

Exploring Reciprocity in International Service Learning Programs

Samantha Dear, HBOR., B.A.

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Under the supervision of Erin Sharpe, PhD

Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario

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Abstract

Using aspects of grounded theory methodology, this study explored the perceptions and practical implementation of reciprocity in International Service Learning (ISL) Programs. Data were collected through interviews with nine ISL practitioners representing a variety of organizations offering international service learning programs. Findings suggest that multiple conceptualizations of ISL programs exist. ISL programs are interdisciplinary in nature and that using reciprocity as a guiding framework is problematic. Further attention is needed in relation to shifting the guiding framework of ISL programs from reciprocity to interdependence.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Unless we take up the pieces of this project as we can, we may not only fail to effectively teach our students how to engage in just global relations, we may fall terribly short of our own deepest hopes for doing so. (Robin Crabtree, 2008)

A Moment of Awakening

I was first exposed to extreme poverty during an international service-learning (ISL) trip to Haiti in 2006. This two-week trip was organized by a small charitable organization that had been operating in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, for more than 20 years. The purpose of the trip was to complete construction of a school that the organization had begun building the previous year. My interest in Haiti stemmed from my dad, who had been involved with the organization facilitating the program from its start in the late 1980s. As a child, whenever my dad returned from Haiti, I was always curious to see the pictures and hear the stories of people whose reality was much different than mine. I was motivated to participate in the ISL program offered by this organization because I wanted to experience these stories and pictures firsthand. I was equally motivated to participate in the program because it offered me the opportunity to travel with a purpose rather than simply being a tourist. From my perspective at the time, it offered me the opportunity to help.

During my 2006 trip, my initial understanding of the word “help” was challenged almost immediately. Outside the airport and at various times throughout the two-week trip in Haiti, locals invariably greeted me on the streets in one of three distinct ways: with welcoming open arm, with blank stares, or with a raised middle finger. These disparate reactions by Haitians quickly challenged my motivation for participating in,

and my perception of, ISL programs.

I became increasingly conflicted at the work site where for several days I worked alongside four local Haitian men moving piles of wood and stone. As each group task was accomplished, I felt that my contribution was meaningful and productive. This contribution echoed my primary motivation: international travel and assistance to communities in need. However, my feeling of purpose was blurred by the fact that every day at the work site, over 50 local children stared at me and begged for money and candy while yelling “blanco, blanco,” the Creole word for “White person.” It was during these moments that I felt misplaced and confused. By moving piles of wood and stone, was I taking an employment opportunity away from a local Haitian? Did my presence at the service site suggest that the Haitians could not construct this school on their own? What and who was I actually helping by being in Haiti?

Seeking clarity, I asked Ranaue, a Haitian man and now friend with whom I worked daily at the work site: “What do you think of me, coming here, working with you to build a school?” He replied, “I love that you come, it’s good to know that the world, that Canada, has not forgotten about us. Thank you. You help me, I help you, right? We are friends.”

I sat in the back of a pickup truck on the way home from the work site that day. As I looked ahead up the road, I noticed that we were about to pass a local Haitian woman walking with a large basket. The basket, full of grain, was supported on her hip and seemed like part of her body as she walked. I was immediately drawn to her and had the impression from the way she walked that she was strong, proud, and determined. I was drawn to and appreciated her confident presence. When the truck passed the

woman, she stopped and looked at me. I looked into her eyes and waved. In response, she gave me the finger. Although I had experienced this gesture several times already, this time it seemed different. For me, this gesture had substance: I felt that this woman had good reason not to respond to me in friendship. Ranaue, who sat beside me and witnessed this interaction, gave me a friendly nudge on the shoulder and laughed.

Although I would describe my experience in Haiti as transformative, enhancing my personal awakening to global injustices, the image of the Haitian woman staring at me, her middle finger raised in defiant salute, has remained a vivid memory. This interaction and numerous others I have experienced while visiting developing countries since my time in Haiti have left me morally conflicted and engaged in a complex learning journey focused on the challenges inherent in engaging in reciprocal relationships in a world rife with injustice. Understanding reciprocity in this context formed the foundation of this study.

Background

My participation in the ISL program in Haiti reflects a growing movement of people who travel to developing countries to participate in service work. The popularity and growth of these programs are evident when looking at current statistics: An article in Time magazine reported that American involvement in these programs has quadrupled since 2005 (Mendleson, 2008). Kelly and Case (2007) estimated that since 1960, 65,000 Canadians have volunteered overseas. In 2009 the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) increased support for partner agencies, subsequently increasing the amount of international volunteers abroad from approximately 2,500 to 8,500. Further, Tiessen and Heron (2012), who provide a detailed timeline of international volunteer

trends, suggest that millions of people who live outside of North America have volunteered internationally.

Bringle and Hatcher (2011) define ISL programs as:

A structured academic experience in another country in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that addresses identified community needs; (b) learn from direct interaction and cross-cultural dialogue with others; and (c) reflect on the experience in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a deeper understanding of global and intercultural issues, a broader appreciation of the host and the discipline, and an enhanced sense of their own responsibilities as citizens, locally and globally. (p. 19)

In the academic literature, ISL is most often described as part of a formal academic course, generally within a university setting. However, ISL- focused organizations with similar program structures exist independent of academic institutions. For the purpose of this study both academic and independent organizations offering ISL programs are referred to as sending organizations.

Three program aspects characterize international service learning programs:

1. They involve international travel.
2. Students engage in community service work.
3. Students participate in structured learning.

Sending organizations offering ISL programs, generally based in developed countries, are diverse; nevertheless, most ISL programs share a common overarching goal, which is to educate participants through service about global civic responsibility in an international context (Crabtree, 2008).

The increased offering of international service learning programs can arguably be the result of the complex and contradictory phenomenon of globalization. Globalization as a concept and a phenomenon is understood in different ways. Giddens (1990) defined globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (p. 64). Through this lens, globalization can be understood as international integration (Chomsky, 2006). However, this definition is rather superficial in relationship to other definitions that highlight the negative face of globalization. For example, Kirkwood (2001) suggests that globalization has “brought problems of lack of tolerance and respect for others who are culturally and racially different, uneven distribution of resources, ethnic conflict, and struggles of power” (p. 1). With these two outcomes of globalization in mind, Breunig and Dear (2012) suggest that “globalization is thus often viewed as either one of two dimensions – one dimension emphasizes the rich potential of imaging the world as community; the other is rooted in capitalist culture” (p. 4). Based on both the outcomes of globalization, international integration and global inequity, the call for an engaged global citizenry is on the rise (Crabtree, 1998). International service learning (ISL) programs respond to this call by providing an alternative travel experience based on the principles of active global citizenship and service (Crabtree, 2008).

Today, evidence is mounting surrounding the ability of ISL programs to further the goal of fostering a more sophisticated understanding of globalization and a greater sense of global citizenship among participating students (Crabtree, 1998; Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009; Grusky, 2000; Kiely, 2004). Increased leadership ability, intercultural

understanding, language skills, and greater knowledge of global injustices are commonly reported outcomes. Furthermore, scholars suggest that ISL programs foster an environment where cultural norms and preheld assumptions surrounding self and society are challenged (Mezirow, 1978; Rhoads, 1997). These beliefs are congruent with students describing factors that lead to a deeper understanding of self, the service they provide, and justice. Students often describe ISL experiences as “transformative” or “life changing” and upon return from an ISL experience, there are cases of students who feel the need to switch career and lifestyle paths into areas that allow them to work with an explicit social justice framework (Kiely, 2004).

While support for ISL programs as a vehicle for fostering student transformation is strong, new questions and criticisms concerning the impact of ISL programs have begun to emerge. These new questions focus not only on the impact on the student participants, but on the undertheorized relationship between ISL programs, the communities they serve, and the service projects in which they engage. Proponents and practitioners of ISLs have begun to attend to what could be described as the unintended negative outcomes of ISL programs on the host community. Crabtree (2008), an educator and ISL scholar who has been involved in ISL trips in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Kenya, offered a number of observations and concerns related to relationships with the host community. Some of these observations resonate with my own experience in Haiti:

- Local children become enamored with the foreign students and the material possessions they take for granted (a phenomenon that reinforces what has been referred to as a “lucky us/poor them” attitude among student travelers);

- Students and other visitors leave piles of used clothing and other “gifts” after project/trip completion (which reinforces a charitable model of student-participant engagement, the opposite of a critical approach);
- Community members fight about project ownership as development activities exacerbate internal political and interpersonal divisions (a situation which leads the program to have a divisive impact rather than being a unifying or otherwise a positive experience);
- Members of neighboring communities wonder why no one has come to help them (which reinforces the next point);
- Projects reinforce the notion among communities that development requires external benefactors; national governments rely on NGOs to respond to the needs in their country (thus reinforcing a dependency, rather than an empowering relationship). (p. 19)

Crabtree (2008) concluded the paper by noting that she felt “theoretically conflicted” about the value and effectiveness provided by ISL programs and the impression it leaves on those involved in the programs in the host community. Crabtree (2008) articulates the sense of conflict that I felt intuitively during and after my experience in Haiti. Some of the questions that she (and I) was asking include: Are ISL programs and participants welcome in the communities in which they engage in service? If so, is the service work meaningful and effective? Or are ISLs simply exacerbating the social differences between developed and developing countries? Can ISL be conceptualized and delivered in such a way that it becomes a positive experience for the communities and the student participants alike?

Observations and questions such as these have led to a greater discussion within the ISL scholarly community on the need to attend to the impact of ISL programs on the host community. The answer to this last question relates to successfully addressing a key point that has emerged; namely, the importance of recognizing and incorporating the perspective and needs of the host communities within ISL program development (Crabtree, 2008; Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009; Porter & Monard, 2001; Pusch & Merrill, 2008). Further, an argument central to resolving this conflict is to place greater focus on *reciprocity* as a guiding ethical principle in ISL programming. ISL programs operating through the lens of reciprocity work towards ensuring that all parties involved (e.g., university, NGO, participant, members of the host community) in the ISL program receive equal benefit (Crabtree, 2008; Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009; Porter & Monard, 2001; Pusch & Merrill, 2008).

With the notion of reciprocity in mind, I was curious to explore the discussion beyond the academic community to see whether reciprocity also resonated with current ISL practitioners. Further, as I read the literature, I found that it lacked depth when it came to addressing how reciprocity was practically implemented into programs. For example, if we know that this is important, how do we do it? What does it look like?

Purpose of the Study

This study had two purposes. The first purpose of this study was to explore ISL practitioners' perceptions of the meaning of reciprocity in international service programs. The second purpose was to explore if and how a reciprocal framework was practically implemented into current ISL programs. The research questions that framed this study were:

1. How do ISL practitioners perceive, describe, and resonate with the term “reciprocity” in relation to their international service learning program?
2. What attempts are ISL practitioners making to practically implement reciprocity into their programs?
3. What do ISL practitioners identify as the challenges to using reciprocity as the guiding framework of ISL programs?

To investigate the above research questions, I held nine semistructured interviews with experienced ISL practitioners, who represented a diversity of sending organizations that offer ISL programs. The study was guided by the methodology of constructivist grounded theory (GT) as developed by Charmaz (2006). Choosing to explore reciprocity through a constructivist lens allowed me to acknowledge that the data obtained, the way in which the data were analyzed, and the findings of this study are a result of a shared experience between my research participants and me as the researcher. In other words, a constructivist approach allowed me to view my research as an interpretation. It is important to note that typically, researchers employing GT conduct up to twenty to thirty interviews. Due to this study being at a master’s level, I was not in a position to saturate the data by conducting 20 or more interviews. With this in mind, this study was not in a position to create a theory; rather, it served as a preliminary investigation into the perception of and process of achieving reciprocity in ISL programs. Much more will be said about this in Chapter Three.

Importance of the Study

As the popularity of ISL programs continues to grow, it is imperative that the recent criticisms surrounding ISL programming be taken seriously. At the heart of these

criticisms and the core of ISL programs is the relationship between visiting participants and host community. With this in mind, exploration of reciprocity is relevant and timely. However, it is not enough to study reciprocity in its generic sense. We need to deepen our understanding of reciprocity and explore how well it serves ISL programs as a guiding framework. Does reciprocity resonate with ISL practitioners? Can it be implemented in a practical way? If not, what are the alternatives? The findings of this study contribute to this discussion.

Crabtree (2008) suggested that exploring the preceding questions is ambitious and overwhelming. However, she also suggests that

unless we take up the pieces of this project as we can, we may not only fail to effectively teach our students how to engage in just global relations, we may fall terribly short of our own deepest hopes for doing so. (p. 29)

With this in mind, this study serves as a small step forward in light of the work to be done.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this chapter, I introduce international service learning (ISL) and its theoretical foundations, which include experiential education (Dewey, 1938, 1964) and *conscientization* (Freire, 1970, 1972). Following this, I will describe current criticisms of ISL programs which include: (a) exploitive behaviour, (b) the potential for ISL programs to fuel Western paternalism, and (c) questions revolving around the relevancy and effectiveness of the service projects with which programs engage. I then review the literature on reciprocity as an underlying philosophical framework for ISL programs, as well as the literature that discusses pathways forward to implement the philosophy on a practical level. It is important to note that the literature surrounding ISL is limited compared to domestic service learning (SL). For this reason, I have incorporated some SL literature into this review in order to provide a context where needed and appropriate.

Defining International Service Learning

Crabtree (2008) defined ISL as the “combination of academic instruction and community-based service in an international context” (p. 1). A more recent definition provided by Bringle and Hatcher (2011) sheds light on the multiple aspects of ISL programs:

A structured academic experience in another country in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that addresses identified community needs; (b) learn from direct interaction and cross-cultural dialogue with others; and (c) reflect on the experience in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a deeper understanding of global and intercultural issues, a broader appreciation of the host country and the discipline, and an enhanced sense

of their own responsibilities as citizens, locally and globally. (p. 19)

In the academic literature, ISL is most often described as part of a formal academic course, generally within a university setting. However, ISL-focused organizations with similar program structures exist independent of academic institutions. Some well-known examples of independent organizations that offer programs include; Cross Cultural Solutions, Projects Abroad, Save the Children, Canada World Youth, and Youth Challenge International. Although these organizations are independent from formal academic institutions, it is not unusual for these programs to form partnerships with academic institutions to create programs that give participants the option to work towards an academic credit, although they do not need to exercise this option.

What happens in ISL programs? - Program components. Typically, ISL programs include three stages: pre-departure, sojourn, and re-entry (Kiely, 2004; Porter & Monard, 2001). Structured learning (curriculum, guided reflections, etc.) is found throughout these three program stages and is characteristic of ISL programs facilitated through formal academic settings. Although structured learning is a prominent characteristic that is used to describe ISL programs in the formal academic setting, The International Partnership for Service Learning and Leadership (IPLS), a leading NGO in the field of ISL, encourages service learning programs independent from academic credit to create programs where learning is intentional, structured, and evaluated (International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leadership, 2012). The three program stages that comprise ISL programs, in the order that participants experience them, are described below.

Predeparture. The first component of ISL programs is predeparture. Pre

departure training is conducted prior to departing for an international destination (sojourn). Although a universal curriculum for this stage of ISL programs does not exist, group-building activities, information pertaining to the host country's culture, and personal health and safety are the most common aspects (Porter & Monard, 2001). Recently, ISL practitioners have been advocating for a pre-departure curriculum that facilitates an explicit aim towards social justice (Mitchell, 2008). This curriculum may include facilitating participant learning and reflection on privilege, epistemology, global governing systems, and active citizenship (Mitchell).

International travel/sojourn. The second component of the program is the sojourn. Pusch and Merrill (2008) defined the sojourn as “an intensive and extended visit into cultural contexts different from those in which one was socialized” (p. 314). The length of the sojourn component of ISL programs may vary from one week to six months. During the sojourn, participants typically follow a schedule that includes exploration and introduction to the host community, participation in community-based service work and free time. Typically, ISL participants are from developed countries and travel to developing countries. Furthermore, the majority of program settings are characterized by issues of poverty (Crabtree, 2008).

Service projects. The service component in SL can be defined as civic participation or the action component in SL programs (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Gray et al., 1996; Kolenko, Porter, Wheatley, & Colby, 1996; Newman, 1990, as cited in Parker & Dautoff, 2007). Within the academic literature reviewed, civic participation or the action component is called service work; however, volunteer work is also widely used. With this in mind, service and volunteer work will be used interchangeably throughout this

thesis. Within ISL programs, participants engage in action-oriented service work in a variety of different ways. Common service projects include community-based construction (Porter & Monard, 2001), assistance with healthcare (Dickson & Dickson, 2006), and education interventions (Crabtree, 2008). Service projects are typically facilitated through a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) or Community Based Organization (CBO; Annette, 2002). Determining the nature of a community service project varies depending on host communities' needs, student skill, and duration. For example, Cross Cultural Solutions offers a roster of different programs of varying duration, sector, and locale. Academic courses are often not in the same position to offer such breadth of choice.

Dickson and Dickson (2006), who perform voluntary dentistry work in Mozambique, Africa, state that volunteering involves "traveling great distances [to] provide care at our own expense" (p. 1). Crabtree (1998) states that participants engage in hard physical labor and are exposed to new living conditions that challenge the body, as well as the mind and the spirit (p. 190). These definitions suggest that service requires participants to travel to the host community in need and engage in physical or mental work.

The action-oriented component of engaging in service work connects to John Dewey's principle of interaction which suggests that engaging in service within a situation produces knowledge that is useable through recall and application (Giles, 1994). The educational benefit of interacting with others during ISL programs echoes Keith (2005) who suggests that interacting with the host community allows participants to form a face-to-face partnership. This form of contribution is much different than sending a

cheque to an organization. For Dewey, sending a cheque may be considered knowledge that is segregated from experience that “can be forgotten or not available for transfer to new experiences” (Giles, 1994, p. 79).

Reentry. The final stage of the program is reentry. Martin and Harrell (2004) defined re-entry as “the process of reintegration into primary home contexts after an intercultural sojourn” (p. 310). The re-entry stage, near the end of the sojourn and upon return to the home country, can be facilitated by formal debriefs, reflective papers, and discussions on related opportunities to stay involved with, educate, and/or address issues facing the host community. The last few days of the sojourn and initial integration back to the home country are often the most difficult times for participants (Kiely, 2004). This is when participants may realize to what a degree their values and ethics have changed as a result of the ISL experience. This new lens may result in participants’ expressed need to reevaluate lifestyle and career paths, concerns they may find difficult to discuss with old friends and family (Kiely, 2004). With this in mind, Pusch (2004) described the reentry stage as the most important and most difficult component of ISL. Pusch further suggested that, “it takes the complete cycle of departure/sojourn/return to solidify the learning” (p. 121).

This section described the program components unique to ISL programs. The following section will describe the theoretical and philosophical foundations in which ISL programs are grounded.

Theoretical and Philosophical Foundations of ISL Programs

Why should learners travel to international locations and engage in service? On what educational philosophies is it based? The theoretical and philosophical foundations

of ISL can be traced back to two influential social and educational philosophers, John Dewey (1938, 1964) and Paulo Freire (1970, 1972). Although they differ in approach, both philosophers believe that education should provide students with the tools to critically reflect and engage in action as curious global citizens. The works of Dewey and Freire are extensive and space limitations have led me to provide a necessarily brief overview of the works of Dewey and Freire as they pertain to ISL programs in two categories, experiential education and the development of a critical consciousness.

Experiential education as theoretical underpinning. The first theoretical underpinning of ISL programs is Experiential Education. This philosophy and methodology is grounded in John Dewey's (1938) work *Experience and Education*. In this work, Dewey (1938) advocated for the importance of integrating lived experience into traditional education. Furthermore, Dewey (1938) suggested that through these experiences, students should develop the ability to transfer new learning from one experience into future experiences. Today, the Association of Experiential Education (AEE) builds upon the work of Dewey (1938) and defines experiential education as "a philosophy that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities." (The Association of Experiential Education, 2012).

Today, there is a growing recognition that experiential education consists of both methodology and philosophy (Breunig, 2008). Although used interchangeably, these two terms are distinct in meaning (Breunig). Experiential education as a *philosophy* implies values-based content (i.e., philosophy) while experiential education as a *methodology*

relates to how experiential learning is facilitated (i.e., methodology). Experiential learning is commonly illustrated as a four-stage learning cycle developed by Kolb (1984). See Figure 1. Knapp (1992) describes these steps as “(a) active student involvement in a meaningful and challenging experience, (b) reflection upon the experience individually and in a group, (c) the development of new knowledge about the world, and (d) application of this knowledge to a new situation” (as cited in Breunig, 2008, p. 79). Furthermore, experiential education as methodology suggests that there is an intended purpose behind the experiential learning.

Closely connected with ISL pedagogy, Dewey (1938) suggested that not all experiences are educative but can be mis-educative. For Dewey (1938), an educative experience includes both agreeableness and the ability to have an effect on future experiences (as cited in Dwight & Eyster, 1994). Giles (1994) suggested that Dewey’s (1933) criteria concerning how to make projects educative serve as the clearest examples of how to apply Dewey’s theory to service-learning:

1. must generate interest
2. must be worthwhile intrinsically
3. must present problems that awaken new curiosity and create a demand for information
4. must cover a considerable time span and be capable of fostering development over time.(as cited in Giles, 1994)

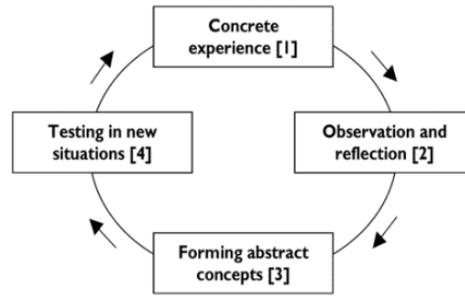


Figure 1. Experiential learning cycle.

Adapted from “Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development” by D. Kolb, 1984. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

It is evident that aspects of experiential education provide the foundation for participant learning during the ISL program stages described above. First, intentional and structured learning, one of the defining aspects of ISL programs, is integrated into all program stages. Further, the curriculum associated with programs such as reflection on privilege, epistemology, global governing systems and active citizenship (Mitchell, 2008), provide an opportunity for students to reflect upon themselves and, in turn, clarify values, a defining characteristic of experiential education (AEE, 2012). In addition, the content of the curriculum involved in ISL programs and the way in which it is facilitated can ultimately be guided by Dewey's (1938) insights on educative and/or mis-educative experiences. The concepts of educative and mis-educative experiences become particularly relevant in relationship to the current criticisms facing ISL programs discussed later in this chapter. Finally, the reentry stage of the program strongly relates to participants of ISL programs as they begin to reflect upon new learning and start reflecting upon how to transfer this learning to new experiences.

This section provided a brief overview of the philosophy of experiential education and how the philosophy provides the groundwork for participant learning and self-development. The next section will discuss the second theoretical underpinning of ISL programs – the development of a critical consciousness.

Development of critical consciousness (conscientization). The development of a critical consciousness or *conscientization* (Freire 1970, 1972) is grounded in the belief that education should not be separate from society and, further, should work towards addressing social inequities. For example in his work *The Public and its Problems*, Dewey (1964) states:

It is true that the aim of education is development of the individuals to the utmost of their potentialities. But this statement in isolation leaves unanswered the question as to what is the measure of development. A society of free individuals in which all, through their own work, contribute to the liberation and enrichment of the lives of others is the only environment in which any individual can really grow normally to his full stature. (as cited in Deans, 1999)

The above quote suggests that, for Dewey, education and society are interdependent (Deans). Furthermore, this statement supports the idea that students should be actively involved in society. In other words, Dewey advocated for the integration of critical, active, civic participation within education (Deans).

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian philosopher of education and social activist, supports a more radical perspective that suggests that education is structured in such a way that it functions to serve the dominant forces in society. With this in mind, Freire suggested that education *is* politics (Breunig, 2008). Congruent with the ultimate aim of ISL programs, both Dewey and Friere advocate that education should serve as a vehicle for social change. However, shaped by his involvement with marginalized populations in grassroots adult literacy programs, Freire's works add culture, class, and race into the mix (Deans, 1999). For example, in his influential book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Friere (1970) explained that in order for people to lift themselves out of oppression and, thus, be liberated, they must understand and be actively involved in dismantling dominant societal structures that allow oppressive conditions to flourish. Freire (1970) stated that the process of liberation entails a dialectical relationship between changes of "structures" and changes of consciousness or *conscientization*. Freire (1970, 1972) described critical

consciousness as the ability to recognize that governing systems are created and fueled by human action and thus, can be dismantled by human intervention.

For Freire (1970, 1972), the consciousness can be contextualized in three ways: naïve, superstitious and critical. Finlay and Faith (1987) indicated that individuals characteristic of *naïve consciousness*, have “an unreflecting acceptance of the solidity and inevitability of the world and one’s own views” (p. 65). In other words, people in this stage have internalized the ideology of the oppressor, with whom they identify. With this belief in mind, these individuals are “unable to conceive of social change” (O’Sullivan, 2008, p. 12). Individuals characteristic of superstitious consciousness are those with heightened critical thinking skills and, as a result, less naïve regarding global inequities. Further, these individuals “recognize that options for change and transformation exist” (Breunig & Dear, 2012, p. 6) However, although these individuals are aware that they may have the power to induce change, they have “a concomitant sense of powerless to do anything about those options” (Connolly, 2008, p 5). In other words, these individuals may be passionate about a cause, however, lack the skills or information necessary to allow them to participate in action oriented behaviour. This lack of clear “pathway forward” can potentially result in “action paralysis.” (Breunig & Dear, 2012, p. 7). Kiely (2004) reported evidence of this stage of consciousness in students upon return from an ISL program in Nicaragua. He used the term *chameleon complex* to capture the students’ struggle “to take action that reconciles and integrates profound shifts in one’s worldview upon re-entry” (p. 10). Individuals characteristic of the final stage, *critical*, understand that “cultural institutions can be analyzed, understood, and therefore – in principal – shaped, modified, and controlled by members of the community” (Finlay & Faith, 1987,

p. 66).

This section has provided a brief overview of how the development of a critical consciousness helps to inform ISL programs. The process of reaching conscientization, particularly the critical stage, strongly relates to the service component of ISL programs which ultimately aim to address social inequities, a fundamental aspect of education.

The following section will provide a review of the research on the impact of ISL programs.

Review of Research on the Impact of ISL Programs

So far, I have presented a description of the key components of ISL programs as well as the key theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of international service learning. In the next sections, I review the research on the impact of ISL programs, including both the research that has focused on the positive impacts of program participation, as well as the current writing that considers the complex and unintended impacts of ISL programs and the ISL field in general. I also discuss the complexities that currently are too often missed or overlooked by participants and the relationship of these complexities as they relate to obtaining reciprocity in ISL programs.

The impact of ISL programs on participants. From the majority of empirical studies conducted on ISL programs, evidence suggests that participation in ISL programs has a positive impact on participants (Crabtree, 1998; Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009; Grusky, 2000; Kiely, 2004). Through a longitudinal case study involving 43 students who participated in an ISL program to Nicaragua over a seven-year period, influential ISL practitioner Richard Kiely reported that students experienced change in at least one of six dimensions: political, moral, intellectual, personal, spiritual, and cultural. The following

section will utilize Kiely's six dimensions to organize and elaborate on the impacts of ISL programs on participants.

Political. Kiely (2004) described *political change* as a process by which participants rethink their role as global and local citizens as a result of participation. In other words, political change refers to students being awakened to a greater sense of social responsibility. Some aspects of political change that have been noted in the research include the development of a greater understanding of issues surrounding poverty and justice among the participants (Crabtree, 2007, 2008; Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009; Grusky, 2000; Kiely, 2004; Monard-Weissman, 2003). For example, Monard-Weissman was curious as to how ISL programs contributed to participants' sense of justice. Through analyzing data obtained from semistructured interviews of 5 female undergraduate students who recently completed an ISL program in Ecuador, political change in respect to their commitment to justice was evident. This complemented Kiely who noted that participants were compelled to take on an increasingly active role in society; for example, engaging in advocacy versus simply voting (Kiely, 2004). Other changes that relate to Kiely's concept of political change that have been noted in research include a heightened sense of global awareness (Crabtree, 2007) and an increased sense of civic responsibility. Further, these studies suggest that students reported developing leadership skills as a result of the ISL experience (Crabtree, 1998; Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009; Grusky, 2000; Kiely, 2004).

Moral. Kiely (2004) described *moral change* as the process of developing relationships and mutual respect. Moral change involves a change that involves what Neururer and Rhoads (1998) have described as the personalization of the other (as cited

in Crabtree, 2008, p. 30). This complements Gaines-Hanks and Grayman (2009), who described moral change as “an increased capacity to love others” (p. 82).

Kiely’s (2004) concept of moral change has also been explored empirically. For example, Gaines-Hanks and Grayman (2009) analyzed written responses and how 12 undergraduate students self rate how much their ISL experience in South Africa affected them personally. Upon analysis, it was found that students acquired greater tolerance and understanding of difference. These characteristics are congruent with Kiely and Nielson (2002/2003) who suggested that students develop greater intercultural competence.

Intellectual/cultural. Kiely (2004) described *intellectual change* as the ability “to question the origin, nature and solution to problems” (p. 11) and this concept was one that arose consistently within participant reports. Highly relevant to the proposed study, Kiely found intellectual change within students’ ability to critically analyze the service component of their ISL program in Nicaragua. For example, one participant reported, “I wanted to help and yet it was clear that we were providing a Band-Aid solution to a systemic problem” (p. 12). Kiely describes *cultural change* as the process of rethinking hegemonic forces in society, such as consumerism, materialism, and individualism.

Personal/spiritual transformation. Kiely (2004) described personal transformation as “the process of re-evaluating identity, lifestyle choices, daily habits, relationships and career choices” (p. 13). Aspects of Kiely’s notion of personal transformation are similar to Freire’s (1970, 1972) concept of *conscientization* and transformative learning theorist Mezirow’s (1978) notion of perspective transformation. This shift of consciousness can be found within empirical studies conducted on ISL programs that report participants describing their ISL experience as transformative or life

changing (Crabtree, 1998; Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009; Grusky, 2000; Hartman & Rola, 2000; Kiely, 2004).

Further evidence of this personal transformation is found in reports from participants describing an initial desire to switch career and lifestyle paths to disciplines associated with addressing global or local inequities (Grusky, 2000; Kiely, 2004). These shifts in lifestyle or worldview are congruent with Kadel (2002), who suggested that the ISL experience “solidifies a commitment to social justice” (p. 59).

As the review illustrates, the impact of participation in ISL programs on students is strong. Research shows that students undergo change in multiple areas, including political, intellectual, and personal change. However, while support for ISL programs as a vehicle for fostering student transformation is strong, new questions and concerns have begun to arise in the field regarding the impact of ISL programs in other areas, specifically, in the relationship between ISL programs, the communities they serve, and the service projects in which they engage (Crabtree, 2008). The following section will discuss these questions, and the criticisms that have arisen, as they pertain to participants and service projects in ISL programs.

ISL Programs: Current Criticisms and Contradictions

As noted in the introduction, ISL advocates are concerned about the potential that ISL, rather than fostering personal and social transformation, is instead potentially exploitive, paternalistic, and ineffective. In this section, I present the current discussion in the ISL field that describes and explores these issues.

Are ISL programs exploitive? One criticism of ISL programs is that they promote the action of witnessing poverty as a means to realizing a personal, life-

enriching experience. For some ISL practitioners, this is considered to be exploitive behavior (Grusky, 2000). Grusky further suggested that there is a fundamental contradiction in ISL, stating that, “only in countries such as the United States and among the upper and middle classes in these countries could one even conceive of the concept of ISL” (p. 866). Dickson and Dickson (2006) suggested that, “while volunteering is a sign that we care, it is also an indication of how well we are doing” (p. 1). In other words, those who are able to engage in a volunteer or *server* position are usually in a position of greater privilege than those who are being *served*. Along the same vein, Guo (1989) described ISL as “allowing relatively well-off people in this world to travel long distances to experience other people’s misery for a life changing experience” (p. 108). This perspective relates to the rise in popularity among people who are motivated to travel by a fascination with dangerous places and/or a search for an authentic other. Another way to describe this phenomenon is the term “cultural capital,” which suggests that status is gained through travel and higher status is gained through travel to specific countries (Mendleson, 2008). Crabtree (2008) suggested that these motives “require interrogation” (p. 20). In other words, according to these critics, participants who engage in ISL programs with the suspect motives identified above may impede the potential of ISL to foster personal or social transformation.

Exploitive motivations can also be linked to participants who engage in international programs for purposes of their own career or professional skill development. This criticism is reflected in the title of a recent article in Maclean’s magazine entitled, *Helping the World and Me. Is volunteering about saving the world or enhancing a resume?* (Mendleson, 2008) In this article, Tiessen described the preliminary results

from her study, *Creating Global Citizens? The impact of Learning/Volunteer Abroad Programs*. She reported that out of 40 interviews with young adults regarding what motivated them to engage in international learning/volunteer experiences, "career" or "skills development" were the most common responses. Tiessen pointed out that "the emphasis was [on] how they could learn, how it would be useful to them" (p. 54). In other words, the motivation for respondents to participate in international programs was self-serving, geared to enhancing their own resumes.

Are ISL programs Western paternalism? Mendleson (2008) recounted the story of an intern who was sent to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to train local journalists how to report on human rights violations. Upon arrival, she was surprised to find that they knew more about the topic than she did. The intern reports being "struck by how ridiculous it was for her to be in a position of power" (p. 50). What this intern is expressing captures the paternalistic attitude that has prevailed between developed and developing nations since colonialism (Narayan, 1995). This idea is congruent with Mitchell (2008), who indicated that SL has been labeled as "charity, forced volunteerism and deemed paternalistic" (p. 1). Given this emerging criticism, are ISL programs in danger of losing their original theoretical underpinning of social justice? Are ISL programs in danger of becoming the very systems and practices they were intended to replace? Furthermore, are these programs fueling a decidedly one-way feel good mentality?

Some service projects are also criticized for utilizing Western approaches and technology without taking local knowledge and practices into consideration. Dickson and Dickson (2006) suggested that foreign volunteer skill and technology, such as advanced

medical tools, increase the rate of productivity of local service operations. In this context, Dickson and Dickson argued that service placements “encourage the volunteer to focus almost exclusively on providing services in ways that emphasize efficiency, quality and productivity” (p. 867). Although this is clearly a positive aspect of volunteer placements, this productivity is short-lived, due to the very nature of international projects (Dickson & Dickson, 2006). As a result, when volunteers leave and productivity declines, the host community may feel discouraged about their own circumstances. Dickson and Dickson suggested that this unhappiness can contribute to brain drain, a term used to describe the process of educated and skilled locals moving from their native country in search of greater job opportunities. Although the increased productivity that occurs initially as the result of a successful project is a positive, it can also be viewed as “White knight” syndrome. The term White knight is used to describe foreigners whose attitude suggests that they can help or save the day (Dickson & Dickson, 2006). Interestingly, Astin (1993) suggested that “during the past 40 or 50 years American universities have come to be dominated by three powerful interrelated values; materialism, individualism and competitiveness” (p. 4). Could ISL programs be coincidentally both challenging and feeding these values?

Do service projects benefit those in the host community? Service projects are not new. International development interventions, foreign aid, and religiously-based missions, mostly originating in the global north, have been operating in countries plagued by issues of poverty for centuries (Crabtree, 2008). Clearly, these projects have yet to address global inequity. Therefore, the question is: How effective are service projects in ISL programs, which are in many ways extensions of development and aid programs?

Further, many participants of ISL programs are not professionals in a particular area and, thus, lack the skills needed to build the capacity of the host community. This resonates with some ISL program participants who report a feeling of uselessness, even embarrassment, in service placements (Mendelson, 2008). Dr. Josh Ruxin, involved in three development projects in Rwanda, suggested, “if you’ve got two or three weeks and you want to make a difference, come to Rwanda, go on tours, go spend money, and don’t feel bad about it” (as cited in Mendelson, 2008, p. 52). In a similar vein, Mendelson suggested, “it is difficult for volunteers to be anything other than tourists” (p. 50). This attitude is challenged by Dickson and Dickson (2006), who reported successful volunteer projects in their dental clinics in Mozambique. A fourth voice, Crabtree (2008), suggested that “the material aspects of our service are merely symbols of a new relationship among differently-situated actors in global relations” (p. 30). Clearly, there is a lot of contention among practitioners.

The criticisms above arise from the belief that relationships in SL are based on difference between server and served (Bickford & Reynolds, 2002). In the same vein, Mitchell (2008) suggested that engaging with SL may reinforce hierarchies and unequal relationships. In an elaboration of this criticism, Grusky (2000) concluded that

International service-learning programs burst with potential and stumble with the weight of contradictions left unattended. Without thoughtful preparation, orientation, program developments and the encouragement of study, as well as critical analysis and reflection, the programs can easily become small theaters that recreate historic cultural misunderstandings and simplistic stereotypes and replay, on a more intimate scale, the huge disparities in income and opportunity that

characterize North–South relations today. (p. 858)

ISL Programs: Where Do We Go From Here?

Growing out of these concerns has been a greater focus on reciprocity as a guiding ethical principle in ISL programming. ISL programs operating through the lens of reciprocity work towards ensuring that all parties involved (e.g., university, NGO, participant, host community) in the ISL program receive equal benefit (Crabtree, 2008; Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009; Porter & Monard, 2001; Pusch & Merrill, 2008). For Keith (2005) “the principle of reciprocity in service learning emerges from the need to address a recurring negative tendency in the server-served relationship” (p. 13). The following section will discuss the goals and the meanings of reciprocity found within the literature.

The International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leadership (2012), a leading NGO offering ISL programs, provided an initial definition of reciprocity by asserting that SL has two goals, student learning and service to the community. These goals echo remarks in literature that suggest that the design of ISL programs must not be solely concerned with the development of ISL program participants, but of equal importance is the growth and development of all parties involved, including the host community (Crabtree, 2008; Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009; Porter & Monard, 2001; Pusch & Merrill, 2008). Jacoby (1996) added to this idea by suggesting that reciprocity should create a learning environment in which the role of the server and the served becomes indistinguishable in principle, if not in practice. To Holland (2002), reciprocity involves “respect for different sources of knowledge, different contributions of each participant, a fair exchange of value, and the assurance of benefits to all” (p. 2). In a

different vein, Dickson and Dickson (2006) use the term White knight to describe foreigners whose attitude suggests that they can help or save the day (p. 867). Falk and Fischbacher (1998) suggested reciprocity is the process of “rewarding kind actions and punish unkind ones” (p. 1). They further suggest that reciprocity is not measured by the outcome of the action but rather, the underlying intention of the act. Aspects of this theory of reciprocity resonate with Keith (2005) who remind us that *do ut des*, the Latin counterpart of the word reciprocity, translates into English as “I give so that you will give” (p. 14).

From the literature reviewed, reciprocity works towards combating a one-sided approach to ISL programs. Further, programs operating with reciprocity in mind work to ensure that all parties involved in ISL programs receive equal benefit.

Although reciprocity as a foundational principle for ISL programs has strong support, it has also received some criticism. As Keith (2005) went on to note, reciprocity is rooted in exchange theory. This exchange, according to Keith, suggests a calculable transactions involving social networks (material, social, psychic, political, and so on)” (p. 14). This is congruent with Pratt (1992) who suggested that the ultimate goal of reciprocity is to “achieve equilibrium through exchange” (p. 80). In her paper, *Community Service Learning in the Face of Globalization: Rethinking Theory and Practice*, Keith (2005) introduces the reader to Sahlins (1972) who presents reciprocity in relationship to social distance. In other words, “social solidarity varies according to the position of individuals on a continuum ranging from close in-group relationships to distant out-group relationships” (Kragh, p.12, 2012). . Sahlins describes the relationship between the closest of the in-groups as *Generalized Reciprocity* or engaging in

relationships out of social obligation. Sahlins further explains this form of reciprocity as an unconscious moral obligation; for example, helping family members, without being motivated by altruism. As social distance increases, Sahlins describes the second form of reciprocity as *Balanced Reciprocity*, meaning an equitable exchange between parties with mutual interests. Kragh (2012) suggests that this form of reciprocity involves an attitude of “something for something” (p. 251). An example of balanced reciprocity in ISL is difficult to identify because it demands a protracted analysis of exactly what constitutes balance. However, an argument could be made that Israeli kibbutzim are a good example of a truly balanced reciprocal relationship; visitors are attracted to these agricultural cooperatives for their efforts to express the utopian ideals of socialism. The kibbutzim do not need their aid but benefit from their labour. In exchange, the visitors are exposed to and immersed in a vibrant, thriving culture. The third and final form of reciprocity, *Negative Reciprocity*, means relationships based on fast transactions with no trust involved. This form of reciprocity can also be explained by relationships that are one-sided and, thus, not reciprocal. Canada’s own terrible history of residential schools is an example of this.

Based on these criticisms, some scholars have moved to redefine reciprocity from the idea of exchange to the idea of interdependence. In other words, service is not about material gain but instead is about establishing relationships and developing effective cross-cultural communication (Crabtree, 1998, 2008). Keith (2005) suggests that interdependence is a more conducive term to employ. For Keith, interdependence is congruent with the need to redefine roles from server and served to “service learning relationship as partnership” (p. 16). Keith suggested in this context, “the reaction to

service that says, 'I am so lucky' speaks to failure because it assumes independence and separation: the other has nothing to do with me" (p. 16). This shift toward reciprocity as interdependence is also supported by Porter and Monard (2001), who summarized that "in the dialectical relationship involving service and learning, each depends on the other so, too, the actors are engaged in a dynamic, interdependent relationship" (p. 1). Similarly, Grusky (2000) suggested that it is the host community and/or service agency that provide the experience in service learning and not vice versa.

Reciprocity as interdependence strongly connects to Porter and Monard (2001), who proposed aspects of the Andean concept of *Ayni* as a guide towards reciprocity in ISL programs. An *ayni* relationship is not based on one sole exchange but is seen as an ongoing cycle of reciprocity. Unlike a contract, people enter into *ayni* or *ayllu*, with a neighborhood or community, as a relationship. Viewed as a continuous cycle, *Ayni* is a worldview revolving around interdependent living and focusing on long-lasting relationships (Porter & Monard, 2001). To offer direction to ISL program planners, Porter and Monard described eight aspects of *Ayni* that can be used as the foundation for obtaining reciprocal relationships. It is important to note that these aspects emerged from the data of this particular study and do not constitute a generally applicable definition.

1. Service programs must be based upon a foundation of genuine need as expressed by the recipients.
2. Ownership and responsibility for the project must be clear and shared.
3. Real people must perform hands-on services.
4. Communal labour means strenuous physical engagement.
5. Workers must come with an open heart and generous spirit.

6. *Ayni* cycles involve a different conception of time and place, participants in an ongoing relationship that extends across both generation and geography.
7. The *ayni* exchange is equitable, with both sides feeling that they received at least as much as they gave.
8. The “value” of reciprocal work cannot and should not be calculated in simple monetary terms. (p. 8)

Towards achieving reciprocal relationships: Work to be done. In the academic literature, the goal of reciprocity is clear. However, questions remain surrounding how to move reciprocity from a philosophy to a framework that can be practically implemented into programs. Upon review of the literature, two emerging themes appeared when proponents of reciprocity within the ISL spoke of moving reciprocity from philosophy to strategic approach or moving ISL programs towards a more ethical practice, which reciprocity implies. One theme has been the call for ISL programs to shift their program structure from a charity-based to a justice-based approach. The second theme has been the importance of considering the perspective of the host community in the planning of the service project. These two themes are discussed below.

Charity to justice approach. The traditional approach to SL is described as curriculum and service without attention paid to systems of inequality. In other words, the traditional approach to SL is a form of charity (Jacoby, 1996) or an approach to service that offers band-aid solutions (Crabtree, 2008). Conversely, the critical approach to SL has as its explicit aim the achievement of social justice and deconstructing “systems of power” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 50). In the context of these larger global

structures the critical approach to SL poses questions such as, “Why do we have significant economic gaps between different racial groups? Why do women continue to face economic and social inequities? Why does the richest country on earth have such a serious problem with homelessness?” (Rhoades, as cited in Mitchell, 2008, p. 53). These questions are echoed by Mitchell, who suggests that the ultimate goal of the critical approach is “to deconstruct systems of power so the need for service and inequalities that create and sustain them are dismantled” (p. 50). In other words, the critical approach advocates for the elimination of need (Jacoby, 1996).

It is clear that shifting from a traditional to a critical approach requires that SL programs be designed with the explicit aim of addressing issues of social justice (Mitchell, 2008). This involves programs that examine and understand the root causes of inequality (Brown, 2001). Wade (2001) suggests that, “rarely do students in service-learning programs consider whether some injustice has created the need for service in the first place” (p. 1). For example, participants engaged in the traditional approach to SL might work in a soup kitchen with the ultimate objective of serving food to those who are hungry. When those who are hungry are fed, the goal has been achieved. Participants engaged in the critical approach may also work in the soup kitchen and serve food. However, the ultimate objective is to understand the root causes as to why people are hungry in the first place. These queries open the door to addressing the structural causes of hunger and, thus, work towards eliminating the need for the soup kitchen.

With this approach, participants are assigned the role of social change agents (Mitchell, 2008). Along the same lines, Marullo (1999) suggests that SL has revolutionary potential due to its ability to transform communities. This belief echoes

Fenwick (2001), who suggests that SL is “a problem-solving instrument of social and political reform” (as cited in Mitchell, 2008 p. 51). In strong opposition, Chesler (1995) suggests that SL does not lead to social change. Similarly, Boyer and Hechinger (1981) suggest that, “service should not be seen as a panacea for deeply rooted social problems” (as cited in Crabtree, 1998, p. 187). Further, Pusch and Merrill (2008) suggest that self-identifying as a social change agent in an international context becomes increasingly complex. They caution ISL practitioners to be realistic surrounding a program’s ability to provide students with the knowledge to be social change agents in a country that is not their own. As they note, assigning a student to this role without a keen understanding of the political, economic, and historical context of a country can be dangerous and ineffective (Pusch & Merrill, 2008). The identification of this potential downside is not dissimilar to the previously mentioned White knight (Dickson & Dickson, 2006) mentality that contributes to unequal power dynamics, which critical SL seeks to undo (Mitchell, 2008).

Integration of the host community. Increasingly, the majority of empirical studies conducted on ISL programs are starting to recognize the importance of incorporating the perspective of the host community into the planning and facilitation of service projects (Crabtree 2008; Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009; Porter & Monard, 2001; Pusch & Merrill, 2008). But in the empirical data, the focus still remains on the positive outcomes of the participants (Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009; Grusky, 2000; Kiely, 2004). The limited research associated with the perspective of the host community reinforces the criticism within the SL literature that suggests program participants take precedence over the needs of the host community (Brown 2001; Eby, 1998; Mitchell,

2008). Gamson (1997) suggested that “we must recognize that communities are not voids to be organized and filled by the more knowledgeable; they are well developed, complex, and sophisticated organisms that are deemed to be understood on their own terms” (p. 13). Finally, scholars suggest that the needs and perspectives of the host community were integrated into program planning. (Annette, 2002; Crabtree, 2008; Simonelli, Earle, & Story, 2004). This strategy echoes Porter and Monard, who suggested that, “the cycle of reciprocity begins with the expressed needs of the host community” (p. 8). Having knowledge of local needs can help to ensure that the service project in ISL is effective and timely (Crabtree, 2008). It can also help to clarify ownership and responsibility for the service project (Porter & Monard, 2001). From the literature reviewed, it is evident that scholars are discussing two ways in which to aid ISL practitioners towards greater inclusion of the voice of those with ISL programs in the host community: (a) forming international partnerships, and (b) integrating models characteristic to the field of international development. These two pathways are described below.

Forming international partnerships. Scholars discussed the importance of forming a partnership between the sending organization and a preestablished organization in the host community as a way to further integrate the voice of those involved in the host community. Many ISL programs utilize Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) or Community-Based Organizations (CBO) to help connect programs with the host community. Typically, NGO/CBOs have existing projects on the ground. Due to this on the ground presence, NGO/CBOs are able to provide ISL practitioners with information surrounding the host communities’ cultural norms, politics and perspectives on useful and timely service projects (Crabtree, 1998, 2008; Porter & Monard, 2001).

For example, Porter and Monard (2001) partnered with NGO *Amizad* when planning and implementing an *Alternative Spring Break* ISL program in Bolivia. Through meetings with the host community facilitated by an *Amizad* employee, Porter and Monard were able to gain important information surrounding cultural norms and create an environment where the host community was able to provide input into the service project. This process is mirrored by Crabtree (2008), who stated that the NGO she works with in Nicaragua helps to “collaborate with community organizations to prioritize and design projects” (p. 23). The above-mentioned ISL examples are also complemented by the SL literature, which suggests that working with NGOs can help to promote and practice sustainable community development (Edwards & Gaventa, 2001; Gaventa, 1999;).

Although partnering is recognized as important, the literature also suggests that international partnerships are complex. Contrary to the belief that NGOs are effective in integrating the host community, Streeten (1997) suggested, “NGOs rarely meet the merits they proclaim” (as cited in Crabtree, 2008, p. 23). This statement can be traced back to a long history of ineffective international development programs in which NGOs were, and still are, heavily involved (Crabtree, 2008). Today, the ramifications of colonialism, financial restructuring programs put in place by the global North after WWI, and the failure to acknowledge local practices, have left the “development project” less than credible in the eyes of the global South (McMichael, 2004, as cited in Crabtree, 2008). With this in mind, how do ISL practitioners know if they are choosing an NGO that is effective? Or, if they are choosing an NGO that incorporates the voice of the host community? It is with concern that Chesler (1995) brought to light the fact that SL

programs are not designed to challenge nor direct how an NGO functions. As Chesler explained, “as students fit into prescribed agency roles for their service work they typically do not challenge the nature and operations or quality of these agencies and their activities” (p. 139). Clearly, assurances are not guaranteed.

Integration of international development. The second way scholars speak of better integrating the voice of the host was to bring knowledge of international development into the ISL context. Literature surrounding the use of international development (ID) models in ISL service projects is limited. However, interest in the topic of ID models, especially as it relates to service projects, is growing (Crabtree, 1998, 2008; Porter & Monard, 2001; Simonelli et al., 2004). Crabtree (2008) suggests that in order for ISL programs to move towards a more ethical practice, it is crucial that practitioners begin to develop the “ability to incorporate an understanding of development’s complex history, some knowledge of comparative ideologies of development, and analysis of the contexts where we work” (p. 24).

ISL literature has identified participatory development as a model worthy of more attention (Crabtree, 1998, 2008; Simonelli et al., 2004). Consistent with many of the themes found in this chapter, White (1994) suggested that participatory development has four goals: (1) a redistribution of power and control to the people; (2) consciousness-raising, or what Friere (1970/1998), called conscientizacao; (3) self-reliance and sustainability; and (4) knowledge sharing (as cited in Crabtree, 2008, p. 184). Contrary to development work that is paternalistic in nature, the aim of participatory development is to include the voice of the host community in the planning, implementation and

ownership of the service/development project. In turn, the power resides with the host community (Mohan & Stokke, 2000).

The ISL programs to Bolivia facilitated by Porter and Monard (2001) redistributed power and control to the people by basing the service aspect of the program on the local philosophy of reciprocity *ayni*. Self-reliance and sustainability were achieved through the process of the host community determining, and ultimately taking, ownership of the service project. Consciousness-raising was apparent in students' personal development surrounding service and civic responsibility. Finally, knowledge sharing was apparent through the development of new guidelines surrounding methods of engaging in reciprocal ISL programs (Porter & Monard, 2001).

Simonelli et al.'s (2004) experience facilitating an ISL program in Chiapas, Mexico, also showed evidence of achieving the goals of participatory development. Redistribution of power and control was exemplified by basing the program on the host community's own definition of service. Furthermore, the service project was based on the community's self-identified needs. Similar to Porter and Monard (2001), consciousness-raising was evident through students' greater understanding of their own "cultural, class and ethnic biases" (Simonelli et al., 2004, p. 44). Self-reliance/sustainability and knowledge sharing were exemplified by the fact that this particular ISL program had been operating in the community for over 25 years and still remained committed to refining their practice. Collaboration between NGOs, the university and the host community also provide evidence of shared knowledge (Simonelli et al., 2004).

The above-mentioned examples are evidence that the model of participatory development has the potential to provide pathways forward towards integrating the voice

of the host community into the planning and implementation of the service component of ISL. It is also apparent that ISL programs that utilize this model are, in fact, developing partnerships (Crabtree, 1998). Although these examples are positive, they are only two, an extremely small sample. Questions still remain.

The respected and well-known SL pedagogue Barbara Holland (2002) suggested that a key issue within reciprocity is “balancing the different perspectives that make up service learning partnerships” (p. 14). She further contended that this process has not yet been mastered. In a keynote address she delivered to the Western Regional Campus Compact Conference *Every Perspective Counts: Understanding the true meaning of reciprocity in Partnerships*, she posed a critical query: “Can we say with certainty that our partnerships are truly reciprocal – truly respectful of diverse sources of knowledge and community expertise?” (p. 2). In the same vein, Crabtree (2008) asked, “How can we create cross cultural experiences that empower all participants while neither reinforcing nor exacerbating the social distance among them?” (p. 29). This question is echoed by Keith (2005) who brought to life the issue of “how to support relationships that are not only not exploitative, but contribute something of value to all participants...” (p. 14).

This chapter has provided some insight into how ISL programs can start to address these questions. It is clear that participants of ISL programs will benefit from the continuing dialogue. However, the process of integrating the voice of the host community in the planning and implementation of the service project is still new. Although the theoretical basis for this process is becoming more refined, there is a large gap in the literature that outlines practical pathways forward.

In light of the above review of the literature, it was clear that there was work to be done if reciprocity is to move from a philosophy to a practical framework that could be implemented into ISL programs. In the following chapter, I will present the methods I used to conduct this study.

Chapter Three: Methods

In this chapter, I provide an overview of how this study was designed. I will begin by explaining how I explored the research questions by employing characteristics unique to the grounded theory methodology under the qualitative research paradigm. The chapter will then discuss (a) researcher reflexivity, (b) sampling and participant recruitment, (c) data collection procedures, (d) data analysis techniques, and (e) ethical considerations.

Qualitative Methodology and Constructivist Grounded Theory

A qualitative research methodology was chosen for this study for its ability to explore a phenomenon holistically (Creswell, 1998). Because qualitative research is not bound by “tight cause-and-effect relationships” (Creswell, 1998, p. 39), it has the ability to allow researchers to gain a greater understanding of human experience within a phenomenon (Lichtman, 2006) and offers a framework to explore complex interactions (Creswell, 1998). Within the qualitative paradigm, I followed aspects of constructivist grounded theory (GT), developed by Kathy Charmaz (2006), to explore the purpose of this study. Charmaz’s book *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis* was used as a guide throughout this research.

Grounded theory emerged as a qualitative method during the 1960s, when social science was facing criticism and was seen as “anecdotal, unsystematic, and biased” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 5). At that time, interpreting the meaning of social processes or human problems without positivist techniques, which searches for one truth (knowledge), was disregarded and qualitative research was believed to be incapable of generating theory (Charmaz, 2006).

As a reaction to these claims, two sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1965, 1967), developed grounded theory methodology. The systematic technique they introduced challenged the dominant view that theory could not only be derived from the scientific method but also developed through systematic analysis of qualitative data (Charmaz, 2006). Glaser and Strauss' (1965) classic GT methodology provides rigorous guidelines for each step of the research process, particularly data analysis, and through the method of constant comparison. GT also stresses the importance of theory advancement. Unlike positivist procedures that test preexisting theories, GT methodology seeks to develop new theories grounded in the data obtained from research participants, field observations, and reflective memo writing.

Since its emergence, GT has become one of the prominent methods in qualitative research. However, it is not without its critics. The main criticisms revolve around scholars' discomfort with the positivist roots of the method, specifically that it assumed there is a truth to be discovered and that the researcher is unbiased (Charmaz, 2006). As a result, today there are two main approaches to GT methodology, objectivist and constructivist (Charmaz, 2006). Objectivist grounded theory, rooted in positivism, eliminates all external factors that may influence data, including social context and the researcher. In the objectivist approach, data are seen as information that is true in and of itself and stays consistent with the Glaser and Strauss (1967) method of grounded theory. Alternatively, the constructivist approach advocates the importance of realizing the researcher's personal biases and relationships with the data. In this approach, although Glaser and Strauss' (1967) techniques of data analysis are still used, both data collection and analysis are viewed as a result of shared experience and relationships with the

researcher and participant. As indicated by Charmaz, “truth can be local, relative, historically based, situational and contextual” (p. 9). As a student who is seeking to problematize some of the claims about reciprocity in ISL programs, this latter approach was certainly more resonant with my own approach to conducting this research.

GT has three unique characteristics that distinguish it from other qualitative methods. First, GT favours analysis over description in order to create a general explanation (a theory). Second, GT follows a rigorous procedure for data analysis and provides analytical guidelines for each step of the data analysis process. Initial coding, focused coding and axial coding are all regarded as pivotal steps in GT methodology (Charmaz, 2006). Third, GT’s main objective is to create a general explanation of a social process. Charmaz defines process as “temporal sequences that have identifiable markers with clear beginnings, endings and benchmarks in-between” (p. 8).

During the initial stages of designing this study, I was drawn to GT methodology because it provided a framework for investigating social processes in a way that linked the elements of process: root causes, barriers to, strategies to overcome barriers, and intervening conditions related to the phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, as cited in Creswell, 1998). At this time, I believed exploring these aspects of process was congruent with my research questions. Further, consistent with GT methodology, I believed that focusing on those elements of process would allow me to analyze reciprocity as a relationship between “human agency and social structure that pose theoretical and practical concerns” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 7) and, thus, further fitting with my own epistemological leanings. As discussed throughout this chapter the initial way I proposed to utilize aspects of GT shifted as a result of the data obtained from the research

participants. The following section will describe my background prior to engaging with the research and how I believe it initially influenced this study.

Researcher Reflexivity

Choosing to explore reciprocity in service through a constructivist lens allowed me to situate myself in the research and acknowledge that data and data analysis were a result of shared experience between my research participants and myself as the researcher. In other words, a constructivist approach allowed me to view my research as an interpretation. With this in mind, it was imperative that I engaged in the reflexivity process prior to commencing and throughout the duration of this study. Willis (2007) indicates that reflexivity involves the process of identifying the researchers influence on study design and results. In the following section I will describe my background prior to engaging in this study and how this shaped the initial design of the study. Later in this chapter, I will describe how, through data collection and analysis, my assumptions and viewpoint revolving around the subject changed, resulting in a slight shift of focus with my data analysis.

My background and influence on the study. Prior to beginning this study, I had some experience in both the theory and praxis of outdoor experiential education. I began my career in outdoor education at the age of 17 as a camp counselor and, subsequently, gained experience through various roles such as wilderness guide, instructor, and program manager. My practical work in the field was complemented by earning an Honours Degree in Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism, and BA in Geography from Lakehead University in 2005. Following the completion of my undergraduate degrees, I spent a year travelling. Within that year I travelled in Southern China, Tibet, and

participated in an ISL program in Haiti. During my undergraduate degree I had travelled to Southern China for a fourth-year geography class. On several occasions during my time in the field with this program, I found myself feeling uncomfortable with the power dynamics that often unfolded between me, as a Western tourist, and the locals. For example, at a restaurant I received better treatment than the local inhabitants. As a result of these experiences during this year of travel following my undergraduate studies, I became conscious of these relationships and strongly related to the slogan line “travel with purpose.” Not surprising to me now, during this year of travel I encountered more ethical dilemmas which left me returning to Canada with restless inquiry of how to best engage with locals in countries of lower economic status. To fuel this interest, I returned to school to earn a postgraduate certificate in International Project Management from Humber College in Toronto. This program was oriented toward preparing students to enter the work force in the field of international development. To accomplish this, the program’s curriculum focused strongly on proposal writing for grants for development projects. Guidelines associates with needs assessments and monitoring and evaluation were covered extensively. My class consisted of 80 people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Some of my peers were drawn to the program after recently obtaining undergraduate degrees in ID. Others had been working in the field of ID for over 20 years. Many of these peers had recently moved to Canada and, although, for example, some had been working for the United Nations in various countries around the world, their work experience and/or qualifications were not deemed appropriate in Canada. Finally, other peers admittedly suggested that they were drawn to the program out of a deep desire to further a career that addressed issues of social justice and saw this program

as a means to create pathways forward to do so. Together, we were a passionate class with a diversity of experience and opinions to bring to the table. To date, my year spent with this peer group and instructors of the program was one of the most powerful and influential experiences of my life. Upon completion of the course, I was very passionate, had strong opinions about international development, and was very practically minded.

I brought this practical mindset into my Master's program and it shaped the focus of my thesis project on discovering practical pathways. I remember talking to my supervisor and explaining with conviction: "my thesis must have a practical outcome. If not, it's not worth doing it." Further, keeping in mind that I was helping to design and eventually instruct an international course, I wanted to ensure that my study would help deepen my understanding of the root problems facing international engagement and in turn, help me grow as an educator. Overall, I initially engaged with this study looking to problematize ISL programs; however, not dismantle them.

Sampling and Recruitment of Research Participants

Following GT methodology, study participants were chosen based on their ability to contribute to the development of a theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As previously mentioned, to create a theory, researchers employing grounded theory as a method conduct interviews and site observations until they have reached data saturation. Typically, to reach data saturation researchers conduct up to twenty to thirty interviews. Due to this study being at a master's level, I was not in a position to saturate the data by conducting 20 or more interviews. Again, it is important to note that this study was not in a position to create a theory; however, it was initially assumed that GT methodology was the most effective method to employ to address the research purpose(s) and

questions.

To address this study's research questions and congruent with GT methodology, I created criteria to ensure that participants included in this study had extensive experience and knowledge with leading, advising and designing ISL programs. The following three criteria guided participant selection:

- Participants must practice the three main components of ISL: (a) international travel, (b) community based service project, and (c) structured learning.
- Participants must have a minimum of 5 years' experience working with ISL programs offered through sending organizations.
- Participants must have experience initiating and developing an international partnership and subsequent service project.

Charmaz (2006) indicates that in GT methodology, recruitment of participants generally happens in two stages: initial sampling and theoretical sampling. In initial sampling research participants are selected to form a representation of the subject. Following initial sampling, the second stage, which she calls theoretical sampling, involves sampling research participants who have the ability to elaborate, refine, and saturate the categories that have begun to emerge in the data analysis of the initial sample. As Charmaz (2006) noted, "Initial sampling is where you start whereas theoretical sampling directs you where to go" (p. 100). For Charmaz, the idea of having two samples emphasized the importance of engaging in data analysis during data collection, and using what is learned in this analysis to shape and refine further data collection. Although she describes the initial and theoretical sample as two separate samples, the data obtained from both samples complement each other and are meant to be integrated in the final analysis.

Data for this study was obtained from nine research participants. Due to the diversity of sending organizations who offer programs that met the above criteria, recruitment efforts for the initial sample centered around obtaining participants who could form a representation of the subject. With this in mind, my initial sample consisted of four participants: two participants who had experience with ISLs that were connected with a university and two participants who had experience with ISL programs offered through independent organizations. These participants were recruited through sending a “request to participate” email to participants’ personal email accounts, which I obtained prior to commencing this study through three professional networks which I had previous connections with. The first network was a list serve that connected graduates of a postgraduate program in International Project Management offered through Humber College. As a graduate of this program, I was able to access this list serve, which provided contact information for graduates involved with ISL programs. The second network was a working group, of which I was a member, facilitated through the Ontario Council of International Cooperation. This group consisted of representatives of organizations who offer ISL programs. This group meets every month to discuss pertinent issues related to international volunteering and share resources. Finally, the third professional network from which I drew included people I had met as an undergraduate and/or graduate student who had experience with ISL programs.

The email sent to prospective participants included a short note that introduced me, the purpose of the study, and the criteria necessary in order to participate. Further, I attached the Letter of Invitation, which contained additional details regarding the study. The Letter of Invitation is included as Appendix A.

After analysis of the data obtained from the participants in this initial sample, it became evident that the majority of the data revolved around the perception of reciprocity versus how respondents practically implemented a reciprocal framework within their ISL programs. Some categories associated with action-oriented procedures were established from the initial sample; however, the data were limited. A description of the analysis techniques utilized to analyze data obtained from the initial sample will follow later in this chapter.

With limited data surrounding practical implementation of reciprocity in mind, I began to recruit additional participants who would constitute my theoretical sample. In an attempt to build upon data obtained from my initial sample, I added a recruitment criterion to ensure that participants recruited for the theoretical sample were those who worked with organizations that had been in operation for over ten years. Based on this criterion, it was my assumption that participants would be able to speak in greater detail as to how reciprocity was practically implemented within programs.

The theoretical sample for this study consisted of six participants. To begin the process of participant recruitment for the theoretical sample, I first conducted a search of ISL programs through web-based search engines. Information found in websites or brochures (e.g., the organization's mission statement, duration of operation, etc.) was used to establish important benchmarks to measure against this study's preestablished criteria. Once suitable organizations were identified, I sent an email to the email address provided on the organizations website. In this email, I included a brief explanation of the study, the criteria required to participate and a request to the individual who received the email to forward it to appropriate individuals within the organization. I also attached the

Letter of Invitation to the email. Over the course of two weeks, I sent out 14 emails. I did not receive any replies. After approximately two weeks of waiting for responses, I decided that a more aggressive approach to recruitment was necessary.

With a more aggressive approach to recruitment in mind, I traveled to the Go Global Exposition in Toronto, Ontario with the goal of meeting and introducing the study to perspective interview participants in person. The Go Global Exposition provides organizations and schools with the opportunity to showcase their overseas volunteer or study abroad programs. At the exposition, organizations set up booths in a large showroom and interested participants from the general public are invited to collect written material regarding programs as well as to ask questions to organization representatives.

During my time spent at the exposition, I was able to meet nine prospective interview participants. Similar to the email I had sent to recruit my initial sample, when speaking to representatives of various organizations I explained that I was a graduate student conducting research, outlined the purpose of my study and inquired as to whether they would be interested or knew of anyone within their organization who would be interested in participating.

To my delight, the response from the nine individuals with whom I spoke was very positive. All 9 individuals either gave me their cards and asked me to contact them to set up an interview or gave me the personal email address of individuals they thought would be appropriate and interested in the study. Using the contact information obtained from the Go Global Expo, I was able to successfully recruit three interview participants. The other 6 prospective interview candidates did not reply after I contacted them

following the Go Global Expo.

To recruit the remaining one participants included in the theoretical sample, I returned to the list of organizations to which I had initially sent emails during the initial recruitment of the theoretical sample. As emailing these organizations was not successful, I decided to try recruiting via telephone. Similar to recruiting participants through email, when I phoned the organization I first explained that I was a graduate student conducting research, provided a brief explanation of the study, the criteria required to participate, and a request to pass the relevant information on to the appropriate and/or interested individuals within their organizations. I contacted three organizations via telephone. Out of the three contacted, I was successful in recruiting one additional participants. The other two respondents did not reply.

Data Collection

The primary method of data collection in GT methodology is in-depth interviews (Charmaz, 2006), as they create an environment that allows the researcher to engage in direct, purposeful dialogue with the participants (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Further, this structure of interview is conducive to exploring the process of achieving reciprocity that cannot be detected simply through observation (Patton, 2002). Finally, congruent with the sampling criteria described above, in-depth interviews are effective when interviewing who have previous experience with the process being studied (Charmaz)

For this study, data collection through interviewing followed a format that was consistent with the GT approach of initial sampling and theoretical sampling. First, in-depth interviews were held with four individuals who comprised the initial sample. The data obtained from this sample was then analyzed. Next, an additional five interviews

were held with individuals who comprised the theoretical sample. Memo writing continued throughout data collection and analysis for both the initial and theoretical sample. I will discuss this process following an explanation of the data collection and analysis procedures for both the initial and theoretical sample.

Data Collection through Interviewing. For this study, nine interviews were conducted. Eight of those interviews were face-to-face and 1 interview was conducted over the phone. Of those interviews conducted face-to-face, seven interviews were conducted in the personal offices of the participants and one interview was conducted in a coffee shop, which the participant indicated was a convenient location. The interview that was conducted over the phone was due to the distance of the participants' office, which was outside of the country in which I was residing. As a result of this distance, the phone interview was conducted in my supervisor's office through a speakerphone to ensure the conversation could be adequately recorded.

All of the interviews conducted for this study ranged from 35 minutes to 60 minutes in length, and the average length of interview was 50 minutes. Before each face-to-face interview I read aloud the information included in the consent form, had the participant read it and provided the opportunity for participants to ask questions. Once the consent form was signed I began the interview. The consent form is included as Appendix D. Before the phone interview began, I explained to the participant that I was alone in an office. Similar to the face-to-face interviews conducted, I asked the participant over the phone if he/she had any questions regarding the consent form which this participant signed and faxed to me prior to the interview date.

A pre-established interview guide was used during all interviews. Following

interviews with the initial sample the interview guide was revised in an attempt to build upon data during interviews conducted with the theoretical sample. For example; the question: What does a successful service project look like to you?, included in the initial interview guide, was revised to; How do you evaluate your programs? Further, in attempt to gain more data revolving practical techniques of gathering the perception of the host community new questions were added to the revised interview guide. For example, How do you find out the perception of the host community? The initial interview guide is included as Appendix B and the revised interview guide used when interviewing the theoretical sample is included as Appendix C.

Charmaz (2006) encourages interviews to take on a conversational feel. Some potential barriers to achieving this goal in this study included participants feeling intimidated or judged by the interviewer, environmental conditions that interfere with dialogue, and reluctance to share information. I addressed these barriers by creating non-judgmental questions, ensuring confidentiality, being aware of my tone, and making a conscious effort to interpret, to the best of my ability, the body language and eye contact of participants while responding to my questions. Further, all face-to-face interviews were conducted in participants' personal offices surrounding the city of Toronto to ensure a familiar environment.

Charmaz (2006) indicated that the challenge of in-depth interviews is one of creating a balance between allowing new and emerging ideas while maintaining a focus on one's primary research questions. To obtain this balance I ensured that interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions. In other words, while interview questions were pre-set in my interview guide (see Appendix B and C) they were broad

enough to allow participants to express personal opinions, assumptions and stories from a personal point of view (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). This form of interviewing provided the flexibility I needed to pursue emerging ideas but also helped me to remain directed and focused on primary research questions.

Data Analysis

The following section will describe the data analysis procedures utilized for both the initial and theoretical sample. For this study, the data obtained from the initial sample was used to create initial categories. The data from the theoretical sample was used to complement and further refine categories established from the initial sample. As previously mentioned, although the initial and theoretical samples are described above as two separate samples, in the final analysis the data obtained from both samples were merged.

Initial sample. Data analysis began after I finished transcribing the first four interviews from my initial sample. At this time I followed the qualitative coding techniques characteristic of the grounded theory approach: initial coding, focused coding, and axial coding (Charmaz, 2006). According to (Charmaz) initial coding consists of determining segments of data within the interview transcript. This exercise helped me to begin the process of transforming data segments into analytic interpretations (Charmaz). To determine these data segments, I first read the entire interview transcription to get a sense of the whole (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009), Then, I determined important data segments by using line-by-line coding. Line-by-line coding involved treating each line of the interview transcript as data segments and giving each segment a short name (code) that summarized and accounted for each piece of data. In other words, the code, given to

each line, defined what I interpreted to be happening in the data (Charmaz, 2006). For example, during the interview, participants were asked: What does sustainability mean to you? In response, one participant indicated, “I would say that’s something that both the community and us as Westerners coming over can work on together over time.” As the researcher, I created two codes to encompass relevant data within this excerpt:

1. The code ‘LONG TERM COMMITMENT’ was used to encompass the idea of sustainability as something achieved over time.
2. The code ‘COLLABORATIVE APPROACH’ was used to describe sustainability as a combined effort between the host community and Westerners.

If a line of data contained two or more important data segments, I reexamined the line word-by-word to ensure important data were not lost. In this phase of coding, I employed an inductive approach to analysis in order to examine the data free from pre-set codes or other sources such as literature or research questions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Further, at this stage of analysis, following an inductive approach was congruent with Charmaz who noted that having preset concepts in mind prior to commencing data analysis may inhibit the researcher from following unique theoretical patterns found in early analysis. After coding the first four interview transcriptions, I had approximately 100 codes. Each code was written on a small piece of paper. As the process of data analysis continued I grouped these small pieces of paper together in order to establish initial categories and themes. This will be discussed in further detail below.

Following initial coding, I began the second phase of coding: focused coding. In GT methodology, focused coding has two primary functions: (a) to determine the most

significant or most frequent initial codes in order to begin to develop emerging categories, and (b) to allow the researcher to sift through large amounts of data in order to build upon development of emerging categories (Charmaz, 2006).

To explore what codes fit together, I continued using inductive analysis to link like codes with like (Maykut & Morehouse, 1992). In other words, focused codes (or emerging categories) were created by grouping like codes together that I interpreted to have the same meaning or connect closely to one another. Charmaz (2006) indicated that focused coding “requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and completely” (p. 57). This stage proved to be a pivotal step within my data analysis as it allowed raw data to move from description to a more abstract theoretical level (Charmaz, 2006). For example; the two initial codes of CULTURAL EXCHANGE and EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE were grouped together and assigned the focus code of MUTUAL LEARNING which later developed into the category of RECIPROCITY AS EDUCATION. As a second example, the initial codes of DIFFICULT TO QUANTIFY and BALANCE were grouped together and assigned the focused code of MEASURING RECIPROCITY which later developed into the category of WRESTLING WITH RECIPROCITY. When creating these emerging categories, I attempted to follow Charmaz who indicated that initial categories should “explicate ideas, events, or processes in the data” (p. 59). Some examples of emerging categories at this stage of analysis included meaning of reciprocity, purpose, partnerships, sustainability, aid, local need, evaluations, global citizenship, visiting participants, host community, and random.

At first, building categories from my initial codes during focused coding was very

difficult. Initially, I felt very lost as I felt that many of my codes could have been placed within the same categories or perhaps be categories on their own. In other words, at this stage of analysis I could interpret my data going various directions. This difficulty is noted by Guba (1978) who suggests that when developing categories from initial codes the researcher must “first deal with the challenge of convergence” (as cited in Patton, 2002 p. 465). In other words, determining what things fit together. Once several emerging categories had been determined, I began the axial coding stage of analysis.

Axial coding, developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), is the process of bringing the categories established in focused coding into a coherent whole. In other words, axial coding is the process of linking relationships between categories. During this stage of coding, the researcher may choose to fit categories established in focused coding into a set of preestablished scientific terms, referred to by Strauss and Corbin as theoretical concepts. When utilizing these preset concepts, data analysis shifts from an inductive to a deductive approach as the data is now being analyzed according to an existing framework (Patton, 2002).

Strauss and Corbin suggested that these concepts are the “building blocks” for theory and when shown in relationship, answer questions such as “when, where, why, who, how and with what consequence” (p. 25). As quoted in Creswell (1998), the following terms provided by Strauss and Corbin guide this coding phase:

- (1) *central phenomenon*, the category which holds the most conceptual interest;
- (2) *causal conditions*, the categories that cause or influence the central phenomenon to occur;

(3) *strategies*, actions or interactions that occur as a result of the central phenomenon;

(4) *intervening conditions*, conditions that influence the strategies in response to the central phenomenon; and

(5) *consequences*, the outcomes of the strategies.

Further, Strauss and Corbin provide a visual diagram showing the link between these concepts (See Figure 2). As previously mentioned, it was these preset concepts and subsequent diagram, which break down the elements of process, that initially sparked my interest in GT methodology.

At this stage of analysis, I was keen on exploring how my data fit into the preset concepts; however, I was also conscious of Charmaz (2006) who warned that employing a preset framework and deductive approach may limit or extend the researcher's vision. For example, if categories that I had established inductively in focused coding did not align with pre-set concepts, I may be forced to manipulate the data to align with the preset categories, during which the meaning of the data may be lost. Although I understood the importance of staying open to all theoretical directions, I was drawn to the preestablished framework and, at this time, hoped it could act as a frame of reference to help clarify what had been, to this point, a challenging and messy data analysis experience. I strongly resonated with Charmaz, who suggested that using the preestablished framework can be a useful guide to novice researchers who have had a hard time dealing with ambiguity.

Utilizing the framework outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) as a frame of reference, I began the axial coding stage (See Figure 2). In the initial stages of analysis

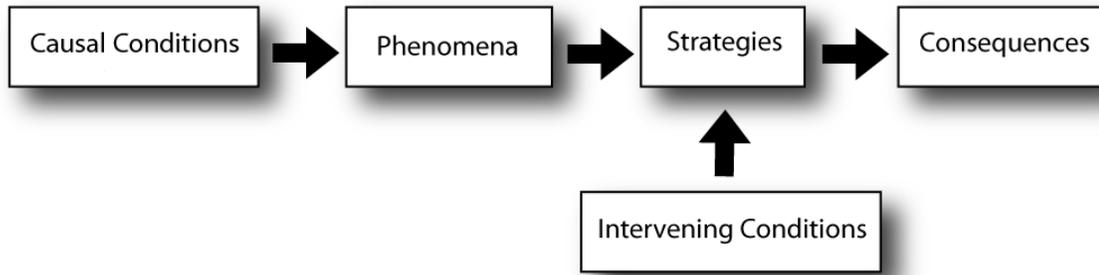


Figure 2. Axial coding stages of process.

and design of this study, I planned to use this visual diagram to portray the process of reciprocity in ISL programs. At first, utilizing this diagram helped clarify the direction of my data but at the end of this axial coding stage of analysis, it became evident that the process of organizing my emerging categories and focused codes under diagram headings was far from complete. Specifically, at this stage of analysis, it showed that additional data was needed in relationship to the practical implementation of reciprocity, in particular the categories on establishing partnerships, conducting evaluations, and determining service sites. As I mentioned earlier, in an attempt to build upon these categories established from my initial sample, I adjusted my sampling criteria to participants involved with larger organizations with the assumption that they could elaborate on the practical implementation of the reciprocity framework.

This section outlined the data analysis techniques used to analyze data collected from the initial sample. The following section will discuss analysis techniques used for the theoretical sample.

Theoretical sample. Data analysis of the theoretical sample began after I conducted and transcribed five additional interviews. Similar to the analysis of my initial sample, I first read the interviews over to get a sense of the whole. Next, I used a deductive approach to read each interview, looking for data segments that fit with the focused codes established during the analysis of my initial sample. If I read data that did not fit with the preestablished codes but felt it was relevant to the study, I coded the data and placed it under a category that I called RANDOM.

Data obtained from the theoretical sample helped to build upon categories established with the data obtained from the initial sample; however, it did not provide

enough data to effectively portray the process of reciprocity through the predetermined categories characteristic of the axial coding stage. At this point, it was clear that I needed to disregard the preset categories and follow a unique direction that my data had presented me with. A reflective memo at this stage of analysis synthesizes this realization:

I have come to the conclusion that using the pre-set concepts will not work with the data that I have collected. I feel like each one of them could have been a study on my own. I suppose this is a sign of a novice researcher with big intentions and naiveté surrounding the subject and what could stem from it.

Memo writing. As a researcher, I viewed memo writing and coding as interconnected with the process of data analysis. Memo writing is a written exercise done by the researcher to aid in the analysis of ideas surrounding, codes, categories, and concepts and how they relate (Charmaz, 2006). Consistent with my constructivist approach to research, engaging in memo writing helped me to stay personally involved in the analysis process and aided in the development of theoretical categories and concepts. Charmaz advised that the praxis of engaging in memo writing should be spontaneous, not mechanical. For this reason, I engaged in memo writing when ideas came into my head. Over the course of conducting this study, I wrote 48 memos ranging from two sentences to one page in length. During the early stages of this study, the majority of my memos related to initial reactions or reflections of the content shared by my interview participants. Second, memos were written during data analysis and served as a tool to reflect upon what I thought the data were saying and what pieces of the data fit together. This approach followed the recommendations of Charmaz who indicated that engaging in

memo writing during the early stages of analysis helps clarify theoretical categories and, thus, accelerates productivity. Third, I engaged in memo writing during three international trips to Cuba throughout the duration of this study. Participating in these trips in a variety of roles proved to be invaluable in bringing the theory incorporated into this study into praxis. This ultimately produced memos that reflected my own growing concern regarding the relevancy of the topic in relationship to my experiences while in the capital city of Havana, and the rural parts of the country. Finally, I was inspired to write memos following meetings that I attended as a member of the OCIC Intern working group. These meetings helped to confirm that the data obtained and the way I was interpreting them were pertinent and relevant to issues facing ISL practitioners today. In other words, many of the categories and questions I was asking myself as a researcher were congruent with what other professionals, who attended these meetings, were discussing.

Looking back on my journey with data analysis, it is clear that the final interpretations and findings of this study were a result of comparing and contrasting all phases of coding and memo writing. Although at times each stage was conducted separately, in the end they were all interconnected. This relationship between the phases of analysis echoes GT's strong commitment to the constant comparative method. As summarized by Charmaz (2006), the constant comparative method allows the researcher to compare "data with data, data with category, category with category, and category with concept" (p. 187). Adhering to this process allowed me to begin to consider emerging categories and concepts early in the analysis process and throughout the data collection process. Furthermore, reflecting and hypothesizing via memos, about emergent

theoretical concepts provided me with a good sense of whether or not the organizational scheme provided by Strauss and Corbin (1998), described in the axial coding phase, complemented or limited the data obtained.

Final analysis. To finalize major themes within the data, I returned to an inductive approach in order to refine and merge categories established from both the initial and theoretical sample. Further, I placed certain data segments placed in the RANDOM category where I saw fit. During this stage, I also returned to my reflective memos to further refine final themes by exploring the relationship between the themes established and my personal reflections of how the data fit together. With the final themes in mind, I read over all nine interviews for a final time to ensure that all the relevant data had been detected. At the end of this final analysis stage, I had determined eight main themes, which provided me with a framework to write the results chapter of this study.

Ethical Principles and Considerations

As a researcher, my utmost aim was to complete this study in an ethical manner. To do this, I followed two ethical principles while conducting the proposed study: (a) maintaining transparency with my research participants, and (b) protecting research participants from repercussions.

To address maintaining transparency with my research participants, I ensured that the purpose and motivations behind this study were clear to all interview subjects prior to engaging in the study. In other words, all information pertaining to this study was accessible to all participants in this study. To ensure full understanding of the study, all

participants signed a consent form prior to participating in the interview. The consent form included the purpose of the research, why the participants were invited to participate in the study, the intended benefit for the interviewees, how the results would be presented and/or published, and prefaced the fact that all interviews would be recorded with a tape recorder provided by the interviewer. To limit confusion or misleading language, I was cautious of the language I used in the consent form, ensuring it was clear and free of academic jargon.

In addition to transparency, I also reflected on the possible consequences this study may have on the psychosocial and physical well-being of participants being interviewed, with the intent of protecting them from any repercussions from the larger body that they may represent (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). To exercise protection of participants, the identities of the research participants remained confidential throughout this study. As the researcher for this study, confidentiality meant, “I know but I won’t tell” (Patton, 2002, p. 408) which differed from anonymity. With this in mind, as the researcher, I was able to promise confidentiality by explaining to research participants that pseudonyms would be used for all interviewees and no company name would be written in any letters or documents. To ensure this, I kept all written and recorded material associated with my interview participants in a locked office only to be accessed by me or my supervisor. These materials included: (a) contact information including interview participants’ real names and organizations they represented, (b) interview transcriptions, and (c) tapes with recorded interviews and written memos. Further, it was clear to interview participants that data obtained through the interview would only be used for this study. In other words, if, as a researcher, I wanted to use the data for future

research projects, I would need the consent of the research participants. In the written proposal of this study, I explained that confidentiality would be broken only if I suspected or was told of illegal activities. Fortunately, I did not have to deal with either of these problematic outcomes.

A second way I worked to protect my participants from repercussions was by mitigating the risk of physiological stress or harm. To mitigate these risks, I designed this study and created interview questions that fostered data collection in a nonjudgmental way. Further, the design of the study was oriented toward presenting results as collective wisdom, rather than as a program evaluation or comparison. To ensure results did not reflect program evaluation or comparison, I was cautious to detect statements involving negative or malicious comments associated with organizations within the ISL community. Comments of this nature did surface during interviews and, as the researcher, I found that they did have links to reciprocity. When this situation arose, I took note of the opinions surrounding good and bad practice within ISL programs but disregarded the name or identifying aspects of the organization to which some respondents would refer.

Finally, to mitigate risk, the proposal of this research was submitted to the Brock University Research Ethics Board for review. This review ensured that all participants' rights are protected. This study did not commence until after I received this formal approval. The ethics review for this study is filed under 10-006-SHARPE.

Final Researcher Reflection.

Upon reflection, the data analysis process of this study was profound as it allowed me to become more self aware of the ways that my own perspectives and biases influenced this research project. First, although it was my intention to stay open to all theoretical possibilities through the research, I believe that during the initial stages of this study, I was entering into interviews with participants with a desire to know whether or not they were following the guidelines of project management I had learned at Humber, at the time guidelines in which I truly believed. This approach and mindset were first evident by my being drawn to the pre-set concepts characteristic of the axial coding stage mentioned above. This was further evident in my interview protocol where I based my questions around each of the pre-set concepts. Looking back, these interview questions were too broad, which is likely why I had a difficult time with data analysis as I was trying to explore too many aspects of the topic.

Second, upon review of the data it became evident that during the first two interviews with research participants, I had engaged with an unconscious agenda to see if organizations measured up to what I believed was “good” practice and further, to educate participants on the latest ideas in relationship to ethical practice in ISL programs. I noticed this behaviour as the researcher by examining the first two interview transcriptions. During these interviews, it was apparent that I unconsciously brought up new ideas that I had been thinking about in relationship to the ethical practice of ISL programs. This was most evident when the interview took on a conversational approach. These ideas resulted in the research participants taking their thoughts in a new direction. It is my assumption that this new direction in thinking would not have happened without

my frontloading of the conversation. A reflective memo written after the completion of the second interview captures this feeling:

Some of the data that I got out of the interview this afternoon is really good; however, I must say that I feel that I can't even use it because I may have put words into the researchers participants mouth. I have to remember that I am not educating people but interviewing them. Sometimes this is tough.

As I continued through data collection and analysis it became apparent that, as a researcher, my ambition and practical approach to this study were being challenged. Through data analysis I started to notice inconsistencies in the way that respondents theorized reciprocity and realized that this aspect needed to be addressed and further explored before a practical framework could be established. As a result, the data on meaning of reciprocity was analyzed separately and the findings that are presented in the next chapter of this study capture this effort to explore the meaning of reciprocity as well as determine how reciprocity is implemented practically into programs. Looking back, the point at which I realized and accepted the fact that my data was not going to fit within the pre set concepts characteristic of the axial coding stage also represented a shift in the way I viewed ISL programs as well as what I thought was important to discuss. I believe that coming to this realization allowed me to look at my data differently and interpret it in a way that is ultimately more effective. This shift also allowed me to become a better interviewer as my initial biases and agenda, whether unconscious or not, had been problematized.

Study Limitations

The following are a list of study limitations.

1. As previously mentioned, this study included a small sample size, which limited data saturation and theory building potential.
2. This study was based on self-reports, which may or may not adequately, accurately, and/ or fully represent the subject being explored.
3. The findings of this study are grounded in the thoughts and opinions of practitioners residing in developed countries. Including the voice of host communities involved in ISL programs would have further enriched the study and increased validity of the results of this study.
4. This study did not engage in analysis related to potential differences between programs offered through academic institutions, non-Governmental organizations (NGO) and charities.

This chapter described the methods and data analysis procedures used in this study. The following chapter will present the results of this study.

Chapter Four: Results

This study had two purposes: to explore ISL practitioners' perceptions of the meaning of reciprocity in international service programs, and to explore if and how a reciprocal framework was practically implemented into current ISL programs. In the following chapter, I will present the findings as they relate to the research questions that framed this study:

1. How do ISL practitioners perceive, describe, and resonate with the term reciprocity in relation to their international service learning program?
2. What attempts are ISL practitioners making to practically implement the philosophy of reciprocity into their programs?
3. What do ISL practitioners identify as the challenges to using reciprocity as the guiding philosophy of ISL programs?

Introduction to the Respondents and their Organizations

As described in the previous chapter, respondents were selected from a variety of sending organizations including postsecondary academic institutions, volunteer organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGO), and nonprofit agencies. The following section will introduce the respondents and their organizations. The respondents have been organized by the initial sample and the theoretical sample. All names of participants and sending organizations are pseudonyms.

Initial sample.

Laird. Laird is the founder and lead facilitator of trips for Choice Haiti, a small volunteer-run organization that focuses on the construction of primary schools in Haiti. Hope for Haiti has been operating in Haiti for over 20 years. In this time, participants

affiliated with the organization have constructed 15 schools that once built, are operated by Haitians. Participants of Laird's program cover their own costs to volunteer in Haiti and usually stay in the country for one or two weeks. Service projects facilitated through Laird's organization include construction initiatives suited to participants' skill levels. These activities range from clearing garbage and debris from building sites to all construction aspects involved in building a school.

Meg. Once a participant of an ISL program offered by International Challenge, a nongovernmental organization that operates in Africa, South America, and South East Asia, Meg is now a field instructor responsible for facilitating and creating international partnerships for this organization. Participants of Meg's program work in community and health centers as well as on construction initiatives. Meg has led over five international programs.

Jarod. Jarod is a professor of Physical Education at Harrison College, a mid-sized (i.e., 15,000 students) university in Canada. Jarod was first introduced to Latin America through a professional research opportunity in 2007. His involvement with this research led him to develop and facilitate his first ISL program in 2009. Since this time, Jarod has facilitated four ISL programs. Jarod's ISL program is a for-credit course offered to students within his department. Participants of Jarod's program do service/volunteer work surrounding physical education as a means to develop life skills.

Jay. Jay is the Director of International Services at a mid-sized (i.e., 15,000 students) Canadian university. Building upon an international experience to Africa facilitated by Chapel services at his University, Jay has since been involved in creating and facilitating international trips once a year to various countries in Africa for the past 6

years. In contrast to Jarod's program, which is open only to students in his department, the programs run through Jay's office are open to all students attending the university. Participants of Jay's program participate in service/volunteer projects ranging from shoveling elephant dung to teaching English at an orphanage.

Theoretical sample.

Brent. Transferring his knowledge of service learning in the outdoors to an international education setting, Brent is the Program Director for Village Trips, a branch program of a large national nonprofit organization that focuses on building homes for low-income families all over the world. Similar to Laird's program, participants are involved in a wide range of construction initiatives that fit their ability level. To participate in Brent's program, participants must pay their own way.

Kat. Following an internship with Global Watch, Kat has been the Program Manager at Global Watch for over five years. Global Watch is a not-for-profit agency that works with impoverished youth in several countries across Latin America and Africa. The ISL program associated with this organization is a CIDA-funded internship offered to youth between the ages of 9 and 30 years old.

Carrie. Carrie is a Program Manager at 360 Global Vision. In this position, Carrie is responsible for overseeing all of the logistics for two international partnerships. Unlike other organizations represented in this study, 360 Global Vision facilitates bilateral programs. In other words, this organization facilitates exchange programs with partner organizations from Asia, Africa, and India. Programs are designed in a way that allows participants from the Global North to have an international experience with an NGO in the Global South. Following this experience, participants from the Global North

host participants from the Global South. Service projects revolve around health and environmental issues; for example, installation of energy efficient stoves or new wells for potable water. Participants in these programs must pay their own way.

Judd. Judd is the Senior Manager of Program Quality and Evaluation for Solutions Across Borders. Solutions Across Borders is a large volunteer sending organization offering programs in 12 countries across Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Asia. Solutions Across Borders offers programs ranging from 1 week to 6 weeks in duration. Program participants in Solutions Across Borders take part in service projects ranging from caring for the elderly to educating at-risk youth and delivering skill based training. Participants of Solutions across Borders are required to pay a program fee that covers all aspects of their trip.

Matt. Following many months of travel and volunteering in Latin America, Matt decided to switch careers and founded Global Volunteer, a volunteer organization that provides service programs in Latin America. Participants of Matt's program may choose to volunteer in a number of service projects ranging from working at an animal rescue center, a child center for youth living in dumps, or a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre to assisting in rural elementary schools, to name only a few. Participants of Global Volunteer are required to pay a program fee, which covers all aspects of their trip.

Part 1: Exploring Perceptions of Reciprocity in ISL Programs

In this section, I explore the different ways that the interview respondents perceived, described, and resonated with the term reciprocity in relation to their international service programs. I first begin with a description of the extent to which participants resonated with reciprocity as a guiding philosophy for their organization's programs. Following this, I describe how respondents conceptualized reciprocity in an ISL context. I then describe the extent to which respondents saw the different conceptualizations of reciprocity as compatible with one another and with the role of international service learning programs. The results presented in this section are congruent with the themes established during data analysis.

Resonance with reciprocity as a guiding philosophy. The interviews began with an initial query of what the term reciprocity meant to respondents and if it resonated with the aims and practices of their international service learning programs. In response, 8 of 9 interview respondents stated that reciprocity did resonate as a guiding philosophy of their ISL programs. When respondents described reciprocity, they used phrases such as “mutually beneficial” and “happens both ways” to capture the notion that international service programs should benefit both the visiting participants and hosting communities. When respondents spoke of the visiting ISL program participants and their role in reciprocal relationships, they used words such as “leaving something behind” or “contributing to society down the road.” The majority of respondents conceptualized reciprocity as a term that related to the idea that programs should be designed to not only benefit the visiting participants but those involved with the program in the host community as well. Only one respondent, Laird (Choice Haiti) did not consider

reciprocity to be a guiding philosophy of his organization. In contrast to the others, he described reciprocity as “irrelevant” and “self-centered.” When asked to explain, Laird stated, “I think it’s one of the reasons why international development hasn’t worked as well as it can. People are looking for what they are going to get back rather than making it what they can give.”

For the remaining participants, reciprocity was described in program activities or organizational policies. Half of the respondents noted that reciprocity resonated with their organizations’ protocols. For example, when describing the process of initiating and establishing new international partners, Carrie (360 Global Vision) noted that reciprocity was used to help make decisions about who to partner with, in the sense that the partnership had to be mutually beneficial. As she described:

It’s part of our protocol in deciding how we want to work together, that we recognize that the host community members and organizations in communities in which we are working are equal. We’re equally interested in their experience and what they are getting out of it.

Similarly, when connecting reciprocity to the development of his programs, Judd (Solutions Across Borders) suggested that reciprocity was an aspect of ethical practice; that, “In order to be ethical and responsible and effective and all those things, that [reciprocity] definitely needs to be the first consideration.”

Respondents also linked the philosophy of reciprocity to the goals of their ISL programs. When elaborating on his program goals surrounding his university-based ISL to Central America, Jarod indicated, “[Students] talk about this being a life-changing experience for them and that’s great, but what are they also leaving behind? It’s got to be

reciprocal.” Similarly, Brent (Village Trips) indicated, "If there was no benefit for the host community we wouldn't be doing this. We don't make any money off of it."

Meanings of reciprocity – What is reciprocated in ISL programs? Although nearly all of the respondents were committed to working towards reciprocity between all parties involved with programs, it became apparent that among the respondents, the way in which reciprocal relationships happened was understood differently. For some, the mutual benefit came in the form of an exchange of knowledge and education. For others, reciprocity involved the participants from the sending organization ‘leaving something behind.’ Further, some respondents resonated with both conceptualizations.

Reciprocity through Education. For the majority of respondents, reciprocity was conceptualized primarily in terms of education. For these respondents, reciprocity was reflected in comments that suggested that ISL programs create an environment where knowledge can be shared among participants, providing educational benefit for all involved. When relating sharing of knowledge to their understanding of reciprocity, respondents used phrases such as "cultural exchange" or "mutual learning." Further, these respondents shared the belief that through exchange of knowledge and exposure to people with less economic privilege, participants would develop a long-term commitment to being engaged with issues of justice.

Eight respondents reported resonating with reciprocity as education through the exchange of information regarding participants’ respective cultures. According to respondents, the type of information exchanged ranged from cultural traditions, food, values, politics, and current issues in the respective communities. The way in which this knowledge was exchanged between participants varied among programs. Some

respondents spoke of formal methods such as organizing guest speakers from the host community to speak to the visiting participants about their culture or issues facing their specific community. Others explained that in their experience, this exchange occurred through informal methods such as conversations and/or visiting and host participants simply being exposed to one another's values and lifestyles.

A good example of this exchange occurring informally occurred when Jay (Director of International Services) spoke of the importance of ensuring dialogue between visiting and host participants. He pointed out that while working together at the service site, both visiting and host participants are always talking to and asking questions of one another. Jay provided some examples of these questions: "Which size of family do you come from? What are your hopes for the future? How do you think Botswana is going politically?"

Judd described this exchange happening in what he called a "formal cultural learning session." During this session, visiting and host participants share issues that face their respective communities. As Judd described: "It's the cultural exchange of global issues both in that community where [visiting participants] are volunteering but also making [host] community members aware of issues that may be similar for those volunteers back home."

Three respondents resonated with reciprocity as education through ISL programs' ability to challenge societal norms and/or false assumptions of one another as well as to de-stigmatize social issues. The ability to challenge societal norms and/or false assumptions strongly related to the process of gaining cultural knowledge and becoming increasingly culturally literate. As a result of this new knowledge, participants develop

the ability to challenge preheld assumptions of one another. For example, Jay described that prior to their involvement in ISL programs, many host participants, who live in Central Africa, have a false assumption that it is winter all year round in Canada.

Respondents also provided examples of how participants were able to influence the way in which social issues were understood and acted upon simply by leading by example. Judd recalled a program that took place in a community where a social stigma was attached to HIV/AIDS, and the prevailing attitude in the host community was that if you are near a person with HIV/AIDS you could yourself become infected. In this community, Judd's organization facilitated a service project where visiting participants volunteered with people infected with HIV/AIDS. Judd explained that the partner organization reported that visiting participant participation is helping to de-stigmatize HIV/AIDS in the community. Furthermore, Judd said that the partner organization has seen an increase in community involvement with the partner program.

When explaining volunteer impact of volunteering with this population Judd indicated:

One of the greatest impacts of the volunteers is de-stigmatizing HIV/AIDS in the community. The community sees volunteers there everyday and that helps to promote it. The partner program has seen an increase in community involvement and all this other stuff and that is something that was totally unexpected.

Four respondents resonated with reciprocity through education as long-term commitment. In other words, these respondents believed that as a result of bearing witness to issues of global injustices while participating in ISL programs, participants would value change and, as a result, be motivated to continue to be active in initiatives associated with social

change—giving back to society throughout their lives. For these respondents, reciprocity was understood as an ongoing process that continued after the completion of and result of what participants had learnt during the ISL program. This belief was present when Brent elaborated on his understanding of reciprocity. He indicated: “It’s the whole piece that you are making an investment in someone who is going to pay society back way down the line.” Similarly, when Jay explained the way he evaluates his students he said: “There is no final exam. The final exam for me is what you do 3 years from now, 30 years from now.”

The assumption that participants would give back to society as a result of ISL experiences was also reflected in the stories that respondents shared about participants who returned to do another program with the sending organization, or returned to the host community on their own where the program had brought them before. For example, Jarod explained that after completing his ISL program, a student returned to the destination country after she received funding to aid in the development of an accessible playground. Jarod indicated:

Because of our students they are probably going to build an accessible playground. So you know, things like that are sort of now emerging and developing, which is pretty cool. So there is that sense of social responsibility to that they’ve got.

Reciprocity through leaving something behind. The second main way respondents described reciprocity was through leaving something behind. In this conceptualization, the service component of ISL programs was thought of as a means to contribute to the development of a project that aimed to enhance the lives of people

residing in the host community. Generally, these respondents articulated their resonance with the idea that volunteers should leave something tangible behind to “balance” the “gain” of knowledge that they get from the experience. The type of service project and the way in which respondents described leaving something behind varied.

The first way respondents described leaving something behind was through ensuring that after the completion of the ISL program, something tangible that benefited the partner organization was left with the host community. For some, the tangible outcome that was left behind was the product of the manual labour of the participant volunteers. For example, service projects characteristic of Brent’s program would be to build houses for families that could not afford to buy them on their own. Others described leaving something behind through the development or distribution of educational resources. For Jarod, aiding in the development of educational resources was his way of leaving something behind.

Respondents also considered financial donations as a form of leaving something behind. For these respondents, it was suggested that leaving behind a financial donation would help further develop or sustain partner organizations. For example, at the time of his interview, Matt indicated that he was in the beginning stages of obtaining charitable status for his organization. If granted this status, Matt indicated that financial donations would help contribute to the long-term sustainability of his partner organizations, which struggle to operate on a daily basis. Laird also connected financial donations to the notion of reciprocity. He explained: “For each participant who goes we donate the equivalent of \$350 US to most countries and \$500 to some countries in Africa as a straight financial donation to the building projects.” Although Jim did not resonate with reciprocity as a

guiding philosophy, he also saw the value of leaving behind a financial donation. He indicated: “I think that the essence of doing work in developing countries is sharing. Sharing your knowledge but most of all sharing your money.”

Compatibility of conceptualizations. Interestingly, the way respondents resonated with reciprocity was congruent with the way in which they understood and were motivated to participate in service work. For some respondents the goal of participating in service work was to leave something behind. In contrast, other respondents resonated solely with participating in service due to their belief that it provides educational benefit for all who are involved. These respondents generally downplayed the leaving something behind approach of service work, to the point where some completely rejected the idea of international service learning programs as a means for developing projects that aim to help those involved with the program in the host community. Finally, some respondents resonated with both conceptualizations of reciprocity – as education and as leaving something behind – and viewed these program elements as compatible goals at the service site.

Of the nine respondents, four participants (Kat, Brent, Jarod, and Matt) considered the two conceptualizations of reciprocity as compatible with one another and aligned with their international service goals. For example, Jarod linked the two conceptualizations together when he discussed what he had to consider prior to developing an ISL program around a preestablished development project. As he stated, his primary question was: “How can our students contribute to the program and further develop it but also how can they learn from that so when they come back to Canada they can be better educators in the global sense of education?” His perspective was echoed by

Kat, who indicated that the internships at her organization help participants to develop a greater understanding of themselves in the context of a developing country as well as help to further develop the partner organization.

Compatibility between the two conceptualizations of reciprocity was made sense of by some in terms of seeing education as a short-term goal and developing the host partner, through leaving something behind, as a long-term goal of international service learning. For example, Matt's short-term goal was to provide a unique and informed international experience for his participants. Matt's long-term goal was to help create long-term sustainability for the grassroots organizations with whom he partnered. He indicated, "I can't help but count the number of NGOs that I have come across that are really trying to do great things but they need an extra hand." For Matt, the participants of his programs are seen as the crucial link to building the capacity of his partner organizations, which struggle to operate on a daily basis.

In contrast, four respondents placed greater value on education at the service site, versus the development of the partner organization. The extent to which respondents resisted the service-learning goal of developing the partner organization by leaving something behind varied in intensity. Generally, these respondents resonated with a more holistic approach to service (i.e., relationship building) and questioned the effectiveness of the leaving something behind approach.

Meg (International Challenge) and Judd (Solutions Across Borders), whose organizations facilitated a number of different service projects, indicated that some service sites had contributed to the development of the partner organization. However, they noted that this was not the primary goal of the program. For both Judd and Meg, the

underlying purpose of participating in service work was to gain a greater understanding of self and others through forming relationships.

For example, Judd indicated that the vision and overarching goal of his programs were “to have a world where people value cultures different from their own, are aware of global issues, and have the power to affect positive change.” Meg explained that the sole purpose of her programs was to “build relationships” between participants and those involved with the program in the host community. Meg explained that when these relationships are formed, all involved in the program begin to realize how similar they are to one another. Further, through building relationships, participants gain knowledge of who they really are and what they believe in, a process that according to Meg, results in greater engagement with issues of global justice. As Meg explained, “if everyone could be who they really are and discover who they really are, they are going to contribute more successfully to this world.”

Both Judd and Meg recounted stories of program participants claiming service sites were not successful based on the fact that they could not see physical change – a participant perspective strongly associated with a leaving something behind service framework. As Meg explained:

A huge challenge that I have had in the past with team members in particular is because International Challenge is so relational and spiritual when you have team members that just want to do and build that is the biggest challenge because they are like, ‘We aren’t doing anything, I can’t see anything. Where is this house I’m supposed to build?’ Whereas I sit back and say, ‘Just have a conversation, just be.’ And that’s a challenge.

While Meg and Judd questioned and saw as problematic the leaving something behind approach, other respondents, including Carrie and Jay, were outright opposed to it as a guiding framework for ISL programs. For Carrie and Jay, the leaving something behind framework was troublesome for how it, in their opinion, perpetuated a perspective of the host communities as being “in need,” a perspective that they hoped to disrupt through their international service learning courses. Both Jay and Carrie expressed that while students in their programs engaged in service work and volunteering, the work had “nothing to do with helping,” or producing something that was of benefit to the community. For Jay, the purpose of service “is education...for many volunteer programs the goal is volunteering. For me, that’s not what it is. You volunteer to learn.” He specifically resisted any notions of communities being “in need” of work, and instead framed service as a form of expressing gratitude rather than “helping.” He explained this when he said:

They don’t *need* White people to paint a school for them, they don’t *need* a White person to shovel dung for them. We’re only doing that because that’s our way of saying thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to teach us about your country.

Similarly, Carrie, whose organization runs exchange programs, indicated that her programs have always been marketed as international education and/or volunteer programs. She indicated; “the fact that [participants] volunteer overseas has nothing to do with development.” For Carrie, development work was concerned with building capacity. In Carrie’s opinion, the goals of development work differed from the goals of volunteer work, which was “more about observing, seeing, learning, asking questions, not

about helping.”

Although the word reciprocity is well-known, even among this small group it was conceptualized in different ways: as education, as leaving something behind, and as long-term commitment. For some, these different meanings were compatible; whereas, for others, they were not. Further, findings suggested that a relationship existed between the way respondents conceptualized reciprocity and the philosophy they held regarding the purpose of participating in service. In the next section, I will examine how respondents practically implemented a reciprocal framework within their ISL programs.

Part 2: Exploring the Practical Implementation of Reciprocity

Part 1 of this chapter explored the first research question of this study that explored ISL practitioners’ perceptions of the meaning of reciprocity. Part 2 of this chapter presents major themes found in relationship to the second research question, which explores the attempts ISL practitioners are making to practically implement the philosophy of reciprocity into their programs.

Part 2 of this chapter will first explore findings associated with the initial set-up of ISL programs including the establishment of international partners and service projects. Second, this section will present findings associated with sustainability of ISL programs including the importance of local ownership and long-term commitment to international partners. Finally, this section will present what respondents had to say about the challenge of managing expectations of various parties involved within ISL programs.

Engaging with international partner and service site selection. The first theme found in relationship to exploring how and/or if reciprocity was being practically implemented into programs was *international partner and service site selection*. Closely

associated with reciprocity, findings associated with this theme provide a deeper understanding of the role of those involved in the host community in the initial planning and design of ISL programs.

Findings indicated that in ISL, choosing program and service sites went hand-in-hand with establishing a partnership between the sending organization and an international organization, whose role was to facilitate community initiatives in the host country. In other words, service projects were established as a result of sending organizations seeking out a partnership with an international organization that facilitates preestablished service projects. This finding alone indicates that the sending organization and the host organization collaborate to create ISL programs.

The way in which these partnerships and service sites were established varied. One way that they did so was in terms of who initiated the partnership. A second way was in the process that they followed to set up a partnership and service project.

The first and most common approach used was for the sending organization to seek out a partnership and program site. Typically, a representative of the organization personally visited the country of interest. For example, Jay, representing his university in student services, explained that before he began facilitating trips to Namibia he had visited the country twice to make connections and explore options for various service project opportunities. Jarod indicated that in his case, he built on a research partnership he had with an organization in Latin America; however, it took five years of working with this organization on other projects before he felt ready to establish a program in which students could participate. Another way partnerships were initiated was for a representative of the organization to follow leads on potential partners, acquired from

trusted colleagues or friends. Once this information was obtained, partnership relationships were initiated through emails and/or phone calls. For example, when Meg began to initiate a partnership with an organization in South East Asia, she did so by initiating via an email given to her from a friend with whom she had previously participated in a service learning program. When explaining how the partnership was formed in Burma, Meg indicated:

The organization in Burma is called Trioze and I have a friend through 360 through the service learning project I did in California who lived there for two months. So, he got me connected and so I connected with the director of Trioze through email and that's how the partnership was formed.

The second way that a partnership with a service site was initiated was again through a sending organization, but driven by the efforts of a representative of the organization who was based in the host country. This approach was conducted by organizations with multiple offices that had the ability to pass this responsibility on to in-country staff. One reason that sending organizations used this approach was that it allowed for the decision to be made by a person in the host country rather than by a distant outsider. For example, Judd indicated that when his organization was looking to develop a new site they first recruited a national to fill the role of country director. The responsibilities of the country director included establishing and maintaining partnerships with local organizations that saw a benefit in working with participants from the ISL program.

When describing the ideal candidate for the position of national director, Judd explained that, "the perfect combination is someone who is interested in local responses in their own community but has experience looking at their own culture through another

lens or another culture's eyes." Judd indicated that when choosing a local to fill the role of director they look for someone who has experience working with local NGOs or volunteer organizations that facilitate foreigners to the host country. Judd noted that the combination of this particular form of work experience typically leaves this prospective employee with multiple contacts that he or she can utilize in the start-up stages when they need to focus on finding appropriate partner organizations and service projects. Then, as Judd described, once the country director is hired, this person decides which sites to develop:

So once we find that amazing country director with all this experience and everything like that it's basically turn the keys over to them and where do you want to go with this? What local community initiatives do you find that our volunteers would be able to assist with and have that sustainable impact in the community?

Respondents also indicated that occasionally partnerships have been initiated by an organization in the host country, which took the first step by seeking out a sending organization with which it could partner. Sometimes, the organization in the host country sought out a specific organization for a particular reason, such as was the case for 360 Global Vision. As Kat indicated, "Sometimes we have partners coming to us that are interested in our training and then we collaboratively look for funding."

In other instances, organizations from a potential host country were less specific regarding who they sought out as a partner. For example, Matt, the founder of a small volunteer organization, described how a representative from a Nicaraguan NGO had flown to Toronto for the Go Global Fair, which provided a venue for volunteer sending

organizations to promote their programs and answer the questions of potential volunteer participants. When describing the representative from the Nicaraguan organization, Matt explained:

They just showed up and they started handing out their cards and talking to people and all the power to them, that's great. It's a great venue that show...I know we are going to be talking with him a little bit further looking at possible working partnerships in Nicaragua. We have an exciting project in the area but theirs would offer something different that we could offer to our volunteers. There could be something there.

Not only were service projects and working relationships initiated in different ways, but the organizations also varied in terms of the process they followed to set up these relationships. For example, some organizations made their site selection by following a very methodical process. One example of a methodical approach was that taken by Kat who indicated that her organization often facilitated directors' meetings in a specific country. The purpose of these meetings was to invite directors representing various organizations in order to facilitate a conversation surrounding the training that her organization had to offer and to determine the level of interest among the participants. Once a partnership was formed with an organization, Kat then inquired about the possibility of developing an intern position.

The organization that Brent worked for also pursued a methodical approach, according to his report. He indicated that the national offices of his organization conducted a wide scan of preestablished project sites in order to determine which programs would benefit from ISL participants. Once this was determined, the

information was then conveyed from the national office to Brent, who facilitated ISL experiences for participants in the host community.

Other service projects were established through quicker or more informal processes. For example, although Laird had formed a partnership with a local NGO, it was clear that he had full control over the selection of service projects and took an informal approach to project selection. Laird explained the process of determining project sites after a natural disaster had destroyed two and damaged 12 of his organization's schools; he quickly and simply determined priorities by speaking directly with local leaders and teachers:

We talked with the teachers of the various schools and looked at the situation in a very relational, unorganized but effective manner and quickly determined what the priorities were...from there we were quickly able to sit down and say this is what has to be done. I think we underestimate the effectiveness of that.

Sustainability. The second theme found in relationship to exploring how and/or if reciprocity is being practically implemented into programs was *sustainability*. Further, findings related to this theme highlight some challenges practitioners faced when working with sustainability in mind. Respondents indicated working towards sustainability in two ways: (a) ensuring local ownership and management of service projects, and (b) long-term commitment to host organizations. These two aspects of ISL program facilitation are described below.

Local ownership. The first way respondents worked towards sustainable service projects was by ensuring that the service projects were ultimately owned and managed by the host organization. In other words, for long-term sustainability of service projects,

initiation, management, and final decisions must be locally driven. This belief was evident when Jarod contextualized the service work in which his program was involved. He stated with conviction, “it’s not a Canadian project, it’s a Colombian project.” Further, Jarod said: “From our experience it’s got to be sustainable, it’s got to be locally driven, it’s got to have local expertise. If not, it’s just going to phase out and people move on and you know, funding runs out.” Similarly, when Judd spoke of the importance of locally driven projects he observed: “Obviously the local initiatives are acting as the driving force and our volunteers are there just to help out.”

Although all respondents acknowledged the importance of service projects being driven by local initiative, the level of involvement of the sending organization varied. Some programs were designed in a way that placed emphasis on the participation and financial contribution of the participants to maintain sustainability. In contrast, other organizations worked to ensure that partner organizations remained operational under their own means and viewed the offering of extra hands from visiting participants as an additional add-on to what was already a functioning operation.

For example, Judd’s understanding of sustainability reflected a belief that visiting participants should not be relied upon to ensure sustainability of partner organizations.

When explaining sustainability, Judd indicated:

To me that means that in the unfortunate situation that the economy gets even worse and we go from sending 3,000 volunteers or 4,000 volunteers to sending 1,500 volunteers we would be able to leave a community and hopefully have had a very positive impact there but not create any type of dependability on our volunteers.

Conversely, some programs operated from the standpoint that visiting participants were essential for maintaining the sustainability of the service project. As previously mentioned, Matt's program design centered around his belief that visiting participants are the crucial link for his partner organizations that struggle to operate on a daily basis. Both Laird and Brent's programs, which revolved around construction projects, relied on the visiting participants and sending organization to fund and participate in manual labour to ensure the completion of the service project. Coincidentally, these programs resonated with the participation in service as an approach to leaving something behind and placed value on financial donations as an important program component. For example, in relationship to sustainability, Brent spoke of financial donations and creations of jobs for locals as a result of this building project. Brent indicated: "For each participant who goes we donate the equivalent of \$350 US to most countries and \$500 to some countries in Africa as a straight financial donation to the building project." Further, Brent indicated that his service projects create job opportunities for local residents and that the creation of jobs is something that the host community requests. As Brent explained, "the feedback we get from the host country is that we need to provide employment in that community. You know jobs that might not have been there."

Challenges with ensuring local control. Challenges began to surface as respondents elaborated on the belief that service projects should be ultimately owned and managed by the host organization. First, it was evident that inherent power imbalances existed between the sending organization and the partner organization. For example, when Jarod discussed the importance of local involvement in projects, he indicated that the presence of local expertise at the project site challenges the mentality that foreign

presence is required for projects to be taken seriously. This belief was evident when Jarod described the role of his ISL program related to the service project:

What we have said is that we want to back off and they told us people take it more seriously if it comes from a foreigner, which is really too bad. There are some amazing, intelligent, bright leaders in the country. Often they say to us well if it comes from us it's one thing but if you say it, it actually comes across as being more important.

Jarod, unimpressed by these statements, expressed the irony of the situation when he added, "And who are we? We're these gringos from Canada."

Unlike Jarod, who expressed negative outcomes connected to the power of the sending organization, Judd recounted a story where, to his mind, the power of the sending organization was viewed as a positive. Brent explained:

I've been in communities and been on a build site and you know at the closing celebration event all of a sudden, a local politician shows up because this is a cool thing and there are people from Canada here doing it. Before we leave the country they already have a donated piece of land. Whereas if we hadn't shown up in the country, the local politician would say, 'I'm not going to get involved.'

In relation to both statements, Kat indicated: "There is an inherent power imbalance of us being a funder, of the interns being from the West."

In relation to locally driven projects, respondents indicated the importance of not enforcing the values of the sending organization onto the partner organization. For example, Laird explained that one of the mistakes he has made over the years was to impose his values and not listen to the locals. As Laird explained:

We have ideas about how things should be done and many of them are very good ideas here in Canada. Down in Haiti they have ideas about the way things should be done and there necessarily has to be a compromise of perspective ideas to be able to make it work. Generally speaking if there has to be a compromise it has to be us and that is the hardest.

Further statements relating to not imposing values came from Jay who explained:

“We do not want to change them. We want them to change us.” Brent indicated: “It wasn’t us telling them what to do. It was coming from them. We said we would be there for support, let’s work together and do this, make it happen.”

Long-term commitment. The second way respondents discussed sustainability was through long-term commitment to partner organizations and/or the communities in which they operate. In other words, these respondents placed importance on maintaining relationships with partners and the communities in which they operate over long periods of time, versus changing partners, projects, and communities on a yearly basis. The importance placed on long-term commitment reflected respondents’ beliefs that work associated with ISL programs is relational and that it takes time to form strong trusting relationships with one another.

Findings indicated that the majority of respondents maintained long-term commitment with their partner organizations. With all that is involved in establishing partnerships, these respondents indicated that they do not tend to pick up and drop partners very easily. Part of the commitment comes from the recognition that it takes a substantial amount of time to establish a good partnership. For example, Matt indicated, “It took 6 to 8 months to develop a trusting relationship before we were willing to put

something together and work with them and finalize something on our website.”

Two of the 7 respondents who placed importance on establishing long-term relationships indicated that the idea was new and had not been practiced by their organizations in the past. Meg believed that the mentality connected with projects and partner organizations in the past had been “Oh, let’s travel all over the world, visit communities, see what we can do.” In contrast, her organization is now working with a new philosophy of “less is more” and has plans to narrow the focus to one or two projects in each country of operation. Meg indicated that she believes it is a huge challenge for organizations to realize that working with the same organization over time is more effective than having a short-term presence in various places around the world. Meg indicated that her organization’s current challenge is *how* to reduce the number of projects associated with her organization. She explained, “We are just overwhelmed by how do you choose between a community in Northern Thailand to a community in Cambodia?”

Throughout the interviews, respondents often spoke of the overwhelming need within the global community and that the goal of addressing everyone’s needs is unobtainable. With the need being very great, some respondents indicated that it is very easy to pick up international partners. For example, Matt explained that his organization could have easily made partnerships with hundreds of organizations. Matt indicated that he was working hard to ensure that he limits the number of partner organizations so that he can maintain personal communication with them all. Matt indicated that he speaks personally to his partners on a weekly basis.

Managing expectations. The third major theme found in relation to the practical implementation of reciprocity and the challenges inherent to this process was *managing expectations*. Findings indicated that for effective ISL facilitation, setting and managing expectations of all parties involved, the sending organization, the host organization, and the visiting participants, is critical. In other words, to foster a reciprocal relationship all parties involved must be aware of one another's intentions and underlying philosophies.

First, respondents indicated the importance of setting expectations with partner organizations regarding what each organization can and should do. Judd indicated:

We have to be very, very clear. There is a lot of education on the part of the in country staff members when we are building relationships. This is what we do, this is what you should expect from our volunteers, is this still something that you would be interested in?

For example, Judd's organization has a strict gift-giving policy. Although Judd indicated that oftentimes the need expressed by the partner organization is financial, his organization created a policy that prohibits any sort of financial exchange between the sending organization or its participating volunteers, as well as between the partner organization and the community in which they work.

Respondents also talked about the importance of managing the expectations of the visiting participants regarding the purpose of the ISL program and the role that they would play in the service project and host country. As they noted, expectations for visiting participants needed to be clearly defined prior to enrolling in the program. The way in which some respondents spoke of managing expectations was to place less value on the needs and wants of the visiting participants and more value on working to ensure

that priorities set in collaboration with the partner organization were upheld. For example, Carrie indicated that the experience of the visiting participants was important but did not take precedence over the objectives established by their partners. Carrie explained:

I mean the interests of the volunteers, to be honest, I mean I'm not sure we take into account their interests that much. We tell them what we have to offer, what our program is about. If it sounds good to you and you are into it, come aboard. But are we interested in catering to what our volunteer's interests are? Not necessarily.

Jay described a similar process as Carrie. As his was a credit-based university program, Jay was able to require that all interested potential participants go through an interview process prior to being accepted into the program. During the interview, Jay asks participants what they think the program is about. Jay indicated that if the students come with a false impression of the goals and objectives of the course, he happily clarifies. Jay indicated: "People can come with all kinds of motivations and there is nothing wrong with that as long as they understand my motivation."

Finally, Brent indicated:

We have gone into this very thoughtfully not to create a product that people want. We have gone into it the exact opposite side by saying this is what we are and this is what we can do and if you want to be here we would be happy to have you join us but we are not going to create. This whole danger of voluntourism that is coming up now scares me to death. We are not going to create an experience just to get more people through the door.

In contrast, Matt, representing one of the youngest organizations in this study, admittedly struggled to manage the expectations of his visiting participants and host partners. Matt's challenge was based on the fact that he ran his ISL program as a business and, as such, he depended on the revenue from visiting participants to be viable as an organization. He indicated:

I mean there is no secret about it. I am trying to create a company here and I am trying to create something that I can do full time that puts a roof over my head, food on the table but something that I am passionate about, something that I can continue to stay involved with.

While respondents indicated that they made a substantive effort to manage the expectations of participants prior to their visit to the host country, they also noted that expectations needed to be continually managed throughout the ISL program itself. This included managing the expectations of the visiting participant as to the purpose and relevance of the role they were to play at the service site. This effort was particularly important for programs whose service projects did not have immediate tangible results. For example, two respondents indicated that it was challenging to combat visiting participants' preconceived notion that a successful service project is only one where you can see physical difference in the form of a house or school.

Meg noted this mindset as a particular challenge in her ISL work, particularly as her programs focus on building relationships and understands service as taking various forms such as giving love or learning about another culture. In relationship to the challenge of managing expectations of visiting participants, Meg indicated: "You have team members that just want to do and build and that is the biggest challenge because

they are like were not doing anything, I can't see anything...where is this house I'm supposed to build?"

Similarly, Judd recounted a story of his visiting participants being confused about the relevance of a service project that involved painting the toenails of elders in the community. In Judd's perspective, this simple act increases emotional well-being in a community that neglects people in old age. Judd indicated that if the service project were contextualized in this manner prior to visiting participants arriving at the service site, it would be less likely to run into volunteers who feel that their service is purposeless.

Evidence of behavior that reinforces negative relationship was evident when interview participants spoke of the visiting participants not being prepared for what to expect during their time spent internationally. Two interview participants spoke of negative outcomes due to the visitors being ill-prepared for their time spent internationally. For example, Matt recounted observing visiting participants getting off a bus in an extremely impoverished village. The children of this village greeted the visiting participants with a hug. In response, the visiting participants pushed the children away because they were surprised by how dirty they were. Matt explained that these situations are heartbreaking and create a bad experience for both the visiting participant and the host community.

Part 3: Exploring the Challenging to Using Reciprocity as Guiding Philosophy

Part 2 of this chapter presents major themes found in relationship to the second research question, which explores the attempts ISL practitioners are making to practically implement the philosophy of reciprocity into their programs. Part 3 of this chapter will explore findings in relationship to the third research question that explores what

practitioners identify as the challenges to using reciprocity as the guiding philosophy of ISL programs.

From Part 1 of this study, it is clear that respondents were able to articulate their understanding of reciprocity within the context of their ISL programs. However, findings also suggested that respondents wrestled with aspects of the philosophy, particularly when it came to the idea of having to prove that reciprocity existed or was happening within their programs. This restlessness was particularly evident when respondents questioned the relevance of and ability to obtain quantitative evidence for ISL program outcomes such as awakening to global injustices, breaking down cultural stereotypes, and developing critical thinking skills.

To explore how respondents determined or measured the reciprocal nature of their programs during the interview, they were asked to elaborate on their evaluative procedures specific to their program. Findings indicated that the majority of respondents did not have a formal evaluative procedure designed to measure the impact and/or reciprocal nature of their programs.

Two respondents spoke of a formal evaluative procedure to measure the impact of their programs. Judd indicated that his evaluation was called the annual partner survey program. This partner survey allowed international partners the opportunity to evaluate the impact of the visiting participant on their organization. Judd explained that the survey is designed to address a number of program areas, including the impact the visiting participant had on achieving organizational goals, on the beneficiaries of the organization, on the community members, and on the families of the beneficiaries. Finally, he indicated, "I think the biggest thing in my mind is drawing that line of

figuring out how our volunteers are most effective as defined by our partner programs.”

Although Judd could articulate a formal evaluative procedure for measuring impact, upon elaboration of measuring reciprocity in his programs he suggested: “It’s a lot more difficult to quantify in terms of academic research. There are so many variables and those sorts of things.”

Brent, whose visiting participants help with construction of schools, indicated that the national offices of his program conduct the evaluation for his program. He explained that he receives feedback from the national offices surrounding visiting participants’ preparedness, including, for example, being properly briefed when they arrived at the service site. Like Judd, Brent was also restless when elaborating on reciprocity in programs. He questioned; “This idea of shared responsibility I think is a huge piece and how do you put a value on that in terms of reciprocity?”

Two participants indicated nonformal ways of evaluating programs. For example, Diane explained:

I mean the two partners that I work with in East Africa are members of the communities in which they work and live. Their work community is the host community and the project community is their community. So, how do we evaluate their effectiveness? I mean they are still working with us so essentially that is a pretty big statement.

Similarly, Matt suggested that evaluating programs is easy enough and equated evaluative procedures to ensuring that he stays in close contact with his partner organizations to confirm that everything is running smoothly. Upon elaboration of reciprocity within his programs, Matt suggested, “I don’t think there is any clear cut way

to making the balance perfect. It's a learning process and it's going to continue to be a learning process as long as I do this."

Meg also struggled with obtaining a measurable outcome of reciprocity in relation to her belief that the perception of benefit is culturally relevant. She explained that what she perceived to be a beneficial result might not be congruent with the perception of benefit of her partners. Furthermore, Meg questioned:

How do you know what they are getting out of it? I mean I have been involved with some projects that physically you can see this is what they got out of it.

They got a community center we helped them build. So, they got something out of it that is going to last them and we got something out of it, too. We got to learn their skills and they got to learn ours. So that exists there. This is hard.

Although findings suggested that respondents struggled with the idea of obtaining a measurable outcome of reciprocity, two respondents, Carrie and Kat, acknowledged with certainty that the visiting participants of their programs gain more from the ISL experience than those involved with the program in the host community. For example, Carrie explained, "My hope would be that we can create a situation where it is mutually beneficial and I think in some cases we do to a degree but I still feel that the balance of benefit is on the intern." Finally, Kat, who struggled with the cultural relevance of reciprocity indicated with conviction that: "There is definitely more of a focus on what we as Canadians are getting out of it and our projects abroad need more of a focus. We are getting more out of it than the communities we are visiting."

This chapter presented the findings in relationship to the research questions of this study. In the next chapter, I will discuss the most prominent themes within the findings

in relationship to the literature reviewed. Further, the next chapter will discuss the implications of the findings on the theory and practice of reciprocity in ISL programs.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to interpret the findings in relation to the body of literature and discuss the implications of the findings on the theory and practice of reciprocity in ISL programs. To stay congruent with the research questions, the first half of this chapter will be split into three parts. Part one will explore the perceptions of reciprocity in ISL programs, part two will explore the practical implementation of reciprocity, and part three will discuss the challenges of using reciprocity as a guiding framework. Each part will begin by interpreting the findings in relationship to the body of literature followed by a discussion relating to the implications on the theory and practice of reciprocity in ISL programs. The chapter will also include concluding thoughts followed by recommendations for practice and future research.

Part 1: Exploring Perceptions of Reciprocity in ISL Programs

Reciprocity as a concept entered the dialogue of international service learning in the mid 1990s as an attempt to provide a framework that could begin to combat the paternalistic tendencies of some ISL programs and, in turn, empower those residing in the host community (Kendall, 1990). Further, reciprocity was a response to the criticism that ISL programs were failing to focus on the impact they were having on the host community (Crabtree, 2008; Porter & Monard, 2001; Pusch & Merrill, 2008). In light of this, the results of my study suggest that the push towards a reciprocal framework within the ISL scholarly community may be reaching further into the world of the study respondents than indicated by previous studies. Findings from my study indicate that the study respondents were knowledgeable and informed on the debates that led to the emergence of reciprocity as a guiding framework and initially described it as it is

generically defined in the literature – as a relationship that nurtures not only the growth of the visiting participants but of equal importance, the growth and development of those involved with the program in the host community resonant with previous studies (Crabtree, 2008; Gaines-Hanks & Grayman, 2009; Porter and Monard, 2001; Pusch & Merrill, 2008). This conclusion from my study may be somewhat limited or not fully corroborated given my reliance on participants' reports. Participants may have responded favourably to some of my questions in support of their own programs or in light of wanting to make an impression on me. I also wonder about their use of the term reciprocity. Perhaps, reciprocity is not a good fit?

Beyond the generic definition of reciprocity found within the literature, it was evident that participants interpreted reciprocity in various ways. This difference was noted specifically between respondents who related reciprocity to transactional exchanges and those who related reciprocity to interdependence; in other words, a relationship that focused on long-term commitment and interconnectedness. For example, Pratt (1992), who provided a critical look into the philosophy, suggested that the ultimate goal of reciprocity is to “achieve equilibrium through exchange” (p. 80). Holland (2002) indicated that reciprocity involved “respect for different sources of knowledge, different contributions for each participant, a fair exchange of value, and the assurance of benefit to all” (p. 2). These two conceptualizations suggest that the essence of reciprocity is to nurture relationships that are transactional in nature. In contrast, Porter and Monard (2001) resonated with reciprocity through the Andean concept of *ayni*, describing relationships with those involved in ISL programs as one that is not based on one sole exchange but seen as an ongoing cycle of reciprocity. Further, the concept of *ayni*

revolves around interdependent living, focusing on long-lasting relationships rather than an exchange that happens once during an ISL program.

Findings from my study are resonant with the view that reciprocity can be perceived differently across various sectors within the ISL community. Unique to the literature reviewed for this study, this small group of respondents brought to life that reciprocity can be conceptualized in two different ways: (a) as education described as both exchange of knowledge and long-term commitment, and (b) as leaving something behind. Further, some respondents resonated with both conceptualizations. In addition, the way respondents framed and understood reciprocity directly informed their understanding of the purpose of participating in the service project component of their program. For example, respondents who resonated with reciprocity as education saw the purpose of participating in service work as a way to create space where both the visiting and host participants could learn something from one another. Those respondents who resonated with reciprocity through the idea of leaving something behind believed the purpose of participating in service was to provide an educational experience for students while at the same time creating something of tangible benefit to the host community. This variation in perception of reciprocity and subsequent motivational differences to participate in service work brings to light that although ISL programs represented in this study shared the same curricular components (i.e., predeparture, sojourn, and re-entry), the overarching design and goals of the program varied.

How can the word reciprocity be interpreted so differently? Kendall (1990) provides a useful starting point to unpack the reasons for this variation. Kendall differentiates between service as pedagogy and service as philosophy. For Kendall,

service as pedagogy is the specific methodology for the delivery of content. Service as philosophy is the worldview that ultimately shapes the curriculum, facilitation, and assessment of the course. In relation to the findings, this worldview could serve as the underlying reasons for respondent's resonance with service as education and/or leaving something behind. Further, Butin (2003) suggests that concepts are filtered through a person's worldview and shape how different components of ISL programs are perceived and understood. Butin suggests that service learning can be contextualized in four ways: technical, cultural, political, and poststructuralist. Butin suggested that a technical perspective involves a focus on the innovation itself. A cultural perspective focuses on the meaning ascribed to ISL programs. For example, how participants come to know themselves better through a service-learning program. The political perspective focuses on the power dynamics associated with service learning. The fourth and final perspective, poststructuralist, is concerned with how an innovation disrupts social norms. Butin highlights the importance of paying attention to these various views of service learning from multiple perspectives because it "can lead to alternative conceptualizations of foundational goals and pragmatic enactments" (p. 1684).

This section explored the findings in relationship to the literature revolving around the perception of reciprocity in ISL programs. In the next section, I will discuss how the findings implicate the theory and practice of reciprocity in ISL programs.

Implications on theory and practice.

Multiple conceptualizations of reciprocity. From both this study's findings and the literature reviewed, it is evident that multiple conceptualizations of reciprocity exist. It is important that the ISL community pays further attention to the variations of these

multiple conceptualizations. Understanding the root motivations that lead to the different conceptualizations is necessary to better understand the complexity of these programs.

By exploring the multiple conceptualizations of reciprocity and subsequent curriculum associated with each variation, ISL program designers and facilitators will be better able to broaden their perspective on the potential outcomes of ISL programs. In addition, a deeper exploration of varying motivations will help program designers and facilitators develop skills in order to better recognize the negative outcomes inherent within some of these conceptualizations. Generally speaking, this knowledge would allow ISL practitioners to be better able to adapt should an ethical issue arise during program design and delivery. However, it is also necessary to further explore the impact of these conceptualizations to determine the most effective model for change.

In relationship to this study, it would be necessary to determine the extent to which respondents have committed to their perspectives through a process of critical reflection on the impact of their programs. For example, did the respondents whose programs focused on education understand reciprocity as exchange of knowledge simply as a way to cover up the fact that they are engaging internationally for the purpose of personal learning? In our current global situation, can we afford to engage internationally simply for educational purpose? Or, on the contrary, are the respondents of these programs focusing on education ahead of the times? Is their resistance to helping a sign of deeper wisdom and a way of expressing their belief that community change should be driven from the local community without foreign assistance or intervention?

Or, is Laird, who suggested that reciprocity was “irrelevant” and “self-centered” and believed that change happens “when people share their time and mostly, their

money” more grounded in the reality of present global circumstances? With these questions in mind, I am left thinking: What should the ultimate goal of ISL programs be? Further, should we be creating guidelines for best practice in both facilitation and forming international partners? If so, how would we begin?

Part one explored the perception of reciprocity in ISL programs. In the next section, I will examine findings that related to the design and practical implementation of a reciprocal framework.

Part 2: Exploring the Practical Implementation of Reciprocity

The majority of the literature reviewed on the topic of practically implementing a reciprocal framework revolved around the call to further involve the voice of the host community in relationship to program design (Annette, 2002; Crabtree, 2008; Simonelli et al., 2004). This study does not include the perspective of the host community. However, from the respondent’s point of view, findings suggest that programs represented in this study have extensive involvement with those in the host community.

The most common example of this involvement that respondents provided was that all programs represented in this study formed a partnership with an international organization, whose role was to facilitate the service project component of the program. For example, some organizations partnered with a local organization strictly for the service component of the program while others placed their full trust, at least according to their reports, in the international partner to plan all aspects of the program. The way respondents described their international partners was in accordance to the recommendations found within the ISL literature pertaining to forming international partnerships. This literature suggests that partnering with local organizations is

invaluable to ISL programs due to their ability to effectively relay important information concerning cultural norms, politics, and perspectives on useful, relevant, and timely service projects (Crabtree, 1998, 2008; Porter & Monard, 2001).

Integration of the host community was also evident in the way respondents explained working towards sustainability within their programs. The first way respondents explained working towards sustainability was by ensuring that service projects were ultimately owned and managed by the host organization. For example, when Jarod contextualized the service project integrated into his program, he said with conviction “it’s not a Canadian project, it’s a Columbian project.” Further, in reference to engaging with service, Brent explained, “It wasn’t us telling them what to do. It was coming from them.” These statements suggest that respondents believe that decision-making power regarding ISL programs should rest with the international partner. Further, the value placed on local ownership parallels literature which suggests that service projects should be based on a timely and relevant need of the community that is ultimately determined by the host community/partner (Annette, 2002; Crabtree, 2008; Porter & Monard, 2001; Simonelli et al., 2004).

Further, and also worth emphasizing, involvement of the host community was also evident when respondents from my study indicated that to maintain sustainability, a long-term commitment to host partners and the communities in which they operated was essential. It is important to note, that although all respondents strongly resonated with the importance of committing long term to partner organizations, some respondents indicated that their organizations were not engaged in long-term relationships and that program restructuring was needed in order to work towards this desired goal.

Within the literature reviewed, it was suggested that in order to move towards a more ethical practice, ISL programs must shift program orientation from a traditional charity approach to one with an explicit focus on justice (Cermak et al., 2011; Mitchell, 2008; Wade, 2001). From the literature reviewed, a charitable approach is described as a temporary fix or band aid solution to problems (Crabtree, 2008). In contrast, programs with a justice approach work towards combating the root causes of social problems and, thus, work towards the elimination of need (Jacoby, 1996).

It is interesting to place findings from my study, related to sustainability in particular, with/in and across this charity to justice continuum. For example, some programs were designed in a way that placed emphasis on the participation and financial contributions of the visiting participants to maintain sustainability. In contrast, other organizations worked to ensure that partner organizations remained operational under their own means and viewed the offering of extra hands from visiting participants as an addition to what was already a functioning operation. Where do these differing perspectives of sustainability fall along the charity to justice continuum? Is the first step to sustainability to have foreign involvement and financial donations or is this idea strongly based within traditional notions of helping?

It is also interesting to relate the different motivations of participating in service (as a space for education or as a space for leaving something behind) to the charity to justice continuum. Is leaving something behind more of a justice approach than simply going to be educated? How can this be deciphered if justice is to work towards the limitation of need? Where do we place programs that do not keep this motivation at the forefront of their program delivery? These questions parallel Cermak et al. (2011)

question, “Is the dominance of charity over social justice within service-learning programs parallel to a dominance of service over activism?” (p. 6). In other words, does service work provide a space for activism (or social change)? Or, on the contrary, is participation in service work ultimately moving ISL programs away from the justice orientation they are seeking?

Although limited in content, some literature suggested that in order to better integrate the voice of the host community, it was necessary to bring knowledge of international development into the context of ISL programs (Crabtree, 1998, 2008; Simonelli et al., 2004). Crabtree (2008) suggested “an understanding of development’s complex history, some knowledge of comparative ideologies of development, and analysis of the contexts where we work will all be crucial if we are to engage in ethical and responsible ISL work” (p. 24). Crabtree (2008) indicated that domestic but especially international service, learning is directly related to community development. According to Crabtree (2008), the examples of leaving something behind described by respondents, such as the construction of a house, school, and educational interventions, are considered development work.

The majority of literature reviewed in relationship to these development projects revolved around questioning how effective they were in relationship to the impact they had on the host community. The most current example of this can be found in the findings of a recent study conducted by Tiessen and Heron (2012) entitled *Volunteering in the Developing World: The perceived Impacts on Canadian Youth*. To conduct this study, the authors conducted 50 interviews with young adults aged 18–30 who had recently returned from a volunteer, intern, or practicum placement in a developing

country. The findings of this study indicated that the majority of study participants felt they like they had a meaningful impact on the communities in which they were working; however, 34 participants also indicated that they experienced some negative outcomes as a result of their work and/or presence in the community. Tiessen and Heron also noted that those participants who experienced a negative felt that it was balanced out by the positive impact. Interestingly, participants of this study were asked if they could justify their overseas experience. Tiessen and Heron suggest that many of the responses could be encapsulated in this response:

I probably got more out of the experience than they had with me living there. It was definitely an exchange of ideas and an exchange of communication of people coming from different perspectives and I think there's growth on both sides but I probably got more out of it than they did with me being there (p. 52).

Tiessen and Heron further suggest that participants justified their experience through means of self development. For Tiessen and Heron, these results are significant as “they reflect the emphasis on the Canadian youth’s experience and very little on the impact on the host countries or host communities” (p. 52). They further suggest that the findings “..raise questions about the implications of programs that may do little to improve the quality of life of people in developing countries” (p. 52).

These findings are congruent with some respondents of this study who suggested that programs were ultimately geared towards benefiting their program’s visiting participants more so than the host community.

Respondents who resonated with reciprocity as education to the degree that they rejected the notion of helping within their program further added to the literature

reviewed which challenges the conceptualization of ISL programs as a tool to solve deep-rooted social problems (Boyer & Hechinger, as cited in Crabtree, 1998). Further, comments made by respondents who expressed they worked towards combating a paternalistic approach to service work complemented the literature that cautioned ISL practitioners to motivate their students to self identify as change agents and/or be motivated to help those involved with the program in the host community (Push & Merrill, 2008).

Finally, the model of participatory development was briefly mentioned in the literature. As previously mentioned in Chapter Two of this study, White (1994) suggested that participatory development has four goals: (1) a redistribution of power and control to the people; (2) consciousness-raising, or what Friere (1970/1972), called conscientizacao; (3) self-reliance and sustainability; and (4) knowledge sharing (as cited in Crabtree, 1998, p.184). Findings from my study suggest that respondents did not use the term participatory development when referring to the practical design of their programs; however, the way respondents described the practical implications of their programs, it was evident the above language was congruent with some of the concept's goals. For example, redistribution of power, control, and self-reliance to the local people can be seen with the value respondents placed on reports about local ownership. Consciousness-raising is seen within reports that ISL programs provide educational benefit for all involved. Finally, working towards sustainability was something all respondents deemed important within their programs.

Implications on theory and practice.

The interdisciplinary nature of ISL programs. If the ISL community wishes to

deepen their understanding of the complexities associated with engaging internationally they should consider and accept that ISL programs are multidisciplinary in nature. In particular, the field of international development and the understanding of justice as it pertains to ISL programs are in need of further exploration. In order to move forward, critical reflection is needed regarding what service means in ISL programs and how we determine the impact of those programs on the communities in which they are facilitated.

Both the findings and literature suggest that ISL programs are multidisciplinary in nature. There are many subjects and practices that shape both the theory and practice of ISL program philosophy and delivery. These include: international education, experiential education, critical pedagogy, sociology, and international development, to name only a few, each intersecting under the complex umbrella of ISL programs. The multidisciplinary nature of these programs is further compounded by the influence of the variety of practitioners who are able to utilize these experiences within their own frames of practice; for example, dentists and health care professionals to recently graduated high school students lacking professional skills.

Given the multidisciplinary structure of an ISL program, the findings and literature suggest that international development theory and practice is underemphasized within ISL literature. As previously discussed, this is particularly troubling due to the majority of these programs revolving around a community development initiative. Findings suggest that respondents are using language that is not incorporated within the current ISL literature; for example, sustainability, measuring the impact, and local ownership. These terms might best be explored within the literature that surrounds international development. Some of this literature specifically relates to foreign

intervention with an explicit agenda to build capacity within communities of need. As previously discussed, the service component of ISL programs incorporating a service project component intersect with this aspect of international development. With this in mind, it is clear that further exploration is needed regarding the relationship between ISL programs and international development. Is there room for collaboration? If not, what are ISL service projects doing to hinder this relationship?

This study's findings emphasized two distinct ways of looking at service. The first conceptualization is that service provides a space for education, while the second is that service provides a space for leaving something behind. These two conceptualizations offer a distinct difference in the goal of participating in service work. The findings that speak to the concept of leaving something behind can be directly related to the literature that questions the relevance and effectiveness of service projects. In other words, what is the impact of the service project in the host community? With the impact of service projects on the host community in mind, it is imperative that we deepen our understanding towards what justice means in ISL programs. Given the variations of conceptualizations as well as the differing motivations for participating in service, the term justice becomes a buzzword leaving service learning with limited direction and questioned legitimacy. This is particularly important given Tiessen and Heron's (2012) recent study, which suggests that participants of service programs do not contribute substantial value to communities in which they are working. We must take a serious look at whether ISL programs have the ability to positively impact the communities in which programs are facilitated.

Part 3: Exploring the Challenges to Using Reciprocity as Guiding Framework

Findings indicated that respondents wrestled with the philosophy of reciprocity, particularly when it came to the idea of having to prove that reciprocity existed or was happening within their programs. This restlessness was particularly evident when respondents questioned the relevance of and ability to obtain quantitative evidence for ISL program outcomes. The challenges expressed by respondents strongly relate to Keith (2005) and Johnson (2009) who both suggested that reciprocity is not the most effective framework in which to guide ISL programs.

Within the literature, the majority of controversy regarding the effectiveness of reciprocity as a guiding framework for ISL programs focuses on the concept's strong connection to exchange. For example, Johnson (2009) explained that exchange suggests that both parties involved are equal. She further suggested "this essential equality is often not the case, particularly with First/Third World partnerships" (p. 183). Finally, she suggested that the equality assumed by those involved with programs in Western countries "denies an appropriate recognition of the underlying power dynamics involved." (p. 183). As Keith (2005) noted, reciprocity is rooted in exchange theory. This exchange, according to Keith, suggests a calculable transactions involving social networks (material, social, psychic, political, and so on)." (p. 14). The calculable transaction that Keith brings to life strongly complements respondents who questioned the relevancy of reciprocity because it does not provide a space to include ISL program outcomes such as awakening to global injustices, breaking down cultural stereotypes, and the development of critical thinking skills.

Implications on theory and practice.

A shift from reciprocity to interdependence. In light of this study's findings, it is evident that respondents are wrestling with the relevance of reciprocity as a guiding framework for ISL programs. Generally, findings suggest that respondents valued relationships based on trust versus relationships built on the premise of mutually beneficial exchanges. Further, respondents struggled with having to prove through quantitative measurements various interpersonal and developmental outcomes associated with ISL programs. Finally, the value respondents placed on sustainability and long-term commitment to partner organizations contradicts the nature of a reciprocal relationship. For example, if respondents are working towards long-term commitment, it suggests ongoing presence and involvement with host partner, not a one-time exchange that the root of reciprocity suggests.

Previous discussion in this chapter suggests that a shift from reciprocity to interdependence is needed within the ISL community. This parallels Keith (2005), who suggests that interdependence is a more conducive term to employ in order to capture the essence of ISL programs. This parallels Porter and Monard (2001), who were guided by the Andean concept of *Ayni*. Unlike a contract, people enter into *ayni* or *ayllu*, with a neighborhood or community, as a relationship. Viewed as a continuous cycle, *ayni* is a worldview revolving around interdependent living and focusing on long-lasting relationships (Porter & Monard, 2001). For Keith, interdependence is connected closely to the need to redefine roles from server and served to "service learning relationship as partnership" (p. 16). Keith indicated that it is through relationship and dialogue with others that we "...come to know and fulfill a more complete sense of ourselves and the

world” (p. 16). With this in mind, Keith suggests, “the reaction to service that says, ‘I am so lucky’ speaks to failure because it assumes independence and separation: the other has nothing to do with me” (p. 16). Shifting from reciprocity to interdependence combats this attitude ultimately structuring curriculum to foster the understanding that the world’s problems are shared amongst all parties involved. In other words, what affects you affects me and, therefore, we need to work together to help each other. This idea strongly connects to Lilla Watson (1985) who suggested “If you have come here 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.” For me, this quote suggests that everyone in the world is constrained by some sort of oppression. It is obvious that some forms of oppression are far more detrimental than others. However, what this quote is saying is that we need each other's lessons to reach a state of personal consciousness that will ultimately serve to liberate ourselves from those forms of oppression and ultimately result in a new way of thinking and acting towards one another.

Given the above, reciprocity suggests a relationship based on transactions. In contrast, interdependence suggests a paradigm of continued support, long-term presence, an understanding that both parties are empowered to learn from each other, and, finally, the idea that the world’s problems, although they occur in different geographical locations, are ultimately shared by all. Working with interdependence in mind is the beginning of a shift of people’s attitudes away from the pillars of transactional behavior. This will result in a paradigm shift.

Concluding Thoughts

As described in the opening vignette in Chapter 1, this study was born from a

personal interaction I had with a local Haitian woman while participating in an ISL program in Haiti. This interaction left me theoretically conflicted regarding the way in which to engage internationally with people of lower economic status from my position of privilege. With this question in mind, I was drawn to literature that contextualized ISL programs as reciprocal. Throughout my time working on this study, I reflected on the difficult questions posed by ISL scholars: “How can we create cross cultural experiences that empower all participants while neither reinforcing nor exacerbating the social distance among them?” (Crabtree, 2008, p. 29). This question is echoed by Keith (2005) who suggests that the topic of reciprocity includes both moral and pedagogical considerations. She suggests the issue is “how to support relationships that are not only not exploitative, but contribute something of value to all participants, understanding that these kind of relationships and their attendant experiences are also responsible for a deeper kind of learning” (p. 14).

As anticipated, after completion of this study, I do not have answers to these questions. However, I am more grounded in the fact that these questions should not be answered in a generic way. In other words, in the context of ISL programs having an answer to these questions may indicate that the broader issue is not being considered.

My experience with this subject over the past three and a half years in writing, reading, and practice has led me to believe that we must treat every partnership individually. By doing this, we facilitate a space in which people can authentically express their thoughts, opinions, and concerns regarding all aspects of ISL program design and facilitation.

I initially engaged with this study wanting to problematize ISL programs in order

to improve practice and grow as an educator. Throughout this study, I experienced various feelings regarding ISL programs. At times I felt the need to reject ISL programs; however, at this time, I am choosing to create pathways in order to stay involved with these programs in an attempt to maximize potential.

In my full time job I was recently offered the opportunity to create a proposal for and ISL program for a high school in Toronto. After quite a long thought process I decided that I would accept the task. My decision to engage with the development of this program was based on my assumption that the popularity of ISL programs is on the rise and I believe it is better to stay engaged with programs in an attempt to continue learning and collaborating rather than fight to dismantle them. In the following and final section of this study I highlight recommendations for future research and recommendations for practice. The recommendations for practice are a representation of my learning and where I stand in regards to ISL programs, to date. These guidelines will also be used to guide me through the process of designing an ISL program. To me this is an important next step in order to bring this written work to life.

Recommendations

The following section highlights a variety of recommendations that can be synthesized from this study. Both recommendations for future research and future practice are offered. These recommendations are intended to help operationalize this study and offer helpful reminders of work to be done.

Recommendations for ISL program practice.

1. Communication of ISL goals between the sending and host organization. Prior to engaging with international partners and service projects, it is imperative

that multiple discussions are had relating to goals and expectations of the program with all parties involved. This discussion will help to decrease the amount of conflict that could arise in the field. It is much better to deal with conflicting viewpoints prior to engaging in the project as this could have detrimental effects on the program's quality.

2. Long-term commitment and vision of projects. Prior to engaging with international partners, programs must ensure that they are able to commit into a long-term relationship with the host partner and subsequent service projects within the local community that the host partner operates. Long-term commitment will allow for the development of trusting relationships. This is imperative for effective communication and authentic programs.
3. Creation of effective curriculum associated with a framework that supports interdependence. Curriculum associated with predeparture, in-field, and reentry will ultimately frame students' experiences and their subsequent actions. In order to combat recent criticism associated with the potential for exploitive behavior of participants within ISL programs, curricular agendas must be created with sensitivity and intention towards shifting the traditional notions of helping and reciprocity to one of interdependence.
4. The importance of evaluations. Findings of this study suggest that the majority of programs do not engage in structured evaluations with their host partners. Although it may seem like issues are being communicated outside of a formal evaluation, it is imperative to incorporate structured evaluations into new and existing ISL programs.

5. Promoting constant communication. ISL programs are facilitated in an environment where power dynamics between the sending and host organization can shift quickly. If these shifts are not recognized and dealt with in an effective way, they can ultimately lead to negative results. In an attempt to work towards a more ethical practice of ISL, it is imperative to foster open and honest dialogue between all parties involved.
6. Shifting from reciprocity to interdependence. Reciprocity in relation to ISL programs is effective in the sense that it helps to shed light on the idea that ISL programs should not solely be designed to benefit visiting participants. However, ultimately, reciprocity contradicts many of ISL programs goals. First, reciprocity suggests an equal exchange must take place. This is problematic given the fact that parties involved in ISL programs experience different economic privileges. Secondly, the transactional nature of reciprocity reinforces the other which ultimately fuels a I'm so lucky attitude held with the visiting participants. Finally, the nature of exchange, inherent to reciprocity, is not congruent with ISL goals related to sustainability and long-term commitment.

Recommendations for future research.

1. Greater inclusion of literature on international development. As previously discussed, further research is needed that explores the relationship and potential collaboration between ISL programs and the field of international development. The international development literature may help the ISL community deepen their understanding of how to create effective service

projects.

2. Inclusion of the international voice. A major limitation of this study was that it did not include the voice of the international partner and/or those who reside in the host community where ISL programs are facilitated. Further research is needed that explores the perceptions of those involved with ISL programs in the host community. One example of how this could be done is through testing the results of this study to see if they resonate with those involved with the host community. Greater understanding of the international voice surrounding their perception of reciprocity and the impact of the visiting participants and service projects would greatly contribute to the dialogue on effective and ethical ISL programs.
3. Techniques for assessing the impact of ISL programs. More research is needed on ways to record outcomes related to ISL programs. First, respondents were challenged by the idea of having to connect a numerical value to ISL outcomes associated with personal growth (e.g., increased critical thinking skills, cross cultural understanding, etc.). Secondly, further research is needed to identify techniques for assessing the impact of the service project on the host community (e.g., beneficiaries served, value placed by the community on project, etc.). These factors will become increasingly important as the popularity of ISL programs continues to grow and, as a result, will need to find ways to prove their credibility. Additionally, collaborative data collection procedures and techniques may offer more generalizable data sources for ISL program designers.

4. Comparison between different organizations offering ISL programs. Research participants involved in this study self identified with a number of different organizations offering ISL programs: NGO, formal academic institution, volunteer organization, not-for-profit and charity. A major limitation of this study was that it did not explore the differences and/or similarities in approach across these sectors. Further research is needed in relationship to comparing and contrasting ISL program approach across these organizations to determine if common themes in approach are evident. Deepening our understanding of this can lead to better conceptualization of the field of ISL programs and pinpoint organizational structures that are effective and/or problematic.
5. Better conceptualization of the charity to justice continuum in relation of ISL programs. The majority of ISL literature oversimplifies the charity to justice continuum and further, spoke of justice as simply being connected to curriculum associated with the visiting participants. Further research is needed that explores what it means to work towards justice through service and further, if charity as giving or “doing to” can be done in ways that could be more than a band-aid solution. Additionally, research is needed that expressly explores what justice means to those involved with the program in the host community.

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Appendix A

Letter of Invitation (printed on Brock U. letterhead)

(insert date)

Participant/Organization Name

Participant/Organization Address

Title of Study: From Philosophy to Strategic Approach: Exploring issues of Reciprocity in the Service Component of International Service Learning Programs.

Principal Investigator: Samantha Dear, Master of Arts Student, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Erin Sharpe, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University

Dear: [insert name]

Today, it is clear that the benefits of ISL programs on participants are positive. However, less is known regarding the process of integrating the perspective of the host community and the effectiveness service projects.

I, Samantha Dear, Master of Arts Student, from the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at Brock University invite you to participate in a research project titled *From Philosophy to Strategic Approach: Exploring issues of Reciprocity in the Service Component in International Service Learning Programs*. The purpose of this research is to collect information surrounding the practical steps taken by ISL programs/practitioners to determine and implement effective and meaningful service projects through ISL programs.

It is my hope that the results of this study will add to a body of emerging knowledge surrounding practical approaches towards achieving reciprocity through service within international service learning programs. I invite you to share your experience and knowledge about this important aspect through participating in a face-to-face interview that will take approximately 60 – 90 minutes of your time. Individual and/organizations names or defining characteristics will not be used in this study. Individual pseudonym will be attached to interview transcriptions.

[Insert organization/ practitioner] has been chosen to participate in this study because [Insert organization/ practitioner] your program involves three distinct components: international travel, community based service work and structured learning. Furthermore you/organization has been involved in ISL programs for over two years.

No companies or organizations have sponsored this study. Data for this study will be obtained from a variety of sectors offering ISL programs including universities, volunteer organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Brock University Research Ethics Officer (905 688-5550 ext 3035, reb@brocku.ca).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly or my advisor.

Thank you,

Samantha Dear, Dr. Erin Sharpe

MA Student, Brock University, Associate Professor, Brock University

(289) 213-8901, (905) 688-5550 ext. 3989

sd08au@brocku.ca, erin.sharpe@brocku.ca

Appendix B

Interview Guide

Welcoming

[Insert name/organization] thank you for participating in this study. For the next 60 – 90 minutes I will be asking you questions surrounding your experience in ISL programs, specifically related to the service projects. The interview will start when I push the ‘record’ button and will terminate when I push the ‘stop’ button. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Introductory Questions

1. How long have you been involved in ISL programs?
2. What attracted to and/or brought you to ISL?
3. Where have these programs taken you in the world?
4. A lot of what I have been reading this year has talked about the importance of reciprocity in ISL. What does reciprocity mean in ISL?
 - Prompt- Is it found within the service component of ISL?
 - Prompt- Is it found within the partnerships of ISL?
 - Prompt- Is it found within the participants of ISL?

General information pertaining to ISL Programs

5. In your own opinion, what is the purpose of ISL programs?
6. What are the barriers you have experienced towards achieving this purpose?

The Service Component of ISL Programs

7. Tell me about the service component of your program(s).
 - a. Prompt – what is one of the current service projects that you/your organization is involved with?
 - b. What is the purpose of this particular service project?

Program Development

8. How do you choose your projects?
 - Prompt – How do you work the perspective of the host community into your decision?
 - Prompt - What are the most important aspects of choosing a project site?
 - Who was involved in setting it up, and what kind of role did they play?
9. What do you see as the purpose or goals of the service component of your ISL? How well do you think your ISL meets these goals?

10. In your mind, what does an effective service project look like? Why do you say that?
11. What are some of the factors that impact the ability of ISL to be effective in its service? Why do you think that is a factor?

Concluding Questions

12. Can you describe an ISL program that in your opinion was unsuccessful?
 - Prompt- Was it in the service component?
 - Prompt- If so, what would you recommend should have been done differently?
13. Can you describe in your opinion an ideal service project?
 - Prompt -What would it look like?
 - Prompt -Who would be involved?
 - Prompt -What purpose would it serve?

Is there anything else you would like to discuss? Is there anything that you think I missed to help me better understand your perspective on ISL program?

Appendix C

Revised Interview Guide

What is the purpose of your organization?

Has this purpose changed over time?

If yes how?

In terms of how you incorporate your volunteers within you programs?

In terms of the projects you are involved with?

How do you choose your project sites?

What are the most important aspects of measuring the effectiveness of projects?

What are the barriers/challenges you have experienced with this?

How does your organization determine the need?

What are the barriers/ challenges associated with this?

What are the strategies used to overcome these barriers?

How do you balance the interest of your student/volunteer and the host community?

Have you had any challenges with this?

What is the role of your volunteers in your organization?

How do you find out the perception of the host community?

How do you assess this?

How do you evaluate your projects?

Does the term reciprocity meaning, equal exchange for both participate and host community resonate with you? What does reciprocity mean to you?

Appendix D

Consent Form

(printed on Brock U. letterhead)

(insert date)

Participant Name

Participant Address

Title of Study:

Principal Investigator: Samantha Dear, Master of Arts Student, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Erin Sharpe, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University

Dear: [participant name]

WHAT'S INVOLVED

As a participant, you will ask to take part in a face-to-face semi structured occurring at a convenient location. This interview will take approximately 60 – 90 minutes of your time. The interview will follow an interview guide that has been pre-approved.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

By participating in this study you will be adding to the limited literature surrounding practical pathways towards achieving effective and meaningful service in the communities that International Service Learning programs like yours operate. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with the participation of this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information that you provide during this interview is confidential. Individual names and organizations will not be used. Interview transcriptions will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the faculty supervisor and electronic transcriptions will be kept on the researchers computer protected by a password. Access to data associated with this study will be restricted to the Principal Investigator of this study and the Faculty Supervisor.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. In addition, the interview can be terminated at any point if you so desire to do so.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

The results of this study may be written into papers that appear in professional journals. Results may also be incorporated in professional conference presentations. The results of this study will be ready by January 2011. I will send you a complete copy of the results.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If you require further information, please contact the Principal Investigator or the Faculty Supervisor using the contact information provided above. If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office by phone at (905) 688-5550 ext. 3035 or by e-mail at reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

Samantha Dear, Dr. Erin Sharpe

MA Student, Brock University, Associate Professor, Brock University

(905) 932 6863, 905-688-5550 ext. 3989

sd08au@brocku.ca, esharpe@brocku.ca

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I know that I may change my mind and can withdraw from this consent at any time.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____