperative in the
   quality of the program. And I think, too, being able to connect, having in-their-face
   connections with the people that put the things that you’re engaging in together, is key
   not only to their own empowerment, but empowering the people that you’re with. And if
   you can have that dialogue, then I think it enhances the learning from that.

The emphasis that Janice placed on maintaining this relationship with the host community and
her discussion of program quality and empowerment is connected to the social change paradigm
of service that is discussed in chapter II (Dorsey, 2001; Morton, 1996). Students also connected the strength of the community relationship with program quality due to the ease in which an established program can be administered. Kate (1 week, Panama) talked about her program’s established relationship with the San Miguel community:

This’ll be our third year, and we’re staying with the same families. We’re working with a lot of the same community members and Peace Corps volunteers, so we have that connection, and the people want us to be there. We have that contact, which helps us run everything smoothly.

The strength of the continued partnerships facilitated in these short-term ISL programs were directly connected to students’ perceptions of program quality. Students were more likely to perceive a program to have high quality if the relationship between the host community and the program facilitator(s) was well established. This was especially evident in programs that had been in existence for more than 2 years. Mary Ann (1 week, Jamaica) commented on her feelings about her program, which was in its first year of implementation:

There were parts I remember in the beginning where I wasn’t as confident in the program. I think that as far as pre-departure, there could have been more preparation, but I also understand there was a level of just now knowing, not knowing the culture, not knowing the procedures, not knowing the experience. So that’s understandable. But hopefully since this was the first year that initially went to Jamaica, maybe next year it’ll be a little bit better.

Mary Ann’s confidence in the future success of the program is a testament to the relationship that was established with the host community. By maintaining a relationship with the community, the leaders of the program can ensure that it is of a higher quality on subsequent occasions.

**Theme 4: Student Perceptions of Program Duration**

“Of course I wish it could be longer, not because it wasn’t an appropriate time but more because I just didn’t want to leave” (Mary Ann, 1 week, Jamaica).
The international service-learning programs included in this study are defined by their duration. The programs within this study are considered to be short-term since, by definition, they have a duration of 8 weeks or less. Half of the programs lasted for 1 week (Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Panama). Four programs in the study had a duration of 2 weeks (Tanzania, Kenya, Dominica, and Bolivia), and one program had a 4-week duration (Wales). During the interviews conducted for this study program, participants were asked about their thoughts on their program’s length. The students responded by both supporting the short duration of their program and wanting them to be longer.

When the question on program length came up students were quick to say that they wanted their program to be longer, but in the same breath were quick to defend its current length. Diana (1 week, Costa Rica) shared her thoughts on appropriate program length:

I wish it could be longer, but something is to be said about the length of one week. Like even in youth group when we would take trips, it was always one week, and I feel like after you pass that eight or nine day mark, is when people start to get kind of on each other’s nerves.

Diana’s opinion was mirrored by many of the students, who also wanted to stay in the host country for a longer period of time but also understood the need for the short length of the programs. Eight of the 10 short-term ISL programs took place during the breaks between semesters or during spring break. Students were inclined to support the shorter lengths due to the placement of the programs. Harrison (Dominica, 2 weeks, Kenya, 2 weeks) discussed his thoughts on the length of the programs that he had participated in:

I wish they’d been longer. And I understand why they weren’t, specifically the Dominica one; it was over Christmas break, and we got back on the twenty-third, and I guess some people like to be with their families at Christmas. But that’s sensible I guess, but I do wish, especially I wish Kenya had been longer. I kind of felt like to a degree we spent a lot of time traveling.
Harrison’s experience of long travel time was not duplicated among most of the programs included in this study. Seven of the 10 programs took place in the Americas and, for the most part, required less travel time. The program in Bolivia was an exception, as one student said the amount of travel time between there and her university was 20 hours. The fact that a majority of these programs were implemented during semester breaks made it more practical to select host countries that were in close proximity to the United States.

One reason students gave for feeling that their program had an appropriate length was the efficient use of time for program activities. Mary Ann (1 week, Jamaica) commented on the schedule of her program:

Going to school with the kids and being there all five days was very appropriate and very necessary, I think. And then it was kind of nice also, to have that Saturday free day and then Sunday as a travel day. So I feel like in general, we had, we got there on Saturday night. We had the one day to get into the culture, had the five days of work, had the one day of rest, and then we traveled back. So I think, even though I wish it could have been five weeks long, for the allotted amount of time, it was definitely utilized to the maximum.

The amount of time that was programmed, or planned out, for the students heavily outweighed the amount of free time available during the programs. This was especially evident in the 1- and 2-week programs. Kelly James, the program leader for the Bolivia program and other past programs, commented on the planned monopolization of student time during the programs:

Even if there is a free afternoon, generally it’s a group activity. But when we went for our--I mentioned a trip to the Dominican Republic--we had two hours in the middle of the day. You ate, and then you had like an hour before you walked back to your school. But so you know, it’s not like every ounce of it, but it’s pretty much, you’re the get-along-gang for a week, and you’d better be ready for it.

The monopolization of student time in these programs was done intentionally in order to both give the students a full experience and to aid in managing the group. This gave the students a full experience and allowed for leaders to avoid potential problems that could arise from an excessive
amount of free time such as a misplaced student or other potential incidents. This strategy was successful in that none of the programs included in this study had any major incidents and the students were generally pleased with program length thanks in large part to the amount of programmed time.

The participants’ perceptions of short-term ISL program characteristics provided data that were aligned into two distinct themes. Student perceptions related to these programs yielded a number of indicators connected to program quality. Within my conversations with students, the concept of quality was linked to student learning, group dynamics, program preparation and leadership, and the relationship with the host community/community partner. Student perceptions of program duration yielded information related to their ideas of appropriate program length and the proper utilization of programmed time. The themes in this section describe student participants’ ideas related to the function of short-term ISL programs. These perceptions provide a view of the programs from the student’s perspective and, in turn, gave me insight related to the following category focused on student perceptions of reflection and change.

Student Perceptions of Reflection and Personal Change

This section describes the final two themes of the study, student perceptions of reflection and student perceptions of change. The fifth theme of the study illustrates the students’ perceived effects of organized reflection within short-term ISL programs. Reflection was seen by the students as a processing agent, an avenue for group bonding and assimilation, and an emotional outlet. The sixth theme, student perceptions of change, describes students’ self-perceptions of personal change related to their involvement in these programs. The personal changes perceived by the students were categorized as increased involvement, new ways of thinking and personal
interaction, changes in academic focus, and a new comfort with travel. The perceptions of program participants discussed in these themes are a culmination of their insights related to the program experiences and characteristics described in the previous sections.

**Theme 5: Student Perceptions of Reflection**

“The reflection, I realize it’s a requirement of our program, but it’s one of the most important aspects of it as well” (Kate, 1 week in Panama).

Each of the short-term international service-learning programs included in this study had an integrated reflection component. Reflection activities were conducted throughout the programs at both the individual and group level. Individual reflection activities were carried out in written form. The most common form of written reflection among the programs was reflection journals. In some instances, the program participants were given writing prompts to guide the reflection. Most of the programs within the study only asked that the student keep a journal during their time in the host country. Several of the programs required the students to complete an assignment after returning from the host country that would require use of the reflection journal. All of the programs within the study used group reflections in an oral format. Group reflections were semi-structured conversations facilitated by program leaders. Student preference for the type of reflection used varied by the individual. There was not a general preference for one type of reflection over the other.

Students were asked to describe the reflection activities from their programs as well as describe any impact that they felt the reflections had on them personally. The students perceived reflection to have a number of roles within the program experience that affected both the group
and the individual. The most common perception that students had of the reflection activities was as a processing agent.

Lewis (1 week, Canada) commented on the differences between a program with an integrated reflection component and one without:

If you were just going on any regular trip, like spring break or just doing any other thing, you do stuff, and then you don’t actually think about--you think about what you did, but the next day it’s over, and then you probably won’t even ever think about it again. But when you write something down or when you elaborate more upon a subject, it kind of dwells in your mind more, and you’re able to actually draw something from the experience.

Many of the program participants talked about how the reflection activities made them more mindful of their surroundings or made them think of things in a different light. Kate (1 week, Panama) found that reflection helped her “connect all of the aspects of the trip instead of just the ones that were at the forefront of [her] mind.”

When students talked about their perceptions of written reflection one gets the feeling that participation in the program, and the act of reflective writing, has left an indelible mark on the students. Janice (2 weeks, Dominica) shared her thoughts on written reflection:

I wrote a whole book that I think I’ll go back and look for a lifetime just because the thoughts and things that go through your mind when you’re in a completely different place, and it was just the pace of life just gave ample time for you to be able to just slow down and really reflect not only on what we were doing there, but just your time and place in life and what your life was like at home and really what you could take from what you’re doing in Dominica and apply to various things that you realize about home that you need to change based on what you’re learning and engaging with in a different culture.

In addition to chronicling the student’s reflections for later in life, the journals also had more practical uses. Several of the programs required larger reflection papers or portfolios to be written after returning to the United States. Maintaining a reflection journal aided the student in completing this last assignment as well as retaining their experiences.
The program participants’ views of oral reflection displayed the dual effect of personal contemplation and shared dialogue. In the oral reflection sessions the students would share their reactions to the day’s events, which often brought about shifts in perspective for other program participants. Kate (1 week, Panama) talked about how the group oral reflection was processed by the individual:

I think more than anything, it pushed me out of my perspective. So I guess the biggest thing was that it wasn’t just, “This is my trip, and this is how it affects me,” but I was pushed into seeing how it affected everyone else. And I mean, obviously the trip meant something different to every person there, so voicing that and hearing it meant a lot.

The use of reflection in an oral format transformed the individual experience into a group experience. Students often looked forward to the session at the end of the day because of the processing element of the reflection. Beth (2 weeks, Bolivia) felt the sessions were beneficial because, “by having a group of people to be able to reflect on it, you can talk it out. You can really figure out like what is causing these feelings.” In this way the processing element of reflection was expanded from the individual to the group.

The oral reflection sessions also aided in bringing the students together as a single group. A majority of the programs in this study had 10 to 15 student participants. Building a team atmosphere is crucial as it can prevent problems from arising, such as the alienation of group members. Group reflection activities often served as a way for the students to “check in” with the team leaders as well as build rapport within the group. Nancy (1 week, Costa Rica) commented on how the reflection sessions brought her into her group:

Having to do the reflections, you have to join in; you have to say how you feel, how that made you feel, or help somebody else figure out why that particular incident made them feel that way. And so I have, the reflections, for a person who is quiet, it’ll help them assimilate into the group. It’ll help them feel more connected with the group. It did for me at least because I did not want to do the reflections. But after the third day of doing them, I couldn’t wait because I just wanted to hear how a particular incident made
somebody feel. And then we’d laugh about it, and then it just made you feel so much more bonded and wanted, and it was just a good feeling.

The assimilation effect and subsequent group bonding brought on by oral reflection sessions was remembered fondly by several of the students. Mary Ann (1 week, Jamaica) said of it “I think that was definitely one of the strongest points of the whole trip, was that bonding reflection time as a group.”

In some instances the bonding accomplished during the program led to lasting friendships between the participants. Abigail (1 week, Dominican Republic) spoke of how the group reflection fostered relationships:

I think for me it made me really bond with the other group members. I made a lot of really amazing friends that I still keep in contact with, and that was two years ago that I went on this trip.

The relationships built among the program participants were furthered by the connections created in the reflection sessions. Within the close, sharing environment created for reflection, students were encouraged to express their feelings as well as their experiences from the day.

Reflection also served as an emotional outlet for the program participants. More often than not, the emotions that came up during the sessions added to the bonding of the group. Mary Ann (1 week, Jamaica) said of the group reflection activities:

You’d go around in a round robin thing, but because of the emotional attachment that we got to a lot of the situations, it was a very personal experience, and it was a great opportunity for us to get to know each other, because most of the time we were working with just one or two of the other group members, and working with the kids. So it was kind of that personal bonding time between the group on a very emotional level.

The emotional release associated with group reflection could also bring up less positive feelings among the program participants. Selma (1 week, Panama) discussed her feelings of alienation stemming from a reflection session:
I felt that any kind of dissent from, “Oh, this is awesome; this is such a great culture that we never get to see,” was considered judgmental. And I didn’t see it as me being judgmental at all; it was just a new experience.

In this instance she and another student had expressed feelings during group reflection that apparently did not match up with the majority of the group’s viewpoint. This program, which was student-led, was described by Selma as “the most contentious group in ASB (Alternative Spring Break) history,” a moniker that she heard sometime after the end of the program. There is no way to know why the program was labeled as such, since several of the programs within the study were student-led as well and had no reported issues such as the one that Selma described.

In addition to serving as an emotional outlet, students perceived the reflection activities as a catalyst for personal growth. Abigail (1 week, Dominican Republic) commented on the growth she perceived to be an outgrowth of reflection:

I think it’s just interesting and fascinating to see these students grow because you’ve been with them for almost a semester, doing classes and going on this trip, and then seeing them afterwards, that they have made so much growth, that you are just so excited for that. And that’s definitely the most fulfilling part of it, and I think a lot of that growth comes from the reflection, listening to what other people say and what you’re thinking about, what you have to say.

Reflections also led students to consider different career paths and academic majors. A number of students reported changing majors following their participation in the programs included in this study. This is by no means considered out of the ordinary. Undergraduate students are known to change their field of study regularly. Students returning from study abroad programs have been known to change majors as well. Student interest in a new career path is likewise common following participation in study abroad. What is worthy of noting is the specific career in which students expressed interest. The Peace Corps was mentioned by a handful of the students as an area in which they would like to work. Kate (1 week, Panama) specifically talked about these growth areas and linked them with reflection:
I started considering Peace Corps because I was working with Peace Corps volunteers and just thinking about if what I was studying was really what I wanted to do or not. It was a very reflective time for me.

The students’ perceptions of the power of reflection extend from that of a processing agent to an outlet for emotional exchange and personal growth.

**Theme 6: Student Perceptions of Change**

“I would say without hesitation that it’s been the biggest change in my lifestyle of my life in that I have a lot more confidence now” (Travis, 2 weeks, Bolivia).

Nearly every student who was interviewed for this study described some type of perceived change in themselves following their international service-learning experience. The change may have been noticeable in concrete terms, such as an increase in involvement on campus or in the community. In other instances the students perceived a change within themselves such as a new way of thinking about certain issues. In whatever way the students described it, the topic of change came up in practically every conversation conducted for this study.

After returning from their international service-learning program, several of the students talked about how they felt that their involvement in the program had led them to increase their involvement at home. Kate (1 week, Panama) said of her experience:

That trip is the reason I’m involved in our community service office. I joined a team of students that’s really involved my junior year because of that trip and the people I met on that trip, and I just wanted to get more involved. Now, I’m in a leadership role on that team. I’m leading an ASB (Alternative Spring Break) trip this year, and I’ve also changed my life plan. I’m going to go back to school and get my master’s in college student development.
Kate’s response to her participation in the Panama program was repeated by several other students. Nancy (1 week, Costa Rica) had also signed up to be an ASB student leader following her involvement in an international service-learning program. While stepping up to be a program leader is the utmost example of concrete change in an individual, other students described how their involvement led them to increase community engagement. Since returning from her program, Selma (1 week, Panama) has begun volunteering with a nonprofit agency in her community. Travis (2 weeks, Bolivia) also spoke about how his experience has changed him:

I see the impact that just doing a little bit can have. And for example, I served on the blood drive committee, put together the blood drive a month ago. And it’s made me want to look into the Peace Corps a lot more seriously.

Students attributed their increase in community involvement to their experiences in international service-learning. While these students may have been already predisposed to service, evidenced by their participation in an ISL program, they perceived that their increased involvement was related to their program experience.

In addition to a perceived increase in involvement, several students reported changing their academic major or minor following their ISL experience. In the majority of these instances the student added a foreign language to their program of study. Nancy (1 week, Costa Rica) reported the greatest amount of change related to her field of study and plans for the future:

I was a Spanish Ed major, and I had changed it to business before this trip, but after, when I came back from the trip, I was just like, “I know exactly what to do.” I changed it to international business; my minors are Spanish and Chinese. I’m going to go to law school, and hopefully I’ll be able to do like human rights law or environmental rights law for businesses. And that’ll be great. I’ll be able to help a lot of people in a way that I feel more comfortable because to me I couldn’t do an NGO (nongovernmental organization), but I could fight for somebody’s rights. So my whole outlook has changed since that trip. That trip, best week of my life, the most life-changing experience. I mean, everything happened in that week; it was great.
Other students expressed interest in studying a foreign language in an international setting. In addition to perceived change that can be recognized concretely, students also reported changes that were not as easily defined.

Several students discussed changes in their way of thinking following their participation in an ISL program. Each student described their new outlook differently and gave examples of how these new ways of thinking manifested themselves. Kate (1 week, Panama) commented on the connections that she now makes between her experiences and academics:

Seeing the world in some way is even more important to me now than it was before. And also just having the connection of applying what you’re learning in a classroom to something real that you’ve experienced is very powerful, I think. And even if it’s in a really strange way, like maybe we talk about a bird in one of my biology classes, and I saw a bird in a similar family while I was in Panama. You know like whatever it is, I have a connection to that that I wouldn’t have otherwise had.

The connections that Kate talked about are the same ones targeted by service-learning instructors. Connecting academic learning to experiential learning through reflection is the basis of the pedagogy. Kate is able to make those connections by reflecting on her experiences from an ISL program.

Students perceived that the connections that they made with the culture of the host country during their ISL experience affected their ways of thinking. Mary Ann (1 week, Jamaica) said of her experience, “Talking to people who have lived their lives entirely in this culture, it changes the way you think.” One subject that came up with several students was the perception of time. Abigail (1 week, Dominican Republic) commented on her experience in the host county and her new way of thinking:

Time was a really big issue for me because they just don’t worry about it there. They don’t say, “Oh, I’ll pick you up at nine a.m.” I mean, they’re just like, “Oh, well, we’ll see you later. We’ll see you around nine.” And it’ll be ten o’clock before they get there. And I mean, they don’t have any--I’m not going to say “respect for time,” (laughter) but I
think we are just on this linear time clock that we think everything has to be done on a
certain time at a certain this. And getting back, you just don’t think that way.

Other students reported increases in patience and lower levels of frustration. It should be noted
that all of the students who reported changes in their perception of time were involved in ISL
programs that took place in Latin America or the Caribbean.

Changes in self-perceptions related to ability and interactions with others were also
described by the students. Mary Ann (1 week, Jamaica) said of her experience, “It didn’t help me
as much to see other things in the world as it helped me to see things within myself.” The self-
introspection that Mary Ann and other students experienced led some of them to new realizations
about their own ability. Selma (1 week, Panama) commented on her self-realizations:

I never expected to be able to do all the work that we were doing. And I never expected
to be able to be a translator for me and my roommate with a family of ten people, and it
worked. And it was really interesting to see abilities I didn’t know I had from ASB.

In addition to the realization of ability, students have perceived changes in their interactions with
others. Lana (4 weeks, Wales) talked about using electronic means of communication, such as
cell phones and Facebook, less. Selma (1 week, Panama) said “I feel like I am a person who is
more outgoing because of that experience.” These increases in self-efficacy and other areas of
personal growth are typical outcomes of study abroad participation (Kauffman et al., 1992;
Ingraham & Peterson, 2005).

The last area in which students perceived personal change associated with their
involvement in a short-term ISL program was an increased comfort with international travel.
Harrison (Dominica, 2 weeks, Kenya, 2 weeks) commented on his travel experiences following
the ISL programs:

Since I’ve done those two programs, I’ve also been out of the country several other times
and been to seven or eight more countries, none of which were in Europe. So I think that
what, I guess they definitely made me more confident in being able to deal with issues that would come across there.

Other students expressed interest in returning to the host country either to visit or to study. These reactions are also associated with participation in study abroad (Hadis, 2005).

Declarations of personal change were made by students throughout this study. Some of these changes were manifested by the student’s actions after they returned from the short-term ISL program in which they were involved. In other instances, the student felt intellectually or emotionally changed by their experience. Either way, many of the students perceived that they were changed in some fashion because of their involvement in these short-term ISL programs.

The two themes described in this section describe the perceived outcomes of student participation in short-term ISL. Students perceived reflection as a vehicle for a number of outcomes, including group bonding, emotional release, and thought processing. My conversations with students also covered their perceptions of personal change related to the short-term ISL experience. When the subject of change was mentioned, students discussed transformations on the personal and academic levels. The changes that the students described were manifested by new actions and new ways of thinking. Together the themes of student perceptions of reflection and student perceptions of change were a culmination of the student experience within these programs.

Conclusion

The themes that emerged from the collected data in this study provide a view of short-term international service-learning programs that has not been seen before. Student experiences within homestays and service activities provided background for students to form perceptions of program characteristics, including program duration and quality. The themes of student
perceptions of reflection and personal change were present throughout the study but are best placed at the end as they are built on the previous four themes. Together these themes provide a narrative of the student experience in short-term ISL, from their activities, to their thoughts, and finally to how they perceive the experience affected them.

This chapter has provided a glimpse into the student experience of short-term international service-learning. Each program, and student, is unique and therefore presents a unique perspective from which to view this delivery method for experiential education. The programs within this study vary in many aspects, yet still provide similar experiences and inspire comparable perceptions among many of the participants. These programs are as much a product of the idea of service-learning as they are a creation of their program leaders and institutions. The importance of service and learning connected by reflection is the guiding principle in these programs and it is exhibited by the experiences and perceptions of their student participants.
CHAPTER V
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will discuss the implications of the study and include recommendations drawn from the findings. The first section focuses on the answers to the research questions presented previously in chapter III. The chapter’s second section connects the study’s results to conceptual framework drawn from Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement, Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle, and the students’ experiences. The third section of this chapter discusses the study’s implications for practice, which highlight short-term ISL program characteristics and administration. The fourth section provides suggestions for further research. The chapter’s fifth section presents a conclusion to the study as a whole.

Answering the Research Questions

This study sought to provide answers to the questions on the experiences and perceptions of students involved in short-term international service-learning programs. Specifically, this study sought to understand the ways in which short-term ISL programs affect student attitudes and perceptions. This includes the actual experiences of students within these programs, how organized reflection affects student perceptions, and how differences in perceived quality affect student experiences. This section will provide answers to each of these research questions that have guided this study. Each research question will be connected to the findings as a way to provide a concise answer.
The first research question, which sought to identify the experiences of students within short-term ISL programs, is answered by the findings in themes one, homestay experiences, and two, service experiences. These experiences were considered “programmed” activities and required the student to invest a large amount of their energy and time for the duration of the program. The students’ investment of time and energy is connected to Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement, which places a premium on the quantity and quality of involvement related to student development. Student experiences gathered into these themes went beyond basic overviews of program activities. Instead, the students described their homestay and service experiences as avenues to emotional and personal connections with the culture of the host country and the community where they served. Cultural learning was also a byproduct of the student experience within the short-term ISL programs.

The second research question sought to understand how organized reflection within short-term ISL programs affected student perceptions. Organized reflection plays a critical role within service-learning as it is used to connect the academic and experiential components of a course and create new learning. The answer to this research question was provided primarily through the fifth theme, student perceptions of reflection, listed in chapter IV. Reflective observation and abstract conceptualization are two key steps within Kolb’s (1984) four-step learning cycle. They are built upon concrete experience and, in turn, drive active experimentation. The reflection sessions held within the short-term ISL programs included in this study served as a delivery vehicle for Kolb’s (1984) reflective observation stage as well as provided the impetus for the individual’s abstract conceptualization. Within the context of the short-term ISL programs, students perceived organized reflection to serve four specific functions. First, reflection was perceived as a means for the students to process their experience
during the program. Students also understood reflection to serve as a way to promote bonding among the program participants. Group-based oral reflection was the delivery method used in these instances. The use of organized reflection in the short-term ISL programs was also perceived by the students to serve as an emotional outlet. The fourth area in which students felt that reflection played a role was personal growth. It is apparent that reflection played a central role in the short-term ISL programs within this study and that that students felt the effects of reflection both during and following their participation in the programs.

The third research question sought to discover if differences in perceived program quality affected the student experience within these short-term ISL programs. The idea of quality is discussed by Astin (1984) in his theory of involvement and focuses on the value of the student’s participation in their experiences. This research question focuses on the quality of the provided experience, which has not been taken into account in previous studies. The programs included in this study provide experiences that oblige students to be fully involved in activities. The students’ perceptions of the experience’s quality then become important as it speaks to the students’ quality of involvement.

This research question was answered from the data drawn from theme three, student perceptions of program quality, and the other five themes discussed in chapter IV. The students’ comments concerning quality were gathered into theme three and focused on four of the students’ perceived indicators of quality. Students connected program quality most often with the learning they attained from participation in international service-learning. Group dynamics within the short-term ISL programs also played a part in students’ perceptions of quality. Additionally, students associated quality with program leadership and preparation. The individuals who directed the programs had a significant impact on how students perceived the
quality of the program, as they were instrumental in arranging many of the program details and, in many instances, guided reflection activities. The strength of the relationship between the short-term ISL program and the host community was another factor in how students gauged program quality. Programs that had a more established relationship with their host community, and thus a more complete partnership, were viewed as being of higher quality. Despite these differences in program/community relationships, none of the students felt that their program was of low quality. Some just seemed to have different levels of “good” quality. It should be noted that two students expressed negative opinions concerning certain aspects of program quality. These were specifically aimed at the program leadership’s handling of reflection and host community partnerships. However, instead of leading the student to deem the program as low quality, these examples were given by students to emphasize areas in which the programs could benefit from improvement.

Connection of Results to the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used to guide this study includes several concepts drawn from experiential education theory, in order to aid in understanding the experiences and perceptions of the students involved in short-term ISL programs. Specifically, the framework drew elements from Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement, Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle, Paolo Freire’s (1997) thoughts on the importance of reflection, and the weight of the student experience within models of experiential education. This section will examine the study’s findings in connection with components of the conceptual framework.
Astin’s Theory of Involvement

In his explanation of the theory of student involvement, Astin (1984) stated that “a particular curriculum, to achieve the effects intended, must elicit sufficient student effort and investment of energy to bring about the desired learning and development” (p. 301). Astin’s emphasis on the importance of student investment of time and energy and its connection to student development is an important aspect of this study. The students in this study were constantly engaged in program activities, including planned service, homestay experiences, and organized reflection. Although all of the programs were relatively short in duration (1 week to 4 weeks), the amount of time that was preplanned for the students required large investments of their time. Free, unplanned time was kept to a minimum in nearly all of the programs.

The theory of involvement is also related to the level of quality within the short-term ISL programs included in the study. Astin (1984) stated that “the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program” (p. 298). All of the students interviewed for the study considered their programs to be of good quality, with a large part of them deeming the programs to be of high quality. Within the students’ perceptions of quality, they associated it with learning. The amount of perceived learning among the student participants was quite high. Additionally, students connected quality with program/community partnerships and program leadership.

As stated in chapter IV, nearly every student experienced some level of perceived change. The students’ perceptions of personal change are directly related to the advancement of student development that Astin (1984) theorized to be an outgrowth of student involvement. Specifically, Astin (1984) stated that “the extent to which students can achieve particular
developmental goals is a direct function of the time and effort they devote to activities designed
to produce these gains” (p. 301). Students who were involved in the programs that emphasized a
balance between service activities, homestay experiences, and reflection reported perceived
personal change in the areas of involvement, academic focus, ways of thinking, perceptions of
personal ability, and interactions with people. Students involved in programs that placed more
emphasis on cultural exposure and less on service reported personal changes related to increased
comfort with international travel and talked very little about the changes listed above. This
appears to show that the service experience created an environment that required a greater
amount of student time and energy than cultural programming experiences within short-term ISL
programs. According to Astin’s (1984) theory, the service-emphasizing programs are better
adapted to fostering student development than their cultural exposure-emphasizing counterparts.

Kolb’s Learning Cycle and the Importance of Reflection

Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle is built around the connected concepts of experience,
observation/reflection, and action. The short-term ISL programs included in this study provided
an excellent environment for the implementation of Kolb’s learning cycle, as they incorporated
two forms of experiential education. The combination of study abroad and service-learning
offered student participants a rich experience that was heavy in concrete experience and
organized reflection. The stages of abstract conceptualization and active experimentation were
also documented through the participant interviews. During the course of the study, data were
gathered which followed students through all four stages of the cycle.

The concrete experiences of the students occurred throughout the duration of each
program, although the areas that seem to have had the most significant impact were the service
activities and the homestay experiences. Kolb (1984) stated that students participating in experiential education must be “able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences” (p. 30). For the most part, the students within this study were fully involved in their experiences. This was especially true for the students when they were engaged in service activities or involved in a homestay environment. The importance that Kolb placed on the students’ full and open involvement in their experiences goes well with Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement, in that they both require a high level of student engagement in the experience. However, Kolb’s (1984) idea that the student should come into the experience “without bias” fails to take into account that a student’s prior life experiences have already provided them with certain biases. Expecting that students show up with a blank slate is perhaps too much to ask. The existence of preconceived notions held by the student prior to a short-term ISL experience should not preclude their participation. Instead, the experience itself is an opportunity to expose the student to new situations and conditions that may cause the student to change their biases. A description of one of these situations was detailed in chapter IV, in which a student serving at a homeless shelter said to a service recipient that they were there to study poor people. This briefly caused an uncomfortable situation at the service site. At the same time it served as a cultural lesson for the students within the group and stimulated discussion during an organized reflection session.

The reflective observation stage of Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle is an essential component of service-learning and is therefore present within the short-term ISL programs in this study. In Kolb’s view, the organized reflection activities used in these programs allow students to “reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives” (p. 30). This was
especially true for students taking part in group-based oral reflection. Kate, who spent 1 week in Panama, described how reflection allowed her to observe experiences from many perspectives:

    I think more than anything, it pushed me out of my perspective. So I guess the biggest thing was that it wasn’t just, “This is my trip, and this is how it affects me,” but I was pushed into seeing how it affected everyone else.

Students also perceived reflection to serve as a processing agent, which corresponds with Freire’s (1997) view that reflection activates “the subsequent development of experience” (p. 35).

Abstract conceptualization and active experimentation are both in evidence from the conversations with the student participants. Movement through the abstract conceptualization stage of the learning cycle coincides with a student’s realization concerning the after-effects of their participation in the experiences and reflections associated with short-term international service-learning programs. The sixth theme listed in chapter IV, student perceptions of change, is filled with examples of students who have moved through the abstract conceptualization stage. The final stage in Kolb’s learning cycle, active experimentation, involves the use of ideas and theories formed from the experiences and reflections to “make decisions and solve problems” (Kolb, 1984, p. 30). Within this study, students demonstrated their movement into the learning cycle’s final stage by acting on their new ideas. This would include the changes in academic majors and minors and the increased involvement that students reported following their return from the short-term ISL experience.

The stages listed in Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle are good at describing the experiences and perceptions of the students involved in the short-term ISL programs within this study. This is due to a combination of two components of international service-learning, programmed experiences/activities and organized reflection. Participation in these two components of the
cycle set the stage for the student to conceptualize their actions and leads to further action based on newly formed ideas. The information gathered in this study suggests that Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle can be used to understand the experiences and perceptions of students involved in short-term ISL programs.

*Student Experiences*

When the conceptual framework for this study was first assembled it included a section on the outcomes of student experiences within study abroad and service-learning programs. It listed a number of the outcomes associated with the student experience in these two forms of experiential education. Within this section it was posited that the combination of the study abroad experience with the reflective elements of service-learning may drive personal development in the student participants of a short-term ISL program. After interviewing student participants and program leaders and analyzing the gathered data it appears that experience plus reflection does not equal personal development in these short-term ISL programs. This equation does not include all the elements that are present in many of the programs included in this study.

The data suggest that a high level of student engagement, specifically the investment of time and energy that Astin (1984) talked about, in program experiences in conjunction with organized reflection is what leads to student development within these programs. The findings suggest that involving students in activities that require high levels of personal engagement, such as community service, throughout the duration of the program is beneficial to promoting student development in short-term ISL programs. This makes sense given that short-term programs cannot offer the same amount of time overseas as longer term study abroad programs. Instead,
short-term ISL programs must provide a high level of engagement for students along with organized reflection in order to provide comparable levels of student development.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

The most noteworthy implications coming out of this study are related to the variety of ways in which short-term international service-learning is implemented at different institutions. The findings of this study that are the most significant in the practice of short-term ISL are programmatic components and administrative issues. Both of these areas affect student experiences and outcomes and should be evaluated by short-term ISL program leaders and study abroad administrators.

The recommendations for practice that are discussed in this section carry their significance beyond the programs included in this study. As the number of short-term ISL programs continues to grow, recommendations for practice will be useful in the field. It is my hope that the recommendations listed in this section will be helpful to program leaders and administrators who are establishing new short-term ISL programs or reviewing programs already in existence.

Program Components

The study’s findings show that there are several components of short-term international service-learning programs that contribute positive outcomes for the student participants. Among the variety of short-term ISL programs in existence these components are implemented in different ways. For example, the presence of a homestay component in these programs is not required in order for them to meet the definition of international service-learning. However, the
inclusion of a homestay experience offers benefits to the student that would not be as easily provided in an “island” program that separates students from the local culture. How important a role service plays within a program also varies in the implementation of international service-learning. Likewise, the type and frequency of reflection within the programs differ. The manner in which these components are implemented have an effect on student outcomes and perceived program quality. Listed below are my recommendations for the execution of these components in order to maximize student outcomes and program quality.

Incorporation of homestays. Homestay experiences were present in 8 of the 10 short-term ISL programs included in this study. The students who were involved in these programs established personal connections with the communities in which they were hosted. The homestay experience also provided a pathway to cultural learning and exchange between the student and the host family. Additionally, participation in a homestay environment contributed to the students’ level of involvement within planned program activities. Involvement in a homestay, along with integrated service and reflection, was a contributing factor to the perceived personal development of students involved in these programs.

Considering the brief amount of time that students involved in short-term ISL programs are present in the host country, their exposure to the local culture is very limited compared to students participating in long-term study abroad. The incorporation of a homestay experience in the short-term ISL programs exposes the student participant to a relatively high level of cultural immersion in a short amount of time. I believe that all short-term ISL programs would benefit from including a homestay component. The data collected for this study show that students can benefit from participation in a homestay experience, even one that lasts for only a week.
A homestay component may not be practical for certain programs, such as those that place emphasis on cultural programming or ones that involve a large amount of travel within the host country. Still, travel within the host country should not preclude the inclusion of a homestay experience. The Bolivia program included in this study incorporated homestays in two different communities. Likewise, the Dominica program included a 2-day-long homestay experience. A homestay as short as this is not ideal, but it does expose the student to a cultural situation to which they would not otherwise have access. Students involved in short-term ISL programs should be exposed to as many experiences as possible in order to maximize their chances for cultural learning. Participation in a homestay is an excellent way to do this in a short amount of time.

Integrated service components. The short-term ISL programs included in this study varied in their level of service component integration. Six programs incorporated service components that were present throughout their duration. The other four programs included service components as well, but the actual service was carried out either irregularly or only on one occasion. The data collected for this study suggests that short-term ISL programs that have service components integrated throughout their duration are able to foster student development in the areas of involvement, academic focus, ways of thinking, perceptions of personal ability, and interactions with people. As I mentioned earlier in my discussion of Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement, the programs with brief or uneven service experiences produced students who did not perceive the aforementioned changes in themselves. Instead they only saw themselves as having an increased comfort with international travel.
The literature concerning study abroad already considers short-term programs to be less beneficial for students. The 1- and 2-week-long programs that make up the majority of the ISL programs included in this study would be expected to offer very little in the area of student development. One of the differences between regular STSA and short-term ISL is the presence of a service component. The programs in this study that had fully integrated service components produced students who perceived personal growth in the six areas previously.

I am not advocating that every short-term study abroad program include an integrated service component. Programs within the STSA area operate under a number of formats, one of which is international service-learning. Within the area of short-term ISL, however, I think that a service component that is integrated throughout the duration of the program is necessary to encourage student development. Only giving service a cursory place within an ISL program is detrimental to the classification of the program as such and detrimental to the students who are deprived of an experience that could encourage their own development.

*Encourage group-based oral reflection.* Organized reflection was used in all of the short-term ISL programs within this study. Each of these programs implemented reflection in a group-based oral format. Additionally, several of the programs required the student participants to keep journals for written reflection. While both methods for reflection were beneficial for the students as individuals, the use of group-based oral reflection had the added effect of encouraging dialogue between the program participants.

Group-based oral reflection promoted bonding within the student groups in the programs included in this study. This delivery method for reflection was useful in the programs because of its effects on relationships with the student group. Students described their groups as “intimate”
and “like best friends.” Within the student perceptions of quality outlined in chapter IV’s third theme, group dynamics were mentioned as an indicator of quality and were connected to group reflection sessions. The importance of positive group dynamics cannot be stressed enough when it comes to short-term ISL programs. This is because most programs of this type, including all of the programs in this study, are operated with groups of no more than 15 participants.

The positive effects of oral reflection on the group dynamics of short-term ISL programs should be considered by program leaders when planning the reflection component of the program. Implementation of group-based oral reflection accomplishes two tasks within a short-term ISL program. First, it provides the organized reflection that is essential to service-learning to enable students to process their experiences. Second, reflection delivered by this method promotes bonding within the student group, which should already be a goal of the leader for a short-term ISL program. I recommend that all of these programs include group-based oral reflection for the reasons stated above.

Program Administration

While collecting data for this study I noticed the variety of styles associated with short-term ISL program administration. Each institution within this study has a unique way of planning and implementing their programs. Even after taking these differences into account, I think there are some areas in which these programs could standardize administrative practices. Suggestions made in this section focus on program leader training, community partnerships, and a call for the establishment of a set of best practices in short-term ISL.
Program leader training. Program leaders were a factor in student perceptions of quality within this study. Leaders of short-term ISL programs are involved in every aspect of program administration, from identifying the community partner to initiating organized reflection. The manner in which an ISL leader plans and implements their program affects student experiences on a very deep level because of the leader’s part in setting up that experience. Additionally, the way in which the leader directs reflection activities and influences group dynamics affects the student experience and perceived program quality.

Within the programs included in this study there were isolated cases in which students felt adversely affected by the actions of program leadership. One of these instances involved a group reflection activity in which a student felt ostracized for offering an opinion that did not agree with a number of the other students within the group. The situation that arose when the student offered this opinion could have been avoided had the leader been prepared for such a circumstance. Leader preparation and training is an area in which short-term ISL programs should place more emphasis.

Training for STSA leaders is centered on overall program administration with little emphasis on fostering good dynamics within student groups. Short-term ISL programs, however, require more in-depth training due to their group-based nature. Other characteristics of short-term ISL programs that require additional training compared to regular STSA are the organized reflections and the importance of community partnerships. While many short-term ISL program leaders have had experience in service-learning, providing training in these areas prior to the beginning of program activities is advisable. The variety of experience levels among program leaders is one rationale for providing training to these individuals. Another reason to provide this
training is to promote standards among all the short-term ISL programs sponsored by an institution.

Require sustainable community partnerships. Like leadership, the strength of the partnership between the program and the host community was a factor in student perceptions of quality. University-community relationships have the potential to affect important aspects of short-term ISL programs. The service activities of these programs occur within the host communities. If a homestay component is part of the program, then they are also affected by the relationship with the community. Additionally, program participants’ interactions with community residents are also influenced by the strength of the relationship. Considering that the host community is the place where service is completed and the place where students are housed, this relationship should carry weight when a short-term ISL program is being planned.

The relationship with the host community will also affect the paradigm of service that is used for the short-term ISL program. Within the study, programs that were in their second year or longer were considered to be of higher quality. Programs that are only being held on a one-time basis will most likely operate within the charity paradigm. Established ISL programs are a better choice for implementing project and social change paradigm service-learning. Implementing project paradigm or social change paradigm service-learning in short-term ISL programs is advisable because it strengthens the relationship with the host community over time and it may be more beneficial to the student.

The significance of the connection between the community and the institution/program should be recognized by college administrators who are responsible for STSA programming. The partnership with the host community should be between it and the institution, not the program’s
leader or instructor. The same instructors/leaders may not be available to run the same program every year. The formalization of this relationship should encourage the institution to have a greater interest in what happens during the short-term ISL program. At the same time, arranging community partnerships in this manner will require a set of guidelines or standards for short-term ISL programs at a given institution.

Short-term ISL best practices. All of the previous recommendations have focused on the different aspects of short-term ISL programs. In this study I have interviewed students from three institutions of higher education who were involved in one or more of 10 programs. Each institution and program is unique and has provided me with information that has allowed me to better understand the experiences of the student within short-term ISL. After conducting these interviews and looking over documents related to the short-term ISL programs I have come to the conclusion that a set of standards, or best practices, should be created for this category of study abroad. The recommendations that I have listed above could be used in their formation.

Considering that national statistics are not kept on ISL programs as they are on regular study abroad, there is no way to know how many such programs are in existence or what standards are currently being used. To facilitate the establishment of best practices for short-term ISL, individuals representing a number of organizations and institutions will need to collaborate on a set of standards. I suggest identifying individuals who are involved in short-term ISL through the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) and the organizations engaged in the practice of ISL, including the International Partnership for Service-Learning (IPSL) and Amizade, an organization focused on global service-learning and volunteerism. The Association
of International Educators (NAFSA) should promote these best practices in order to disseminate to as many short-term ISL practitioners and institutions as possible.

Furthermore, I propose that NAFSA establish an international service-learning network within their Education Abroad knowledge community. This would provide a means for networking among practitioners and facilitate discourse on ISL programming. The establishment of the ISL network within NAFSA, and the institution of a set of best practices should lead the Institute for International Education to begin collecting statistics on ISL programming, short-term and otherwise. The collection of statistical data on international service-learning should aid research focused on this area of experiential education.

The literature on international service-learning is quite sparse, with most publications serving to document individual programs or programs administered by a single provider. Calls for best practices in short-term ISL do occur within the literature, but are likewise based on the study of individual programs. In their study of a short-term ISL program held in Costa Rica, Lewis and Niesenbaum (2005) advocated for integrative experiences within such programs, including community-based research and service-learning in a single host community. This study’s recommendation for integrated service components within short-term ISL supports Lewis and Niesenbaum’s (2005) advocacy and provides support based on findings connected to Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement. Another example of the literature providing similar suggestions for practice is Smith-Pariola and Goke-Pariola’s (2006) study of a program held in Jamaica. The authors’ experiences within that program led them to make changes connected to stable host community partnerships and increased formal reflection in an oral format. This study’s recommendations support the programmatic changes made by Smith-Pariola and Goke-Pariola (2006) and suggest that similar programs be open to making modifications.
Some of the recommendations made in this study do not have counterparts in the literature, although this may be due to the currently meager amount of publications on international service-learning. Calls for program leader training and the incorporation of homestay experiences have not surfaced within ISL literature. This may be attributed to the focus of articles already published (i.e., individual programs or ISL programs administered by a single provider). Likewise, suggestions for the establishment of best practices for short-term ISL have not surfaced in the literature. This could be ascribed to an ISL community that is quite disconnected and a study abroad establishment that has yet to fully embrace international service-learning.

There is no doubt that some institutions or programs may already have standards that meet or exceed those of the recommendations listed above. This section is aimed at those institutions that are in the process of establishing short-term ISL or are open to reviewing their current programs for areas of improvement. Additionally, this section calls for the institutionalization of international service-learning within the study abroad establishment. This could have the effect of mainstreaming this form of experiential education thus increasing the number of such programs on an annual basis. Implementing some or all of these recommendations for practice would serve to improve short-term international service-learning, either on the basis of a single program or for the program type as a whole.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study focuses on an area in which little research has been completed. Literature concerning short-term ISL in any context is in short supply. There are several areas of international service-learning and study abroad that were touched on by this study, but were not
examined in depth. The effect of participation in international service-learning on student global-mindedness is an area that merits further study. The host community/community partner’s role in international service-learning is another subject which has yet to be explored. The students who participated in this study discussed the cultural connections formed during the course of their participation in homestays and short-term ISL. This is an area that could be studied to increase understanding of the effects of the homestay experience and service-learning on cultural learning. The effects of short-term ISL in comparison with long-term study abroad could also be researched. Additionally, the long-term effects of participation in international service-learning could be studied on a larger scale.

*Global-mindedness in International Service-learning*

This study focused on the experiences and perceptions of students in short-term ISL programs. The findings revealed that students involved in these programs recognize changes in themselves related to their actions and ways of thinking. In addition, students reported establishing personal and cultural connections with the community and country where they were involved in ISL. These reported connections carry implications related to students’ attitudes toward communities outside their own, specifically those communities outside of the United States.

Considering these implications, a study focused on the affects of involvement in short-term international service-learning on global-mindedness should be conducted. Global-mindedness is a worldview in which one sees oneself as connected to the global community and feels a sense of responsibility to its members (Hett, 1993). Indications of global-mindedness can be found in a student’s actions, beliefs and attitudes. Recently, two dissertations have been
published that explore the effects of study abroad participation on student global-mindedness. One study, conducted by Golay (2006), focused on student participation in semester-long study abroad programs. The other study, conducted by Kehl (2006), compared rates of global-mindedness between participants of long-term and short-term study abroad along with students who intended to study abroad.

Both of these studies documented limited growth in student global-mindedness following involvement in study abroad. This was especially true of the STSA participants in Kehl’s (2006) study, who had levels of global-mindedness that were identical to students who intended to study abroad. In her study, Golay (2006) suggested that the use of service-learning pedagogy within study abroad programs could increase students’ scores in four of the five subscales within Hett’s (1993) global-mindedness scale. Studies comparing global-mindedness levels in short-term ISL participants and STSA participants could be conducted using Hett’s (1993) scale. Additionally, global-mindedness level comparisons could be done between short-term ISL participants and students who have completed long-term study abroad. This is an area of research with much potential.

**Short-term ISL and Community Partners**

A majority of the literature on service-learning has centered on student outcomes or the role of the instructor. In recent years, research focused on the community partner within the context of service-learning has been conducted. Research in this area has concentrated on either community partner perspectives (Bushouse, 2005; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2007) or partnership development (Dorado & Giles, 2004; Keeskes, 2006). The role and perspective of the community partner within international service-learning is not present in the literature. This is no
surprise, as this area of research has only recently been explored within domestic service-
learning.

The relationship between the institution/program and the community partner has many
facets which can be investigated. Partnership development in this area requires much more
planning than a domestic partnership. I imagine that international partnerships would also come
under the review of an institution’s study abroad office. The inclusion of this regulatory element
within a service-learning partnership would make for an interesting study. Research conducted
on the perspectives of international partners could also aid in building the literature on ISL. The
satisfaction of host communities concerning the partnership and its affect on the program quality
could also be an area of focus. The literature on international service-learning is relatively sparse
and so research in the area of international community partnership would be a welcome addition
to the knowledge base.

Cultural Knowledge, Homestay, and International Service-learning

Study abroad homestay experiences have been shown to aid in students’ learning related
to the culture of the host country. Living with a host family gives students “an immediate entrée
into the cultural and linguistic environment while protecting them in a smaller, ‘caring’ unit”
(Schmidt-Rinehart & Knight, 2004, p. 254). This is accomplished through student participation
in “meals, religious observances, or other activities common to the host culture” (Golay, 2006, p.
53). The student participants in this study reported cultural connections related to their homestay
experiences.

Participation in domestic service-learning has also been shown to affect the cultural
knowledge of students. Studies conducted by Sedlak et al. (2003) and Gallini & Moely (2003)
found that students involved in service-learning demonstrated growth in cultural competence as a result of their experiences. Service-learners were also able to identify with the community that they were serving (Gallini & Moely, 2003; Simons & Cleary, 2006). Students in this study discussed the connections they formed with the host community during their participation in short-term ISL. These connections served to acquaint students with the local culture in a fashion similar to the homestay experience.

Increases in cultural knowledge have been reported as an outcome of both the homestay experience within study abroad and participation in service-learning. Student participants in this study reported making connections with the culture of the host country and with the host community. The amount of cultural knowledge that is cultivated from participation in a short-term ISL program, as opposed to a homestay-infused STSA program, has yet to be gauged. A study comparing short-term ISL and STSA programs, both with a homestay component, could help determine if participation in service-learning gives students an advantage in cultural learning over that offered by a homestay experience.

*Long-term Effects of International Service-learning on Personal Change*

Participation in international service-learning, both in short-term and long-term programs, has usually been studied on a program-by-program scale. Additionally, these studies have been conducted during and soon after the conclusion of the programs (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005; Smith-Pariola & Goke-Pariola, 2006; Wessel, 2007). With these studies being completed so close to their programs’ completion, it is difficult to gauge any long-term effects of participation on the student participants. This is also true of most studies on the effects
of service-learning (Gallini & Moely, 2003; Toews & Cerny, 2005), which are conducted in the
same timeframe as the short-term ISL programs mentioned earlier.

In order to determine the long-term effects of participation in international service-
learning, a quantitative multi-year longitudinal study should be performed. An instrument could
be constructed that draws from Hett’s (1993) global-mindedness scale and the Civic Attitudes
and Skills Questionnaire (CASQ) developed by Moely, McFarland et al. (2002). Participants
would be drawn from multiple institutions, with an even split between students who had
participated in international service-learning and those who had not. The control group within
this study would be the students who had not participated in ISL. To further ensure non-
contamination, the students in this group would also need to have not participated in any study
abroad or service-learning activities while attending college. The implementation of a study such
as this would provide evidence of the long-term effects of participation in international service-
learning, or lack thereof, on personal change.

**Long-term Study Abroad versus Short-term ISL in Student Development**

The literature on student development within study abroad favors long-term programs as
the best vehicle for delivering positive student outcomes. Ingraham and Peterson (2005) found a
positive relationship between the length of time spent abroad and a number of student
development factors including “personal growth, intercultural awareness, career development,
language learning, and academic performance” (p. 87). A study conducted by Dwyer (2004)
found that students who had studied abroad for a full year were more likely to be influenced in
their career choices compared to those who studied on a short-term basis. Short-term study
abroad is viewed as having less of an impact on the student.
Published studies on international service-learning have either focused on programs administered by a single provider (Tonkin & Quiroga, 2004) or have spotlighted individual programs (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005; Roberts, 2003; Smith-Pariola & Goke-Pariola, 2006; Wessel, 2007). The use of service-learning to enhance student outcomes in short-term study abroad programming is not present in the literature. A study comparing student outcomes of short-term ISL participation and long-term study abroad participation could be beneficial to the literature as well as to practice. If the infusion of a service-learning component into a STSA program is shown to raise student outcome levels to that of a long-term program, it could heighten the profile of international service-learning within study abroad.

Short-term study abroad, in general, and short-term ISL, in particular, suffers from a shortage of literature. There is a need for this to be remedied, as short-term programs now constitute the majority of all study abroad programs that are implemented each year. That there is very little literature available on this subject seems strange, considering the number of students who now participate in these programs on an ever-increasing basis. The dearth in research on international service-learning programming must also be addressed if we are to fully understand the effects of combining study abroad and service learning.

Conclusions

Study abroad and service-learning are two distinctive categories within the realm of experiential learning. Both engage students in activities outside of the classroom in the hope of increasing student learning. These educational delivery methods often affect student learning beyond the academic domain. Participation in study abroad is known to affect students’ professional development (Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1958; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004), foreign
language proficiency (Carlson et al., 1990; Isabelli-Garcia, 2003; Nash, 1976), cultural learning (Anderson et al., 2006; Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004), and personal growth (Black & Duhon, 2006; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004). Service-learning has been shown to affect students’ personal development (Gallini & Moely, 2003; Toews & Cerny, 2005), cultural awareness (Gallini & Moely, 2003; Sedlak et al., 2003), and social responsibility (Kellogg, 1999; Kendrick, 1996; Rockquemore & Schaffer, 2000). Students who are engaged in a combination of these two types of experiential learning stand to gain much in these areas.

This study focused on understanding the experiences and perceptions of students who had been involved in programs that combined these two methods of experiential learning on a short-term basis. Short-term study abroad programming is portrayed in the literature as having less of an impact on the student than the more traditional semester or year-long programs. Despite this view, STSA programs far outnumber the long-term programs. When I first began this study I wanted to understand if the infusion of a service-learning component in STSA programs could somehow provide the student with the amount of development equivalent to participation in a long-term study abroad program. After conducting the study and looking into the experiences and perceptions of students engaged in short-term ISL programs, I believe that service-learning does provide added value to the student experience in STSA. However, the added value of service-learning is not quantified within this study.

A number of factors influenced the student experience within the short-term ISL programs included in this study. The inclusion of a homestay experience, the rate to which a service component was infused into the program, the program’s leadership, the relationship with the host community/community partner, and the type of organized reflection all affected the
students’ experiences and perceptions. Because of these factors, each program was its own unique experience and the students upheld this in their conversations with me.

In the process of conducting this study I used a conceptual framework based on Astin’s (1984) theory of involvement, Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle, and student experiences to analyze the collected data. Qualitative research techniques were used in the collection and interpretation of the data, which provided emergent themes that were merged into three categories. These themes supplied the means to answer the research questions that directed this study of the experiences and perceptions of students engaged in short-term ISL programs.

This study builds an argument for the importance of student involvement within short-term study abroad programs. Including a service-learning component in the structure of a STSA program can aid in student development if it is done as more than an afterthought. The service experience and organized reflection must be interwoven throughout the course of the program if it is to be effective in facilitating additional student development over regular STSA. In addition, the inclusion of a homestay experience can be beneficial to the student’s cultural development. The three elements of service, reflection, and homestay all require the student to be engaged in the study abroad experience. By instituting program components that stipulate high levels of student involvement, these programs ensure that student participants will invest high levels of time and energy, which should result in elevated levels of student development.

The recommendations made in this chapter may not be applicable to every short-term ISL program. Institutions and program leaders must make their own decisions as to whether these proposals are to be acted upon. Nevertheless, I feel that the recommendations for practice drawn from this study could be beneficial in the application of short-term ISL programming. Additionally, converting certain STSA programs to short-term ISL could aid in augmenting the
student experience and advancing their personal and cultural development. Recommendations concerning organizational action could be applied fairly soon to the advantage of the students involved in short-term ISL and the study of this type of program. By taking a greater interest in international service-learning, institutions and national organizations can promote the improvement and standardization of this programmatic fusion of study abroad and service-learning.

Short-term ISL is a segment of the largest and fastest-growing area in study abroad. Students are attracted to STSA programs because of their convenience and low costs. The benefits that students receive from their participation in these programs tend to be seen as inferior to those that a student has access to in a long-term study abroad program. Students are paying less for study abroad, but also getting less when it comes to their experiences. The short-term ISL programs included in this study provided a variety of experiences for the students, some of which may have been more effective than others in eliciting student development. In comparing the programs, the existence of activities that engaged the student and caused them to reflect on those experiences are what made the difference in the changes that students perceived in themselves. It appears that student engagement is the key in eliciting student development within STSA programs. The service and reflection components of international service-learning, in conjunction with homestay experiences, are able to provide this engagement.
REFERENCES


Knight, S., & Schmidt-Rinehart, B. (2002). Enhancing the homestay: Study abroad from the host family’s perspective. *Foreign Language Annals, 35*(2), 190-201.


APPENDIX A

STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Student Interview Protocol

1. Tell me a little bit about why you chose to participate in this program.
   a) Have you studied abroad before?
   b) Have you ever been involved in service-learning before?

2. Can you describe the program for me?

3. Describe your experience as a student in the program.

4. Suppose I was going to participate in this program next year. What should I be prepared for?

5. What are your thoughts on the program’s length?

6. After returning from the program have you noticed any differences in yourself?

7. What aspect of the program do you feel had the biggest impact on you personally?

8. Can you describe for me the reflection activities that you did during the program?
   a) Do you have a preference for one type over the other?

9. What kind of impact do you think the reflection activities had on you?

10. How would you describe the quality of the program.
APPENDIX B

PROGRAM LEADER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Program Leader Interview Protocol

1. Can you describe the program to me?

2. Tell me about your role in the program.

3. What kind of learning objectives do you set out to accomplish in the program?

4. What are your thoughts on the program’s length?

5. Suppose I am a student participating in your program. What should I expect to experience?

6. What role does reflection play in the program’s design?

7. Ideally, what should reflection activities accomplish in a program like this one?

8. What would the ideal international service-learning program be like?
APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT PSEUDONYMS
## Participant Pseudonyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Host Country</th>
<th>Program Duration</th>
<th>Other Identifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abigail</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernie</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmen</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Morris</td>
<td>Tanzania/Kenya</td>
<td>2 weeks each</td>
<td>Program Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison</td>
<td>Dominica/Kenya</td>
<td>2 weeks each</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice</td>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly James</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>Program Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lana</td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Ann</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandra</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selma</td>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travis</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Definitions

1. Global-mindedness: Global-mindedness is a worldview in which one sees oneself as connected to the global community and feels a sense of responsibility to its members (Hett, 1993).

2. Globalcentrism: “Thinking in terms of what is good for the global community, not just what will benefit one’s own country. A willingness to make judgements based on global, not ethnocentric, standards (Hett, 1993).”

3. International Service-Learning Programs: Study abroad programs that include service-learning as part of the overall experience for student participants.

4. Long-Term Study Abroad Programs: Study abroad programs with a duration of one semester or more.

5. Reflection: The process of thinking about one’s service activities and their relationship to course content (Werner & McVaugh, 2000, p. 123).

6. Self-Efficacy: An individual’s perceived capability to organize and carry out actions required to deal with possible situations and produce successful results (Milstein, 2005).

7. Service-Learning: A form of experiential education that links community service with the academic objectives of a course through the incorporation of a reflection component.

8. Short-Term Study Abroad Programs: Study abroad programs with a duration of eight weeks or less.

9. Study Abroad Programs: Organized educational programs in which college students enroll in courses for academic credit. Program activities take place in a country that is not the students’ home country (Kehl, 2005).
APPENDIX E

IRB APPROVAL
November 4, 2008

David Brooking  
Department of ELPTS  
College of Education  
Box 870172

Re: IRB # 08-OR-246 “College Student Experiences in Short-Term International Service-Learning Programs”

Dear Mr. Brooking:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your proposed research.

Your protocol has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

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

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the assigned IRB application number. Please provide copies of the IRB approved consent form to your participants.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Carabftato T. Myles, M&M, JD,LM  
Director of Research Compliance & Research Compliance Officer  
Office of Research Compliance  
The University of Alabama