


Spring 2014

Perspectives of International Students Performing Service-Learning in the United States: A Case study With Amizade

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**PERSPECTIVES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS PERFORMING SERVICE-
LEARNING IN THE UNITED STATES: A CASE STUDY WITH AMIZADE**

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
May 2014

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ABSTRACT

PERSPECTIVS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS PERFORMING SERVICE-LEARNING IN THE UNITED STATES: A CASE STUDY WITH AMIZADE

Suzanne Beth Unger
Old Dominion University, 2014
Director: Dr. Shana Pribesh

Past research has demonstrated consequences of service-learning and impacts of service-learning experiences on students and community members in domestic and international settings. Researchers have this topic in developing countries; however, few have studied international students' perspectives on doing service-learning in a developed country. This qualitative study aims to determine how students recognize their lives, and lives of community members in need are impacted as a result of their Amizade Global Service-Learning program in the United States. The investigation employs Cone and Harris' (1996) conceptual framework of service-learning to examine interpersonal, socio-cultural, and psychological components of the experience. Data were collected using three focus groups and two individual interviews with students, three interviews with adult youth workers, and three audio recorded reflection sessions. Participants included two separate groups from Ireland who did service-learning in the United States. Results indicated international service-learning in the United States positively influenced students' relationship development, leadership, behavior, and tolerance. Students also dispelled stereotypes and subsequently partook in and planned future altruistic endeavors.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Howard and Nancy Unger, who have supported me to face every opportunity at the fullest degree. Since my childhood, they modeled strength, drive and compassion, all of which have become embedded in my heart. My Dad and Mom also first encouraged me to seek ways of bettering lives of others. This philosophy led to my passion for service-learning, and my enthusiasm for furthering youth to become positive change-makers in society. I also feel indebted to those experiencing homelessness, those seeking to end homelessness, and those educating others to make a difference for people in need. Others' willingness to share their stories and knowledge with my students and myself became the driving force behind this research opportunity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people who have contributed to the successful completion of this dissertation. I extend my gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. Shana Pribesh, who graciously took the lead on this research after becoming inundated with service-learning practices as a committee member for my comprehensive examination. She is a true inspiration with her calming nature and endless support. In addition, I want to thank Dr. Linda Bol, who encouraged me to apply to this PhD program, and became my advisor and biggest ally throughout the experience. Dr. Bol's flexibility and willingness to go beyond her traditional realms of research allowed me to find new passions. Furthermore, I wish to express thanks to Dr. Daniel Dickerson. Through his courses and guidance, I have learned to clearly define academic goals, and focus my studies on authentic experiences.

Moreover, I feel appreciation for my colleagues at Amizade Global Service-Learning for allowing me to use their programs for data collection. Specifically, I want to recognize Brandon Blache-Cohen and Dr. Eric Hartman whose extensive knowledge of service-learning research, and personal desire to make advancements in the field drove me to particular areas of study. Finally, I want to thank Stephen Hughes who helped the organization develop this service-learning program, brought Irish students to the United States, and maintained constant contact with me to ensure the successful completion of all interviews and focus groups. Each person has added so much to my academic career and my life.

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PERSPECTIVES OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS PERFORMING SERVICE-
LEARNING IN THE UNITED STATES: A CASE STUDY WITH AMIZADE

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Violations of human rights, drug abuse, environmental trauma, and poverty remain concerns throughout the world. Due to such unfortunate circumstances, youth around the globe often seek opportunities to contribute to society through service-learning. The purpose behind service-learning involves students identifying an actual need or problem in the community, and through curricular objectives posed by school systems and educators, leading an initiative to help address the problem (Billig, 2005; Gonsalves, 2010). In the United States, 25 percent of elementary and secondary schools integrate service-learning as a major part of their curriculum (Gonsalves, 2010). More than half of public schools, and almost 80 percent of private schools in the United States offer service-learning to students (Billig, 2005).

History of Service-Learning

Slavkin (2007) notes service-learning has existed for many decades under various names. The concept of service-learning arose as far back as Aristotle and Plato who focused on developing good citizens through education (Parker et al., 2009). Most researchers, however, consider John Dewey the originator of school-based service-learning because of his democratic theories, and his implementation of experiential education in 1938. Experiential learning enabled students to think more critically by participating in discourse, partnerships, and leadership development (Crabtree, 2008;

Parker et al., 2009; Terry & Bohnenberger, 2004). The term “service-learning” first came into use in 1969 by members of the Southern Regional Education Board, who defined it as an amalgamation of academics and authentic tasks that support others’ needs. This new perspective disputed submissive teaching and increased social and community insights (Cook, 2008).

Working from the principle that youth can contribute to improving society, the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC), comprised of adults and students, began to develop new modes of service-learning education in 1983 (Kielsmeier, 2011). In addition, The National and Community Service Acts of 1990 and 1993 have prompted universities in the United States to focus on volunteerism along with traditional learning, and encouraged students to begin addressing worldwide problems (Primavera, 2008; Terry, 2004).

With the proclaimed support of community service from recent U.S. Presidents, including Presidents George H. Bush in 1990, Bill Clinton in 1993, George W. Bush in 2001, and Barack Obama in 2009, statistics regarding student involvement in service-learning have surfaced (Kielsmeier, 2001; Terry, 2004). For example, funding from Serve America allows over 1.5 million students from kindergarten through the university level to dedicate approximately 20 service-learning hours each school year in their local communities (Gonsalves, 2010). Additionally, over half of college students have reported involvement in volunteerism (Primavera, 2008). Furthermore, the Corporation for National and Community Service states approximately 35 percent of high schools, 25 percent of middle schools, and 20 percent of elementary schools incorporate service-learning into their curriculum (2011). While this is down from 46, 38, and 25 percent

- respectively in 2004, researchers credit this to increased time teachers dedicate to preparing students for standardized tests in reading and mathematics (Kielsmeier, 2011). In Billig, Root, and Jesse's (2005) review of service-learning, they cite half of all public schools, and 80 percent of private schools incorporate service-learning. Moreover, 40 percent of schools consider service-learning a critical part of their curricula (Gonsalves, 2011).

Impacts of Service-Learning

Service-learning experiences can have various positive effects on student participants. For example, Billig (2000) described benefits that include more personal and social responsibility, higher self-esteem and self-efficacy, improved academics, fewer discipline problems, enhanced relationships with adults, greater sensitivity to others, and increased acceptance of cultural diversity. In addition, students often experience better communication, organization, and leadership proficiency (Ash, Clayton, & Atkinson, 2005; Billig, 2000; Carver, 1997; King, 2004; Lai, 2009; Lee, 2005). Although much research indicates benefits to service-learning, if not executed well its impacts may prove no greater than traditional learning (Billig, 2005).

Though literature on service-learning acknowledges benefits to students and schools, one must also evaluate the value such experiences have on communities (Crabtree, 2008). Cuban (2007) links service-learning to social justice, whereby all stakeholders within the classroom and communities find value in the experience; and systemic issues become evaluated, changed, and addressed. In addition, service-learning should prove reciprocal, without highlighting those serving versus those being served. Rather, all stakeholders should offer different perspectives on their values, address

tensions, and collaborate to determine learning outcomes of the experience and community needs. True partnerships should be formed throughout the service-learning process (Keith, 2005). To create a valuable experience, communications between students and community members must remain open and positive (Hui, 2009).

International Service-Learning

International service-learning (ISL) is one type of service-learning experience meant to increase global citizenship by combining community service with academic instruction in an international setting (Crabtree, 2008). Keith (2005) described how globalism entails creating a system of values, inclusive of social and political associations, that focus on universal responsibilities. Such ideals afford support for service-learning experiences that encourage multicultural and global citizenship, and economic and social justice. This philosophy stresses the relationships people throughout the world have to one another and their responsibility to seek equity and justice. Furthermore, globalism allows dominant groups to acknowledge the voice of those who historically felt marginalized.

Research has identified that many international communities experience problems inclusive of dominance struggles created by issues related to social standing, race, gender, cultural mores, and poverty. Such communities may benefit from collaborations with others through service-learning to help assuage these problems. Service-learning within the lens of globalization allows students to take action and support efforts toward positive change; it also enables them to develop relationships with others and gain a sense of self (Keith, 2005). Similarly, studies have mainly examined the impact of service-learning pertaining to students living in the United States or other developed countries.

Typically such youth either support their local communities or travel abroad to a developing country for such experiences.

Consequences of Student Nationality on Service-Learning

Dolby (2008) found that during service-learning students' nationality impacted how they processed and comprehended their experiences abroad. She discussed how American students typically focused on discovering their own and their country's place in the world, and therefore did a lot of internal reflection to determine significance of their national identity in the perspective of studying abroad. This limited their ability to understand themselves as global citizens. On the other hand, Australian students did not tend to focus on how national identity fit into their study abroad program, which enabled them to more easily integrate in various contexts. Dolby also discovered that one's national background determined how service-learning fit into their lives and persona before, during, and after the study abroad experience. For example, the researcher attributed this to how schools in the United States offer study abroad programs to become more sensitive to other cultures, while schools in Australia typically recruit international students to gain revenue for the country (Dolby, 2008).

A gap in research exists, however, on effects of service-learning whereby international students come to the United States. Questions also remain as to whether international students perceive a need to support communities in the United States since historically this is not a commonly adopted viewpoint. Thus, researchers of this study sought to examine differences in ideas about global citizenship, culture, and community, and whether international service-learning of this kind in the United States lead to results comparable to aforementioned traditional service-learning.

Framework for Current Research

Using Cone and Harris' (1996) theoretical framework, researchers examined psychological, interpersonal, and socio-cultural aspects of service-learning. According to this framework, participants should enter into their service-learning experience as learners with different skills, backgrounds, life values, attitudes, and expectations.

Educators will then help participants gain tools to prepare participants cognitively and pragmatically for the experience in order to maximize their learning once the program begins. Critical reflection through oral and written forms should help participants process the-service-learning experience, as well as mediated learning. Finally, Cone and Harris (1996) contend participants will conclude their service-learning experience as critical thinkers who recognize their function in a complex society.

Through a case study with the nonprofit organization Amizade, this research examined perspectives of international students and their adult leaders who traveled to the United States to participate in service-learning. Researchers asked participants about their perspectives of positive and negative impacts to themselves and the communities in which they served, cultural reflections, proven or disproven stereotypes, and potential for future philanthropic involvement. Amizade has the mission to empower individuals and communities through worldwide service and learning. Domestic and international students come to various locations in the United States to learn about societal issues. The program includes community-driven service, deliberate learning, intercultural immersion and exchange, consideration of global citizenship, and participation in reflective inquiry. Amizade programs in Washington D.C. focus on hunger and homelessness issues and involve working in food kitchens, preparing meals for homeless populations, listening to

talks from formally homeless individuals, disseminating food and blankets to those currently living without shelter, and examining historically “invisible” populations. In contrast, while in West Virginia students participate in an outdoor adventure course and do cultural exchange activities with local youth. Similarly, in Pennsylvania, Amizade participants gain leadership skills through a formal workshop and support the environment through a community garden project.

By learning about poverty and homelessness in Washington D.C. through a historical and present-day lens, Amizade exposes groups to problems surrounding homelessness and types of support currently received by this population. Amizade’s goals include a hope for individuals to break down stereotypes of those experiencing homelessness, serve the local population in need, and bring knowledge and passion back to home communities in order to make a positive impact beyond this experience. Similar goals exist in other Amizade service-learning locations that focus on additional societal issues. Research suggests a benefit of such service-learning to communities and domestic students, however, does not indicate whether differences in nationality will result in comparable merit (Bernacki & Jaeger, 2008; Billig, 2000). In a time when educators often incorporate service-learning in curricula, and students increasingly learn about becoming global citizens, further research should examine whether value exists when international students come to the United States for such experiences.

Research Foci

By examining participant perspectives regarding their Amizade Global Service-Learning experience in the United States, this study focused on whether involvement in service-learning bears value to international students and community members.

Participants included international students and their adult leaders who facilitated and chaperoned the trip. Researchers will address the following foci:

1. How does home culture impact the Amizade international service-learning experience in the United States?
2. What are students' perspectives about the consequences to themselves and others during their Amizade international service-learning experience in the United States?
3. What are students' perspectives about how their Amizade international service-learning experience modified preconceived notions about the population being served?
4. How did the Amizade international service-learning experience affect students' conceptions of their future altruistic behavior?

Overview of Design and Methods

This study used the research paradigm of social constructivism to explore students' perspectives of their Amizade international service-learning experiences in Washington D.C., Morgantown, West Virginia, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, three of the organization's service-learning sites in the United States. The purpose of this study is to describe the value of the service-learning experience to students and communities. Based on a case study research tradition, the researcher explored international student and adult leader perspectives. Both groups provided perceptions because while students are the targets of service-learning adult leaders offered insights into individuals' growth based on previously established relationships and goals, and participation in facilitating reflection activities.

Participants came from Ireland. The high school aged students registered as a group for the Amizade international service-learning experience. They participated in activities throughout the Washington D.C. community in order to better understand and serve those living in poverty, Morgantown to enhance personal development and relationships, and Pittsburgh to gain leadership skills and positively impact the environment. Each participating group determined which and how many students attended the experience, provided adult leaders, and were accompanied by an assigned Amizade staff member.

The researcher used purposive sampling procedures to obtain a sample of Amizade students. Through observation, the researcher determined which students were engaged throughout the service-learning, and selected those information-rich cases to better inform questions. Twenty-six students and three adults participated.

The researcher used qualitative focus groups to collect data from students. She conducted individual interviews with adult leaders. Further, the researcher analyzed group reflections that were completed nightly. To find themes related to the value of service-learning experiences to international students coming to the United States, focus groups, interviews, and audio taped nightly reflections were conducted with youth and adults from two separate Irish groups.

Initially, the researcher analyzed data from interview transcripts and contact summary sheets multiple times. The first analysis had a broad focus with preliminary topics identified. Further examination lead to topic clusters and the development of categories. The researcher performed simultaneous data collection and analyses that compared each of the two Amizade service-learning groups.

Strategies for Enhancing Trustworthiness and Limitations

By using various means, the researcher established the credibility, transferability, and dependability of the study. Detailed field notes were taken during focus groups and interviews to record descriptions, researcher reactions and thoughts. Data collection took place over eight days in which group experienced service-learning in the United States. The prolonged engagement increased trustworthiness during later focus groups and interviews. Throughout data collection, the researcher did member checking, and asked for clarification of participant comments. For the duration of the study, the researcher maintained an audit trail.

Although the researcher implemented methods to ensure trustworthiness of the study, limitations still arose. For example, each group had some autonomy in determining group dynamics and participation level; therefore the possibility of eliminating some suggested elements of reflection existed. Another limitation included preconceptions based on researcher bias that may have arisen due to prior experiences of the researcher. Finally, the role of the researcher as an investigator created an unbalanced power dynamic with participants during the interview.

Overview of Chapters

This chapter introduced concepts and issues related to service-learning experiences. It addressed impacts service-learning has on students and community members, and acknowledged the need to identify whether value exists for international students serving communities in the United States. Additionally, Chapter I proposed an overview of the study. In Chapter II, the researcher synthesizes past research to present a background on service-learning, and expresses the need to further study impacts of

coming to the United States to learn about and support communities. Chapter III provides a detailed description of the study, and rationale behind methodologies used. Chapter IV reveals results of the study, and Chapter V discusses those findings in relation to past literature, limitations, and implications for future research and consequences to the field of service-learning.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter will present findings from previous studies that contribute to research on service-learning. It will begin by defining service-learning and related strategies, objectives, and perspectives for its use. It then proceeds with identifying who currently uses this teaching and learning method. It will also further discuss positive and negative consequences to implementing service-learning, and highlight the impact service-learning has on students and community members. Finally, the researcher will describe the theoretical framework guiding the study.

Definitions and Perspectives

For purposes of this study, service-learning is defined as an active learning experience whereby student participation in solving a genuine societal problem mutually benefits themselves and the community in which they serve. Research indicates service-learning has value on multiple levels. It constitutes an active education that enables youth to enhance their communities (Carver, 1997; Crabtree, 2008; Kielsmeir, 2011). For students to actively participate in gaining knowledge, they must clearly comprehend educational goals, and tasks must prove challenging (Billig, Root, & Jesse, 2005). Through service-learning, students should identify a problem in their communities, and become personally invested in order to solve an authentic issue (Billig, Root, & Jesse, 2005; Carver, 1997; Gonsalves, 2010; Roschelle, Turpin, & Elias, 2000). Goals of implementing instructional strategies of service-learning include enhancing critical

thinking, building community connections, and supporting teachers to more successfully educate students (Kielsmeier, 2011). Furthermore, both communities and students should mutually benefit from the service-learning experience (Crabtree, 2008).

Eight key elements of service-learning exist (Slavkin, 2007). First, students must feel empowered to express their voice. This gets them involved in the community, allows for increased occasions to learn, and affords them an opportunity to reflect before and after experiences (Billig, Root, & Jesse, 2005; Slavkin, 2007; Terry & Bohnenberger, 2004). Second, the service must prove meaningful (Lai, 2009; Slavkin, 2007), whereby students collaborate to achieve a goal that benefits the community, enhances civic engagement, and prepares them for potential challenges during the service-learning experience. Students should also consider strengths of peers, educators, and community partners in order to make the greatest impact. Third, to improve comprehension and transfer knowledge, students should reflect through daily logs, journals, peer discussions, audiotapes, and time sheets. (Lai, 2009; Slavkin, 2007). Fourth, prior to students starting the service-learning experience, educators must identify authentic community needs (Carver, 1997; Slavkin, 2007). By recognizing these actual needs, students' work has more value, and they can see real impact. Slavkin (2007) noted educators also should assess student learning inclusive of contribution to activities, engagement, quantity of work, collaboration efforts, promptness, and preparedness. Fifth, teachers must find connections between the service-learning experience and academic standards for which they teach. This allows for more meaningful learning as connections build between past knowledge and current learning (Slavkin, 2007). Sixth, collaboration between schools, communities, and parents must arise to produce reciprocal regard, gratitude, and

awareness (Slavkin, 2007). Seventh, teachers must evaluate student learning, and communities must see the impact of service-learning (Billig, Root, & Jesse, 2005; Slavkin, 2007). Eighth, students should receive public recognition for their service. This is positive for them personally, and may result in additional members of the community supporting the identified cause. Slavkin's (2007) eight elements of service-learning appear aligned with Billig, Root, and Jesse (2005) who stress students must plan, take action, reflect, then celebrate their experience.

Social Justice Perspectives of Service-Learning

Service-learning occurs on a continuum from social change to charity (Crabtree, 2008). One goal of service-learning includes bringing students from participating in charity, to becoming involved in global issues and service, and imparting change in communities (Crabtree, 2008). Typically, through such aforementioned charity, students do not analyze the intricacies within the community, causes of community needs, and outcomes of the identified problems (Cuban & Anderson, 2007). Camacho (2004) contends the promotion of social change encompasses the main objective of service-learning: Moreover, service-learning that involves social change is often political, and at this end of the continuum, students become involved with superficial and fundamental societal problems (Cuban & Anderson, 2007; Hui, 2009). Research indicates only one percent of service-learning experiences engage students in the view toward societal change (Cuban & Anderson, 2007).

By narrowing the scope of societal change to focus on social justice, one can view service-learning through a different lens. For example, service-learning can focus on critical theory, and seek to evaluate and change society, not just examine it (Patton,

2002). Cuban and Anderson (2007) examine social justice from a Jesuit perspective, and define the concept as a focus on prejudice between social classes. This outlook acknowledges the urgency of supporting low-income people. The authors further argue how such people have a right to respect, fruitful jobs, and decent pay. By incorporating social justice into service-learning, educators focus on identifying current community needs, attending to group dynamics, incorporating students' opinions in discourse, and promoting social insights and action (Cuban & Anderson, 2007). Integrating social justice into service-learning also enhances students' ability to develop their own character (Keith, 2005).

Globalization and International Service-Learning

Another lens through which to examine service-learning is globalization. Keith (2005) discusses three forms of globalization: 1) *neoliberalism* where the main focus of free market economics establishes society under the assumption that people choose to elevate their self-interest; 2) *time-space compression* where the "communication revolution" impacts the time and space people experience, and leads toward an unvaried society; and 3) *globalization* where developing values of a culture emphasize discourse, variance, and group responsibility for the world. Each of these categories has different meaning for service-learning experiences. Neoliberalism, for example, requires action-oriented service-learning in areas where the government does not show support for its citizens. Alternatively, time-space compression involves service-learning where a diverse group bands together to address local and global problems to enhance regions. Finally, with globalization, service-learning involves advocating for heterogeneous and global citizenship, and financial and civil justice.

International service-learning exists as an extension of the description of globalization. This type of learning occurs in an international setting, and incorporates educational instruction with community service. Involved participants should enhance their international comprehension and global citizenship (Crabtree, 2008; Prins & Webster, 2010). Students strengthen these skills by interfacing with community members and working on projects that positively impact the community (Prins & Webster, 2010).

Putting international service-learning in the context of globalization allows students to understand struggles of people unlike themselves, open their eyes to an interconnected world, and encourage them to feel responsibility for the world's citizens (Keith, 2005). Ideally, through international service-learning experiences of this kind, reciprocity should exist between those serving and those receiving services. Furthermore, all stakeholders should identify components of learning to ensure contributions prove fair, values get addressed, and everyone benefits. The quality of the service-learning experience is lacking if students ultimately feel more fortunate than community members to whom they serve; it means they did not integrate into the community well and felt like outsiders. To prevent such negative outcomes, a mutual respect for perspectives and backgrounds should exist (Keith, 2005). Research might begin to answer the question whether students can successfully and positively impact the lives of community members around the globe, regardless of a student's country of origin or the location of the service-learning experience.

Impact of Service-Learning on Students

Considerations for enhancing service-learning

Research on service-learning has found varied outcomes for students. While many studies report benefits of service-learning, Billig (2005) contends if not executed well, it has no greater positive effect than a traditional learning experience in school.

Furthermore, service-learning experiences have increased positive effects if they last longer; however, semester-long programs benefitted students more than year-long programs. Service-learning allows students to apply knowledge from the classroom to an authentic learning situation in their community. Through such community connections, students also develop concern for others (Terry & Bohnenberger, 2004). In fact, in Primavera's (2008) study of students involved in a Head Start service-learning experience, participants felt more satisfied with themselves, and judged they made a difference in the lives of others when they began to notice advancements in children's language. In addition to their sense of self-development, students involved in service-learning gained more academic, communication, organization, and leadership competence (Ash, Clayton, & Atkinson, 2005; Billig, 2000; Carver, 1997; King, 2004; Lai, 2009; Lee, 2005). Reflection proved an important component to the development of these skills, and students pondered, discussed, or applied their experiences an average of 1.7 hours for every hour of service-learning (Primavera, 2008).

The importance of reflection during service-learning experiences became evident in Porter and Monard's (2001) qualitative study of service-learning in an international setting. Researchers studied 16 undergraduate college students and four coordinators. At

the beginning of the service-learning class, students participated in a seminar on philosophies and applications of service-learning. Twice a week, students wrote reflections about the course, and received relevant comments from coordinators. The class also included an Alternative Spring Break, where students discovered community needs abroad and became assimilated into the community. Qualitative data collected included students' responses in interviews, in-class writings, arts-based projects, and collaborative reports. Throughout the process, the researchers took detailed field notes, and videotaped and transcribed interviews. Reflection proved critical in understanding challenges to the pedagogy of service-learning and difficulties in developing reciprocity between benefits to students and community members.

Internal and behavioral improvements to students

Internal and outward improvements to students have also resulted from service-learning. For example, according to Vernon and Ward (1999) students' psychosocial and moral reasoning improves. In a study by Bernacki and Jaeger (2008) the researchers examined whether service-learning classes elevated students' morality more than traditional courses. Participants included 46 university students at a Catholic college in northeastern United States, who elected whether or not to partake in a service-learning class. To determine moral development, data collection occurred during the first two and final two weeks of class through questionnaires that assessed moral reasoning, moral inclination, personal assessment of the service-learning experience, demographics, and previous service-learning experiences. Although results could not determine any long term developmental changes, students exposed to a semester of service-learning reported greater compassion and sensitivity, increased ability to solve social issues, and more

desire to make a positive impact in the world than students who did not elect to participate in service-learning.

According to past research, other behavioral changes also arose. For example, Billig (2000) noted fewer disciplinary problems, pregnancies and arrests. Students participating in service-learning also displayed increased trustworthiness, more dependability, enhanced relationships with adults, increased sensitivity, and improved tolerance of diversity (Billig, 2000). Further, they more willingly undertook responsibility and demonstrated increased compassion toward others (Billig, 2000; Unger, Pribesh, Bol, & Dickerson, in press). Primavera (2008) also discovered 65 percent of service-learning participants experienced self-improvement including increased patience and tolerance of others; and more regard for themselves in areas like compassion, creativity, and desire to help people. Similarly, after returning to the United States from their service-learning experiences abroad, students increased their involvement in local community activities, including supporting peers with charitable endeavors, and training for leadership positions (Unger, Pribesh, Bol, & Dickerson, in press).

Academic considerations

Furthermore, research has examined consequences of service-learning for academic achievements. While Ash, Clayton, and Atkinson (2005) believe participation does not have definite positive effects on academics, many researchers suggest benefits. Billig, Root, and Jesse (2005) discussed the impact of engaging in different types of service-learning. The researchers noted students who became involved in an indirect service, like fundraising, tended to have more academic commitment. These youth

favored school substantially more than their peers. Likewise, Primavera (2008) found 81 percent of service-learning participants believed their actions, comprehension, and outcomes improved as a result of participation. In particular, students made moderate gains in English, mathematics, and overall GPA. They also felt more driven to learn (Billig, 2000), and understood material better (Ash, Clayton, and Atkinson, 2005; Hou, 2010). Those with more service-learning hours also reported better grades, fewer absences in school, and more overall success in school (Barney, Corser, & White, 2010; Gonsalves, 2011; Hou, 2010; Nadan, 2010; Scales, Roehlkepartain, Neal, Kielsmeir, & Benson, 2006). Engagement in service-learning has also shown to improve academic performance for low socio-economic students, compared to demographically similar peers who were not involved; as well as minimize the achievement gap between high and low socio-economic groups. These academic gains may occur because students feel needed and appreciated, and can apply classroom knowledge to an authentic situation (Scales et al., 2006). Furthermore, reflection that occurs during service-learning experiences allows for learning to become deeper rather than validated (Clayton and Ash, 2004).

Similarly, service-learning may impact future career choices of students. For instance, students feel more willing to seek additional skills for future careers, investigate a wider variety of career options, and have a positive attitude about possible career decisions (Billig, 2000). Furthermore, career choices of students who have participated in service-learning often include public service that focuses on social justice issues (Roschelle, Turpin, & Elias, 2000). In choosing their career, Primavera (2008) found 44 percent of those previously involved in service-learning used their experience to support

or prepare them. Unger, Pribesh, Bol, and Dickerson (in press) found students often pursued career paths directly related to what they learned during immersion.

A mindset of social responsibility

Research studies have also indicated an impact of service-learning on students' civic and social responsibility. Billig, Root, and Jesse (2005) found people who cooperated with civic and political causes during their service-learning experiences, like petitioning for a cause, measured highest in civic proficiency. The fact that service-learning combines academics with engagement in the community fosters students' sense of civic responsibility in a scholarly manner (Roschelle, Turpin, & Elias, 2000).

Becoming involved in service-learning also allows students to challenge inequalities, prejudices, and social stigma (Barney, Corser, & White, 2010; Kiely, 2004; Lai, 2009; Lee, 2005). Similarly, service-learning primes students to integrate in a multicultural, multiethnic, and multi-faith society (Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009). Primavera (2008) discovered 49 percent of service-learning participants in the study reported how volunteering enabled them to better value different cultures and learn about diversity amongst varying socio-economic backgrounds. Camacho (2004) contended developing a relationship with a single member of the community throughout the entire service-learning experience may enable students to even more effectively rid themselves of stereotypes and understand diversity. In Primavera's (2008) study, 57 percent of participants revealed a better understanding of social issues like poverty, illiteracy, inequitable education, and violence as a direct result of their service-learning experience. Also, 44 percent indicated the need to proactively resolve such social issues.

Impact of service-learning environment on students

Another factor in the value of service-learning experiences includes the development of the country where participants serve. For instance, Jones and Popper (1972) found Peace Corps volunteers participated in the program longer if the country had low linguistic standards, and low social and economic maturation. Moreover, community members will more often view volunteers as outsiders, and express less acceptance of them, if the country has experienced little cultural exposure in their development history (Jones & Popper, 1972). Likewise, students may encounter power differentials, seeing themselves as more privileged and lucky for their personal situations. Although findings did not arise as anticipated, in hopes to lesson the chance of power differentials during service-learning experiences, Camacho (2004) suggested facilitators of service-learning caution students of the potential issue between those serving and receiving services in the community. If taught and learned properly, students should rid themselves of stereotypes and realize those they serve deserve compassion and justice (Roschelle, Turpin, & Elias, 2000).

Service-learning has many positive implications for students and society. If done well, students can become more educated, valuable resources in their local and global communities, as well as more active citizens (Pitts, 2009; Terry & Bohnenberger, 2004). Furthermore, students can make important contributions to their learning, which also benefits society and builds community connections (Kielsmeier, 2011). With all of these benefits to service-learning in mind, it is important to discover additional impacts students perceive they have on communities.

Impacts of Service-Learning on Community Members

Many students participate in community service, but service-learning differs because of reciprocity between those serving and those receiving services. If done improperly, however, issues of power may arise (Camacho, 2004). This constitutes one reason some criticize service-learning as a greater benefit to students and universities than targeted communities (Crabtree, 2008).

To increase the likelihood for reciprocity, facilitators and participants of service-learning should consider community needs and link them to interests of students (Keith, 2005). Students might also become active members of the communities rather than patrons engaged in an experience meant solely to build their own character (Keith, 2005). Rather, service-learning should help students understand and create relationships with communities (Crabtree, 2008). Moreover, educators must support students as they reflect on the service-learning experience so they do not perpetuate stereotypes and an unjust society, but instead help students continuously examine and reevaluate community practices (Camacho, 2004; Roschelle, Turpin, & Elias, 2000).

Cruz and Giles (2000) found service-learning contributed to community development. They discovered that having service-learning as a component in communities provided authority to receive other funding or grant opportunities. In addition, service-learning enabled different community agencies to network. Cruz and Giles (2000) compiled research in their article that indicated service-learning rejuvenated communities, prompted public support to take action and resolve problems, enabled growth, and established trust among community members.

Terry and Bohnenberger (2004) suggest youth positively impact communities because problems get identified, and solutions become actualized; thus, change occurs in these communities. However, all communities have different needs, therefore, the value of service-learning varies depending on each situation (Terry & Bohnenberger, 2004). Similarly, students participating in service-learning come from varying backgrounds. Dolby (2008) found nationality affects ways individuals think about and understand international service-learning experiences. A combination of these factors may indicate a resulting difference in impacts of service-learning depending on whether students go abroad to serve in a developed versus a developing country.

Theoretical Framework

In order for communities to find value in service-learning experiences, the framework of these programs should target academics, as well as other aspects of personal growth to students (Cone & Harris, 1996; Cuban, 2007). With this consideration, Cone and Harris (1996) provided a theoretical framework for the current study. In their model, the researchers focused on psychological, interpersonal, and socio-cultural facets of service-learning. Moreover, the framework stressed the need for students to attend pre-service training to prepare them for the service-learning experience, and enabled educators to appropriately place students in a setting for service-learning. Additionally, Cone and Harris (1996) expressed the importance of challenging students' global perspectives by placing youth in a situation that deviated from typical life. Finally, the theoretical framework included written and oral reflection as essential to revealing students' cognitive and emotional dimensions.

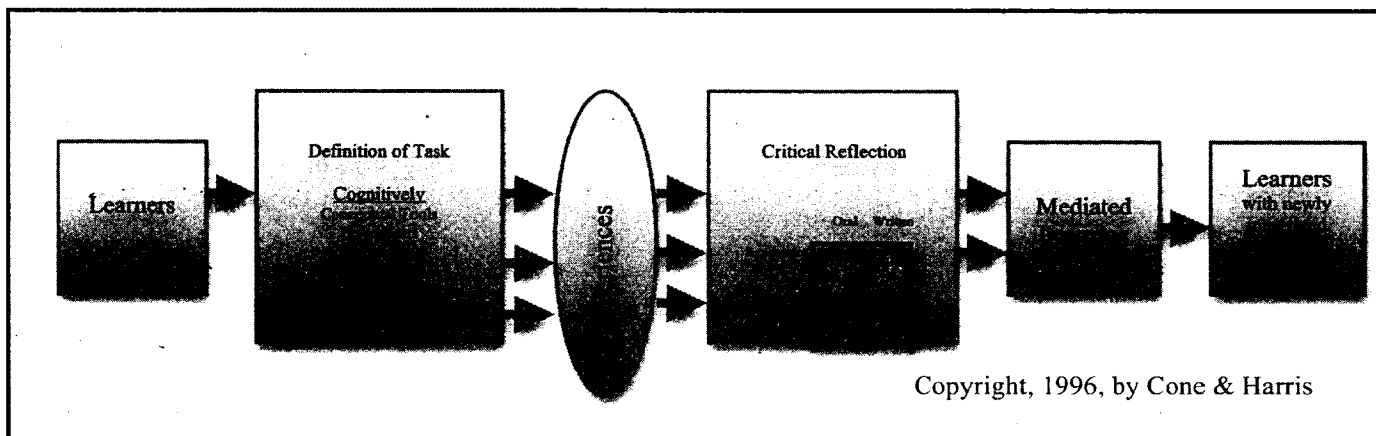
The current research focused on perspectives of international students doing service-learning in the United States through the nonprofit, Amizade. This organization uses community-driven service, deliberate learning, intercultural immersion and exchange, consideration of global citizenship, and participation in reflective inquiry. A different service focus in each of Amizade's sites around the world is identified by working with community partners.

Service-learning experiences with Amizade align with Cone and Harris' (1996) theoretical framework in many capacities. For example, during the service-learning experience, through daily education, team bonding, and support for those experiencing chronic struggles, students develop relationships with peers, leaders, and community members. In addition, every Amizade participant attends a pre-service conference call to learn about expectations, what they will encounter, cultural sensitivity, and safety. Further, based on group dynamics and goals, and leader input, Amizade makes specific service-learning placements. Volunteers also get positioned outside of their everyday experiences through service assignments in one of 12 countries where Amizade has a presence. Finally, after each day during their placement, volunteers reflect intellectually and emotionally on their service-learning experience by participating in group discussions and writing in private journals.

Figure 1, *A Lens Model for Service-Learning Educators* further elaborates on the conceptual framework (Cone & Harris, 1996, p. 34). Cone and Harris' (1996) model begins by assuming learners enter the service-learning experience with "different learning styles, skills, histories, philosophies of life, attitudes, values, expectations, and perspectives" (p. 34). In this case study, the learners were students who voluntarily

signed up for Amizade's service-learning experience; specifically international students who came to the United States to learn about and try to support poverty and homelessness in Washington D.C., strengthen participant character in West Virginia, and serve the environment in Pennsylvania.

Figure 1: A Lens Model for Service-Learning Educators



Defining the Task

As learners progress through Cone and Harris' (1996) lens model, they first reach the phase, *Defining the Task*, which includes cognitive and pragmatic processes. Through cognitive approaches, students gain *conceptual tools* as their educator supports them in discovering problems, developing questions, and collecting information prior to entering their service-learning experience. Billig (2005) notes the importance of this preparation. By defining their task, students will become aware of safety measures and gain knowledge about and empathy toward community members where they will serve.

Through Amizade, *Defining the Task*, involves group leaders communicating directly with the organization's staff at headquarters in the United States to understand community problems at a chosen site, address questions the group has regarding impending experiences, and review safety guidelines. Prior to opening a site, Amizade works with a fair trade learning model to ensure their groups' presence is based on mutual and respectful learning partnerships within communities. Amizade staff rely on group leaders to have conversations with their participants prior to placement to address the aforementioned. Staff also conduct at least one conference call with the entire group to discuss concerns, answer questions, and offer additional support.

Once students begin working in the community, they should answer *Academic Questions* to validate or dispute knowledge acquired in their pre-service training. As preparations advance, students generate more perceptions about their future experience. Knowledge students gain during preparations as well as during previous life experiences and social encounters will become compartmentalized into categories. Through service-learning experiences, students may redefine these cognitive categories (Cone & Harris, 1996).

The researchers additionally explain that pre-service activities will help students define the task pragmatically. This incorporates explaining what students should anticipate during the service-learning experience, and their plan for beginning fieldwork. Through these clarifications, students' apprehensions should decrease (Cone & Harris, 1996). Amizade prepares volunteers pragmatically through pre-service conversations, on-site orientations, and detailed nightly schedule reviews to elaborate on upcoming activities and community interactions.

The Experience

While many elements of a service-learning experience are expected, some unpredictable components inevitably arise; therefore, in an attempt to maximize all aspects of the program and enhance learning, educators must carefully consider potential pitfalls of the program. The service-learning experience begins with educators developing a program that considers predictable and unpredictable elements that maximize aspects of the program to enhance learning, and reduce those that do not. For example, Amizade ensures intercultural engagement, comprehension, and knowledge by engaging community leaders and organizations to help determine authentic and valuable service-learning experiences. Similarly, these service-learning experiences allow students to develop relationships with community members (Cone & Harris, 1996). Research indicates service-learning must prove collaborative and have reciprocal benefits (Clayton & Ash, 2004); the *Experience* stage in this theoretical framework constitutes the first attempt to ensure such an integration.

Critical Reflection

Cone and Harris (1996) assert students should reflect critically through *Academic Questions* and *Journal Questions*. They elaborate that *Academic Questions* make students think more critically as they observe, contemplate, and explain. For example, during group reflections on this Amizade program, a leader asked students to choose a quote that best described their experience. Conversely, generating and responding to *Journal Questions* assist students in understanding more about themselves as they think about experiences. For example, the journal participants used during the Amizade experience included an inquiry for students to individually describe what happened today and their

feelings about the program element. The researchers warn that students should re-evaluate views, convictions, and ethics they have before the service-learning experience rather than build upon prior notions. Billig (2000, 2005) and Terry and Bohnenberger (2004) also contend such reflection before, during, and after the service-learning experience supports critical thinking. Furthermore, reflection allows participants to connect service-learning to curricular objectives by relating it to themselves, personal experiences, and their global community (Correia & Bleicher, 2008).

Moreover, students should critically reflect through written modes like journals, and oral modes like group discussions. Written reflection helps students bridge concepts they learned in the classroom with what they perceived in the community. During written reflections, students can craft arguments and learn related vocabulary. Through oral reflection, students can continuously re-define their thoughts based on conversations with others (Cone & Harris, 1996). Amizade encourages all such types of reflection, and maintains each are completed daily as a critical component to its programs.

Mediated Learning

In the next phase of the framework, Cone and Harris (1996) describe mediated learning. This involves educators mentoring students so they develop an understanding of difficult concepts, and become more empathetic and multi-cultural in preparation for their international experience. Many Amizade groups have adult educators as part of the group who ensure mediated learning. In addition to adult educators, or in the case where one does not exist, Amizade staff members and community partners become facilitators of mediated learning.

Mediated learning occurs in a large range. For example, prior to service-learning immersion, educators may have students identify and expand on stereotypes students have about the population they will serve. Rather than accepting just a label for each stereotype, educators may mediate learning by asking youth to provide context about how such stereotypes developed and why students hold them as true. During immersion, another discussion may arise about stereotypes in the population being served, and educators will mediate learning through formal and information questioning to discover if and why students' mindsets have stayed the same or changed. Post immersion, educators may continue mediating learning to identify how and why students may change their pre-conceived notions in their own community. This may come in the form of additional group and individual discussions, or even brainstorming session about how to teach local community members about a target issue.

Learners

Through the support of educators, Cone and Harris (1996) believe their theoretical framework for service-learning will commence by leading students to engage in high level, critical discussions about their experiences. Students should become critical thinkers who assess and analyze their knowledge and understanding, and their role in an intricate society. Amizade hopes volunteers break down stereotypes, serve the local population in need, and bring knowledge and passion back to their own communities in order to continue making a positive impact on society.

Chapter Summary and Significance

While research on service-learning has increased in the past decade, most studies have examined the impact on students who have served in either their local communities

or in developing countries. Meanwhile, educators from around the globe are increasingly incorporating service-learning in their curriculum to prepare students for becoming global citizens. With this growing trend, students have begun to complete international service-learning in developed countries as well. This study examined how cultural background, ideas about global citizenship, and community impacted such service-learning experiences in the United States by students who live outside of the United States. This study also endeavored to discover whether international students perceived a need to support communities in the United States since historically this has not been a commonly identified necessity. Therefore, this research attempted to determine if value exists for international students who come to the United States for service-learning experiences. The next chapter will describe methods employed to determine whether service-learning had worth to international students and communities they serve in the United States, if cultural background impacted the experience, whether stereotypes became enhanced or eliminated, and if service-learning changed perspectives on participants' future altruistic behaviors.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter III focuses on methods used to explore global service-learning experiences of international students and community members they served in the United States. It begins by presenting research foci, followed by a description of the design. A review of the participants follows, and finally, the researcher indicates measures and procedures.

Design

By examining participant perspectives regarding their Amizade Global Service-Learning experience in the United States, this study used case study research tradition. Qualitative data sources focused on determining whether involvement in service-learning bore value to international students and community members. The researcher presented findings through a combination of her rhetoric and that of the participants to display voices and experiences of community members and students.

Research Foci

This study focused on the following research foci associated with impacts of international service-learning:

1. How does home culture impact the Amizade international service-learning experience in the United States?
2. What are students' perspectives about consequences to themselves and others during their Amizade international service-learning experience in the United States?

3. What are students' perspectives about how their Amizade international service-learning experience modified preconceived notions about the population being served?
4. How did the Amizade international service-learning experience affect students' conceptions of their future altruistic behavior?

Research Philosophy and Tradition

Using social constructivism as the research paradigm, the researcher examined students' perceptions about their Amizade global service-learning experiences. This viewpoint enabled the researcher to rely on participants to create subjective understandings of their experiences (Creswell, 2009). Each participant brought cultural perspective as well as biographical experiences. In relation to service-learning, the nature of truth is neither fully absolute nor subjective. While service-learning can reach all age groups, as people mature, their sense of the value it brings to their community changes. Epistemologically, the knowledge people have about the value of service-learning is unlimited, because the more people learn, the more they can spread this knowledge to other facets of their community. Morals and experiences of the researcher may have impacted research design components.

The research involved a case study research tradition to describe the impact Amizade's service-learning experiences had on youth and community members as described by participating students and adult leaders. The researcher chose a case study strategy in order to explore this program with depth using a variety of data collection procedures (Creswell, 2009, Yin, 2003). The qualitative approach to analyzing the case study included a process whereby the researcher could collect multifaceted and organized

information about each case (Patton, 2002). This research tradition also allowed the investigator to study a contemporary event in a real world environment (Yin, 2003).

The researcher considered each of the two participating groups as separate cases. Thus, the study contained two bounded cases that had different experiences due to the fact participants had different backgrounds and reasons for participating in the study (Patton, 2002). For example, one group of students, youth from the Ardoyne region of Ireland, was severely at-risk; while the other group of students from Down Patrick, constituted a more typical sample of students.

Participants and Context

The research study included two distinct groups of participants coming from youth groups in Northern Ireland. Due to religious conflict that erupted in Northern Ireland in the 1960's, many youth groups were established to help ensure youth had a place to go away from community violence. Today, youth groups remain common in Northern Ireland.

Both participant groups engaged in this service-learning experience in the United States as one component in a yearlong journey facilitated by youth workers. Phases of the program included pre-immersion in home communities, immersion in the United States, and post-immersion in home communities. International student participants and adult leaders came from the developed country of Ireland, and from families with a range of socio-economic statuses and backgrounds.

Ardoyne

The first group of participants involved youth from the region of Northern Ireland called Ardoyne. The group constituted 10 at-risk males, aged 15 to 17 years, who had

been in the same youth group for several months prior to immersion in the United States. Four male youth workers came to the United States with the group to act as chaperones and educational facilitators. Each youth worker had previously established relationships with the group, however only one of them was the senior youth worker consistently in charge of the boys. Further, to ensure youth did not accept this opportunity as solely a travel vacation rather than a service-learning experience, they had already committed to bettering their lives before their youth worker presented Amizade's program to them. Amizade developed a program for this group by collaborating with an organization called Youthworks, comprised of youth workers in Northern Ireland. Objectives for students included developing a sense of belonging to the Irish community from which they came, gaining independence, treating those in need generously, learning proficiencies for adult living, making responsible decisions, and enhancing appropriate communication skills.

Down Patrick

The second group of participants consisted of 10 females and 6 males aged 12 to 17 years from the region of Northern Ireland called Down Patrick. The students came from varying youth groups throughout Down Patrick, and had applied to and were accepted as part of a youth leadership council for the region. As one component of this leadership council, youth received the opportunity to participate in Amizade's service-learning program in the United States. A female senior youth worker and a male junior youth worker came to the United States with the group to act as chaperones and educational facilitators. Both youth workers had previously established relationships with the group.

To develop a program for the Down Patrick group, Amizade partnered with a branch of government in Northern Ireland called the South Eastern Education and Library

Board, Queens University in Ireland, and West Virginia University in the United States to create a specialized program. Established goals for the Down Patrick group centered on global service-learning, citizenship, interface with academia, educational policies in Ireland, and a hope for life-long learning after service-learning immersion.

All participants from Ardoyne and Down Patrick paid a fee to Amizade to participate in the service-learning program; and youth did group fundraisers to pay. Students knew peers in their group prior to coming to the United States with Amizade. All students were in high school, and both programs lasted a week.

The Experience

The research study was implemented in three of Amizade's service-learning sites located in the United States. While typically Amizade global service-learning programs take place in one location, and focuses on one societal issue, the organization collaborated with two different entities in Ireland, Youthworks and the Southeastern Education and Library Board, to create programs catered to specific objectives. While these two stakeholders had contractual agreements with the Amizade, neither drove data collection for the current study.

During the service-learning experience, groups visited Washington D.C., Morgantown, West Virginia, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1984, Washington D.C. became the first jurisdiction to establish a right to shelter. However, in 1989, it also became the first jurisdiction to overturn this right. Issues of hunger and homelessness continue to escalate, and almost every homeless shelter for single men and women in downtown Washington D.C. has closed. During one component of their Amizade service-learning experiences, Irish students focused on this issue by learning about the history of

hunger and homelessness in Washington D.C. and served the D.C. homeless population. This was accomplished with the support of Amizade's community partners. Experiences included working in a food preparation kitchen, disseminating meals for those in need, learning to have conversations with people experiencing homelessness, and hearing personal stories from formally or currently homeless individuals. Conversely, in West Virginia, students received educational and reflective components of service-learning by participating in leadership and team building activities through an outdoors adventure course. Finally, in Pennsylvania youth connected with local peers, supported women agriculturalists from a low socio-economic district, and participated in a leadership workshop. Every evening participants engaged in oral group reflections, as well as written journal reflections. Down Patrick youth also maintained a daily video journal. All Amizade service-learning is community-driven, deliberate learning that incorporates intercultural immersion and exchange, concern for global citizenship, and reflective inquiry.

Sampling

The researcher used purposeful sampling, specifically via convenience sampling, of Amizade students and adult leaders to participate in the study. Although convenience sampling often yields information-poor cases, due to the novice nature of the current research, finding groups of international students coming to the United States for service-learning proved difficult (Patton, 2002). The researcher identified two cases.

All students were under 18 years of age, and thus required parental permission to participate in the study. The researcher attempted to have all youth and youth workers participate in a focus group or individual interview. Data collection began seven months

post immersion for the Ardoyne group. The investigator initially collected data via Skype, completing two individual interviews with students, and one individual interview with the senior youth worker. In order to gather data with more participants, the researcher went to Ireland seven months post immersion to complete a focus group with 10 Ardoyne youth. Also included in this focus group, were the two youth who previously completed an individual interview via Skype. In total, 67% of Ardoyne youth, and 25% of Ardoyne youth workers agreed to participate.

In the Down Patrick group, data were collected on the last day of immersion in the United States. 12 students participated in focus groups and audio-recorded nightly reflections, totaling 75% of students who came with the group to the United States. The remaining 4 students from the group participated in only audio-recorded nightly reflections. Their participation in a focus group was hindered due to time constraints. Both youth workers participated in individual interviews, totaling 100%. Overall, 26 total students, and 3 adult leaders participated in data collection from both groups.

Role of Researcher

Since this qualitative case study is highly dependent on the researcher, it is necessary to disclose any bias or perspectives that may have affected the study. The researcher is a 31-year-old Caucasian female pursuing a doctoral degree in Education, with a concentration in Curriculum and Instruction. She currently attends graduate school part-time and works part-time as the Washington D.C. Site Director for the nonprofit organization, Amizade. The researcher works with students and adults from all ages to empower individuals and communities through worldwide service and learning. Prior to her work with Amizade, for three years the researcher acted as the Director of Student

Programs and Curriculum at Operation Smile, a children's medical charity that sends volunteers around the world to provide free surgery to patients with facial deformities. She supported students in over 50 countries to provide them with programs centered around education, leadership, service, and awareness; including various service-learning initiatives she helped develop. Through her experiences at Amizade and Operation Smile, the researcher developed positive beliefs about impacts of service-learning and social justice: The researcher also taught fourth and fifth grade gifted students for four years. Her experiential knowledge working with students and community members through service-learning may have impacted methodology or interpretation of findings.

To control biases, the researcher used a second coder for interrater reliability whom she had trained during a previous research study on service-learning. In addition, the researcher used bracketing. This potentially enhanced data collection, results, and analyses as the researcher maintained self-awareness of possible preconceptions (Tufford & Newman, 2010).

Data Sources and Collection

Prior to beginning data collection, the researcher gained human subjects approval from the Institutional Review Board. See Appendix A for the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board notification form. This involved proof of CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative on Social and Behavioral Research, as well as approval to include minors and adults as participants, consent forms, focus group and interview protocols, contact summary sheets, photography release forms, and overall methodological procedures.

The researcher used qualitative focus groups and individual interviews to collect data. Each focus group and interview included formalized questions posed in the protocol and facilitating conversational inquiries in an impartial fashion (Yin, 2003). She also audiotaped nightly reflections in which the Down Patrick group participated. The researcher decided to include adult leaders in the study because, while students were the target of service-learning, adult leaders could offer insight into individuals' growth based on previously established relationships and goals. Adults also participated in facilitating reflection activities.

Data were collected for the Ardoyne group seven months after immersion in the United States, while data were collected during immersion for the Down Patrick group. The researcher initially completed two individual interviews with students from Ardoyne, and one individual interview with an adult from Ardoyne via Skype technology. After completion of these interviews, the researcher received an opportunity to collect data from the Ardoyne group face-to-face in Ireland. At that time, she invited the remaining eight youth along with the two youth who had already done individual interviews to participate in a focus group. In total, 10 Ardoyne students participated in data collection post immersion. All 12 youth from Down Patrick completed focus groups face to face in while still in the United States, and two adults from Down Patrick completed individual interviews in person as well.

Measures

The blueprints listed in Appendices B and C establish content validity. They were expert reviewed and focus group and interview questions that arose from the blueprints were tested in a pilot study. The blueprints also provide a structure for the focus group

and interview questions based on Cone and Harris' (1996) theoretical framework. In Cone and Harris' (1996) model, researchers focus on interpersonal, socio-cultural, and psychological aspects of service-learning. Focus group and interview questions fall within these three classifications, and also coordinate with each phase of the framework: *Learners (Pre Service-Learning Experience)*, *Definition of Task, Experiences, Critical Reflection, Mediated Learning*, and *Learners (Post Service-Learning Experience)*.

By conducting focus groups with international students participating in an Amizade service-learning experience in the United States, themes emerged to reveal whether participants perceived their experience had an impact on them and community members. Based on Cone and Harris' (1996) conceptual framework, learners presumably entered into the experience with different learning styles, skills, philosophies of life, and expectations for service-learning. Then, with the help of educators, students discovered problems, formulated questions, and collected information (cognitively) in order to develop academic perceptions that define their future service-learning experience (pragmatically). According to the theory, through the actual service-learning experience, students maximized learning by participating in predictable and unpredictable elements of the program, and developing relationships with others. As part of the program, learners reflected critically through academic means based on observations, and personal self-evaluations. Moreover, through mediated learning, educators mentored students so they gained an understanding of different concepts, and became more empathetic and multicultural. Finally, learners left the experience as analytical thinkers who understand their role in a complex society. Interview and focus group questions thus touched on each of these phases of learning as they occurred before, during, and after immersion with

Amizade. Table 1 provides an example of a focus group question asked in regards to each phase of the conceptual framework.

Table 1

Sample Focus Group Questions

	Sample Question
Learners (Pre)	What types of service or volunteering had you done before your Amizade service-learning experience?
Definition of Task	How do people in your culture view homeless individuals? How do you know this?
Experience	How did your initial expectations about this Amizade service-learning experience align with your actual experiences?
Reflection	What would you have changed about this service-learning experience?
Mediated Learning	How do you feel your presence in the United States impacted community members you encountered in this country?
Learners (Post)	How has this experience affected your view of becoming involved in your home community?

To gain an additional perspective on the value of service-learning experiences, the researcher also interviewed adult leaders. Questions focused on the value of their students' participation to themselves, their families, their home community, and the international community supported by the Amizade trip. Table 2 provides an example of an individual interview question asked in regards to each phase of the conceptual framework.

Table 2

Sample Individual Interview Questions

	Sample Question
Learners (Pre)	How did the fact that students were from a different culture affect this Amizade service-learning experience?
Definition of Task	Prior to this Amizade service-learning experience, what were students' perceptions about people experiencing homelessness?
Experience	What was unexpected about this service-learning experience?
Reflection	Based on their reflections, what impacted students throughout this service-learning experience?
Mediated Learning	As students progressed through this service-learning experience, what did you notice about relationships they developed with others? (ie-peers, community members, or adult chaperones).
Learners (Post)	How will this experience affect students' altruistic behaviors once they return home?

See Appendix D and E for the Focus Group/Interview Protocol and Consent Form interviewers used when facilitating the focus group with students; see Appendix F and G for the Interview Protocol and Consent Form interviewers employed when interviewing adult leaders who completed the service-learning experience; Appendix H indicates the Photo Release that permitted the researcher to document service-learning; and Appendix I displays the Contact Summary Sheet the researcher used to denote any other pertinent information observed during focus groups and interviews. Finally, the researcher audiotaped nightly reflections for data source triangulation. She purposefully selected three of the most informative reflection sessions to code. Using three data sources of interviews, focus groups, and audio taped reflections, helps support findings through triangulation. (Yin, 2003).

Data Analysis

Using previous literature as a framework, this case study examined potential impacts service-learning has on international students coming to the United States to serve. Initially, the researcher read data multiple times from interview and focus group transcripts, which she transcribed word for word, and contact summary sheets. Patton (2002) necessitates finding meaning in the data through content analysis that includes “identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labeling primary patterns in the data” (p. 462). The researcher performed simultaneous data collection and analysis. This allowed for developing themes and preliminary judgments from field research. The concurrent collection and analysis also allowed the researcher to identify themes and unknowns within the research process (Patton, 2002).

During this procedure, the researcher labeled coding categories based on each phase of Cone and Harris’ (1996) conceptual framework, then subdivided that further into *interpersonal*, *socio-cultural*, and *psychological*. For example, *Learners (Pre)-Interpersonal*; *Learners (Pre)-Socio-Cultural*; and *Learners (Pre)-Psychological*. The codebook for interviews, focus groups, and audio-recorded reflections was revised three times to ensure clarity and accuracy of differences between categories (Patton, 2002). Every sentence in transcriptions was broken down and placed into these relevant categories. The investigator also performed a cross case analysis between the Ardoyne and Down Patrick groups. Ultimately, the researcher analyzed categorized data into themes. Figure 2 in Appendix J provides a thematic conceptual matrix of international students performing service-learning in the United States.

Strategies for Trustworthiness

By using various means, the researcher established the credibility, transferability, and dependability of the study. Detailed field notes were taken during interviews to record descriptions, and researcher reactions and thoughts. Data collection took place over weeklong Amizade service-learning trips. The prolonged engagement increased trustworthiness during later focus groups and interviews (Creswell, 2009). Throughout data collection, the researcher did member checking, and asked for clarification of participant comments during and after focus groups and interviews (Creswell, 2009). Similarly, she asked questions during reflections, and encouraged students to elaborate upon discussion points.

In addition, the researcher supported the validity and reliability of the focus group interview questions in various ways. For example, blueprints provided content validity. Further, university faculty on the researcher's dissertation committee critiqued focus group and interview questions. After refining interview questions based on the expert review, the researcher enhanced validity by performing a pilot study to test focus group and interview questions. The pilot study aided the researcher in predicting focus group and interview questions that needed revisions to better support goals of the study. In addition, the researcher recruited and trained a second coder of the data. The researcher coded and recoded data and themes until inter-rater reliability levels reached 80 percent or higher (Creswell, 2009). Specifically, inter-rater reliability was 80 percent. Finally, the researcher established further trustworthiness through data source triangulation, by comparing data from focus groups, interviews, and audio taped reflection sessions. This

aided the researcher in collecting and exposing various perspectives rather than finding a lone truth (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002).

Chapter III presented the methodology used for this study of international service-learning in the United States. It began with a description of the research foci and design. The chapter continued with an explanation of participants, measures, and procedures. Chapter IV will discuss research results.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter describes various themes related to how international participants' service-learning experiences in the United States fit within Cone and Harris' (1996) conceptual framework. The cases and quotations provided were chosen because they best represent the essence and rhetoric of participants. Specific data not included had similar content or meaning to examples provided. All names cited represent pseudonyms for participants. The qualitative data in this chapter addresses global service-learning through interpersonal, socio-cultural, and psychological lenses relevant to each phase of the theoretical framework: *Learners (Pre Service-Learning Experience)*, *Definition of Task*, *Experiences*, *Critical Reflection*, *Mediated Learning*, and *Learners (Post Service-Learning Experience)*. Data for the Ardoyne group were collected seven months post immersion, and therefore reflect current behaviors, while data for the Down Patrick group were collected on the final day of immersion and reflect predicted actions.

Learners (Pre Service-Learning Experience)

Aligned with Cone and Harris' (1996) framework, participants had varying backgrounds, not only from each other, but also from people and environments they encountered while doing service-learning in the United States. Such diversity impacted students' perceptions of their service-learning experiences before, during, and after immersion.

Community Life in Ireland

Participants' domestic interpersonal relationships affected their perceptions and treatment of others. For example, ongoing religious conflict within Ireland painted the mindsets of Ardoyne participants, who had frequent exposure to violence and racism between Catholics and Protestants living in the country. Grady, an Irish Catholic teenager, explained how prior to the service-learning experience, he and his friends stayed away from Protestants. He said, "we can't go out into certain areas, and they can't come in certain areas." Kevin, an Irish youth worker who chaperoned the group in the United States, elaborated on the socio-cultural impacts of religious persecution by explaining how in comparison to American youth, "our young people are more politically active...and I think that's probably as a result of the conflict here. So, for me, we are encouraged very early on, you must be protective of your politics. You must be fighting the good fight, or the cause...but in terms of civic engagement, the bigger charitable engagement, we're much less well organized than what the Americans would be."

Students also discussed how community members interact in small towns of Ireland. Deirdre contended, "it's very tight knit, and everybody knows what's going on...and you know who's feeling sad, and who's feeling good about themselves." Similarly, most participants had little or no experience interacting with people in big cities prior to coming to the United States with Amizade. Participants from both groups, did, however, have substantial experience volunteering. For instance, several built a garden for a church, collected tools for an organization to send to developing countries in need, mentored younger students, donated toys during Christmas, and organized a fashion show to raise money to support cancer research. In relation to students' volunteer work,

Brian expressed, “we don’t really get to see the impact that we make. We maybe, like have people come in, or hear people talking about it...[but] the way we do it [in Ireland], isn’t direct. We’re...raising money, and then giving it out to somebody else. Or getting gifts that get on to somebody else. We don’t really get as much of a direct impact.” All students had positive feelings about contributing to the community. For example, Finn gave up his time every Sunday to volunteer, and he said, “it was worth it.”

A few students like Brian mentioned extensive leadership training and his qualifications to “run a youth group on my own.” One other student also fulfilled this same qualification, and several from both groups were in the beginning stages of this process.

Stereotypes Revealed

Almost all participants had no previous interaction with people experiencing homelessness. Alannah thought they were people “who give you dirty looks and won’t talk to you.” Brian once saw his friend try to give a sandwich to someone experiencing homelessness, “and they’ve thrown it away because they want money instead.” No participant mentioned a positive encounter they had with someone experiencing homelessness in Ireland. In regards to how people experiencing homelessness fit into society, participants discussed stereotypes including dirty, bums, lazy, alcoholics, addicts, and arrogant. The students’ youth worker, Kevin expressed how his group perceived those experiencing homelessness as “people who have put themselves in their own predicament...they’ve been lazy and no good. It was a very negative perception of homelessness. There was no understanding, no empathy, no caring within them.” As a whole, all students discussed how, as Aidan described, “I didn’t know they were there at

all.” Alannah elaborated that in Ireland, “we don’t really talk about it. It’s a subject that is put in the corner.” Further, many participants noted their ideas about homelessness came from television, not from personal encounters. Carrol pondered how while in Ireland, she and her peers didn’t “really think about the homeless...’cause you don’t really know their entire story.” Similarly, Finn expressed how he had stereotypes like most of his community, that “they were just people who were wasted, and couldn’t do nothing, couldn’t get a job.” He continued to share that he “never really thought of health or mental health.” From a psychological perspective, students did not consider feelings or motivations of people experiencing homelessness. In general, they did not have an awareness of such situations beyond aforementioned labels.

Stereotypes participants harbored extended to the American population as well. Alannah believed Irish people “think people in America are really fake, because everything is really fake. And they’re obsessed with freedom and the eagle.” Caitlin extended on this sentiment by sharing how they thought schools in the United States were all like the movie, *High School Musical*, where students “would all be running down the halls, always singing.”

Definition of Task

By communicating with their long-term youth workers and Amizade staff members prior to leaving, both participant groups developed expectations for the experience.

Goals of Professional Youth Workers and Program Leaders

Beyond traditional objectives of service-learning programs, youth workers for both populations expressed specific interpersonal, socio-cultural, and psychological

outcomes they hoped to achieve by supporting youth in Amizade's global service-learning program. While each group included a range of disadvantaged students, Ardoyne youth were considered more at-risk than Down Patrick youth.

As the senior youth worker leading Ardoyne students, Kevin expressed six goals. First, he wanted them to "develop a sense of association and belonging to the community they came from. That they have civic obligation within that community." Second, the boys should gain skills for independent living, including managing finances, organizing their backpacks and bags, planning, adhering to timeframes, and reading information in their surroundings (like signs at the airport). Third, Kevin wanted students to become generous, develop character, become trustworthy, honest, and principled; traits he contended, "Americans are quite good at...[and will] make [the youth] generous to others that are less well off than themselves." Fourth, students should gain skill development important to "adult living." This included financial literacy, social and life skills, and accreditation. Fifth, youth workers hoped students would develop cognition to "hear people," "assess risks," and "set out [their] own options...to help [them] make decisions." Finally, the sixth goal for the Ardoyne students involved communication. This encompassed youths' tone, language, behavior, body language, and self-portrayal.

Conversely, Down Patrick participants comprised the first group of students entering into a service-learning program devised by youth workers and the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) in Ireland. SEELB partnered with Amizade Global Service-Learning, Queens University in Ireland, and West Virginia University in the United States to develop the program. As listed on the cover of their handbook, designers had the ultimate mission to "create responsible citizens using the pedagogy and

practice of global service-learning.” Objectives for Down Patrick students involved linking service-learning with academia to “enable young people to develop analytical, critical thinking skills that will support their love of life long learning and social action” (p. 2). Five key objectives existed. The first one was for students to develop literacy. This included literacy in reading, writing, numbers, finances, and computers. The second objective included students developing critical reflection, problem solving, and self-awareness. Third, students should have creativity, innovation, and enterprise. Fourth, youth should gain social and life skills necessary for networking and collaboration. Finally, students should develop communication and presentation skills.

Student Expectations for Service-Learning Experiences in America

Both groups expressed having a general idea of what to expect from the Amizade service-learning experience, however, through discussions with youth and youth workers the researcher found neither group had ample time to prepare for all possible interpersonal, socio-cultural, and psychological components of the program. In regards to expectations on an interpersonal level, for example Finn said, “I was expecting to sort of just be with my friends. I wasn’t really expecting to learn much...” Similarly, Dermot realized he would participate in volunteerism, but not at a high level. He expressed, “I thought it would be more painting taxis and polishing cars and that sort of job.” Conversely, some students like Brian believed they would experience service “similar to what we’re doing back home, but on a much, much larger scale.”

In addition, all students anticipated the program would involve interacting with people experiencing homelessness. Laura maintained, “We were talking about doing food for the D.C. Central Kitchen, and they said we would be handing it out to homeless

people.” As previously mentioned, students anticipated learning about homelessness and supporting the community, however, from a socio-cultural perspective, they did not expect to become integrated so greatly. For example, when confronted by her peers in Ireland about why she wanted to work with homeless populations when “you don’t need to,” Caitlin explained, “...we want to, we need to. We haven’t got really the background knowledge of what homelessness is, and how to stop it and stuff. It was for us to learn, and also for us to help.” Similarly, Deirdre understood she would become familiarized with homeless culture, however, she described, “About the homeless people and everything. I knew they would be there, but I didn’t think it would be so bad.”

Furthermore, the majority of students had not previously traveled to the United States. Of the few who had, none had visited the cities involved in the service-learning experience. Psychologically, most students agreed with Deirdre when she concluded, “while I was in Ireland, I didn’t know what to think about America...”

Experiences

Amizade collaborated with adult leaders from Ireland, and community partners in Washington D.C., West Virginia, and Pennsylvania to develop an authentic program to enhance student learning. During the planning phase, program designers considered predictable and unpredictable elements of the experience to maximize reciprocal benefits to students and community members. The service-learning program differed for each group based on length of time spent in each city, and community partners in collaboration. Ultimately significant components scheduled for the service-learning experience which students referenced in reflections, interviews, and focus groups included going to Washington D.C. where groups visited the Holocaust Museum as a

connection to invisible populations, participated in a program that used physical theatrics to think both inwardly and globally called Theatre of the Oppressed, ate dinner with women living in a homeless shelter, volunteered in the food preparation kitchen called D.C. Central Kitchen, and heard stories from currently and formally homeless individuals through National Coalition for the Homeless' Speaker's Bureau. In Morgantown, West Virginia, students did teambuilding and leadership development through an outdoor education center, and gained exposure to an American university by touring West Virginia University. In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania groups visited the National Football League's stadium called Heinz Field, participated in a leadership workshop with local high school students and had a social evening with them, became educated about a low socio-economic neighborhood through a historical tour, volunteered with a women's agricultural nonprofit called Ujamma Collective, and had lunch with students from the aforementioned neighborhood as prepared by the women in the collective.

A Chance for Growth and Independence

Although students did not formally discuss opportunities they received that enabled them to display personal independence during the service-learning trip, according to youth workers, this appeared to be a great concern to many parents. On several occasions, for example, youth worker Devin described such conversations he had prior to departure. In one instance, a student's father said, "when you get over to America, you're going to be taking all the passports, and you'll be looking after them? And I said no. This is the opportunity for her, as a young person to be more independent." Most parents felt concerned their children needed to be "Molly coddled" as Devin expressed. Youth workers from both groups really focused on students feeling

psychologically independent, capable, and mature. For instance, students woke up on time, managed personal money, and completed daily and nightly obligations like journaling and photographing. Once back home, Brianna and Devin planned to convey to parents how well students grew in these areas while on the service-learning trip. They hoped in doing so, youth could continue to express self-reliance.

Peer Relationship Development

Many students commented on how relationships with their peers who were on the service-learning trip grew as a result of extensive time spent together. Grady contended, "...this made us even better friends." Lead youth worker, Kevin, from the Ardoyne group agreed with Grady, however in reference to the boys' interpersonal interactions with each other, which at times were aggressive or overwhelming, he explained, "In terms of peer relationships, there were some really positive things. And some negative things with a positive impact." For example, although some youth became physically aggressive during their time in the United States, these instances were used as teachable moments, discussion points, and springboards for personal improvements. Similarly, senior youth worker, Brianna took note of how students from Down Patrick became better problem solvers with one another, and took ownership of their decisions more consistently which she observed during one of the high stress group activities in West Virginia. Brianna noted, "...there were conversations with the group then about what happened." Her colleague, Devin, noticed, however, that students continued spending time with their close friends rather than branching out. For this reason, he developed various plans to "shuffle them up" and enable them to get rid of their "comfort blanket."

Additionally, participants spoke positively about relationships they developed with peers from the United States who participated in a few activities with them. Finn noted that while partnering with a local high school group during a leadership workshop, he realized "...people my age in America are not that different from me." Similarly, Declan found many commonalities between himself, his Irish peers, and the American high school students. He talked about developing "respect" for them as they spent the whole day together. Terms and scenarios students described were that of a cultural exchange and cultural immersion, such as Dermot's reminiscence about his time with an American high school student that it "was nice talking to people his age and talking about things that we do and they do." Similarly, Brogan mentioned how "we also taught them all this slang. Like what's the craic."

Furthermore, the American high school students prepared certain activities for the Irish group, like buying them costumes for Halloween. This type of welcoming behavior proved psychologically unexpected for participants. Brian elaborated, "I didn't expect everyone to put themselves out of the way as much...which for us, made us feel really, really special."

Community Relationship Development

Almost every student from Down Patrick commented on their surprise with how friendly their interactions were with community members in each city, beyond the American high school students. For example, Aidan discussed, "I think the stuff that wasn't planned [had the most impact on me], like when we were on the metro and the group bumped into the Jamaican group, and they had no idea who we were...and they invited the whole group into their game...and incorporated the whole group...which was

fantastic.” Three students also mentioned conversations they initiated with Americans during their free time shopping. Alannah shared with a few people in a store that they were in the United States to do volunteer work that supported homelessness. She explained as a result, “the three people who worked in the shoe shop were saying they wanted to come to Northern Ireland to do homeless work.”

Furthermore, during reflection sessions and formal focus groups, it became evident that the majority of students from both groups felt their interactions with people experiencing homelessness had the greatest impact on them. It afforded students the opportunity to hear stories about people’s lives and better understand their situations; and even relate homelessness to their own lives and communities. Alannah described, “...they told us their stories and we got attached to them. Like when Rachel, for example, was telling her story, I really felt like she was explaining the years she was on the streets. You really felt like you were there with her, because of how much detail she was going into.” Similarly, Aidan told the impact Steve, a formally homeless individual who spoke during the Speaker’s Bureau, had on him by saying, “He was a true inspiration. He showed how much one mistake can change your whole life. But I thought it was a good, good way, he wised up and did what he could to get off the streets.” Furthermore, Steve’s lecture had unexpected psychological impacts on students like Finn who contended, “That was life changing to be honest. I wasn’t really expecting that.”

Moreover, Carrol discussed how “Back home, we don’t really think about the homeless like we do now, ‘cause you don’t really know their entire story. But here, we were really connected with them.” Students like Brian also described how learning to hand out food to people experiencing homelessness, and approach them with kind and

non-defensive conversation, was a powerful lesson. He shared how he and a couple peers approached a woman in the park with pizza. “She said no. And when we walked away, she went, hold on, hold on, I might know a few people. But as we walked away, we did see she was having some of it. It was just sort of pride or embarrassment [that kept her from initially accepting the pizza], and she realized she needed to sort of overcome that.”

In addition, the ways students saw homelessness in the United States enabled them to re-evaluate how they previously defined such a situation. For instance, while Aidan viewed “homelessness as not really a big deal [in Ireland], because it wasn’t really a big problem where we came from...” He was surprised to see in the United States “all these homeless people, people living in parks and stuff.” Alannah felt the same way as she described, “walking down the street there were just so many, so far worse. I didn’t think it would be anywhere as bad.” She also admitted a psychological shift by explaining, “In Belfast, I would have been really scared [to see a homeless person], walked really fast. But when we walked by them over here, I was just like, oh. It didn’t scare me.”

Although homelessness in the United States proved more extreme than students anticipated, some participants like Brian felt impressed by the expansive network of community support for the population. He referenced “the scale” being “a lot larger than what we had at home.” Brian also appreciated how the group’s exposure to homeless culture included working at D.C. Central Kitchen, where he described, “...we knew exactly what we were doing. We were preparing food that would go out as meals. We prepared I think 50 stacks full of food.” This contrasted with Brian’s experiences

volunteering in Ireland, where he never felt a similar “direct impact”, particularly not on a level of “ providing 5,000 meals a day, which couldn’t be comprehended back home.”

Critical Reflection

All participants from the Down Patrick group completed personal written and video reflections daily. Prior to arriving in the United States, students used journals to identify goals, strengths, areas of development, and hopes and fears about the future project. While the researcher did not have access to private daily journal reflections during the immersion experience, questions students answered consisted of topics related to feelings about the day’s experiences, what they learned in regards to knowledge, skills, or attitude development, and how their learning made them better citizens. The researcher informally observed students during all activities throughout immersion, and consistently solicited participants’ thoughts and feelings. Additionally, each evening the researcher listened to oral reflections with both groups to better understand how students’ critical thinking developed as they observed, contemplated, and explained their experiences.

Group Dynamics

By conversing with each other, all students felt they built stronger bonds within the group. Relationships they had with friends grew, and new ones developed across age ranges. This benefitted group dynamics and increased support systems. For example, Carrol, one of the newest, and least confident members of the youth group, reflected on how her internal strength improved as a result of this experience, but so did strength she gathered from her peers. She responded that her most meaningful experience was on the high ropes course in West Virginia, because “everybody in my group was very supportive and they got me through to the end, even though I cried for two hours. It was worth it,

because it taught me I could do it.” Many more conversations developed in West Virginia about how relationships within the group evolved. Brian noted, “You build bonds with other people in the group. Like you start working together with them. Like people who you don’t really know well, or worked with before.” He described how this helped his team of peers as they struggled to complete a geocash scavenger hunt challenge using a GPS in unfamiliar woods. Aidan perceived such peer relationship development would have long-term benefits. He contended, “I think spending this much time with each other has gotten the whole group closer together, and makes it easier whenever we go to do future projects. Especially the fundraising we’re doing after this.”

Youth workers from both participant groups felt this service-learning experience impacted student development. For example, Kevin articulated, “It enabled us to help young people in particular ways that we would have never been able to do. We would have never gotten to that depth. They would have never shared the personal stories and the challenges, baggage that they have in life. We wouldn’t have gotten that deep, that quickly. That may have taken three years to get that deep, and we got there in six months, in seven months, [including the time leading up to this service-learning experience].

Students also recognized change both in each other and themselves. For instance, Aidan shared, “Before...some people weren’t as confident going out and doing outreach work. But now I think everyone in the group can, and do it well.” Similarly, when asked about changes in themselves, Neil expressed a difference in “the fact that a year and a half ago, no one would even [have] talked [during this focus group], they would just sit and laugh.” Moreover, Carrol said, “I felt like there was a change in myself. And I’ve

grown to appreciate what I have, and people have inspired me to appreciate and value what I have.”

Community Development

In contrast, participants reflected on relationships they made within the U.S. communities that proved much different than they originally anticipated. A common theme students discussed involved relationships with high school youth they met and spent time with during immersion. For instance, Declan declared how spending the whole day with a new peer group in Pennsylvania enabled him to gain respect for new people, but he described, “you wouldn’t have thought because we’re from two different countries, or two different backgrounds [we’d want to socialize with them]...but they’re just kids like us. They just want to have a good time.”

Moreover, one of the biggest hurdles students overcame during the service-learning experience was their fear of interacting with people experiencing homelessness. During the first full day of immersion with participants from Down Patrick, students participated in Theatre of the Oppressed as a way to express themselves through oral and physical theatrics, discussions, and interactions. The activities were meant to get the group thinking beyond their comfort zones and in a global perspective. Amizade set this program up so women living in a homeless shelter in Washington D.C. joined students for this four-hour activity, followed by a joint dinner. Ciara was surprised at her experience with the homeless women and said, “People were so nice. Like, they smiled when you talked. They were just like us. They weren’t depressed.” On another level, Aislin initially felt concerned women from the shelter would feel uncomfortable around the group. She described her experience with a woman named Mary by expressing,

“when she joined our group, she was so friendly and so lovely that we immediately warmed to her. From then on, I was completely happy with everybody. It’s just that initial kind of tensions there, that go away so quickly that we don’t want other people to worry about it.” During the group reflection that evening, youth worker, Brianna expressed to students, “In a very short space of time, you’ve shared about your fighting some anxieties, speaking to you spending time with these [homeless] women, and yet within a two hour period, what I observed when you had the pizza party was complete naturalness, you were engaging, you were chatting very comfortably, you were sharing food, and there were hugs exchanged, and the atmosphere was completely different.”

While immersion experiences included some quick interactions with people experiencing homelessness, more extended exchanges that enabled students to learn personal stories, proved the most impactful and reflective. Brian imparted his feelings about National Coalition for the Homeless’ Speaker’s Bureau as he recounted stories shared by Steve and Shelly, “who have both probably had ridiculously hard lives, [and] were able to come into a room full of young people our age, and inspire the whole room...that was incredible. I did not expect that at all.” When discussing his time spent learning Steve’s story, Finn said “He had loads of jobs and loads of money, and then it became a drug addiction. And that’s how he became homeless. And the other guy had depression...and that’s why he was homeless. I never thought that could happen. I just thought it was due to people being lazy, but it actually wasn’t. It was eye opening.”

Moreover, as the immersion progressed, students began reflecting on how certain interactions they had impacted community members, while others solely impacted the group. For instance, Aislin described how she noticed, “those who are more disconnected

to society...would benefit...from a hello or a friendly greeting.” However, she commented on how everyone they encountered in the United States were “being so friendly to everyone [in the group]...[and] it impacts us, but doesn’t benefit them.”

Likewise, Brian picked up on the benefits of such friendly interactions as he illustrated his time giving out pizza to people living on the street. He said, “The thanks we got from that woman was just unbelievable. It brightened up her whole week, never mind her day. It was as if she hasn’t spoke to someone in ages.” In a similar vein, Declan reflected on a mutually beneficial experience at D.C. Central Kitchen as the group interacted with community volunteers from the United States who also prepared food for the organization to disseminate to people in need. Declan and his peers agreed volunteering at this food preparation kitchen constituted one of their favorite experiences because of the “direct impact” they felt, the interactions with staff, and the interactions with other volunteers. He contended, “The number of people that were volunteering along with us, they were so happy with what they were doing. They knew they were making a difference in preparing all the vegetables...” While students regarded D.C. Central Kitchen as a highlight, they reflected on how they could have extended this to benefit even more people. Deirdre “would have liked it more if we could have gone out and actually gave [the food we prepared] to someone.”

Comparing Communities

As students discovered patterns within their daily experiences, they began to reflect on how interpersonal relationships differed in the United States versus Ireland. For instance, Aislin shared, “If somebody asked me how are the general people in Northern Ireland, I’d be like fine, they’re friendly. But then you go somewhere else, to see what

people are like there, to realize how down people can be, like compared to the people over here, we're a lot more reserved and negative. But if I never came here to see that, I never really would have thought about how negative people can be." In response, Brian remembered a time when a friend he made during a previous trip to the United States expressed, "I thought Ireland would be great. I would love to go, I would love to visit. It would be so much better than over here [in the U.S.]," while Brian would have described his home as "not good" and "wet all the time." Aislin summed up this conversation by reflecting, "It takes going to see somewhere else, see something else, to realize what can be changed in your community."

Another community comparison highlighted by youth from Ardoyne involved religious conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. Grady felt impacted by how high school students in Pennsylvania said "there's no Catholic and Protestant problem [in the U.S.], and over [in Ireland] that's a big thing. Like over in Pittsburgh, we...asked them if they knew what Catholics and Protestants was, and they didn't know...they can just go anywhere they want, like be with anyone they want. But [in Ireland] it's harder to be with anyone you want or be where you want to go."

Additionally, students reflected that society viewed homelessness differently in the United States and Ireland. Finn exclaimed, "We may have a problem [in Ireland], but I don't think it's a big issue." Similarly, Aidan said in Ireland, "I think people are less aware. Actually...I wasn't aware of the homeless community. I didn't know they were there at all until I came here and we were talking about them." Furthermore, Deirdre felt, "Because the homeless community back in Ireland isn't as much, I think if you did something [to help the population], it would really make a bigger impact." Overall,

almost every participant, including adult youth workers, commented on how in the United States, people are more aware of societal issues, and more inclined to support causes than in Ireland. In fact, after visiting a low socio-economic district in Pittsburgh that society does not support, and has almost forgotten, only Brian mentioned “the most blatant racism and discrimination that I’ve ever seen.”

General Sentiments about Service-Learning Experience

As a whole, participants contended they would not want to change aspects of the service-learning experience beyond certain activities being longer or shorter. For example, several students wished they could have done more outreach on the streets to people experiencing homelessness, or gone to D.C. Central Kitchen more than once. Grady commented that experiences aligned with expectations, however, “we just didn’t know it was going to be as good as it was.” Comparably, Caitlin added, “I was really scared coming [to the United States], but now that I’m here, I don’t want to leave...I want to stay, I want to do more work. I had such a good experience.”

Mediated Learning

Throughout the service-learning experience, adult youth workers facilitated mediated learning with participants. In addition, Amizade staff members and staff at Adventures West Virginia supported learning.

Evaluation of Self and Others

Through mediated learning, adults tried to enable a variety of student self-reflection. For example, one big focus of development for both groups involved building relationships with others. Brianna explained how she and Devin worked hard to “explore relationships...and look at how we can build on [them].” They often tried to have

students “challenge themselves in terms of working with people they don’t know so well.” Furthermore, youth workers frequently tried relating current experiences to future real-world applications. For instance, Brianna would challenge, “What would you do if you’re on a job, and your best friend works with you? And that she gets moved to another department, and there’s no longer opportunities for you to work with them. And you’re faced with 10 brand new people.”

Devin also encouraged students to pay attention to body language as they interacted with others. He recounted how Aislin noticed, “a lot of people walk about and wouldn’t smile at you, and hardly talk. It doesn’t cost anything for you to initiate that and say hello.” He built on student’s comments like this one, and helped them connect thoughts to relevant situations. In this instance, Devin focused on treatment of others by referencing Aislin’s comments she “said about the homeless...that saying hello to a homeless person is probably as nice as giving to them or offering a piece of pizza.”

Similarly, Kevin sought to have his group think about friendship and support systems by inquiring, “What is a real friend? How do you value that person? What do you invest in your friendships? What’s your expectations of a friend?...So whenever we do the exercise the first time...I have 35 [friends], I have 70 people on my Facebook page...And I’m going, right. But...who’s the guy you tell something real and meaningful with? Who’s the one, if you’re gay? Who do you tell if it’s that sort of thing? And we work on that regularly. One of the things that has come out as a result of America is that they have redefined their friendships.” Kevin stressed how through mediated learning this service-learning trip enabled student thought processes to reach “a different depth. And at a much speedier timeframe. To me, honestly it would have taken years to get to that

depth. That whole trust that they had in us, to share those stories, those life experiences, the challenges that they have in life...”

Skill Development

All students demonstrated particular strengths and weaknesses, and youth workers chose to hone in on such characteristics to enhance student development. For instance, Brianna suggested, “we’re seizing every opportunity to allow them to enable those skills as leaders. So what I need to be doing now with the younger groups is enthusing them, and telling them about leadership groups. And this is where I see you in a couple years’ time...that they are seen as role models. Someone to come in, to aspire to, and see that they’ve got skills developing.” Several students were already on this path toward leadership, and Brianna wanted to identify students who were sometimes seen as bullies or outcasts and also place them on this positive path so “they’re not seen in a negative way.” Likewise, Kevin continued to dispel the myth that the “American dream” just happens without effort, as his students believed prior to coming to the United States. In particular, he referenced students’ time in Heinz Field as they listened to the owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers and former American Ambassador to Ireland, Dan Rooney, tell the story of his family’s success. Kevin reminded them, “If you work hard enough, you’ll be successful...This is your life journey. If you want these things in life, you’ve...got to create, you’ve got to innovate, you’ve got to take risks.”

Moreover, youth workers aimed to enhance skill development via choices like offering use of different media for capstone presentations; prompts as reminders or encouragement for positive decisions, and opportunities to communicate and interact in new ways.

Another way youth workers mediated learning was by pointing out growth changes to students as the program progressed. For example, Brianna reflected on a time when she surprised Caitlin by asking her to share her changed mindset about homelessness in front of the group's panel of guest speakers. She remembered taking Caitlin aside and questioning, "Do you realize how proud I am of you? [Caitlin] started to laugh, and I said, you know what? Twelve months ago if I had directed a question like that at you...you would have put your head down or more likely you would have giggled out of embarrassment. And [Caitlin] said, you're so right."

Extending Discussions and Asking Questions

All youth workers mediated learning by encouraging students to expand on thoughts and think more deeply. They accomplished such psychological growth by asking students to ponder through continued feedback. Brianna, for example, pressed students by saying, "What I want you to think about now is feelings, and what you thought about the program." Similarly, Devin wanted youth to assess broadly, "What's been your best experience? What's been your worst experience?" Also Devin pushed uncertain students to participate by asking, "Do you think we can be a source of support to you?" Brianna and Devin put effort into individualizing experiences and reflections with students to support learning. For example, the two came up with a sheet of possible questions to pose to students in small groups, but Brianna wanted to "mix and match and choose [questions] based upon individuals. We have a look and then we reflect on who it is. And then we change [inquiries] based on them." Furthermore, Devin noted how students most felt impacted by personal stories they heard from community members. He

hoped to question youth about which stories meant most to them and ask them to produce their own powerful stories based on the service-learning experience.

Transfer of Learning to Home Communities

During reflection youth workers spent a significant amount of time encouraging students to consider how experiences in the United States could transfer to communities in Ireland. Youth workers posed questions to mediate such learning. For example, because students felt struck by the “friendliness and openness” of people in the United States, Brianna re-oriented thoughts in that direction and prompted, “That’s something we can bring back and maybe work on in our own communities. What do you think everybody? Do you agree?” She also wanted to ensure lessons students learned throughout the experience extended into the future, and consistently discussed with Devin and the researcher “how we can transfer the learning and make a commitment to our own communities in terms of future service...” Moreover, Brianna and Devin wanted youth to realize their role in decisions the group would make in their communities. They consistently questioned students about their goals and, as Devin said, “what they’re getting out of the program.” Similarly, Brianna reminded youth of their voice and ability to become positive change-makers by saying, “You guys are the driving force behind the youth forum. Devin and I are in the background.” Conversely, youth workers supported students to think about what their home community had to offer. Brianna, for instance asked Adhamh, “Anything positive that you can think of in our communities that you would like to share or talk about? Something really good?”

Learners (Post Service-Learning Experience)

Youth workers and program developers supported students to engage in critical discussions about their service-learning experiences. They analyzed knowledge gained and understanding of their function in a complex society.

Setting Personal Goals

Due to the service-learning experience and continued interactions with youth workers, several participants decided to positively change their lives as a result of seeing how individual behaviors can impact society. After interviewing the youth worker Kevin seven months post immersion, he conveyed such strides from youth from Ardoyne. For example, "...the drugs have stopped, the interfaith violence has stopped, the gang related violence has stopped. They're back at school, they're in employment. It's everything we want, you know. And the rest will click into place for them." In addition, Kevin touched on progress from Keane in regards to interpersonal relationships. He expressed, "...he only has two real friends now. Where he would have said he had 40. He re-evaluated his relationships within that group. Same with Liam." The youth worker also discussed how Lucas "was in a single parent household with his mother, and...would have given [her] quite a hard time...but Lucas has re-evaluated his whole life...we took away one kid, we brought back somebody different. He's not binge drinking, he's not involved in violence. He's much more caring and understanding of his mother." In general psychological terms Kevin assured, the difference in the boys is "...unbelievable. Even visually, they're not as angry. You know they were quite tense and screwed up, and they're very, very different people." He continued to elaborate that the most unexpected part of the whole experience

was “the change in cognition. The change in the way they...processed the information that they were given. And used it to affect change in themselves.”

Moreover, Grady has internalized impacts youth workers like Kevin have made, and shared, “I want to be, when I’m working, like Kevin a lot. That’s what I want to be when I’m older. He does a lot for people in need, for the whole of Northern Ireland...”

Although Kevin described the great strides of the majority of students, two continue to express problem behaviors, and one “hasn’t worked it out yet, but he’s getting there.”

Likewise, when thinking about his self-development, Brian contended, “I’ll sort of be thinking more wisely, especially for what I’ll be doing over the next few years.

‘Cause people can’t take an education from me, so I’m going to make sure I’ve got that.

Rather than what I was planning on doing, which was just going back to work. So,

making sure I think through decisions.” Similarly, Alannah shared a goal specific to the

cause of homelessness when she said, “I didn’t think I could meet such inspirational

people and like, it made such a change to me. I want to open a couple shelters around

Ireland. I know it sounds really silly, but I actually really want to help them, because I

feel completely different about the homeless.”

Affecting Change Through Relationships

As they did prior to the service-learning experience, students from the Ardoyne group continued to focus on religious conflict in Ireland. Now, however, these Catholic youth have developed relationships with Protestants through a cross community program.

Grady said, they “mix...every Monday...and go away on weekends with them...we

discuss a lot of stuff about Catholics and Protestants.” He also maintained he does not get

involved in religious protests anymore, “I just walk past it.” Kevin extended on Grady’s

acknowledgement that students are no longer involved in gang violence and have a new outlook on others' differences by revealing, "They want Protestant friends, they want nonwhite friends. They're embracing the new ethnic communities. Before that, they just hated everyone."

In addition, several students from the Down Patrick group discussed how they wanted to maintain relationships with peers they met in the United States. Declan, for example, shared, "I think it's important that our group keeps in contact with them, so maybe they can come over and enjoy Northern Ireland, and maybe have an experience like the one we had over here [in the United States]." While students hoped to have international youth do service in Ireland, they also had ideas for educating their local community about societal issues. Aidan articulated, "My friends, they know I'm in the U.S., but nobody fully understands what I'm doing. So when I get home, I'll be able to talk to them about everything that we did. And how important everything that we did was." Similarly, Brian planned to use his iPad video recordings from the program so "People can visually see...the whole talk from Steve [during the Speaker's Bureau]...and maybe...show [them]...homeless people are not what people expect." Moreover, Kevin learned Down Patrick youth did their capstone presentations back in Ireland in front of parents and the Minister for Education. He said, "the kids...had written poems, they had taken video clips, and shared some of their photographs. It was a super night, so much so, that the Minister is going to speak about it...on the radio."

Affecting Change Through Education

Correspondingly, Deirdre suggested educational instances like the aforementioned were important after the completion of service-learning "because not everybody can go

on a trip like this, so it's better to tell them what it looks like so they have an idea if they ever have to confront the stuff we have to confront here. They will know how to react to it." Brogan proclaimed for the same purpose, it is necessary "to stop stereotypes...so people know not to be afraid of [homeless individuals]." Similarly, Kevin added, students "can see everyone is vulnerable to this, you hear it all the time now...they haven't got that perception of a homeless person being a bum. And they understand the mental health issues, and hard decisions can impact." In contrast, Caitlin felt her peers' service actions necessary for an additional reason. She suggested, they needed "to make [adult community members] have a different point of view of young people, because all they think of young people now are, don't leave home, they're so lazy, they're going to be the worst generation when they're older and stuff. So we can like show them...we can do stuff like this and have a better future than you think we are."

Reaching Out to Communities and Community Members

Due to the education students received about homelessness while on their service-learning experience in the United States, several expressed how their behaviors toward people in need have changed specific to this cause. For example, Finn asserted, "Like Stephen [from the Speaker's Bureau] told us [in his lecture], all they really want is a conversation sometimes, and I just took that away with me. If all he wants is a conversation, I'm going to do it. That's free. It doesn't cost me nothing." Additionally, students discussed how this experience sparked their desire to support people in need, in a broader sense beyond issues of homelessness. Finn contended, "I see people in need now and try to be more sensitive to them, not pre-judge them. Not think that you know what they're going through, because you don't...Hear what they have to say."

Furthermore, Kevin revealed, “they’re back now, they’re involved in civil action and social justice. So they’re involved in fundraising, involved in lobbying and helping the homeless within their own community, within their own city. They’re now doing this globally, so they’re heading to Africa to affect...social and economic change. So, there’s been a significant impact...” Moreover, students have almost raised the entire 40,000 pounds required for the experience in Africa.

In addition, Kevin talked about the different mindsets students have regarding what it means to do service. He said youth now emphasize, “We want to go and help somebody. We want to get our hands dirty. We’ve went, and we’ve done, and we’ve seen, and we’ve experienced, and now we want to make a change.” Furthermore, students have different expectations about what types of service others should deliver. For instance, Kevin described when youth in the Ardoyne group heard American students would soon come to Northern Ireland they were “not happy that they’re just coming to visit. They want action. That’s the way they talk...What is it we’re going to do? What is it we’re going to have them produce? What is the outcome?”

In addition, an overall theme from both groups was a desire to become more active volunteers, and a belief that goal would happen. Aidan expressed, “It’s going to get me involved with, if I can, a lot more volunteer stuff. If I can make a difference then I will take the opportunity to. And I think the whole group is probably feeling the same way...”

Summary

This qualitative study provided insight into impacts of international service-learning in the United States. Youth came from two communities in Northern Ireland;

and while both groups had backgrounds with varying difficulties, those from Ardoyne constituted a more highly at-risk population than the Down Patrick youth. The researcher used data source triangulation to find themes that converged across sources and individuals. As a result of service-learning, students gained education on societal needs, and effectively identified problems in their home communities. Students thus planned to teach parents, peers, and community members about possible changes in their culture. In addition, findings indicated youth developed leadership skills and problem-solving capabilities, achieved stronger relationships with peers and youth workers, increased sensitivity and concern for others, and expressed more empathy. Such advancements were more evident in the group from Ardoyne, likely because they started the program in a more difficult emotional state having previously experienced more traumatic life events than the group from Down Patrick. Furthermore, the immersion experience enabled youth to modify stereotypes. It also resulted in greater acceptance of different ethnic groups. Finally, through the international service-learning experience, youth now desire to serve in ways that directly impact society, and have begun to accept social responsibility. In conclusion, international service-learning for this population proved positive and pertinent for personal and societal growth.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study investigated international students' perspectives of their service-learning experience in the United States. Specifically, through qualitative methods, the researcher sought to gather data about interpersonal, socio-cultural, and psychological impacts of service-learning as students advanced through six stages of Cone and Harris' (1996) theoretical framework: *Learners (Pre Service-Learning Experience)*, *Definition of Task, Experiences, Critical Reflection, Mediated Learning*, and *Learners (Post Service-Learning Experience)*. This chapter will discuss how findings relate to research on the topic and will close with a dialogue on limitations of the present study and future research implications.

Chapter V will discuss results of the service-learning study as organized around four research foci:

1. How does home culture impact the Amizade international service-learning experience in the United States?
2. What are students' perspectives about the consequences to themselves and others during their Amizade international service-learning experience in the United States?
3. What are students' perspectives about how their Amizade international service-learning experience modified preconceived notions about the population being served?

4. How did the Amizade international service-learning experience affect students' conceptions of their future altruistic behavior?

Impact of Home Culture

The current study on international service-learning supported previous research that indicated nationality impacts how students process and understand experiences abroad (Dolby, 2008). For example, one of the senior Irish youth workers explained how people in Ireland demonstrate political activism as a result of past and current religious conflict in the country; opposed to people in the United States who display civic activism. This suggested why many students in the Ardoyne group approached American peers hesitantly, and questioned their religious viewpoints. For example, participants shared that prior to the service-learning experience, a focal point in their lives was religious discord between Catholics and Protestants. They felt surprised that American high school students did not internalize hatred for one group or the other, and did not base their decisions for going to certain places on religious backgrounds of people in attendance. Ultimately, gaining an understanding of social interactions amongst people of varying backgrounds in the United States may have lead to the newly developed interpersonal associations between Catholic participants in the study and Protestant community members in Ireland. Jean-Marie, Normore, and Brooks (2009) explained that service-learning helped students integrate into a multi-faith society. Consequently, participants of this study now hope to interweave threads of religious tolerance into the fabric of their society by integrating Protestant peers into their lives.

Moreover, the majority of participants did not have experience in big cities like they visited in the United States. They felt more comfortable with tight knit communities

of Ireland; and several students initially felt overwhelmed by America's crowds, tall buildings, and expansive homeless population. Dolby (2008) discussed how nationality effects ways individuals think about and comprehend international service-learning experiences. Such fears students had upon arrival in the United States initially escalated their stereotypes of Americans and people experiencing homelessness. However, as evidenced in later sections of this chapter, those negative stereotypes decreased as youth started to gain experiences, critically reflect, and become supported through mediated learning.

Consequences of Service-Learning

Keith (2005) found globalization enabled students to develop relationships with others and acquire a sense of self. Similarly, a recurring theme in the current investigation involved students' relationship development, as well as personal strides. For example, participants from Ardoyne and Down Patrick discussed how through the service-learning experience, they achieved stronger relationships with other peers in the youth group. This became most notable during Adventures West Virginia, when students focused on team building, trust, and support for one another. Youth verbalized how such relationships would not only make the rest of the service-learning experience more valuable, but would also enable them to take their new-found confidence and better rely on each other to serve communities in their home country.

Moreover, past research found leadership development resulted from service-learning (Ash, Clayton, & Atkinson, 2005; Billig, 2000; Carver, 1997; King, 2004; Lai, 2009; Lee, 2005). Thus, youth workers in the current study used this service-learning opportunity to evolve leadership skills. Results indicated even students who had not

previously taken on a leadership role, now become vocal during community projects and volunteer work to ensure endeavors are active, worthwhile, and educational.

This study also aligned with research completed by Billig (2000) in that students displayed fewer discipline problems, developed stronger relationships with adults, felt greater sensitivity to others, and accepted cultural diversity. Such benefits proved evident in outcomes revealed by the Ardoyne group upon their return to Ireland. In the seven months between the service-learning experience and data collection, all but three students stopped doing illegal drugs, and discontinued participation in interfaith and gang-related violence. Furthermore, youth have re-defined relationships with friends and family members so they now encompass more caring and understanding. Overall, students from both groups are also less angry, have reconsidered life goals, and now assess decisions more thoughtfully.

Similarly, past research indicated service-learning readies students to assimilate into a multicultural, multiethnic, and multi-faith society (Jean-Marie, Normore, and Brooks, 2009). During this service-learning experience, students from both groups indicated prolonged engagement with American high school peers enabled them to develop unexpected respect for and find commonalities with a new and different population. In particular, results highlighted changes for students from Ardoyne who now view others' differences more positively. For example, they want to have Protestant and non-white friends, whereas before this seemed objectionable. They also accept new ethnic communities that have recently become integrated into Irish culture. Such interpersonal and psychological changes vary greatly from mindsets of many students prior to coming to the United States.

In addition, Terry and Bohnenberger (2004) indicated community connections made via service-learning helped students develop concern for others. Results of the current study revealed students demonstrated such characteristics. During the program, youth described the positive impact of having conversations and sharing smiles with underserved populations. They also desired to extend volunteer opportunities to ensure maximum impact like wanting to work more at D.C. Central Kitchen, and when following a social dinner, they chose to give pizza to people living on the street rather than throw away food. Further, Keith (2005) contended the worth of service-learning lacks if students ultimately feel more fortunate than the population being served, because it indicates they felt like outsiders rather than integrated into the community. Although several youth described how aforementioned experiences allowed them to feel grateful, no one implied their life was more valuable than the life of someone in need.

Further, the current study divulged relationships between students and youth workers have deepened as a result of the program. Students also increasingly trust youth workers, and frequently share personal stories and challenges with them. Adults in the study indicated this transformation happened in months, rather than years as a result of the international service-learning. Although not evidenced by the current research, another possible reason for such advancements may be due to students' continued engagement and accompanied weekly support as part of the youth group. Possibly for this same reason, the current study found only positive sentiments post immersion, whereas Unger, Pribesh, Bol and Dickerson (in press) discovered students often experienced feelings of depression upon re-assimilation in home communities post service-learning. In their study, however, students participated in international service-learning with only

one other peer, who typically came from a different state in the United States. This likely provided students with little post-immersion support.

Modifications of Preconceived Notions

Participants came to the United States with stereotypes of Americans and the country. Billig (2000) found service-learning lead to improved tolerance of cultural diversity. The current study supported these findings because students revealed they no longer felt Americans were obsessed with freedom and had schools that looked like musicals. Rather, they met inspirational people, felt overwhelmed by Americans' friendly interactions with them, and looked forward to dispelling stereotypes of their peers once back in Ireland. Students also expressed that it took them being somewhere new to realize what needed to change in their home community.

Moreover, prior to the international service-learning experience, participants harbored many stereotypes about people experiencing homelessness. For example, students expressed such people were dirty, bums, alcoholics, addicts, arrogant, could not get a job, and did not do anything of value. Past research indicated service-learning would allow students to dispute social stigmas, prejudices, and inequalities of underserved groups like people experiencing homelessness; and the current study also found this occurred (Barney, Corser, & White, 2010; Kiely, 2004; Lai, 2009; Lee, 2005). While prior to the program, students did not have much awareness of homelessness, nor did they believe such a dire situation existed, after hearing stories from homeless individuals, youth saw the severity of homelessness and also became attached to community members in this position. It additionally sparked them to learn about homelessness in Ireland, and find ways to support those in need at home.

The fact that students connected to the cause through individual interactions with people experiencing homelessness aligned with Camacho's (2004) research that explained developing a relationship with a particular community member during service-learning can facilitate a breakdown of stereotypes, and enhance understanding of diversity. Similarly, Hui (2009) found constructive service-learning experiences stemmed from open and positive communications between students and community members. Ultimately, participants felt inspired and personally changed by people experiencing homelessness. Further, they started to approach homeless individuals, offered them food, initiated conversations, and volunteered for organizations that also supported the population in need. Stereotypes dissipated, and participants began describing people experiencing homelessness as nice, friendly, lovely, inspirational, and just like them.

Conversely, students hoped by participating in this service-learning experience, adults in their home community would dispel their personal stereotypes, and recognize this generation of youth was worthwhile, valuable, and comprised of people who could make a positive difference in society. Prior to the program, students explained adults perceived their cohort as lazy, homebound, and incapable of becoming valuable members of society when they got older.

Future Altruistic Behaviors

Along with Billig's (2000) study, the current research found service-learning led to more social responsibility. Students asserted they desired to help more people in need, starting by having conversations with them, acting sensitively, and not pre-judging. Similarly, Bernacki and Jaeger (2008) discovered, by participating in service-learning youth reported more empathy, better ability to solve social problems, and increased

aspirations to make a positive impact in society. Students in this study also have become involved in fundraising, lobbying, and helping homeless people within their community. While many youth had already participated in volunteerism before the service-learning experience, none indicated they had done so internationally. Post service-learning, several participants revealed they had begun planning a trip to Africa with others in their youth group to affect social and economic change. Thus, many students have begun a journey toward global citizenship beyond this one experience.

Moreover, service-learning has the capacity to enable students to become more educated and beneficial resources in their local and global communities (Pitts, 2009; Terry & Bohnenberger, 2004). In the same way, this data indicated students planned to take their new knowledge and affect change in the near and distant future. For example, youth in the Ardoyne group began developing a program with their youth workers that will educate students from the United States when they come to Ireland. They hope to make the experience one where a local issue is identified, the Americans learn about the societal problem, and then together the groups work to remedy the situation.

Additionally, students from Down Patrick have already begun educating parents, peers, community members, and political figures about what they learned during their international service-learning experience. Further, they plan to take this knowledge and apply it to similar issues in their local communities. Participants also hope to educate local community members so they will better know how to react when faced with supporting or overcoming injustices; as well as try to rid society of untrue stereotypes.

In addition, results indicated students have begun recognizing their place in an intricate society (Cone & Harris, 1996). For example, several students are working

toward becoming leaders amongst their peers in order to help guide future youth groups. Others hope to attain careers as youth workers so they can also support people in need throughout their community. One student even revealed a desire to open homeless shelters throughout Ireland so she can support a problem in her community that, as the students described, is rarely acknowledged.

Limitations

Although the researcher implemented methods to ensure trustworthiness of the study, limitations still arose. Researcher bias, for example, may have caused preconceptions based on prior experiences of the researcher. To control biases, the researcher used a second coder for inter-rater reliability whom she had trained during a previous research study on service-learning. In addition, the researcher used bracketing to improve data collection, results, and analyses as the researcher maintained self-awareness of possible preconceptions (Tufford & Newman, 2010). Another threat to internal validity may have surfaced because of social desirability. Although the researcher personally conducted all focus groups and interviews to maintain consistency and accuracy, participants had developed a relationship with her throughout the week of service-learning, and thus responses may have reflected what students believed the researcher wanted to learn. To minimize this threat of social desirability, the researcher introduced focus groups and interviews by stressing all responses would remain confidential and not impact participants' future experiences with the organization or their youth group. Throughout data collection it became evident participants provided honest responses. For example, students openly shared negative stereotypes they had of Americans, even though this is the researcher's ethnicity.

Moreover, a threat to external validity may have occurred due to small sample size of the population, and the question as to whether responses could generalize not only to students involved in Amizade Global Service-Learning, but also to other service-learning contexts. Although further research should investigate this threat, the current study included two groups with large variances in background, living environment, and past experiences. With these evident differences between groups, results proved consistent. A similar issue may relate to the fact that only Irish students comprised the focus groups. For example, based on Irish youth workers' previous travels to the United States, they discovered Americans typically welcome and act friendly toward Irish people. While the question thus arises, whether such treatment results from natives of all countries when they come to the United States, the focus of this study was examining perspectives of youth from one developed country doing service-learning in another developed country.

Directions for Future Practice

Based on positive findings of this research, educators should consider implementing international service-learning programs in the United States more frequently. Amizade's global service-learning programs could enhance lives of more Irish students, and Irish and United States communities. If taken to greater extents, such international service-learning experiences have potential to benefit other cultures as well.

Further, more privileged youth traditionally receive opportunities abroad like this service-learning experience. In the cases of Irish youth from this study, at-risk students were supported to engage in the program, resulting in positive findings linked to their

own lives and the lives of local and international communities. Encouraging implications exist for underprivileged youth to participate in service-learning if more youth associations and government officials around the globe to support and fund such programs.

Finally, in considering implementation of a service-learning experience, educators should incorporate highly involved pre and post immersion experiences. The success of these two groups likely was in part due to continuous engagement with youth workers beyond the isolated immersion experience in the United States.

Directions for Future Research

In the future, researchers should include more ethnicities and cultures in their studies. Also, further examinations should consider whether international service-learning experiences have the same consequences if done in developed countries other than the United States. Similarly, the current research focused on perspectives of students from a developed country performing service-learning in a different developed country. However, future studies may also consider impact of students from developing countries doing service-learning in a developed country.

Moreover, all participants in the current study spoke English, the official language of the United States. Additional investigations should examine communication barriers, and whether findings differ if students speak an alternative language than the one of the population being served.

To gain added perspectives, a similar investigation to this one should interview community members being served as well as staff from partner organizations that support

the cause. Moreover, by enhancing methods of data collection to include repeated measure and observations to students and community partners, deeper insight may be gained. Both of these strategies may help determine a wider range of international service-learning impacts.

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Appendix A

RESEARCH PROPOSAL REVIEW NOTIFICATION FORM

No.: 13-137

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY
HUMAN SUBJECTS INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
RESEARCH PROPOSAL REVIEW NOTIFICATION FORM

TO: Shana Pribesh
Responsible Project Investigator

DATE: August 22, 2013
IRB Decision Date

Perspectives of International Students Performing Service-Learning in the United States:
a Case Study with Amizade
Name of Project

Please be informed that your research protocol has received approval by the Institutional Review Board. Your research protocol is:

- Approved
 Tabled/Disapproved
 Approved, contingent on making the changes below*


IRB Chairperson's Signature August 22, 2013
date

Contact the IRB for clarification of the terms of your research, or if you wish to make ANY change to your research protocol.

The approval expires one year from the IRB decision date. You must submit a Progress Report and seek re-approval if you wish to continue data collection or analysis beyond that date, or a Close-out report. You must report adverse events experienced by subjects to the IRB chair in a timely manner (see university policy).

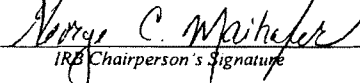
* Approval of your research is CONTINGENT upon the satisfactory completion of the following changes and attestation to those changes by the chairperson of the Institutional Review Board. Research may not begin until after this attestation.

* **In the Application**

- Under 3b reminder that we can only approve a study for 1 year and a Progress report will be due next August.
- Under 7d, add the designation, "English speaking", before the word "participants" in the first sentence.
- Add the Permission for Use of Audiovisual/Photos release form.

Attestation

As directed by the Institutional Review Board, the Responsible Project Investigator made the above changes. Research may begin.


IRB Chairperson's Signature August 30, 2013
date

Appendix B

BLUEPRINT FOR STUDENT FOCUS GROUP

Blueprint for Student Focus Groups (item number in cells)

	Interpersonal	Socio-Cultural	Psychological
Learners (Pre)		1	2
Definition of Task	3		4
Experience	5		6
Reflection		7	8
Mediated Learning	9	10	
Learners (Post)		11	12

Appendix C

BLUEPRINT FOR ADULT LEADER INTERVIEWS

Blueprint for Adult Leaders' Interviews (item number in cells)

	Interpersonal	Socio-cultural	Psychological
Learner (Pre)		1	2
Definition of Task		3	4
Experience	5		6
Reflection	7		8
Mediated Learning	9	10	
Learner (Post)		11	12

Appendix D

FOCUS GROUP/INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR STUDENTS

Date:

Site Location:

Interviewer:

INTERVIEW MATERIALS:

1. Audio recorder

INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

1. Arrive at the meeting space 15 minutes prior to students to set up.
2. Follow the Introductory Script.

Introductory Script:

Hello everyone. Thank you in advance, not only for your participation in today's focus group/interview, but for all of the dedication you have already shown to community members experiencing poverty and homelessness. As you may already know, I am currently working on obtaining my doctorate degree in Education, specifically, Curriculum and Instruction. As part of this program, I am doing a research study perspectives of international students performing service-learning in the United States. You are here today to support this research by participating in a focus group. Please remember, your participation is voluntary and will not impact your relationship with Amizade in any way.

Again, your participation is voluntary, and the information you provide is confidential. Your responses will be audio taped, however, you will not be distinguished by name or identifying characteristics when I write results for the study, so please be open and honest with your answers.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns before, during, or after the interview.

3. Have students sign a consent form or turn in an assent form if under 18.

4. Facilitate the focus group or interview.
5. Allow students to ask any questions or voice any concerns about the session.

Focus Group/Interview Questions

1. What types of service or volunteering had you done before your Amizade service-learning experience?
2. What did you expect your Amizade service-learning experience would be like?
3. How do people in your culture view homeless individuals? How do you know this?
4. Before your service-learning experience, what did you think about homeless people?
5. What types of relationships did you develop with others during this Amizade service-learning experience?
6. How did your initial expectations about this Amizade service-learning experience align with your actual experiences?
7. What would you have changed about this service-learning experience?
8. Who or what was the most meaningful part of this service-learning experience?
9. How do you feel your presence in the United States impacted community members you encountered in this country?
10. As you have learned about poverty and homelessness, what stereotypes did you discover were true or untrue about the population? Describe how and why you came to these conclusions.
11. How has this experience affected your view of becoming involved in your home community?
12. In what ways do you now think about people in need?

Appendix E

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT **Students** **OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY**

PROJECT TITLE: Perspectives of International Students Performing Service-Learning in the United States: A Case Study of Amizade

INTRODUCTION

The purposes of this form are to give you information that may affect your decision whether to say YES or NO to participation in this research, and to record the consent of those who say YES. The research study is called Perspectives of International Students Performing Service-Learning in the United States: A Case Study of Amizade. It will be conducted with you and a few of your peers who have also gone on an Amizade service-learning experience.

RESEARCHERS

Shana Pribesh is the Responsible Project Investigator. She is a professor for Old Dominion University's Darden College of Education, in the Department of Educational Foundations and Leadership. Suzanne Unger is the investigator for the study. She has a Master's Degree in Elementary Education, and is working on her doctorate degree in Education, Curriculum and Instruction, from Old Dominion University's Darden College of Education.

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY

Several studies have been conducted looking into the subject of service-learning. None of them have explained the perspectives Amizade students coming from an international country to serve a community in the United States have about their experiences, and how it has impacted their lives.

If you decide to participate, then you will join a study involving research of service-learning. As part of your time with Amizade, you will participate in daily reflection sessions with your peers and adult chaperones. These sessions are intended to allow you to process experiences of the day. You will also contribute to a focus group with approximately 7 peers on the trip, or an individual interview, and join a discussion to provide your perspectives about the experience. The reflection and focus group session will be audio recorded, but all identifying information will remain confidential. If you say YES, then your participation will last for about 1 hour, and will take place in a meeting room of a local hotel. In addition, during service experiences, you will be photographed as a way to document your activities.

To better understand your thoughts, reflection sessions will also be audio recorded.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

RISK: There is minimal risk of loss of confidentiality in being identified as a participant in the study. Researchers will minimize this risk by not revealing identifying information

during audio recorded reflections and focus group sessions. In addition, subsequent analysis of audio recordings will remain in a password-protected file that is ultimately destroyed once research is completed. And, as with any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified. You do not face other risks by participating in this study. Your responses will not impact your involvement in Amizade.

BENEFITS: No direct benefits exist for participation in this study. The main potential benefit to you for participating in this study is being able to express your opinions about the Amizade service-learning experience, and in turn make the program stronger for other students who participate in the future. In addition, your perspectives will strengthen the program for community members who receive services.

COSTS AND PAYMENTS

The researchers are unable to give you any payment for participating in this study.

NEW INFORMATION

If the researchers find new information during this study that would reasonably change your decision about participating, then they will give it to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The researchers will take reasonable steps to keep private information, such as focus group responses and identifying information confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications; but the researcher will not identify you. Of course, your records may be subpoenaed by court order or inspected by government bodies with oversight authority.

WITHDRAWAL PRIVILEGE

It is OK for you to say NO. Even if you say YES now, you are free to say NO later, and walk away or withdraw from the study -- at any time. Your decision will not affect your relationship with Old Dominion University or Amizade, or otherwise cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled.

COMPENSATION FOR ILLNESS AND INJURY

If you say YES, then your consent in this document does not waive any of your legal rights. However, in the event of harm arising from this study, neither Old Dominion University nor the researchers are able to give you any money, insurance coverage, free medical care, or any other compensation for such injury. In the event that you suffer injury as a result of participation in any research project, you may contact the Office of Research at Old Dominion University at 757-683-3460, Shana Pribesh at 757-683-6684, at 757-683-3245, Suzanne Unger at 757-761-0408, or Dr. George Maihafer the current Old Dominion University IRB chair at 757-683-4520, who will be glad to review the matter with you.

Appendix F

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR ADULT LEADERS

Date:

Site Location:

Interviewer:

INTERVIEW MATERIALS:

1. Audio recorder

INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

1. Arrive at the meeting space 15 minutes prior to students to set up.
2. Follow the Introductory Script.

Introductory Script:

Hello. Thank you in advance, not only for your participation in today's interview, but for all of the dedication you have already shown to community members experiencing poverty and homelessness. As you may already know, I am currently working on obtaining my doctorate degree in Education, specifically, Curriculum and Instruction. As part of this program, I am doing a research study perspectives of international students performing service-learning in the United States. You are here today to support this research by participating in an interview. Please remember, your participation is voluntary and will not impact your relationship with Amizade in any way.

Again, your participation is voluntary, and the information you provide is confidential. Your responses will be audio taped, however, you will not be distinguished by name or identifying characteristics when I write results for the study, so please be open and honest with your answers.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns before, during, or after the interview.

3. Have adult leader sign a consent form.
4. Facilitate the focus group.
5. Allow participant to ask any questions or voice any concerns about the session.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Demographics

1. How did you become involved in Amizade?

Value of Service-Learning

Interviewer Says: *Now I am going to ask you some questions related students' experiences on this Amizade service-learning trip, as well as future impacts of their experiences.*

1. How did the fact that students were from a different culture affect this Amizade service-learning experience?
2. What did students expect to happen during this service-learning experience?
3. Before this service-learning experience, what did students believe they would be doing to support the community in the United States?
4. Prior to this Amizade service-learning experience, what were students' perceptions about people experiencing homelessness?
5. How do you feel students' presence in the United States impacted community members they encountered in the country?
6. What was unexpected about this service-learning experience?
7. Based on what you heard students discuss during reflections, how do students relate this service-learning experience to their lives back home?
8. Based on their reflections, what impacted students throughout this service-learning experience?
9. As student progressed through this service-learning experience, what did you notice about relationships they developed with others? (ie-peers, community members, or adult chaperones).
10. As students learned more about poverty and homelessness, what stereotypes did they rethink about the population? Describe how and why you came to these conclusions.
11. How can your home community benefit from what students learned during this service-learning trip in the United States?
12. How will this experience affect students' altruistic behaviors once they return home?

Appendix G

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT **Adult Leaders** **OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY**

PROJECT TITLE: Perspectives of International Students Performing Service-Learning in the United States: A Case Study of Amizade

INTRODUCTION

The purposes of this form are to give you information that may affect your decision whether to say YES or NO to participation in this research, and to record the consent of those who say YES. The research study is called Perspectives of International Students Performing Service-Learning in the United States: A Case Study of Amizade. It will be conducted with you and a few of your peers who have also gone on an Amizade service-learning experience.

RESEARCHERS

Shana Pribesh is the Responsible Project Investigator. She is a professor for Old Dominion University's Darden College of Education, in the Department of Educational Foundations and Leadership. Suzanne Unger is the investigator for the study. She has a Master's Degree in Elementary Education, and is working on her doctorate degree in Education, Curriculum and Instruction, from Old Dominion University's Darden College of Education.

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY

Several studies have been conducted looking into the subject of service-learning. None of them have explained the perspectives Amizade students coming from an international country to serve a community in the United States have about their experiences, and how it has impacted their lives.

If you decide to participate, then you will join approximately 45 people in a study involving research of service-learning. As is part any Amizade program, you will participate in daily reflection sessions with your students. These sessions are intended to allow you to process experiences of the day. As a separate component to this research, you will also participate in an interview to provide your perspectives about the experience. The reflection and interview session will be audio recorded, but all identifying information will remain confidential. The investigator will subsequently analyzing audiotapes for the research study. If you say YES, then your participation will last for about 1 hour, and will take place in a meeting room of a local hotel.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

RISKS: There is minimal risk of loss of confidentiality in being identified as a participant in the study. Researchers will minimize this risk by not revealing identifying information during audio recorded reflections and interview sessions. In addition, subsequent analysis of audio recordings will remain in a password-protected file that is

ultimately destroyed once research is completed. And, as with any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified. You do not face other risks by participating in this study. Your responses will not impact your involvement in Amizade.

BENEFITS: No direct benefits exist for participation in this study. The main potential benefit to you for participating in this study is being able to express your opinions about the Amizade service-learning experience, and in turn make the program stronger for other students who participate in the future. In addition, your perspectives will strengthen the program for community members who receive services.

COSTS AND PAYMENTS

The researchers are unable to give you any payment for participating in this study.

NEW INFORMATION

If the researchers find new information during this study that would reasonably change your decision about participating, then they will give it to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The researchers will take reasonable steps to keep private information, such as focus group responses and identifying information confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications; but the researcher will not identify you. Of course, your records may be subpoenaed by court order or inspected by government bodies with oversight authority.

WITHDRAWAL PRIVILEGE

It is OK for you to say NO. Even if you say YES now, you are free to say NO later, and walk away or withdraw from the study -- at any time. Your decision will not affect your relationship with Old Dominion University or Amizade, or otherwise cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled.

COMPENSATION FOR ILLNESS AND INJURY

If you say YES, then your consent in this document does not waive any of your legal rights. However, in the event of harm arising from this study, neither Old Dominion University nor the researchers are able to give you any money, insurance coverage, free medical care, or any other compensation for such injury. In the event that you suffer injury as a result of participation in any research project, you may contact the Office of Research at Old Dominion University at 757-683-3460, Shana Pribesh at 757-683-6684, at 757-683-3245, Suzanne Unger at 757-761-0408, or Dr. George Maihafer the current Old Dominion University IRB chair at 757-683-4520, who will be glad to review the matter with you.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT

By signing this form, you are saying several things. You are saying that you have read this form or have had it read to you, that you are satisfied that you understand this form,

the research study, and its risks and benefits. The researchers should have answered any questions you may have had about the research. If you have any questions later on, then the researchers should be able to answer them:

Shana Pribesh, Principal Investigator 757-683-6684
 Suzanne Unger, Investigator 757-761-0408

If at any time you feel pressured to participate, or if you have any questions about your rights or this form, then you should call Dr. George Maihafer, the current IRB chair, at 757-683-4520, or the Old Dominion University Office of Research, at 757-683-3460.

And importantly, by signing below, you are telling the researcher YES, that you agree to participate in this study. The researcher should give you a copy of this form for your records.

Subject's Printed Name & Signature	Date
---	-------------

INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT

I certify that I have explained to this subject the nature and purpose of this research, including benefits, risks, costs, and any experimental procedures. I have described the rights and protections afforded to human subjects and have done nothing to pressure, coerce, or falsely entice this subject into participating. I am aware of my obligations under state and federal laws, and promise compliance. I have answered the subject's questions and have encouraged him/her to ask additional questions at any time during the course of this study. I have witnessed the above signature(s) on this consent form.

Investigator's Printed Name & Signature	Date
--	-------------

Appendix H
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT
FOR USE OF PHOTO/IMAGE MATERIALS

STUDY TITLE: Perspectives of International Students Performing Service-Learning in the United States: A Case Study with Amizade

DESCRIPTION:

The investigator would like to use photographs of you as part of her research analysis, or to use as a visual during future presentations. An example of when the researcher may take photographs includes during service and discussion sessions. All photographs will be used for educational purposes.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

You will not be identified by name in any use of the photographs or images. The photographs or images may be shown in an educational classroom to help educate teachers or students about service-learning, or they may be shown or published in a report that appears at an educational conference or in a professional journal for other educators or researchers to learn about international students performing service-learning in the United States.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT

By signing below, you are granting the investigator the right to use your image for educational purposes. The investigators are unable to provide any monetary compensation for use of these materials. You can withdraw your voluntary consent at any time.

If you have any questions later on, then the researcher photographing you should be able to answer them: You may also contact Shana Pribesh, PhD, Educational Foundations & Leadership at 757-683-6684, or Dr. George Maihafer PT, PhD, 757-683-4520, or the Office of Research 757-683-3460.

Subject's Printed Name & Signature	Date
Legally Authorized Representative's Printed Name & Signature (If applicable)	Date
Investigator's Printed Name & Signature	Date

Appendix I

RESEARCHER'S CONTACT SUMMARY SHEET

Researcher: Suzanne Unger

Interviewees (circle one): Amizade

Students/Adult Leader

Contact Date:

Today's Date:

1. What were the main issues or themes emerge for you in this contact?
2. What discrepancies, did you note in the interviewees' response?
3. Did anything else strike you as salient, interesting, or important in this contact?
4. General comments about how this interviewee's responses compared with other interviewees:

Appendix J

Figure 2

Thematic Conceptual Matrix of Perspectives of International Students Performing Service-Learning in the United States

	Interpersonal	Socio-Cultural	Psychological
Learners (Pre SL)	<p>-“The culture in Ireland is made of Catholics and Protestants, and like we can’t go out into certain areas, and they can’t come in certain areas.”</p> <p>-“She has been very coddled.”</p> <p>-“...[Ireland’s community] is very tight knit, and everybody knows what’s going on.”</p>	<p>-“I would say our young people would be more politically active, but Americans are more civically active. And I think that’s probably as a result of the conflict here.”</p> <p>-“At home people have a stigma [of homeless people]...And they don’t really know, we’re not taught, ‘cause we don’t see homeless people where we’re from.”</p> <p>-“We don’t really get as much direct impact [from volunteering].”</p>	<p>-The way I viewed it was, they are just people who just sit on the street all day begging for money off people who actually go out and get a job.”</p> <p>-“I couldn’t comprehend how they ended up on the streets.”</p>
Definition of Task	<p>-“I was expecting to sort of just be with my friends. I wasn’t really expecting to learn much...”</p> <p>-“We were talking about doing food for DC Central Kitchen, and they said we would be handing it out to homeless people...”</p> <p>-“I didn’t expect everyone to like put themselves out of the way as much.”</p>	<p>-“I was just expecting for us to go over and learn a wee bit about different cultures and stuff...but I wasn’t expecting to mix with other people.”</p> <p>-I think Americans are more morally and socially, and ethically...responsible. And they see it as something of good character, to be giving back.”</p> <p>-“...but we haven’t got really the background knowledge of what homelessness is...”</p>	<p>-“I didn’t know what to think about America.”</p> <p>-“[I thought homeless populations in America were going to be] really, really bad.”</p>

Figure 2 Continued

	Interpersonal	Socio-Cultural	Psychological
Experiences	<p>-“I learned a lot of stuff about different communities and people my age in America are not that different from me.”</p> <p>-“We need to shuffle them up...in activities, and in groups when they’re going together, because you know, it’s your comfort blanket.”</p> <p>-“And there were conversations within the group then about what happened.”</p> <p>-“He showed how much one mistake can change your whole life. But I thought it was a good, good way, he wised up and did what he could to get off the streets and all. He was a true inspiration.”</p>	<p>-“You see all these homeless people, people living in parks and stuff.”</p> <p>-“But at D.C. Central Kitchen we knew exactly what we were doing. We were preparing food that would go out as meals. We prepared I think 50 stacks full of food.”</p> <p>-“It’s providing 5,000 meals a day, which couldn’t be comprehended back home.”</p>	<p>-“That was life changing to be honest. I wasn’t really expecting that.”</p> <p>-“This is the opportunity for her, as a young person to be more independent.”</p> <p>-“I didn’t expect everyone to put themselves out of the way as much...which for us, made us feel really, really special.”</p>
Critical Reflection	<p>-“I think spending this much time with each other has gotten the whole group closer together, and makes it easier whenever we go do future projects.”</p> <p>-“Those who are more disconnected to society...would benefit...from a hello or a friendly greeting.”</p> <p>-“Steve and Shelly, who have both probably had ridiculously hard lives, were able to come into a room full of young people our age, and inspire the whole room.”</p>	<p>-“So it takes going to see somewhere else, see something else, to realize what can be changed in your community.”</p> <p>-“Over in Pittsburgh...they can just go anywhere they want, like be with anyone they want. But [in Ireland] it’s harder to be with anyone you want or be where you want to go.”</p> <p>-“I wasn’t aware of the homeless community. I didn’t know they were there at all until I came over here and we were talking about them.”</p>	<p>-“I never thought that could happen...It was eye opening.”</p> <p>-“Before...some people weren’t as confident going out and doing outreach work. But now I think everyone in the group can, and do it well.”</p> <p>-“I felt like there was a change in myself. And I’ve grown to appreciate what I have, and people have inspired me to appreciate and value what I have.”</p>

Figure 2 Continued

	Interpersonal	Socio-Cultural	Psychological
Mediated Learning	<p>-“Explore relationships...and look how we can build on [them].”</p> <p>-“What is a real friend? How do you value that person? What do you invest in your friendships? What’s your expectations of a friend?”</p> <p>-“We’re seizing every opportunity to allow them to enable those skills as leaders.”</p>	<p>-“That’s something we can bring back and maybe work on in our own communities. What do you think everybody?”</p> <p>-“How can we transfer the learning and make a commitment to our own communities in terms of future service...?”</p> <p>-“You guys are the driving force behind the youth forum.”</p>	<p>-“If you work hard enough, you’ll be successful... This is your life journey. If you want these things in life, you’ve...got to create, you’ve got to innovate, you’ve got to take risks.”</p> <p>-“I think that we mix and match [questions to ask students] and choose them based upon the individual.”</p> <p>-“Do you realize how proud I am of you?...12 months ago if I had directed a question like that at you...you would have put your head down or more likely you would have giggled out of embarrassment.”</p>
Learners (Post SL)	<p>“[They] mix...every Monday...and go away on weekends with Protestants.”</p> <p>-“...when I get home, I’ll be able to talk to [my friends] about everything that we did. And how important everything that we did was.”</p> <p>-“I see people in need now and try to be more sensitive to them, not pre-judge them...hear what they have to say.”</p>	<p>-“They want action. That’s the way they talk...What is it we’re going to do? What is it we’re going to have them produce? What is the outcome?”</p> <p>-“They want Protestant friends, they want nonwhite friends. They’re embracing the new ethnic communities. Before that, they just hated everyone.”</p> <p>-“I want to open a couple shelters around Ireland...I actually really want to help them, because I feel completely different about the homeless.”</p>	<p>-“...Lucas has re-evaluated his whole life...we took away one kid, we brought back somebody different.”</p> <p>-“[The most unexpected part of the experience] was the change in cognition. The change in the way they...processed the information they were given. And used it to affect change in themselves.”</p> <p>-“[Students] can see everyone is vulnerable...they haven’t got that perception of a homeless person being a bum...”</p>

VITA

Suzanne Beth Unger
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Norfolk, Virginia 23505
Email: unger.suzanneb@gmail.com
Phone: 757-761-0408

DEPARTMENT OF STUDY:

Darden College of Education
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EDUCATION:

- May 10, 2014 Expected date of completion
Ph.D. in Education Curriculum and Instruction
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia
Dissertation Topic: Perspectives of International Students Performing
Service Learning in the United States: A Case Study with Amizade
- 2006 M.T. in Elementary Education
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia
Thesis: The Impact of Peers on Academic Motivation
- 2006 B.A. in Psychology
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia

EXPERIENCE:

- 2013-Present **Washington D.C. Site Director**, Amizade Global Service-Learning,
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- 2009-2013 **Director, Student Programs & Curriculum**, Operation Smile, Inc.,
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