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Conceptualizing University Education Abroad Programs Using a Mutualistic Process: A Community Perspective

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Conceptualizing University Education Abroad Programs Using a Mutualistic Process: A Community Perspective

THESIS

By

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Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Kristina Ricketts, Associate Professor of Community and Leadership Development

Lexington, Kentucky

2015

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Conceptualizing University Education Abroad Programs Using a Mutualistic Process: A
Community Perspective

In the growing trend of education abroad, students in higher education are expected to
become global citizens. While the literature supports the notion that students can positively
benefit from the process of international education, yet little research exists in determining the
community's roles and perspectives and to evaluate mutually beneficial outcomes. This study
identifies the three phases of international education, pre-immersion, immersion and post-
immersion and overlays the biological concepts of symbiosis to capture the community voice to
create mutualistic programs in education abroad. The results indicate that not only is there a role
for communities, but that communities need to be included in all three phases of education
abroad to help dictate mutualistic outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Education Abroad, Community Reciprocity, International Service Learning

___Tara A. McClintic___

____April 21st, 2015____

Conceptualizing University Education Abroad Programs Using a Mutualistic Process: A
Community Perspective

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Introduction

A continuous increase in globalization and growing diversity in society demands that students have a greater understanding of people and culture (McCabe, 2001; Myers, Hill & Hardwood, 2005). International educational experiences aim to assist in filling that gap by developing student cultural competence. According to an Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange, in the 2012-2013 school year, a record high of 289,408 students studied abroad for academic credit, an increase of 6,000 students from the previous year. Additionally, US participation in study abroad has more than tripled over the past two decades and the popularity of short-term programs is on the rise (Institute of International Education, 2014). The growing trend of university education abroad opportunities continues to play an important role in higher education.

To understand international education opportunities, we need to first define the types of programs. Study abroad refers to the traditional programs where students attend an international university anywhere from 4-12 months (Engle & Engle, 2003). Students usually transfer academic credit to their degree and primary institution. Summer programs are similar; students can take classes internationally for 1-3 months. Language specific programs focus on international language development rather than classes in the student's major. Embedded courses usually start domestically; they attend regular classes throughout the semester and travel abroad during academic breaks or post-semester. These programs tend to be synonymous with short-term programs; they can be anywhere from one to several weeks in duration. Students who accept teaching abroad

opportunities, internships or volunteer abroad are all experiencing international

education. Additionally tourism can be a form of international education, where people

benefit from learning about other cultures (Kenny, 2011).

Figure 1.1: U.S. Students Studying Abroad Trends from 1995-2013

Figure 1. Reprinted from Institute of International Education (2014). *Open doors report.* Retrieved from www.iie.org/opendoors.

Figure 1.2: U.S. Participation Rate in International Education

	U.S. Study Abroad Total	U.S. Higher Education Total	%
All US students studying abroad in 2012/13	289,408	19,859,928*	1.5
All US undergraduates who study abroad during their degree program	250,338	2,673,425**	9.4
US bachelors students who study abroad during their degree program	246,865	1,729,702**	14.3

*Total enrollment of U.S. students (excluding international students) in higher education.
** Undergraduate degrees awarded to U.S. students (excluding international students).

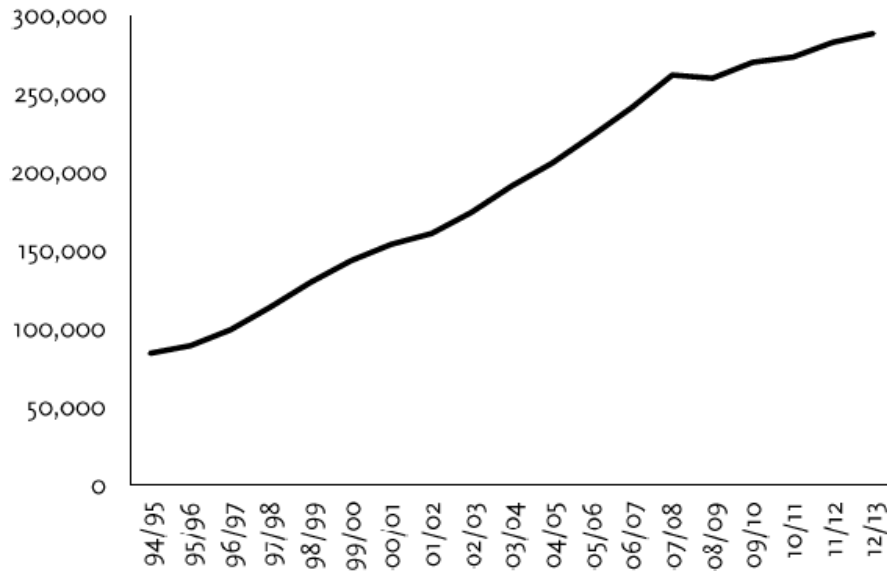*Figure 2*. Reprinted from Institute of International Education (2014). *Open doors report.* Retrieved from www.iie.org/opendoors.

In the United States alone, participation rates in international education or study abroad have also been gradually increasing (See Figures 1.1 & 1.2). In the academic year 2012-2013, 289,408 U.S. students participated in study abroad, this is the highest recorded number, typically each year surpassing the previous (Institute of International Education, 2014). An additional 15,089 students participated in international programs for non-credit work, internships and volunteering abroad. In Table 1.1, the observable trend shows that short-term programs are the most common programs and are growing in popularity.

Table 1.1: U.S. Student Study Abroad Program Trends

Academic Year	2011/2012	2012/2013
Short-term (summer or 8 weeks or less)	58.9%	60.3%
Mid-length (one or two quarters or one semester)	37.9%	36.5%
Long-term (academic or calendar year)	3.2%	3.2%

Table 1. Adapted from Institute of International Education (2014). *Open doors report.* Retrieved from www.iie.org/opendoors.

Students can be positively impacted by study international education in many ways (Williams, 2005). Those who study abroad develop a number of competencies including better linguistic skills, increased cultural competencies, improved engagement, increased global awareness, and enhance their marketability in the global workplace (Kuh, 2009; Kurt, Olitsky & Geis, 2013; McCabe, 2001; Trooboff, VandeBerg & Rayman, 2008). While these programs prove to be impactful for students, there are many different kinds of programs higher education provides and other stakeholders in the process.

Education Abroad Programs

International education has proven to be extremely beneficial both, personally and professionally for student participants. However, there are many more stakeholders than just students in an international experience; there are students, faculty and international host communities. The roles of these stakeholders need to be clearly defined for a beneficial program. The 'community voice' is stated to be of great importance for student and community reciprocity, yet little research in international education has been conducted to utilize community members in the process of planning international educational experiences (Longo & Saltmarsh, 2011; Sutton, 2011). One aspect that considers the community within the education abroad experience is international service learning (Crabtree, 2008; Johnson, 2012). Robbin D. Crabtree (2008) illustrates,

> ISL projects are not about providing material support to our partners in developing countries and communities – after all, how much can we really do in the face of such extreme poverty and structural inequality? ISL is about producing global awareness among all participants, providing opportunities to develop mutual understanding, and creating shared aspirations for social justice and the skills to produce it. (p. 29)

Like education abroad, other disciplines also aim to create mutually beneficial outcomes through interaction or in relationships. Symbiosis is the interaction of two beings in close association (Bauman & Cosby, 2009; Oxford English Dictionary online, n.d.) and these relationships can prove to be negative, neutral or positive in impact (See Table 2.1). Employing methods of citizen involvement from the discipline of biology can

be implemented into the design of ISL and education abroad programs. Impactful programs are created from a planning process that allows for depth through stakeholder involvement (Burby, 2003). Additional research of evaluating positive community impact needs to be conducted. Establishing multidisciplinary efforts for future research will fill the gap in existing international education literature.

Within education abroad, three phases occur during the process; pre-immersion, immersion and post-immersion (Boubek, n.d.). In the strategy of implementation, these phases constitute the design or creation of the program (Pre-Immersion), the roles and responsibilities are established (Immersion) and the impact or outcomes can be assessed (Post-Immersion). Using these three phases, the researcher overlaid the biological concepts of symbiosis to evaluate the application. Symbiosis is the relationship between two organisms in close association with each other (Bauman & Cosby, 2009). The organisms represented in this study are the students and the international host communities in the process of education abroad.

The three dependent relationships that can occur are parasitism, commensalism and mutualism (Bauman & Cosby, 2009). Parasitism represents the relationship where one organism (the student) is reaping all the benefits at the expense of the second organism (the community) (Schowalter, 2006). Commensalism is the idea that one organism is positively impacted, while the other is neither affected positively or negatively – it remains neutral. Finally, mutualism represents the relationship when both organisms are positively impacted in the outcome their interaction (Schowalter, 2006).

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this exploratory study was to understand the roles of international communities in the process of education abroad in higher education. Overall, the process of study abroad needs to continue to develop and grow as the student interest has in higher education. On the community level, it is apparent there is a lack of preparation and consideration of potential impacts within the international host community (Whitney & Clayton, 2011). In addition, as globalization and societal diversity grows the rising interest of international education opportunities need to keep up and be impactful for all parties. It is especially important to recognize this is also a learning process for the international host communities, and to provide appropriate structures to help ensure success. This research aims to narrow the knowledge gap between all parties involved in the planning processes of international service learning and education abroad.

Research Questions & Objectives

The guiding research questions for this qualitative study were:

RQ1: What are the impacts of education abroad for the international host community?

RQ2: How can international host communities prepare to work with students and faculty in international educational opportunities?

- How can communities benefit in the planning process of international education?
- What are the facilitator's roles in international student educational opportunities?
- What can students studying abroad 'bring' to a community?
- How do communities prepare for students studying abroad?
- What can communities offer to students studying abroad?
- How do you determine what is essential community knowledge for students?
- How can the community be impacted by students?

Chapter II – Literature Review

Introduction

In a speech given by, First Lady, Michelle Obama she stated,

> Studying abroad is about so much more than improving your own future, it's also about shaping the future of your countries and of the world we all share. Because when it comes to the defining challenges of our time, whether it is climate change or economic opportunity or the spread of nuclear weapons these are shared challenges, and no one country can confront them alone. That is why it is so important, for young people like you, to live and study in each other's countries, because that is how you develop that habit of cooperation. You do it by, immersing yourself in one another's culture, by learning each other's stories, by getting past the stereotypes and misconceptions that too often divide us. I guarantee you that in studying abroad, you're not just changing your own life; you are changing the lives of everyone you meet (Buell, 2014)

The spark of globalization has created a need for internationalized education (Cummings, 1993). Due to policy constraints, formal education is a difficult field to 'control', because there is an imperfect correlation between the students' needs and the collective goals; and the tight association between its content and the social and cultural conditions affecting the results (Sutton, 1993). The global trend for education abroad is made possible by improvements in communication, technology, and transportation, and interdependence of the world's economy (Cummings, 1993). In the 2012-2013 academic year it is estimated that 1,175,406 students from around the world chose to

internationalize their education though participation in education abroad; a gradual increase since the 1950's, slowing only during the Vietnam War recession (Cummins 1993; Institute of International Education, 2014).

When discussing study abroad, there are many different programs associated with the term; short-term programs, semester-long, embedded class programs, international service learning and many others. It is important to clarify what type of program is associated with the generalized term study abroad. The article, *Study Abroad Levels: Toward a Classification of programs*, Engle and Engle (2003) raised the question, how can study abroad be analyzed and outcomes assessed, when there is no precise language to differentiate the type or programs or categorize the study abroad experiences? The need for consistent language and terminology in education abroad is abundantly clear. To clarify, we are exploring some of the most popular experiences of study abroad below.

The term cultural tourism, emerged as a theme in the literature of international education; it can be applied to tourism 'trips' when cultural resources are visited (Hughes, 1996). It is debated that you will inevitably be exposed to 'culture' when traveling internationally, but the concept stems from the ideas that international communities aid this notion, not just through hotels, restaurants and other amenities, but in restorations of cultural shrines, creation in local handiwork for sale, and rituals performed (Allen, Long, Perdue & Kieselbach, 1988; MacCannell, 1992). In the book Empty Meeting Grounds, McCannell (1992) continues this idea stating that tourism can promote the commercializing of cultural activities and practices and it has the ability to reshape ideology, cultural and nature to suits the needs of tourism.

International service learning (ISL) takes place at the intersection of service learning, study abroad and international education; utilizing the strengths of each of these subjects to enhance the experience (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011). Where study abroad tends to be student focused, ISL involves the international community as a stakeholder in the process (Hovey & Weinberg, 2009). Therefore, there are three stakeholders invested in the process: students, academic institutions (faculty) and international host communities.

Student Engagement

It is evident that the practices of international education opportunities are invaluable tools for student development – it deepens student learning and can be directly linked to growth in important career and life skills, such as global and intercultural competencies and improves students' engagement (Kuh, 2009). Even during short-term study abroad programs, results indicate that students experience a significant increase in global awareness (Kurt, Olitsky & Geis, 2013; McCabe, 2001). The importance of international education can be best interpreted in this statement by James Skelly, "It should be a requirement at higher education institutions that all students engage in a significant period of study abroad in order to help them see the globe as the context, and fundamental referent, for their lives" (Skelly, 2010).

International education opportunities help students develop better linguistic skills, both of the international host language and of their first language (Williams, 2005). In a survey collected by the Institute of International Education, students who study abroad are more likely to have an interest in global affairs (Institute of International Education, 2014; Norris & Gillespie, 2009) and environmental sustainability (Dvorak, Christiansen, Fischer & Underhill, 2011). International education can increase a student's intercultural

and global competencies through knowledge, perceptions and skills changed due to the international experiences (Stebleton, Soria & Cherney, 2013). Ultimately students are becoming "global citizens" or students who identify with and understand their roles in the global community (Dolby & Rahman, 2008; Tarrant, 2010). International education or study abroad can be seen as a personal investment because students are making themselves more marketable in the work place (Trooboff, VandeBerg & Rayman, 2008).

It can be debated that study abroad is unnecessary, that students can learn about other cultures through research and education (Johnson, 1997). However, many researchers recommend that students immerse themselves into other diverse cultures to deepen their multicultural understanding and build empathy (Hains, Tubbs & Vincent, 2013). The concept of experiential education program authenticity is the idea that students experience 'real world settings' outside of a classroom, to promote personal development and impact (Blair, 2011). Without the immersion, physically placing oneself in another culture, students cannot experience the importance of global citizenship (Banks, 2008).

The literature supports the ideas that international education can positively impact students and their future career (Kuh, 2009; Kurt, Olitsky & Geis, 2013; McCabe, 2001). Additionally, there are ways to prepare students for education abroad (Lewin, 2010). The Institute for International Education provides many resources for students, including the book, 'A Student Guide to Study Abroad', which outlines the roles, responsibilities and best program options for students.

The roles of the student participants should be identified prior to international immersion. First and foremost, students need to be respectful of international

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communities, members and cultures (Bringle, Hatcher & Jones, 2011; Standards of Good Practice, 2011; Tonkin, 2011). Students traveling internationally need to be 'open-minded' and emotionally prepared for international experiences (Hains, Ricketts & Tubbs, 2012; Savicki, 2012). All participants of international educational programs must abide all domestic and international laws (Standards of Good Practice, 2011). It is the responsibility of the student to complete all educational learning objectives and international service goals or tasks determined prior to international immersion (Whitney & Clayton, 2011).

University Engagement

It is clear, that students are the primary beneficiaries for education abroad; they have defined roles and potential impacts. However, faculty also can be positively impacted in education abroad in terms of developing cultural awareness, increasing international professional development and improving teaching effectiveness (Black & Buhon, 2006; Festervand & Tillery, 2001). Additionally, the institutions and faculty create the opportunities; therefore they also have a major role in the process and design. The roles of the faculty director or academic lead begin domestically. Educational objectives must be created and implemented into service learning (Kiely & Hartman, 2011). Using pedagogy consistent with experiential education, the faculty must determine process and student integration or development, establish problem based content, and facilitate collaboration and dialogue within the context of the community (Lutterman-Aguilar & Gingerich, 2002).

Program directors or faculty should facilitate reflection, providing students time and space for critical reflection, to help students make connections between their

international experiences in the community and their thought processes related to those experiences to promote advance learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Brewer, 2011; Whitney & Clayton, 2011). "Researchers, directors, and faculty have a responsibility to employ methods and paradigms that integrate various viewpoints into applicable and effective service learning" (Kahn, 2011, p. 123), they must be transparent with locals, create programs to embrace culture and provide students with the ability to determine their own interconnectedness in the global society (Kiely & Hartman, 2011).

Study abroad is viewed as a "high-impact educational practice" on many university campuses throughout the United States (Kuh, 2008). The roles of the academic institution can vary based on the actual institution, the 'type' of program and the duration of the program. First institutions of higher education need to provide international opportunities to their students and provide proper infrastructure and resources to international educational objectives (Lewin, 2010). Many academic institutions provide liability coverage or insurance for students. Other roles include accepting international academic credit and educating students on the possible opportunities. There are clearly many impacts interpersonal and intrapersonal for students and faculty participating in education abroad, but there can be impacts for the host community as well.

Community Engagement

Beyond the benefits experienced by student participants and faculty, there are also impacts experienced by the international host communities. Community reciprocity includes social justice, building relationships, enhancing social capital, and developing mutual respect (Annette, 2002; Gammonley, Rotabi & Gamble, 2007). Although students can 'help' the community through international service learning experiences, each of

these studies collected data from the student perspective; the student participants were the sole sources of data. The actual members of the community were not surveyed to determine community impact.

In the United States, international educators often partner exclusively with staff from community-based organizations, in order to establish relationships to determine community needs and help facilitate student involvement. These community organizations members have the potential to be good proxies for the members of their communities or they could be fulfilling other agendas which interfere with student and international educational objectives, which impede on the interests of their communities (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011).

In a study out of Appalachian State University, the researchers found there is little reliable literature to support the ideas that students are making *positive* impacts within their international host communities (Schroeder, Wood, Galiardi & Koehn, 2009). In fact, the Standards of Good Practice provided by the Forum of Education Abroad (2011) states that students are only 'required' to, "respect the cultures and values of the countries in which it operates." In an article written to help negate negative community impacts, Schroeder et. al. (2009) state,

> nondamaging international experiences require a substantial amount of planning, experienced group facilitation, and solid debriefing of students and community members….We recommend that geographers [educators] with a critical perspective and extensive foreign expertise should help guide the development of these experiences and urge their universities to screen study abroad for unintended negative outcomes on local [host] communities. (p. 141)

The community impact literature tends to focus on the students' domestic 'community' and their involvement after the program, rather than the international host community they visited (Eyler, 2011). The partnership between students, faculty and communities is a complex relationship within the context of international service learning and often overlooked are the community perspectives (Kahn, 2011). The planning or design of international educational opportunities is important for the international host community, therefore to have positive impacts and to create reciprocity; communities need to be included in the preparation and planning. ISL programs need to be flexible to address the community needs based on the community voice, not the perspective of the program or faculty directors (Kahn, 2011).

International Service Learning

For the purposes of this exploratory study we focused on international service learning (ISL) rather than other study abroad or international educational programs. International service learning can be defined as, "a structured academic experience in another country in which students participate in an organized service activity that addresses identified community needs, learning from direct interaction and cross-cultural dialogue with others and reflect on the experience" (Bringle et. al., 2011, p. 19). International service learning promotes the idea, "that immersion in another culture in a service role broadens student's horizons and makes them better adapted to playing an active role in global citizenship" (Tonkin & Quiroga, 2004). ISL works to meet the needs of the international host community, while promoting the student's learning of international and intercultural understanding, fostering personal growth and maturity,

developing understanding of societies, cultures and world issues, advances leadership

competencies and promotes reciprocity (Brown, 2011).

In international service learning and all other study abroad programs, there are a

number of stakeholders; students, faculty, academic institutions and international host

communities. In order to plan and implement the international educational program, the

roles of each stakeholder need to be determined. The current design of education

programs abroad is focused on the students and their outcomes rather than the

community's roles or impacts (Ritsema, Knecht & Kruckemeyer, 2011).

The process of designing and implementing international education opportunities

is often seen as a multi-faceted progression of student and faculty responsibility; however

there are community roles as well. When planning and implementing an international

education opportunity for students there are a variety of roles taken on by both the

student and faculty, yet community roles are often overlooked (Bringle, et. al., 2011). It is

imperative for international host communities to provide input to help guide student

success, yet existing research does not seem to include the international host community

in the planning process. It is especially important to recognize this is also a learning

process for the international host communities, and to provide appropriate structures to

help ensure success. Many researchers state the importance of the community voice as an

essential element of community reciprocity for international service learning, but they do

not integrate the actual roles of the community and how to implement the student

experience to best serve that community (Kiely & Hartman, 2011; Longo & Saltmarsh,

2011; Whitney & Clayton, 2011).

In order to promote reciprocity in the student and community relationship, international service learning can utilize the biological terms of symbiosis as an overlay in the design or process of the program. The student perspective can be self-focused and biased, but international service learning focuses on community impact, therefore to determine success, the community must be evaluated. In the creation of inclusive programs, the participating stakeholders must be involved in each phase to promote reciprocity.

There is a major gap between the application of education abroad and the theoretical foundations that drive the process. Without theory, you cannot ask the fundamental questions about impact, program design and standards, there is no shared language to determine common vocabulary and no definition of what qualifies as study abroad (Kenny, 2011).

The term 'study abroad' covers a large umbrella term for all international educational programs from a one week experience to an entire year abroad (Engle & Engle, 2003), yet the experiences can be radically different. However different these programs might be, education abroad courses often include three phases, pre-departure, onsite and return (Boubek, n.d.). The pre-departure consists of the design or creation of the program, establishing relationships and any preparatory education for students and faculty. The second phase is the onsite immersion of the program; the sojourn takes place within the international community of the program and the roles and responsibilities for each party (faculty, student and community) are established and carried out. Lastly, phase three is the return or post-immersion, impact or outcomes can be evaluated from all perspectives.

Conceptual Framework

In determining the conceptual framework for this study, the researcher and two faculty members discussed the impacts of education abroad and the three stages that drive the process. As a group, they were able to see parallel in the potential outcomes of education abroad and the symbiotic relationships of biology.

The foundation of the conceptual framework of this study is the three stages of education abroad; due to its unique application of relationships, the researcher overlaid the stages with the biological concept of symbiosis. In biology, ecology and other related sciences, symbiosis can be defined as the interaction between two different organisms in close association (Bauman & Cosby, 2009; Oxford English Dictionary online, n.d.). There are three symbiotic relationships; parasitism, commensalism and mutualism (See Table 2.1). In this study, 'Organism 1' will represent the university stakeholders (the students and faculty) associated in the context of education abroad and 'Organism 2' will represent the international host community or organization.

Table 2.1: Three Types of Symbiotic Relationships

The Three Types of Symbiotic Relationships		
	Organism 1	**Organism 2**
Commensalism	Benefits	Neither benefits or is harmed
Parasitism	Benefits	Is harmed
Mutualism	Benefits	Benefits

Table 2: Adapted from Bauman, R. W., & Cosby, C. D. (2009). *Microbiology: With Diseases by Body System.* Pearson Benjamin Cummings.

Parasitism is the idea that one organism (the parasite) benefits while the other (host) is affected negatively, either weakened or damaged (Schowalter, 2006).

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Commensalism is the relationship between two organisms when one is positively

receiving benefits and the other (host) is unaffected (Schowalter, 2006). Lastly,

mutualism (commonly used synonymously with symbiosis), is the interaction between

two organisms when both partners positively affect each other creating a cooperative or

mutually exploitative relationship (Schowalter, 2006). In Figure 2.1, you can see the

dependent relationships between the symbiotic associations.

Figure 2.1: Symbiotic Relationships
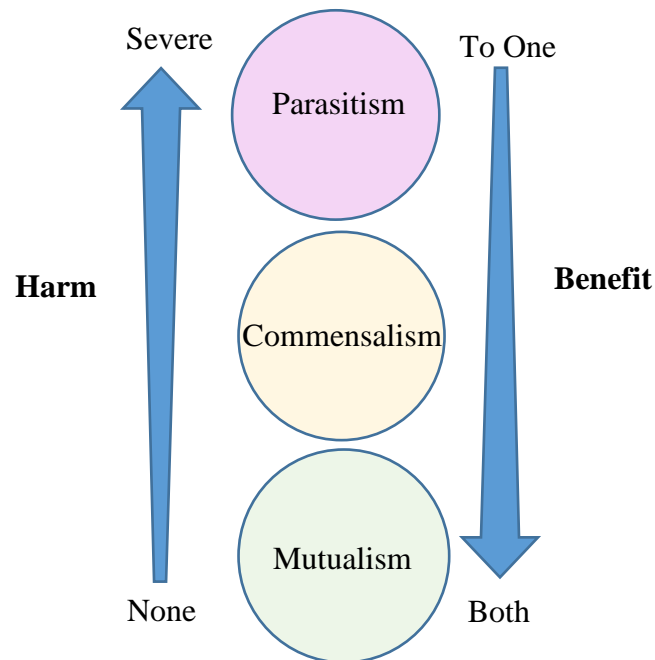
Figure 3: Adapted from Goering, R., Dockrell, H., Zuckerman, M., Roitt, I., & Chiodini, P. L. (2012). Mims' Medical Microbiology: with STUDENT CONSULT Online Access. Elsevier Health Sciences.

The symbiotic relationships between biological organisms can be used as a

framework or metaphor, if you will, for university and community research. In contrast to

parasitism, mutualism requires dependency to benefit both organisms involved in the

relationship. In the example of study abroad, the community depends on the students to

mutually benefit and vice versa. It is important to note that while mutualism is the desired design for international service learning and other education abroad programs, commensalism is appropriate for many programs as well. Ultimately, avoiding parasitism is the key in every program.

Commensal Design

The commensal design of study abroad is a system where students and academic institutions reap all of the benefits of international education or study abroad, without any cost to the international host community. Meaning, the community remains u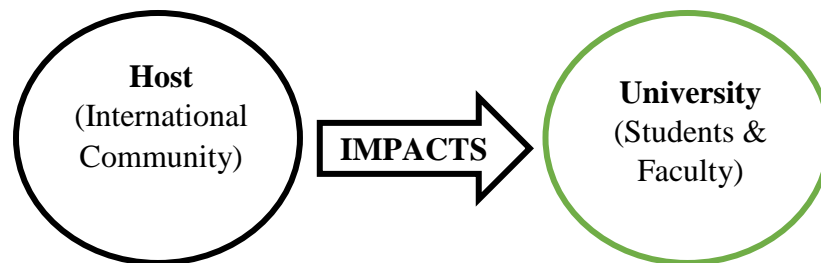naffected by the presence of students in any capacity. This design is likely to be the most common in study abroad or cultural tourism (Hughes, 1996; MacCannell, 1992).

Figure 2.2: Commensal Design

Pre-Immersion (Program Creation)

The design of the program would have no input with the community whatsoever. All of the pre-immersion program creation and design would be facilitated by faculty of the institution with few or no international contacts or partners. The preparatory education would be the responsibility of the university (faculty and student) and the

community would not provide insight to cultural norms or expectations in the pre-departure education.

Immersion (Roles)

During the program or student's sojourn the roles and responsibilities would be implemented. The program would take place within the context of the community, however, in a commensal design, the immersion would not include the community or the community perspective in the process. Culture tourism or recreational tourism, can often be commensal in relationships, these tend to be surface and non-impactful or sustaining, little to no reciprocity is developed (MacCannell, 1992; Schroeder et al., 2009). During the immersion the students and faculty will follow patterns of cultural adjustment, intellectualization, adaption and integration (culture shock) (Bennett, 1986; Hanvey, 1979; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002). The community acts solely as a host for international learning to take place, after all the primary rationale for study abroad is to benefit the student (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011), they have little to no role or responsibility during the immersion. This is uncommon in the implementation of international service learning, where the community interaction is the pinnacle of the program (Tonkin, 2011).

Post (Impacts)

The success or failure of the program could be assessed solely from the student perspective in the commensal relationship. The community having little involvement in the program, would be unaffected by the presence of the students. While the students we able to become 'global citizens', improve linguistic skills, become more marketable career candidates and benefit from the process of international education (Kuh, 2008;

Trooboff et. al., 2008). The design can be seen in figure 2.2. The community essentially remains unaffected by the students; the community is the same prior to the immersion of students as it is post-departure.

Parasitic Design

A parasitic design of education abroad is the idea that the students and professors of the university reap all the benefits of international education, however it comes at the expense of/or negatively impacts the international host community. Although every study abroad program is extremely different it the design, there is little research to evaluate the unintended consequences for host communities (Schroeder et al., 2009). The literature highlights potential negative impacts of foreign visitors on the host community's economy, social structures and culture (Archer, Cooper & Ruhanen, 2005; Schroeder et al., 2009).

Figure 2.3: Parasitic Design

Pre-Immersion

In the parasitic design of study abroad, the community would not play a role in the creation of the program. The university and professors would be the sole proprietor of

the program and the design. In the field of Community Development there is a term known as the 'Ivory Tower' which can be defined as, "a place or situation in which people make and discuss theories about problems without having any (actual) experience with those problems"(Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, n.d.). This is often used to describe academic institutions, inherently removed from practical or worldly affairs making decisions for the community without actually including the community or having real experience within the community. This concept of elitism can be seen in study abroad programs. The 'Ivory Tower' or elitist perspective would select a community and select a program based on a perceived need. The pre-education or preparation would be dependent on each program, however, it would be identified without community perception or input.

Immersion

According to the Forum on Education Abroad's, *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* (2011, p.19), they only suggest that students, "respect the cultures and values of the countries in which it operates", however they make no recommendations to mitigate the potential negative effects of study abroad on local communities (Schroeder et al, 2009). Yet community risks include, over use of community resources (including water, disposal, and pollution), economic stress, consumption of goods, community member exclusion, cultural offenses, modeling poor behavior, negative perceptions, reinforcing stereotypes and lack of preparation are some of the potential negative impacts a community endures during study abroad (Schroeder et al., 2009).

Post-Immersion

Students immersed into a community for study abroad are often using time and community resources. These impacts support the idea that students 'leech' off an international community to gain personal and professional benefits at the expense of the community, which models a parasitic design (See Figure 2.3). In a study conducted out of Central Michigan University, community members participating in hosting students in study abroad programs (homestays), found that the burden food preparation, modern conveniences (i.e. telephone usage), and cultural disregard were draining and negatively outweighed the positive impacts (Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2002).

Mutualistic Design

The mutualistic design can be best exemplified in the international educational term, reciprocity. In terms of international service learning, reciprocity is the concept that both the sender and the host mutually benefit in the implementation on the program (Tonkin, 2011).

Figure 2.4: Mutualistic Design
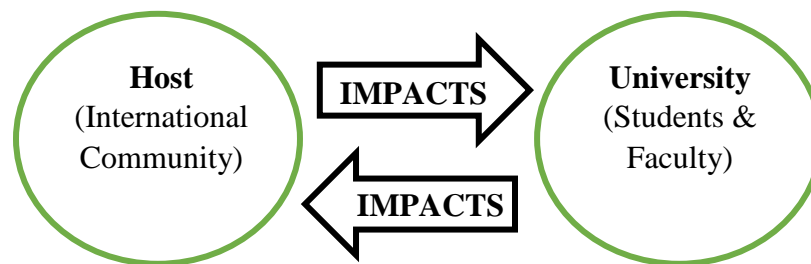
Pre-Immersion

To create a mutually beneficially program, "both the practice of ISL and research about ISL require close, thoughtful attention to local context and a clear understanding of

the forces shaping that context" (Sutton, 2011). This involves a dependent partnership between the university and the host community during creation and design of the international educational program. Education abroad can utilize the engaged and inclusive pedagogy of service learning to amplify the community voice in the design and program (Sutton, 2011).

Immersion

In order to mutually benefit, students must respect customs, cultural and people of the international host community (Bringle, et. al., 2011; Standards of Good Practice, 2011; Tonkin, 2011). These roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined for the students and hold impactful consequences. Within study abroad, reciprocity can be problematic when a student does not integrate with the host community, and can potentially reinforce negative American stereotypes (Ogden, 2006).

In terms of the community's roles and expectations in a mutualistic design of study abroad, "little to no work has been done on framing these considerations as research questions, nor on setting them in an international context" (Tonkin, 2011). As a major player in the process of education abroad, the host community's need to have established roles and responsibilities in order to positively benefit from collaboration with students and faculty.

Post

When utilizing the ideas of mutualism, where both parties reap benefits, international host communities and university participants can create a mutually beneficial relationship. International service learning focuses on reciprocity as a core

value stating, "mutuality in partnerships must always be the foundation for this work" (Longo & Saltmarsh, 2011). One major limitation in the evaluation of education abroad, is that the primary investigation or reflection is from the students' perspective, even when the goals are to reach a much broader audience (Whitney & Clayton, 2011). For education abroad to fully evaluate the impact and program outcomes, the community voice needs to be captured.

Summary

The purpose of this exploratory study was to seek the community's voice to establish roles and potential impacts for students and for the host community during international service learning. The literature supports the ideas that the current education abroad design follows the ideas of a parasitic or commensalism relationship (Ritsema, Knecht & Kruckemeyer, 2011); the students being the dependent party receiving all of the benefits, while the hosts are naturally unaffected or even harmed in the process (i.e. exploitation). This design is a 'one-way' street (See Figures 2.2 and 2.3). International service learning reports the importance for mutualism or reciprocity between the students and the host communities (See Figure 2.4), yet the roles and responsibilities of the host communities are unestablished (Sutton, 2011).

Chapter III – Methodology

Research Design

The purpose of this exploratory study was to identify the community's roles and potential impacts in the education abroad design. Due to the lack of existing research in related topics, the researcher could not identify hypothesizes and instead developed research questions related to the empirical nature of the topic. This study used qualitative analysis with the mode of inquiry being the exploratory research. Qualitative design was utilized for this study, as it allowed the researcher to gather rich data on the topic of interest. Therefore, research questions were designed to explore this topic while garnering the community voice. The design of the research included the researcher collecting data, shaping the data to interpret and then develop themes and descriptions (Creswell, 2014). The researcher's observations and interviews determined the purpose and effectiveness of the exploratory study (Patton, 2002). Therefore it was appropriate to create this methodology utilizing qualitative research design.

In-depth individual interviews were conducted to answer the research questions and gain a deeper understanding of the community's roles in the process of international education. Data was collected in the natural setting of the participants' own community. In this qualitative study, the researcher is identified as the primary data collection instrument. The researcher collected data based on interviews, observations and audiovisual information.

The research questions were developed in consult with faculty experts from the University of Kentucky, Community and Leadership Development Department and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Due to the limited scope, the results

of this study cannot be generalized to the greater public or other international

communities, but are generalizable to the larger sample of this identified community.

Research Setting

This study was conducted in 2014 within a western county of Nova Scotia,

Canada. This community was identified and established as a partner for international

educational opportunities for University of Kentucky undergraduate students. The

partnership was made possible by faculty in the department of Community and

Leadership Development, who had prior connections with the 'gatekeepers' in the

identified region. This study took place concurrently with a study abroad program. The

participants were identified in connection to the paralleled program. The research

questions and objectives of this study were independent of the program.

Research Questions & Objectives

The purpose of this exploratory study was to understand the roles and impacts of

an international community in the process of study abroad in higher education. The

guiding research questions for this qualitative study were:

RQ1: What are the impacts of education abroad for the international host community?

RQ2: How can international host communities prepare to work with students and faculty in
international educational opportunities?

- How can communities benefit in the planning process of international education?
- What are the facilitator's roles in international student educational opportunities?
- What can students studying abroad 'bring' to a community?
- How do communities prepare for students studying abroad?
- What can communities offer to students studying abroad?
- How do you determine what is essential community knowledge for students?
- How can the community be impacted by students?

Population and Sample

The target population of this study is a rural international community of western Nova Scotia in Canada. Community members were selected for this study based upon their interest and agreement to participate. Snowball sampling was utilized within this study. The identified 'gatekeeper' of the community established relationships with random interviewees to consent to participation. All participants were identified through their relation to the gatekeeper and by their positions within the community. In confidentiality regulation, their names will not be identified and they will be referred to as the following:

Participant 1 (P1); Female – community leader, head of a local community development organization

Participant 2 (P2); Male – university professor

Participant 3 (P2); Female – university professor

Participant 4 (P4); Female – local governmental official

Participant 5 (P5); Female – employee of local community development organization

Participant 6 (P6); Female – student

Data Collection

This international host community was identified by two faculty members in the department of Community and Leadership Development at the University of Kentucky.

The initial relationship with the community gatekeeper was established at an international conference. The community leader was able to act as the voice of the community to begin the process of engaging international students. Participants were identified by the community gatekeeper and by their position within the community.

The interviewees were asked a set of semi-structured questions by the researcher which allowed them to share their experiences and community perspectives of international education (See Appendix A). The semi-structured interview guide was used to ensure consistent inquiry between interview while allowing the participants the latitude to add supplementary insight on the topic and related subjects (Patton, 2002). Due to the varying locations of the community members, all interviews were conducted individually and in-person. The locations were set based on the needs and availability of the interviewees. The interviews lasted between 15-30 minutes depending on the interviewees desire to share their personal information and their time availability. The audio of the interviews was recorded, which the permission of all the interviewees and the data was transcribed by the researcher.

The established interview questions were aimed to support the research objectives. The primary source of the data was collected through the interviews as they best represented the individual beliefs and the community perspective. All of the questions were aimed to gain individual perspective of the community's roles and impacts in the process of education abroad.

Data Analysis

The researcher explored the rich data while gaining a comprehensive

understanding of the participant's perspective of community involvement in education

abroad. First the data was organized, recordings were transcribed and researcher notes

were collected. As the first stage of analysis, the researcher identified themes from the

data, identified through 'open coding' (Saldana, 2013). After each participant's

interviews were thematically evaluated, the researcher began to study consistencies as a

group to represent the collective themes. Themes were identified when four or more

participants identified a topic as relevant.

All of the data were transcribed by the researcher in periods of time ranging from

30 minutes to one hour. After the interviews were transcribed, the results were reviewed

numerous times by the researcher to identify patterns and themes in the data. Initially,

open coding was used to review the data and observe topics by participants. First cycle

coding, holistic methods, were used to identify initial patterns. Lastly, second cycle

coding, pattern methods, were used to conceptualize that data (Saldaña, 2013). The data

were validated through member checking, clarifying the bias, and using an external

auditor to review the data.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument in data collection and

analysis (Creswell, 2014). The researcher was identified to be the best person for this

study due to their personal and professional interest in the topic of education abroad.

After the researcher immersed themselves in the available literature, they observed a gap

representing the community's voice in the process of education abroad. In order to

mitigate the bias, the researcher kept a detailed journal of observations.

The trustworthiness of this study was enhanced by the strategies of creditability,

transferability, dependability and conformability. Creditability was established through

the implementation of member checking (Creswell, 2014). Transferability can be

considered based on the following, restriction in the participants and their positions

within the community, the number of participants, data collection methods, the interview

lengths and the time period in which the data was collected (Shenton, 2004).

Dependability can be determined based on the research design and execution and

the evaluating the process of inquiry through the replicable methods the research

developed so that other can obtain similar results. Dependability was strengthened by

working with a panel of experts to ensure accuracy, and methods were articulated

accurately in order to replicate the study in the future. Conformability was established

through results and responses of the participants rather than the assumptions or

inclinations of the researcher. Conformability was achieved through the use of the

researcher's observational journal and participants interview responses. Trustworthiness

and creditability were established to ensure validity.

Limitations

The mode of inquiry was to collect community member perspective on the

process or design of international education, yet the community targeted was in Nova

Scotia, Canada. Due to the potential similar cultures between the international

community and the domestic community – it can be seen as a potential imbalance of the

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representation of the greater populations of international communities. Researcher

interpretation of the findings based on personal relationships with the some of the

interviewees forms the researcher bias associated with this study. Observable data can be

misinterpreted based on setting or general misconceptions collected by the researcher.

Chapter IV – Results

Introduction

Ultimately the purpose of this study was to explore the roles and impacts associated with the three factors; student, university and community in the design and process of international education. Utilizing the three symbiotic relationships, parasitism, commensalism and mutualism, the results are represented to outline examples of each from the community perspective in the process of education abroad. The following results indicated the community perspective of roles and potential impacts. Considering the process of education abroad, participant 3 (P3) reflected on student impact within the community stating, "They [the community] can be impacted positively or negatively or neutrally – they could have zero impact." This idea clearly illustrates that how students are engaged in the community through the community abroad process is important. Three design strategies that clarify the roles, relationships and interactions through an education abroad experience are: mutualism, parasitism and commensalism. Each of these strategies were used as a frame to address the research question;

RQ1: What are the impacts of education abroad for the international host community?

Parasitism

Even in international service learning, there can be negative associated outcomes when working with a community. One primary finding was that students participating in international education programs utilize community resources, specifically time and money. In one example, participant 1 (P1) explained how it would have been a lot easier for her and a local group to complete the tasks of the students; "I could have done it myself in a lot less time. There is a lot of important value added in a community

development context by all the other things the students 'brought', but it is NOT the most efficient way."

Additionally, the international community contacts or partnering universities are relying on their social capital to create networks and to help build relationships between the students and the community members. If the students were to fail or inappropriately carry out the program, they could damage the social capital of the community contact. P1 said, "Part of the role of the community or the community host is to utilize their social capital to make connections in the community." The fundamentals of the community member's social capital was explained to include (P1), "introducing host families, talking up the students to the local government, making numerous contacts with organizations participating in the students' work and facilitating opening doors." This impact can be very parasitic, which can be explained as the students are benefiting, but at the expense of the community or community members.

Another theme highlighted the need for self-awareness while being immersed in a community. When a group of students is immersed into an international community for the first time, they need to be aware of the impression they are leaving with the host community. Participant 5 (P5) stated, "If the students tear up the town, the next group might not be welcomed." Parasitic relationships are not sustainable; while the student can benefit, the negative impacts of the community could be detrimental, possibly even resulting in the termination of all future programs.

It was also mentioned that the duration of the education abroad program can affect the overall impact. Many participants stated that the shorter the program, the less likely students will be able to make significant or lasting contributions to a community.

P5 sparked the question, "How much of an impact can you have in two weeks?" P3

focused on the objectives of international service learning and the intentions of outcomes

stating;

> I have some issues with voluntourism [volunteerism in an international context],
>
> even in an educational system because of the service learning conundrum of
>
> sending people for a short amount of time with the expectation that they are
>
> helping…but the longer the stay, generally the more positive impacts you can
>
> observe.

Commensalism

In education abroad, a commensal design would be one that has no impact on the

community, yet students reap the benefits of the study abroad experience. This design can

be seen in the student-centered focus of the program. Due to the lack of community input,

the responses for the community are ones that drive the student impacts without having

any mutual benefits. Participant 2 (P2) reflected, "One of the biggest things in traveling is

you see yourself and your own community more clearly…you probably learn much more

about yourself and your own community than learn about the community you are going

to."

Another theme supported by participants argues that students make contribute

differently within various environments. Students participating in education abroad

programs or even "cultural tourists", "may not be able to contribute to the community,

but they may contribute by providing education when they get back home" (P2). This

idea neither helps nor hurts the international community the students are immersed

within. Students are able to gain many personal and professional skills while traveling

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abroad. In addition, empathy can be developed; P2 said students can be impacted by, "Seeing what life is like in someone else's shoes." Self-awareness can be advanced, "determining where and who you are as a person through critical reflection…be aware of yourself and understand potential imbalance of where you are going" (P2). P1 said students are creating a global perspective, "opening their minds…young people traveling, while they are still forming their thoughts about the world can broaden their horizons and add more experiences into the mix for them to be thinking about the world." These are all fantastic learning opportunities for students, but offer no mutual impact or benefit for the community in which they are able to capitalize from.

Mutualism

Mutualism or reciprocity is the idea that both the community and the students participating in international service learning or education abroad benefit mutually. This is ideally the best design practice for international education, creating a 'win-win' for all the stakeholders. International service learning aims to meet the needs of an international community, while students are able to gain new insights of internationalization, globalization, and intercultural competence (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011). Ultimately, the relationship should be mutually beneficial.

In order to establish mutual impact through international service learning, pre-immersion is essential to collect the community's voice and determine the 'needs'. P2 stated that open communication must exist to,

> deeply connect with people in the community and clearly explain why the
> students are coming, what the students hope to get out of it [education abroad
> program], and what potential there might be for the community to get out of it

[education abroad program], and what might be the limitations or disadvantages

or negative parts of the students coming into the community and interacting with

me – if there are any [negative factors].

The community members feel that students need to adapt and accept change for

mutual benefit and success of the program; "in change, it needs to happen with the

permission of the community and the facilitators – they can't just go freelancing. There is

an implicit agreement about what is going to happen at the benefit of everyone. It is

important to honor that agreement" (P2).

Students can positively impact international communities in many ways. P2

believes students "can pull a community together to engage them in a positive way –

where the community might not have come together if the students had not initiated it."

Students can help enhance public goods and services; "when students come and ask

questions, they highlight positive or unique things within the community that the people

might not to be so focused on or aware of, because they are everyday to them" (P6).

Students have the ability to offer communities a new and different perspective.

"They can also identify uses or challenges from a different perspective and if 'done' well,

they're non-threating…so people can feel comfortable and they don't have to feel like

there is some power over them" (P2). Additionally, participant 4 (P4) related,

"Communities can learn from the students, seeing other ways of living themselves when

interacting with the students." P3 continued the ideas of global perspective and diversity,

"Students coming from a very different cultural background then the people they interact

with will also have an opportunity to question themselves and how they perceive the

world." Students can, "help to develop and grow a community through

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relationships…and impact individuals just by learning about a new place" (P3). Students

can provide communities with new opportunities in the future; P5 said, "The students can

make people want to come! They help promote local tourism."

RQ2: How can international host communities prepare to work with students and faculty in

international educational opportunities?

In creating education abroad programs with the foundations of mutualism in mind, the

three phases of the program, pre-immersion, immersion, and post-immersion, needs to be

addressed. To reiterate the importance of the three phases; immersion is the creation of the

program and the pre-education, the immersion is the implementation and the development of the

stakeholders roles and responsibilities, lastly, the post-immersion includes the assessment and

evaluation of the program to determine success and outcomes. According to the community, the

roles of the stakeholders (students, faculty and the community) have been detailed in the

following to create a mutualistic relationship between students, faculty and the international host

community.

Student Roles

According to community members, the most important role a student should take

on in the process of study abroad is preparation or pre-departure education. If the

community is open and receptive to students, they should be prepared to live and function

in the context of that specific community and try to understand the history and culture

that have shaped their 'norms'. P2 believed students, "need to understand as much as

possible…they need to know and understand as much as they can – cultural norms and

ways people interact and what people [within the community] are expecting." P2

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continued that students, "also have an obligation, to the best of their ability and understanding, to prepare themselves culturally and socially… they are never going to be full 'prepared', but they have an obligation to think about that and do whatever work is needed for their understanding." Participant 6 (P6) said students need to, "pre-educate before they arrive…being aware of the cultural and know what the environment is like, so you don't say the wrong thing and act the wrong way, because you could offend a lot of people." P5 noted the risks and warned students, "to avoid pitfalls and disrespecting a culture and their systems, students need to be aware and develop prior understanding." Additionally, (P5) "be aware of any potential cultural differences, they may lead to confrontation or challenge." In summary, participant 4 stated students need to, "understand cultural norms and respect customs."

In addition to cultural and social awareness, the students need to consent to the goals and objectives of the program. In international Service Learning (ISL) the idea is to identify and establish relationships and community needs (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011). Once the program has been outlined and clearly communicated to the students, they need to agree and work to the best of their ability to carry out the mission. Participant 2 best exemplified this:

> If they agree to participating, to live within the context of the program and do that…living in the framework of a relationship that is connecting the community, the facilitator/faculty and their university. So they need to be prepared to know what it is that they are doing, and when they are going to do, and honor that.

P1, believed student preparation was essential for building relationships in the community; "doing preparation work in their class or program with the host organization

and the community. And doing the pre-work and connections with the community organizations and the people they will be working with when they arrive."

The interviewees' answers varied in range of the ideas of the roles of students. Additionally, there were many similarities and key ideas that appeared in their answers. One emergent theme was the idea of respect. Students need to respect the community they are immersing themselves in and this can be best represented in the following quotes;

(P6) "Be respectful of the environment they are in."

(P5) "Be respectful of the community they are going into and the people within it."

(P1) "They need to bring respect for another way of doing things in another cultural context…and pay attention."

(P4) "Students need to have respect, that should be automatic."

Lastly, another theme emerged was the necessity of critical reflection. Many of the interviewees wanted the students to reflect on their experiences, both personally and with the community. The ideas of reflection will reoccur under faculty roles and community impacts. P5 stated students' reflection should take place with the community; "students can share their experiences or history about themselves and their communities. And in Learning those similarities and differences, they can reflect and share with the community about your visit, so that the community does not feel like they are being intrusive."

University Roles

After aligning the students' roles in international education, it was clear the expectation then falls to the faculty, directors or university facilitators. The community members participating in this study had clear expectations for all of the professors involved in the process of international education.

A major role of the facilitator is to create connections in the international community. These community members might be gatekeepers, colleges or universities or other organizations. The importance of this role can be best exemplified in the following quote from P3: "Doing the work at the university and to connect with the community…To insure the program will meet the needs of the community." Continuing that though, (P3) states the facilitator, "is equally responsible for the students and the needs to the community." Logistically, P5 states the roles are, "making the connections and aligning the logistics."

Another role of the university, according to the participants, was to provide the students with adequate cultural background. This was also identified as a role of the students'. It is clear the international host community wants all student participants to have a solid understanding of the cultural prior to immersing themselves. This can be seen in the quote by P2, who has previous experience in international education, "As the facilitator, to the best of my ability, provide them [students] to provide them with a cultural background."

The most apparent role of the university was said to be communication and clarity. The international host community would like to be adequately informed of all of

the goals and objectives of the program. This question often lead participants to raise their voices, or become more animated in their hand gestures, signaling a sense of importance to the idea. P1, wanted the faculty to help the community understand the program by "making it clear, what the goals of the class are… making it clear to the community and connecting people, what the expectations are of the students and the goals of the course." P1 continues that the stakeholders must have an,

> articulated agreement about the roles, expectations, goals and tasks. And making ALL parties aware of that – the university, the students and the community. And doing that in a timely manner, so that the groundwork can be laid. And building these things into the course description and sharing that with the community and host organizations.

P5 echoed the importance of this state the faculty needs to, "establish the roles and responsibilities for each side, the students, and the host community and as the facilitator."

Other roles outlined by the participants for the facilitators or faculty include; providing reflection for the students, prepare for the program with adequate time, resources and professional focus, and ensuring their obligation to the students. P3, stated the importance of reflection with; "When the students come 'home', there is an obligation of the facilitator to provide the student with a good debriefing to allow them critical reflection on their experience." P1 referenced the time faculty need to commit to building the program to make "sure things do not get bottlenecked. Be proactive and timely. And open opportunities for dialogue, during the preparation stages [program design]." Continuing the faculty responsibilities, P1 stated, "whoever the facilitator is, they need to be sufficiently focused, and have time to be able to focus and not have too many demands

on them at the same time." P3 reminds the research that before anything, the faculty must have an "obligation to students to ensure their safety and that their wellbeing is the upmost priority." Lastly, participant 6 believes the faculty director or facilitator must be, "aware of the program and the students. And recognizing and reacting to the student's needs."

Community Roles

Participants felt that communities had a verity of roles and responsibilities in the process of an education abroad program. The communities roles begins in the initial establishment of the relationships between university and the community. P2 stated, "The community's role is to say whether they want them [students] to come and what they might be able to offer." After the relationship has been established, P2 said, "everybody [in the community] needs to be on board about who is coming, why, when, where and what the purpose is and what their time demands are going to be and what the expectations are on both sides. The community should be really clear on that."

Many of the interviewees expressed they wanted the community to be included in the pre-immersion phase of the education abroad program. P1 demonstrated this in the comment, "I think the role of the community is working with the university or faculty prior, so the students are more prepared and more aware of what is happening when they arrive." This can be implemented in the design or creation of the program, P1 continued with, "The community's role is sharing the knowledge the community has, about what would work, helping to design the process and providing contacts and context." In creating a mutually beneficial design, P3 strong stated, "before anything begins there needs to be some sort of understanding that there is going to be reciprocity between the

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two groups so that the community isn't going to be taken advantage of in the relationship."

While the students are immersed into the community, P2 stated the responsibilities become, "defining what roles community members are expected to play relative to them and what roles they need to play." They are to be open-minded and welcoming to the students, P4 stated the role of the community is to, "welcome the students and celebrate their contributions." Community pride was definitely apparent for the interviewees; they want students to enjoy their public goods. P5 commented, "It is nice to show off your town and feel proud of it." Echoing the community pride, P3 believes that, "Generally, communities want people to enjoy their space." And P5 added, "we would hope the community would be welcoming and make the students visit enjoyable."

Chapter V – Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this exploratory study, to determine the community roles and responsibilities in the process of education abroad using mutualism, was to ultimately create more inclusive education abroad programs. In the process it would be mutually beneficial for students and international host communities to be positively impacted by education abroad and international service learning. Data analysis aimed to collect the community voice regarding the process and potential outcomes of education abroad.

The results indicated there was very much a role of communities in all three phases of study abroad; pre-immersion, immersion and post-immersion. Participants indicated the international host community needed to hold input in the design and creation of the program. The community would be best to help educate students regarding cultural and social norms prior to their immersion. Upon arrival, the community felt the roles and responsibilities included being open and respectful towards the students and participant in critical reflection. The community strongly believed students and communities can benefit mutually in the outcome of education abroad; develop reciprocity. Lastly, the theme of communication and clarity must be overlaid throughout all three phases of education abroad to ensure the positive outcomes and reciprocity.

Education

Prior to students immersing themselves into an international community, research indicated pre-education and development is essential for students (Standards of Good Practice, 2011; Whitney & Clayton, 2011). While existing literature very much supports this notion, this study found that the community is best suited to educate students prior to

immersion. Participants revealed that helping students to understand the culture, social norms, history and other specific community factors should come from within the community itself. Although students will, "never be fully prepared" (P2), they have a responsibility to further their understanding. In considering the creation or design of education abroad programs, it is recommended that pre-departure education take with the help and guidance of the international host community and the community members.

Reflection

In much of the existing study abroad literature, critical reflection plays an essential role for students and faculty (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Brewer, 2011). The idea of reflection helps students to make connections, understand experiences and help further the learning process (Whitney & Clayton, 2011). The results of this study indicate the international host community also feels reflection plays a major role in the community. Participants stated they want students to reflect on their experiences in their communities with the community members. This allows for the community to receive feedback from the students and they can adequately understand and/or implement changes into future programs with students.   A recommendation for university and faculty directors of education abroad would be to include student reflection with the community in the program objectives.

Reciprocity

International service learning promotes the idea that students can address a community need and establish a mutually beneficial relationship (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011). However true this might be, much of the evaluation data of education abroad is

collected from the student perspective, not the perspective of the community in which they are immersed. This study captured the community voice to determine potential impacts both communities and students can gain in the process of education abroad.

Participants indicated students can bring a new perspective to a community simply by engaging with community members and sharing experiences. Additionally, students can highlight positive attractions and community goods that often get overlooked. Students have the ability to help promote tourism and can create sustainable program relationships for other students. Most importantly, no matter how long a student chooses to study abroad, they have the ability to develop relationships that span boarders and cultures. In the context of international service learning, students have the ability to participate in developing a social good.

Communication

According to the community participants, communication between all stakeholders (students, faculty and the community) needs to be clear and abundant. In establishing the program the faculty have a responsibility to articulate the goals of the program and provide student information. The community must convey an interest in the program for consent and provide voice in the design and the goals. While students are onsite, they must communicate needs and objections. The community must provide feedback for the faculty members in terms of the students and the program to avoid any pitfalls or parasitic outcomes. In reflection, students have an obligation to share their experiences with the community and communicate feedback for future programs. It is recommended that the community be given the opportunity to communicate with both the faculty and the students in all three phases of education abroad.

Recommendations

Universities have the opportunity to create more inclusive education abroad programs by utilizing the community perspective. In the first phase, pre-immersion, program design can be improved through collaboration between international host communities, students and faculty. Communication between all stakeholders and reflection are necessary requirements of the process of education abroad. These themes create the opportunity for education abroad programs to develop reciprocity or mutualism. In order to create these mutually impactful programs, education abroad can turn to the pedagogy of experiential education.

The National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) developed a guideline, to serve all parties involved in the educational learning outcomes. The *Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning* were established in 1998 create a mutual responsibility in the pedagogy of educational processes:

1. Intention: All parties must be clear from the outset why experience is the chosen approach to the learning that is to take place and to the knowledge that will be demonstrated, applied or result from it. Intention represents the purposefulness that enables experience to become knowledge and, as such, is deeper than the goals, objectives, and activities that define the experience.
2. Preparedness and Planning: Participants must ensure that they enter the experience with sufficient foundation to support a successful experience. They must also focus from the earliest stages of the experience/program on the identified intentions, adhering to them as goals, objectives and activities are defined. The resulting plan should include those intentions and be referred to on a regular basis by all parties. At the same time, it should be flexible enough to allow for adaptations as the experience unfolds.
3. Authenticity: The experience must have a real world context and/or be useful and meaningful in reference to an applied setting or situation. This means that is should be designed in concert with those who will be affected by or use it, or in response to a real situation.
4. Reflection: Reflection is the element that transforms simple experience to a learning experience. For knowledge to be discovered and internalized the learner

must test assumptions and hypotheses about the outcomes of decisions and actions taken, then weigh the outcomes against past learning and future implications. This reflective process is integral to all phases of experiential learning, from identifying intention and choosing the experience, to considering preconceptions and observing how they change as the experience unfolds. Reflection is also an essential tool for adjusting the experience and measuring outcomes.

5. Orientation and Training: For the full value of the experience to be accessible to both the learner and the learning facilitator(s), and to any involved organizational partners, it is essential that they be prepared with important background information about each other and about the context and environment in which the experience will operate. Once that baseline of knowledge is addressed, ongoing structured development opportunities should also be included to expand the learner's appreciation of the context and skill requirements of her/his work.

6. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement: Any learning activity will be dynamic and changing, and the parties involved all bear responsibility for ensuring that the experience, as it is in process, continues to provide the richest learning possible, while affirming the learner. It is important that there be a feedback loop related to learning intentions and quality objectives and that the structure of the experience be sufficiently flexible to permit change in response to what that feedback suggests. While reflection provides input for new hypotheses and knowledge based in documented experience, other strategies for observing progress against intentions and objectives should also be in place. Monitoring and continuous improvement represent the formative evaluation tools.

7. Assessment and Evaluation: Outcomes and processes should be systematically documented with regard to initial intentions and quality outcomes. Assessment is a means to develop and refine the specific learning goals and quality objectives identified during the planning stages of the experience, while evaluation provides comprehensive data about the experiential process as a whole and whether it has met the intentions which suggested it.

8. Acknowledgment: Recognition of learning and impact occur throughout the experience by way of the reflective and monitoring processes and through reporting, documentation and sharing of accomplishments. All parties to the experience should be included in the recognition of progress and accomplishment. Culminating documentation and celebration of learning and impact help provide closure and sustainability to the experience. (Inkster & Ross, 1995)

The NSEE principals give students, professors and communities a mutual responsibility for the program outcomes and in the context of international education together they build a learner-center program (Blair, 2011). Theses eight principals can be utilized to outline the roles and responsibilities of international educational to create mutualistic programs.

In order to promote reciprocity between the community and students engaged in education abroad, stakeholders must be present in all three phases, understand roles and responsibilities and have clear communication to ensure mutual impact. Additionally, the outcomes or evaluation must be considered from both the community and the student perspective.

Summary

Data analysis revealed that community members feel there is a role of the community in the process of education abroad and students and host communities can both be positively impacted. This was demonstrated through individual interviews with community participants. All individuals reported the international host community has a role in the process of education abroad. In addition, all participants mentioned faculty and students also have a role and communication between all parties is essential. Furthermore, participants expressed the need for pre-preparation. While it is impossible to grasp the population's voice on this subject, the sample can be used as a representation. It is clear the community believes there are roles, responsibilities and potential impacts in the design, process and implementation of international education or study abroad.

Future Studies

This exploratory study had favorable outcomes related to the researcher questions and objectives. However, this study has several areas of improvement that should be made. First, the participants were all personal connections of the researcher or the community gatekeeper. In addition, the sample size was small, and it is recommended that a larger sample could represent a more diverse population.

Due to researcher constraints the study was limited in time and duration. It is recommended that future research is conducted in other international communities. This would create a stronger sense of understanding in the community's perspective of education abroad. Suggestions for future research to understand the community vantage point include, utilizing a different participant sample, determining the length of the international education opportunity (i.e. short-term versus long-term programs), and evaluating other international host communities.

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
County of Kings Community Leaders: An Exploration in Cultural Competence

You are being invited to take part in a research study regarding cultural competence of municipality workers and community members in County of Kings, Nova Scotia. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you have volunteered or you are a member of the County of Kings municipality and are developing your diversity training. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of about 30 people to do so. The person in charge of this study is, Tara McClintic of University of Kentucky Department of Community Leadership Development. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Kristina Ricketts. There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study.

A Cultural Immersion Project is diversity development training, in which Kings County municipality workers and community members in Nova Scotia Canada can explore identities of other cultures. This experience is a safe, but a challenging process based off of the six steps of the Cognitive Cultural Competency process from the Model of Cultural Identity Development and Practice. A cultural immersion allows participants to challenge their social and cultural beliefs by creating alter-identities in a public atmosphere. By doing this study, we hope to learn how will Canadian municipality workers, participating in cultural diversity training, through an immersion experience respond to the ideas reflected in the Model for Cultural Identity Development and Practice.

Research procedures will include audio-recording of personal interviews, audio recording of focus groups, and photo analysis of the Cultural Immersion. You will be prompted with series of questions regarding your perceptions of cultural diversity, potential opportunities to explore diverse cultures, experience with diverse cultures, potential barriers to exploring diverse cultures, and motivational factors toward cultural diversity training. All audio recording will be kept on an encrypted hard drive, at the University of Kentucky. All data and materials will be erased after six years, when the analysis is concluded. We will make every effort to keep confidential all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law.

There is no risk associated with this study. There is no guarantee that you will get any benefit from taking part in this study. However, some people have experienced gained emotional and cultural knowledge when participating fully in the immersion. Your willingness to take part, however, may, in the future, help society as a whole better understand this research topic. If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering. If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.
There are no costs associated with taking part in the study. You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the study. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private. All data collected will be combined; you will not be personally identified in any shared materials.

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Tara McClintic at taramcclintic@uky.edu or (859)257-3767. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the staff in the Office of Research Integrity at the University of Kentucky between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Mon-Fri. at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428. We will give you a signed copy of this consent form to take with you.

_____   _____
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study   Date

_____
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

_____   _____
Name of (authorized) person obtaining informed consent   Date

APPENDIX B: GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the community's roles in international student educational opportunities?
2. What are the facilitator's roles?
3. What are the students' roles?
4. What can students traveling abroad bring/offer a community?
5. What can a community offer to student's traveling abroad?
6. What should students experience while visiting the community?
7. How do you determine what is essential community knowledge for students? Prior to their visit?
8. Is there anything done within the community prior to the students arrival?
9. How can the community be impacted by the students?
10. What is your position or job here within the community?
11. Demographics

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