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Toward an Expanded Conceptualization of Transformative Learning: A Case Study of International Service-Learning in Nicaragua

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TOWARD AN EXPANDED CONCEPTUALIZATION OF

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL

SERVICE-LEARNING IN NICARAGUA

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Cornell University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Richard C. Kiely

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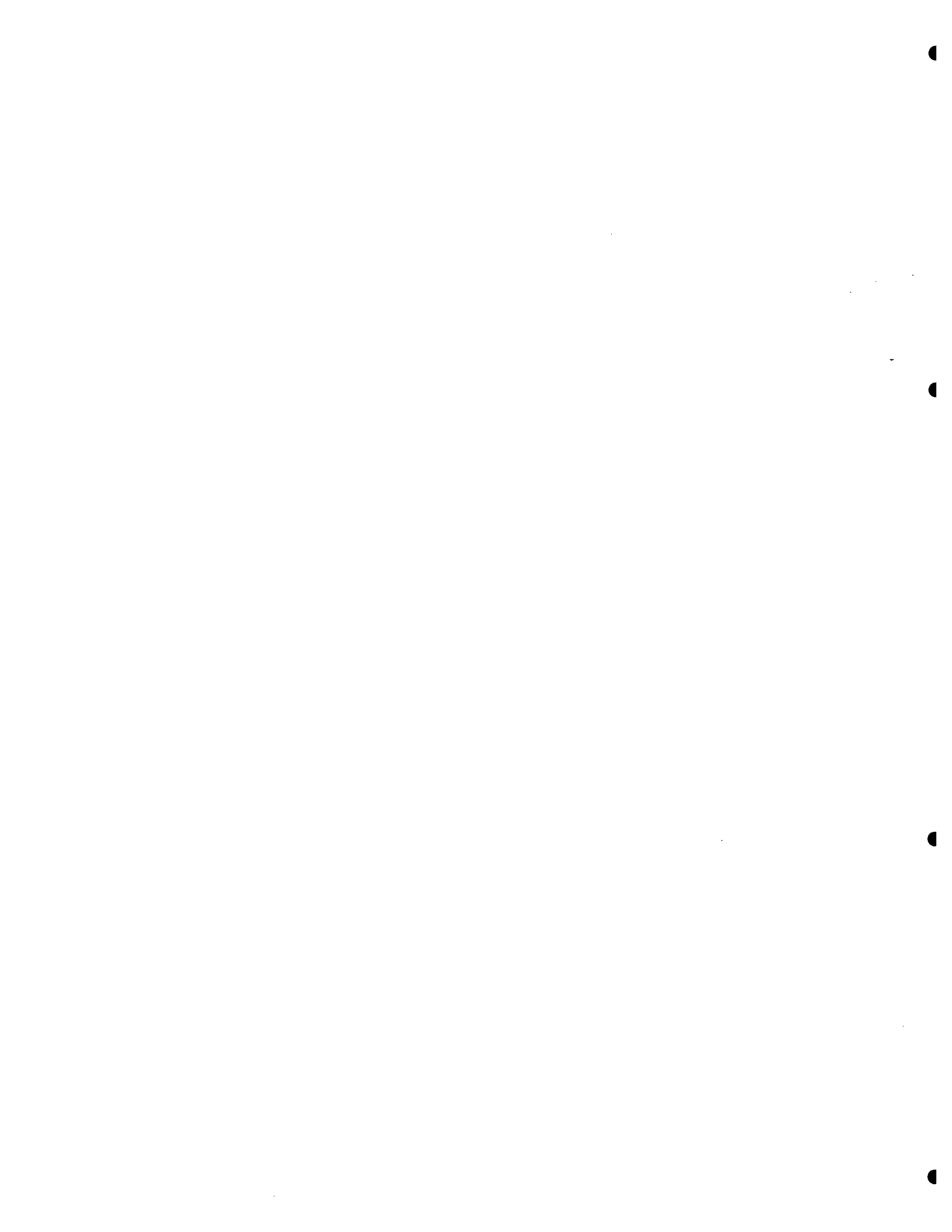
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INFORMATION TO USERS

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Richard C. Kiely was born in 1963 in Ithaca, NY where he spent the first seventeen years of his life growing-up in a tight-knit family of eight. In 1981, his father, Jack, encouraged him to apply for a Rotary scholarship to study overseas and suggested that it would be a good way for Richard to "broaden his horizons." After spending a year as a Rotary exchange student in Sweden, and indeed, "broadening his horizons," Richard spent four years in Geneva, NY and earned a BA majoring in Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. During his four-year undergraduate career, Richard spent a semester studying abroad in Athens, Greece and began to nurture his growing interest in international affairs. In 1987, Richard left for Madrid, Spain and lived there until 1991. During his stay in Spain he earned a degree in Hispanic Studies from the University of Madrid Complutense and taught English as a Second Language (ESL) to a variety of Spaniards including business professionals, university faculty, college students and government officials. Upon returning to the US, Richard seemed intent on learning more about the world and in 1992 he left for San Diego to further his education. He received a Master of Arts degree in International Relations at the University of San Diego in 1993 and decided to return to his hometown of Ithaca to pursue a teaching job.

It was there that he landed a job at the Ithaca Intercultural Institute (III) as an ESL instructor and met his wife-to-be, Andrea McPherson, who was a tutor-mentor at the institute. After a summer working at III, falling in love, and eventually marrying Andrea, Richard was offered a job at Tompkins Cortland Community College,(TC3) teaching courses in ESL, and political science. He was also invited to join a task force to further efforts to internationalize TC3's curriculum. Another member of that task force, Donna Nielsen, asked Richard if he wanted to help coordinate an international service-learning course that she had created, and was planning on implementing for

the first time in Nicaragua, January, 1994. Accepting Donna's invitation to co-instruct/coordinate the Tompkins Cortland Community College-Nicaragua program (TC3-NICA) was an important turning point in Richard's teaching career as his participation in the TC3-NICA program would prove to be a transformational learning experience. So much so, that upon being accepted into the Ph.D. program in adult education at Cornell University in 1998, Richard decided to focus his research on exploring ways to improve the quality of the TC3-NICA program service-learning experience for the students and Nicaraguans who participate in the program. Four years later, Richard's learning experience at Cornell has had a tremendously positive effect on the TC3-NICA program and also represents a turning point in his life.

In August, Richard and Andrea will be moving to Athens, Georgia, where he accepted a job as Assistant Professor in the Department of Adult Education at the University of Georgia.

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Jack Kiely, my father-in-law, James McPherson, and my friend and colleague David Harris all of whom have had a tremendously positive impact on my life. They have inspired me to search in earnest for ways to make a difference by their example and tragically, they were all taken from this earth much too early in their lives.

Sara Sywulka, Hélène Grégoire, Heidi Haugen and many other graduate students in the Education department for offering their continuous support, sense of humor, and encouragement and for sharing their wealth of ideas. I also value highly Donna Nielsen for sharing her warmth, wisdom and friendship, and also the kindness shown to me by the Puerto Cabezas community without whom this research and my career in international service-learning would not have been possible.

Lastly, I am grateful for having been blessed with a wonderful family. I am so thankful for the advice and wisdom given to me by my recently deceased father-in-law. I am also greatly appreciative of the tremendous support given to me by my mother, mother-in-law and the rest of my family. In particular, I would like to thank my wife, Andrea, for her seemingly endless patience, love, and commitment. This dissertation would not have been possible were it not for her valuable insights, superior listening skills, generous support and thoughtful encouragement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

<u>Overview</u>

This dissertation research stems from both practical and theoretical problems

related to understanding the nature of transformation in international service-learning.

In terms of the practical problems, the primary motivation for conducting this study

had to do with pedagogical challenges associated with fostering adult college students'

transformational learning as the coordinator and instructor of Tompkins Cortland

Community College's international service learning program (TC3-NICA)[1] over the

past eight years. A review of theoretical and empirical literature in the fields of adult

learning, service-learning, and intercultural learning did not adequately address the

concerns that I had about the significant and problematic nature of change TC3-NICA

students were experiencing as a result of their participation in service in Nicaragua.

<u>The problem of transformation: Practice-based challenges and dilemmas</u>

During the January intercessions from 1994 to 2001, Tompkins Cortland

Community College, located in Dryden, New York, offered a six credit service

learning program in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, an area that has been experiencing

significant poverty. The Atlantic Coast is rich in cultural, linguistic and ethnic

diversity and includes Miskito, Rama, Sumu and Garifuna who are indigenous to the

region, as well as English speaking black Creoles and Spanish speaking Mestizos.

According to the course catalog and program brochure, the course promises a

"complete cultural immersion experience." Although students earn six academic

credits for two courses while they are in Nicaragua, entitled *History, Language and

Culture* and *International Health On-Site in Nicaragua*, most of the learning that

students experience takes place while performing service beyond the walls of the

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[1] I will use the term TC3-NICA to refer to Tompkins Cortland Community College's international
service-learning program in Nicaragua throughout the rest of the dissertation.

1

make-shift classroom. Students organize and implement health clinics in poor communities, participate in dialogs with community members regarding local needs, attend presentations given by community members, visit a variety of social service providers, and volunteer at the local hospital. They forge bonds with members of the community as they attend to health care needs, rehearse and perform health education skits with local children, conduct family health assessments and home visits, attempt to learn and speak Spanish and Miskito, and eat their meals at the home of a local pastor. Throughout the three-week program, the sights, sounds, smells, conditions, needs, wants and experiences of life in the Atlantic Coast are inescapable for the program participants. Situated outside their familiar surroundings and placed in a radically different reality, students are completely immersed in the natural beauty of the Mosquito Coast, and in the medical hardships, extreme conditions of poverty, and humanity of the community.

The TC3-NICA international service-learning program has an explicit social justice orientation to transformational learning. The goals of the program involve raising consciousness about unequal relations of power between the US and Nicaragua, living conditions in poor countries, promoting cross-cultural understanding, providing first hand experience with community health issues through service-work, and donating medicine, clothing and other supplies to people in need. The course is purposely designed to disrupt students' notion of reality and taken-for-granted assumptions about existing social economic and political arrangements for the purpose of effecting a transformation in their worldview and lifestyle.

Transformational learning in international service-learning represents a process whereby adult learners experience "culture shock" when students from the US confront ill-structured and complex social problems first hand while engaged in international service-work. Their lack of familiarity with extreme poverty reflects a type of cognitive dissonance that service-learners experience in international settings.

The dissonance triggers emotional reactions and students begin to reflect on and develop an evolving critical awareness of the institutional policies and contextual complexities that influence the origin and solutions to social problems such as hunger, unemployment, and access to health care, sanitation and clean water.

Sometimes the dissonance that TC3-NICA students experience as a result of their participation in service activities in Nicaragua is so intense that it shakes the foundations of previously held assumptions and triggers a longer-term transformational learning process. Students react to Nicaraguans who are struggling with poverty or in extremely poor health with strong emotions and sometimes feel helpless, confused and paralyzed, or they want to return home. On other occasions they blame the instructor for exposing them to such impoverished conditions. Often students search for answers to the problems they are witnessing first-hand but find that there are no quick and easy "fix-it" solutions and the resulting ambiguity and complexity sometimes causes further anxiety. To help address and alleviate some of these emotional and intellectual problems, students have the opportunity to participate in a number of reflective, social and dialogic activities that assist them in challenging their assumptions of themselves and the world and also in searching for deeper meanings in what they experience. As the instructor, it is extremely challenging to find appropriate pedagogical strategies for assisting students in overcoming the profound emotional, ethical and intellectual dilemmas associated with the intense dissonance triggered through participation in service and exposure to poverty.

After the program ends and just prior to returning to the US, students describe profound "shifts" in the way they see themselves and the world. In their journals and final reflection papers, they state that the program "was a mind-blowing experience" or that it "changed my entire value and belief system." They often leave Nicaragua feeling a deep sense of pride and inspiration for having overcome difficult and unfamiliar conditions overseas, achieved the goal of strengthening ties with

community members and completed successful and collective service work with members of the Puerto Cabezas community. Building on this sense of accomplishment students tend to envision the various ways that they can continue making a difference in their lives and the lives of less fortunate others prior to returning to the US. Based on my evaluation of journals and papers the first two years of the program, I initially assumed that the cognitive, affective and behavioral responses to the dissonance and international service work described above had a positive long-term and transformative impact on the majority of TC3-NICA students' lives. However, encounters with former TC3-NICA students who still lived in the area caused me to question this assumption. The following short vignette re-tells a conversation with a former TC3-NICA student that led me to question my own assumptions regarding the "transformative" nature of the TC3-NICA international service-learning program.

A Practice-Based Problem Vignette: Re-entry. The time is March, 1998. It had been three months since I had returned from my third service-learning trip to Puerto Cabezas. As the new director of the Center for International Business and Education at TC3, I was sitting in my office, surrounded by a computer, phone, desk, pens, paper, and book. I was thinking about all of the things that I had, when I began think about Carlos, an eleven-year-old Nicaraguan boy and an aspiring artist. He gave me a number of his paintings to bring back to the U.S. and sell as a way for him to earn money. I had several of his paintings displayed in my office in case the opportunity should arise. If I sold all ten of the paintings at ten dollars each, Carlos and his family of eight would have enough food for two or three months. As I pondered this thought, a knock came at my office door.

Richard: Hi Amanda! What brings you here?

Amanda: Oh, I was hoping that we could talk a little bit about Nicaragua.

Richard: Sure. What's on your mind?

Amanda: Well, I was wondering if I will ever forget what happened in Nicaragua.

Richard: What do you mean? (I knew what she meant.)

Amanda: I mean, will I ever forget Nicaragua, because I think about it all the time, the kind of living conditions for the orphanage kids, and Harry, Henry and Daniel. I miss the kids so much, I want to take them home with me, take care of them, hug them, give them toys, food, love. . .I'll never forget playing soccer with a plastic Coke bottle...

Richard: Why would you want to forget all of that?

Amanda: Well, no one understands what I mean when I talk about my experience in Nicaragua. I showed my pictures to my friends and family, and I gave a presentation at my church, but they don't understand what I am feeling. They don't want to listen. But, I think about it all the time because it meant so much to me. I learned so much and I am not sure what to do about it...

Richard: I don't think you will ever forget Nicaragua. (I said it almost apologetically.) It is not uncommon to feel frustrated because most people, even family and your closest friends don't understand or want to listen when you tell them what you experienced and what you learned. The same thing happens to me all the time. Because they were not there with you, it's hard for them to imagine what it's like for people in Nicaragua.

Amanda: Yeah, but it's frustrating. I mean, no one should have to live like those kids. I feel so sad for them and think about it all the time. It really affected me...

Four years later, I conducted an interview with Amanda. I learned that the conversation we had in my office represented the part of the transformational learning experience Amanda was experiencing. As a result of participation in the program, her frame of reference had been altered. In particular, she questioned and struggled with fundamental assumptions pertaining to her deeply held spiritual beliefs. However, her transforming perspective did not manifest itself as a state of spiritual bliss. Instead, Amanda lost friends because she no longer shared their religious convictions, which had formerly governed her way of life. In addition, she felt somewhat alienated from

the church community that had provided her with emotional support and a social network although she remained committed to the congregation.

Subsequent interviews with other program participants revealed that Amanda was not the only one who experienced difficulties upon return to the US. Many of the students reported that their emerging global consciousness clashed with their old selves and social realities. It appeared that students' transforming perspectives that were triggered by participation in the TC3-NICA program were not leading to increased competence in adapting to their home culture. They were not achieving higher levels of personal and social integration. Instead, they were struggling to adjust to life in the US after the "TC3-NICA experience." More specifically, students were experiencing tremendous difficulty adjusting to mainstream and taken-for-granted aspects of cultural life in the US such as individualism, excessive consumerism and materialism. They were also confused about their cultural, political, religious and social affiliations and identities on a personal level and in attempting to communicate it to others – particularly family, friends and co-workers. Contrary to some of the action-oriented assumptions within the transformative rationale of the TC3-NICA program, many students reported having a difficult time translating their dramatically different sense of self and purpose to others and into personal and social action.

Because student problems on-site in Nicaragua and post-Nicaragua were increasingly becoming both pedagogically and emotionally challenging, I began to question my own assumptions regarding the transformative nature and value of the program and also my own ethical responsibility to the students and Puerto Cabezas community. I experienced significant ethical dilemmas associated with facilitating a course meant to disrupt and trigger profound and positive changes in students' world-view by connecting them to the lives and perspectives of Nicaraguan people experiencing extreme poverty through service work. In 1998, I decided to take a year

off to reevaluate the transformational learning and community-based service goals of the TC3-NICA program. I endeavored to explore and develop more appropriate and theoretically informed pedagogical strategies for facilitating transformational learning and assisting students with challenges associated with their participation during and after in the TC3-NICA program. Serendipitously, I started my doctoral program at Cornell University that year. With the encouragement of faculty mentors, I focused on exploring the theoretical and empirical literature in adult learning and community development as it pertained to improving my practice as facilitator of international service-learning programs. The review below presents what I gleaned from research on transformational learning in adult learning, service-learning, and intercultural learning and lays the groundwork for understanding the practical and theoretical problems that led to this study.

The Problem of Transformation: Adult learning, Service-learning, and Intercultural Learning

Service-learning, intercultural learning and adult learning theories converge as a potential conceptual bridge for understanding the form and process of transformation in international service-learning. While each of the three areas of learning also provides a distinct interpretation of the process of transformational learning, they assume implicitly or in some cases, explicitly, the possibility that transformational learning can be personally and socially emancipatory. They also tend to share in common a general definition of transformation as a progressively developmental and positive learning outcome and process characterized by radical shifts and/or revisions in one's assumptions, values, beliefs, perspectives or world-view as well as significant changes in personal and social behaviors.

The problem of transformation: Adult learning. A review of the adult learning literature found that transformational learning processes have undergone a more extensive and detailed empirical and theoretical evaluation than in the fields of

service-learning and intercultural learning. Extensive literature reviews (Taylor, 1997,

1998, 2000) and more recent scholarly research (Mezirow & Associates, 2000) have

elaborated in detail various learning processes and outcomes that build on Mezirow's

original conceptualization of transformational learning. There are some adult learning

theorists, however, who contend that the transformative claims in research have

become so abundant that "transformation" has begun to lose its meaning and critically

transformative potential as a form of learning that liberates students from distorted

assumptions, dependency relationships and situations of oppression (Brookfield, 2000;

Kegan, 2001). Kegan (2000) argues that despite an increase in empirical research

building on Mezirow's initial conceptualization of transformational learning, there are

still significant gaps in coming up with an agreed upon set of criteria for identifying

and evaluating the process of transformational learning and the eventual "form" that

transforms. Brookfield (2000b), who is concerned with reviving the critical and

emancipatory elements underpinning transformational learning through the practice of

ideology critique, contends the meaning of perspective transformation has become so

diluted that just about any kind of personal change, except anything having to do with

ideology critique and social change, passes for transformation. Brookfield also points

out that the positive sheen that hangs over much of the transformational learning

literature misleads students and practitioners into believing that transformation is

always a positive learning experience when, in fact, it can be tremendously emotional

and disabling (1994). For both Kegan and Brookfield, the lack of clarity combined

with the adult education field's fascination with Mezirow's conception of

transformational learning theory has made "transformation" a double-edged sword.

That is, research has advanced our understanding of some of the forms and processes

of transformational learning, but it also "begins to be used for myriad purposes; its

meaning can be distorted, its distinct ideas lost" (Kegan, 2001, p. 47).

Along a similar line of thinking, a number of adult learning theorists argue that Mezirow's transformational learning theory has overestimated its usefulness in understanding how context and unequal relations of power shape learning processes (e.g., Clark & Wilson, 1991; Collard & Law, 1989; Hart, 1990; Newman, 1994; Tennant, 1993; Welton, 1995). More than twenty years after Mezirow (1978) first proposed perspective transformation as a promising critical theory of adult learning, transformational learning theory still lacks a strong empirical base for substantiating their theoretical claims regarding its social critique and social emancipatory potential (Taylor, 1998). They consistently argue that while Mezirow (1981) claims a critical epistemological bent based in Habermas' critical social theory, his conception of transformational learning continues to be based in psychologically-based humanistic learning traditions offers no explicit social vision from which practitioners can draw guidance (Cervero & Wilson, 2000; Collard & Law, 1989; Foley, 1999; Hart, 1990; Newman, 1994).

The theoretical shortcomings above and the lack of clarity regarding what constitutes the form and process of transformation adult learning has meant that the critical promise of perspective transformation has lost much of its explanatory power as a politically and ethically based, emancipatory alternative to predominantly market-driven, instrumental forms of learning. More importantly, there is the danger that educational endeavors that do hold transformative potential will fall by the wayside. As a consequence, the valuable insights on the risks and challenges associated with the liberatory potential of such transformative learning endeavors might be lost along with them. There is a need for further empirical inquiry into the processes involved in transformational learning particularly in identifying educational programs that might offer insight into its critical and transformative potential.

The problem of transformation: Service-learning. Eyler and Giles (1999) describe the service-learning process as "not about accumulating more knowledge, but

about seeing the world in a profoundly different way, one that calls for personal commitment and action" (p. 129). They add, "service-learning practitioners tend to come down on the side of transformational learning, supporting education that raises fundamental questions and empowers students to do something about them" (p. 133). Service-learning theorists offer descriptive models for theorizing the transformational impact of service participation on students learning (Delve, et al., 1989; Kahne & Westheimer, 1999). Delve, et al., (1989) view the transformational learning process as developmental continuum that represents a shift in perspective from a charity to social justice. Kahne and Westheimer (1999) present a theoretical model for the transformational process in service-learning along political, intellectual and moral dimensions. Cognitive developmental theories are useful heuristic models for potentially explaining the transformative potential of service-learning but lack empirical evidence for substantiating their claims.

A few studies have attempted to locate transformation in service-learning; however, results of these studies have been inconclusive regarding the form and process of transformation in service-learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kellogg, 1999; Rhoads, 1997). For example, Eyler and Giles' (1999) large mixed-method study located a pre-determined notion of what college students' perspective transformation is in service learning as: (1) a new cognitive and rational understanding of the locus and solution to social problems as linked to existing social arrangements, (2) critically questioning current social and institutional arrangements, (3) a greater commitment to social justice, and (4) an intent to act in ways that change social policies and institutions to alleviate social problems. Rhodes (1997) phenomenological study identified students' perspective transformation as the transformation of identity into a more "caring self" – one who is committed to social justice and working on behalf of people living on the margins. Kellogg's (1999) study also found that students reported

perspective transformation as a positive learning outcome along intellectual, moral and political dimensions.

While these studies have identified positive and short-term forms of perspective transformation in service-learning they also found that such profound transformations do not occur very often (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Rhoads, 1997). Rhoads (1997) contends that most students continue to see the world through the lens of the charity or as "do-gooders" and rarely engage in the type of critical reflection necessary for fostering perspective transformation as an increased understanding and commitment to changing unjust social and institutional arrangements. Even though empirical studies (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Rhoads, 1997) report that perspective transformation occurs rarely, they have also found that well-integrated service-learning programs that have quality community placements, and incorporate reflection, community voice, and diversity into their pedagogy are more apt to lead transformative learning outcomes. Given that social justice models for service-learning advocate transformational learning as an important goal of service-learning and the limited evidence that service-learning programs lead to perspective transformation, in-depth case study analysis of a well-integrated service-learning program might provide important empirical evidence regarding the nature of perspective transformation in service-learning and offer insight on why it happens so rarely.

Although research on perspective transformation has linked certain program characteristics (i.e., reflection, community voice, diversity and community placement) to perspective transformation, empirical studies tend to define and focus on students' perspective transformation as short-term outcomes. All of the empirical studies above identified critical reflection as a useful predictor for perspective transformation but neglected to consider other learning processes. This research trend is consistent with the dominant view in service-learning research and perpetuates an uncritical

acceptance of reflection as the most important element of learning in serviced-learning. This notion is expressed in the following statement: "we are persuaded that reflection is the glue that holds service and learning together to provide educative experiences" (Eyler et. al., 1996, p. 16). However, none of the studies cited explain how students experience the process of reflection, nor do they conceptualize the process of learning in service-learning as something other than reflecting on the service experience. Even the process of reflection remains largely undifferentiated. As Eyler (2000) points out in her recent review of research on learning in service-learning, "we know reflection is a good thing – but we don't know how to structure reflection and integrate it with service to maximize learning – *or what learning might look like"* (p. 12, emphasis added).

These studies imply that without reflection, there is no transformation in service-learning. The overemphasis on reflection and the lack of empirical research on other types of learning processes that might occur service-learning not only makes it much harder to locate where transformation is in service-learning, it also makes it more difficult for service-learning practitioners to develop appropriate pedagogical strategies for dealing with the possible challenges or adverse effects of transformation as reflected in the vignettes described earlier.

On the darker side of the experiential learning equation, insufficient attention to process and excessive attention to the purported transformative short-term benefits and learning outcomes, deflects researchers' and practitioners' attention away from long-term and potential harmful effects of service-learning experience. Research that describes how students experience the transformative process of service-learning over the long-term might shed light on difficulties students have during and after their service-learning experience. That there are very few longitudinal research efforts examining the process of transformational in service-learning should be of great concern to the service-learning community. By examining the ways in which students

experience the long-term process of transformational learning in international service-learning, this study is one attempt to address that imbalance.

The problem of transformation: Intercultural learning. Theories of culture shock and cross-cultural adaptation suggest that the experience of being immersed in another culture foreign to one's own can cause sojourners to experience a significant amount of stress, but can also lead potentially lead to tremendous personal growth and development, and even transformation (Adler, 1987; J. Bennett, 1993a; M. Bennett, 1993b; Kim, 2001). Shames (1997) claims that the transformation in intercultural learning is a "journey from culture shock to self-actualization, however fraught with bruised egos and moments of darkest alienation, [that] culminates ultimately in liberation" (p. 36). The theoretical models conceptualized by prominent intercultural learning theorists such as Adler (1987), Bennett (1977, 1993a) Bennett (1993b) and Kim (2001) converge in presenting transformation as an internal, cognitive, psychologically driven process whereby sojourners pass through stages of identity development.

The theorists above also tend to converge in viewing intercultural learning as a cognitive developmental process triggered by culture shock which, at the most advanced stage, leads to a more fully "integrated" perspective and a new consciousness or cultural identity variously portrayed in Adler's (1977) "multicultural man," J. Bennett's (1993a) constructive marginality," M. Bennett's (1993b) "ethnorelativist," and Kim's (2001) "intercultural personhood." Each theoretical model above assumes that the highest developmental stage achieved in intercultural learning represents an "interculturally competent" individual who is able to make ethical and knowledgeable decisions and choices by balancing multiple cultural frames of reference leading to more effective functioning across diverse cultural contexts. Kim (2001) describes transformational learning process as an emerging "intercultural personhood:"

Unlike the original cultural identity that has been programmed into the stranger through childhood socialization experiences, the emerging identity is one that develops out of the many challenging and often painful experiences of self-reorganization under the demand of a new milieu. Through prolonged experiences of trial and error, the stranger begins to "earn" a new, expanded identity that has more than either the original cultural identity or the identity of the host culture...As they undergo adaptive changes in host communication competence (most notably, language competence), their internal conditions change from monocultural to an increasingly multifaceted character. At the same time, the host culture is increasingly incorporated into their self-concept. In the process, the strangers identities become more flexible. No longer rigidly bound by membership to the original culture, or to the host culture, their identities begin to take a greater *interculturalness*. (pp. 65-66)

The views presented by Adler (1975, 1977, 1987), J. Bennett (1977, 1993a),

M. Bennett (1993b) and Kim (1992, 2001) are useful in that they describe the learning

and growth potential in culture shock, particularly in terms triggering an individual

transformational process by which one's identity moves toward a culturally sensitive

and multicultural consciousness. However, learning growth approaches have been

critiqued for not adequately providing empirical evidence for their theoretical claims,

and for not describing the learning processes by which sojourners become

interculturally competent (Taylor, 1994). Cognitive developmental theories in

intercultural learning have also been criticized for maintaining a naïve constructivist

epistemology that neglects the social, political, economic and indeed, cultural forces

that constrain and influence intercultural learning and identity development (Sparrow,

2000).

Taylor's (1993) study provided an important conceptual link between

Mezirow's transformational learning theory and the process of learning in intercultural

learning, and also it added important empirical insight to the process of

transformational learning in achieving intercultural competence – successfully

adapting to another culture. However, his study is based on the problematic premise

that equates transformational learning with the process of adapting to another culture by developing intercultural competence (Taylor, 1993). His study overlooks the struggles and tensions inherent in the transformational learning process that result from critically evaluating prior assumptions about one's identity and mainstream cultural values, beliefs and rituals. As a result, studies combining intercultural and transformational learning theories do not describe how adult learners critique and resist oppressive aspects of society - particularly upon re-entering their home culture after having gone through a transformational learning process in another culture. In some contexts (i.e., counter-hegemonic social movements and other forms of resistance to the dominant cultural norms, practices, rituals and institutions), the process of cross-cultural adaptation may actually be antithetical to the process of transformation.

Empirical studies (Evans, Evans & Kennedy et al.,1987; Taylor, 1993) are also methodologically flawed in that almost all rely on study participants' self-reports through interviews and document analysis. Study samples of participants have diverse goals and purposes for sojourn so difficult to evaluate and discern a pattern of "transformation." All of the empirical studies reviewed above failed to examine the long- term process of transformational learning. As a result, we have no understanding of how sojourners experience the process of transformational learning after they return for their sojourn.

Lastly, although there are a few international service learning programs that have been providing international service opportunities to their students and faculty, the field of international service-learning is still a relatively recent phenomenon in higher education (Hartman & Rola, 2000; Holland, 2000). Consequently, there is very little information about the types of programs being offered and their impact on students, faculty, institutions and communities (Hartman & Rola, 2000; Holland, 2000). Further research examining the ways in which students experience

transformational learning in cross-cultural settings might clarify the above theoretical and empirical shortcomings.

The areas of adult learning, service-learning and intercultural learning combine to the main problem with transformational learning theories and research is we still lack a clear understanding of what constitutes perspective transformation. The research problem is that we don't know how adult learners experience the outcome and process of transformational learning.

Research Problem

The underlying rationale for conducting this research stems from the convergence of practice-based problems with the failure of previous research to provide adequate theoretical and empirical explanation for these problems. A review of theoretical and empirical research in the three areas adult learning, service-learning and intercultural learning highlighted a number of problems and unresolved issues related to the form and process of transformational learning, failed to adequately address practical problems I was experiencing as coordinator of the TC3-NICA international service-learning program and suggested the need for further research on the nature of transformational learning in international service-learning.

The main problem identified in the area of adult learning is that we still don't have a clear understanding of what constitutes transformation and as a result, its meaning and critical epistemological underpinnings have been diluted. In the area of service-learning there is a lack of understanding the processes that lead to transformation and this has led to an uncritical acceptance that the outcome of perspective transformation leads to social action. Lastly, intercultural learning theories tend to equate transformation with sojourner's intercultural competence and as a consequence transformation becomes defined solely as adaptation to, rather than critique of society. The nature of the research problem emerged as a practical dilemma in a specific educational program setting and converged with gaps found in the

scholarly literature. The research problem led to the following question: How do adult learners experience the forms (outcome) and process of transformational learning?

<u>Research Purpose</u>

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe how adult learners experience the form (outcome) and process of transformational learning as participants in the Tompkins Cortland Community College-Nicaragua (TC3-NICA) international service-learning program. The central questions guiding this case study were: (1) Where is the transformation in international service-learning? (2) How do students experience and interpret the process of transformational learning as participants in the TC3-NICA international service-learning program?

This research examined how TC3-NICA students constructed and gave meaning to their transformational learning experience in a cross-cultural setting, therefore, I chose a case study design as the most useful phenomenological strategy for exploring in-depth experientially-based meanings that students attribute to their international service-learning experience. A case study approach enabled me to examine the complex meanings students associate with the processes of transformational learning as participants in the TC3-NICA international service-learning program. A case study also proved an effective approach for providing rich, thick and in-depth descriptions of a social context and cross-cultural setting (Patton, 1990). The following assumptions guided this case study:

1) Based on initial observations and evaluations of TC3-NICA students learning experience, participation in the TC3-NICA program leads to significant and sometimes problematic changes in students' identity and world view.

2) The TC3-NICA service-learning program represented a critical case sample because it incorporates elements of community immersion, diversity, and structured reflection and has given preliminary evidence that transformational learning is occurring.

3) A case study examining TC3-NICA student's learning experience using the above purposive critical case sampling procedure was more likely to provide an experiential window for describing how TC3-NICA students experience the form and process of perspective transformation in international service-learning

4) A critical case study was the most effective way to gain a holistic, contextual and qualitative interpretive understanding of how student participants experience the process of transformational learning in international service-learning.

Significance of the Research

This study contributes important empirical insight that addresses both theoretical and empirical shortcomings identified in the areas of adult learning, service-learning, intercultural learning pertaining to the form and process of transformational learning. This research also fills a discernable void in the international service-learning research literature by offering in-depth case study documentation on how TC3-NICA students experience the form and process of transformation learning in international service-learning. By describing TC3-NICA students' international service-learning experience through their stories and testimonials, this case study provides the reader with a more holistic view of the transformational learning experience. In-depth documentation that empirically confirms the form and process of transformational learning in international service-learning is tremendously useful to program administrators and faculty who are concerned about the unique learning issues students confront in international service-learning settings. Lastly, this study addresses important practice-based problems related to pedagogical challenges in assisting TC3-NICA students with profound changes were experiencing as a result of their international service-learning experience and has led to a reevaluation and restructuring of the TC3-program format and important institutional recommendations.

Study Organizational Overview

There are five chapters that make up the organizational structure of this dissertation. The foregoing discussion provided an introduction to the practical and theoretical literature-based origin of the research problem and the rationale for conducting this study. The second chapter discusses the research literature that informs the purpose of this study. I determined that service-learning, intercultural learning and adult learning theories converged to offer an expanded conception of transformational learning theory and a useful conceptual framework for guiding this study. The third chapter discusses the research methodology, case study design, data gathering methods and criteria for warranting the quality of this research. The fourth chapter presents findings related to how students experience the form and process of transformational learning as participants in the TC3-NICA international service-learning program. Individual student cases of transformation and a process pattern are presented as part of the findings. The last chapter summarizes the findings, integrates the findings with theoretical and empirical literature in the areas of adult learning, service-learning and intercultural learning and offers recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework of this study is an expanded conceptualization of Mezirow's transformational learning. The first section of this chapter describes Mezirow's theory of transformational learning as a critical adult learning theory and subsequent theoretical critiques and extensions of his initial theoretical model. The following two sections review research literature focused on transformational learning processes in service-learning and intercultural learning respectively. Research on transformational learning in the fields of adult education, service-learning and intercultural learning provide an expanded view of Mezirow's conception of the process of transformational learning and a more adequate conceptual framework for conducting this study and in examining the process of transformational learning in international service-learning.

Adult Learning

Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory

Many adult educators point to Jack Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation as the most advanced theory of the process of transformational learning (Clark, 1993; Merriam & Cafferella, 1999; Taylor, 2000; Welton, 1995). The evolution of Mezirow's conception of transformational learning, which he introduced to the field of adult education as holding promise for the development of a critical theory of adult learning more than two decades ago (1978b, 1981), has been influenced by a diverse combination of intellectual traditions including Dewey's pragmatism, Blumer's and Mead's symbolic interactionism, Gould's psychoanalytic theory of adult development, Freire's concept of *conscientization*, and Habermas's critical social theory (Finger & Asun, 2001).

Mezirow (1975) developed a theory for the process transformational learning based on a national study of women participating in re-entry programs at a number of

US community colleges. Based on interviews that he conducted with women participating in these college re-entry programs, Mezirow (1978) found that a number of women engaged in a transformational learning process whereby they began to critically reexamine culturally defined gender roles and expectations (i.e., "the women's place is in the home") of which they had become uncritically dependent upon. Mezirow labeled the pattern of learning processes that these women engaged in during their participation in US college reentry programs as "perspective transformation" (1981, p. 6).

According to Mezirow (1991) all learning involves meaning making based on experience. Mezirow (1995) states that transformational learning is a theory of adult development characterized by an ongoing "process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or a revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (p. 49). Mezirow predicates his theory of transformational learning on the assumption that most adults are unaware of the origin of their worldview and the reasons behind or justifications upon which that base their beliefs, values and actions. He claims that "our frames of reference often represent cultural paradigms…learning that is unintentionally assimilated from the culture – or personal perspectives derived from the idiosyncrasies of primary caregivers" (2000, pp. 16-17). Mezirow, (using the analogy of Myth of Sysyphus), argues that for much of our adult life we are "caught in our own history and reliving it" which is a condition that is detrimental to our personal development and growth (1978, p. 101). Mezirow proposed transformational learning theory as a uniquely adult learning process whereby we develop the capacity to become "critically aware of the absurdity of living out our lives without challenging the roles we play in meeting our assigned tasks and meeting social expectations" (1978, p. 101). According to Mezirow, the highest achievement of transformational learning is to facilitate perspective transformation, "the learning process by which by which adults come to recognize the culturally

induced dependency roles and relationships and the reasons for them and take action

to overcome them" (1981, p. 7). For Mezirow, the central purpose of adult education

should be to "precipitate, facilitate and reinforce perspective transformation as well as

implement resulting action plans" (1978, p. 109).

The Process of Transformational Learning

Mezirow's transformational learning theory builds on Habermas theory of

communicative action to distinguish between instrumental and communicative

domains of learning which have "different purposes, logics and processes" (1995, p.

49). Instrumental learning, which dominates adult education practice, involves

acquiring information, skills and competencies in order to learn more effective ways

"to control and manipulate the environment or other people, as in task-oriented

problem-solving to improve performance or practice" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8).

Communicative learning involves "learning what others mean when they

communicate with you" regarding feelings, expectations, values as well as abstract

and intangible issues such as justice, love, freedom, beauty, responsibility and so on

(2000, p. 8). Mezirow (2000) theorizes transformational learning as an integrative

process that occurs within the instrumental and communicative areas of learning.

Mezirow further claims that there are four processes of learning which occur in the

two domains above, of which only the last two are transformative: (1) building on our

existing meaning schemes or points of view, (2) creating new points of view, (3)

transforming our meaning schemes or points of view, and/or (4) transforming our

meaning perspectives or frames of reference (1996).

According to Mezirow, meaning structures or frames of reference can be

"cognitive, conative, and emotional" (Mezirow, 1997a, p. 5). Meaning structures have

two dimensions called meaning perspectives or "habits of the mind" and meaning

schemes or "points of view" (Mezirow, 1997a, p. 5). Meaning perspectives or a "habit

of mind, is a set of assumptions - broad, abstract, orienting predispositions that act as a

filter for interpreting the meaning of experience" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 17). In

Mezirow's most recent work (2000) he expands his notion of meaning perspectives as

a set of assumptions that are:

•Sociolinguistic (cultural canon, ideologies, social norms, customs, "language games," secondary socialization
•Moral-ethical (conscience, moral norms)
•Epistemic (learning styles, sensory preferences, focus on wholes or parts or on the concrete or abstract)
•Philosophical (religious doctrine, philosophy, transcendental worldview)
•Psychological (self-concept, personality traits or types, repressed parental prohibitions that continue to dictate ways of feeling and acting in adulthood, emotional response patterns, images, fantasies, dreams)
•Aesthetic (values, tastes, attitudes, standards, and judgments about beauty and the insight and authenticity of aesthetic expressions, such as the sublime, the ugly, the tragic, the humorous, the "drab," and others) (Mezirow, 2000, p. 17)

Meaning perspectives are frequently developed uncritically through the process of

socialization into the culture that we grow up in. Meaning perspectives often reflect

our cultural biases and "are like a 'double edged sword' whereby they give meaning

(validation) to our experiences, but at the same time skew our reality" (Taylor, 1998,

p. 7). Therefore each of the sets of assumptions described above, which have been

culturally and socially derived to constitute our worldview, simultaneously help to

partially justify and explain as well as distort the meanings we attach to experience.

Meaning perspectives also shape our meaning schemes or the outward and tangible

representations of our worldview that we express and communicate to others through

linguistically and through our everyday actions. Meaning schemes manifest

themselves as belief, values, ideas, and points of view that one articulates and

communicates as tangible expressions of our habits of mind (Mezirow, 2000, 18).

Adults face a number of challenges throughout life like divorce, the death of a

loved one, natural disasters, the loss of employment, a traumatic event, and other

experiential anomalies that cannot be addressed by "simply learning more about them

or learning to cope with them more effectively" (Mezirow, 1978, p. 101). Our worldview acts as an ongoing filter that assists us in categorizing and organizing the meanings associated with everyday experiences. Experiences affirm, broaden and/or challenge our worldviews. Mezirow proposes transformational learning as an alternative and more appropriate mode of learning for assisting adult learners in addressing existential crises. Negotiating and resolving such life crises that often challenge the ways in which we see the world and ourselves is at the heart of the process of transformational learning. – what Mezirow labels traumatic and problematic experiences that are incongruent to, and cannot be accommodated by our current frame of reference, "disorienting dilemmas." Disorienting dilemmas act as triggers that initiate the reflective process whereby learners begin to reevaluate prior assumption and can function as reliable predictors of the process of perspective transformation (Mezirow, 2000).

Mezirow (1990) explains that the learning process of reflection, which is essential to the transformation of meaning structures, occurs most often after one is confronted with certain anomalies, problems and/or disorienting dilemmas that don't fit into one's frame of reference (p. 7). Mezirow differentiates among three different types of reflection: content, process or premise reflection. Mezirow maintains that the most important adult learning experiences are those that trigger premise or critical reflection and result in perspective transformation, "when critical reflection on premises involves self-reflection, major personal transformations can occur" (1995, p. 45). Perspective transformation tends to be initiated by either epochal experiences (significant events in one's life) or results from a series of cumulative changes in one's meaning schemes (1995, p. 49). Perspective transformation entails three processes: "critical reflection on assumptions, discourse to validate the critically reflective insight, and action" (Mezirow, 1997b, p. 60). Mezirow defines perspective transformation as:

the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting up these new understandings. *More inclusive, discriminating, permeable and integrative perspectives are superior perspectives* that adults choose if they can because they are motivated to understand the meaning of their experience. (1990, p. 14, emphasis in original)

Perspective transformation has to do developing the critically reflective capacity to recognize and overcome distorted assumptions that make up our meaning perspectives so that they are more developmentally functional in guiding observations, interpretations and actions. Perspective transformation constitutes a profound shift in our worldview.

According to Mezirow (2000), perspective transformation appears to follow a process represented in the phases below (although not always in this exact sequence):

(1) A disorienting dilemma
(2) Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame
(3) A critical assessment of assumptions
(4) Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are q shared
(5) Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
(6) Planning a course of action
(7) Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
(8) Provisionally trying out new roles
(9) Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
(10)   A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective. (p. 22)

Mezirow argues that there are three ways to establish the validity of a belief or an assertion: to look to "authority figures," to use "force," or to undertake "rational discourse" – which is an essential part of communicative and transformational learning (1994a, p. 224). Rational discourse, according to Mezirow means attempting to monitor subjective biases and personal motivations in evaluating assumptions and

the validity of arguments for and against problematic assertions in an effort to reach consensus. Mezirow stresses that although the ideal conditions for discourse are not attainable educators should look to them as the "standards against which to judge educational efforts and for setting norms that protect participants from the inequalities of power and influence that commonly corrupt discourse" (1994a, p. 225).

Following critical reflection and discourse to justify assertions and beliefs, the action phase of the transformational process can result in a variety of actions: it "can mean making a decision, being critically reflective or transforming a meaning structure as well as a change in behavior" (Mezirow, 1995, p. 59). Over the years Mezirow has maintained the belief that perspective transformation, despite its Habermasian conceptual framework happens to the individual and does not necessitate collective social action (2000). According to Mezirow, the type of perspective transformation that occurs and the actions that result depends on the type of disorienting dilemma and circumstances that one is experiencing.

Mezirow's transformational learning theory elaborates a learning process to guide educators in assisting individual adult learners to critically reflect on the validity of their presuppositions, engage in discourse with others to further assess the validity of assumptions and come up with a best tentative judgments through consensus, in order to more effectively act on them. Mezirow (2000) contends that the goal of adult education is to foster transformational learning processes that result in perspective transformation which he equates with helping "adults realize their potential for becoming more liberated, socially responsible, and autonomous learners" (p. 30).

Unresolved Issues in Mezirow's Transformational Learning Theory

Over the past two decades, a scholarly debate has surfaced within the field of adult education regarding different aspects of Mezirow's transformational learning theory. Taylor (1997, 1998, 2000) has identified a "areas of contention" from his extensive literature reviews of research in transformational learning theory including:

the relationship between individual and social transformation, a decontextualized view of learning, transformational learning as a universal model of adult learning, adult development as a shift or progression, an emphasis on rationality, neglecting other ways of knowing, and the various components of the Mezirow's model of the process of transformational learning. The following section discusses unresolved issues and critiques related to Mezirow's conception of the process of transformational learning theory including the extent to which context is considered, the over-reliance on critical reflection to the neglect of the affective dimension and the relationship between individual and social transformation.

What constitutes transformation? Mezirow (1978a) initially inductively conceived of his theory of perspective transformation based on a phenomenological study he did interviewing women participating in community college re-entry programs after a long hiatus away from school. Mezirow describes the type of perspective transformation that the women in the study experienced as:

> For example, a housewife goes to secretarial school in the evening and finds to her amazement that the other women do not have to rush home to cook dinner for their husbands as she does. Perspective transformation may occur through the accretion of meaning schemes. As a result of the transformation of several specific meanings schemes connected with her role as the traditional housewife, she comes to question her own identity as predicated on previously assumed sex roles. (1990, p. 13)

In one of the more recent updates on transformational theory of adult learning, Baumgartner (2001) describes the nature of transformation as something that "evokes the notion of profound physical or psychological changes and as "visions of caterpillars emerging as butterflies and deathbed conversions" (p. 15). Clark (1993) describes perspective transformation as a learning process that produces far reaching changes in one's consciousness so that "before the experience we were one sort of person and afterward we were another." Taylor's (2000) review provides a

comprehensive summary of the types of perspective transformations that have been documented in empirical studies including: new concepts of knowledge, mystical experience, an increase in personal power, spirituality, a transpersonal realm of development, compassion for others, creativity, a shift in discourse, courage, a sense of liberation, and a new connectedness with others" (p. 297). Taylor (2000) concludes, "despite the abundance of studies looking at change in a frame of reference, it is still far from clear what warrants a perspective transformation" (p. 292).

It has become increasingly clear that what constitutes a "frame of reference" is not clear. Some adult educators have raised significant concerns on the negative impact of the increasing popularity and use of transformational learning theories (Brookfield, 2000a, 2000b; Kegan, 2000). Transformation has come to mean so many things at once that transformational learning theory is losing its historically "critical" and "emanicipatory" import (Brookfield, 2000a, 2000b). Kegan (2000) claims that notions of what constitutes "perspective transformation" have become so diluted that what once described a profound shift in consciousness, frame of reference or worldview, now seems to "...refer to any kind of change or process" (p. 47). In asking "what forms are transforming," Kegan (2000) argues that further empirical study should illuminate elements of epistemological change that make transformational learning distinct from other forms of learning. Kegan (2000, p. 47-48) suggests that there are five epistemological forms of perspective transformation that people experience of which self-transformation is the highest that occur, and argues that further empirical study should illuminate elements of epistemological changes that make transformational learning distinct from instrumental forms of learning. However, even Mezirow (2000) claims that "we need clarification of how the term consciousness is being used" (p. 349). Of particular concern there are very few empirical studies that have documented the long-term behavioral actions that result from perspective transformation (Taylor, 2000). Taylor points to other areas

for further research including examining the role of disorienting dilemmas and triggers of the process of perspective transformation and states unequivocally, "We've only scratched surface in understanding process" (p. 292).

What is the relationship between individual transformation and social action? Directly related to understanding the actions that result from perspective transformation, a number of adult learning theorists have critiqued Mezirow's theory for privileging individual perspective transformation over social action, for his selective and problematic appropriation of Habermas's critical social theory and for not making social critique and action more explicit within his theory (Collard & Law, 1989; Finger & Asun, 2001; Hart, 1990; Newman, 1994a, 1994b). For example, Collard and Law (1989) contend that without a theory of social action "it is difficult to see how his ideas can be located within the European tradition of critical theory when they are largely devoid of the socio-political critique that lies at the heart of that tradition" (p. 105). Hart (1990) is primarily concerned with how Mezirow's theory neglects various dimensions of power in distorting communication and social relations and with his "failure to address the full range of social, political, (and thus educational) implications which are contained in Habermas' overall critical project" (pp. 126-127). Finger and Asun (2001) contend that the epistemological eclecticism underlying Mezirow's theory leads one to theorize how "adult learners adapt to rather than criticize society" (p. 59). Newman (1994) finds problematic Mezirow's notion of action in perspective transformation as "reintegration." He argues that "Mezirow's discourse society can be perceived as essentially stable since toward the end of the process of perspective transformation he gives the learner the option of reintegration. The learner is perceived as an individual, seeking a new role for him or herself and it seems to me to be a *readjustment*" (Newman, 1994a, p. 240, emphasis in original). Newman (1994b) adds that there is a bit of romanticism in using the learner as the point of departure for social change where "Mezirow seems to argue that perspective

transformation will get the learner to the starting line, but that we will have to rely on a kind of faith that some larger change will come about after that" (p. 240). Newman warns, "my worry here is that if we accept reintegration as a satisfactory outcome then, although the individual may be transformed, the oppressors may go unchallenged and the society these oppressors continue to act in may go unchanged" (1994b, p. 45).

For Mezirow, different types of distortions, (i.e., epistemic, psychic and socio-cultural) leads to different types of praxis (1989). He points out that there are mitigating circumstances that might impede learners from taking action on transformed perspective along epistemic, psychic and sociocultural dimensions including "a lack of information, situational constraints, psychological hang-ups or absence of required skills" (1989, p. 172).

What is the role of context in transformational learning? Clark and Wilson (1991) critique Mezirow's transformational learning theory for primarily locating perspective transformation within the individual learner and for largely ignoring the ways in which the social context plays an important role giving meaning to learners' experience. They argue that Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation as a linear ten-step process is flawed because it is based solely on an analysis of the internal experience of individual women participating in college reentry programs and neglects to consider important contextual and historical factors that influence and shape the meanings that the women associate with their learning experience (Clark & Wilson, 1991). By theorizing transformational learning as an internal, psychological process within the individual, Mezirow's analysis of "women's experiences were studied as if they stood apart from their historical and sociocultural context thereby limiting our understanding of the full meaning of those experiences" (1991, p. 78).

Clark and Wilson argue that within the structure of Mezirow's theory, "the relationship between the individual and the social context is not problematized, in part because human agency is assumed to be at least potentially more powerful than any

inhibiting influences" (p. 81). The emphasis on human agency over social context has important theoretical and practical implications for how the meaning of experience is understood and gives the false impression that individuals can define their identities and act outside external forces and constraints. They add further, "the underlying model here is one of unimpeded human agency" (p. 81). For Clark and Wilson, experience and meaning are dependent on context and transformational learning theory needs to address how contextual factors such as biography, class, gender, race, and the historical and socio-cultural environment, shape, impede and influence the learning process and the actions that result (Clark & Wilson, 1991).

Hart (2001) also argues that learning theory needs to make explicit connection between context and the development of a critical consciousness entails what Hart theorizes as learning from "*la mestiza*, a concept that signifies cultural, political and epistemological border crossings (p. 165). Hart's conceptual framework for adult learning that is critical and transformative means helping adult learners develop *mestiza* consciousness – identifying the structural borders that frame global maps of power that impose restrictions on some, while allowing others with power to move freely across borders – with all of the rights and privileges that go along with that. Drawing from the ideas of Giroux (1992), McLaren (1997) and Anzaldua (1990), Hart (2001) sees critical transformational learning as "crossing borders" and boundaries of race, gender, class, sex, age and so on to develop a relational and contextual awareness of, and greater connections with the historical and social construction and position of our identities on social, political, and cultural maps of power (p. 168). The development of "mestiza consciousness" becomes transformative practice when it leads to using power and privilege to ally with those who been silenced because they have no "place" on the "map" (Hart, 2001, p. 173). The purpose of map making is developing greater critical awareness of who creates the lines on the map, who has citizenship and the rights and privileges that go along with that, and learning how to

collectively build enough support, trust and care to create maps that promote social justice (Hart, 2001). In essence, Hart's notion of exploring one's position on the map of power relations becomes the context for shaping the transformational learning process.

Lastly, Elizabeth Tisdell's (1998, 2001) poststructuralist feminist pedagogy also theorizes how context affects transformational learning by exploring the "postionality" of the adult learner and educator and the construction of identity in interlocking systems of gender, race, and class. Tisdell maintains that it is crucial for adult transformational learning theory to address the interdependent relationship among individuals and societal structures in which some individuals and groups are privileged over others based on relations of power (1998). Making explicit and critically reflecting on one's socially constructed *"position"* and understanding one's shifting identity relative to the dominant discourses internal and external to the teaching-learning relationship is central to the process of transformational learning within the post-structural feminist approach (Tisdell, 1998, 2001).

What is the nature of the relationship among critical reflection, affect and other forms of knowing in transformational learning? A number of adult learning theorists have problematized the way in which Mezirow conceptualizes the role of critical reflection in effecting transformation (Brookfield, 2000, 2001; Hart, 1990). Some adult learning theorists also claim that Mezirow's transformational learning theory privileges a western bias toward rational forms of learning such as critical reflection, while minimizing the important role of affective, connected and spiritual dimensions of process of transformational learning (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986; Brookfield, 1994; Clark & Wilson, 1991; Hart, 1992, 1995; Taylor, 1998, 2000; Tisdell, 2000a, 2000b, 2001).

Steven Brookfield's more recent work (2000a, 2000b 2001) draws from the earlier Frankfurt School tradition of critical social theory to "reposition ideology

critique as a learning process crucial to the realization of adulthood" (Brookfield, 2001, p. 7). Brookfield (2000a, 2000b, 2001) problematizes the loosely defined notion of "critical" in the reflective process that is at the heart of much of Mezirow's transformational learning theory. For Brookfield, the "critical" aspect of reflection cannot be understood without the notion of "ideology critique" which stems from ideas associated with the Frankfurt School of Critical Social Theory (Brookfield, 2000a, 2000b, 2001). Critical reflection in the tradition of ideology critique has two purposes in adult learning settings, "the first is to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame and distort so many adult learning processes and interactions. The second is to analyze our own practices to reveal the hegemonic assumptions embedded within them" (2000a, p. 39).

Brookfield's view of critical reflection departs from Mezirow by extending the concept of ideology critique as "not to be understood as pertaining only to our beliefs about social, political, and economic systems, but as something that frames our moral reasoning, our interpersonal relationships and our ways of knowing, experiencing, and judging what is real and true" (2000b, p. 130). Ideology is so pervasive in society that it permeates every aspect of social life that we take for granted social, economic, cultural and political practices that are detrimental to our well-being (Brookfield, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a). Resuscitating the "critical" in the Frankfurt School's tradition of ideology critique, Brookfield's (2000b) analysis reemphasizes the historical socio-economic, political and cultural constitution of the "self" in society. From this perspective, critical adult educators fostering transformational learning should help adult learners "get the big picture" or "structuralized world view" – to work with them so that they view personal problems as manifestations of larger social, economic and political forces (Brookfield 2002, p. 108).

Brookfield (1994) also critiques Mezirow's conception of transformational learning for neglecting to adequately consider to "visceral and emotional" ways adult

learners experience the process of critical reflection (1994, pp. 203-4). Based on a

longitudinal study of 311 graduate students and adult educators, Brookfield (1994)

identified five themes to describe that way in which the participants experienced

critical reflection on experiences in their Ph.D. program: (1) *impostership* describes

participants' feelings of angst associated with not living up to the academic standards

expected of them by their peers and professors (2) *cultural suicide* "is the threat

critical learners perceive that if they take a critical questioning of conventional

assumptions, justifications, structures, and actions too far they will risk being excluded

from the cultures that have defined and sustained them up to that point in their lives"

(p. 208). (3) *loss of innocence* results from the extreme ambiguity in realizing through

critical reflection that certainty and truth are but multiple shadows on the wall, (4)

roadrunning has to do with the realization that the process of critical reflection often

leads to a precarious state of suspension far above where all knowledge becomes

questionable and foundationless;[2] and, (5) *community* which means the importance of

building and nurturing community with others feeling frustrated with critical

reflection. Brookfield's (1994) research findings suggest that the tendency of adult

educators and the adult education research literature to describe the process of critical

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[2] Brookfield provides a telling description of the roadrunning process that participants in the study experienced,

> The critical struggle, with its attendant aspects of impostership, cultural suicide and loss of innocence, is seen as worthwhile because of the transformative fruits it will bear. There comes a moment, terrifying in its impact, however, when these educators feel they have left behind many of the assumptions, meaning schemes, and perspectives which used to explain their world but that no other coherent ones have moved into the vacuum. At this moment there is a feeling of being in limbo, of being suspended above the canyon floor with the solid ground of familiar assumptions left behind…this is the time when educators crash to the floor of their emotional canyons, when they face the crises of confidence that cause them to abandon their quest for critical insight and to claw their way back to the security of the known. However, as happens with the coyote, whatever prompted their quest—whatever tantalizing impulse born of trauma or a niggling sense of 'things don't fit' spurred them on a search for more authentic assumptions in the first place—invariably come back into play. Sooner or later the journey for critical clarity begins again, but this time there is greater preparedness for the moment of suspension, and the ability to stay dangling above the canyon floor for a few seconds longer than was formerly the case (p. 212)

reflection as transformative, empowering, emancipatory and liberating might not be an entirely realistic account in that it can also trigger emotional and visceral responses.

Belenky and Stanton (2000) also critique Mezirow for assuming that adults can engage in critical reflection and argue that "most adults have not developed their capacities for articulating and criticizing the underlying assumptions of their own thinking, nor do they analyze the thinking of others in these ways" (p 73). Drawing from earlier research conducted by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldeberger and Tarule (1986) which found that women go through a number stages of epistemological development over the lifespan - labeled silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge and constructed knowledge - they point out that critical reflection and dialogue represents higher stages of procedural knowing and constructed knowing (Belenky & Stanton, 2000). They point out that Belenky et al. (1986) found that during the procedural stage of knowing women engaged in two types of learning identified as connected knowing and separated knowing (Belenky & Stanton, 2000). They equate separated knowing, or what is metaphorically known as "the doubting game," with Mezirow's version of critical reflection and dialogue which emphasizes rational forms of knowing and generating consensus on the best tentative judgment (Belenky & Stanton, 2000). Women also engage in connected knowing or "play the believing game" (Belenky & Stanton, 2000, p. 87) when trying to understand what others mean. In connected knowing people are not interested in finding strengths and weaknesses in one's argument rather they try to understand them by "using empathy, imagination and storytelling...to enter into another person's perspective, adopting their frame of mind, trying to see the world through their eyes" (2000, p. 87). The goal in connecting knowing is to gain a deeper and more personal, emotional and visceral understanding through building relationships based on trust, solidarity, empathy, intuition, and feelings (Belenky & Stanton, 2000).

Hart (1992, 1995), whose use of the metaphor "Motherwork" to reevaluate the relationship between work and adult education, offers an alternative view of transformational learning that does not privilege, like Mezirow's work does, detached forms of rationality that separates rather than connects. Motherwork means giving voice to problems facing people living on the margins, on challenging oppressive structures of power in the workplace, and enabling organizational learning and change (Hart, 1995). For Hart, "a critical adult education theory must understand that the life circumstances of the poorest members of our society reveals best what this society, in its local and global repercussions, is all about" (1995, p. 114).

Counter to Mezirow's approach to transformational learning that focuses rational modes of expression and separated ways of knowing, Tisdell's post-structural feminist pedagogy embraces more connected forms of knowing and that value adult learners sharing their personal experiences through stories rather than critically reflecting (2000b; 2001). From a post-structural feminist perspective, stories allow learners to share aspects of their learning on a deeper, more emotional, and visceral level, as well as critically reflect on the social and contextual influences that shape how adult learners come to know, learn and act (Tisdell, 2000b; 2001). Tisdell contends that stories "touch our hearts; they embody and put a human face on the abstract world of ideas. They move our spirits. It is through the interaction of our hearts, minds and spirits that we eventually move to action" (p. 183). For Tisdell, rational processes of transformational learning such as critical reflection, are only part of the equation of transformation: "affective involvement and expression is also a *necessary condition* for transformational learning to happen" (Tisdell, 2001, p. 160, emphasis in original).

Lastly, Tisdell's (2000a) theoretical and empirical work exploring the connection between spirituality and critical adult educators' deep commitment to social change may be the most significant dimension of critical and transformative

adult learning, and ironically, the least understood. Tisdell (2000a) describes spirituality as having to do with "greater self awareness, a sense of interconnectedness and an experience with a perceived higher power" (p. 310). Tisdell's (2000a) emphasis on the spiritual dimensions of learning of has a number of implications for developing a critical conceptual framework for explaining and understanding transformational learning processes. It is essential that critical adult educators understand that adult learners bring more than just mind and heart to the classroom, they bring spirit as well (Tisdell, 2000a).

Summary of transformational adult learning theories. Mezirow's (1996) conception of transformational learning is a reconstructive theory that "seeks to establish an abstract and idealized model which explains the general structure, dimensions and dynamics of the learning process" (p. 166). Mezirow's transformational learning theory focuses on how adults make meaning of their experience through the processes of reflection and discourse on the nature of and justifications for beliefs, values, meanings and actions. Of particular importance in his model is critical self-reflection on one's assumptions in order to effect personal perspective transformation or "meaning making that results in a change in consciousness" (Clark, 1993, p. 54). According to Mezirow, the process of "perspective transformation fills an important gap in adult learning theory by acknowledging the central role played by critical reflectivity. Awareness of *why* we attach the meanings we do to reality, especially to our roles and relationships – meaning often misconstrued our of the uncritically assimilated half-truths of conventional wisdom and power relationships assumed as fixed...that we are caught in [our] own history and reliving it (p. 11). Mezirow (2000) proposes transformational learning as a process for "helping learners become aware of the context of their problematic understandings and beliefs, more critically reflective on their assumptions and those of others, more freely and fully engaged in discourse, and more effective in

taking action on their reflective judgments (p. 31). Building on Habermas theory of communicative action, Mezirow conceptualizes transformative learning as a theory that embraces experience, "critical reflection, rational discourse, and praxis as central to adult learning as the sine qua non of emancipatory participation" (1995, p. 66). Mezirow (2000) claims that the intended purpose of transformational learning is to assist learners in becoming critically reflective their assumptions in order to "to gain greater control over [their] lives as socially responsible, clear thinking decision-makers" (p. 8).

For Tenant (1993), the value of Mezirow's transformational learning theory is that it provokes theoretical debate by getting at the "tension between the individual and the social" aspects of learning and by attempting to elaborate the components of an idealized adult learning process in terms of both individual psychological development and social transformation without making an explicit normative commitment to an end point for perspective transformation whether social action or something else (p. 35).

However, there are some adult learning theorists who contend that "transformative" claims in research have become so abundant that "transformation" has begun to lose its emancipatory meaning and critical import (Brookfield, 2000; Kegan, 2001). Brookfield (2000), who is concerned with reviving the critical promise of transformational learning's through the process of ideology critique, contends the meaning of perspective transformation has become so diluted that just about any kind of change, save anything having to do with ideology critique and social change, passes for transformation. Along a similar line of thinking, a number of adult learning theorists argue that Mezirow's transformational learning theory has overestimated its usefulness in understanding how context, and unequal relations of power shape transformational learning processes (Clark & Wilson, 1991; Collard & Law, 1989; Hart, 1990; Newman, 1994). More than twenty years after Mezirow (1978) first

proposed perspective transformation as a promising critical theory of adult learning, adult learning theorists contend that transformational learning theory still lacks a strong research base for substantiating theoretical claims regarding its social critique and social emancipatory potential (Collard & Law, 1989; Finger & Asun, 2001; Hart, 1990; Newman, 1994). They consistently argue that Mezirow's conception of transformational learning does not provide an adequate conceptual link for connecting individual transformation to social change. While claiming a critical epistemological bent, transformational learning is embedded in psychologically-based, humanistic learning traditions and offers no explicit social vision from which practitioners can draw guidance (Cervero & Wilson, 2000; Collard & Law, 1989; Hart, 1990; Newman, 1994). For social change critics, not having an explicit vision for social change is what weakens and makes problematic the critical and Habermasian social underpinnings of Mezirow transformational theory. Lacking a sound social vision means that critical reflection, autonomy and social change can be defined and used in a number of ways and for a variety of purposes that will most likely be representative of the most powerful interests in society (Wilson & Cervero, 2000). Adult learning theorists also critique Mezirow's theory for privileging rational forms of learning such as critical reflection and discourse over affective and spiritual modes of learning which further weakens the model's explanatory power (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986; Brookfield, 1994; Clark & Wilson, 1991; Hart, 1992, 1995; Taylor, 1998, 2000; Tisdell, 2000a, 2000b, 2001).

In addition, Taylor's (2000) most recent review of research in transformational learning found that empirical studies have not advanced theoretical tensions in transformational learning that were highlighted above. He found that "there has been a redundancy of research, an insufficiency of in-depth exploration into the nature of particular components of a perspective transformation and a reification of transformative learning theory as we presently know it, whereby its basic premises

about learning have become accepted practice in adult education" (Taylor, 2000, p. 286). Thus, empirical studies have largely failed in providing insight into how the forms and processes of transformational learning are shaped and constrained by political, economic, social, and cultural forces, information that is essential for understanding the social significance and "critical" promise of transformational learning theory.

All of the adult learning theories described above suggest the need for further empirical study using an expanded conceptualization of the process of transformational learning. Based on the theoretical perspectives above, an expanded conceptualization of transformational learning includes the role of context, the relationship between individual and social transformation, as well as the rational, affective, and spiritual forms of learning and knowing. An expanded conceptualization of transformational learning provides an important theoretical rationale and framework for conducting a critical and holistic examination transformational learning forms and processes.

Service-Learning

Kathleen Weigart (1998) contends that the service-learning movement on college campuses has to do with higher education's role in defining the public good, preparing students to be civic-minded citizens as essential for the maintenance of a democratic society, and in generating research directly applicable to the welfare of society. Service-learning represents the combination of academic coursework with community service with some form of structured reflection on the service experience to promote student learning and development and alleviate community problems (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Weigart, 1998). Kendell (1990) argues that service-learning should be focused on helping students gain greater awareness of the complex historical, political, economic, social and cultural forces that influence the social

problems service-learning programs are meant to address. Chapin (1998) describes service-learning as "change, caring, social reconstruction, and a transformative experience are characteristics of service learning goals, whereas charity, giving, civic duty, and additive experience characterize community service" (p. 205). Eyler and Giles (1999) describe the service-learning process as "not about accumulating more knowledge, but about seeing the world in a profoundly different way, one that calls for personal commitment and action" (p. 129). They add, "service-learning practitioners tend to come down on the side of transformational learning, supporting education that raises fundamental questions and empowers students to do something about them" (p. 133).

Service-Learning Theory: Where's the Transformation?

Cognitive developmental models for service-learning offer a useful point of departure for understanding where the transformational learning is in service-learning because they imply that transformational learning occurs as an intellectual and moral developmental process along charity to social justice continuum (Kahne & Westheimer, 1999; Morton, 1995).

Kahne and Westheimer (1999, p. 29) advocate a theoretical and normative rationale for service-learning as a continuum from charity to social justice. Their model distinguishes among the intellectual, moral and political assumptions, goals and purposes contained in the "charity" and "change" paradigms of service-learning. Charitable models support moral learning that fosters attitudes of volunteerism, altruism, and giving to those in need "as a kind of noblesse oblige – a private act of kindness performed by the privileged" (Kahne & Westheimer, 1999, p. 33). Change models for service-learning foster moral transformation by assisting students in developing a deeper level of care and understanding of others through the development of more meaningful, reciprocal relationships with other students and community members (Kahne & Westheimer, 1999, p. 33). Political learning in the

charitable model translates into a passive, individualized sense of what it means to be a citizen (i.e., voting and volunteering). In the change model, political transformation means becoming more critically reflective about power dynamics, social context and social action. It means transforming charitable notions of citizenship into one which support active involvement in individual and collective efforts to address the root causes of social problems. Lastly, in the intellectual realm of the charity model, students "add" to their knowledge of social issues, develop teamwork skills, and develop more confidence to take on greater leadership roles (Kahne & Westheimer, 1999, p. 36). However, the change model emphasizes structured critical reflection to foster transformational learning that help students "get outside the box," deconstruct stereotypes, and break up habitual thinking. Critical reflection assists students in challenging the status quo, in envisioning alternatives, and in proposing innovative strategies for alleviating the nature of the problems that the "service" is supposed to address (Kahne & Westheimer, 1999, p. 37). Kahne and Westheimer (1999) offer their service-learning model as an alternative to the charity model and to advocate for a transformative service-learning approach that fosters a deeper, more critical sense of what service and learning means for changing individuals and improving communities.

Delve, Mintz and Stewart (1990) were the first service-learning theorists to connect service-learning to the student development theories of Perry (1970), Gilligan (1982), and Kohlberg (1975). These distinct cognitive developmental theories share the view that transformation occurs when students pass through a sequence of progressive epistemological stages of increasingly complex capacities for intellectual and moral reasoning. Each stage represents higher order reasoning and greater capacities to differentiate among complex ideas or issues, and more complex structures of understanding related to knowledge, identity, and social relations (Delve, et al., 1990).

Their service-learning model assumes in theory that as students become more involved in service-learning programs they will progressively pass through five epistemological and moral stages along a linear charity to justice continuum (Delve et al., 1990). The elements of the five phases include (1) *exploration* which is a limited form of "individual feel-good" service commitment, (2) *clarification* which represents greater exploration of social issues, (3) *realization* which is the "aha" stage where students become aware of the meaning of service as reciprocal, and greater truths about themselves, (4) *activation* which is the "questioning authority" stage which signals greater commitment to service, lifestyle changes, advocacy and dealing with institutional and societal barriers, (5) *internalization* means a lifelong commitment to social justice and a "sense of inner peace that goes hand in hand with living one's principles" (Delve et al., 1990, pp 12-17). Delve et al.'s (1990) model theorizes that as students progress along the phases of the service-learning continuum they increase their moral and intellectual reasoning capacities, which are related to greater awareness of their self, others, the world, interpersonal skills, increased knowledge of social issues, and a commitment to social justice. Delve et al. (1990) emphasize that the aim of service-learning should be to promote social justice and that charitable activities will not help students develop a sense of empathy and empowerment needed to achieve that goal.

A number of service-learning educators question the transformative assumptions embedded in advocating service-learning rationales in terms of "leading" students and communities along a mysterious continuum from charitable intentions to social justice realities. Langseth and Troppe (1997) temper transformational optimism with the following statement, "perhaps the most fundamental question we need to ask is whether or not people involved in with service-learning are even interested in social change" (p. 38). While they support a more pragmatic

understanding of how to realize social change goals, they are less sanguine about the transformative potential of current service-learning practice (Langseth & Troppe).

Morton (1995) also questions the assumptions of various versions of the charity to social justice continuum described above. According to Morton, there is a discernible irony of service-learning by the "gulf between intention and action" (1995, p. 31). That is, if service-learning educators look more closely, students often act and think in ways that run contrary to the assumed progression inherent in the charity to social justice continuum (Morton, 1995). Rather than viewing each along a developmental continuum, Morton (1995) offers an alternative perspective to frame service-learning practice by conceptualizing three discrete paradigms for service learning: charity, project and social change – each with its own set of assumptions, values, goals, and sets of practices. He sees the relationship of the paradigms "not as a flat line but as a series of ranges bounded by investment in relationship building and commitment to understanding root causes to of problems" (Morton, 1995, p. 21). He argues each paradigm should be considered as having a "weak version" and a "strong version" – with service-learning practitioners recognizing the merits of, and striving for engaging in the best practices of each approach.

Leeds (1999) goes even further than Morton in problematizing the implied transformative potential embedded in the assumptions driving the "social change" paradigm for service-learning as "premature certainties" that at their best are educational and at their worst, "coercive" in creating false expectations (p. 120). Leeds asserts that social change theorists generally overestimate the social, economic and political impact of service-learning on students, institutions and communities so that the field has become "burdened with bloated rhetoric" (p. 120). He contends that service-learning is a more powerful educational tool then political one and cautions against expectations of often "ill-defined" notions of what constitutes social change (Leeds, 1999, p. 119). Leeds emphasizes "that even if students come out of all classes

with a social change perspective, it is a dubious leap of faith or logic that actual social transformation will occur as a result" (1999, p. 119). Leeds argues for a more balanced approach to service-learning resulting from a dialectic tension of "commitment (disseminating knowledge) and detachment (opening inquiry)" so that students and faculty do not become paralyzed by unrealizable romantic visions of social justice (1999, p. 121). According to these theorists (Langseth and Troppe, 1997; Leeds, 1999; Morton, 1995), it is naïve and perhaps harmful to uncritically assume that students will learn according to the developmental dynamics of the social justice continuum, and become social activists. We end up knowing less of how students genuinely experience learning in service-learning and also, important social justice aims become mere rhetoric (Morton, 1995).

Empirical Studies: Where's the Transformation in Service-Learning?

The following section reviews empirical studies in service-learning that examined learning processes and the transformational impact of service on student learning. These empirical studies provide a conceptual link with transformational learning theory, in spite of the fact that, with the exception of Gibboney (1996), most of these studies continue to emphasize transformational learning outcomes and offer very little insight on how students experience the process of transformational learning.

Eyler and Giles' (1999) book, *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning*, describes the results from three separate empirical studies examining the effects of various service-learning types of programs on college students. As a mixed-method study, it is perhaps the most comprehensive empirical study to date on service-learning that links different program characteristics to learning outcomes. The three studies included a pre/post semester survey of 1500 students (1,100 were involved in service-learning programs and 400 were not) from 20 US colleges and universities; pre/post – semester problem solving interviews with 66 students from 6 colleges; and interviews with another 65 students from 6 other colleges.

Eyler and Gile's (1999) study substantiated that service has a positive impact on outcomes related to personal and interpersonal development, academic learning and perspective transformation. The study results also identified specific program components, (i.e., placement quality, application, written and oral reflection, diversity and community voice) as strong predictors of student learning outcomes – including perspective transformation (Eyler & Giles, p. 168).

Eyler and Giles' (1999) study is the first study in service-learning to explore learning outcomes related to Mezirow's notion perspective transformation. The following definition of perspective transformation in service-learning provided by Eyler and Giles (1999) highlights this point:

> Service-learning students who become aware of the role of deinstitutionalization in homelessness or begin to understand the complexity of an environmental problem exhibit this type of learning. Transformational learning occurs as we struggle to solve a problem where the usual ways of doing or seeing do not work, and we are called to question the validity of what we think we know or we critically examine the very premises of our perception the problem. So while students who acquire more complex information on the many factors that contribute to homelessness are merely deepening their understanding of the issue, the student who begins to question government budgetary priorities or zoning regulations or the way in which access to medical care is linked to employment is starting to question some assumptions on the way society operates. This process of questioning may lead to transformation of perspective. (Eyler & Giles, p. 133)

Rather than emphasizing service-learning as a transformational learning process, Eyler and Giles (1999) borrow certain aspects of Mezirow's theory to measure "social outcomes" that result from service participation. Their study reported that students experienced the outcome of perspective transformation as a result of service participation in the following ways:

- Questioning and overturning one's fundamental assumptions in society;
- Viewing social problems in a new way;
- Demonstrating a more systemic locus for causes and solutions to problems;

- A belief in the importance of social justice;
- The need to change public policy, and
- The need to influence the political structure personally (Eyler & Giles, 1999 p. 148-49).

Eyler and Giles (1999) make an important contribution to service-learning theory by using Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation as an alternative way to explain service-learning beyond the ubiquitous use of Kolb's experiential learning model. Yet, by focusing only on short-term outcomes and students' intention to act on perspective transformation, they weaken the potential explanatory power of transformational learning to better understand how students experience the long-term process of transformation in service-learning particularly as it relates to social action.

Eyler and Giles (1999) study also advances the field's understanding of how certain program characteristics in general seemed to affect a wide variety of learning outcomes – including perspective transformation. However, because their study did not look at specific program contexts, it is not clear how program characteristics link to transformational learning outcomes and processes. The identification of program characteristics as predictors of learning outcomes, is an important first step however, as Stanton (2000) points out, "how do students 'see' and experience these applications?" (p. 121). He adds "we need to know a lot more about his process than we do now" (2000, p 121). Eyler (2000) also points out that "studies often link service experiences that bear no logical relationship to them. Stacking soup cans in a food pantry is not likely to have an impact on public speaking; tutoring kids math may have no impact on a multiple choice test in sociology; clearing a trash-filled city block is obviously no connected to improved critical thinking capacity" (2000, p. 12). Lastly, Eyler and Giles (1999) found that "dramatic transformations of perspective are rare, and we would not expect service-learning to lead to this outcome routinely" (p. 148). However, their findings also suggest that perspective transformation has a greater likelihood of happening in "well-integrated" service-learning programs that

place a strong emphasis on social transformation, community placement, critical reflection, diversity, and community voice (p. 148-149).

While Eyler and Giles (1999) define perspective transformation as an academic, personal and social learning outcome aimed at social change, Rhoads (1997) study suggests the process of service-learning is a personal transformation toward becoming a "caring self" - one who develops critical consciousness described as a profound concern for social justice. Rhoads conducted a qualitative study and collected data through interviews, participant observation, and journal analysis over a six-year period during which he evaluated students who participated in variety of community service and service-learning programs at three different universities.

Drawing from the metaphor of "border-crossing" (Giroux, 1992; McLaren,1995),[3] Rhoads (1997) found that connecting with diverse community members through service work, building mutual and reciprocal relationships with others who have fewer privileges due to their race, class, or gender combined with critical reflection can have a dramatic effect on students sense of "self" and their role in making a difference in society (Rhoads, 1997, p. 124). Rhoads found that students who had contact with diverse members of the community problematized identity of the "other" – the recipient of service and role represents a transformational learning journey toward becoming a "caring self" (Rhoads, 1997, p. 202). But such transformations he argues can potentially mean more then just serving meals to the homeless; it also involved confronting larger social and economic issues that lead to homelessness in the first place (p. 202). Rhoads (1997) study, however, found that most students "do not develop critical awareness of the mitigating factors that may contribute to rural and urban poverty, and, in fact, most students do not seek such knowledge" (p. 202). There were only a few students who reported perspective

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[3] See also Hayes and Cuban (1997) and Skilton-Sylvester and Erwin (2000) for further discussion on the use of "border-crossing" as a metaphor for describing how students experience service-learning.

transformation in terms of reevaluating their identity and who expressed greater commitment to working for social justice. Based on his study he developed classification of "Do-gooders," students who don't have a critical understanding of the factors that lead to poverty and often ignore such knowledge. "Cynics" are students who are paralyzed or scared to address the complexity of it all. "Critical idealists" are the rare few who experience a transformation of self defined in terms of recognizing the importance of "working with the oppressed as opposed to charitable notions of giving to the needy" (p. 183). Rhodes study locates perspective transformation as a change in students' self-identity characterized by a more critical and caring self who understands the structural nature of social problems, identifies with the poor and intends to advocate on their behalf. He found that this kind of transformation takes place rarely. More importantly though his study fails to show the process by which students experience identity change and act on it particularly over longer periods of time.

Kellogg's study (1999) incorporates into her senior project service-learning class on neighborhood access to environmental information Kahne and Westheimer's (1999) typology of learning in charity and social change models of service-learning. Kellogg uses the typology to conceptualize perspective transformation in terms of political, moral, and intellectual learning outcomes rather than processes. In the moral domain, perspective transformation "would include an enhanced sense of empathy and caring about urban neighborhoods" (p. 64). In the political realm, transformation means students "bolster their sense of civic community and enhance their awareness of the realities of political relationships" (p. 65). In the intellectual domain of learning perspective transformation entails "a better understanding of the challenges faced by urban neighborhoods seeking to address environmental problems and the challenges that can result from the structure of the regulatory system" (p. 69). She found that service impacted students along each of the dimensions in Kahne and Westheimer's

(1999) service-learning typology but like Rhoads, failed to identify the processes whereby students in her study transformed moral, political and intellectual perspectives.

Gibboney's (1996) qualitative research is unique in that she used a grounded theory approach to examine the meaning-making process of the service experience for students to address whether students' increase in civic awareness persisted after two years. Her study focused on the long-term effect of service-learning on undergraduate students development of civic responsibility enrolled in a service-learning honors seminar rather than short-term outcomes. While Gibboney did not explicitly intend to evaluate the process of transformational learning in service-learning, it was one of the few empirical studies that specifically looks at the ways in which students experience the process of learning in service-learning and also over a longer period of time.

Gibboney's (1996) study found that participation in the course heightened students' sense of "commitment to community." Over a two-year period, students' different conceptions of their commitment to community entailed an ongoing process of "reflection and reframing" on what their role was in terms of making a difference in the community (1996, p. 513). Gibboney reported that students over a two-year period engage in a learning process that is non-sequential and concurrent which entails ongoing reflecting and reframing regarding their role in the community. The learning processes of reflecting and reframing occur along five dimensions: "(1) determining fit between the service opportunities relevant to identified needs, (2) getting prepared (e.g., by obtaining more information about identified needs, finding an appropriate agency, or seeking further education), (3) counting the costs and setting priorities, given the multiple demands on their time, energy, and talents and the influence of a supportive or non-supportive environment, (4) acting with integrity; that is, acting in a way that is consistent with their self-concept and their concept of the individual's role in the community and, (5) responding to the service experience (e.g., the satisfactions

and hazards they discovered as they served)...and then repeating the cycle in terms of an assessment of need, fit, preparation, priorities and so forth" (1996, p. 513). Gibboney also found that a number of students felt guilty for not having lived up to their expectations of what it meant to be committed to the community: "they did not feel that they were acting with integrity" (1996, p. 513).

Overall, Gibboney's findings question the notion that attitudes of social responsibility persist and add insight to both the long-term impact of service on attitudes toward social responsibility. Her study also sheds light on some of the processes students go through after their service-learning experience and how they define notions of charity and social justice. Her study also questions unsubstantiated claims regarding developmental models in service-learning (e.g. Delve et al., 1990) that depict service-learning as a continuum from charity to social justice. Her findings suggest that students' commitment to community – rather than a developmental process of sequences from charity to social justice – is a process of constant negotiation mediated by personal constraints and community issues as indicated in the five types of reflecting-reframing processes described above (Gibboney, 1996).

Summary of service-learning literature. A review of theoretical and empirical study in service learning indicates a lack of understanding regarding where and how transformation occurs in service-learning. From a theoretical standpoint, there seems to be an uncritical acceptance that students' perspective transformation occurs along a moral, intellectual and political charity to social justice developmental continuum. Cognitive developmental theories for service-learning are presented conceptually as descriptive models for explaining the form and process of transformation but have not been empirically confirmed. Findings from empirical studies that have attempted to locate perspective transformation in service learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Rhoads, 1997) consistently report that:

- Perspective transformation has been conceptualized as changes in self-concept, understanding social problems differently and developing a commitment to advocate on behalf of others less fortunate
- Perspective transformation that results from participation in service has only been documented as a short-term outcome and occurs rarely.

- On the rare occasion when perspective transformation is identified, these studies tend to document *student's intent* to become more actively engaged citizens rather than providing evidence of long term and active political engagement (Eyler & Giles, 1999: Giles 2000: Rhoads, 1997).

- Except for an emphasis on reflection and reciprocity, there is very little empirical knowledge on the processes by which students experience perspective transformation. The role of triggers, negative experiences, relationships, emotions, affect, context, spirituality and other learning processes are not adequately explored.

- The long-term impact of perspective transformative has not been documented and the studies tend to be retrospective – looking back on instances of "perspective transformation" rather than looking at the transformational learning 'in process' over a period of time.

- Given that we don't have a lot of empirical evidence substantiating theoretical claims about the nature of transformation in service-learning, there is a need to expand our limited empirical understanding what constitutes transformation in service-learning. The final section of the literature review will focus on empirical studies that primarily explore transformational learning processes in the area of intercultural learning programs.

Intercultural Learning

As international exchanges of various types were on the rise during the Post-WWII period, a number of researchers began to focus on the experience of the cross-cultural sojourner[4] (Kim, 2001; Ward, Furnam & Bochner). After WWII there was a significant increase in the number of university, corporate and military personnel sent overseas. Sojourner adjustment problems to living in another culture stimulated

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[4] I define sojourner as a person who lives in another country (host culture) temporarily for periods of short (one to three months), or longer duration (one year or longer), but eventually returns the his/her country of origin (home culture). Sojourners, unlike immigrants and refugees who tend to settle permanently, are tourists, businessmen, missionaries, military personnel, exchange students, Peace Corps volunteers who travel abroad for a variety of reasons including education, business, community development and other activities of a temporary nature (Kim, 2001; Ward et al., 2001).

scholarly interest in gaining insight into cross-cultural adaptation (Ward et al., 2001). Cross-cultural exchange programs sponsored by the US government such as the US Fulbright Scholarly Exchange Program, 1946 and the US Peace Corps, 1961 also stimulated scholarly interest in identifying and examining sojourner's affective, cognitive and behavioral patterns of adjustment to living in a different cultural setting (Kim, 2001; Ward et al., 2001).

Most of the research examining the cross-cultural sojourn experience since WWII centers on assisting sojourners, international educators, government and business personnel in adjusting to, and becoming more competent living in cultures foreign to their own (Althen, 1994; Kim; 2001; Ward et al., 2001). Research in the area of cross-cultural learning and adaptation has focused on personality traits of successful sojourners, environmental factors that cause stress, and various coping and learning strategies sojourners use to adapt to foreign cultures (Ward et al., 2001). The underlying assumption is that by identifying the most important variables related to stressful and/or successful intercultural experiences, as well as affective, cognitive, behavioral abilities needed for adapting more effectively to a foreign culture, researchers can better predict and control for cross-cultural adjustment (Ward et al., 2001).

There are two dominant scholarly research approaches to cross-cultural learning and adjustment, "the problem approach and the learning/growth approaches" (Kim, 2001, p. 17). The problem approaches focus on cross-cultural adaptation with "culture shock"[5] and "reverse culture shock"[6] as the central organizing concepts, and

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[5] The term "culture shock" is attributed to Kalvero Oberg (1954, 1958, 1960), an anthropologist who used it to describe the "occupational disease of people who have been transplanted abroad" (Hess, 1997, p. 90) during a presentation to the Women's Club of Rio de Janeiro August 3, 1954. A few years later Oberg (1960) defined culture shock more systematically below as a common pattern of behavioral responses that sojourners experience entering a foreign culture,

> precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues are the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life...Some of the symptoms of culture shock are: excessive washing of

studies on cross-cultural adaptation as an intercultural learning process of personal growth and development, of which culture shock is a separate component (Kim, 2001).[7] Problem or "recuperation" approaches to cross-cultural adjustment tend to view culture shock as a disease or temporary ailment related to the individual personality of the sojourner and his/her contact with unfamiliar social and physical aspects of the new cultural environment (Anderson, 1994, p. 293). These approaches focus on identifying the general symptoms associated with culture shock in order to develop appropriate treatments to "inoculate" (Paige, 1993, p. 4) sojourners so that they can develop immunity to adjustment problems associated with culture shock (Kim, 2001;Ward et al., 2001).

The other major approaches to cross-cultural adaptation emphasize the coping and learning strategies that sojourners use to respond more actively to manage their

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the hands; concern over drinking water, food, dishes, and bedding; fear of physical contact with attendants or servants; the absent-minded, far away stare (sometimes called the 'tropical stare); a feeling of helplessness and a desire for dependence on long term residents of one's own nationality; fits of anger over delays and other minor frustrations; delay and outright refusal to learn the language of the host country; excessive fear of being cheated, robbed, or injured; great concern over minor pains and eruptions of the skin; and finally, that terrible longing to be back home, to be able to have a good cup of coffee and a piece of apple pie, to walk into that corner drug store, to visit one's relatives, and in general, to talk to people who really make sense (p. 176).

Intercultural learning theorists initially described the sojourners' culture shock experience in terms of chronological phases or stages of adjustment characterized by a "U-shaped curve" (Kim, 2001; Lysgaard, 1955; Oberg, 1960). Oberg's (1960) U-curve model depicts the cross-cultural adjustment process of culture shock occurring in four phases or stages: The honeymoon phase is an up-swing where the sojourner feels excitement upon arrival in the new culture. The disillusionment phase is the next stage where the sojourner descends into feelings of frustration in trying to deal with the stress of culture shock. The coping and recovery stage is when individuals gradually begin to try out new patterns of communication and behavior and make an effort to climb out of their disillusionment in order to adjust to the new climate and the final stage is the actual adaptation to culture shock. The assumption is that the sojourner reaches cultural balance or equilibrium, is cured of culture shock and has in essence become bicultural the sojourner feels a sense of ease and is able to function and communicate effectively within in the new culture (Kim, 2001; Ward et al., 2001).

[6] Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) extended the U-curve model by describing the process of adaptation as a "W-curve" or "double U-curve." The "W-curve" includes both culture shock and the parallel process of re-entry adjustment or reverse culture shock which describes a sojourner's experience returning home after living in another country (Austin, 1983; 1986; Martin, 1993; Ward et al., 2001).

[7] I will use the terms 'intercultural learning' and cross-cultural learning interchangeably throughout this study.

adjustment to an unfamiliar environment (Anderson, 1994; Kim, 2001). The learning

and growth approaches examine both the stress-causing *and* growth-inducing aspects

of cross-cultural adaptation and regard culture shock as one, albeit important, factor of

an overall process of acculturation (Anderson, 1994; Kim, 2001; Ward et al., 2001).

The major purpose then of most research on cross-cultural learning and adjustment is

to develop a set of predictors for successful adaptation to a foreign culture with the

ultimate goal of assisting sojourners through cross-cultural orientation and training

programs to develop "intercultural competence" (Kim, 1991, 2001; Taylor, 1994a;

Ward, et al., 2001).[8] Most theorists, however, seem to agree that, despite the unique

ways sojourner's react to a new culture, it entails some process of adjustment and

adaptation and that culture shock plays a major role in that process (Anderson, 1994;

Kim, 2001; Paige, 1993; Ward et al., 2001).[9]

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[8] While there isn't a consensus on what constitutes "competence" in another culture, I think Ward, Bochner and Furnam (2001) and Kim, (2001) provide useful updated and comprehensive definitions for intercultural competence. Ward et al., (2001) define intercultural competence as *affective, cognitive and behavioral* responses that make up part of a larger acculturation process in which a sojourner undergoes "psychological adjustment" and "sociocultural adaptation" (pp. 42-43). Their model departs from culture shock or problem approaches to cross-cultural adaptation by integrating the stress and coping theories and culture learning perspectives of the acculturation process (p. 43). The process of acculturation is defined as psychological adjustment which has to do with affective reactions in actively coping with the stresses adjusting to a new culture and sociocultural adaptation, which has to do with learning social skills to communicate, interact and function more effectively with the host culture (p. 43). Kim (2001) describes intercultural competence in terms developing social and communication capacities as the most effective way to adapt to a new and unfamiliar cultural milieu. For Kim, (2001) the development of social and communicative competence entails three main facets: greater functional fitness, enhanced psychological health and the transformation of one's existing cultural identity to an expanded "intercultural identity" (p. 61). I describe in greater detail the three facets of Kim's (2001) theory of intercultural competence later on in this section of the literature review.

[9] In her extensive review of research cross-cultural adaptation, Kim (2001) identifies both problem and learning /growth approaches and also highlights "macro" and "micro" approaches to cross-cultural adaptation. Macro approaches to the study of cross-cultural adaptation emerged in the field of Anthropology in the early part of the 20th century to examine the effects of "acculturation" process particularly the cultural changes that occur within immigrant groups adjusting to contact with other cultures. Kim (2001) also points to macro level analysis of cross-cultural adaptation in the field of sociology in terms of adjustment problems related to cultural 'stratification' that is, the hierarchical classification of the members of society based on the unequal distribution of resources, power and prestige" (p. 13). Kim (2001) points out that "Like anthropologists, sociologists generally have treated individuals as abstract entities forming social categories, classes, or strata and have focused on such adaptation phenomena as 'assimilation' and 'marginality' of immigrants and racial hybrids (p. 13). Anthropological and sociological studies undertaken at the macro-level have tended to examine

Intercultural Learning Theory: Where's the Transformation?

Learning that stems from culture shock can lead to significant personal change, deep self-awareness and profound and mystical personal transformation- a process that has been described "as a 'crack in the 'cosmic egg' of the sojourner" (Shames, 1997, p. 135). Paige's (1993) statement below highlights the contradictions inherent in both the potentially transformative and problematic impact that cross-cultural experiences can have on individual self-awareness:

> it takes a jarring life transition, such as an intense intercultural experience to force self-reflectiveness and self-awareness. Such confrontations with the self can be challenging and painful. As learners realize that their cultural reality may not be central to the perceptions of culturally different others and is definitely not seem as superior, they will begin to question their own assumptions. As learning activities begin to test the learners' flexibility, openness, tolerance, and other qualities, they may come to view themselves differently and not necessarily in previously naïve or positive terms. They may, in fact, learn things about themselves they would rather not know. It behooves intercultural educators to create a climate that encourages self-discovery and to inoculate learners against the inevitable stresses of self-awareness. (p. 17)

While there is the general recognition that culture shock produces stress that is sometimes emotionally painful, there is also the knowledge that in some cases the cognitive dissonance manifested in the concept of culture shock might lead to profound transformational learning. The cross-cultural learning theorists described

adaptation of structural problems associated with the adjustment of immigrant groups and minority populations within or in contact with another, dominant cultural group.

Studies conducted at the micro-level focus on individuals, on the other hand, "have dealt primarily with the intra and interpersonal experiences of newcomers in unfamiliar environments (p. 15). Cross-cultural adaptation studies at the micro-level analysis, according to Kim (2001), fall in the fields of social psychology and communication, and tend to look at the cross-cultural adjustment experience of individuals living in another culture on a permanent or temporary basis (p. 15). These studies also emphasize the individual psychological effects of acculturation, assimilation and marginality on a variety of sojourners including refugees, immigrants, missionaries, college students, scholars, Peace Corps volunteers, military and government personnel (Kim, 2001). Problem and learning/ growth research approaches focusing on the process of cross-cultural adaptation fall within the broader macro and micro-levels of research (Kim, 2001). Kim's (2001) model seeks to combines micro- and micro-levels of analyses and build on problem/learning growth approaches as an "integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation" (p. 26)

below expand on "culture shock" approaches by elaborating cognitive, developmental stage theories for understanding and explaining the cross-cultural learning and adaptations. Their theories also lend insight to the process of transformation in intercultural learning.

Adler theorized that "culture shock can be thought of as significant learning experience that leads to a high degree of self awareness and personal development"(Adler, 1987, p. 28). Adler further describes in vague terms the transformative potential of cross-cultural learning by, "aside from the obvious broadening of horizons that takes place, individuals returning from a period of stay in another culture often state or imply that the experiences were something akin to a personal religious experience in profoundness, sublimeness and personal significance" (p. 30).

Identity development is at the heart of Adler's conception of intercultural learning. Cross-cultural adaptation for Adler (1975, 1987) is a series of developmental transitions of self and cultural awareness. Contact, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy and independence describe the five stages of personal identity development as a result of experiencing culture shock (Adler, 1975). Adler implies that culture learning can be a powerful transformative process by stating that "culture shock can be a shattering experience, in can also be a source of reintegration of personality" (1987, p. 33). Adler (1977) claims that "multiculturalism" (a condition of independence) is the highest stage of an individual's identity development and also the most important aspect of learning from the cross-cultural experience. According to Dinges (1983), Adler's notion of a multicultural person can "make total shifts in psychocultural and orientation and may reformulate in whole or part important aspects of his daily life, such as religion, nationality and occupation. At it's best the multicultural identity is described as a fluid, dynamic movement of the self, an ability to move in and out of

contexts, and an ability to maintain some coherence through a variety of situations" (p. 180).

Adler's (1977, 1987) description of "multicultural man" envisioned the development of a multicultural person who could serve society as an effective cultural mediator between different cultures, someone who could envision alternative and innovative ways of thinking, feeling and acting in the world (Shames, 1997). However, the constant dynamic shifting sense of self that makes multicultural man so creative and successful in adapting to diverse cultural contexts, also causes him to be highly susceptible to self-disintegration (Shames, 1997).

While recognizing that culture shock can be a negative experience for sojourners, Adler's (1987) developmental theory of cross-cultural learning emphasizes the positive aspects and the potential for personal growth and identity transformation that can occur as a result of the process of cross-cultural adjustment. However, Adler fails to explain the specific learning processes that explain how sojourners transform their identities into multicultural self-hood. Adler (1987) explains, "for those individuals who have had successful experiences abroad, culture shock process has served as a catalyst and a stimulant to deeply personal understandings about self and culture. Although the specific dynamics of the culture shock process are not completely understood, it is evident that for some individuals the process has many positive consequences" (p. 34).

Janet Bennett's work (1993a) on "cultural marginality" describes a number of "multicultural" Americans who for a variety of reasons, "immigration, sojourning, marriage, adoption, or birth are actively carrying the frame of reference of two or more cultures" (1993a, p. 110). Bennett (1993a) claims that because these multicultural and bi-cultural individuals have identities that are not necessarily associated with any single cultural viewpoint or value system, they tend to exist on the margins of culture.

In describing some of the issues related to the "marginal status" of sojourners and people who have developed multicultural identities, Bennett differentiates what she terms "constructive marginality" and "encapsulated marginality" (1993a). She uses the term "encapsulated marginality" to characterize individuals who are in a problematic and dysfunctional situation of being stuck between "conflicting cultural loyalties and unable to construct a unified identity" (Bennett, 1993a, p.113). "Constructive marginals," on the other hand, have developed a more functional level of epistemological understanding that all knowledge "is constructed and that what they will ultimately value and believe is what they choose" (Bennett, 1993a, p. 128). Bennett describes the different levels of cognitive development between encapsulated and constructive marginals:

While encapsulated marginals practice boundary expansion and contraction, constructive marginals are mastering commitments and boundary setting. Constructive marginals tend to avoid getting lost in every new cultural frame of reference that presents itself. While being able to understand the other frame, constructives do not re-invent their frames on a weekly basis. (1993, p. 130) In contrast to intercultural educators who see sojourner "marginality" as a form of psychological regression, Bennett (1993) advocates a progressive approach to "marginal" identity development and sees both encapsulated and constructive marginality as part of cognitive developmental continuum. Shames (1997) summarizes Bennett's (1993a) perspective on the nature of the distinction between sojourners who have developed constructive and encapsulated marginal identities by concluding, "the encapsulated marginal is one who is never at home in the world, while the constructive marginal is never *not* at home. Having transcended culture shock, the homeless mind becomes the global mind" (p. 140, emphasis in original).

Milton Bennett's (1986, 1993b) developmental model of intercultural sensitivity suggests that cross-cultural learning can transform normally ethnocentric

individuals into becoming more tolerant of cultural difference. Transformation along Bennett's cross-cultural continuum means that individuals develop increased sensitivity to or greater tolerance for cultural difference. He characterizes intercultural learning as a movement along six possible stages from ethnocentrism, the three lowest levels of intercultural sensitivity, to ethnorelativism, the three highest stages of intercultural sensitivity. Bennett's (1993) developmental model for intercultural sensitivity consists of the following six stages: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation and integration.

Ethnorelativism constitutes a major cognitive transformative shift in the way individuals experience, perceive and give meaning to cultural difference and in the way they view themselves (Bennett, 1993b). In ethnorelativistic stages, individuals accept cultural difference rather than feel threatened by it. They see cultural difference as inevitable (Bennett, 1993b, p. 46). Examples of acceptance include the recognition that language, communication styles, rituals and behaviors are different and the respect given these differences. Individuals also tend to see values and assumptions not as objects that we have but as processes of assuming and valuing that are related to how we filter and construct them through our cultural lens. In this stage, individuals begin to understand values, assumptions and behaviors as dynamic, and changing according to the specific cultural context.

In Bennett's (1993b) model of intercultural learning *integration* represents the highest stage of intercultural development and parallels the level of intercultural competence represented in Adler's (1977) highest stage of "independence" (p. 59). While most individuals associate with one culture, there are pluralistic, multicultural individuals who have "lost or discarded" their "primary cultural affiliation" as a result of an extended stay in another culture (1993b, p. 60). Culturally pluralistic individuals, according to Bennett (1993b), exist in a state of being where "multiple internalized frames of reference clash with one another and create what might be

described as *internal culture shock*. The subsequent disintegration of identity leads

toward *cultural marginality* – existence on the periphery of two or more cultures" (p.

60, emphasis in the original). Similar to Janet Bennett's (1993a) analysis above,

Milton Bennett (1993b) argues that individuals who have reached the pluralistic stage

of intercultural sensitivity are also marginals: "outside all cultural frames of reference

by virtue of their ability to consciously raise any assumption to a meta-level...there is

no natural cultural identity for the marginal person. There are no unquestioned

assumptions, no intrinsically absolute right behaviors, nor any necessary reference

group. And it is certainly true that many marginal people experience great discomfort

and dysfunction as a result of their status" (p. 63).

Bennett (1993b) argues that marginality faced by sojourners can be

constructive. He contends that educators can help learners to break out of the

"encapsulated" marginal status and adds that it "may be as simple as labeling the stage

as both marginal and constructive" (pp. 64-65) so that people can become self-

conscious or meta-aware of their condition. Bennett concludes in summarizing the

following view of "constructive marginality" which he considers the highest form of

ethnorelativism during the integration level of his developmental model of

intercultural sensitivity:

> The integration stage describes the attempt to integrate disparate aspects of
> one's new identity into a new whole while remaining culturally marginal. The
> goal of this new definition of identity is not to reaffiliate with one culture, nor
> is it simply to reestablish comfort with a multiplicity of worldviews. Rather,
> the integrated person understands that his or her identity emerges from the act
> of defining identity itself. This self-reflective loop shows identity to be one act
> of constructing reality, similar to other acts that together yield concepts and
> cultures. By being conscious of this dynamic process, people can function in
> relationship to cultures while staying outside the constraints of any particular
> one. (p. 60)

Although Bennett's cognitive developmental model theoretically presents a developmental continuum of increasing cultural sensitivity, it also suggests, that in spite of sojourners culturally marginal existence, they can achieve a superior state integrative existence by choosing appropriate adaptation strategies "as a constant creator of one's own reality" (p. 64). His solution for sojourners who find themselves experiencing the negative side of the marginal ethnorelative equation is to develop increasingly sophisticated capacities for "self-reflectivity" for "world view hopping" so to speak.

Sparrow (2000) conducted a study of multicultural students participating in a course on cultural identity, and critiques a number of assumptions implicit in models presented by Adler (1977), J. Bennett (1993a) and M. Bennett (1993b) for their epistemologically narrow constructivist views of the self. Based on interviews and an analysis of papers written by twenty multicultural men, Sparrow's (2000) empirical study suggests an alternative social constructionist view of the development of multicultural identity. While the constructive epistemological stance on culture learning privileges cognitive self-awareness and assumes that multicultural people can exist outside the boundaries of cultural frames of reference, Sparrow's (2000) social constructionist approach argues that intercultural constructivists falsely assume that is feasible to remove one's identity from the confines of the socially and culturally constructed realities (Sparrow, 2000). Sparrow (2000) contends that intercultural theories of a constructivist bent assume the existence of a unified, self, capable of acting rationally and autonomously, cognitively free from social constraints while largely ignoring that identity development as a process that is intimately interconnected and structured by social, cultural, economic, political and historical forces. Based on the experience of the "multicultural" participants in her study, her findings refute the constructivist position that multicultural or bi-cultural individuals, particularly those who are members of oppressed or minority groups, are truly free to

act upon their cultural values, let alone shift back and forth among different cultural frames of reference (Sparrow, 2000).

Kim's (2001) provides a comprehensive view of intercultural learning and adaptation and offers a theory of intercultural transformation as communication competence and cross-cultural adaptation. Kim's (2001) offers an expanded conception of intercultural transformation that integrates theories of intercultural adaptation and learning into a comprehensive theory of intercultural competence.

Kim (2001) theorizes the sojourner's transformational experience with cross-cultural adaptation and learning as an ongoing "cyclical process of stress, adaptation and growth" (p. 57). Kim (2001) describes the transformational process of cross-cultural adaptation in the following way, "strangers respond to each stressful experience by 'drawing back' which in turn activates adaptive energy to help them reorganize themselves and 'leap forward' (p. 57). She adds, "the adaptive journey follows a pattern that juxtaposes novelty and confirmation, attachment and detachment, progression and regression, integration and disintegration, construction and destruction. The process is continuous as long as there are new environmental challenges" (2001, p. 57). By emphasizing that the process of adapting to another culture occurs through the dynamic tension of problematic and growth inducing experiences, Kim's theory (2001) moves toward reconciling the culture/shock and learning/growth approaches described above.

Kim's (2001) stress-adaptation-growth model conceptualizes sojourners' cross-cultural adaptation to a new environment as an "intercultural transformation process" characterized as a "forward and upward psychic movement toward greater adaptation and growth" (p. 57). Kim's theoretical model describes the process of intercultural transformation is predicated on three assumptions: (1) Humans have an innate self-organizing drive and a capacity to adapt to environmental challenges, (2) adaptation of an individual to a given cultural environment occurs in and through

communication, and (3) adaptation is a complex and dynamic process that brings about a qualitative transformation in the individual (pp. 35-37). Kim (2001) contends that "communication lies at the heart of cross-cultural adaptation...both the quantity and quality of strangers' communication activities in a new environment are crucial to the success of their adaptation" (p. 72).

There are four main elements to Kim's (2001) integrative theory of intercultural transformation: personal and social communication competence, host environmental conformity and receptivity, the sojourner's adaptive predisposition, and intercultural transformation (pp. 71-94). Intercultural transformation, the last and most important element, represents a sojourners successful adaptation to another culture through the integration of the other three elements.

Intercultural transformation consists of three facets; "*functional fitness* in carrying out daily transactions, improved *psychological health* in dealing with the environment, and a movement from the original cultural identity to a broader, '*intercultural' identity*" (p. 61, emphasis added). The first three components of Kim's theoretical model (i.e., personal and social communication competence, host environmental receptivity and conformity, and the sojourner's adaptive predisposition) determine the extent to which sojourners successfully adapt to another in terms of enhancing functional fitness and psychological health and in developing an intercultural identity. The successful integration of all four components leads to what Kim labels "intercultural personhood" (p. 194). Kim describes intercultural personhood opaquely as the "highest degree of internal harmony" and "psychic evolution" (p. 195).

In terms of the components that make up Kim's (2001) model for intercultural transformation, host communication competence refers to the sojourner's affective, cognitive and behavioral ability to appropriately engage in different types of personal, interpersonal and mass communication activities within the host culture (p. 72). The

host environment influences the sojourner's adaptation process in terms of host receptivity and conformity and "serves as the cultural and sociopolitical context for their communication activities" (p. 78). Host environmental receptivity refers to the extent of the host culture's openness to, acceptance of and support for sojourner's participation and interaction in social activities and communication networks (p. 79). Host environmental conformity pressure characterizes the degree to which the host culture tolerates sojourner's non-conformity to social customs and norms. According to Kim, (2001) cultures that are more open and accepting as well as less authoritarian and more heterogeneous tend to be more tolerant of deviations from social norms and hence, increase the likelihood for successful adaptation (p. 80). A Sojourner's adaptive predisposition refers to the extent to which a sojourner's background differs from the host culture or ethnic proximity, has an adaptive personality, and is ready for change (Kim, 2001, pp. 82-85). Having an adaptive predisposition increases the likelihood for fostering communication in the host culture and hence, successful adaptation. Intercultural transformation results from the interaction of the dimensions as sojourners "undergo internal changes toward greater functional fitness and psychological health in relation to the host environment and toward the development of intercultural identity" (p. 86).

Taylor (1993, 1994a, 1994b)) infers from learning/growth approaches and in particular, Kim's theory, "that intercultural competency is a transformative process whereby the stranger develops an adaptive capacity, altering his or her perspective to effectively understand and accommodate the demands of the host culture" (p. 156). Taylor adds, " it seems quite apparent from this brief review of the various conceptual frameworks that all of these approaches would define a successful intercultural experience, intercultural competency, as being inclusive of a higher state of consciousness and a more discriminating world view" (1993, p. 36). Taylor's (1993) review of theories of intercultural competency suggests that all of these theories

implicitly describe learning processes that parallel Mezirow's adult learning theory of

perspective transformation. Indeed, Kim (2001) draws a similar conclusion by

implying that transformational learning processes occur as stress-adaptation-growth in

the description below:

> The stress-adaptation-growth model further resonates with Mezirow's (1984, 1991) notion of 'transformation learning' of adults…Once strangers enter a new culture, the cross-cultural adaptation process is set in full motion. The stranger's habitual patterns of cognitive, affective and behavioral responses undergo adaptive transformations. Through the processes of deculturation and acculturation, some of the old cultural habits are replaced by new ones…In this transformation process, large and sudden adaptive changes are most likely to occur during the initial phase of exposure to new culture. Such drastic changes are themselves indicative of the severity of adaptive difficulties and disruption, as has been demonstrated in culture-shock studies…Over a prolonged period, however, as strangers go through a progression of internal change, the fluctuations of stress and adaptation are likely to become less severe, leading to an overall 'calming' of strangers internal condition (pp. 58-59)

However, apart from this brief citation in her most recent work, Kim (2001)

still falls short of examining further the theoretical connection of adult

transformational learning theory to intercultural learning as well as the learning

processes that are occurring. Indeed, Taylor (1994a) found from his earlier review of

Kim's theory of communicative competence and scholarly literature on intercultural

adaptation and learning that "intercultural identity and transformation research of the

learning growth approach have all offered insights into the process of intercultural

competency, but fall short in two significant areas. First, it has not been linked to adult

learning theory and research; secondly, when the learning concept itself has been used,

the intricacies of the learning process are hardly explored" (p. 157). Hence, models

described by Adler (1987), J. Bennett (1993a), M. Bennett (1993b) and Kim (2001)

provide very little insight on the processes of transformational learning in cross-

cultural contexts. Rather, each tends to describe abstract theoretical models of culture

learning as developmental stages and higher states of multicultural awareness,

sensitivity and consciousness that at times reach mystical and transcendent proportions (Taylor, 1993; Jacobson, 1996).

Taylor (1993, 1994a, 1994b) suggests that Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation offers a valid conceptual framework for explaining the process of cross-cultural learning and adaptation in terms of developing intercultural competence along three transformational learning dimensions: "1) the precondition for change; 2) the learning process and; 3) the outcome" (1994b, p. 395). The precondition for change in intercultural learning is culture shock and parallels Mezirow's disorienting dilemma as a reaction to the cognitive dissonance produced when sojourners come into contact with new and unfamiliar aspects of the host culture (Taylor, 1993; 1994b). Also, both culture shock and disorienting dilemmas act as "catalysts for change" as important preconditions for learning and growth, and in some cases intercultural or perspective transformation (Taylor, 1994b).

According to Taylor, (1994a), the process dimension link means that "both perspective and intercultural transformation offer hierarchical stage models of the transformation process during the learning experience, whereby people evolve from lower to higher levels of competence" (p. 159). For Taylor (1994a), the outcome of intercultural competence "reflects a change in world view" or in Mezirow's terms, "toward a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable and integrated world view" (p. 159).

Empirical Studies: Where's the Transformation in Intercultural Learning?

The following section will also briefly review empirical studies that have been conducted in the area of intercultural learning as they relate to the process of transformational learning in specific program contexts. I will also highlight studies that help expand on Mezirow's model for transformational learning.

Taylor's (1993) was the first study conducted to examine transformational learning theory as a possible explanatory framework for understanding the learning

process of intercultural competence. To gain an understanding of how individuals experience the process of intercultural competence, Taylor interviewed 12 US adults, (four women, eight men, three African Americans), who had lived overseas in countries in Western Europe, Africa, South America and Asia for over two years, had spoken the language of the host culture, had reported a positive intercultural experience, and had described themselves as interculturally competent (1993). Based on an analysis of the twelve interviews, Taylor (1993) identified a patterned transformational process of becoming interculturally competent entailing five components "setting the stage, cultural disequilibrium, cognitive orientations (non-reflective and reflective orientations), behavioral learning strategies, and evolving intercultural identity" (1993, p. 129). Taylor describes "setting the stage" as what the participant brings to each new intercultural experience that contributes to the context of "learning readiness." Learning readiness has to do with the motivations behind living in another country. Taylor found that personal goals, former critical events and previous intercultural training influenced their decision to participate in programs abroad and the process of transformational learning throughout the duration of their field placement (Taylor, 1993). Cultural disequilibrium resembles culture shock and refers to "the participant's experience of incongruency during integration in the host culture" (Taylor, 1994a, p. 137). Taylor's study found that cultural disequilibrium for participants was stressful, emotional, and periodic. He also found that cultural disequilibrium was "intensified by gender, marital status and race" and "muted by previous experiences of marginality, host language competency and by experience in the host culture" (p. 129). Importantly, Taylor (1993) found that emotions drove the process of learning in cultural disequilibrium that the initial intensity of disequlibrium decreased over time as participants became competent in the host culture.

Taylor (1993) describes cognitive orientation as non-reflective and reflective response to cultural disequilibrium. Non-reflective orientation "is where some of the

participants approached their cultural dissonance with little questioning of the validity of presuppositions" and reflective orientation had to do with "deep critical thought by identifying and questioning their presuppositions and assumptions from their primary culture" (Taylor, 1993, p. 152). Taylor (1993) found that participant's engaged in behavioral learning strategies including observation, participation and making friendships "in an effort to balance their cultural disequlibrium" (p. 159). Taylor also found that behavioral learning strategies gave participants "access to information about the culture, provided them more control over their daily life, and provided them support and insight during difficult time" (p. 170).

Finally, Taylor (1994a) describes "evolving intercultural identity" as representative of a change in values, an increase in self confidence and a change in world view (p. 129). Intercultural identity is evolving "because there is always potential for greater competency with each new intercultural experience" (Taylor, 1993, p. 170). Taylor found that perspective transformation meant "greater inclusiveness of other points of view, contextual relativism, and recognizing the commonality of humankind" (p. 173).

Taylor's (1993) research adds important insight into the process of learning in a cross-cultural settings particularly in identifying the elements of the learning intercultural competence and it was the first empirical study to examine the relationship between Mezirow's transformational learning theory and intercultural learning and adaptation. He found that Mezirow's theory partially explained the learning process of becoming interculturally competent (Taylor, 1993, 1994b). He adds insight to the role of personal context in intercultural learning although he does not consider how structural, historical and programmatic elements of the context shape the intercultural learning process. He also does not differentiate among the types of culture shock and critical incidents that the participants in his study experience report as having a catalytic effect on their learning. He also highlights the important role of

emotions and non-reflective processes that influence the process of intercultural learning which points to the need for further research in those areas.

While Taylor's study contributes knowledge toward developing cross-cultural transformational learning theory, there are a number of shortcomings in his study that are pertinent to this study. First, on a methodological level, Taylor only chose participants who had self-reported a positive cross-cultural learning experience and intercultural competence. He has no way of corroborating what intercultural competence is or isn't without the benefit of participant observation and can only rely on relatively brief interview data to gain phenomenological insight into the study participant's deeply held values, feeling and perspectives (Jacobson, 1996).

Second, he assumes that the process of becoming intercultural competent is indicative of the process of perspective transformation. Having a predetermined, and possibly false conception of perspective transformation seems antithetical to the phenomenological underpinnings of the study. Equating the development of intercultural competence, which means adapting to the needs and demands of the immediate cross-cultural context, with transformational learning limits his study to an exploration of how participants instrumentally learn to become more competent in "doing as the Romans do." By assuming that the process of perspective transformation is reflective of intercultural competence, Taylor's study is more apt to find that perspective transformation means functioning more effectively in the host culture without necessarily questioning the status quo of the host culture. Taylor, perhaps unwittingly, takes on an instrumental view of competence as learning how to better function within the status quo and this seems to contradict the basic critical thrust and premises underlying Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation.

Third, by limiting his conception of perspective transformation to intercultural competence, Taylor only focuses on how participants experience the process of perspective transformation during their stay in the host culture. Taylor's study fails to

account for the ongoing transformational learning process upon re-entry, which, according to studies on reverse culture shock, may produce more profound dissonance and lead to more significant changes in participant's perspectives. It may be the case that the most significant learning occurred when the participants in his study returned home. As a result, Taylor's study neglects an important part of the process of transformational learning in intercultural learning and presents only a partial and possibly inaccurate view of the transformational learning process. The transformational learning process upon returning to the home culture may not be reflective of becoming more competent it might reflect incompetence, resistance and struggle. We can only speculate then on potential long-term transformative impact of the intercultural experience for the participants in Taylor's (1994a) study.

Lyon (2002) provides an excellent review of eight empirical studies (Harper, 1994; Holt, 1994; Kennedy, 1994; Lee, 1997; Lyon, 2001; Taylor, 1993; Temple, 1999; Whalley, 1995) that "combine and explore both transformational learning theory and cross-cultural adaptation" (p. 238). She found that these studies shared common elements in their findings including: the identification of "disorienting dilemmas" as the catalyst for perspective transformation in culture learning, engagement in both reflective and non-reflective learning processes, the existence of different types of perspective transformation and the role of relationships for helping foster transformative learning. There were also other patterns that emerged. Methodologically almost all of the studies relied on study participants self-reports through semi-structured interviews, except Harper (1994) who conducted a case study with one person and Whalley (1995) who examined students' culture journals (Lyon, p. 239). None of the studies were longitudinal so that for the most part "re-entry" or "reverse culture shock" were not examined as part of the transformational learning process. Also, none of the studies explored in depth the role of the relationship among programmatic, structural and historical context in shaping the learning process.

Rather, individual sojourners were interviewed apart from the myriad ways that social context (except perhaps biographical contextual factors including gender, prior travel and so on) influences intercultural learning. As a result, there is no substantial empirical insight on how the program purpose, historical factors and structural forces that interact across unequal relations of power (i.e., nationality, class, gender, race) converged to affect the learning process. Along the same lines, because all of the studies assumed a constructivist epistemological position, they do not incorporate into their studies an examination that responds to the theoretical critiques described earlier regarding the role of context, power, social action and affect in transformational learning. Consequently, since all of the studies mentioned did not explore unresolved theoretical issues described earlier particularly in terms of the critical promise of Mezirow's original conception of transformational learning theory, the internal, psychological and rational structure of his theory remains largely the same.

Evans, Evans and Kennedy's (1987) book *Pedagogy of the Non-Poor* describes eight different case studies of transformative education. Two chapters in particular warrant mention in this literature review. Robert Evans chapter called "Education for Emancipation: Movement Towards Transformation" suggests a vision, criteria, dynamics and components for transformation education that emerged as common elements that he distilled from an analysis of the eight models presented in the book. The common transformative vision of all the models is aimed at reconstructing a new map of reality that supports a "more just, sustainable and peaceful world community" through the repositioning of the non-poor in solidarity with the poor and with God (p. 258). Repositioning occurs at three fundamental levels of change in terms of transformation – *reduction of the resistance to change*, *"letting go"* or *"relinquishment"* and *participation* in changing unjust structures" (p. 260). Evans proposes three criteria for transformation which include:

(1) Sufficiency which means education directed at "redistribution and more equitable sharing of the worlds resources" on a personal, institutional and systemic level

(2) Solidarity which promotes a movement away form self-interest toward greater advocacy on behalf of the poor at personal, institutional and systemic domains

(3) Emancipation from the dominant controlling ideology of the middle class (pp. 261-263).

Evans (1987) suggests that each of the eight cases of transformative education follow a similar pattern of transformation which includes: facing the problem or recognizing the plight of the poor, maintaining the restlessness or feeling uncomfortable with that recognition, sustaining a vision for transforming the conditions of the poor, countering controlling ideology in terms of challenging the status quo and imagining alternatives, and reinventing power in taking action to overturn unjust structures (pp. 264-274).

Evans (1997) also describes the different components of the transformational learning process that each of the eight models share in common: An encounter with the poor, experiential immersion that challenges assumptions, openness to vulnerability; community of support and accountability, vision and values; cycle of critical socioeconomic analysis, commitment, involvement and leadership, and symbol, ritual and liturgy (p. 274). Evans' principles and criteria for transformation grounded in the eight descriptive case studies provide a useful point of departure for developing and evaluating transformative educational programs for the non-poor. However, they are primarily descriptive and are not based on empirical research. Further research examining his proposed principles for transformation education in cross-cultural settings would be particularly useful.

Evans and Hajek's (1987) chapter "Traveling for Transformation" describes a case study of the Plowshares Institute's Third World cross-cultural immersion model (p. 162). The traveling for transformation immersion model immerses US, non-poor,

participants in third world settings "through visits with ordinary people as well as with key political and religious leaders representing different approaches to a particular country's situations and problems" (p. 162). They add, "the model claims to provide experiences which lead participants to transform their previous, US-oriented views of the world by taking into account Third World perspectives on global relationships and problems" (p. 162). While no research findings were reported as part of the case study description, the authors suggest that preliminary research evaluating program participants' transformational learning "revealed that there was measurable and extensive attitudinal and behavioral change" that was directly attributed to the traveling seminar as a catalytic event (p. 162). One travel seminar participant reported, "impatient with my lack of direct involvement in issues of peace and justice, I moved from reading theological books on these topics to direct participation groups such as Amnesty International, Bread for the World, and a peace committee in my town. I also volunteer three days a week as a staff person for an organization focusing on issues of peace and justice. I still wrestle with the conflicts, but there is no doubt the seminar lived up to the warning that 'it may be hazardous to your lifestyle'" (p. 169). Unfortunately, Evans and Hajek's (1987) case study only provides very limited anecdotal evidence of transformational learning and there is no description or examination of how travel seminar participants experience the process of transformational learning.

Graybill's (1989) case study of the Cuernavaca Center for Intercultural Dialogue on Development (CCIDD) uses Mezirow's theory as part of a larger conceptual framework using other experiential learning theories (Kolb, Jarvis, and Freire) to evaluate the program organization, curriculum and its impact on U.S. adult students. Guided by liberation theology, CCIDD is an international social justice program that is committed to raising the critical consciousness and fostering behavioral change of program participants in terms of development problems facing

the poor in Latin America. As a transformative education program CCIDD exposes US adult students to poverty and the circumstances of the poor in the Third World through face to face encounters with the poor (p. 51). Graybill describes the educational experience of CCIDD as providing "(a) a cultural detachment from the geographic isolation, ideological captivity and structural influence of North American culture, (b) a stimulus of new vulnerability and adventure, (c) artificial short-term community whose attention can be concentrated, (d) an opportunity to structure direct contact and dialogue with the poor, and liberating elements of their struggle, and (e) a chance to bring to bear a wealth of powerful theory and techniques to bear on participant experience in program development. A travel model, in many respects, represents a compelling approach to conscienticize the non-poor" (pp. 51-2).

Based on surveys and interviews with program participants, participant observation on-site and document analysis, Graybill found that program participants are personally changed by the experience, continue to be actively involved in advocacy, political and social change activities related to issues in Central America and use the program experience to assess career options related to international development (pp. 281-284). While Graybill's study confirmed that dissonance and reflection were important elements influencing participants' attitudinal and behavioral change, one of the limitations of Graybill's study is that he did not focus on how participants experienced the process of transformation over time. Also, by evaluating CCIDD on three different program levels (i.e., organizational, curricular and participant), the study was overwhelmed by the data so that the actual evaluation results, particularly in terms of explaining how student experience learning processes, are not clearly presented.

Summary of intercultural learning literature. The theoretical models described by Adler (1975, 1977, 1987), J. Bennett (1993a), M. Bennett (1993b) and Kim (2001) above are useful in that they describe the learning and growth potential in culture

shock particularly in terms triggering an individual transformational process by which one's identity moves toward a culturally sensitive and multicultural consciousness. However, these approaches have been critiqued for not adequately providing empirical evidence for their theoretical claims, and for not describing the context and learning processes by which sojourners transform and/or become interculturally competent (Jacobson, 1996; Taylor, 1994). Cognitive developmental theories in intercultural learning have also been criticized for maintaining a naïve constructivist epistemology that neglects the social, political, economic and indeed, cultural forces that constrain and influence intercultural learning and identity development (Sparrow, 2000). Constructive developmental approaches to culture learning attempt to locate the transformative potential of culture learning, but they are misleading because they equate transformation to adaptation or the development of intercultural competence conceived as "constructive marginality," "multicultural person," and "intercultural personhood" (Adler, 1977, 1987; J. Bennett, 1993a; M. Bennett, 1993b; Kim, 2001). The process of cross-cultural adaptation may actually be antithetical to the process of transformation if transformation is conceived as resistance to cultural hegemony or a critique of society rather than adjustment to it.

Empirical studies (Evans, Evans and Kennedy, 1987; Graybill, 1989; Lyon, 2001, 2002; Taylor, 1993) that have attempted to evaluate transformational learning in intercultural learning add important insight to the elements of the learning process in adapting to another culture. However, because they are based on constructivist conceptual frameworks they have not advanced our understanding of how context, affect, and crossing cultural borders along unequal relations of power shape transformational learning processes. Because empirical studies continue to assume that intercultural transformation is an internal psychological process that goes on inside ones head, the ways in which structural forces and contextual factors shape the cross-cultural learning process remain invisible. As a result there is no sense of

resistance and struggle in the learning process as well as challenges that confront learners who disagree or who are oppressed by the dominant cultural discourse. Empirical studies end up equating transformation to effective communication and adaptation to another culture rather than a critique of culture.

Importantly, empirical studies (Lyon, 2001; 2002; Taylor, 1993) in intercultural learning also do not consider the kinds of learning processes that occur when one returns home from the sojourn. Re-entry learning processes may have an important effect on ongoing transformational learning. Furthermore, from a methodological standpoint, empirical studies for the most part (with the exception of Graybill, 1989) are based on participants self-reports in retrospect. Participant observation would contribute significantly to understanding and corroborating more substantially aspects of the process of transformation in intercultural learning. Divergent programmatic purposes may lead to different types of transformation. That is, the intercultural experience of a businessman stationed in another country to establish a company's product to increase their profit margin and locate cheap labor may experience culture shock and transformational learning very differently than the experience of refugee escaping persecution or prejudice both at home and abroad.

In my review of empirical studies focused on the transformational learning in intercultural learning I found that most were limited in their understanding of the long-term process of transformational learning. Moreover, while these studies shed light on transformational learning processes in cross-cultural settings, I was unable to locate empirical studies that examined the process of learning in international service-learning contexts; that is, in cross-cultural contexts where service was a major educational activity. What kinds of short and long-term processes of transformational learning occur when one combines service in an intercultural setting?

<u>Summary of Literature Review</u>.

Service-learning, intercultural learning and adult learning theories converge to provide an expanded conceptualization of transformational learning. Studies in the three areas above share in common a general definition of transformation as a significant learning outcome and process characterized by profound changes in one's assumptions, values, beliefs, perspectives or world-view as well as significant changes in personal and social behaviors. Each area also envisions implicitly or in some cases, explicitly, the possibility that transformational learning can be personally and socially emancipatory.

A review of service-learning theoretical literature (Delve et al., 1989; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kahne and Westhiemer, 1999; Rhoads, 1997) found that service-learning as transformation represents a learning process whereby one's perspective moves from charity to social justice. Intercultural learning theories view sojourners' transformation as the development of intercultural competency and intercultural personhood (Kim, 2001), a cognitive, developmental shift in intercultural sensitivity from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism (Bennett, 1993b), or transforming along various stages from monocultural identity to a more advanced multicultural identity (Adler, 1975, 1977, 1987). While learning for transformation is an important goal to achieve in each of these fields, there is very little empirical evidence that provides insight on the long-term nature of the transformational learning processes taking place as one transforms their identity and/or moves to a higher state of cultural or social consciousness.

Transformational learning theory has been used as a conceptual framework for empirical studies in service-learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kellogg, 1999; Rhoads, 1997). Empirical studies have measured students' perspective transformation as a short-term cognitive learning outcome rather than as a set of learning processes. These studies have found that on rare occasions service-learners' perspective transformation leads to an increased understanding of the structural forces that determine social

problems, a more active involvement in changing unjust social policies, and an altered view of the self as more caring. Empirical studies in intercultural learning (Graybill, 1989; Lyon, 2001; 2002; Taylor, 1993) have also used transformational learning as a useful theoretical framework for understanding cross-cultural learning processes. However, these studies have tended to ignore critical underpinnings of transformational learning and have continued to undertheorize the role of context, power and other forms of knowing. As a result, these studies have uncritically accepted transformation as intercultural competence, and have failed to explore the long-term and possible harmful effects of the intercultural learning experience upon re-entry.

Also, since there have been relatively few longitudinal studies looking at the process of transformation in service-learning and intercultural learning, there is very little empirical evidence to support the critical assumption that cognitive transformation leads to personal and/or social behavior change and/or action (Gibboney, 1996; Sparrow, 2000). In essence, the learning processes entailed in intercultural learning and service-learning, and the phenomenon of transformation in both are undertheorized and not well-understood.

A review of the adult learning literature found that transformational learning processes have undergone a more extensive and detailed empirical and theoretical evaluation than in the fields of service-learning and intercultural learning. Based on extensive reviews of theoretical critiques and empirical studies (Taylor, 1997, 1998, 2000) and also more recent scholarly research (Mezirow and Associates, 2000) focused on understanding transformational learning theory and practice, a number of educators have identified various learning processes associated with perspective transformation in diverse educational settings. Compared with the fields of intercultural and service-learning, in-depth study in adult transformational learning has advanced our theoretical and empirical understanding how transformational learning

works in practice (Mezirow and Associates, 2000; Taylor, 1998, 2000). It is also clear that there exist various alternative conceptualizations of transformational learning from the perspectives of adult learning theorists described above (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule, 1986; Belenky & Stanton; Brookfield, 1994; Clark & Wilson, 1991; Collard & Law, 1989; Finger & Asun, 2001; Hart, 1990, 1992, 1995; Newman, 1994a, 1994b; Taylor, 1998, 2000; Tisdell, 2000a, 2000b, 2001).

Drawing from adult learning theorists critiques of Mezirow's model of transformational learning, the role of context and power in shaping and influencing the form and process of learning takes on greater importance (Collard & Law, 1989; Hart, 1990). Adult learning theorists consistently contest Mezirow's notion that there exists a unified, autonomous adult learner that moves freely outside the influence of the social context (Clark & Wilson, 1991; Finger and Asun; 2001; Newman, 1994). They also question Mezirow's privileging of critical reflection to the neglect of affective and spiritual forms of learning and knowing as the most effective process for fostering transformational learning (Belenky and Stanton, 2000; Tisdell, 2001). Mezirow (1978, 1981) first proposed perspective transformation as a promising critical theory of adult learning over twenty years ago, yet these adult learning theorists contend that transformational learning theory still lacks a strong research base for substantiating theoretical claims regarding its liberatory potential (Brookfield, 2000a; Collard & Law, 1989; Finger & Asun, 2001; Hart, 1990; Newman, 1994a; Tisdell, 2001). They consistently argue that Mezirow's conception of transformational learning privileges rational over affective forms of learning, and undertheorizes the role of context, power and positionality (Cervero & Wilson, 2001; Tisdell, 2001). Thus, while claiming a critical epistemological bent, transformational learning based in psychologically-based humanistic learning traditions offers no explicit social vision from which practitioners can draw guidance for how to foster transformational learning that for both individual and social transformation (Cervero & Wilson, 2001; Finger & Asun, 2001).

The literature combining perspective transformation with service-learning and intercultural learning provided a better understanding of the form and process of transformation. However, there were very few empirical studies that provided an adequate explanation of how context, power and other ways of knowing shape the transformational learning processes that take place in service and culture-cultural learning settings (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kellogg, 1999; Lyon, 2002; Rhoads, 1997). Empirical research in these areas has not explored the critical promise of transformational learning, addressed theoretical critiques, nor advanced ho Mezirow's constructivist, humanistic conceptualization of personal transformation leads to social action. As a result we are largely stuck within Mezirow's transformational learning theory and reliving it.

Overall, this literature review suggests that the form of perspective transformation and the process of transformational learning remains, as Taylor (2000) suggests, contested, ambiguous and elusive. There is a need then for further research that builds on theoretical and empirical studies in order to expand Mezirow's transformational learning theory particularly in terms of reviving its critical promise and emancipatory potential.

An Expanded Conceptualization of Transformational Learning

This study builds on prior theoretical and empirical research in order to develop an expanded conceptualization of Mezirow's model of transformational learning. An expanded conceptualization of transformational learning provides the theoretical framework for this study by incorporating and exploring the relationship among context, critical reflection, other forms of knowing (i.e., affect, and spirituality) and the learning link between individual perspective transformation and social action. Empirical study based on an expanded conceptualization of transformational learning above contributes significantly to advancing our understanding of the forms and processes of transformational learning in the areas of adult learning, service-learning

and intercultural learning, and for the purpose of this study, international service-learning.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The fields of service-learning and intercultural learning converge in offering international service-learning as a potential educational settings for fostering transformational learning. Sojourners immersed in another culture often experience significant affective, cognitive and behavioral changes that are transformational (Adler, 1975; Bennett, 1993; Graybill, 1989; Hess, 1997; Taylor, 1994). Likewise, students who participate in well-integrated service-learning programs, in which they perform service work with distressed communities, often develop an altered, more caring sense of self (Kahne & Westheimer, 1999; Rhoads, 1997) and "a new set of lenses for seeing the world" (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 129).

The learning processes that occur in service-learning and intercultural learning mirror adult transformational learning. Becoming immersed in a foreign setting through international study adds a unique cross-cultural dimension to the learning process. The addition of service to the process of intercultural learning adds an explicit moral and political dimension to the transformational learning process in international service-learning. The purpose of this study is to describe how students experience the process of transformational learning as participants in the TC3-NICA international service-learning program.

Because of the emphasis of this research is on how experience and learning processes are constructed and given meanings by service-learning students in a social and cross-cultural setting, a qualitative, interpretivist-constructivist research methodology was considered the most appropriate research design for this study. Since the research problem emerged as a practical dilemma in a specific educational program setting and converged with gaps found in the scholarly literature, I chose a case study design as the most useful phenomenological strategy for exploring in-depth experientially-based meanings that students attribute to their experience. A case study

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approach was particularly effective in allowing me to provide a rich, thick and in-depth descriptions of a social context and cross-cultural setting (Patton, 1990). A case study approach also enabled me to examine the complex meanings students associate with the processes of transformational learning as participants in the TC3-NICA international service-learning program. The following section describes the various elements of the research process: the research design and strategies implemented, the methods used, and the criteria chosen for warranting the quality and goodness of the knowledge generated throughout this research process.

<u>Case Study Research Design</u>

A case study represents a research approach in which a researcher "explores a single entity or phenomenon ('the case') bounded by time and activity (a program, an event, process, institution, or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time" (Creswell, 1994, p. 12). A case study design is a useful research approach for gathering data that illustrates in great detail a unique or enigmatic phenomenon in a specific social context that is of particular interest to researchers, practitioners, policymakers and program staff (Patton, 1990) – in this case, transformational learning in international service-learning. Detailed case studies are particularly instrumental as a research approach for providing rich and in-depth contextual information on processes and outcomes of which there is little knowledge for program improvement or for enlightening a wider scholarly or policy-making audience (Patton, 1990). Case studies typically use a number of data gathering methods including participant observation, interviewing, life histories, and document analysis allowing researchers greater flexibility and access to knowledge and information in a given social setting. A case study that utilizes multiple methods rather than relying on one method is useful in terms of "validating and cross-checking" or "triangulating" emerging ideas, constructs

and interpretations and is more apt to increase the authenticity and trustworthiness of the results of the study (Patton, 1990, p. 244).

Stake (1995) sees the case as an "integrated system" (p. 4) and identifies the central epistemological question motivating case studies as "what can be learned from single case?" (2000, p. 436). Stake (1995, 2000) distinguishes among three distinct types of cases: intrinsic, instrumental and collective case studies. A researcher conducts an intrinsic case study if she "wants a better understanding of a particular case. Here, it is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases, or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because, in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest" (Stake, 2000, p. 437). The aim of the intrinsic case study is not in testing theory, but in gaining an understanding of the intrinsic elements of a specific individual, group, activity or program (Stake, 1995, 2000). A researcher undertakes an instrumental case study "if a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role and it facilitates our understanding of something else" (Stake, 2000, p. 437). A researcher who conducts an instrumental case study describes the context and activities of the case but only with regard to enhancing her understanding of a phenomenon of research interest. The instrumental case then "will serve only a supportive role, a background against which the actual research interests will play out" (Berg, 1998). Stake (2000) also indicates that because researchers have multiple interests general and specific to the research phenomenon and case at hand, "there is no line distinguishing intrinsic case study from instrumental; rather, a zone of combined purpose separates them" (p. 437). Lastly, a collective case study describes research undertaken in order to study a social phenomenon across multiple instrumental cases (Stake, 2000).

This case study is also instrumental because the central aim of this research is to gain an in-depth, holistic understanding of how TC3-NICA students experience the

process of transformational learning as participants in the TC3-NICA international service-learning program. As an instrumental case study, the TC3-NICA program provides the contextual background for supporting and advancing knowledge of the ways in which students experience transformational learning processes. However, there is some amount of intrinsic interest in the aims, interests and activities that make-up the TC3-NICA program itself, particularly as a setting that provides a unique climate and set of programmatic conditions that contribute to and/or hinder transformational learning processes.

Merriam (1998) defines a case study approach as "intense descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system" (p. 19). Merriam (1998, p. 27) suggests one strategy for determining whether a case has "boundedness" is to ask if there is a limit to the number of participants within the case who could be observed or interviewed. If the number were infinite, then it would not qualify as a case. The TC3-NICA program qualifies as a case given that there is a finite number of students that have participated during a set specific time period.

Merriam (1998) argues that researchers choose case studies over other approaches because they are "interested in insight, discovery and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing" and when "it is impossible to separate the phenomenon's variables from their context" (p. 29). Merriam (1998) contends that case study designs are particularly useful in terms of providing contextual interpretations, for understanding learning processes, and for illuminating unique or unusual aspects of a research phenomenon. The TC3-NICA program offers a unique context for understanding the phenomenon of transformational learning because of the unusual and atypical combination of service-learning immersion in an international setting. Since there are only a few international service-learning immersion programs that exist in higher education, this case study provides a richer, more holistic description of how students experience the transformational learning processes that occur during and

after participation in international service-learning program activities. Since the data collection process has entailed the use of multiple methods and techniques for over the course of the seven-year research project, this case study offers vivid and detailed description of how TC3-students experience the process of transformational learning.

Case study sample selection.   In general, sampling in qualitative research is non-random, non-probabilistic and purposeful "because the initial definition of the universe in more limited...and because social processes have a logic and a coherence that random sampling can reduce to uninterpretable sawdust" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27). Qualitative sampling procedures are not completely pre-determined and usually involve intentionally systematic and sequentially conceptual and contextually bound choices as fieldwork evolves (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Accordingly, qualitative sampling procedures that are purposive entail at least two intentional processes: setting boundaries, and creating a framework to "uncover, confirm, qualify the basic processes that undergird" the study (Miles & Huberman, p. 27).

There are two levels of sampling in case studies: "sample selection occurs first at the case level, followed by a sample selection within the case" (Merriam, 1998, p. 66). For both levels researchers need to follow either a set of criteria for identifying a case or choose from a variety of purposeful sampling strategies (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). When thinking about "within-case sampling" (Miles & Huberman, p. 29), researchers need to think about case selection not only in terms of the particular case and who to observe and interview, but also the "setting, actors, events and processes" within the case (p. 30). The purposive choice of a particular case means that the sample should "optimize understanding" and "maximize what we can learn" (Stake, 1995, p. 4) about the research interest or purpose. In this instrumental case study, given that the research purpose had to do with understanding how TC3-NICA students experience the process of transformational learning in service-learning, I selected the TC3-NICA program as a bounded system

that would advance my understanding of transformational learning through observation. Consistent with Merriam's (1998) two-tiered case-study sampling procedure, I also purposely selected a sample of TC3-NICA students within-the-case for gaining an in-depth understanding of how they perceived the process of transformational learning.

Patton (1990, pp. 182-183) delineates sixteen possible purposeful sampling strategies. He argues, "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in-depth. *Information-rich cases* are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term *purposeful* sampling" (Patton, 1990, p. 169; emphasis in original). This case study meets both criterion and intensity purposeful sampling strategies described by Patton (1990). As a credit-bearing service-learning program that immerses students in an international context and as a program that has an explicitly transformative service-learning pedagogy and social change orientation whose purpose is to raise students' critical awareness about social, political, and economic disparities that exist between Nicaragua and the US, the TC3-NICA program fit the programmatic criteria identified by Eyler and Giles as "well-integrated service-learning program" (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p. 149). According to Eyler and Giles (1999), a well-integrated program has to do with particular aspects of service-learning program that enhance the quality of student learning. Eyler and Giles (1999) also found that well-integrated service-learning programs are strong predictors of the outcome of perspective transformation. In their study, Eyler and Giles (1999) identified the placement quality (i.e., increases in variety of service work, and greater challenges and responsibilities for students), higher levels of application of course material to service and vice versa (i.e., course work that is focused on the specific type of service work); multiple and diverse opportunities for structured reflection; community voice (which represents higher levels of participation of community

members in terms of decisions made regarding the nature and process of service and learning activities) and; increased levels of diversity (characterized by interaction among students and community members of different ethnic, class and cultural backgrounds) as having a positive impact on the likelihood of students' perspective transformation.

Since Eyler and Giles (1999) found that service-learning programs that were "well-integrated" were more apt to lead to students' perspective transformation, the TC3-NICA as a specific case that met the criteria for being a "well-integrated" service-learning program, was chosen as an information-rich case that would be more apt to shed light on the processes of transformational learning in service-learning.

Furthermore, since a number of TC3-NICA students had self-reported profound changes in their world-view in prior exploratory studies and program evaluations, the TC3-NICA program also met the intensity case study sampling criteria specified by Patton (1990, p. 171), as an "information-rich case that manifests the phenomenon of interest intensely." As a case study sample that exemplifies the phenomenon of transformational learning intensely, interviews with a number of TC3-NICA students participating in the TC3-NICA program enabled the researcher to gain in-depth insight on how students experience the form and process of transformational learning in international service-learning.

Data Gathering Methods

This case study used a "multimethod triangulation approach" for gathering data that included participant observation, document analysis, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Patton, 1990, p. 245).

Participant observation. My role as co-founder and co-instructor of the TC3-NICA program enabled me to describe in great detail the transformational service-learning process since its inception in 1994. Participant observation entailed extensive documentation of student participation in program activities. Particular attention was

devoted to observing the participants, physical setting, service activities, social interaction, relationships, non-verbal communication, critical incidents, emotions, surprises, conversations, and learning process patterns from year to year. I also monitored my own subjectivity and behavior as both a participant and observer (see Participant-Observation Guide, Appendix A). Once the central framing question regarding how TC3-NICA students experience the process of transformational learning was chosen, I was able to more specifically identify and confirm through on-site observation a number of intuitive hunches, ideas, sensitizing concepts, themes and dimensions that were emerging from multiple data sources (Patton, 1990). I was also able to solicit immediate feedback on the learning processes that I was observing and beginning to analyze in student journals particularly during the last two cohorts. To record observations during fieldwork in Nicaragua, I carried with me at all times a small pocket size notebook and jotted down field notes each day during and after program activities. The field note taking process entailed describing unusual behavior or comments as well as sights, smells, sounds, feelings, emotions, activities, interactions and people related to the most important events that took place daily. At night, I tried to fill in gaps in the notes taken in the field and added greater detail on important events and/or stories. Each program year, I also videotaped a number of daily service-learning activities. The footage from the videotapes added contextual insight on a number of elements in learning environment that I had missed in my field notes. I also solicited ongoing, daily feedback from the co-facilitator and incorporated feedback sessions with routine evaluations that were performed to stay in tune with individual student and group learning experiences, activities and processes.

Being a participant in the service activities allowed me to share and better understand how students experience international service-learning on a number of levels – emotionally, intellectually, affectively, and viscerally. However, as one of the program instructors, I had to remain somewhat detached and analytical. My instructor

role blended with my role as researcher and allowed me a certain privileged "free space" for undertaking the necessary data gathering and analysis. My role as instructor has given me flexibility in terms of being up front about my research and also has meant that I did not have to justify the analytical space that I needed in terms of observing and interpreting the constant flow of data. I was also able to solicit feedback more freely. Indeed, because the research was largely being conducted to improve the program, my participant-observation role was not ambiguous.

Also, my ability to gain access to students' interpretations of their international service-learning experience was facilitated in a number of ways. Because each member of the cohort lives in close proximity to each other, shares meals, lives in the same house and performs a number of service activities as a team, a climate a group trust develops over time so that people begin to express their thoughts and feelings about their service-learning experience more openly and freely. Also, group reflection and informal, un-structured interviews occurred daily so that I am able to receive immediate responses to my queries regarding transformational learning processes and gaining ongoing important insights on how students perceive, interpret, and give meaning to their service-learning experience in real time.

In his discussion of the interdependence of the observer and the observed, Patton points to the "ambiguity and tension" involved in being a somewhat detached observer and personally involved at the same time in a particular program setting. Merriam (1998) also highlights the "ambiguity and anxiety" that stems from balancing the inherent interdependence between participant observer and the observed and how that influences behaviors and the interpretation of observations (pp. 103-4). On some occasions during my participation in the service-learning program in Nicaragua, I felt a tension between my role as instructor, participant, and observer-researcher. Over time, I had begun to anticipate certain reactions and behaviors and on some occasions avoided service situations that I expected would produce intense physical and

emotional reactions. That reaction reflected not only my experience with the program, but indicated more of a personal, subjective reaction that I have attempted to monitor more closely in terms of how I analyzed and interpreted student interpretations and behaviors.

Document analysis. Document analysis included pre- and post-trip questionnaires, journals, final reflection papers and covenants for social justice action. Document analysis also included a review of course syllabi and program brochures. All of the documents combined provided rich primary sources of information as symbolic representations, accounts and narratives of experiences, the setting and program components. The program documents added additional depth and breadth to what it's like for TC3-NICA students to experience the process of learning in international service-learning.

A review of documents as a primary source of information supplemented and complemented data gathered from observations and interviews. Pre-program questionnaires (see Appendix B) provided important demographic and background information and added insight on students' travel experience, prior service work, beliefs, values, personality traits, expectations, fears, feelings, and assumptions prior to leaving – the contents of "the contextual baggage" prior to crossing the border into Nicaragua. Post-program questionnaires (see Appendix C) offered information on whether expectations were met and changes in students' prior assumptions. Student journals provided in-depth descriptions of events and experiences as well as the feelings, emotions and meanings students attached to certain events and experiences. Journals (see Appendix D) allowed me to corroborate information collected from interviews conducted after the program participation. Analysis of information provided by journals was useful in terms of finding incongruence and congruence with my own on-site observations and with stories about events that were brought up by students during interviews. Students' final reflection papers (see Appendix E)

offered important cognitive insight to on-site experiences as reflections on the experience rather than in or through the experience. Students were asked to describe, analyze and interpret critical incidents that they experienced in Nicaragua. The spatial and temporal analytical distance and focused interpretation of students' experiences added a more detailed level of interpretation to events and experiences. While the affective dimension of the international service-learning experience was difficult to explain, the final papers strengthened my understanding of the cognitive dimension of students' experience. Lastly, I reviewed final reflection papers and identified critical incidents prior to conducting interviews as a way to stimulate conversation and add insight to aspects of their "stories" that I needed further elaboration particularly in terms of understanding the process on transformational learning.

Semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews were conducted with TC3-NICA students. Semi-structured interviews followed on-site unstructured interviews, participant observation and document analysis in order to focus more specifically on the emergent transformational learning patterns particularly after program completion. Prior to each semi-structured interview students were given a set of possible interview questions to think about prior to the interview that were part of the interview guide I created to help structure the interviews (see Appendix F). Questions were open-ended and attempted to elicit the meanings that students attributed to their expectations, experiences, behaviors, feelings, opinions, values, senses, knowledge, and behavior prior to, during and after program participation. To gain access to how students perceived their TC3-NICA program experience, I asked each interviewee to describe an experience, critical incident or an event that stood out in their minds. By assuming students had an important experience to share, such "presupposition questions" were useful in terms of affirming that it is natural to have experienced an important event and that the interviewee has something to share (Patton, 1990, p. 305). Significant experiences

and events were useful in terms of stimulating more detailed student descriptions of the areas above and often allowed me to share with them situations that I had observed or experienced as well (Mezirow, 1990).

Prior to each interview, I also reviewed my own field notes on events I had observed that related to the student interviewee's participation in the TC3-NICA program and prepared a summary of critical incidents the student interviewee had described in their pre- and post-program questionnaires, journal and final reflection paper. I ended each interview by asking each interviewee if they had an image or metaphor that described their TC3-NICA experience. Metaphors were extremely illuminating in getting at deeper meanings and more sensitive issues that often did not come up as part of the other interview questions (Deshler, 1990).

Interviews helped confirm or challenge my own interpretation of events that I had observed and in documents I had analyzed. After each interview I noted non-verbal gestures not caught on tape and did a preliminary analysis of issues that confirmed or were incongruent with the transformational process pattern that was emerging and evolving from the data. Interviews generally lasted from ninety minutes to two hours and in a few cases, three hours.

In order to improve the quality of the interview relationship and capture the authenticity of emic voice, I attempted to create a dialogue, or what Seidman (1991, p. 73) refers to as an "I-Thou verging on we interview relationship." I started each interview with an icebreaker type of question that did not relate to the TC3-NICA program and that focused on a subject that they felt comfortable with. The quality of the interview data was enhanced by the trust, rapport and openness that the students and I had established prior to the interviews during program participation, thus adding greater authenticity to the data collected (Kvale, 1996). I conducted interviews after

grades had been turned in to diminish potential pressure that students might feel to respond in a certain way.[10]

Interview sample selection. As Patton points out "there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry" and he adds, "the size of the sample depends on what you want to find out, why you want to find it out, how the findings will be used, and what resources (including time) you have for the study"(p. 184). Post-program interviews with TC3-NICA students entailed a combination of sampling strategies including intensity sampling (see above), and an purposive effort to "maximize heterogeneity" on characteristics of program year, field, age, class, professional background, education, gender, ethnicity and country of origin (Patton, 1990, p. 172). I chose maximizing heterogeneity as a purposeful sampling strategy because the intent of the interviews was to elicit as broad a range of perceptions related to the process of transformational learning. Also, in choosing a combination of the sampling strategies above, I endeavored to identify common patterns related to the processes of transformational learning based on the perceptions of a diverse set of students who were more apt to have experienced transformational learning as participants in a well-integrated international service-learning program.

There were two main purposes for gathering data about transformational learning processes through post-program semi-structured interviews with TC3-NICA students. First, interviews allowed me to triangulate data gathering methods and lend further credibility and trustworthiness of the findings in this study. Data gathered from participant observation data only enabled access to external behaviors and at times I was to gain insight into what was going on inside students' heads. Apart from group reflection on-site, post-program interviews with TC3-NICA students allowed me to surface deeper meanings associated with specific critical events, non-verbal

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[10] Students who agreed to participate in the study also signed a consent form (see Appendix G).

expressions and behaviors that I observed. Second, the interviews complemented the information that had been collected through participant observation and document analysis after a period of time for reflection away from the program setting. More importantly, the interviews provided valuable longitudinal insight on the long-term process of transformation after participation in the program – knowledge that could not be gleaned from other data gathering methods.

Initially, I considered ten students an appropriate number interview sample because the primary purpose of the interviews was to gain access to the meaning students associated with their re-entry experience and elicit responses to more focused questions about transformational learning processes. I used the criteria of redundancy and saturation in terms of increasing or decreasing the size of the sample with regard to post-program transformational learning processes only (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 1990; Merriam, 1998). Data collected from participant observation and document analysis was sufficiently redundant in terms of identifying the ways in which students experienced transformational learning processes on-site in Nicaragua. Indeed, information gathered from participant observation, and document analysis – particularly during the last two program years when the study focus was limited to transformational learning - provided an abundance of data so that information regarding learning processes during the program was sufficiently saturated.

Description of interview sample. A total of 43 students participated in the TC3-NICA program over a seven-year period from 1994-2001. There were five separate cohorts (see Table 3.1). The interview sample was made up of 19 females and 3 males. Because only 5 male students out of a total of 43 students participated in the Nicaragua service-learning program, a majority of students interviewed were female. All of the study participants were white and US citizens except one participant who was a black, Creole, Nicaraguan. The ages of the students in the sample ranged from 18-60. Seven students were married, one was divorced and fourteen were single.

Although many of the students were matriculated in the Nursing program at TC3, the professional, academic and personal backgrounds of the students were quite diverse.

Table 3.1: Interview Sample

Cohort Year	Total # of TC3-NICA Students	Total # of TC3-NICA Student Interviewees
1995	8	2
1996	9	2
1997	11	6
1999	7	5
2001	8	7

Ten students provided sufficient information for data saturation; however, a total of 22 students were interviewed at least once. I contacted students from the first three cohort years by phone or email. The last two program cohorts were made aware of the study prior to their participation in the program. I did not have the addresses for all the students in the first three cohorts and in some cases students lived in countries outside the US and/or did not have addresses available. In other cases, scheduling interview times was not possible. Because almost all of the students in the last two cohorts agreed to be interviewed (save three), additional interviews helped further maximize heterogeneity especially by cohort year and age, and also allowed for further analysis of the transformational learning process over longer periods of time, possible disconfirming evidence, and negative cases. I invited students who had reported experiencing intense dissonance and significant changes over longer periods of time as a result of their participation in the TC3-NICA program for a second interview in order to get more a in-depth understanding of the meanings they

attributed to the form and processes of transformational learning in international service-learning.

<u>Data Analysis</u>

An interpretivist-constructivist qualitative approach to data analysis meant exploring how participants interpret the meaning of their international service-learning experience. The constant comparative method was used for data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and was chosen to more effectively "triangulate" data sources "by comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information derived at different times and by different means within qualitative methods" (Patton, 1990, p. 466). In general, the constant comparison method is an analytic sense-making process that is dynamic, iterative and relational whereby researchers recursively sift through data to "continuously compare" experiences, incidents, comments, and so on in order to identify what each shares in common, what is meaningful and/or what is salient to the phenomenon of research interest (Merriam, 1998, p. 179). It is an ongoing, back and forth process analyzing human engagement, looking for relationships, and connections in meanings (Patton, 1990).

Merriam (1998) describes three levels of data analysis for case studies, "descriptive accounts, category construction and theory building" (p. 178). At the most basic level, data analysis begins by describing in detail the phenomenon of interest while determining which data is extraneous (Merriam, 1998). At this stage connections are not made among the data, rather it is taking it all in to begin to establish boundaries on what is relevant or salient (Merriam, 1998). According to Marten (1988), "when we read and classify descriptions of a phenomenon, we are not merely sorting data; we are looking for the most distinctive characteristics that appear in those data; that is, we are looking for structurally significant differences that clarify how people define some specific portion of the world" (p. 146).

Data analysis initially focused on problems associated with observations and experiences of student learning during fieldwork. Students frequently reacted to the service-learning experience in Nicaragua by displaying intense emotions that were difficult to understand and manage. They also reported dramatic changes in their beliefs, perspective, values and lifestyle habits upon returning to the US and difficulties in integrating and acting on those changes. Data analysis began with reviewing prior knowledge of the process of service-learning in Nicaragua gleaned from participation, observation, and student documents from the first three program cohorts. Early on in the process of analyzing data I identified "sensitizing concepts" that I brought with me to the study regarding the process of transformational service-learning in Nicaragua (Patton, 1990). According to Patton (1990), "sensitizing concepts" call to our attention the observer does not enter the field with a completely blank slate" (p. 217). Sensitizing concepts "help orient fieldwork," and "provide the basic framework highlighting the importance of certain kinds of events, activities and behaviors" (p. 216). For example, because I was familiar with adult learning, service-learning, and intercultural learning literature and had been a international service-learning practitioner for a number of years, I already had a pre-conceived notion of how TC3-NICA students experience the process transformational learning in an international service-learning context. Identifying sensitizing concepts helped me focus more intently on specific aspects of the transformational learning process like dissonance, reflection, and significant changes in attitudes or behaviors. Sensitizing concepts gave me a point of departure for focusing data collection and initiating data analysis on aspects of the transformational learning process that seemed to stand out.

Once I had finished the data gathering process, I organized data from journals, final papers, questionnaires, field notes and video-tapes in boxes representing each cohort. I then sorted journals and papers for each student as a separate case and combined that with interview transcripts. I then developed a case profile or record

for each student that was interviewed based on data from observations, journals, final papers, questionnaires and interview transcripts. I developed an initial coding scheme for the profile that consisted of basic demographic information, critical incidents, metaphors and changes in beliefs, values, perspectives and habits. Data analysis at this stage was primarily a descriptive chronological narrative of the students' experience in Nicaragua.

Constant comparison of data as category construction has the analytical goal of reducing a large amount of qualitative data into a set of categories, underlying dimensions and major themes (Merriam, 1998). It means reviewing statements, stories, epiphanies, critical events, metaphors and evocative quotations and look for connections and patterns among them (Patton, 1990). It entails mining the data to sort and code the pools of meaning that have begun to form from constant repetition of the data (Glesne, 1999).

During the category construction stage of the analysis I identified an initial set of categories (see below for description of categories) that fit an emerging process pattern for transformational learning within cases and across cases. Constant comparison at this stage meant shifting data around, spending time finding and grouping clusters, and looking across categories, people, cases, critical events, metaphors, and vignettes in order to better understand how students experience the process of transformational learning (Patton, 1990). It meant working back and forth from the various forms of data to pool meanings by transcribing, coding and analyzing data with the intent to represent different conceptions of transformational learning phenomena as categories, themes and dimensions. I then developed a coding scheme to match quotations with categories in order to begin to shape the pools of meaning (Glesne, 1999). I looked for what was salient and relevant within each case profile and across cases and developed an initial set of categories that could stand alone, not

overlap with other categories and be understood in an of themselves as a recurring pattern that related to the process of transformational learning.

I also made a conscious effort to identify what Patton (1990) refers to as "indigenous concepts" – symbolic phrases or terms that were used during the program or that were unique to the context that captured elements of the process of transformational learning (p. 390). I also compared emerging patterns, themes and categories with my own sensitizing concepts and how they matched with the transformational learning processes identified in the research literature in service-learning, intercultural learning and transformational learning. Finally, I performed member checks with students and debriefing with peers who had significant travel experience in developing countries to receive feedback, or to make different connections and generate new insights from the themes, patterns and categories that were emerging from the process of constant comparison (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 1990).

Six initial themes emerged from the data analysis under the general category of transforming forms. They included political, intellectual, moral, personal, cultural and spiritual forms that students shared in common. Once these themes were identified, I checked with study participants by sending out a separate email asking for feedback on the initial emerging themes. I then went back through the journals, papers and transcripts and color-coded quotations and stories that elucidated aspects of the six themes in order to come up with a color-case profile for each student. I then did another comparison across cases to identify transformational processes that linked to or connected to each of the transforming forms identified. The following five process dimensions were identified, contextual border crossing, dissonance, personalizing, processing, and connecting – each with a set of sub-categories to further differentiate aspects of each process dimension. I again did another round of member checks and peer debriefings and reviews of the literature to find areas of convergence and

divergence and to further refine the emerging pattern and to find an appropriate name that would fit each category.

Finally, rather than present a set of cause and effect relationships, in the theorizing step of the data analysis I attempted "to link the conceptual elements" together and to suggest a more meaningful conceptual relationships among the categories (Merriam, 1998, p. 188). I developed a set of tables to link sub-categories to categories more systematically and constructed a process diagram in order to visualize how each of the six dimensions might be linked together conceptually in order to give a more holistic rendering of the process of transformational learning in international service-learning. After various iterations, I conceptualized emerging global consciousness as representative of the relationships among the processes of transformational learning in international service-learning. Importantly, transforming forms became a sub-category of emerging global consciousness, rather than a broader "stand alone" dimension of the process of transformational learning.

Quality Criteria

As an interpretivist-constructivist researcher, I am interested in gaining insight on participants' perceptions of service-learning. I seek to understand the meanings participants' attach to their experience immersed in the service-learning program as well as the meaningful changes that occur as a result of the research process. For this reason, I have chosen the epistemic criteria of trustworthiness for warranting the quality of knowledge claims and non-epistemic criteria of authenticity for ensuring the goodness of the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, 2000). Guba and Lincoln (1989) developed trustworthiness criteria for warranting knowledge claims that parallel positivist and post-positivist conceptions of criteria for warranting knowledge claims but are more in tune with qualitative forms of research. To ensure the trustworthiness of the knowledge claims made in this study, I used multiple methods, sources, and theoretical perspectives which allowed for greater triangulation and

enhanced the quality of the analysis, interpretations, findings and actions. There are four criteria that help establish the trustworthiness of the study findings: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, 2000).

Credibility. Credibility has to do with "the isomorphism between constructed realities or respondents and the reconstructions attributed to them" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 236). That is, how well does my own interpretive representation of the process of transformation through the "findings" fit students' multiple interpretations collected in the data. In other words, how do I know if I got it right? Guba and Lincoln (1989, pp. 237-238) offer a variety of strategies for establishing isomorphism or the credibility of the research results including prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, progressive subjectivity and member checks.

As on of the co-founders and co-instructors of the TC3-NICA program, I have developed an intimate understanding of the program context and curriculum. As the program instructor I have conducted substantial fieldwork observations over the past seven years. Member checks take place continually during conversations, interviews, and group reflection with students in particular, in order to ensure I evaluated their perspectives and understood their interpretations accurately. As an immersion program the TC3-NICA students' senses are on call 24 hours a day and also, as an instructor, I have a unique opportunity for engaging more substantially with the service-learning program setting and participants than if I were interacting with students in a traditional classroom environment three hours a week. The TC3-NICA "team" lives, works, sleeps, studies and shares the same space for much of the time spent in Nicaragua. As a result, through prolonged engagement, each student and the instructors have the opportunity to develop close relationships and learn trust one another.

As an instructor I was able to undertake extensive and detailed participant observation of service-learning seminars, activities and interactions among students, community members, and the physical setting. I was constantly looking for negative cases, rival hypotheses, paradoxical, counter-intuitive and/or ironic evidence to reevaluate and critically reflect on my own evolving theories and assumptions regarding the process of transformational learning.

Member checks were done at various intervals through the data gathering process to clarify student responses in interviews and to confirm or refine emerging process themes and categories. I solicited critical feedback during periodic debriefings with three peers who were female US citizens that had lived in developing countries. Two peers had worked in the Peace Corps and the other peer had studied in a number of countries outside the US and had worked for some time as an international education administrator. Peer debriefings were extremely useful in terms of challenging me to define the boundaries of categories more succinctly and to elaborate more fully the conceptual relationships among categories. One peer debriefer in particular contributed to the co-construction of the category, "Chameleon Complex." I also consulted with the co-facilitator throughout the data gathering process to share preliminary findings and to discuss dimensions of the program context and aspects related to critical events in greater detail. Finally, I made an effort to monitor my own subjectivity by keeping a field journal and by reflecting on the ways in which my own understandings of international service experiences were different or similar to other student's interpretation of the same experience. Being a male researcher with a study population that was predominantly female was something that I was very cognizant. Having three female debriefers helped "check" and balance potential distortions of meanings that were related to gender.

Transferability. Transferability is another quality criterion that I followed for ensuring the trustworthiness of the knowledge claims. Transferability mirrors the

conventional positivist social science criterion of external validity or generalizability of the research results to other cases or contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The general strategy for enhancing the degree to which these inquiry results might be useful to service-learning educators working in another similar (but unique) service-learning context is "thick description" (1989, p. 241). This study provides a thick, rich, colorful, textured and holistic rendering of the TC3-NICA program context and the process of transformational learning in service-learning so that practitioners can understand, judge and identify with elements of the program that might be transferable and/or applicable to their own situation.

Dependability. The criterion of dependability helps establish the trustworthiness the research results "in that it is concerned with the stability of results over time" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 242). Dependability parallels the conventional criterion of reliability or the ability of another researcher to replicate the results (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Unlike fixed quantitative research designs, in qualitative inquiry it is not unusual to periodically change elements the research design if circumstances warrant it. It is important then to keep track of changes and to make the reasons behind those changes transparent. I maintained an audit trail to document changes, decisions and the evolution of my analytical reasoning in various places throughout the study. My field notes served as a record of my observations. I recorded analytical memos and methodological comments after each interview. Apart from keeping an extensive audit trail the research process, frequent debriefing at home has allowed for more substantive and critical reflection on my assumptions, biases and research decisions. Reflective journals and papers have allowed me to monitor my subjectivity and bias as well as critically reflect on my own values and theories and well as appreciate a variety of other theoretical lenses – gained through conversations with literature, students, community members and colleagues. In spite of my efforts to triangulate, keep an audit trail and be reflexive and transparent about the research

process, I also recognize the distinctly emergent and dynamic processes involved in qualitative research do not lend themselves to ensuring conventional notions of reliability. Merriam affirms this concern in stating, "rather than demanding that outsiders get the same results, a researcher wishes outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense – they are consistent and dependable. The question then is not whether findings will be found again but *whether the results are consistent with the data collected*" (1998, p. 206, emphasis in original).

Confirmability. Confirmability is another criterion for warranting the trustworthiness of the results and parallels the positivist requirement of objectivity. Confirmability means that the reader can be reasonably confident in that the study findings are not figments of the researcher's imagination – that they can be traced to their original source (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 243). One way of assuaging possible doubts is to ground the data in the voices of the study participants by including generous portions of direct quotations to illustrate the meaningfulness and consistency of the categories. This study provides ample evidence grounded in student constructions to confirm the trustworthiness of the research results and knowledge claims made in terms of illustrating and conceptualizing how TC3-NICA students experience the process of transformational learning.

I also used non-epistemic authenticity criteria for warranting the "goodness" of the research process. Authenticity criteria do not parallel positivist criteria that tend to focus on ensuring the appropriate application of methods, rather they "spring directly from constructivism's own basic assumptions" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 245). Authenticity criteria shift the emphasis of validity of knowledge claims to whether a research process embraced reciprocity, surfaced minority voices, empowered study participants, provided arenas for open dialogue, raised awareness or stimulated action (Schwandt, 1997; Guba & Lincoln, 1989, 2000). Authenticity criteria includes

fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity and tactical authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 245-250).

Fairness criteria has do with valuing and surfacing study participant voices Lincoln & Guba, 2000). During this inquiry I endeavored to listen passionately during my interactions with students who participated in this study. I reviewed interview transcripts to evaluate how well I listened. I also attempted to diminish my own bias by not privileging my own voice over others through member checks and peer debriefings.

Ontological and educative authenticity refer to the extent to which TC3-NICA students experienced an increased level of awareness so that their own interpretations are "improved, matured, expanded and elaborated" in the former sense, and in the latter instance, to an increased appreciation for the interpretations of others (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 248). On a few occasions, particularly during interviews, students indicated an increased awareness of their own assumptions and expressed greater appreciation for the interpretations of others.

Catalytic and tactical authenticity "refer to the ability of a given inquiry to prompt, first, action on the part of the research participants, and second, the involvement of the researcher/evaluator in training participants in specific forms of social and political action if participants desire such training. It is here that constructivist inquiry practice begins to resemble forms of critical theorist action" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 181). I initially felt somewhat uncomfortable using authenticity criteria because I didn't want to impose my own bias on students participating in the study and I wasn't confident that the study could be catalytic and/or tactical. However, upon further reflection, I reasoned that the social and political aims of the TC3-NICA international service-learning program and the purpose of this research tended to complement each other nicely. Therefore, I felt that increasing students' capacity to engage in social and political action as a goal of this

inquiry was a logical extension to the explicit social and emancipatory vision of the TC3-NICA program. Indeed, to my surprise students confirmed that the study helped motivate them to get more involved politically. Combining epistemic trustworthiness criteria and non-epistemic authenticity criteria was a useful strategy for warranting the quality of the knowledge claims made in this study and for ensuring the moral and political integrity or "goodness" of the research process.

<u>Limitations of the Study</u>

As a qualitative case study this study has limitations. The student sample is quite small, primarily female and with the exception of one study participant from Nicaragua, primarily US citizens. Although generalizability is not a criterion determining the quality of this study, a sample that was more diverse particularly in terms of gender, ethnicity and nationality would have met more fully the criteria of maximizing heterogeneity.

The intensity and criterion-based purposeful sampling strategies that I chose reflected my own bias. I decided that student self-reports of profound changes in their world-view in final papers, journals and post-trip evaluations cases that represented "information-rich cases that manifest a phenomenon intensely but not extremely" (Patton, 1990, p. 182). I also decided that the TC3-NICA program represented the Eyler and Giles (1999) criteria for a "well-integrated program" (also a presumably credible criterion) and would therefore provide an instrumental case for advancing my understanding of the phenomenon of transformational learning.

This study also reflected my own assumptions and biases as an instructor and coordinator of the TC3-NICA program. Since this research embraces a qualitative, interpretive-constructivist stance, I am the research instrument. The choices, decisions and interpretations made throughout the research process are filtered through my unique frame of reference. Hence the need for triangulation of methods, strategies for checking personal bias, and transparency. I also assumed that students' self-reports of

profound shifts in worldview were accurate and that students' reflections, descriptions and interpretations in journals and interviews were sincere and genuine. I defer to audience's judgment as to whether the research process undertaken in this study met the goodness criteria guiding this study and importantly, whether the findings were substantive, meaningful, "consistent with the data collected" (Merriam, 1998, p. 206) and importantly, made sense.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Two central questions guided this case study: 1) Where's the transformation in international service-learning?, and 2) how do students experience the process of transformational learning as participants in the TC3-NICA international service-learning program? The following section presents the findings from programmatic and student case study data collected over an eight year time period. Case study results represent the ways in which TC3 students describe, and interpret how they experienced the forms and processes of transformational learning entailed in international service-learning in Nicaragua and upon return to the US.

This first section of this chapter provides programmatic background and information that is essential for understanding contextual and pedagogical influences how students experiential the transformational learning process that takes place in Nicaragua. The first section will also describe in greater detail the TC3-NICA students that participated in this study. The second section addresses the question of where transformation is in international service-learning by describing individual student cases meant to offer substantial empirical evidence that transformations occurred. The last section of the chapter presents findings on how students experience the different components of process of transformation learning as participants in the TC3-NICA international service-learning program. Each process component will be discussed at length with extensive references linking empirical claims to student data. I will conclude with a case that represents the long-term nature of the form and process of transformational learning in international service-learning.

TC3-NICA International Service-Leaning Program and Study Participants

<u>TC3-NICA Program Description</u>

The TC3-NICA program history. The TC3-NICA international service-learning program was initially the brainchild of Donna Nielsen, a professor of Nursing at TC3 for over twenty years. Donna had spent time in Haiti as a 17 year-old volunteer nurse's assistant and wanted to create a course for college students to have a similar experience because she believed very strongly that her experience in Haiti was extremely positive and life transforming. Her spiritual beliefs and her commitment to working for social justice also motivated her to design an international service-learning course that addressed global problems particularly as they relate to access to health care.

Because of the political turbulence in Haiti at the time, and because her church had a strong affiliation with other religious institutions in Nicaragua, Donna traveled to Nicaragua in summer of 1994 to see where she might implement her evolving concept of an experiential international health nursing course combined with community service. Church contacts that she had met with in Managua strongly recommended that she visit with Earl Bowie, a young and enthusiastic Creole pastor working with a local Christian church community located in the city of Puerto Cabezas.

Puerto Cabezas has a population of about fifty thousand and is located on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua. There is a mixture of people inhabiting the Atlantic Coast area, i.e. Spanish speaking Mestizos, English speaking Afro-Americans or Creoles, and three indigenous groups- Miskitos, Sumus and Ramas - and a small group of Afro-Indians called Garifuna. Due to a number of complex historical, social, political, economic and environmental factors, (not the least of which include the devastating impact of a ten year civil war in the 1980's, and most recently, the destruction caused by Hurricane Mitch), a significant portion of the people living in the Puerto Cabezas community has been experiencing a tremendous amount of socio-economic hardship, ethnic and political tension, and psychological trauma related to the fall-out fro the

civil war. There is little access to clean water, sanitation, and health care and the unemployment rate, according to a number of local estimates, hovers around 90%. Dirt roads are in poor condition and are often inaccessible. Food, employment, and medicine are scarce and because many people are struggling for survival crime, drug-use and child prostitution is increasing daily. Given the economic and social conditions, many children and infants die from curable diseases such and diarrhea and skin infections.

Donna's contacts in Managua had speculated that because many people living in the Puerto Cabezas lacked basic economic resources and access to health care, Donna's initial concept integrating an experiential seminar in nursing with a community service component might interest members of the Puerto Cabezas community and in particular, Pastor Earl who had initiated a number of community development projects.

After an initial scouting trip to Puerto Cabezas, and after meeting and discussing her idea with Pastor Earl, Donna, Pastor Earl and other community members agreed to form a partnership based on bringing US students to Puerto Cabezas to implement health clinics and to develop health education programs with poorest members of the Puerto Cabezas community. They hoped that the relationship would develop in a collaborative fashion. They also wanted the relationship to lead the development of health programs that would meet the community's health needs in the short- and long-term, as well as satisfy the US students' desire for practical training. They also hoped that interaction between students and community members would foster mutual learning and respect for their respective cultures, customs and beliefs and would lead to long lasting friendships.

After meeting with Earl and other community leaders, Donna returned to the US to develop her course based on the health needs and concerns expressed by the people she met in Nicaragua and that also met institution requirements at TC3. Donna

and I first met as members of institutional task force that had been created to develop a plan for internationalizing curricula at TC3. At the time I was teaching courses in political science, ESL and cross-cultural learning. Donna, knowing that I had spent over four years living in Spain and Mexico, spoke Spanish fluently and had earned a Master's degree international relations, she asked me to co-teach and facilitate the first trip to Nicaragua.

The first TC3-NICA international service learning program began in 1994 by offering students the opportunity to obtain three credits in international health through "hands on" experiential academic study and community service in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua. Based on our first year experience and evaluation, we decided to create another three-credit course so that the program included a language component and delved more deeply into the historical, cultural, economic and political dimensions influencing social and health problems in Nicaragua. The design of the six credit service- learning courses in Nicaragua combine academic learning, i.e., seminars, lectures, student mini-projects, presentations and readings, with community-based health service programs identified and developed with community members as partners.

The TC3-NICA program has evolved over that past eight years and has developed into a wider social network of service-learning collaborators in both the US and Nicaragua. The academic courses and service work remain focused on health and social problems in Nicaragua and change according to local needs and issues. The central focus of the service work continues to be implementation of health clinics in poor communities that lack access to health care.

TC3-NICA Program Overview

As mentioned, the TC3-NICA program immerses students primarily from US colleges in a cross-cultural experiential context and combines academic course work with community service. There are three central components to the program. A pre-

orientation, on-site academic, service and cross-cultural activities, and post-service activities. The following section gives a general overview of the transformative and social justice program pedagogy, and then describes the academic, service and cross-cultural components of the program. The last part of this section will provide a more detailed demographic representation of the study participants and a one student's description of a service experience as a participant in the TC3-NICA international service-learning program.

<u>TC3-NICA Program Pedagogy</u>

According to Eyler and Giles (1999) study examining different types of college student learning in service-learning, well-integrated service-learning programs are strong predictors of transformational learning. They identified perspective transformation in service-learning as: the capacity to understand the origin and solution to social problems in a new way, to challenge existing social arrangements, an increased commitment to social justice, and to advocate on behalf of the poor and less fortunate in public policy domains. The TC3-NICA international service-learning program fits Eyler and Giles's (1999) definition of a well-integrated service-learning program in terms of the quality of the service placement in the community, multiple avenues for reflecting on service experiences, a strong linkage between course and service work, and opportunities for directly engaging collaboratively with diverse community groups.

The TC3-NICA program attempts to incorporate a number of guiding principles into its critical pedagogy that reflect a social justice orientation including: recognizing epistemological and ideological assumptions that drive one's service-learning practice, developing reciprocal community partnerships, evaluating both student and community learning goals and impacts, and fostering critical reflection "that unfolds within the mind the learner, in dialogue between the learner and others (peers, educators, community members) and....[that] ultimately leads to long-term

shifts in knowledge and action" (Koliba et al., p. 28). The TC3-NICA program fosters transformational learning by assisting students in developing a more critically informed global consciousness about global problems and encourages students to reevaluate their role as citizens in alleviating those problems.

Consistent with critical pedagogy that has an explicit social justice orientation, the TC3-NICA program provides a dramatically different educational setting that a typical middle class college student from the US is accustomed to. It is purposely designed to disrupt US students' worldview to encourage them to develop a critical awareness of social problems and poverty in Nicaragua and the role of the US in influencing the plight of Nicaragua. The program provides educational and service opportunities for students to develop working relationships and friendships with the poorer members of the Puerto Cabezas community. The program is also structured to encourage students to translate their emerging and critical global awareness to act in greater solidarity with others and into taking action as allies with people living on the margins in Nicaragua and elsewhere to help alleviate political, cultural and economic injustice. On a broader scale, the program also encourages students to use their critical insights to educate others in the US about global poverty and injustice and to take a more active role socially and politically in helping reduce both local and global problems.

The TC3-NICA program is designed to address health problems in Puerto Cabezas with the assumption that local problems are connected to larger political, economic and cultural forces shaped by a history of colonialism and continued imperialism from the North. The program also focuses on different levels of oppression caused by unequal relations of power in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and nationality.

TC3-NICA students live and interact directly with a resource poor communities in Puerto Cabezas. Structured experiential service and learning activities

address local health problems. Seminars, readings and community presentations focus
on community problems and their connection to larger historical, social, economic,
political and cultural forces. Learning also includes dialogues with the community
and reflection groups where strategies for dealing with community problems can be
shared and debated.

Throughout the duration of their stay in Puerto Cabezas, students interact with
the community in a variety of ways. For example, by connecting with various
members of the community, i.e., former Sandinistas and Contras, Sukias (local
healers), herbal doctors, orphanage and neighborhood children, religious leaders,
historians, artists, health and community development workers who have spent
significant portions of their lives in the region, students are confronted with real life
experiences, events, stories, and problems that force them to "rethink" and reevaluate
assumptions about themselves, Nicaragua, American foreign policy, political systems,
service, social change, ideals, beliefs, values and so on. They learn to understand more
about and care more for the "poorer other," and to learn to be receptive to local
knowledge. They reconsider the arbitrary nature of location and position. They make
friends with people of different skin color, culture and language and treat them as
equals. They work alongside community members, swap stories, empathize, laugh,
cry, create, and learn about each other. They grapple with extremely complex and
ambiguous "real life" problems while attempting to build sustainable relationships
based on a sharing of power to overcome various forms of oppression. They learn
how to reflect on what it means to be a citizen locally and globally. They question the
status quo. They learn how to become critically reflective listeners and learners. They
learn about the challenges involved in creating democratic learning communities.
Through service they learn how to take individual and collective action in Puerto
Cabezas and develop a vision of how to make the world a better place upon return.

<u>Pre-Orientation</u>

The course design includes readings and seminars prior to arrival in Puerto Cabezas in order to gain a better understanding of the history, politics and culture of Nicaragua and international health issues in the Atlantic Coast region of Nicaragua. Students also choose a research topic related to a problem that community members in Puerto Cabezas have identified as important, compile information on the topic and learn about participatory research methods to prepare for engaging in collaborative research.

The pre-orientation is also meant to help students adjust more easily to the new environment and to imagine and anticipate potential issues and challenges that might arise during their interactions and dialogues with the local community. Activities include watching a video and viewing slides of students performing different types of academic and service work in prior program years and having a discussion related to students reactions and concerns. The pre-orientation also includes role-play and simulations of the kinds of situations students might encounter during their stay in Nicaragua. Students also participate in reflective exercises to designed to help them surface assumptions, expectations, fears and concerns they have about going to Nicaragua. The pre-orientation addresses safety and health issues and logistical details regarding the itinerary and what to bring. Lastly, students begin their service work by soliciting donations to bring with them that they will pack in one of the two suitcases they are permitted to bring to Nicaragua. Donations include medicines, clothing, toys, bedding, towels, hospital supplies, and so on.

<u>Academic Course Work and Activities On-Site in Nicaragua</u>

<u>Seminars and reading assignments</u>. Students participate in seminars and complete reading assignments pertaining to both courses. Seminars and readings also apply directly to their service work in the community. Readings address community health and development issues unique to the region. Reading assignments also focus

on Nicaraguan history and politics, US foreign policy and relations with Nicaragua, cultural aspects of Atlantic coast region, community development issues and approaches and opportunities to practice Spanish and Miskito.

Reflection. Their program also provides structured opportunities for students to engage in oral and written reflection related to students' service work, interactions and experiences in the community. Students have opportunities to reflect in daily journals, one to one sessions with instructors, students and community members and group reflection. The reflection activities help student process and share their experiences. The different types of reflection offer students a variety ways to step back, analyze, interpret and give meaning to their experiences. Reflection exercises, particularly the group reflection, seminars and final papers assist students in critically examining their assumptions regarding a variety of complex, dissonant and ill-structured problems and experiences they confront in Nicaragua.

Community connections. Part of the academic program structure connects students directly with members of the community from diverse ethnic groups (i.e., Miskitos, Creoles, and Mestizos) living in Puerto Cabezas. Community connections allow students to hear the voices of a variety of Nicaraguans. Students participate in community dialogues, informal conversations with families during service work in neighborhoods, clinics and the hospital, and listen to formal presentations by community leaders including doctors, health professionals, government officials, religious leaders, herbalists, and community development workers. Connecting with the community can be extremely disruptive and dissonant and is perhaps the most dramatic, insightful and transformative part of the service-learning experience. The student lives and interacts directly with neighborhoods that are resource poor and do not have access to health care. Students experience firsthand the impoverished conditions that the many community members face daily. Since many of the students have never seen or worked with people living in extreme poverty, many of their

experiences shake the foundations of their intellectual, political, moral, spiritual, cultural and personal assumptions, values, and beliefs.

The unique history of Nicaragua and its unequal relationship with the US also disrupts students' cultural, religious, political and economic frames of reference. Students have the opportunity have in-depth conversations with a number of people who maintain and practice political beliefs that they have never been exposed to except for perhaps on a more abstract level in the classroom and in textbooks back in the US. For example, they have dialogues with community members who are affiliated with the Sandinista party whose Marxist, socialist principles challenge the tenets of the system of capitalism found in the US. They learn about the revolution against an authoritarian government and dictator named Somoza, who was supported by the US government. They also learn first hand about the ensuing civil war, and US support for the Contras from Contras and Sandinista's who fought in the war. Most students have never experienced socialism in practical terms and it challenges assumptions they have about the most appropriate and effective economic and political system.

Students also meet and learn from a variety of community members whose beliefs and lifestyles differ from the lifestyles and habits that they are accustomed to in the US. They meet and interview Miskito separatists, Sukias who practice magic and herbalists, who use and grow local medicinal plants to cure disease and common health ailments. All of these encounters challenge students' way of looking at the world. The program therefore is set-up to be transformational in terms of creating educational situations that challenge students assumptions and beliefs about knowledge, political and economic systems, religious beliefs, health practices, the causes and solutions to social problems and issues, their identity and role in society, the powerful influence the US has on other countries like Nicaragua.

Community Service Work

TC3 students perform a number of different community services during their stay in Nicaragua. Community service work includes giving presentations to different community groups on issues related to health care and hygiene, working directly with families in the El Muelle neighborhood, one of the poorer neighborhoods in Puerto Cabezas to conduct health assessments and help with daily chores including cooking, cleaning and washing laundry by hand. Students work with doctors and nurses in the local hospital. Students design and implement health clinics collaboratively with a number of communities and neighborhoods in Puerto Cabezas, in Miskito communities outside Puerto Cabezas and in Managua. They also create health skits with local orphans.

Service work allows students a significant amount of independence and responsibility for making decisions. Often students will take their own initiative to resolve an issue or find a solution to a problem. Service work also provides ample time for students to build collaborative working relationships and make friends with people in the community.

While service work in the community is satisfying to students in terms of working to help alleviate and reduce health problems in Puerto Cabezas, it can also be extremely disruptive, emotionally exhausting and intellectually challenging. Students work with people living in extreme conditions of poverty up close that sometimes "shock" participants morally, politically, intellectually and emotionally. By getting to know people in Puerto Cabezas on a deeper level through service work, listening to their perspectives, and experiencing their strength and resilience living in conditions of poverty, they begin to questions and challenge existing economic and political arrangements, the global current social order, and the function of service work.

Health Clinics. The health clinics are the most important and time-consuming type of service work that all of the students must participate in before and during their

stay in Nicaragua. The student group and facilitators (throughout the year) solicit donations to subsidize the medicines a few months before leaving for Nicaragua. While in Nicaragua, students spend most of their time creating and implementing a number of health clinics with local doctors, nurses, and community leaders. The clinic consists of a number of stations that each patient passes through prior to a more thorough examination with the local doctor working with our team. One or a pair of students is responsible for a station. Clinic stations include triage, patient intake and initial health assessment, blood pressure, weighing in and measurement, wound preparation and cleaning, teeth check-up, lice washing, and pharmacy. The student is responsible for designing each station and understanding the procedures for each station. Students must locate and learn how to use the tools, materials and medical equipment for each station and make sure the station is properly maintained throughout the duration of the program. The students create the design and procedures for the clinic pharmacy almost immediately upon arrival in Puerto since it takes time to separate out all of the medicines, learn about the medicines to ensure that each patient gets proper instructions and the proper dosage.

During the health clinic, each patient is given a health information form and a number and has to pass through all of the stations prior to receiving a medical examination from the doctor. The doctor uses the health information form, which contains data collected at each station to inform his initial assessment and diagnosis. After patients see the doctor, they bring their prescription to students at the pharmacy station who explain and distribute the medicines to the patients. Most of this work is performed under extremely stressful conditions. For example, the "intake" person is responsible for greeting patients and making them feel safe and comfortable. Their main role in the clinic is to listen carefully to, and document the ways in which people described their health problems. Their responsibilities in the clinic are quite challenging given that the patients come from three distinct cultural and linguistic

backgrounds (Miskito, Creole and Spanish). Students in intake have to communicate and interact with over two hundred adults and children sometimes, responding well to their needs and concerns while calmly explaining the process of going through the clinic under very stressful, complex and difficult social and physical conditions.

Hospital work. The students also perform a number of services at the hospital such as emergency room support, assisting doctors in delivering babies, and helping nurses attend to patients. Often students see what are typically curable health problems and diseases as much more complex and ambiguous in Nicaragua. They work in the local hospital that regularly runs out of food, gauze, oxygen, blood and bedding for patients. Nurses work in the Tuberculosis ward without masks and reuse rubber gloves when handling blood and other waste! Blood transfusions are performed with tubes taped together. X-rays are given without a chest protector for patients and the ambulance has to be jump started - often. Patients are often turned away because they have no money. Prescriptions go unfilled because the medicine has run out. Doctors earn one hundred dollars per month. The lack of resources and working conditions at the hospital often cause students to reevaluate their own taken-for-granted assumptions about health care, health institutions, government and privilege.

Health skits. Also, as part of their service work related to facilitating health education programs, the students work with village children on health education skits. Clinics and nutritional skits (created by the students and the Verbo orphanage children) are performed in various neighborhoods with the poorest health conditions during the stay. Skits pertain to causes and solutions to common health issues such as dehydration, skin diseases, lice, parasites and hygiene.

Living Arrangements and Non-Service Activities

Student live in a variety of places including Pastor Earl's house, his Aunt's house, the team house which is supported by a humanitarian organization based in the

US, housing provided by other foreigners living in Nicaragua, an orphanage, and hotels. They all use mosquito nets that cover their beds as protection against Mosquitoes that carry Malaria. Their meals are prepared at Pastor Earl and his family's house by his wife, Domaris.

Apart from the academic and service work students have most of the weekends to reflect and explore the community on their own or as a group. They often go to the beach with children staying at the local orphanage or play board games with local children who often visit the team house. They spend a lot of time observing their new cultural surroundings. They have informal conversations with faculty members, other students and community members. They walk to the local market, attend one of the local churches or practice their Spanish with community members with whom they have begun to establish relationships.

Post-Service Activities

During the last weekend of the program, the "team" which they now call themselves regularly by the end of the program, spends two days sightseeing in Managua and Granada and reflecting on their experience. The last day of the trip students prepare for possible reverse culture shock in the US by sharing and reflecting on their experience with the rest of the "team" and what they might expect and experience upon their return to the US. After students return to the US they get together two more times (approximately one month and four months afterward) to share stories, exchange pictures and reflect on the impact of the service-learning experience in Nicaragua.

One students' description of the health clinic experience.

A Student Description of the Health Clinic Experience

Kendra, a nursing student who participated in the TC3-NICA program in January, 2000, provides a colorful description of her experience during and after participating in a health clinic in a Miskito indigenous community called Wawa that is

a two-hour boat ride from Puerto Cabezas. Kendra's animated and vivid description

helps contextualize the international service-learning experience by taking the reader

through the myriad stimuli that bombard the minds and senses of program participants

in Nicaragua. She describes a full day's work performing a health clinic in a Miskito

village in Wawa, the boat ride and then pick-up truck ride to Puerto Cabezas. She

alludes to the natural beauty, medical hardships, poverty, and humanity that strike the

students as they cross borders and find themselves in a different reality.

> Wawa, Wawa, Wawa—what does Wawa mean? It means pigs and piglets
> relaxing in the sun, children and grandmothers in bare feet, houses on stilts by
> coconut trees heavy with fruit, fishermen in canoes, skiffs and rivers,
> mangrove wilderness, hand turned pump, freshwater jewels, innocent eyes and
> easy smiles, amputated legs necrotic from maltreatment, punctured organ from
> a five year old's desirous reach for that perfect orange at the top of the tree,
> woman immobilized with hip pain crying on concrete with eyes closed,
> midwife who says that the "bush is the best medicine," breech deliveries, twin
> arrivals—no problema! Young mothers with appetite-free babies, swollen
> foot—sprained? Broken? Stung? Pain, plenty pain. Nakisma—pine, pine tinky
> [Miskito meaning greetings, fine, fine, thank you]. Little girls with florescent
> green lips from some apple lollipops, untouched humanity, touched only by
> exploitation, touched only by gods true hand—lack of the zealous, invincible,
> cocky, ominous mentality of those who think that nature can be controlled. . .
>
> Fresh coconut milk sweet on my lips, newly collected from the tree outside
> Johnny boy's home in thanks for looking after his grandmother. Tinky, tinky
> [Thank you, thank you]. Toddlers inspecting that black box that talks by itself
> and flashes and freezes images of them on film. Pine, pine [fine, fine]...
>
> Almost full moon. The sun setting on the way back to the docks, a couple of
> hours of rhythmic engine rock and lapping waters to calm my over stimulated
> self. . . Water's pink iridescence as the sky darkens and the moon begins to
> glow. Wildlife and creatures pay homage to the closing day and my breathing
> and hear beat regain some level of normalcy.
>
> Pile on, pile on the pick up truck of all shades of roja. No headlights on the
> pothole ridden, crevice hidden, cow moseying, bicycle racing, folks strolling
> and cajoling road. Speeding, speeding back to Puerto Cabezas. A whiplash
> back to my already altered reality. My body is tired and still hungry after a
> heaping plate of camarones de salsa and some Tang-type liquid. Across the
> streets, it's a young man. He is on guard for a store, the doorway is made of
> cheap tin and there is always someone guarding it.

TC3-NICA Study Participants

Participant demographics and background information. All of the program

participants have to undergo an initial pre-program interview with the program

instructors and upon being accepted into the TC3-NICA program, fill out a pre-

program questionnaire. The pre-program interview and questionnaires provide useful

demographic information pertaining to students' cultural, social, political, religious

beliefs and values. Pre-program information also offers important information about

students' knowledge of health and Nicaragua, language abilities, prior international

travel experience, motivations, expectations, personality traits, as well as educational,

career and personal interests and background.

TC3-NICA program participants come from all walks of life and represent

diverse ages, career backgrounds and interests, and have different social, religious,

political and economic backgrounds. While students do share some demographic

characteristics, they tend to bring unique personal backgrounds and biographical

lenses to the TC3-NICA program.

The age of the thirty-eight TC3-NICA participants who have made the journey

from the US to Nicaragua and back since 1994 ranges from 18-60 years old. The

average age of program participants is 29 years old. There were twenty two TC3-

NICA students who participated in this study (see Table 4.1 for demographic and

background information of participants in this study). Of the twenty-two TC3-NICA

students who participated in this study, all, except one, have as their primary language

American English, are US citizens, and are white. One study participant is from

Nicaragua, speaks Creole English and is black. Twenty study participants are female

and two are male. Almost all of the participants have a lower to upper Middle class

economic status. Four of the study participants indicated that they lived below the

Table 4.1 Study Participants

Name	Year	Age	Gender	Race	Citizen	Major	Prior Travel
Karen	1994-1995	22	F	White	US	Lib Arts	Venezuela
Cindy	1994-1995	24	F	White	US	Nursing	Canada
Joyce	1995-1996	37	F	White	US	Nursing	Canada
Jen	1996-1997	23	F	White	US	Educ	N/A
Beth	1996-1997	24	F	White	US	Poly Sci	Europe
Ben	1996-1997	37	M	White	US	Int ed	Israel, Africa, Europe
Carol	1996-1997	42	F	White	US	Nursing	Austria, Canada
Amanda	1996-1997	22	F	White	US	Nursing	N/A
Betsy	1996-1997	43	F	White	US	Nursing	Africa
Liz	1998-1999	21	F	White	US	Soc	N/A
Nancy	1998-1999	22	F	White	US	Pre med	India
Janice	1998-1999	28	F	White	US	Nursing	N/A
Katelin	1998-1999	23	F	White	US	Educ	Costa Rica, Honduras
Laura	1998-1999	27	F	White	US	Nursing	Bolivia, Australia
Kendra	2000-2001	22	F	White	US	Nursing	Canada
Gretchen	2000-2001	18	F	White	US	Lib Arts	Ireland, France, Japan
Angela	2000-2001	33	F	White	US	Nursing	Italy
Cara	2000-2001	21	F	White	US	Pre Med	Peru
Sarah	2000-2001	21	F	White	US	Nursing	N/A
Doris	2000-2001	52	F	White	US	Nursing	Canada
Yani	2000-2001	22	M	Creole	NICA	Lib Arts	US, Honduras

poverty line defined in US terms. The Nicaraguan participant had lived in extreme poverty for most of his life.

Study participants maintain a variety of social support networks in the US including family, friends, significant others, jobs, and have a number of other responsibilities that occupy their thoughts prior to and during their sojourn.

Most of the participants had been brought in some type of Christian faith. Some were still very active in their church, others expressed that they were agnostic or atheist. One student identified herself as Buddhist. Some of the study participants indicated a connection between their religious faith and their reasons for participating on the trip, others who were agnostic or atheist indicated initial concerns about perceived religious overtones to the program and with working with religious institutions in Nicaragua. However, a majority of the study participants expressed an interest in learning about different religious practices in Nicaragua.

A large majority of participants are nursing majors at TC3. Other study participants major in liberal arts, political science, pre-med, rural sociology, and education. Two of the study participants were professionals working as administrators in the field of international education. Most of the study participants were studying at TC3 during their participation in the TC3-NICA program and were seeking associate degrees for further employment or to transfer to a four-year college. One study participant had just completed a four-year year in education at SUNY Cortland and three study participants were studying pre-med at Cornell University and had aspirations for becoming doctors.

Most students express that their motivations for participating in the program have to do with their educational and career interest in medicine, international development and nursing and their interest in practicing and improving upon their cross-cultural skills and abilities in real life situations. They also want to improve their Spanish language abilities and increase their knowledge cultural, political, economic,

social, cultural life in Nicaragua and the developing world. Students typically come with what is characterized in the service-learning literature, as a "charitable" orientation to service. They want to "give to those who have less" – in this case, poorer Nicaraguans. They expect to "make a difference," "provide health care," learn about Nicaragua and interact with the communities they visit. Students often participate in a travel adventure, and learn to be competent in another culture.

Where's the Transformation in International Service-Learning? Individual Cases

The following section offers a description of individual cases of transformation to address the question of where transformation is in international service-learning and offer compelling empirical insight on the "types" of transformation TC3-NICA students experience as a result of participation in an international service-learning program. While a number of students made explicit references to the transformative impact of the TC3-NICA program experience in statements like "after Nicaragua I am a completely different person," "the trip to Nicaragua for me was a mind-blowing experience" and "the experience in Nicaragua is something I think about daily, I am a changed person," transformation was not easy to locate. Furthermore, some of the TC3-NICA students indicated that the program experience had compelled them to critically evaluate their some of their presuppositions regarding the origin and locus of social problems they encountered in Nicaragua, they did not return home "transformed." This section of the findings represents data gathered to understand more clearly and provide ample empirical evidence on the deeper meanings TC3-NICA students associate with the statements that allude to transformation above and to further elaborate what constitutes transformation in international service-learning.

Findings from this study indicate that the TC3-NICA international service-learning experience did trigger various forms of transformational learning. A number of students examined in this research describe their transformational service-learning journey as a profound, ongoing and recursive life-altering

experience. Although the nature of the transformational learning journey was unique for each participant, students consistently characterize perspective transformation as occurring within one or more of the following dimensions of learning: intellectual, moral, political, cultural, personal and spiritual.

The intellectual form of transformation has to do with reevaluating the nature of knowledge, the role of service and the origin and solution of social problems that students encountered in Nicaragua. Transformation in the realm of morality means reshaping one's moral allegiance in the form of a greater sense of care and solidarity with the poor in Nicaragua. Political transformation represents the development of a politicized global consciousness, rethinking one's citizenship role in society and the challenges associated with individual and social actions taken to reconcile a newly formed politicized and global self with aspects of mainstream US culture upon return. Cultural transformation manifests itself in students who challenged hegemonic aspects of US culture including excessive consumerism, materialism and the promotion of a world capitalist system. Personal transformation consists in re-evaluating one's lifestyle choices particularly in terms of materialism, career choice and educating others and raising awareness on issues related to global injustice. Spiritual transformation represents a reexamination of students' existential role in society and a search for deeper meaning in who they are and how that connects to their surroundings conceived much more broadly than in the past. Students also searched for a spiritual dimensions as a support mechanism for dealing with existential dilemmas related to their experience in Nicaragua. Along with the individual student cases presented below, a more detailed description of the forms of transformation is provided in the process section of the findings under the heading "transforming forms" and also summarized in Table 4.7.

TC3-NICA Student Cases of Transformation

Case I: Doris. For Doris, 52, a mother of seven children, and a middle-aged women returning to school to obtain a associated degree in nursing, the international service-learning experience represented a dramatic turnaround in the way she perceived the role of community service, local knowledge, and political power. She sums up her TC3-NICA experience in this way, "my thoughts pre and post journey have taken a 360 degree turnabout.

Prior to leaving for Nicaragua Doris described herself as a "do-gooder," someone who had been actively involved in her local community for years. Her expectations before arriving in Nicaragua reflect an American "do-gooder" frame of reference, "I was about to impart my 'western knowledge' on a rural coastal community whose most outstanding statistic was 90% unemployment. I felt good about this mission and hopeful that whatever relief from physical suffering I could bring the community was a means to an end. My experience in rural Nicaragua for three weeks would soon prove this 'Western thought process' to be very far from reality."

Doris reflects on her transformational journey as having to unlearn and reevaluate much of her innocence regarding the causes and solutions to social problems affecting poor communities and whose reality counts in Puerto Cabezas:

> I wanted to come to a Third World community to be integrated with the local people, to gain insight and understanding about the health and education inadequacies. I did not come initially to figure out the government policies or how lack of public policy affects essential services from reaching the poor. I would need to be 'educated' in time by the people themselves. I would need to let go of my preconceived notions of why people can't raise themselves up to a high level of living, why they don't demand more from their local government, why they choose work over going to school. I would have to become childlike in my quest for answers in order to understand.

Doris mentions how much the clinic in Miskito community outside of Puerto

Cabezas had a transformative affect on her perspective in terms of the reality of poor people, local knowledge, community service and development, "the clinics proved to be a true eye-opener for me on how little I know of native people, their resourcefulness, their community interdependence and the level of 'status quo' thinking regarding their adherence to their immediate situations." Doris began to contextualize and rethink a number "naïve" assumptions she had about the nature of social problems and the role of charitable community service in the form of health clinics as a way to help alleviate problems facing the Miskito community and her reaction was:

> Why are the health facilities lacking for so many? Doesn't the government care about the about the general health of the people? Has the availability of Western medicine and interventions provided a 'cure-all' mentality among the people and thus they have forsaken their traditional medicines and 'medicine providers' [healers]? I was filled with unanswered thoughts. Filled with frustration of having only a 'Band-Aid' [as]...temporary relief for their symptoms.

Toward the end of the program, Doris experiences an epiphany and becomes meta-aware of the culturally framed worldview that she was using as a lens to understand some of the dissonance she was experiencing in Nicaragua "time and encounters with local 'movers and shakers,'...it was only when I stopped my own thought process of how things could be and listened to the people who were working for change, that I began to realize that empowerment comes from the mobilization of the people, not throwing money or medical supplies at them."

In contemplating future action, Doris reflects on her "360 turnaround," her privileged position and expresses her new found feelings of solidarity with and admiration for the poor people working for change in Nicaragua,

> Knowing and doing have been the two words that remain with me after I have returned home. I have access to supplies and donations for clinics and schools.

I refuse to believe and settle with the satisfaction that the answer to empowerment of the Nicaraguan people is 'stuff.' What I am still formulating is how my physical presence is going to be helping the children become the future of Nicaragua 15-20 years from now...Being part of a 'team effort' has been my initiation to international health...It has been a step for me out of my comfort zone and an eye-opener in how the coping strategies of the people living under stressful conditions have the resources of love and faith...I came away with the desire to return.

Case II: Beth. Beth, 29, participated in the TC3-NICA program trip in 1996.

She had been working as an international education professional at a large university

and then later at a small private college coordinating their study abroad programs.

Five years after returning from Nicaragua she describes her service-learning

experience, "although it was the shortest trip I ever went on, it was the most important

life changing international experience I have ever had." Coming from someone who

had spent most of the past five years of her life prior to her experience in Nicaragua

living in Western Europe or working in the area of study abroad, that statement

indicated that her participation in the course had a significant impact on her.

Participation in the TC3-NICA program had changed Beth in profound ways morally,

politically, intellectually, culturally and personally. Beth later elaborated on the

profound changes she experienced upon returning to the US from Nicaragua:

I had always thought that cross-cultural exchange was about going to museums, learning the customs, history and language, you know, challenging yourself to deal with culture shock and finding ways to function and communicate effectively in another culture...at least that's what I always promoted it as...also, I always thought I was pretty exceptional at being able to adjust to living in other countries, but not after Nicaragua, that was a whole different story...Exposure to poverty firsthand and connecting with amazing people like Earl, Domaris and Dr. Humberto changed my whole way of looking at the world and I had to rethink the whole purpose of international education...I had basically been living in a sheltered world and the whole time thought of myself as worldly...

Beth returned from Nicaragua and found herself getting increasingly disenchanted with her job coordinating study abroad and particularly in advocating the school's flagship program in the UK, "I found myself encouraging students to study in non-mainstream alternative programs in Africa and Central America...and I was getting more and more annoyed with US students abroad complaining about internet access and minor issues with their Flats or classes or the fact that the bars closed early in the UK...They were totally unconscious of their privileged lifestyles..."

Beth resigned from her job and earned Master's degrees in teaching social studies and an MA in history where she hoped she could "make a difference and have an impact on teenagers before it was too late." She explained that the Nicaragua program had opened her eyes to a different world, and to how people living in poverty experience life. She had learned about poverty in developing countries through books and TV but she had never really felt compelled to do anything about it. "I felt disconnected to poverty in the developing world, I mean I had read about it...but after seeing people's hardship firsthand, and learning about the US colonial, imperialist role in exploiting Nicaragua and other countries, I felt guilty, more directly responsible, much more accountable. I felt their pain more deeply, it was emotional and visceral...almost surreal." Beth describes one of her more memorable experiences in Nicaragua that made her aware of her privilege:

> One night I felt really sick to my stomach, I thought I had appendicitis and all of the sudden I got really paranoid because I remember the team visit to the hospital earlier in the week, and I began to think about the lack of medical supplies and equipment, no gauze, clean water, the vultures and dogs eating the garbage outside and I realized for the first time what of must be like to get sick in Puerto and not to have access to health care, how it must feel for a person living in poverty who has no escape, no way out...I had prided myself on being able to adapt to culture shock but this was different...I felt so vulnerable and so guilty at the same time...I realized the privileged life I had been living in the US because I was born there into a middle class family...there's a hospital with advanced equipment and technology, I can call an ambulance, I have insurance, there are social services, I have a job, a toilet that flushes, a

shower, clean water ...needless to say, my pain went way, but the painful realization of what it must be like to live in poverty has always stayed with me...and it probably will for the rest of my life...

Five years after Nicaragua Beth explains how she has tried to act on her translated her critical awareness into greater solidarity with the poor by raising awareness about global social justice issues in her classes. Since Nicaragua I got much more interested in social justice issues related to globalization and now I shape my lesson plan for the year around that idea although it's hard given the curriculum requirements and standards that are imposed by the state." She describes further the struggle she feels in working for social justice:

> it's a constant struggle to raise awareness about social justice issues because for many students and teachers the problems of the poor are invisible, they are not real, they don't see their connection to them, so sometimes I get really frustrated that people don't seem to care or understand that global problems, human rights, environmental issues, sweatshops, ethnic conflict and so are related to US foreign policy, international policies, our consumption habits...I show slides of people who are living in poverty and we discuss different causes and solutions but it's not the same thing as being there and feeling it...really caring about that person who is needlessly suffering in a sweat shop where they make the clothing that we purchase or the person dying from hunger or diseases that we have medicine to cure...It can be really frustrating

In spite of her frustrations in raising awareness, Beth describes the ways in which she has translated her new consciousness into action, "since Nicaragua I have tried to change my lifestyle in ways that I think are socially conscious, I watch my consumption habits and support fair trade labeling, I try to raise consciousness of social justice issues through education, but I am not ready to become a political activist that protests in the street and I am not sure that is the answer, but I know I need to challenge American's general indifference to social problems outside the US and our arrogance in treating the rest of the world." Beth offers the following

metaphor as representing the contradictions she experiences in trying to put her transformation into practice:

> I used to run track when I was in college and we had this exercise where you put this rubber tire that was connected to a rope around your waist and then two people would hold it while you ran against it...they keep pulling and you have to resist it...I would say that after Nicaragua led me to question my lifestyle,...to see that I could no longer ignore injustices around the world, and I had to take a stand, so like that tire around my waist I am resisting but it seems like everyone and everything around me is trying to pull me back into American mainstream culture, which is spend money, go shopping, conspicuous consumption and so on and I keep trying to run the other way, to resist it...it takes a lot of time to build up enough strength to resist the status quo...

Case III Amanda. Amanda, 27, was pursuing a degree in Nursing when she decided to go on the Nicaragua in 1996." Amanda had never been on a plane prior to going to Nicaragua. When she returned she described her experience as "a wake up call for me...spending time in Nicaragua made me think twice about my life." She adds, "the impact this trip had on my life is related to my spiritual life."

She explained that her most significant experiences were spending time and connecting with families in El Muelle helping them with daily chores, seeing what there life was like living under difficult circumstances. She also highlighted the time she spent with the orphanage and community children, eating cereal, playing board games and soccer. When she returned from Nicaragua she experienced significant reverse culture shock. "I am experiencing culture shock like you would not believe. It took me four days to eat Cheerios for breakfast without getting upset. I thought of Daniel, Harry and Henry [Nicaraguan children] fighting over who was going to hold the box, while we ate them. I still think of them every morning while I am eating." Five years later they were still a part of her frame of reference, "I still think of the kids everyday...I miss them so much...I know the kids are getting older...but I'll never forget them..."

For Amanda the deep connections she made with Nicaraguans as part of her service-learning experience had a significant transformative impact on her perspective of spirituality. She explained that two years earlier she had gone on a church mission to work in the ghettos of New York city "we had one goal in mind...it was like to cruise-out the gospel with these people in New York City, and we had, you know, a high success rate in terms of our religious beliefs and all that, with the group that went." However, Amanda later explained that her service-learning experience working with the poorest communities in Nicaragua conducting clinics, doing health skits with the children, learning to listen to the voices of the poor during home visits, led her to question fundamental assumptions underlying her spiritual beliefs:

In Nicaragua we deal a lot more with people's medical needs, I didn't necessarily think of it as a missionary trip...but if you don't show somebody that you care first, before you start cramming this stuff down their throat, you have to take care of people's needs before you start preaching the gospel to them...when I went to NYC, it was like, "Hi! How are you doing?" I've got a book that's gonna...feed you for the rest of your life if you believe in this and you follow this path...Yeah, sure; that's going to be an encouragement in knowing that there is hope out there, but there's gonna be more of a success rate with people that suffer with lack of money and lack of food and lack of certain resources if you get to know them on a personal basis better, try to meet some of their needs and show them you care.

Amanda also expressed frustration upon returning to Nicaragua with an emerging set of new spiritual connections that her congregation didn't understand or value her perspective, "When people [in the congregation] came back and told about their summers, like if they went to Africa on a missionary trip or something like that, there was just a different air in the room when they did their presentation compared to me." She also explained that she her relationships with close friends had been adversely affected by the transformation of her spiritual frame of reference "it's highly frustrating because there's a lot of people that, you know, that I felt that I could talk to about this kind of stuff...You know, we sort of drifted apart. I never really particularly saw it happening, but that's just what happened...like I've said it's important to share the gospel with these people, but you need to take care of their other needs first. And a lot of people in the church don't see that; they're like, 'Yeah, we need to share the gospel with people' and that's their main

goal. I'm not saying it's necessarily bad or wrong, but it's just . . . The approach, you know, needs to be improved."

Case IV Betsy. Betsy, 48, participated in the TC3-NICA program in 1996 and was contemplating starting a degree program in Nursing at TC3. She had significant travel experience as the spouse of someone working for international humanitarian and development organizations. She had traveled extensively and often compared her service-learning experience in Nicaragua with her experience with poverty in Somalia.

Reflecting on life shortly after returning from Nicaragua Betsy describes the transformation she experienced "before" and "after" Puerto Cabezas as a "purging" or "cleansing" experience:

> Early last month, a group of us set out for Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua for what I had recently learned had been billed as the 'the complete cultural immersion experience.' Webster's dictionary describes "immersion" as follows: "to plunge into something that covers, or surrounds; to baptize by immersion. Okay, so let's look at the word "baptize." To baptize, according to the same folks, means "to purify or cleanse spiritually, especially by a purging experience or ordeal."
>
> Yep, we were immersed. We were most certainly immersed. I am floating: surrounded and covered by my 'Nicaragua experience.' So let's go a little deeper and explore the meaning of "purge." Well, there was some purging goin' on in Puerto Cabezas during that time we were in 'Port'…Websters define the word "purge" as "to clear of guilt; to make free of something unwanted, such as fear." Ah, fear. Now we're getting somewhere. So, was it a purging experience? Absolutely. At least it was for me…Culturally immersed and spiritually cleansed in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua. I now think of my life as having two distinct phases: the 'before PC' and 'after PC' periods…I am not the same. I will never be the same. How could I be? It was a chance to face down the demons that have been dogging me for years. Fear I would say, was one of those demons. To sum up my feelings about the experience, I would have to say it was a pivotal. Life changing experience for me.

Betsy begins describe the nature of the "form" transforming as deeply personal – an encounter with her mortality in terms of making a difference before she dies:

So what now? Having experienced poverty, and deprivation on a broad scale, where do we go from here? To experience poverty is one thing; to attempt to address is quite another. So the question is this: What do we 'do' based on what we have learned? I now feel compelled to go out into the world to try to make a difference. That's what Puerto Cabezas did for me. The experience made the concepts of poverty and deprivation less abstract. The poor and deprived have names and faces again, just as they did in Somalia. I've looked into their eyes once more, and now it's impossible to simply turn away without looking back ---without going back...At this point in my life, it is important to leverage those changes and perhaps, by the end of my life, I will look back and discover that over the year, there truly was some sort of transformation. When all is said and done, I'd like to be able to look back over my life and feel, that in conjunction with others, I've made some difference in the lives, health and welfare of others

She discusses the process of envisioning the kinds of actions she can take to as part of the continuing learning process that goes along with aspects of her emerging global consciousness:

...I am still in the process of formulating my plans for the future, but without a doubt PC was pivotal...it helped me clarify what it is I think I am supposed to do in the world. I am certain now that I can do the sort of work that I 'should' do, or might want to do, but before the trip there was a certain amount of ambivalence...I've decided that I'll definitely pursue a Nursing career – something that I should have done years ago...Somalia was the beginning of it for me, but my experiences in PC were especially personal

She draws on prior aspects of the international service-learning process to envision and act on it – to ensure that the experience keeps on living and to reaffirm her moral solidarity with the people of Nicaragua:

I now feel a bond with some of the people of PC, and I feel compelled to do something. I feel that I must keep in touch with people that I have come to know and appreciate and that I will go back to PC at some point in the future...When one gets close to people and begins to feel a 'heart connection,...it's difficult, if not impossible to walk away and never look back, as if the trip was some sort of experiential game.

She describes her service-learning experience as part of a larger ongoing process of "running against the wind:"

> Someone has said that songs that spontaneously come to mind are a reflection of the unconscious. All day, as I have been reflecting about my time in Nicaragua, and PC, an old song has been the periodic backdrop. "Against the wind; still runnin' against the wind...I'm older now but still runnin' against the wind...
>
> I've been runnin' against the wind most of my life. Perhaps it's time to stop. Or maybe we're always runnin' against the wind in this life. Perhaps the challenge is to do just that: to run against the wind. To run against the wind with grace. To run against the wind without fear. But at all costs, run against the wind, instead of taking the easy way out.

Betsy had come back from the trip envisioning the kinds of social change projects she was going to work on and had begun to work on. This a partial list of a much larger and more extensive list of ideas and projects Betsy envisioned "further exploration of the possibility of the formation of a woman's soap making cooperative, completion of a nursing degree, exploration of herbal medicines that are available in PC, the establishment of an educational fund to encourage people in PC to stay in the area, and a project related to the distribution of used prescription eyeglasses. Her personal reflections at that time suggested a tremendous personal breakthrough "a purging" as she put it. A few months later Betsy had developed a formula and plan for a community-based soap making project to possibly implement with the Muelle community, a significant accomplishment given that she was in school and working full-time. I remember her project gained recognition at TC3 and I was chosen to read it at a special honors ceremony. Four years later her comments on how the learning experience affected her personally; how it continues to shape her life, her worldview and ability to acts speaks to the complex and dynamic struggles entailed in taking action to "integrate" one's transformational experience.

I do feel it...but to verbalize is just, it's something I can't, maybe it's because so much time has elapsed and so much has happened in my life since I came out of that experience...you can't break a personal transformation into discrete pieces. There's nothing discrete about it in my opinion. I don't know maybe there is and I just don't see it ...but to tease it all apart just would be impossible because there are so many variables that play in

She explains that she quit her job because she didn't find it as meaningful as it once was and discusses the difficulties related to maintaining commitment to global social justice on a personal and moral level that emerged as part of her experience in Nicaragua.

She talks about her important decision to change her career focus and study nursing:

I came back, I decided and it really in large part, or let me say in part because I'd always wanted to do nursing from the time I was young I just had felt that as crazy as it sounds, to be a nurse. It did because I came back to university and I continued doing computer work and I felt uneasy in my work, in my daily work. I felt that there was something else that I needed to do with my life, that working in developing computer systems is not high on my list of priorities and that it really needed to do something that would enable me to work on a level that Donna did in Nicaragua. I really felt that, and she's a wonderful role model you know as a nurse and in many other ways as well...

Betsy explains how her service-learning experience still lives in her and how it has become an important frame of reference in terms of her continued involvement in working in relief situations with people who are suffering or who are in need. She tells the story of a man she met at one of the clinics who seemed desperate and in need of support and how that memory reminds her of how much she continues searching for ways to make a difference:

I think it's interesting, I start work tomorrow, in working in a psyche unit, "behavioral services" excuse me is what they call it. So I did have an experience in Nicaragua...And it made a great impact on me. Then in Nicaragua there was one fellow who stands out. When we were running the clinic...there was a fellow who approached me and he was so desperate and I've thought about him a lot. He just had this kind of look in his eyes, there

was a time when I thought to myself well he's here and he just wants drugs. But yet the more I talked to him there was kind of an earnestness, there was something in him, something in his eyes and I felt that there was definitely a mental health issue, definitely some sort of psyche issue and anxiety was a big piece of it. And I felt guilty because Elizabeth (Mid-wife living in Nicaragua) had referred to me as a bleeding heart liberal and she accused me of jumping the [health clinic] line all the time and so I jumped it one too many times and I didn't feel that I could go back to the front of the line with him.. So I ended up doing what I thought was the best thing for him which was to talk to him about other ways of relieving his anxiety

Betsy discusses how her transformational learning journey continues and having accomplished her goal of gaining a nursing degree and a job where she feels is making a difference, she begins to develop a new vision in becoming part of an international ER team:

So I do see the bigger picture...If I can get a few years of psyche experience, also emergency room experience which as it turns out will be a piece of my work at the hospital because I can do a three month stint in the ER. So I do see that as something I'd like to do in the future. Maybe go abroad and work during periods of crisis. I don't' know. For me its good to be here to hear this from you because it does give me a sense even though on some level of course I knew you were going back year after year after year. But it is, it's not an individual effort. I mean I was just one piece of a larger effort and I think as Americans...I'm not the kind of person you would think would be, I'm not an "all about me" sort of person...it's a team effort.

Case V Kendra. Kendra, 22, participated in the TC3-NICA program in January, 2000 as a second-year nursing student at TC3. Kendra expressed that her career aspiration was to make a difference at the grassroots level as a nurse, mid-wife. A few months after returning Kendra describes her transformation as cultural in terms of struggling against the dominant forces of individualism and materialism, as personal with regard to changing her lifestyle and as moral in learning how to translate her experience into being an ally with the poor.

Kendra's draws from her service-learning experience in Nicaragua to highlight the contradictions she has felt in reconciling her new critical awareness on a personal and cultural level with what she now recognizes tremendous wealth and privilege in the US and an old lifestyle living like a "Queen:"

> O watch myself like an eagle. I am very conscious of my kingdom-like home and my luxurious Queen's bed. My 1983 Volvo just reached 300, 00 miles on the speedometer and I now see it as my opulent chariot. I put a stereo in it as a congratulatory gift for having traveled so far; that stereo could have paid for a year's worth of education for two children in Puerto Cabezas. That thought makes my heart heavy, but I love my music. I have little to no struggle in my life with the exception of the painful (and self-absorbed) awareness of being a member of the most privileged people in the world. Sometimes I believe it's an empty life. I don't really know what it is to struggle. I don't live in a community that is forced to work together to make any movement into something better. It is isolating and suffocating to live this way...I see now that I have endless opportunities, endless. I could choose to live in el Muelle and cook turtle or fish in between my loads of laundry scrubbing, (if I had any turtle or fish or clothes to wash) and I would probably be ecstatic. I could walk down the road and never have to come back because I know that any dream or goal that I have is attainable. I have a support system of family and friends who have money or leverage somewhere that I could take advantage of. I am privileged.

She also had a difficult time relating her international service-learning experience and her new emerging consciousness regarding the US materialism to friends and family:

> ...I told my friends about my trip and I showed them my pictures but there's no way they can understand and I try to... I don't know sometimes I get so angry and sometimes I get so disgusted because not only do we live in such a materialistic, superficial culture, we also live in such a throw away culture and the amount of waste that we have is just despicable....

Kendra discusses how she has tried to translate her new global consciousness into action by altering her personal lifestyle since returning from Nicaragua:

> I try not to buy stuff that is really bad though I know most of the things I have on today are probably made in sweatshops. I was in the mall the other day

with one of my friends and we were like yeah let's go shopping and as I was trying stuff on I was like gosh whose hands sewed this, who... and I go to the mall once a year, that was a rarity I want to just let you know....Yeah and I think that it's constant though and I still bought it...It would be really easy for me to have that information and that probably is a step I'm going to be taking in my life soon because, but I do question every time I buy something and I try to buy locally...I try to buy stuff from farmers that I know or farmers that I... because I know these big corporations are just buying people out and then settling down in some country where maybe they can pay people 3 cents an hour and that's still a battle because if they are not there paying them 3 cents and hour what else are the people there doing....I mean it's so.. it's such a web, it's so interconnected...

Kendra "unpacks" her metaphor of the "spider web" for describing her transformational learning in the moral, personal and cultural realms and how she continues to morally connect with and draw from the struggles of people she met in Nicaragua:

I think that the spider web metaphor is how I... I guess not how I specifically see just my experience in Nicaragua but just life and how I'm here in America now, but I'm still there and I'm still...I'm not so far removed from there, even though I'm here in this totally different culture, totally different experience, I'm still in a lot of ways stepping lightly as I would there and thinking.....I guess I just think about my actions more and I think about...Like I went into Ithaca Bakery to give me something like an organic Nicaraguan coffee, give me coffee...Yeah...I just...my eyes filled up with tears because I was thinking about well I'm glad at least....I actually pictured some women in the fields...Yeah imagine if you were a....[Nicaraguan]

Kendra's comments further illustrate how the interconnectedness that the spider web metaphor helps explain the moral solidarity she developed by becoming critically aware of and learning from the struggle, strength and resilience of the Nicaraguan's she met. With her new frame of reference she draws from the strength of women in Nicaragua that she met by keeping pictures of them by her bedside as reminders of their courage and strength in fighting for women's rights in the face of tremendous adversity:

I really liked meeting Matilda [director of Women's Center in Puerto Cabezas]...it kind of gave me back hope because there have maybe one out of ten women she's been able do it...there's one woman who isn't getting beaten any more...her kids are going to see that...she's tired though...I would think it must be so hard to be in that position...any city that I go into there are all ready a whole bunch of organizations started for me to work in, but she is doing this...With no support from anyone...I have a picture of her too. I felt that community strength and realizing that that's really where it starts is within a community and there can be the political, the laws and what have you but it's the one on ones and it's the community family that keeps on branching out beyond that becoming consummate and being able to be in this society as they are.

She discusses her transformation in terms of her moral obligation to use her privilege to build solidarity with people living on the margins, being an ally, questioning the status quo and staying spiritually healthy in order to continue fighting for social justice:

> I guess what I try do in my life is learn as much as I can try to figure out what I can do that in my position, this life that I'm leading now instead of feeling guilty or feeling like oh I'm the Gringo they would never respect me, but like being happy within myself to be able to communicate with, and support people and growing...If I only said one thing to you this entire time, I guess it would be that what I hope to do in my life is to help people feel as empowered as I do in my life...I can walk into or I can look outside my life and see 500 doors and I can open any of them. There are some people who can't even see one door and I really believe that no matter what situation you are in, what country you're in there are doors and I really would hope to help people to see more doors in their lives. Those doors could be like maybe getting out of that house that your husband beats you daily in. That's like equal to 500 doors you know. So working with people and for social justice and equality it's on the forefront. But I also need to maintain myself first because if I stressed out than that's just going to be more stressed out I try to vent my frustration positively and not feel hopeless ...

Case VI Laura. During our interview a few years after her participation in the TC3-NICA program, Laura, 30, responds to a question regarding how she experienced

the process of service-learning upon return to the US. She describes the bumps, twists and turns that have characterized her long-term transformational journey from Nicaragua, the envisioning, nursing school, to finding a way to integrate her learning experience years later as a co-chair the Green Party and after so much "dis-integration and struggle,"

> That is a really big question. It's not very conscious...But if I look back on actions that I've taken I think oh, yeah definitely I can see some things in the work there that I might have learned in Nicaragua or that were driven home to me in Nicaragua.

She explains that after returning from Nicaragua she ended up changing her education and career direction because she didn't feel that becoming a nurse as part of a larger institutional framework that supported the status quo and served to reproduce an unjust health care system, would allow her to challenge the US health care system as well as fulfill her broader vision for social justice as an alternative to the US political and economic system:

> Actually that's part of when I got out of the nursing program. The institutions actually. I loved working with the patients and I really loved learning but the whole, the way patients were treated and the way nurses treated each other, the way the administration treated all its employees and the fact, it was just, it was so obvious that it was really there to make a buck. And it wasn't really concerned with the patients in the bed, you know or if they were there would have been more nurses working. It was all about, how can we get as much work out of these nurses that we've got going and make a profit. And I thought oh well it will be better when I work in home healthcare and I did a little work with them and it was just like, a little better but the system everywhere was so, I was so disheartened by that and just didn't feel that I could be a part of that at all and knew that it would really just crush me. I didn't want to participate in that, but then it was like but oh this is, that was my whole, that was my world, okay well what the hell am I going to do now.

Drawing from her international service-learning experience, Laura discussed some of her initial evolving personal struggles in trying to understand her role in making a difference on a larger scale:

Because I knew through all of the experiences that I had had that I really wanted to be doing something to help people ...then in Nicaragua I did some clinics and I was with people and there were some other areas that I could get into that would still meet this calling I seem to have yet not be in the medical field...just thinking about that and realizing that okay we did these clinics and my part was to take people's blood pressure. It was not a big deal, I was weighing people and doing their blood pressures but the more important part I think was that people really felt listened to for a while there and I don't know, just reflecting on that experience helped me realize that there were other things to do. You don't have to be so narrow minded...

Laura discusses further some of her fears and concerns thinking about getting more involved in changing social and structure that impact countries like Nicaragua:

> ...you can expand out and just the sheer gravity of the situation in Nicaragua, the desperation of the people. And I remembered again, oh this is going to take years, and oh you're just one person. It helped me beat down the whole, it's almost like a superman image I have of myself, it's not that I really feel like I can do this, but it's almost more like I need to do this, I have to be doing this. And I have to fix everything, I have to fix everything and it helped me realized, well no you're just this little person you know and you can do a little bit and hopefully by the little bit that you do it echoes with a few other people and they in turn go out and help a few others and that's the way it's going to grow. It's not going to be because Laura's the avenger comes in and does any great thing.

Laura then decided to give up on nursing because she felt that she would still be to attached to institutions that supported the status quo and would be able to engage in more radical social change to actually change the institutions themselves. She explains how inspired she was by Earl and Domaris in Nicaragua:

to see the work that Earl and Domaris were doing was phenomenal, that was really fabulous and it's like oh, look at these people who are walking their talk. Look how much they're doing for this community, that's so fabulous. So that was really inspiring. It was kind of an answer to my whole question of oh my God what in the world can you possibly do in the face of this. And here these people were Earl and Domaris and simply with their faith they built this great, this just huge community that was really helping people make the most of their lives...In a very difficult situation.

With Earl and Domaris as role models, Laura makes an interesting distinction between working as a personal career endeavor and working as a contribution to the community. She draws on their example to reconceptualize her own way of viewing herself and her lifestyle as an alternative way to work and as a broad-based community social change effort:

Well you know what, I just thought that people don't' have careers down there. Even Earl, that's not a career, that's a life, that is not a career. And it makes you see like oh my God we are so career oriented, we have life styles in the US where we have life styles that's just such a bizarre idea down there. I mean you have a life down there and for the first time you're like you not on the little one track thing, here you're trained up well what are you going to be when you grow up, you know what's your career, what's you job. But down there it's like family is so much more important and community and you don't have careers. Maybe you're a teacher but you're much more than that. You're part of a bigger community that's your family.

Laura describes how her struggles with her transformational learning journey and her reformulation of her identity in terms of combining social change efforts as part of her "lifework" brought her to commit to being the co-chair of the green party. Involvement in the leadership of the Green Party provided a way for Laura to resist, not adapt, the dominant two-party status quo:

Cool that you're bringing up the Green Party because that's what I was going to go into next about how Nicaragua affected me. Like I was saying, I was able to sit back and wait until something hit me, and most of what was hitting me for the last year and a half was I feel so disenfranchised with this country, you know it's just I don't feel like there's anyone out there who really, or there's no one in government who really understands what the hell is going on. It's

like we've got this elite upper class leading us and they pay lip service to these, to the poor people who don't have nearly as much as they do and it's like how do you break in there. And I just thought oh well that's just the way it is you know, you just have to put up with that. So when the whole Nader thing came along I was like oh there's a Green Party, oh my God and they have similar politics to me, oh my God I can get involved in it. So that was one area that I could jump in...

She further explains how active participation as a leader in the Green Party helped her reconcile her newly emerging consciousness that is antithetical to the American economic, political and cultural system that she is living in:

...because I could so much more clearly see, it's almost like a double life going on in this world you know. One, some people just have it great, they just have no clue about what life is really like in a third world country, what it's like to be poor, even in this country. Like some of the ghettos in NYC or something or DC and just how difficult life is doing. Like my parents are always saying, well why don't' they just move? And I'll look at them and say you people are, you have no clue. First it takes money to move, where are they going, anyway I could really get into it but it just, it really made me see that wow people don't have any clue about what it's like and these people that don't' have any clue are running the country and that really, that hit home... because it works for them.
...they've got it great you know and hey the masses are pretty quiet.

And she describes how the Nicaragua international service-learning experience gave her strength and insight into believed she could be both an ally to the poor and also make a larger political impact taking on a leadership role with the Green Party:

Like I felt, to go back a step, oh this is definitely something I need to do. I want to be an intermediary. I want to bring the plight of these people, any people in distress to the people who are running the country and just didn't really understand how to go about doing that and so then I got involved with the Green Party and it was such, it was such a riot to go to those first meetings because nobody really knew anything, knew how to do anything. What was going on, there were a couple of people there who were older, like 40s, 50s who had been activists for a long time and I was waiting for some leadership from them, you know okay I'm here, I'm ready, I'm enthusiastic, motivated, I will do whatever you want me to do and they weren't telling us what to do you know they had done activism in their own field but they hadn't really done it in a political arena, they didn't know how to run a political campaign and they

were busy with their own causes so they wanted to be involved with this but didn't want to run the show and so suddenly I was like, I could learn how to do this and help them run the show. And so it really, well again the Nicaragua experience made me step up the plate really. I was unwilling to kind of let this slide by because I'd see how important these issues are. Whereas a lot of the people there, they were like yeah intellectually I agree with that and I think this, yeah that's a good thing we should do that. But they weren't motivated to really take it to the next level. I mean, what's the word, help me out here.

Laura speaks to her service-learning experience in Nicaragua and to the ongoing nature of the transformational learning process in personally experiencing a deep connection to the plight and struggle of people on the margins as giving a felt sense of urgency,

> I kind of have this sort of view that makes me feel, it makes me sound like an egotist to say oh well I have this experience, but it wasn't like that. maybe, it's a sense of urgency, I feel a sense of urgency. Like things are going downhill and we need to stop the ball rolling at least before we can even begin pushing it back up the hill.

She further describes how seeing poverty firsthand gave her a greater sense of commitment to doing rather than just thinking about social justice:

> So I was more willing to make it, to go a little bit farther, make things really happen and I really credit the NICA experience for lighting the fire under my butt. You know it's not just, I really wanted to bring it home here too because I mean there are different levels and I mean like we just don't understand the desperation. In the face of what's going on in Nicaragua you're just like flattened. But I mean there are so many things happening here in this country. I mean the race barriers I think are just getting wider and the income barrier is just huge and I mean healthcare, just we could go on all night about healthcare.

> And I mean I've recently really come up against that with being sick for so long and I just had a mole removed that might be cancerous you know and I mean I don't have health insurance and so I've racked up a lot of money in healthcare and I don't' have health insurance. So I still think well yes I am poor and there are a lot of people who are much worse off than I am, I mean God what if this had been my kid you know and there are a lot of people who are living with many children with less income in this country and their kid gets sick and what the hell do you do. So even just on the issue of healthcare, if

we could just get a little more equality in that area that would be a help. So I'm not just looking at like global issues but even close, as close to home.

She talks about the ongoing long term struggle with learning how to "integrate" her emerging global consciousness in the US, and in finding a community of like-minded individuals who were willing to make an active and broader political commitment to resisting a culture whose dominant values contradicted with her own:

I went through like 2 or 3 years really having a hard time finding people that thought that way, but then all the sudden along comes Ralph Nadir that says it's not just voting for Gore or Bush it's a whole system that needs to be reworked, that's more environmentally conscientious...and social welfare and health care should be socialized and so on and so forth so I think that there aren't a lot of people in the U.S. obviously because he only got about 3 percent of the vote that think that way but that doesn't mean they should give up. I think that was partly what I was trying to say, is that some people come back and they see people in Nicaragua who are in a system that works against them. From my perspective if we were going to change things in Nicaragua we'd have to change the system. Because Nicaragua is like the lowest on the priority of the capitalist system and they are never ever going to move up. At some point people just say that's got to stop. So part of that means changing the way the U.S. works with Nicaragua on a more systemic level.

Laura then goes on to explain taking on the co-chair responsibility of the "Green party" and the beginning of a new vision and a continuation of the transformational learning process:

I'm still co-chair. I'm actually in I think an even more interesting time because we're not actually an official Green Party, we're like a Green Party club almost. So far we're not affiliated with the National Green Party because basically we didn't know how to do it...now I'm reading through that and learning how to affiliate with the National Organization and all kinds of interesting group stuff that needs to be done, and it will make our meetings go so much faster and just more efficient and effective. That's such a good e word. Yes, we're going to be more effective. And the thing is we were actually pretty effective for who we were because I just want to pat us on the back for a

minute because we got 21% in the City of Ithaca. We beat Bush in the City of Ithaca. Tompkins County we got 11.3%...So I keep thinking wow, if we had been organized think of what could have happened, that would be great.

For Laura, the ongoing reconciliation is challenging and tough but she has found a niche to undertake counter-hegemonic practice and has gained a sense of agency to carry out her emerging personal, cultural, intellectual, political and moral consciousness. By participating and drawing from her international service-learning experience Laura continues to learn to reformulate her emerging frame of reference so that allows her to fulfill that need to change the world on a more structural level. Yet, as long as social arrangements continue to impede social justice work, the more equitable redistribution of resources and the alleviation of poverty, the transformational learning processes triggered through the process of international service-learning in Nicaragua will never end.

The individual cases described above provide empirical insight on where the transformation occurs in international service-learning. While not all of the TC3-NICA students in this study express a profound shift in their world view, a significant number do return with a new frame of reference. Of the students who do return with a significantly altered view of themselves and the world, transformation occurs along political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal and spiritual dimensions. For most of the students who described profound changes, the transformative experience in Nicaragua led to greater critical and visceral awareness of poverty in Nicaragua – "it was no longer abstract." While the transformations that result of participation in service in Nicaragua could be defined as "more permeable and differentiated" they are not necessarily positive, liberating experiences. They represent emotional pain and ongoing struggle.

The Transformational Learning Process in International Service-Learning:

An Emerging Global Consciousness

Based on the various forms of data collected and analyzed from 1994 to 2002,

a pattern emerged that describes how students experience the process of

transformational learning in international service-learning which I have labeled

"emerging global consciousness." The transformational learning process pattern that

emerged from the data set entails six major dimensions that represent a combination of

meanings, contextual factors, responses, interactions, and critical events that students

experienced prior to, during and after program participation. The six themes entail the

following process components: Contextual border crossing, dissonance,

personalization, processing, connecting, and emerging global consciousness, which

encompasses all of the themes taken together (see Figure 4.1).

The six dimensions consist of a set of sub-themes or categories that describe

learning in a more detailed manner how students experience the processes of

international service. The positioning of two-way arrows signals the interconnected

and dialectical relationship among each of these components throughout the duration

of the three-week program and afterward.

CONTEXTUAL
BORDER CROSSING

RE ⟷ DIS

CHAMELEON COMPLEX

N

DISSONANCE

S

PERSONALIZING

CONNECTING ⟷ **PROCESSING**

TRANSFORMING FORMS

EMERGING GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS

ENVISIONING
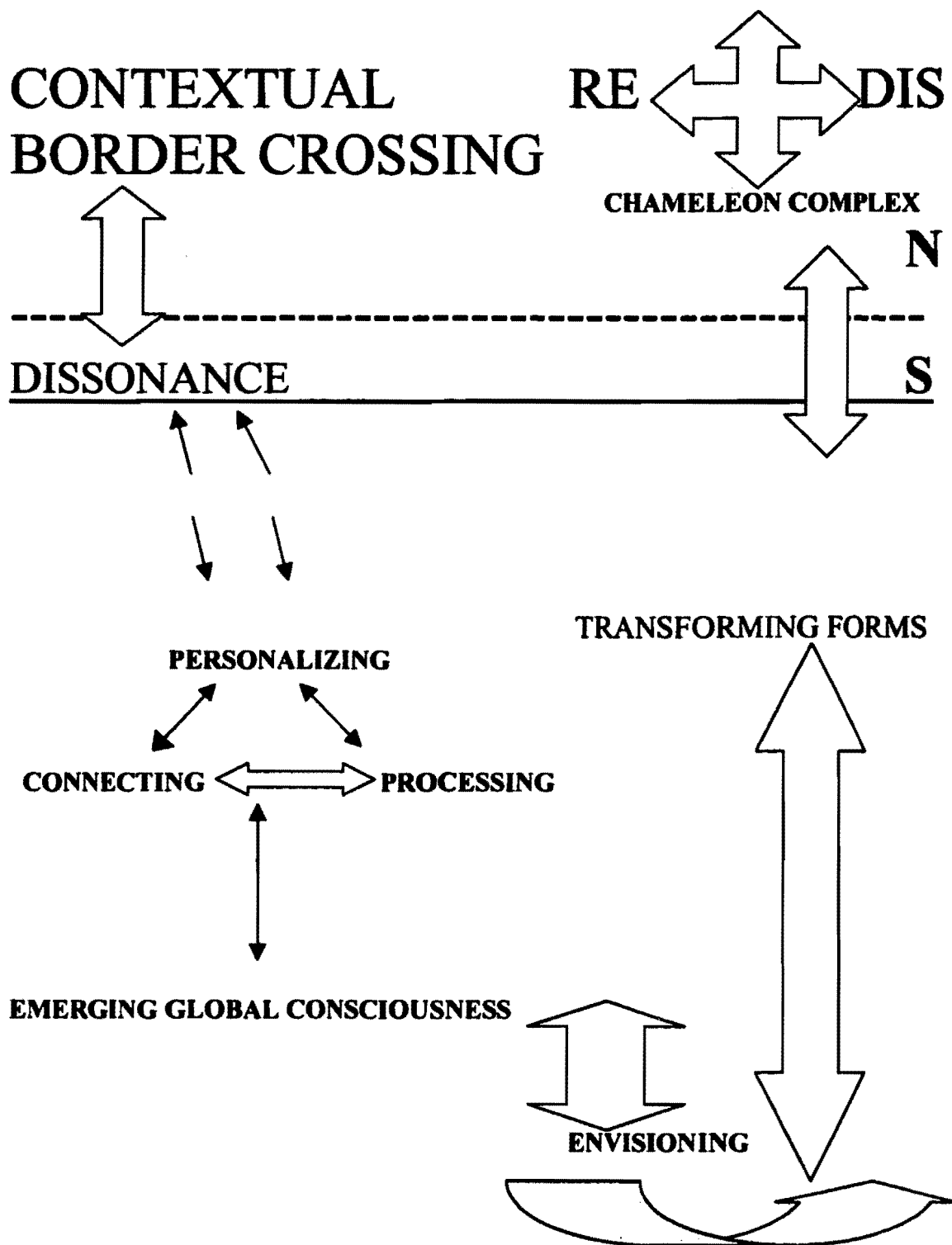
Figure 4.1 The Transformational Learning Process in International Service-Learning:
An Emerging Global Consciousness.

The learning process entailed in emerging global consciousness develops as a result of the dynamic interplay of the other learning components. The overall pattern of the transformational learning process represents transformation as an individually unique, multifaceted, partial, and emerging global consciousness.

Contextual Border Crossing

The study findings indicate that there are at least four important dimensions of the learning process entailed in contextual border crossing that influence how students experience transformational service-learning in Nicaragua (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Contextual Border Crossing

Learning Process Theme	Meaning	Characteristics
Contextual Border Crossing	Elements of students' "baggage" i.e., personal, structural, programmatic and historical aspects of one's position, biography and world view that they carry with them across cultural contexts and which influence and shape the way students experience the process of transformational international service-learning	1) Personal: Personal biography, prior critical life experiences or events, past experiences, expectations, goals, fears, social, political, cultural, epistemological, psychological assumptions, worldview, emotional state, prior travel, personality type and style, language skills, familiarity with Nicaraguan culture, profession, previous and current social role, i.e., mother, sister, daughter, grandmother and so on, service and volunteer experience, historical knowledge of US foreign policy and Central America, level and type of education, religious beliefs, values, self-concept and so on. 2) Structural: Race, gender, nationality, culture, class, age, ableness, sexual orientation 3) Programmatic: Program design, purpose, goals, objectives, institutional sponsorship, duration, group dynamics, interpersonal relations, learning activities, and strategies 4) Historical: Period in history, history of Central America and Nicaragua, US and European-Nicaragua relations, US and European foreign policy in Central America and Nicaragua, Nicaragua's and US position in the Global system of nation states

The transformational learning experience of TC3-NICA students, who are predominantly US citizens, white, middle class, and female, cannot be explained without understanding the individual, structural, programmatic and historical aspects of the context that they carry with them across the border between the US and Nicaragua. Contextual border-crossing represents geographically, chronologically and biographically the initial staging of the transformational process. It is a personal commitment of time, money, and cognitive and emotional energy on the part of the US student. It is the agreement to be open to repositioning him/herself experientially in a different cultural milieu by traveling from the United States to Nicaragua to participate in an international service-learning experience sponsored ostensibly to earn six academic credits from Tompkins Cortland Community College toward completion of their academic program. However, while the outward instrument goal of learning might be to achieve academic credit in the areas of health and culture, there is far more to the learning process than instrumental learning as the data below confirms.

Contextual border crossing uncovers a number of previously hidden or unproblematized taken-for-granted assumptions that students bring with them to Nicaragua. TC3-NICA students carry with them a personal biography, social status and world view that has been shaped by a dynamic set of historical, geographical, social, political, cultural and psychological experiences and circumstances. Many of the aforementioned experiences, characteristics and factors that shape and influence students' assumptions about themselves and the world have been uncritically assimilated through complex processes of socialization and acculturation during different stages of childhood, adolescence and adulthood. These sets of assumptions make up a personal mental frame of reference or world view that acts a filter for how individuals interpret and make meaning of their service-learning experience in Nicaragua.

Individuals also carry with them a socially constructed identity and position located on the global hierarchical map of human social, political, economic and cultural relations. For example, students that participate in the TC3-NICA program, who are predominantly white, female, American, middle class and educated beyond high school have a more powerful personal and structural position on the global social map than a Nicaraguan mother of six who has no income, or education. All of these elements above combine to make up the personal, structural, historical, and programmatic "baggage" that TC3-NICA students carry with as they cross the border from the US to Nicaragua.

I found that the metaphor "baggage" highlighted the culturally textured ways that individual and structural factors affect that ways in which students experience the international service-learning process as they cross borders into another cultural context. The theme of contextual border-crossing represents the individual, structural, programmatic and historical contents of the "baggage" that influence each student's frame of reference and the meaning they attribute to their learning experience before during and after participating in the TC3-NICA service-learning program. Since the TC3-NICA program is an international service-learning program has an explicit social justice orientation, where the US students in this study live, work and study in with Nicaraguan communities who are experiencing tremendous poverty, the transformational learning process that contextual border crossing represents means for many students realization of uncritically examined assumptions related to cultural capital, history, power, wealth, privilege, economic disparities, human rights, access to health, and quality of life – particularly in terms of how they seem to have more power relative to the people they meet in Nicaragua.

Contextual factors frame how students making meaning of the international service-learning experience. The addition of "border crossing" highlights international service-learning as a movement across socially and historically constructed borders

that represent an unequal divisions power between a richer, more powerful US and a poorer, less powerful Nicaragua. The geographic border denotes an unequal and hierarchical relations of power whereby the North has throughout history dominated the South politically, economically and militarily.

Contextual border crossing is a learning a process of re-positioning one's self – a cognitive, affective and behavioral shift across physical, personal, social, cultural, political, economic, and historically structured borders. Contextual border crossing in international service-learning represents a complex process whereby US students are re-located and situated in an radically different set of circumstances, a whole new reality that is dramatically different from their reality across the border. This is a learning process whereby TC3-NICA students begin to unmask and recognize previously invisible aspects of their social location on the global map of power in terms of the social, political, cultural and economic capital "baggage" they carry with them. Contextual border crossing indicates a social learning process in which students begin to more critically evaluate their privileged social status relative to many Nicaraguans. The following section describes the four major elements contained in the learning process of contextual border crossing.

Kendra's description of her thoughts, expectations, concerns, fears and hopes, captures the essence of what goes through the minds of many TC3-NICA students during the process of transformational learning in contextual border crossing:

> Despite my attempts to still my mind, my pre-trip days were filled with daydreams about what might happen. I imagined suffering and pain and had a fear of being unable to function and provide care to people because I thought I would break down emotionally. I was terrified that I would be seen as a rich, ignorant American. I am already insecure about the whiteness of my skin and wondered what kind of coldness I would receive from the local people of Puerto Cabezas and all of Nicaragua. I was afraid I would not be able to access any of the knowledge that I have built up regarding nursing care. I know very little Spanish, therefore I was convinced that communication would be a horrendous barrier and that my inability to speak the language would get

me into some detrimental experience. The United States of America has a very shady and complex history that I have a general understanding of but have never been able to completely understand. Nicaragua has a similarly confusing history that I just started looking into just prior to the trip. I thought that the inadequacy of my knowledge base would greatly hinder my ability to comprehend the state of the country upon my visit. I wanted to enter the country and shed my jaded or preconceived notions but was unsure as to whether that were even possible. I am an optimist and have great hope for the world. When I get into the much and mire of the extensive problems that are prevalent in this world I begin to feel pessimistic. I was worried I would lose all my hope; that the problems were too immense to work with or solve...Providing care is something that comes from deep within me- I didn't want to be perceived as a person who thinks like this 'oh you poor, suffering, ignorant people, let me try to save you.'

Personal elements of contextual border crossing. Each TC3-NICA student carries a unique contextual frame of reference prior to and after crossing the "border" into Nicaragua that has an impact on how students experience international service-learning. In essence, contextual border crossing illuminates the myriad personal, structural, programmatic and historical "contrasting elements" that combine to initiate and also lay the foundation for the international service-learning process. The various elements of the contextual border crossing that each student carries with them is also integral for defining, understanding and explaining how students experience the rest of the components that make up the general pattern for international service-learning. As mentioned previously, the majority of the participants in this study exemplify a middle class woman from the United States, white, previous who have had prior travel experience in the form of academic non-service study abroad or tourism, and who tend to have career aspirations in the health related fields. While not all participants fit that description, it provides useful information in terms of understanding how social context plays an important role in shaping the process of transformational learning for students who come from a different educational, social, cultural, economic and political positions than most of the Nicaraguans they meet.

Apart from personal biographical differences, the first step of the transformational learning process also entails significant personal risk as a step outside one's world into a previously unknown culture. Being separated from their normal social networks of support while experiencing the culture shock of living in another country has an impact on how students learn from their experience. It also means that students will need to develop specific social skills, learn different coping strategies and establish new support networks to adapt to and function effectively in their new environment.

Students are consciously aware of some of the personal contents contained in the baggage that they bring with them. For example, students can readily identify their personal goals, expectations, fears, prior travel experiences and some of their assumptions leading up to entering the host culture. Common statements include, "I want to make a difference," I would like to experience a Third World country," I want to give to those less fortunate," "I would like to work with an international humanitarian organization, "I want to see if I can handle living in a Third World environment," I want to improve my nursing and Spanish language skills in real life situations." Additional individual aspects of the baggage they bring with them include fears of flying, the unknown, language competence in health, and skepticism in their own abilities to handle conditions of poverty and interact with other students, and Nicaraguans.

Students also bring with them prior travel experience, some of whom have been to developing countries in Africa, South and Central America. These students tend to expect and overestimate higher levels of competence in coping with the potential stresses living in a new environment and negotiating their way through linguistic barriers and cultural differences. Surprisingly, the majority of these students experienced more extreme levels of culture shock and incompetence because of their unrealistic expectations of intercultural competence prior to crossing the border into

Nicaragua. Dissonance for some students with prior travel became more intense as the connections they made with Nicaraguans that were experiencing extreme poverty became stronger and more personal.

On the other hand, students who had very little travel experience, and who had expected incompetence, were much more able to handle the stress and intense emotions that resulted from exposure and intimate contact with Nicaraguans experiencing poverty.

Joyce also highlights the personal commitment and meaningfulness in taking such a huge risk crossing the border into Nicaragua as a mother leaving her family and children at home:

> The other piece for me...I felt really irresponsible in a sense doing that, when I had a young child. When we were flying over the jungle, Martha and I were like, "what the heck are we doing? We are mothers with our kids at home, this thing goes down, what are we doing? How irresponsible is that?" You know, but I knew it was like...when you start to have kids, its going to be, you'll really get it.

Betsy describes her fears despite having had significant travel experience in a number of different countries in Africa:

> I had some reservations about the trip, given some family and personal issues with which I was dealing at the time. In spite of having traveled far and wide, including Somalia, I confess I had a few apprehensive moments relating to fear of the unknown, and the prospect of spending time with a group of relative strangers...how do I fare? Could I really get through it...and would I contribute in a meaningful way? Would I be able to 'make some sort of difference?

Structural elements of contextual border crossing. Though much less visible the to the TC3-NICA students' "mind's eye" and much more difficult to observe, some students identified structural elements that constitute their contextual frame of reference prior to crossing the border. Through formal pre-orientation learning

activities and journaling, students imagine the ways in which a Nicaraguan might view North Americans and vice verse. They often ask, "will they see me as a 'gringo' who supported the Contras during the civil war? Will they treat me as a person representing something other than US citizenship?" "Will I be accosted on the street because people will assume I am a rich American?" "Do people think all Americans are rich?" "Is Nicaragua a country characterized by machismo?" "How will I be treated as a white woman?" What does a Third World country like Nicaragua look like? What is poverty in Nicaragua? By imagining and contrasting structural relations that might between the two cultures students initiate the process of learning as contextual border-crossing. They also begin to acquire a superficial understanding of the power differentials that exist between the US and Nicaragua in terms of race, class, gender, culture and nationality.

Doris, a mother of seven children, reflects on how much structural contextual "baggage" she ended up unpacking that she didn't realize she had brought with her:

> My passport was stamped with the Nicaraguan State Seal and it made me an official international student. I was about to embark on the 'mission' of 'helping people' so poor that they can't help themselves. I was about to impart my 'Western knowledge' on a rural coastal community whose most outstanding statistic was 90% unemployment. I felt good about this mission and hopeful that whatever relief from physical suffering I could bring the community was a means to an end. My experience in rural Nicaragua for three weeks would soon prove this 'Western thought process' to be very far from reality.

Programmatic elements of contextual border crossing. Student representatives of an international service-learning team, whose purpose is to learn about social problems – particularly health problems in Nicaragua - and perform service to help address and alleviate those problems, students carry "program baggage" across the border as well. They start to think about the program's purpose, the service-learning activities they will perform, their prior experiences in "developing countries," images

of the poor that they have seen on TV or have construed from reading books and/or talking to people. They think about other study abroad or service-learning programs they have participated in, and compare it with the purposes, and types of interaction and contact they had with the "locals," and the other students in those programs.

Students in this study tend to assume that service means charity and have a positive outlook on charity as an appropriate approach for making a difference and contributing a social good. Assumptions about the benefits associated with charity and altruism are carried across the border into Nicaragua and impact how students experience international service-learning. Most TC3-NICA program participants have an undifferentiated view of "service" and have not problematized the concept of service as something other than charity. Along with a charitable view, most students have not experienced or theorized alternative approaches to liberal capitalism and view representative democracy, voting and community volunteering as the most appropriate forms of citizenship.

The program design influences how students experience the learning process as they begin to make mental and imaginary contextual leaps across US-Nicaraguan borders. As part of the program, students participate in two 3-hour pre-orientation seminars prior to going to Nicaragua. Learning activities include small group work, clinic simulations, role-plays, and exercises meant to help them anticipate and prepare for some culture-specific issues they will experience in Nicaragua – particularly as US citizens.

Pre-orientation activities also include video footage from former trips which documents clinics, community dialogues, and the various sites and people current TC3-NICA students might encounter during their sojourn. Other learning activities include presentations by former students, and reading assignments related to the history, geography, politics, and culture of Nicaragua and more specifically, the Atlantic Coast Region. Academic materials also cover theories, practices, ands issues

related to community development and health care in the Atlantic Coast region. The pre-orientation program provides students with an initial understanding of the historical context of some of the social, cultural, political and economic problems and differences that they will encounter when they arrive in Nicaragua.

The pre-orientation activities focus on US-Nicaraguan relations over the past two centuries, Nicaraguan history (Particularly the history of British colonization of and US (neo) colonialism in the Atlantic Coast region), the Somoza family dictatorship, the Sandinista revolution, the civil war period, US support for the Contras, Miskito separatism, Nicaraguan foreign debt, oppression, human rights, to situate social, economic, political, cultural, and ethnic problems in a broader historical context. The pre-orientation helps students to begin to imagine what life was and is like for a majority of Nicaraguan citizens.

The pre-orientation program also presents health as a culturally and socially constructed practice to assist students in beginning to look more critically at their assumptions about North-South structural relations and beginning to unravel dominant approaches to health and medicine in the US. Each of the above exercises are meant to begin the process of learning how to question and challenge assumptions and learning how to become culturally sensitive to multiple and alternative approaches to history, politics, health and development.

The pre-orientation program also encourages TC3-NICA students to begin to locate their "position" or where they "fit" in terms of privilege, rights, freedoms, control, capital and access relative to Nicaraguans. The pre-orientation program only touches the surface of some of the elements each student brings with them in their baggage as they embark on their nascent journey of "contextual border-crossing." The contextual "baggage" doesn't get "unpacked" until students arrive in Nicaragua as a result of the dissonance they experience through personal interactions with the

Nicaraguan community. Upon arrival the program pedagogy becomes disruptive and dissonant.

Historical elements of contextual border-crossing. The historical context that also makes up a part of students' baggage is much more complex and much less tangible for students to understand prior to crossing the border. From a historical standpoint, it constitutes a profound movement from the richer, more economically, politically and militarily powerful and colonizing North to the less powerful, colonized South. Whether students like it or not, they carry their nationality with them, along with its history and the historical relations between the US and Nicaragua.

Students who have had an opportunity to learn about US-Nicaraguan relations will have begun to create an image of the economic, military and political strength and power each country has relative to each other, and their position within the hierarchy of the world capitalist system of nation-states. They will begin to think about "statistics" that differentiate the two countries along a variety of complicated social dimensions. They will read about disproportionately high rates of unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, hunger, infant mortality, and children dying from curable diseases that puts the social, economic and political position of Nicaragua vis-à-vis other countries, including the US, very low in on the hierarchical global map of power.

Dissonance

Dissonance makes up another critical element of the pattern that students consistently describe as part of how they experience the transformational process of international service-learning. There are three sub-categories of the kinds of dissonance that students describe: (1) Type of dissonance, (2) Intensity of dissonance, and (3) Duration of dissonance (see Table 4.3).

Dissonance type. Different types and intensities of dissonance trigger distinct types of learning. Low level dissonance that students experience in Nicaragua leads them to engage in instrumental and communicative learning processes and high level

Table 4.3 Dissonance

Theme	Meaning	Characteristics	
Dissonance Type	The gap between the contextual baggage that each TC3-NICA student carries with them as a North to South movement across the US border and their experience in Nicaragua	Historical, environmental, physical, cultural, communicative & technological	Historical, cultural, social, economic, political, self & spiritual
Dissonance Intensity	The depth and breadth of the gap between contextual baggage that is carried by TC3-NICA students as a movement from the North across the border to the south	Low level dissonance Instrumental & Communicative Learning	High level dissonance Transformationa l, Communicative & Affective Learning
Dissonance Duration	The combination of dissonance type and intensity impacts the duration of dissonance	During Program After Program	After Program

dissonance tends to trigger transformational communicative and affective learning processes.

In general, cross-cultural dissonance or "culture shock," as it is commonly referred to in the intercultural learning literature (Oberg, 1960), occurs when sojourners experience aspects of a new culture which are inconsistent with their prior experience, or do not fit into their cultural frame of reference or individual worldview. In Nicaragua, dissonance occurs frequently because much of what TC3-NICA students see, feel, touch, hear and participate in does not make sense them, and causes different levels of cognitive, affective and behavioral responses – often in the form of discomfort or confusion.

Throughout the duration of their stay in Nicaragua the TC3-NICA students confront dissonance in a variety of ways, intentionally (by course designed activities) and unintentionally (their own experiences interacting with the Nicaraguans and in adapting to the new and unfamiliar physical and social environment in Nicaragua). TC3-NICA international service-learning program activities situate and position TC3-NICA students so that they are face to face, hand in hand, heart to heart – with a variety of Nicaraguans who have limited access to food, shelter, clean water and sanitation, economic resources and health care. Because TC3-NICA students are living in a dramatically different set of environmental, cultural, social, physical, political, and economic circumstances they are forced to function and think in ways that they are not accustomed to. Students describe experiencing a variety of different types of dissonance while participating in multiple international service-learning activities (See more detailed student descriptions below).

For example, through collaborative service work with the Puerto Cabezas community, TC3-students live, work and play with children at an orphanage who despite being under a significant amount of physical and emotional stress, display a tremendous amount of resilience and courage. The orphans' physical and emotional growth has been severely stunted due to constant exposure to hunger, disease, parasites and poverty. The students also work with and build relationships with Nicaraguan women and men who tell them tragic stories about their experience living through a civil war and its continuing impact on the community. They share their thoughts and feelings about living in constant daily struggle to survive. The men and women tell them of their suffering – their emotional and physical scars, and aches and pains. Sharing in an intimate and personal way the concrete lived experience of Nicaraguan community members, who, in spite of their difficulties, open their homes, share their food, their thoughts and generosity – has a an enormous impact on TC3

students' learning that is more than cognitive, it is deeply personal, visceral and transformative.

Dissonance types described by TC3-NICA students. This study found that the dissonance that TC3-NICA students experience includes physical, environmental, technological, social, cultural, political, economic and historical types of dissonance. As mentioned, the type and intensity of dissonance influences the students' learning process.

Historical dissonance has to do with the shock of realizing that ones assumptions about US foreign policy in Nicaragua, as the benevolent Northern neighbor, are untenable. Students learn from course material, seminars and from listening to various Nicaraguans that the history of US foreign policy in Nicaragua represents a contradiction to the democratic principles and sovereignty the US government purports to uphold. They often become puzzled over why the US military occupied Nicaragua, and why a number of US presidents openly supported generations of the Somoza family's dictatorship, such as Roosevelt's famous quotation referring to the US relationship to Somoza, "he may be a son of a bitch, but at least he's our son of a bitch." Students express confusion when they learn that the US did not support the Sandinistas in overthrowing a brutal dictatorial regime and instead, supported the "contras" or counter-revolutionaries fighting against the Sandinistas. They encounter further dissonance when they meet and listen to Contras, and then Miskito separatists who each present a different side to the "story" of how the civil war started, whose side they were on, why they were fighting, the role of the US and so on. To further complicate matters, students listen to grown men who fought for different sides as children -often against their will. These kinds of stories sometimes contradict or challenge what students bring to the context in terms of prior knowledge of the history of Nicaragua of the versions of the story they have read in textbooks.

This kind of dissonance is a key facet in communicative learning which entails a complex analytical process of negotiating and deciding among multiple meanings of what constitutes historical fact. According to student data, historical dissonance also motivates students to begin to question the assumptions behind current US foreign policy toward Nicaragua as well as, the policies of the Sandinistas, and the Central government of Nicaraguan toward the Atlantic coast. As a student says, "the truth is might slippery."

Environmental dissonance occurs when TC3-NICA students encounter animals, plants, insects, snakes, spiders, extreme heat, garbage, pollution, degradation, dilapidated houses on stilts, latrines built along beaches and over waterways, dirt roads with massive potholes, public transportation in the form of huge pick-up trucks, barbed wire fences, vicious unchained dogs, roaming roosters, pigs eating out of ditches, monkeys, strange birds which do not fit, or cannot be located in the current their frame of reference. Such experiences cause disorientation and confusion and seem to defy immediate and/or rational explanation. Environmental dissonance leads to instrumental learning or learning how to navigate, control and adapt unfamiliar terrain. Instrumental learning strategies range from learning how to get home at night without falling into a pothole, a burdensome task for some particularly when there are no street lamps, to drinking enough water and putting on sunscreen to avoid health risks associated with the heat and sun.

Physical dissonance happens when TC3-NICA students interact with Nicaraguans whose skin color and appearance is different from their own. Most TC3-students are white and have not experienced working with Miskitos and Creoles who are predominantly darker-skinned and who look, talk and act in ways that they are not accustomed to. Living amongst three major ethnic groups, Creole, Miskito and Mestizo, TC3-NICA Students often describe this "strange uncomfortable feeling of being a rich, white Gringo," or "a minority," "an outsider who does not belong."

Others describe feeling "self-conscious, like everyone is staring," "not fitting in," and "not sure if they are welcome." Physical dissonance often causes students to challenge previous expectations and stereotypical images that they had of Nicaraguans. Surprisingly, students sometimes report feeling less fearful and more tolerant after having worked with Nicaraguan families for a day. They often express surprise at the generosity and knowledge poor people display. One student reported being so impressed by the depth of the generosity of a young Nicaraguan who had given her one of his only possessions - a photograph of his family - that she made it part of her "mission to return to Puerto Cabezas and thank him" as well as others she had met there after her stint in the Peace Corps in Honduras. She accomplished her mission of going back three years after having visited Puerto for the first time.

Students also describe experiencing social dissonance when they observe how men, and women interact and perform certain social functions that go against everything they have experienced in the US. In particular, many female students react strongly to machismo – "the cat calls, whistles and staring" and the more "traditional" gender roles in which women are expected to stay at home and men are expected to be both the head of the family and the main breadwinner. Gender dissonance causes students to question their own assumptions about the meaning of gender. Students are surprised to see many "older" children ten or eleven years old caring for three or four younger siblings or working in a variety of odd jobs. Students also feel discomfort at receiving an inordinate amount of privileged treatment in various social situations such as interviews and outings with high ranking public officials, or having more responsibility and clout than Nicaraguan nurses in the hospital and being referred to as "doctor" during clinics. Social types of dissonance make students uncomfortable. Social dissonance causes students to question the nature of a variety of gender-based contradictions and begin to recognize both their vulnerability and privilege as US women in Nicaragua. Further, having arrived with very little sense of proper social

customs, they are not sure how to interact, react or if they are welcome as US women interacting with Nicaraguans in different social settings. A number of the female re-evaluated their sense of gender roles and expressed feeling "vulnerable, and unsafe," or "for the first time wanting to ask for protection from the other males in the group," and one woman commented that she was "too proud or independent minded" and "felt conflicted about the role of women."

Cultural dissonance occurs in a number of ways. In terms of health practices students learn about effective traditional and spiritual (magical) approaches to medicine and health that directly challenge the validity and the usefulness of western forms of medicine. Other cultural forms of dissonance have to do with lifestyles, customs, recreation, and local community rituals that are distinct from what students are accustomed to in the US. Life tends to slow down on the Atlantic coast and time does not weigh so heavy on people's minds. Students begin to question the fast pace of living in the US. Students comment that they are "amazed at the ingenuity of people in 'Port' who can find a use for anything, bottle caps for checkers, plastic bottles as soccer balls..."

Communication difficulties also contribute to the dissonance students feel in searching for ways to express themselves verbally and non-verbally in a new cultural setting. Some students who have low level Spanish skills or who are shy, or both, find it extremely difficult to communicate with Nicaraguans and fellow students. They "feel frustrated," they "can't ask deeper questions," and they "feel childlike speaking another language." Language dissonance tends to motivate students to practice their language skills and to decipher hidden messages in the way Nicaraguans communicate verbally and non-verbally. Linguistic, cultural, environmental types of dissonance often trigger an adaptive learning process.

Political and economic types of dissonance occurs when they are exposed to different political ideologies of Sandinista, Contra and Miskito communities. For

most TC3-NICA students it is the first time they have ever listened to revolutionaries, separatists and a variety of community members who express political ideas that challenge the tenets of liberal capitalism and US global hegemony. They experience firsthand communities who support political and economic systems like communism and socialism. They also observe and interact with people who have very little political and economic rights and experience the pain and struggle of people who have very little political power to change the unequal distribution of resources at the local and global level. They see and talk to Nicaraguans and Miskito Indians who are still experiencing the socio-economic and politically devastating impact of the 1979-1989 civil war and natural disaster such as Hurricane Mitch in 1998. They experience first hand the human face of poverty – the other invisible and silenced side of the impact of global capitalism and begin to question traditional forms of tourism and the lifestyles of the rich and famous.

Political dissonance causes self-reflection on the justification and reasons behind tourism, their own tourist excursions to developing countries, and the felt complicity in perpetuating an industry that maintains superficial contact and/or blindness to the conditions of the poor people living in developing countries. Students also begin to reflect on the negative aspects of US foreign policy and the exploitation of natural resources by US multinational interests in Nicaragua and their role in contributing to a perpetuation of the global capitalist system. This type of dissonance furthers a transformational learning process in which students begin to ask deeper questions about the status quo, and their own involvement or lack there of, in challenging and/or resisting it.

Economic dissonance has to do with learning about and experiencing first hand extreme poverty and the tremendous disparities in wealth and resources between communities in Nicaragua and communities in the US. TC3-NICA students encounter, learn about and get to know a vast number of Nicaraguans who have

inadequate access to health care, medicines, clean water, sanitation, education and employment. More specifically, they experience everyday a constant revolving door of men, women, and children begging for food, clothing and money from them as the rich Americans.

The students experience more intimate level the difficult conditions facing the El Muelle community, the Barrio Moravo, the orphanage kids, and the hospital staff because their service work provides a personal encounter and confrontation with inequality and injustice and human suffering that makes no sense. Economic dissonance tends to cause students to recognize their privileged position, and to begin to feel guilty, selfish, spoiled rich, well fed and sheltered from the reality of the poor. Student express a variety of emotions when they experience dissonance directly related to economic injustice and poverty. This type of dissonance tends to demand not only an intellectual and personal response (of which there are no easy answers), and accountability, but also greater solidarity and action across borders. It is also transformational.

Dissonance: intensity and duration. The level of intensity of the dissonance has to do with the gap that students experience between the contextual assumptions they carry with them across the border in relation to the elements of the new cultural context. The wider the gap between the new and old context, the more intense the dissonance. The duration of the dissonance has to do with the combination of the type and intensity of the dissonance.

Importantly, students distinguish between low intensity environmental, linguistic, social and cultural dissonance such as the "culture shock" type of dissonance that sojourners need to overcome and adapt to in order perform daily tasks and communicate effectively in another culture, and high intensity types of dissonance – explained in greater detail below.

This study found that low intensity dissonant experiences tend to trigger instrumental and communicative forms of learning. TC3-NICA students report that initial difficulties communicating with the host culture in a second language and adjustment to unfamiliar living conditions motivates them to acquire and practice language skills in real life cross-cultural situations with the goal of developing a higher level of competence in the host culture. The study also indicates that high intensity dissonance is more apt to stimulate instrumental, communicative and transformational forms of learning that lead students to critically examine their assumptions on the origin and solution to community problems associated with the poverty the are witnessing firsthand. High intensity dissonance also leads to intense emotional reactions, unselfish displays of care and physical affection and an internal examination of attitudes toward the poor and core values regarding social justice and the alleviation of poverty.

Even though students begin to examine their social and historical position relative to Nicaraguans prior to leaving, it is not until students actually step foot in Nicaragua, that is, when they enter that felt state of "physically, emotionally, cognitively and spiritually being there," that they begin to experience dissonance. Low intensity environmental and communication types of dissonance tend to lead to short term instrumental learning strategies to adapt to a new unfamiliar circumstances during their stay in Nicaragua. High intensity types of historical, economic, political and social dissonance often triggers a longer-term transformational learning process whereby students begin to unpack number of the assumptions that make up their contextual baggage with a more critical eye and a more compassionate and knowing heart.

Low intensity dissonance. TC3-NICA students consistently report ands display the ability to adjust to and manage low level dissonance because they have greater control over it – i.e., acquiring and practicing language skills to communicate more

effectively, or learning how to get from "here to there" without a map by locating and memorizing markers. Environmental, linguistic, cultural forms of low intensity dissonance entail the shock of having to adjust to new living conditions and to need to grapple with unfamiliar and unusual social customs and rituals, different forms of public transportation, and so on. Low level dissonance is learning how to perform tasks and manipulate the environment; it is a type of dissonance the eventually becomes a manageable part of their daily routine.

Students learn to adjust to the cultural, emotional and physical disorientation that often results from low intensity types of culture shock in Nicaragua by becoming more competent in the language, by observing and interacting with locals, and by practicing their newly acquired skills in a variety of social settings. Students report increased competence in adapting to low intensity dissonance typically after the first week of their stay in Nicaragua and some, within the first day or two. While they continue to develop language, coping and practical skills, the initial anxiety related to low intensity culture shock decreases rapidly over a short period of time.

For example, dissonance related to environment is often less intense and temporary. Students learn rather quickly how to adjust to daily tasks in living in a new and unfamiliar environment such as eating, sleeping, washing, and even communicating in another language they don't yet have proficiency in. Students initially experience environmental dissonance when for instance, they have to navigate their way around Puerto Cabezas without having a map or street signs as markers. They experience dissonance when they go to the market to buy food while taking in a plethora of unfamiliar and discordant sights, smells, and noises. However, what seemed like a stressful experience the first day buying food in the market, tends to become an enjoyable daily routine by the end of their sojourn.

Another low level form of dissonance has to do with living in physical conditions that are radically different then what they're used to. They have to boil

water that is not potable, sleep under a Mosquito net, be on the look out for poisonous spiders, rats, scorpions, cockroaches and other unusual critters that inhabit the house with them. Often the houses have no running water, they take showers with buckets of cold water, and use outhouses that don't have toilets that flush. While this type of environmental dissonance initially leads to varying levels of stress and discomfort, it tends to last only a week or two as TC3-NICA students learn to adjust and develop intercultural competence. This form of dissonance then, leads to instrumental learning which has to do with learning how to acquire and utilize an entirely different or new set of cultural skills, tools, symbols, and customs to perform daily tasks and "get by" in the new culture. Low intensity dissonance leads to learning that is adaptive, not transformative – it means conforming to and assimilating into the new cultural milieu. It means adjusting to the status quo, not changing it.

High intensity dissonance. High intensity dissonance, on the other hand, can be cultural, environmental, linguistic and social of a more of an extreme type, but it is also economic, political and historical and much more challenging, if not impossible, for students to individually control and manage – particularly upon returning to the US. Intense political, economic and historical dissonance has to do with deep, fundamental human issues of human suffering – sometimes "life or death" struggles that TC3-NICA students experience in Nicaragua. This type of dissonance is more intense and cannot be managed or controlled on an individual level alone.

High intensity dissonance also stays with students longer than low intensity environmental and social kinds of dissonance. Furthermore, high intensity dissonance is not something students adapt to; rather, it is a type of dissonance that leads to internal and external conflict in terms of their assumptions, values, beliefs and worldview. Students continually reshape high intensity dissonant experiences, they learn from it, struggle with it, resist it, channel it and work with it so that it can become of positive force to draw from particularly upon returning to the US. Based

on student data, high intensity dissonance necessitates ongoing and long term transformational learning processes.

High intensity dissonance that students experience in Nicaragua has to do with issues related to basic human rights, US foreign policy, civil war, natural disaster, extreme poverty, inadequate health care, disease, hunger, unemployment, political disenfranchisement, global exploitation, human suffering and hope in the midst of such despair. Economic, political and historical dissonance occurs when students describe tremendous disparities between the kind of life they live in the US and much of the living conditions of many of the Nicaraguans they connect with during their stay – particularly in Puerto Cabezas. This type of dissonance tends to cause extreme shock and intense emotional reactions. Students report that this type of dissonance also has to do with beginning to critically reflect on various aspects of one's "self" or "identity" in terms of one's larger role in working for social justice.

In particular, students begin to see how much social, cultural, political and economic capital they have brought with them along with the more visible donations and clothing that made up the contents of their baggage. High level dissonance tends to lead students to "unpack" and critically examine their contextual baggage in an entirely new way and to discover aspects of it that they had never seen before.

High intensity dissonance occurs when students find that the large majority of the "smiling" children that they interact with are hungry, and sick with worms and who have stunted growth and development because of severe malnutrition. They also connect with children who take care of two or three younger siblings, or who are searching for work at age 10, or even worse, joining gangs, sniffing glue, and begging in street corners. Such discordant interactions are often inconsistent with students' prior assumptions about what it means to be a "child," and/or their experiences growing up, the children that that have raised in US. Their US image of childhood, is shattered by the reality of children struggling to survive in Nicaragua. This kind of

dissonance triggers a learning process whereby universal assumptions of "childhood" break down, and become contextualized.

But it's more than just relativizing childhood, it's unacceptable, and unjust. The suffering child that they hug, play with at the beach, do skits with at the local school, is real; the pain the child experiences hurts; it causes harm, it is felt empathetically and it may cause death. Such intense dissonance demands an immediate solution – medication – of which the student can provide temporarily. What's more, the intense types of dissonant experiences do not go away, it becomes a part of one's baggage upon return to the US.

In other words, students find that high intensity dissonance makes them critically reflect on their assumptions and reformulate them so that they are more "in sync" with their experiences and Nicaraguans' experience. For example, when students are working with members of the community such as former Sandinistas and Contras, Miskito separatists, Sukias and Curanderos (local healers and medicinemen/women), children, orphans, religious leaders, historians, artists, health and community development workers, students often end up grappling with real life experiences, and problems related to community development, health and poverty, that do not fit the sets of assumptions that make up their frame of reference. They begin to take on the perspective of the people they are working with, and feel a deep connection with the way Nicaraguans experience life in continuous struggle.

High intensity dissonance tends to force them to rethink and reevaluate preconceived notions of concepts such as community development, poverty, oppression, empowerment, service, citizenship, capitalism, American foreign policy, Nicaraguan health policy, human rights and social justice. High intensity dissonance that is political, economic, historical and social marks the initial change in the way students see themselves and the world – it is the start of students' transformational learning process, a global repositioning process in which they begin to rethink their

political assumptions, their spending habits, their loyalties, and their global position on the map of power and wealth.

TC3-NICA student descriptions of various types of dissonance. Students describe the initial contact with Puerto Cabezas as "mind-blowing," or "running through a museum bombarded with pictures and images that leaves one dizzy and confused." They describe "seeing garbage everywhere, kids, pigs and dogs eating from it, burning it, rummaging through it." They describe their dissonant experiences as "constant state of shock walking all over town through a mixture of run-down shantys or shacks on stilts, dirt roads, dust, overwhelming heat, the stench of burning garbage, old beat-up cars, sewage systems dried up or stagnant..." The are shocked at "the overwhelming stench coming from the endless row of 'latrines' built along the beach and over streams." They contrast their own homes, with "shantys housing ten family members" and "some of the nicer houses and cars – which the locals attribute to drugs." They see tangible vestiges of the civil war when they observe "those people with the machine guns" and comment, "that's more scary than reassuring."

They express "moral outrage," they "feel compassion," and they have intense emotional reactions – filled with shame, guilt, anger, confusion, compassion, denial, and sadness. What they see, feel, smell, hear and touch during much of their sojourn in Nicaragua is shocking and overwhelming – and the data consistently shows that some high intensity forms of the dissonance never subsides – even upon return. High intensity dissonant experiences become permanent markers in students' frame of reference.

Students describe dissonance as feeling like their "senses are on high alert," in "crisis mode" or "a combination of fear, curiosity, and confusion." Students struggle in learning how to adjust their cognitive and affective lenses to reconcile scenes of poverty that "seem unimaginable, and "surreal," with their false expectations and "assumptions about the resilience of the human spirit." Students report "having a hard

time making sense" of the kinds of dissonance they see because it does not fit into their frame of reference and is particularly repugnant and morally unacceptable.

Their contact with a new and unfamiliar cultural milieu and human suffering and hope is extremely disorienting in terms of relating what they are experiencing with their prior experiences, assumptions, expectations and what they had and imagined as poverty. The point of departure for understanding the TC3-NICA students transformational learning process in Nicaragua begins with the "free fall of culture shock" – a radical encounter with multiple and intense forms of dissonance.

Metaphors that students use to describe dissonant experiences include:

"Going through a museum at 100 miles per hour, multiple colors and blurred images of the human condition, beauty, pain, suffering, hope, sadness, tragedy, laughter"

"Free falling with nowhere to land except trust"

"Like walking into the aftermath of a war zone"

Ben describes the process of learning entailed in dissonance as a force or trigger in cross-cultural environments:

The other thing that strikes me is when you're in an environment like that, just the fact that it's different. Your senses are on greater awareness of just looking around, seeing things, your mind is working more. In my normal day to day environment I can go from my work to my car and be on auto-pilot and think about whatever, the NY Giants or the election or just playing games in my head. But in that environment you feel like you are just, you're focusing so much more on the outside and you're seeing so many things and you're getting so many more sensory images coming into you and making you think and that's a really invigorating thing of just being more lively in, just forcing your brain to work more, exercise, which is on a general basis one of the reasons I'm very pro study abroad and having that opportunity to go to a different environment, no matter what you just get overwhelmed with sights that make you think.

He also highlights the different forms of dissonance that TC3-NICA students experience because of the focus personal interaction and service with the community:

> Well I think the thing that stands out to me about that experience is just kind of a wake up call to how privileged, entitled my life has been as a US American, as a member of the upper middle class within the US and all of the things that I take for granted, as far as not needing to worry about. Things that I was aware of having been in other situations in developing countries and just being aware of generally but having that emotional in your face kind of awareness of the fact that I take for granted, I turn other tap water, the water will be safe and good. I can quench my thirst at any time and will be safe. At any drinking fountain, I don't even question that. I don't even question that I can go to any restaurant in the Ithaca area or any shopping, any supermarket and all of my food will be safe. I don't even question the security of my house generally. I mean security in terms of rats. That was very unsettling to me, sleeping in a place, it freaked me out, I admit it. I was very unsettled and I had difficulty sleeping. Having been in other environments, I've been like you know you go camping here, I've also been in other, camping in the Savannah and Africa but just something about a small place with the proximity of rats. Rats just freak me out. You're sleeping and you know something is touching you, something is on the back, what is it. A little bit unsettling.

Ben, in fact, coined the term "house of pain" to describe the way he experienced living in a dilapidated house owned by the aunt of one the community leaders we worked with. He was deeply troubled by the living conditions but even more so at his "weak" reaction to dealing with what he felt at the time was an unacceptable living arrangement. In an interview four years later he expressed a sense of embarrassment and surprise for not initially being able to handle it especially since he felt more than competent traveling abroad in the past. Interestingly, for some of the other students that year, the "house of pain" became a metaphor for how they (as students from the US) were dealing with dissonant experiences as part of international service-learning in Nicaragua. It became a measuring stick for successful adaptation.

Kendra describes the initial complexity of experiencing dissonance after crossing from the US – the North – to Nicaragua – the South – still holding onto her "baggage:"

But when we did fly into Managua it was still so vastly different from the whole energy of America I just felt like there was this gust of wind, a hot tropical wind, that just made me slow down. We were all standing around the bags and there were like three children that came up begging and like one of the girls, her eye was sealed shut or something and they were really filthy and ripped clothes and I was...it just sort of hit me like this is going to be really hard. Like this isn't any kind of vacation. Then when we got to port [Puerto Cabezas] I fell in love. I was like I'm moving here. I know that that's such...In so many ways it's such an Elitist attitude because I see the dirt, the red dirt roads and see like people walking along in bare feet...

Kendra describes how she began to look more deeply at the conditions people were facing by engaging in the process of "unpacking the contents in the contextual baggage" she had brought with her and still clung to as a set of assumptions that initially gave her a sense of stability and balance, but that were increasingly becoming untenable in the face of unexplainable phenomena:

...but then I get into the reality of it and we go to Muelle [one of the poorest neighborhoods in Puerto Cabezas] and the reason they are walking around in barefeet is because they aren't any shoes anywhere. That's just like the superficial, total superficial side of it. Despite the fact, I guess what really hit me was the spirit and the soul of the people, it was so strong and powerful. Like meeting Pastor Earl, he's just an angel in a human body. But he's a very much a man also because he's...I don't know, I just thought he was the truest pastor I've ever seen. Cause he'd be there at like, his carpenter Valdon, working on the orphanage, working on this house, working on helping ...I guess when we were walking down the road from the airport and then when we were welcomed into their house and Domaris and all the women there were just so wonderful and their huge smiles and warm welcomes...I was feeling Gringa, like rich white, and I'm not rich in this world but I was, I was a queen (Kendra).

Liz offers a view of the contradictory aspects of the initial experience with dissonance in Nicaragua and the immediate need to better understand and find some sense of order:

I feel bombarded by emotions, impressions and ideas. This is such an interesting place. Behind me small chatter. I feel very exhausted...many

things strike me and I want to ponder them, anyway, I am not making a terrible amount of sense...houses on stilts, noises unknown, bugs, birds, freedom...Noise took a little while to get used to. The fruit is cold and tastes wonderful...In the streets we saw soldiers carrying guns over their shoulders...This kind of military presence was so foreign to me and surprised me. I wonder why their presence was necessary...

Later after participating in a clinic for refugees displaced from their homes due to Hurricane Mitch, Liz describes the extreme shock and difficulty she had processing the high intensity dissonant experience visiting the site of a Nicaraguan community that had just recently been destroyed by a mud slide caused by the flooding that came with Hurricane Mitch:

It had such a horrid feeling to it and it was odd to see the dried mud against the beautiful horizon of the sunset. I wanted to just stop and sit and weep but somehow I felt that I did not even have that right for the people who died were not my relatives. I had no understanding of who they were and this was not my country. I did not understand this situation at all. It felt as though I was making a mockery of them to express grief for I could not comprehend what this meant to them as Nicaraguans...This was the first time I had ever been to a natural disaster. It was not like one hears about something like this on the news and says that it is horrible. It was horrifying and confusing. John came over and gave me a hug and said something about flowers growing in the mud and life starting over. This perspective flabbergasted me as it was something I could not fathom popping into my head at the time but yet a very valid perspective and one that I needed to see and acknowledge. Is it OK to acknowledge God's sovereignty in a situation but still be sad and not understand it...It just seems incomprehensible that such a thing could happen to these people and it's hard to know what to do with it.

Janice explains going through the comparing and contrasting contextual process of experiencing dissonance and the human face of poverty during participation in international service- learning in the following ways:

The exposure....I mean, we dove right in. We weren't staying in hotels and seeing the high life. We stayed actually in a village, in a house. We did the "charla." We did the clinics in these little villages that if it were just a class we'd never see. We'd probably read about by somebody else's perspective

about the class and really never form one of our own. By going down there we were able to form our own opinion, or experience our own transformation...

She describes further the high-level intensity dissonance that becomes embedded in one's memory as a critical event in one's life that cannot be forgotten:

> I never realized, you know because the poverty you see here, there's just no poverty, I mean there is but you don't see it every day everywhere like we did down there. I mean if you go to a big city you may see an occasional homeless person or you know, begging for change or whatever, but down there, like, an occasion that stands out in my mind, like those 2 little boys when we went out to dinner that one time...that took our plates and scraped our dinner scraps into a bag...everybody got upset. That's what stands out in my mind, that kids have to do that and that people have to do that...

> like next time you go to Ponderosa, if you ever do, or an all you can eat Chinese buffet, ...Compared to these poor little kids at the orphanage that their bellies are so full of worms it is the only reason why they are round and it just, it's just such a ...contradiction...And the fact that we are supposed to have this knowledge. The fact that we know what obesity does to you and what all that stuff does to you, yet we choose to ignore it and that in itself is another kind of ignorance. In Nicaragua...they can't ignore it because they are poor.

Joyce echoes the sentiments of most students who visit the hospital for the first time and see the tremendous scarcity in terms of basic resources like gauze, sheets, sterile gloves, oxygen, lab equipment, surgical tools, antibiotics, protective masks, phones, food:

> Seeing the hospital, that whole thing, you know...Just because we are so taught to be so clean and sterile and, you know, really tight about things and just have to give all that up and just be, you know, deal with, do what you gotta do with what you have, which is almost nothing...And I was still in school so it was like, you know, I was just blown away by that.

Janice also describes her reaction to visiting the hospital in Puerto Cabezas:

> ...another instance was when we went for that day in the hospital...I was working in the ER with a Creole nurse, Jackie, and when I was giving shots and I was throwing away the needles and she had to go back through the garbage and pick out all the needles that I had thrown away...She is like "oh

we sterilize them" and I'm like "Not enough for my tastes..." I would never use a needle somebody had sterilized, that had been used on countless other people before me. I wouldn't allow anybody to stick me and yet these people didn't have a choice and the fact that there were limited meds available, limited antibiotics, it was scary. We complain now because there is a Zantac shortage and I'm like try having an antibiotic shortage where there are none.

Martha also describes the high intensity dissonance that she experienced at the hospital and how it later affected her in coming to terms with her own fears of living amidst poverty in a developing country,

> I remember how shocked I was at seeing the conditions in the hospital, I mean there were buzzards and stray dogs eating hospital waste right outside, the flies in the kitchen, the women cooking fish for staff and patients on hibachis because there wasn't any propane gas for the ovens, the rice ration running out, no chest protectors for x-rays, an ambulance that would break down, the $100 a month salaries for doctors, hardly any medicine and on and on and on...It was simply overwhelming...

Then Martha adds,

> ...that night I got some serious pains in my abdomen and I just got so paranoid, I thought "what if it is something serious?, where would I go?" you know and "Oh, no, not the hospital...and I thought of how privileged I am and spoiled...It also made me, think, like, "am I cut out for this...? I don't know if I can handle development work and here I am...I have traveled all over Europe, it was a real eye-opener but more just that deep feeling of vulnerability...I just never knew what it was like to live in poverty...I mean really live in poverty so that you know what it feels like not to have, you know...no health, no money, no clean water, no medicines and no social services....

A number of students describe dissonance as something that happens when their experience in Nicaragua does not fit their expectations based on prior travel to developing countries. Surprisingly, prior travel led to a false expectation of intercultural competence. A number of students who had traveled in other countries, including developing countries and who had been through previous bouts with culture shock, tended to expect a that the process of cultural adjustment would be relatively

easy. However, many students reported feeling "surprised" and "embarrassed" by their initial and in some cases, ongoing feelings of anxiety, helplessness, selfishness, jealousy, whining, complaining and "incompetence."

Laura's description below exemplifies how students tend to contrast their prior travel experiences with their experience in Nicaragua. Laura's surprise with environmental and economic dissonance below also displays how students tend to differentiate between low and high intensity dissonance,

> I'd been to other countries and been in this kind of stressful situations and I knew that I enjoyed those situations...I guess I had definitely taken my experience of Bolivia and sort of transported it to Nicaragua and thought well okay well life will be really similar. But it was much more primitive in Nicaragua than it was in Bolivia. Basically amenities. No paved roads. I was expecting the no stop signs or traffic lights. The crime actually really threw me for a loop. Although when I learned about the unemployment rate then it sort of clicked and I went oh well that makes more sense to me. The contrasts with non-primitiveness, like almost everybody had cable TV, whereas they wouldn't have refrigeration or running water. I just thought oh my God, where are the priorities here you know this is bizarre...

Katelin contrasts her tourist experience in Belize with the service focus in Nicaragua and exemplifies comments that describe the TC3-NICA program as triggering a transformation in consciousness:

> I had been to other Third World countries before I went to Nicaragua, so I had some sense of what it would be like but Nicaragua was the definitely the most impoverished out of all of them like by far and in my experience there. I think it was also like in a very remote part of the country, which was even more impoverished so I think that played a big part of it all. I also...think having to deal with it every day and also we didn't stay in a place that was made for students, we really needed to help out with the water and all of those kinds of things which are different than of the life that we have here...just the way that we lived there affected me...you feel so overwhelmed like oh my God where do you even begin. And it's so hard to see a place that...where people are suffering so much...

She then describes how observing the example of some courageous community members who survive offer hope in the midst of despair and gives her a sense of strength to learn how to deal with some of her initial shock:

> ...but then like when I think about Earl and his wife and especially like the program that Earl was doing with the young man, just the fact that he was working here in his place, to meet people who are working, who are trying to do what they can. I think that is really important to see....I guess it also helped me to see, because you can come down with this OK now we're here what should we do...like instead of having that outside perspective, you should...see people who really live there and who are doing the change...I mean I was definitely in a different place mentally I'm sure. I mean yeah your program is really like revolutionary in a way because it goes straight for the reality. I think about being there a lot as having played a really important goal in where my level of consciousness is...

Kendra's story of caring for a little boy from Wawa who was brought to the clinic after falling from a tree. The doctor had diagnosed internal bleeding and the boy was in serious condition. The team ended up bringing the boy and his grandmother to Puerto Cabezas since he needed more intensive medical care in the hospital:

> I remember the first time I cried when I was there, that was in Wawa, because I was holding the midwife's nephew who had fallen from the tree and was breathing, that you remember he was breathing really fast and he had the fever and we brought him back... I just because it was to the point and there was.. people were just milled around wait...like wanting to get the help and because nobody did go there ever and we were the only group who goes there and we had all this stuff and all this knowledge and I just remember feeling so overwhelmed and like thinking this is one tiny community in this world just one of them.
>
> ...Yeah and feeling like...I'm really glad that I'm here to be supporting this little boy and that I can like rub his grandmother's back or whatever but like holy shit!!!...I just started to cry. That was the first time that I cried while I was there and I knew that I was going to at some point and just be like oh my god like I can't believe this world and I guess in ...always when I was going through that oh my gosh I can't believe what life is like here and just keep looking back at Wegmans...Because I know what I'm coming from and I know what it's going to be like when I get back into my life and when my car breaks down and how stressful that's going to be. You know like that's my

stress ...if my car breaks down...[relative to]...oh my baby was born with a deformed heart and they are definitely going to die because there, there's no medicine...

Sarah describes how she dealt with environmental dissonance fairly quickly:

> Gradually I grew accustomed to Puerto Cabezas...Those initial days were fairly hard, mostly due to culture shock. I remember I couldn't write in my journal for those few days because of the amount of stress that I was going under.

Karen also highlights how students' initial culture shock associated with low intensity environmental dissonance wears off fairly quickly as people learn to adapt to the new and uncomfortable surroundings:

> ...we took Chloroquine to protect against malaria. Cindy and I had the worst stomach pains from that and so you are laying there in pain, your butt is almost on the floor because the cot is sinking down like that, there is a rat running above, you are thinking about malaria, you are wondering about cockroaches and you know, did you pat your bed down before you got in and the whole bit, and the kids are chattering and it smells like pee and oh God...they didn't have running water, they didn't have all the amenities...They had to slaughter their own animals. The whole bit, you know, and they had a well. And I started to accept the fact that...you had to deal with it. And we learned to deal with it, but then we had no tolerance for the others that hadn't learned to deal

Karen later describes the high intensity dissonance living in the orphanage:

> I rolled to my side trying not to sink the mattress too low and tried to go back to sleep. It wasn't much later when one of the older children got up and began what I later learned was a morning ritual. She went to the bathroom (which I had intimate contact with through a hole in the wall behind my head) and I heard the sound of her diarrhea. That was unpleasant to say the least and worrisome as I learned that this happened everyday. The poor girl must have felt so sick, I was learning the painful reality of parasites...We got up and started our day by hauling water upstairs in order to flush the waste down the toilet. Then we made coffee over the fire the kids had going in the kitchen. The fire was composed of a metal can with a hole cut in the side and wood burning inside of it. I was startled and then humored by the chicken who had a perch in the kitchen next to the fire. We sat on the porch and drank our coffee when Doris pointed out a Sandinista in uniform urinating in the side yard. We couldn't help but laugh some more and then we ducked down and hid when we realized he had seen us laughing at him. Way to make friends with the neighbors! That morning taught me so more than I can ever explain. I began

to really see and understand the cultural, political and health situation from being dropped in the middle of it all

Laura describes economic dissonance through an encounter with a Nicaraguan man at the team house. For Laura this is one of many encounters with high intensity types of dissonance that motivate her to undertake a deeper look into relativizing the "poverty line." She defined her economic status in the US as below the poverty line, yet her experiences with poverty in Nicaragua challenged her to rethink and contextualize the meaning of poverty:

> Like this one guy... he showed me his feet one day, he's like tell me what's this on my feet....You know where the skin has gotten wet and stayed wet and that will take off little pieces of skin. It's like when you get in the shower and you're feet get all pruned, basically they were pruning and just staring there like that in that climate and he didn't have socks and so pieces of his skin were just coming off. And I said "well what you need to do is wear socks and that will soak up some of the sweat, the water, make sure you dry your feet off." He's like "oh, well I don't' have socks." And I just was like, "you don't' have socks?" Really, go buy some. I didn't say go buy some but I wanted to and then I thought well of course he doesn't have any money. So I actually gave him my socks when we left. But little things like that that hit me. It especially hit me, how much money I have. I mean I've been independent of my parents since 18 and I know you know have always worked and I've always thought of myself as poor. But then to get down there and you know I've got refrigeration, I've got electricity, I've got running water, I can take a shower whenever I want. You know if I don't' have enough socks I go out and I buy some extra. So I was surprised at how different our, what is that word, our definitions of poor and rich were. Because down there I was definitely rich and up here you know oh she's below the poverty line so she's poor

Sarah descriptions of her various experiences with different types of dissonance reflects the non-stop, twenty-four hour a day nature of felt dissonance, contradictions, fears, stereotypes and false assumptions that come with immersion in a foreign culture that is dramatically different, particularly in terms of a North/South geographic border crossing:

The first days in Puerto Cabezas were very difficult. When we first got off the airplane I felt overwhelmed....However, the real anxiety started when we walked...and people were staring at us, checking out the new Gringos in town. The constant honking of the taxis was distracting and I was afraid that someone was going to pickpocket me. And seeing the children running around barefoot and asking for money was upsetting. After hearing other people's stories when they visited Third world countries I was expecting this. Yet, after spending my entire like in the US, it was still a bit of a shock.

She then describes what many students say is one of the most profound paradoxes they encounter – a deep underlying poverty in an abundantly idyllic tropical setting, "Walking along the streets of Puerto Cabezas I would see the most gorgeous flowers hanging on a bush or tree, and then just a few feet away there would be a pile of stinky rotten garbage."

Eight years after participating in the TC3-NICA program, Karen offers a powerful picture juxtaposing low level dissonance that leads to learning for intercultural competence and high intensity dissonance that triggers long-term transformational learning:

Did I tell you I dropped a bucket in the well one time?...That really, really impacted my sense of reality. I was doing laundry at the orphanage and I was washing on the scrub board and I had done all that in Venezuela and that was fine, but there was no running water so I had to go get a bucket of water to use that for soap and wash and scrub and then I would rinse...So I went over to do it and my hands were soapy and I put the bucket down and the rope slipped through my hands and it wasn't attached to anything. It was just an old plastic bucket on a slippery rope, you know, on a cheap plastic rope.

...So I dropped it and I said to the kids, "oh no I dropped the bucket, ha ha" and they said "that's our only bucket!" and they went running and they grabbed construction material...And they just grabbed like a 20-25 foot long construction pole, dropped it down in the well and fished for a while and brought the bucket back up and the whole time I'm like "don't worry about sweetie, I'll go buy another one" and they said to me "they may not have them at the market. They don't always have buckets at the market." And I'm just thinking "what do you mean?" You know, my instinct was, oh we'll just buy another. Because that is like the American consumerists egg, just buy another, it's not a big deal. And they were like there may not be another, we need the bucket so that we can flush the toilet, so we can get water, so we can do

everything during the day. The markets way down the road, their concept was save that bucket at all costs because they didn't have money to go buy another bucket either, if the could buy another one. So that was, that was a hell of an experience...it was like that mental transformation was occurring that day...And it was just so much all at once it just blew my mind

Kendra and Karen describe gender related dissonance and their discomfort with experiencing machismo in Nicaragua

I remember one time, I really had to just sit down and drink a Victoria, because I could not even imagine walking out onto that main street again and getting whistled at one more time or I was going to go and throw with somebody and like you know go throw judo on them, because ...Because I mean I walk at all hours around Ithaca, I don't really spend too much time in Collegetown but, I am a very independent woman. I go anywhere, anytime, I feel confident and I mean sometimes I'll avoid certain places that I've felt uncomfortable before but, I mean even during the day I didn't feel very safe walking...I mean I would walk down the main street and I kind of tested myself a couple times and walked down the main street alone but I would never go off on the side (Kendra)

Karen describes gender related dissonance during her first day in Nicaragua:

Our arrival in Nicaragua was met with customs. I will never forget It. The episode still makes my blood pressure rise! The customs officer in the airport would not listen to me when I tried to answer his questions regarding the baggage for the group like all of the prescription drugs we were carrying. I spoke with a fluent Latin American accent in Spanish and he was pretending not to understand me and would look through me because I was just some gringa, he wasn't about to listen to a little blonde girl. Then when the instructor came up from directing the back of the group, he began to speak with the customs official in a hard to understand accent from Spain and the man tried very hard to understand the instructor and then let him go on his merry way. This was the beginning of my being frustrated and bitchy since I felt exposed and helpless. I no longer had the protection of neither my country nor the assurance that the blue passport would do much good once we got out east to Puerto Cabezas. Nor did I have the confidence in my Spanish skills because I realized it did not really matter since I was a woman. It is hard to explain, but I felt I had been stripped of all my progress and safety that the US had achieved in the past 50 years. There was no stability or equality here in Nicaragua, especially for a foreign white female

In order to function, and survive throughout the rest of their stay in Nicaragua, the students either draw from their past experience, abilities, emotions, intuition, or they acquire and develop new skills and abilities by connecting with locals, and by learning how to use the tools of the host culture. And, importantly, more intense types of dissonant experiences – particularly those that have to do with unequal political, economic, social and historical relations of power, tend to compel students to re-evaluate their beliefs, values, the ideology of their US culture, and in some cases, their world view and lifestyle.

All of the dissonant experiences described above occur when TC3-NICA students come into contact with and develop relationships with poor communities in Nicaragua. They begin to compare their life, and the American way of life in general with their firsthand experience with their newly acquired Nicaraguan friends' day to day struggles to survive. Dissonance leads them unpack, explore more deeply and critically examine the contents of the contextual baggage they carried with them across the border that was, for the most part, cognitively invisible, and more particularly in a felt, visceral sense of knowing. Lastly, the dissonance that TC3-NICA students experience is more than a series of cognitive, affective and behavioral shocks to one's previously held assumptions about who they are and how the world works. It also entails taking serious personal risks, feeling uncomfortable, being open to experiencing difficult and challenging conditions, confronting crisis like situations, engaging in introspection, building connections and seeking out alternative explanations.

<u>Personalizing</u>

Personalizing is another theme that emerged from this study on how TC3-NICA students experience the process of transformational learning in international service-learning participants. Personalizing describes how students personally respond and react to the various forms of high-level dissonance that they experience in

Nicaragua. There are three sub-categories that relate to the theme of personalizing: (1) human face, (2) internalization, and (3) individualized contextual responses (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Personalizing

Personalizing	Meaning	Characteristics
Human Face	Direct, felt, visceral encounter with poverty	Service work, clinics, hospital internships, health skits, and workshops
Internalizing	Responding emotionally	Shame, guilt, compassion, sadness, anger, moodiness, cynicism, frustration, denial, empathy, fear
Individualized Contextual Responses	Soul searching, looking within oneself, surfacing personal strengths and weaknesses	Distancing oneself, not wanting to get too close, caring, loving, tough, macho, vulnerable, (in) ability to connect and/or communicate

Student descriptions of personalizing include:

"I am no longer blind, my bubble has been burst...it's a very emotional and confusing time"

"I want to go home, to fall back into my cocoon, seek refuge, and escape this mess"

"It can't be that bad, it's the exception rather than the rule"

"Life seems so simple, and back to the basics – a real community"

"They are the victims and we need to help them"

Human face. Human face has to do with becoming more conscious of the reality of social problems, poverty and social injustice in Nicaragua through direct participation in it. TC3-NICA students' service work in Nicaragua puts them in direct contact with Nicaraguans that live in poverty and who have very little access to health care and medicine. As a result of their direct contact with people who are suffering

from a variety of social problems, students' experience with poverty becomes real. It is no longer an image on television, rather it is connected to a person with a name, a face and a heart. The lives of people who are struggling to survive with very little food, money, shelter, and clean water is felt viscerally and affectively. TC3-NICA students are literally "touched" by the human face of poverty and injustice and are compelled to respond to it.

Karen describes the learning process entailed in personalization:

> ...A kind of a hands on learning versus intellectually but yes it's a holistic learning. It's bringing in the intellectual and spiritual, the emotional, everything. Yeah usually when you study something, you don't get very emotionally involved. Other than to be enraged by something and then just go have coffee and talk about it with somebody and it goes away...No, not when it's real, not when you've touched it and held it and hugged it. "It" being the community of problems and bodies and the individuals.

Janice captures the personalized way in which one reacts to seeing and feeling the human face of poverty firsthand by contrasting it with how one might experience poverty watching TV. Poverty that human face leads to a heightened sense of personal responsibility:

> ...It gets you more personally involved. Rather than if you see the commercials on TV oh you push surf and you're back to the TV Guide channel. You don't have to watch it. You have a choice. But if you go down to Nicaragua you don't have a choice, you are surrounded with it. It becomes part of your every day experience so you have to deal with it and by dealing with it you come to kind of understand it and hopefully you are able to incorporate it in your value system and your moral system and try to figure out where these people are coming from and try to understand why there is this poverty rather than seeing these starving kids on TV who you don't know you know, if they're just taking the most horrible bunch of the crop and showing pictures of them on TV, going in the ghettos of some town or whatever.

She describes how the experience of poverty with a human face becomes a part of you, it is not forgotten, it's embedded in your mind and heart:

> I keep thinking back to that shack across the street and seeing all the little kids in that place and wondering how they fit all those kids in a shack that probably only had 2 beds if that. And the fact that there was no sanitation and it was so dirty and I remember when I feel off the 2x4 into the sewage…I mean, just it, you experience it firsthand and it's a lot different. It's a lot different than watching it on TV.

Internalizing. Internalizing represents the emotional response students have to the direct encounter with someone who is experiencing significant economic hardship cannot be ignored. Direct confrontation with the human face of poverty cannot be "intellectualized or rationalized away" as students say over and over. Direct contact with poverty and suffering causes intense emotional reactions, "demanding immediate attention." It speaks to moral obligation and generates a sense of "personal responsibility." Connecting and performing service with people who are suffering ill health due to conditions of poverty compels students to respond but according to the ways in which students respond, it tends not to be a matter of providing an answer to someone's dilemma. Instead, students tend to respond by learning how make a connection with Nicaraguans on a deeper level.

Finally, a common pattern at this stage is to begin to view emotional and behavioral reactions to dissonance in terms of personal strengths and weaknesses. Some students romanticize the dissonance they are experiencing. They embrace the conditions without really examining them on a deeper level. They are not ready to accept that people are being oppressed on many different levels. Others try to rationalize or justify the poverty they experience as someone else's problem, caused by individuals or local government. Or students also act cynically toward the extreme poverty they are witnessing firsthand – they are not willing to accept poverty and sometimes feel paralyzed at how overwhelming it is. Katelin describes the internalization and the need to respond to felt poverty in Nicaragua:

Well once you have the information, you can't ignore it, you can't just not say or do anything about it. I mean of course to some degree you'll go out to eat and of course you'll do things that are in your life but you can have values that incorporate more of the world....I think that was definitely a big part of my education of who I am or something. I think that played a really important role in it...I think about being there a lot as having played a really important goal in where my level of consciousness is

Students also describe reacting emotionally to direct encounters with poverty

through international service-learning. Liz depicts some of the emotions she felt in

reacting to children begging and how she tried to overcome some of the personal

weaknesses she was becoming aware of:

When the children came up to me in the streets today I became angry at my reaction. I felt so New Yorkerish. My response was to ignore their comments. I allowed my lack of understanding Spanish to contribute to this as they spoke Spanish to me, not understanding I could continue walk along in a way isolated from interaction. This was really wrong of me. I want to try to interact more than to avoid it...I realize I need to try harder to learn form others rather than just maintaining my comfort zone.

Later after participating in a clinic, Liz continues to grapple with her perceived

weakness in interacting well with others:

Today was intense and I had had many emotions and responses to it. I felt completely incapable as person. I feel completely unable to relate to others...I felt completely incapable at the pharmacy. I was unable to communicate or think quickly. I was surprised how I could be working across from where the ill were sitting and completely block them out as I worked

Betsy describes the mixed emotions and processes entailed in personalization in the

following manner:

The days flew by each full of new and unexpected events. We worked with the children and tried to develop little skits and ways to teach the children about the importance of good nutrition and hygiene. We performed health clinics where we saw the truly poor and sick and we learned that being generous and helping wouldn't be as easy and truly fulfilling as we had thought. I didn't realize how upsetting it would be to see so many people

living so poorly and in need of help. These were only the people who heard about the clinic and there were many that didn't trust us or were too proud to ask for help. Even more upsetting was that we were unable to help everyone that did come because we didn't have enough medicine, facilities or time.

Janice then discusses her initial personal and emotional reaction to working with children who live in poverty:

> Seeing those three little kids who had malaria, do you remember that? And their temperatures were like sky high but there was like nothing we could do for them, there was that feeling of helplessness and from that helplessness stemmed a little anger actually of the injustice of it. With these kids, if they had had the right medicine, if they had had the Quinine or whatever they wouldn't be going through this. They wouldn't be dying. They wouldn't be, you know. And if they had better living conditions and all that stuff. That was my first, the first initial reaction was the frustration I think...I felt weird...the fact that I have so much and I thought it was a pain in the butt to take those pills just to go on this trip and I was, I felt selfish actually. That I had all this stuff at my disposal yet these people had nothing and then here I am and I'm immune to all these things and yet here is this poor father and he's got three kids that are sick with it and I'm just like ooh where do I write? And from it, anger at the whole system actually...

Karen reflects on how participating in international service forced her to take a closer look at poverty rather than ignore it and pretend it didn't exist:

> I'd read about poverty and I'd read about that people were poor and I'd seen the barrios when I was in Venezuela, but I'd never actually been and then I would just walk past the street people because that was what I was told to do, because I was told if I stopped or looked at them, made eye contact, they would harass me. So I would just walk past them and then so when I went to Nicaragua it was the first time that I was like told, here you go you're going to help these people and it was the first time I got to meet them and know them as human beings and not just the entities that were on the street...and then world poverty in the whole the whole level all of a sudden was impacting me personally and all of a sudden you can put names and faces to poverty. You can talk to them and listen to them express their ideas on how many babies they want to have and you know their daily life and jokes and normal interaction and you're interacting with them just like anybody else...those faces don't go away that you've been talking to. That's people that you now know...and have built relationships with....that was like stage 2. You know, stage 1 was realization. Stage 2 was outrage, this isn't fair...

Laura recounts the misconceptions she had prior to experiencing poverty firsthand and the emotions she felt learning firsthand some of the overwhelming odds people face in the communities she was working in:

> There was some sort of a need in me to be doing something to make this better, yes they've got attitudes and nobody has jobs but, I didn't realize why at that point. It was like well why aren't they working, why don't they just work, find a job, work. And then you can make your health care system better. You know all this stuff was going through my head. So I was talking to someone about this and he said yeah, the unemployment rate here is 94% and I just went, what? It really floored me, I was completely flattened by that statement. 94% and I was just like, there's no way, there's nothing you can do. I was so depressed in that moment that I just really wanted to sit down on the curb and cry. Because I had sort of felt like oh, we're down there to help you know. And here we are and we're going to do clinics and everybody's going to be friendly and happy. And I was like oh my God, there's really, what can you do in the face of this. And it was the first time that I'd really thought of it on, I mean I've always felt like oh I'm going to help the world in some capacity, in quotes, I'm saying that, because it's such grandiose idea, I'm going to help the world. And I just in that moment it became really clear, you just can't do it on your own. There's no magic wand, you can't go down there and sprinkle stardust on everything and suddenly everybody's got jobs and healthcare. It really made me understand what kind of work goes into it. Before I hadn't, I just hadn't understood the magnitude of poverty.

Individualized contextual responses. Each student responds to direct contact with dissonance associated with the human face of poverty on an individual basis. Individualized contextual responses depend on the "baggage" TC3-NICA students bring with them and type of problem they are confronting. However, students tend to respond by surfacing and reexamining personal strengths and weaknesses. Often students see things about themselves in the midst of poverty and crisis that they did not know prior to their service-learning experience in Nicaragua because they had never confronted the kinds of dissonance that are associated with situations in which privilege is unmasked in the face of poverty. Transformational learning has to do with individual soul searching and actively looking for deeper meaning within themselves –

which often leads to a shift in political, moral and in some cases, a spiritual commitment. Students also respond along affective, cognitive and behavioral dimensions through processing and connecting (to be discussed later in this chapter). Kendra explains her personal reaction to realizing that poverty has a human face attached to it,

> I could have read as many accounts of what it's like in a developing country, I could have read the whole library but actually physically seeing it and walking inside a woman's house in Wawa.....And saying where's the next room don't you have six kids...oh you have one room to the house...oh you have no house. Yeah actually physically seeing that is a kick in the stomach or worse...

Laura contrasts how the impersonal portrayal of poverty in the US media does not compel action, with the direct experience of poverty in Nicaragua which necessitates greater commitment to fight poverty and injustice on a global level. Her comments are also particularly poignant since she considered herself as living below the poverty line prior to crossing the contextual border from the US into Nicaragua:

> Americans are just inundated with this kind of footage all the time, you see it in the news. So yeah you can show it to me but it doesn't mean anything to me because I can turn that off and then go and grab a coke you know, and it's cold out of the icebox and you know that's, and I think of myself as poor. Here I'm poor and living below the poverty level, but I mean look what I've got. So I mean I've got this image of poor and then I see oh yeah that's poor over there. But you can't get them to reconcile... it doesn't connect and I think that's part of the reason that America can see those kind of photos, oh yeah there's poverty but we don't' do anything about it and capitalism is still rampant...It's almost like you don't believe it. It just doesn't make a lasting impression. You know because you don't know what it's like to go without food, you can't imagine it. I've never been hungry so I don't, I cant imagine what hunger feels like. You don't even know what hunger pains are like, that kind of thing...

Laura adds to the significance of seeing people live life in difficult conditions up close and personal:

> And then to go over to where we ate, Domaris and Earl, just to see all the comings and goings in that household and how they lived. We really, I mean we were living similarly to people down there. I mean definitely a couple levels up. But it was by far many levels down from what we're used to here.

When Kendra first arrived in Managua the difference hits home immediately especially in terms of disparities in wealth, language, the physical environment and so on. However, when she reaches Puerto Cabezas her reaction is somewhat romantic – she romanticizes the differences and only chooses to initially see the beauty on a surface level. Later on during the trip, she begins to recognize the significant poverty, racism and sexism as deep undercurrents that were initially invisible.

> As soon as I got off the plane and stepped into the world of Puerto Cabezas all of the stressors in my mind floated in the tropical breeze. I instantly felt embraced and accepted. I was obviously different, I was obviously rich. There was definitely a feeling of being put on a pedestal but the people around me were smiling. I wasn't attacked by a barrage of shrugs, judgments or disgust. Sometimes there were giggles in response to my attempts to speak Spanish but those giggles were followed by helpful guidance and a striving for successful communication. Hands and arms were outstretched, the people were as warm as the climate

Joyce describes the nature of how students "personalize" the process of international service-learning in Nicaragua by being there first hand:

> Well, it's you know,...when you go there and you kind of have to look inward and you have to figure out how to cope with this really strange experience and so there is an awareness thing that happens that other people can't, like they don't have that understanding.. it's definitely personalized and so it's much more real and its an evolving thing, like you evolved by doing it and somebody who is not there isn't going to do that.

Ben describes the internalization of the poverty he was confronting firsthand and how it made him deeply ware of some of his taken for granted personal baggage he had

carried with him to Nicaragua that he now saw as sign of personal weakness. Ben describes feeling a "double helplessness" (mentioned earlier) that was compounded by the fact that he had traveled extensively prior to going to Nicaragua and expected to be more competence in dealing with high intensity dissonance. The first part of his helplessness had to do with feeling totally overwhelmed by the extreme poverty he was coming into direct contact through service – something he hadn't done in previous travels to developing countries. The second kind of helplessness had to do with feeling incompetent in the face of poverty and what he felt were extremely harsh living conditions. Ben responded cynically to both the conditions TC3-Nica students were placed in and also his inability to initially deal with living in crisis mode.

> That was also very unsettling to me personally the fact that I was unsettled by it. It made me question my self image of a macho tough, someone who can handle things. somebody who can just deal with it, somebody who's not a cry baby or a pampered person. And the fact that I was somewhat unsettled in that environment made me really think about who I am and is this self image that I have of someone who is not a pampered person, do I need to really questions that again. And then also security in terms of personal security. The, I found that to be stressful you know that whole issue of walking at night. Our own security and then security of other members of the group because I also, not to be overly proud or macho, I felt a little bit less vulnerable than some of the women I thought were more vulnerable.

Laura describes how she had to learn to confront her fears and helplessness in the face of so much human suffering. It's not just an intellectualization process but a felt resonance with the reality of injustice that motivates one to work for social change over the long term:

> ...It was bad. I just, I felt so hideous for a couple days after that. I really wanted to just turn, I don't want to have anything to do with this, I can't help. But you know gradually I sort of came out of it and realized well you know you've got to pick yourself up in the face of this. This is reality and you can't hide from reality and you don't have to. I mean think about stuff in the long term but just do whatever is available to you today. And that, and I'd always, you know you read books, especially like The Road Less Traveled and books

like that and they come across with these ideas but it never really actually hit my core before. You know I'd always understood it intellectually and since then I would say yeah, I would say since then I've been a person who will just kind of take a little bit at a time but realizing that there's a longer picture, a larger picture. It's going to take longer.

Karen initially experienced a lot of anger and jealousy having to live in the orphanage when many of the other students didn't have it so but. Later on, she felt guilty for having acted that way toward the others and came to appreciate her experience and see it as a sign of strength particularly through increased interaction with the orphans:

>...the diarrhea. Waking up at 4 in the morning, it would be dark out, you would hear a rooster crow and then the, you know, all the kids would have, I mean they must have had insane parasites, and just hearing them every morning, I felt so bad. And the smell, ugh, wake up to that and wonder why I was a bitch...you had to go down and get a bucket of water after you went and then, from the well and then dump it in the toilet and that would flush it down...That made it hard, but I didn't mind the rats too much...I guess it was hard because the others didn't understand what was happening....At that point I felt like I had survived something, I was a survivor at that point, you know I had survived the orphanage, I was used to it. It actually felt like home after a while, I wanted to get back to the orphanage and you know, because my stuff was there. My bed and I felt like that was my place. So at night when we would have our meetings, I wanted to get back. I didn't feel like dawdling around anymore. But when people would talk about, they would bitch that their toilet didn't flush fast enough, that they had cold water...I got so mad at them. I'm like "we don't even have running water, we have to go get a bucket to flush our toilet, what are you complaining about?" You know, "you have gas to boil water, I have a bucket, a 5 gallon metal container with wood in it that they burn to boil the water, I'm like what are you complaining about? You don't have a wall with a hole in it that leads to that toilet!" You know and I was going on and on and they were just like "well, whatever, what is your problem" because they were getting that part of the experience.

Karen also discusses the guilt felt in not wanting to get to close to patients attending the clinics:

>I counted myself lucky that I spoke Spanish so most of the time I interpreted for Daniel while he gave physical examinations of everyone as they came through. This made it possible for me to be helpful even though I wasn't a nurse and it also made it easier for me to set myself back and not get too

involved. I found that I was revolted by the sick, I feared that I would get lice, fungus, rashes and got knows what else from the people. This made me feel terribly guilty. It increased my personal dissatisfaction with my selfish, unacceptable feelings and the rich life that I took for granted in the United States. I had always thought that I treated everyone equal and could never discriminate, and here when challenged, I failed. I knew that I should reach out and help the people who I had come to Nicaragua to help. I ended up being afraid of them and unable to touch them or treat them as equal human beings. I'm not very religious, but I am always reminded of the story of Jesus when he stops and touches Lazarus the leper and loves him.

Ben expresses the personalizing process that he went through:

So that was something that hit me, the stress of both my own safety and a feeling of some degree of responsibility for the safety of others you just, it was stressful. So that's, those were some of the things that were hitting me personally and as you think about that personally then you think about how it would feel to be a Nicaraguan. Do they feel that stress or is it so much a part of their life that they're not even used to it? What does it feel like to them? And then also again just continuing to play games in my head about that sense of entitlement, it's almost like a lottery a bunch of ping pong balls, there's 100 of them and you know you see those things, we've all seen that survey, if the world were a village, so many people would have running water, so many people would be equal of color, and then 2 people would have 90% of the wealth or something. And just coming to that realization again on a more emotional way. Because again in the US I can think of myself as being semi middle class. When I look and I see people with bigger houses, bigger cars, bigger you know okay I'm just kind of an average guy working at a university, but it's a non for profit entity. But then you really have to question that mind frame and say well realistically where do you really stand in the global picture and you happen to be top 1%, top half a percent. Maybe it's top two or three percent but compared to the world.

Angela aptly portrays the various components to how she experienced personalizing as part of a larger transformational learning process especially with regard to how she viewed the her role in performing service:

I had to learn to think about what we were doing in a completely different light. My focus changed from the solution of unmet need to the ability to show a group of people that they were being cared for. We couldn't change the fact that the lifestyles they led created a life of aches and pains, but we could demonstrate that we were individuals trying to make connections with them as individuals. This was difficult for me to do. It has never been easy for me to meet new people and develop relationships, but I was provided with copious

examples of people who do this with great facility and this made me strive to improve my own skills. I think if I have taken one overarching thing away from this experience it is the promise to myself to work on this aspect of my interpersonal communication.

Personalizing compels students to take a deeper look at who they are. They begin to see different self, whiter, more American, more female, more English, more privileged, more clothing, different clothing, more money, better job, education, ignorant and/or limited "felt" understanding of poverty and so on. The profound realization that poverty is real and exists in Nicaragua makes it personal and unacceptable. Concrete experience provokes the realization that the responsibility for social analysis and action fall on the student. Students develop learning strategies for deeper processing and connecting. They step out of the box to more actively re- focus their lens for seeing the world more clearly.

Processing and Connecting

Processing and connecting are important interlocking themes that TC3 NICA students consistently describe as central to how they experience the transformational process of international service-learning. The two learning components continuously play off each other dialectically and can only be understood as an interconnected part of how students experience process of transformational learning during their international service-learning work in Nicaragua (see Table 4.5).

The dialectical learning relationship between processing and connecting entails the multiple ways students construct meaning within the cognitive, affective and behavioral domains. Processing and connecting occur as both individual and social learning processes. The transformational learning dynamic of processing and connecting combine to shape a more holistic way of knowing the experience of international service learning.

Processing. Processing occurs when students try to cognitively and rationally understand, make sense of, and find deeper meaning in the social problems they are

Table 4.5 Processing and Connecting

Learning Themes	Meaning	Characteristics	
Processing	Learning by processing participation in multiple communities of service practice: Connecting theory to practice, rationalizing meaning-making, critiquing, contextualizing, problematizing & questioning assumptions, debating, researching, & experimenting w/alternatives	Processing by Reflecting in/ on/ through service practice: individual content, process and premise reflection; journaling readings, performing Service, & participant Observing	Group Processing: Formal seminars, Community dialogues, group reflection, community conversations, Informal
Connecting	Learning by connecting in multiple communities of service practice: Building relationships through informal and formal social interaction and Participant-observation; Sensing, sharing, feeling, caring, participating, observing, relating, listening, comforting, empathizing, intuiting & doing, (i.e., clinics, hospital work, skits, home stays, dancing, singing, stories and conversations and sharing living space with community members, peers and community members)	Earlness: Represents learning by empathizing and connecting with community members who inspire through their struggle, faith, kindness, hope, giving, And resilience while faced with poverty, and lack of economic, political, social and cultural support and resources Sisterhood & Motherhood: represents learning by connecting with peers and community members by embracing ethic of care and through sharing similar concerns for the welfare and rights of women struggling against various forms of oppression The Team: Connecting and collaborating with team members for support in adjusting to aspects of new culture and performing service Mentoring: observing and connecting with instructors to increase ability to perform service, adjust and connect	

having strong personal reactions to while interacting and performing service with Nicaraguan communities living "on the margins." Processing typically follows dissonant or problematic events that students experience during service and in their interactions with the community. It is an individual and social learning process affected by the unique elements and tools found in a particular cultural community-service learning context.

Processing occurs both during and after service work. Students describe the processing mode of international service-learning as a reflective response to practical problems, moral and political issues that arise during service work. Processing can be an instrumental, communicative and transformational learning process. Students engage in variety of processing strategies when they encounter practical problems and discrepancies between what they observe and do with what they think and/or assumed about doing service-work in poorer Miskito and Creole communities in Nicaragua.

The technical and communication problems during clinics and home health assessments that students conduct as part of their service work stimulate the following comments related to processing: "I had trouble at first understanding the mother of the family because but we somehow got by OK in Spang-lish," or "my 'little sister' who was eleven showed my how to hang the clothing on the barbed wire fence...I was doing it all wrong, now I understand how they manage to keep their clothes intact and so white..." or "after doing the chores with my family I am exhausted, I can't pick up my arms from washing clothes" and "I now understand what women's work is really like in Nicaragua...they carry such a burden ..with so much courage."

Process comments related to clinics include:

I am still trying to figure out what happened, there were so many things going on at the clinic, we tried to take a break to eat a sandwich and then the mad rush of patients. It was overwhelming, some missed prescriptions...

doctors giving dosages that don't add up with what we have...foul-ups we had to correct and we weren't able to see everything...

After the clinic the boat ride home provided much needed reflection...

...not being able to see everyone at the clinic made me feel so frustrated...many people waited for hours...I am conflicted...knowing that there will still be the same need tomorrow but I wanted to go back to finish the clinic...

Along with processing the practical instrumental problems that students encounter during service work, the moral dilemmas and social problems that students face working in health clinics in Miskito communities and poor neighborhoods produce high intensity forms of dissonance. Hence, they are often left feeling emotionally exhausted, perplexed and full of questions as to why so many Nicaraguans live in poverty and how they manage to survive with relatively few employment opportunities, poor diet, little access to health care, very few economic resources and little if any, political power. Students feel the need to process what they are experiencing to maintain balance, clarify confusion and stop from spinning out of control emotionally, physically and mentally. Processing becomes a survival or stabilizing mechanism for developing the capacity to function and deal with the dissonant experiences specific to the cultural and crisis-like situation international service-work in impoverished communities presents.

Processing cannot be understood without recognizing the various personal and structural dimensions, and factors internal and external to the community service-learning context that frame it such as TC3-NICA program purpose, biography of students and community, unequal relations of power and wealth, practical and technical elements, historical influences, local and global governing institutions and the unequal distribution of resources, and public policy. Processing occurs in the cognitive and behavioral domains and entails the various strategies TC3-NICA

students use to reflect in, and on their participation in international service-learning activities.

For example, students often reflect while they are in the midst of performing service activities such as clinics, health skits and workshops, in order perform tasks and achieve goals more effectively given the various complex elements and unanticipated that make up a given context. They make on-the-spot decisions based on a quick assessment of the factors they see relevant to solving and/or addressing an immediate situation, and they use the tools they have at their disposal in order become more competent in dealing with new and unfamiliar cultural contexts.

Reflection also occurs after participation in service and it has to do with reflecting on the content and process problems that occurred during the implementation of the clinic. Such reflection has to do with learning and developing new clinical skills, practices and procedures in order to become more competent at interacting and communicating with the host culture and in running a successful community clinic. Content and process reflection is a form of instrumental learning to improve skills and practices so that the clinics can run more smoothly.

Students also engage in various cognitive reflective strategies to try to make sense of and seek valid explanations for the high intensity dissonance they encounter in their service work. Students also describe reflection as a process of critically examining and questioning their own and others' practices, assumptions, values and belief in order to come up with the most appropriate explanation for understanding moral and practical dilemmas associated with the complex social problems their service work is dealing with. In some cases, students report that reflection on the premises underlying the various forms of dissonance they are experiencing leads to a reformulation or radical restructuring of how they see a situation, problem, or concept. Students also report a profound shift in their world-view, on how they see themselves, their actions and reality.

Cognitive reflective strategies used by students for processing international service-learning related problems have to do with connecting theory to practice, adapting behaviors and testing new approaches to unexpected problems, developing critical thinking capacities and problem-solving skills, understanding local knowledge, improving communication, becoming more tolerant of ambiguity and accepting cultural differences. Cognitive reflective strategies include engaging with reading material, journaling, participating in seminars, and informal and formal reflection through conversations and more formal dialogues with students, instructors, and community members.

Processing is reflective learning for improving service practices and developing intercultural competence. Reflection during practice occurs often during health clinics, whether it is in dressing a nasty wound with very few resources, or locating, communicating and working with local community members to set up a lice check and washing station. Students report that reflection on service practice particularly during one-day health clinics can be overwhelmingly stressful because of the moral dilemmas associated with undertaking triage to decide which patient sees the doctor. Students report feeling uncomfortable taking on the responsibility of "choosing" who gets to see the doctor, especially given time constraints and pressures being put on them by community members who have been waiting for hours to see the doctor, and who are desperate to receive medicines for a number of their children who may be seriously ill.
Other students describe the challenges in figuring out creative ways to conduct crowd control surrounded by people who have often been waiting all day, who are speaking in multiple languages and who often plead with students to let them in first.

Processing as reflection on/in experience. TC3-NICA Students share a number of stories that entail "on the spot" reflecting:

The prescriptions that the doctor gave us at the pharmacy did not fit the dosage by pill so we had to cut the pills in thirds, halves, it was pretty crazy, so I just took out my Swiss army knife and started cutting...whatever worked you know...

I didn't have measuring tape for checking the height of the children so I got a string and used that...It worked out just fine.

Our trip back to Puerto was a nightmare...Earl's pickup truck was without headlights and it was dark when we got back, we had to navigate our way back through the potholes, roosters, pigs, people walking, biking, you couldn't see anything...fortunately, Gonzalo had a whistle to warn people up ahead...then we shined our flashlights on the dirt road from outside the windows in the front seat...

So there I was without water for lice shampooing, and surrounded by so many kids all waiting ...so I just went to this house nearby and asked if I could use there well...

...at the clinic I remember it was kind of chaos I don't even remember who was doing the line, I think it was Carol or somebody and there was like a lot of people all of like different and they were just all kind of bombarding her and I was like oh this can't be, you know I can't have this. And so I said Jackie do you want me to help you and she said yes, so I said alright and my pathetic Spanish at the time I was like alright everybody, I probably said make a string or something instead of make a line, I don't even know what I said...we're not taking any more patients until people make a line and there's one person in front of the other. And it happened. And I remember you turned around and you looked at me and said "Jen, you're going to be okay." You said something like you got that going or something like you know what I mean like the idea that I was confident in that and it really helped me out. Okay, maybe I can do this...

The following story describes the life and death implications of "on-the-spot" processing. During a visit to a local Miskito village forty-five minutes from the local hospital a young Miskito boy was heard screaming in the distance. TC3-NICA students rushed to assist the young man whose calf had been severed to the bone by a large wooden window that had fallen on it. Because the boy was losing a large quantity of blood an immediate attempt was made by students to contain the bleeding with the T-shirts they were wearing. An on-the-spot decision was made to rush the

young boy to the hospital accompanied by his grandmother, who was extremely distraught, a TC3-NICA student and an instructor in the back of the pick-up truck that the TC3 team had arrived in. This happened to be the only vehicle in the village. The boy's life was most likely saved due to the serendipitous meeting of strangers and quick reflective thinking in the midst of a crisis.

TC3-NICA students below contrast the unique combination of affective, cognitive and behavioral processing that occurs in international service-learning as opposed to a typical classroom setting. They also points to the important social and political dimension of the processing that students engage in while doing service work in Nicaragua, such as reflection in/on/through service work as a collective effort, and informal/formal conversations while being experientially immersed in a unique cultural community service-learning context:

> We were learning culturally...but instead of being in Spanish class, saying oh down in Nicaragua they eat papaya for dessert you know...It's completely different...You just learn about how people interact. What kind of jobs that they have and just by standing on the street you learn so much. There's gates, there's barbed-wire fences all around the houses, is that because there's a lot of crime. What is life like for these people? So you learn that and...you don't' even know you're learning that, it just sort of seeps into you rather than oh down in Nicaragua they all have fences around their houses...So on one level we're getting all this sensory information and then we're able to process that with you guys so that it goes in deeper I think rather than just writing it down and spewing it out for the test and then forget it because you don't, you're never going to use that little piece of data again. It's more that you're learning to think I guess rather than memorizing. You have to learn how to deal with certain situations and think on your feet, that kind of thing. But it's also a great situation because you do know that you can trust the people you're with...(Laura)

> we kind of talked about like our night sessions as well in the rocking chairs....and the fact that some things were clinical and hands on and that I think history and you know psychology of a community or whatever you want to call it, like community analysis can't be done too much hands on and I just like that brain picking. I like to be able to analyze a book with a teacher. I feel like I get so much more out of it. I'm not a good analyst so I like being able to

talk about something and kind of chew it up. And then I loved getting the actual...the visuals to what I thing, hear or see (Kendra)

I appreciated the down time...especially sitting on the porch of the team house trying to make sense of what was happening (Jen)

I cut my fingernails down to where they were almost bleeding because I was like reading all about things. That terrified me...but I got more out of it by reading it afterwards. After the first clinic, I finished the reading. And then I could actually say, I saw that today and I can reflect on it because...I didn't realize until after I had seen the worms...(Karen)

the journal was an extremely important tool to really get down what you're seeing exactly at that moment. Different experiences that happened that you want to remember a certain way. In fact when we got back I was reading through my journal and I was surprised at some of the things that I didn't remember that that way, I'm glad that I wrote that down. So that was helpful. It helped create accuracy I think. I enjoyed the informal reflection. Like Rose and I had a lot of informal reflections together. We would often sit on the porch together and talk about the day and what had gone on. Even though there wasn't a lot of formal reflection which would have helped, the informal was definitely (Laura)

Now that I look back on it. At the time it was just a reading assignment...By reading that book and actually living what that book was saying, you know?...it was reflection. It made you think about, I mean, when you got back from the clinics you were tired, or I was tired. I just wanted to go to bed. I didn't want to sit down. I didn't want, you know, I just wanted to go to bed. But by sitting down and talking about it and getting other people's perspectives it made you reflect on your own perspective and it made you reflect on different things and see things that had happened that day in a different light (Janice).

The clinics proved to be the true eye-opener for me on how little I know of native people and their resourcefulness, their community independence and the level of 'status quo' thinking regarding their adherence to their immediate situations...At the community village of Wawa...The native Miskito people at first observance were of general good health. This was a naïve assumption, I would soon learn, as I chose to be the initial contact for documenting their major health complaint. Not only did I need two interpreters but I became so engrossed in their multitude of physical ailments that I was soon realizing the overwhelming task of providing relief for everyone who had come to the clinic that day...The looks of despair, disappointment and pain in the eyes of those turned away was very hurtful to me. I remember feeling of my stomach aching for the rest of the day. The boat ride back home being solemn and reflective. Why can't we stay and 'fix everyone,' why don't we just spend the night,

camp out in the clinic, waking up the next day fresh with energy to provide the needed care for the rest of the village? Children need us, women need our support...older men and women had been waiting hours and needed us!...Filled with frustration of having only a "Band Aid" and...only temporary in relief of their symptoms...(Doris)

People from the community often stop by the "TC3-NICA team house" where most of the students live during their stay in Puerto Cabezas. The team house and especially the front porch has a wonderful view of the hustle and bustle of daily life in Puerto – of course protected by a 10 foot gate and a barbed wire fence. Each day, during the early hours of the morning, students tend to gather on the porch to enjoy the Porteno custom of sitting on rocking chairs, where they observe life in Puerto, and process their service-learning experiences.

They engage in a number of strategies for processing. They talk informally with other students, instructors and sometimes people from Puerto Cabezas who stop by to discuss planned activities, tell stories about living in Nicaragua, or to simply chat. Students also spend their down time processing by writing in their journal, and reading course materials to try and connect what they experiencing affectively and behaviorally on a more cognitive level.

Often adult men and women, and children from the local community, and sometimes from great distances outside Puerto Cabezas, will stop by the "TC3-NICA team house" or as it is known in the community, "la casa de los medicos Norte Americanos," or "the house of the North Americans" asking for food, clothing, personal exams, medicines, employment, blood, money, and sometimes, just wanting to share their story of struggle. When there is a knock at the team house gate students are of not sure how to respond to people who are asking something of them – "it's an intimidating, and uncomfortable experience to interact with someone who is poor and who is begging in another language and sees you as a wealthier outsider from the US." As soon as someone knocks, many students become anxious and expect their

instructors to "deal with problem" which they do initially and throughout the trip if is

a medical issue or if there is a significant language problem. However, after the first

few days students are encouraged by the instructors to interact with people who are

asking something of them – to confront a difficult situation that has no easy answer.

Laura discusses the value of group reflection in terms of processing the difficulties she

had with the daily phenomenon of poorer members of Puerto Cabezas coming to "the

team house." She explains:

> The routine, oh God I hated that. W had such a great porch to sit on and I liked
> to get up early and that was kind of my alone time and I would sit with my
> journal and I'd write and I'd watch the people go by on the street and at 7:00
> sharp every freaking morning people would just start showing up at the gate
> going can we have bread, is there money, do you have clothing. And the adults
> I didn't mind that at all, I felt like if an adult comes by and they ask they
> probably do really need something. Just because it seems like a very proud
> culture and you make your own way you know. If someone's asking they
> probably really need it. But the kids, there were just hundreds of kids
> everywhere just begging all the time and especially in the morning, give us
> some bread with peanut butter...I would think these kids you know, and I was
> immediately putting them like in my place, I don't know. I was going back to
> when I was a little kid and I, I did crap like that all the time. I would steal from
> the grocery store just a little bit because it was fun to do. Mischievous things
> and I kept putting that experience on these kids and feeling that you know
> they're probably just trying to get the gringos you know, it's fun to play with
> us. So I had a really hard time distinguishing if kids were really in need or,
> well it seemed like even when kids were in need, they really exaggerate that
> too. So you can watch a kid playing with their brother or sister and then a
> gringo walks by and they just sort of turn around and they have the puppy dog
> eyes and their moaning and oh I'm sick, give me some bread or something. I
> just didn't know how to interact with the kids...Anyway so I knew how I dealt
> with that and different cultural phenomenon's but I didn't know how the rest of
> the group did. And just talking about that specific incident really helped me
> open up and not judge.

She later shares an experience observing another member of the group's intense

emotional reaction to the plight of two homeless children who came to our table at an

outdoor restaurant and began eating scraps of food from the plates of few students

who did not "finish" their meal:

...so she's in tears about it and I had looked at the same kids and I thought oh God even the kids are, they're even in the restaurant begging you know God. And so I was, I was not being as sensitive or sympathetic. I was thinking of me at that point and she was right there in tune with the kids and it was so good for me to see that you know. I thought that she took it a little too far, I thought we were both extremes you know, it would have been nice to be in the middle. But talking about that in the group definitely helped bring me in a bit to not be so judgmental and to really try to understand what her thoughts were on, okay well it's lovely to see this from her point of view... to understand each other, it helped build group cohesiveness in the beginning by putting issues out there, to help us get to know each other, to understand people's behavior under the surface and at times it was cathartic,

Katelin describes how reflective processing helped her get at the larger structural

forces underlying the problems she was experiencing:

I think I was learning about how the broader economic and political and social impacts the poverty and kind of like why people are so poor because there aren't any jobs and kind of like why aren't there any jobs. What jobs are there and why are they limited and that kind of thing. And I think that was really important to when you say okay why is their poverty like this and then to be able to see that the bigger picture...

In juxtaposing garbage, Jen offers a poignant example of participant observation type

of processing that occurs in the practice of performing service:

The first experience that warrants mentioning occurred while working with the children from the orphanage on skits about personal hygiene. ...one of our little friends discovered an old, crushed, plastic soda bottle on the dirt grounds...my perception of this finding was "garbage." I was proven wrong when one for them dropped it on the ground and kicked it. Eyes lit up and a number of us engaged in a lengthy game of soccer....As I caught my breath, I watched as these children played. They were all equally entertained by their "toy." I just wondered how the thought of playing an empty soda bottle might go over with the average child from the US....I could easily assume that the natural response would be "lame, where's the nintendo."

She then contrast her first observation of garbage with this second, more disturbing observation:

> Another experience with children and garbage did not leave me with such a positive feeling. Outside the team-house, there were a few children rummaging through our trashcan. I found words stuck on the top of my tongue. Torn between four years of college studying health I told the children not to play in the garbage, that it was dirty. The other part of me felt like a complete idiot realizing that they were looking for food. I went inside to get cookies…but then I feared that the next day's children would increase threefold If I gave handouts

Students also comment the value of learning through community Dialogues or "charlas." The express learning the importance of listening to local knowledge and for becoming more sensitive to understanding how local communities view the problems they are experiencing:

> That dialogue at Muelle was fabulous…Sometimes it got a little out of hand…but it really allowed Yani to shine, it showed his strengths as well. I liked how excited people were there…the people of Muelle were really involved, they just took over. We started it up but they took over. Right, and they were in charge of it you know. We could kind of shoot out some questions and try to you know move it one way or the other but they just kept coming back to that, they didn't want to get off that subject. At first I thought well you know here we are asking them specifically what could we do for them and they got onto this whole, "well we need jobs" and I got thinking well we can't do anything about that or get into something that we can help with. But I realized that…they needed to talk about that. That was the biggest thing that was going on in their community and I don't know, there wasn't anything we could do. We were there with medical supplies and we could do clinics…Set seeds going there and brought us together and we really heard their real concerns. Some specific issues, this is the overwhelming need here you know (Laura)

> I remember the "charla," the purpose of the "charla" was to figure out what health care needs they wanted us to address yet they talked about employment…How there is no jobs and the schools are so poor and I remembered looking at the schools and saying how can kids learn in this environment,

> …and I think that the right kind of help, the educational help, not the preaching help. I think there are some changes that could be made because there seemed

to be a lot of people at the "charla" that were fed up with the way things work otherwise they wouldn't be complaining so loudly about the problems that they saw and the problems that they lived with every day (Janice).

Students also reflect on ways to improve the clinic by searching for ways to address problems using resources available in the immediate context. Joyce came up with a particularly innovative approach to cleaning teeth as a new station at the clinics because she realized that the many of the Nicaraguan's teeth she was seeing at the clinic were very often rotted and decaying. One day she happened to stumble on a particular bush that had what someone called "lufa" growing on it and she decided given it's texture and abundance locally, that along with a little salt, the "lufa" might serve as a useful tool for teeth cleaning – especially in place where toothbrushes and dental care in general is a rare commodity. So she collected a number of "lufa" sponges and created a teeth-cleaning station at the clinic to work with mothers and children. She describes the experience below:

> We were in the yard burning trash and I just saw those lufa sponges on the bushes and just thought it would be something we could use, you know, cut them up and boil them...Yeah I remember that whole thing down there with the sponge and everything and I remember watching, I still have the video where they did like, you know, Fred trying to use the sponge and that was so funny...Well the best was the moms, like just doing it, you know, like scrubbing their kids teeth, you know...

Group processing. Students also mentioned the importance of group reflection for processing – particularly in terms of getting a different perspective from peers who have brought similar baggage to Nicaragua and who might have had a different take of a similar dissonant experience. Group reflection was also a way to build solidarity, support and trust while also giving feedback and/or problematizing assumptions. Karen describes in detail the value of group processing in her various commentaries below:

We had daily group meetings in the team house. In these meetings we had heated discussions over poverty and disease and how to address these issues. We debated what exactly our role was and how we could most effectively collaborate with the people of Puerto Cabezas especially since we were receiving so much from them. We were learning an immense amount of information from them and we felt we needed to return the favor. Like total strangers that I had never met before and just, we just started taking care of each other. We were like, it's like you know, all of a sudden we were like, not partners in crime but we became a pack. You know, like walking to the orphanage at night, you know, we just like whoop we stuck right together and we talked and we taught each other.

The group things worked too...the group therapy. Sometimes that got ugly because we were all just going through that ugliness like transformation and everybody was angry or sad or...It was kind of everything was on edge, everybody was.....I'm the sort that talks everything out. I'm an extroverted person. Usually, you know, I'm the person who will make an ass out of myself, say something I shouldn't have. Because I have to think out loud and I have to bounce ideas off of other people...I could say something and be corrected or they'd say, You know I really think it's this way. And it helped me to widen my horizons because I was seeing the world through my eyes and they were seeing it through theirs and it got bigger and bigger. You could see it through other people's you know by sharing your experiences and then all of a sudden you could see so much more

Karen relates a story below of the nature of how TC3-NICA students experience processing as an important part of international service-learning. She details how students engage with reflecting on and negotiating the multiple meanings associated with the contextual complexity and ambiguity of real life problems and issues:

One of the issues I had a great deal to say about was that we may have been doing more harm than good by giving away the medicine to the people in the clinics. Because later we found the same medicine was seen for sale on in local kiosks. I felt hurt and cheated thinking that the people in the clinics were deceiving us in order to get medicine which in turn they could sell. My argument was that there were people who really needed that medicine and it was a shame that they couldn't get it because others had gotten to the clinic first only to take advantage of us for there own personal profit. Corrine retaliated that it didn't matter if the people were selling the medicine because they must need the money to buy food for their children and pay rent etc. However, I argued that with nearly 90% unemployment, how was it that the men were able to afford the rum they were drinking while lying in their hammocks while their families went hungry? Even though it was irritating to Donna who understood at the time that it was all foolish to be arguing and that

people were being reached and that they would do what they had to do to survive, I was still learning. Now as I write this, I realize that I was learning about more than just misdirected pills. I was beginning to understand the complexity of people's reactions to extreme poverty, social welfare systems and their influences on the economy, the function of the black market, the economics of the area and our impact as the provider or charity and social welfare. There is no welfare system in place, if you are broke, you don't eat and if no one helps you or you can't get a job then you die. Simple as that...this was a hard pill to swallow. I still have a hard time deciding where to draw lines especially when it comes to doing good and whether it will do more harm than good.

Angela describes the importance of group reflection:

> ...relationally it was just, it was so wild watching that whole group function. It was a pretty wild group. So on one hand, I'm kind of dividing this in two ways. I think I learned a lot from you and Donna just being able to process with you guys. Being able to, just have the time to pull you aside and say well you know I've been thinking about this and what about this and what if we try...That's exactly what I look for in a learning situation

Laura shares he view on the importance of group reflection in terms of building

solidarity and support and also highlights the importance of surfacing issues that may

be shared problems that percolating underneath

> Well the group reflection...made such a difference for me...It really made the group more cohesive. Well I'll tell you about our first lesson when...one of us was just, really lit into you about how she felt like she was caged...She wanted a little more independence. I specifically remember her saying, I feel like I'm living with my parents when I was 15 years old. I'm not allowed to go out after dark, and this was all crap....the rest of the group I think was also feeling that but all of us were more, I think all of the rest of us had traveled before so we knew that it was good to stay close to the group. I for one was just like I trust the instructors of our group, if they say it's not safe to go at night, I don't want to go out then you know. Yeah we did feel like we were curfewed or something but we were more willing to give you guys the benefit of the doubt and say well okay, they must know what they're doing...It was very combative but I think it was cathartic for the whole group afterwards, we just felt like whew...when we came together as a group we discussed our behaviors you know and told about what was going on in our mind and that brought a whole different level of understanding and cohesiveness....We were able to see that this is a universal group phenomenon, you know tensions happen and we are able to work them out and it's good to talk to each other rather than kind of hold it really tightly inside.

Ben describes how the boundaries between formal and informal discussion can often

become blurred which he feels helps break down some of the social barriers that exist

that might silence some people who feel too intimidated to discuss their ideas in a

formal setting:

> There was kind of a constant exchange between everybody and sometimes it
> was hard to say well when did the class end and what's you know like the
> barriers were more fuzzy. So we talk and we'd be talking about things and in a
> group that was clearly a class setting and then the class would sort of end but
> people would continue to talk and then you kind of move to the kitchen and
> you're talking a little bit about things and it might lead to personal experience
> and then you might find yourself kind of way off the track but you're still kind
> of, so the barriers were broken down and I think it was good that everybody
> had a chance to speak. Not just to speak but to really exchange ideas and in
> that, kind of an intense environment where we go from class to lunch and we
> were all sharing in that and that had a lot of value

In the TC3-NICA group students tended to view reflection in a variety of

ways. Most students referred to their journals, group and community discussion as the

primary source for reflecting on their service activities and the multiple problems

those activities presented. Group and community processing was particularly helpful

in problematizing assumptions about poverty and other high intensity types of

dissonance that didn't fit our normal mental scheme of things.

Connecting. TC3-NICA students describe connecting as primarily as a

combination of affective and behavioral learning processes and strategies. Connecting

as an affective learning process occurs when students empathize with the social

problems Nicaraguans are experiencing. Affective connecting characterize students

attempts to understand how people feel and how they can connect to that through

empathy, caring, listening, comforting and so on.

Students describe interactions with community members in terms of displaying

love, support and understanding. They express the importance of bonding and

building friendships with particularly with marginalized community members without judging or analyzing who they are or what they are experiencing. They comment on knowing and learning through connecting, sharing, listening and being sensitive to Nicaraguans and fellow students who are suffering, in pain or experiencing a problematic situation. Rather than being preoccupied with searching for solutions to the problem students encounter during or after participation in service, connecting means sharing in other people's experience, being an ally and showing solidarity and deeper moral commitment.

Based on student data, affective learning through connecting means feeling and becoming sensitive to the struggles, positions and perspectives of Nicaraguans while trying to suspend judgment and/or avoid as students say over and over, "rationalizing," or "intellectualizing" the experience of others. It means not falling prey to over-theorizing and "blaming the victim" mentality toward individuals living in poverty.

Affective and behavioral learning strategies for connecting include physical and non-verbal contact with community members and other students in the form of dancing, singing, and storytelling. Affective and behavioral strategies for connecting also include smiling, gift-giving, walking, visiting, listening, hugging, caring, crying, imagining, expressing emotions, dancing, singing, drawing pictures and writing poetry. Affective learning in service often means acting on intuition, on what seems morally correct and just. It represents showing care, compassion and engaging in emotional bonding and physical comfort to alleviate the pain and suffering of others. Connecting has to do with sharing and accepting values, feelings, beliefs and attitudes.

All of these affective processing strategies are meant to better process dissonant experiences and social problems through greater sensitivity, care and connection with the community and other students. It means developing the capacity to act and connect without judging and critiquing. Affective processing also has to do

with self-exploration in terms of how well and to what extent students feel that are connecting to the emotional and felt needs of the community, other students and their own well-being. Affective learning is not meant to solve problematic experiences, but rather connect with experience bodily, intuitively and viscerally.

Behavioral forms of both processing and connecting also emerge from student data. Behavioral processing occurs when students learn by doing. Behavioral processing and connecting processes entail forms of learning whereby TC3-NICA students actively participate in a social context or communities of practice, e.g., clinics, health skits, assessments and workshops, and dialogues. Behavioral learning strategies include participant-observation, conversation, building relationships, caring, bonding, trying on someone else's perspective and so on.

Connecting: student examples. A number of students really get at the kind of learning that takes place in connecting. Students are involved in a variety of "communities of practice" where they learn from the various connecting that they do performing service in a variety of experiential sites, i.e., the hospital, clinics, skits and health assessments in neighborhoods. The learning processes entailed in connecting in communities of practice have so much to do with the context of learning and also tend to affect all of the senses. It is a type of learning that is very different to taking a test in a classroom, or listening to a lecture or reading in the library. It's something much more deeply visceral, felt, resonant and connected. Service learning is experienced as an empathic understanding that connects with others feelings and issues. Connecting is a form of knowing international service-learning that has to do with affect, values, beliefs, attitudes, ethics - one's inner core.

The learning that occurs is not based on some external authority, it's a connection on a personal level. It fosters a greater visceral sense of the experience. It occurs at multiple sites and is formal, informal, discursive, non-discursive.

There are many opportunities for connecting with community children and orphans at the team house and with community members. Students describe a variety of ways they connect with children "eating cereal," "performing health skits," "shampooing hair," "sharing gifts," "playing checkers with bottle caps," playing soccer with a plastic bottle, and "going to the beach." Connecting with Nicaraguan children helps students better understand, and become sensitive to children's living situation in Puerto Cabezas on a deeper and more personal level.

Joyce describes nicely the combinations of connecting and processing that takes place when students interact with various community members informally and formally through service. In this case she discusses observing and interacting with the children staying at the community orphanage:

> So that was amazing to me. And transforming, the idea of like, the children living this kind of scary, hard life and us not really being able to do much about it. I mean, you did some because you have brought people back here and kept in touch and you keep that continuity going, but like systemically, like all those kids without homes, without needs, without opportunities that we have, and still making, you know like making a lot of fun out of nothing.

Karen describes, in general, building relationships with the community as an important part of the learning process,

> I definitely think that we tried to come in and build a relationship. That was good. I got a little embarrassed about my own reactions to things. I hope I didn't embarrass us in any way or make them feel, like question us. Or like other members of the group because we were in such state of shock, observations that might have been verbally, like oh my God they're so poor. You know? But I think that it was, we did make a relationship...(Karen)

The majority of female students describe making important gender-based connections with Nicaraguan women. Katelin shares her story of connecting a deeper level watching a woman give birth at the hospital:

Watching that woman give birth was really significant to me for a couple of different things. One is that I've never seen someone give birth before in person and that was an amazing thing. It was like wow life. And but the other part of it was the lack, the scarcity of supplies in that hospital was unbelievable. That she didn't even have a sheet to sit on when she was in the bed. And also the kind of paternalistic feeling that was still there that was in the hospital, like no one in her family could come in and be there with her, especially not her husband God forbid. I remember also we kind of felt like there were these two kind of young male doctors, I feel like, maybe it's just my own opinions that you know that they could have been, my own feelings about how birth should be is that there needs to be lots of love and a different kind of feeling around you and I felt like there could have been more of that. Of course I feel like what if she wants a woman doctor, things like that which isn't really happening because of the sexism and the culture.

Janice describes the long-lasting impact the connection working with Manuela, the mom in her "home-stay family" in the neighborhood:

I even do my laundry by hand still...With Manuela...That's who I did the home visit with. She was one of the ones, she was another eye opener. Her living condition, yeah...The fact that she had all these little kids, the, for lack of a nicer word for it, the hovel that they lived in that seemed nicer than the rest of the other shacks and I was just floored that kids would live in that kind of condition where they had that wood stove right inside the house without proper ventilation, because I know that causes bronchitis in kids, and asthma and all kinds of respiratory problems with kids. The condition of the clothes that they wore, I was scared to scrub too hard......for fear they would fall apart and I felt so bad for her yet I admired her because she really had nothing yet she was proud

Joyce discusses connection in terms of how a number female students over the course of working with Nicaraguan women in the hospital, clinics and family home stays develop a sort of "sisterhood" bond with the women of Puerto Cabezas

...I think it was kind of like discovering a sisterhood kind of thing, you know their culture is so different, but like some of these women were like, finding this sisterhood thing...It was like finding a commonality and tapping into it....[women] are so dignified, there is so much dignity and you know, ...They're taking it on, they take stuff on more completely it seems. I don't know, I'm having trouble articulating, but watching a woman give birth there,

you know, in those conditions where they're re-sterilizing gloves and everything's filthy and she's, like, on a table and there's nothing there and, you know, the doctor was really pretty terse. You know, I mean, that's all cultural stuff but it was amazing the way she just did it. You know, it's more like, basic. Like life is so much more basic and the women just seem very much, they seem more pragmatic and like, you know, they'll just, they'll do what they gotta do you know. It's just, there's just something, some kind of really notable strength to it, you know.

Katelin describes a women give birth while working at the hospital in Puerto Cabezas.

She also speaks to the deep affective felt sense of connecting with Nicaraguan

womens' experience particularly on a political level:

> Watching that woman give birth was really significant to me for a couple of different things. One is that I've never seen someone give birth before in person and that was an amazing thing. It was like wow life. And but the other part of it was the lack, the scarcity of supplies in that hospital was unbelievable. That she didn't even have a sheet to sit on when she was in the bed. And also the kind of paternalistic feeling that was still there that was in the hospital, like no one in her family could come in and be there with her, especially not her husband God forbid. I remember also we kind of felt like there were these two kind of young male doctors, I feel like, my own feelings about how birth should be is that there needs to be lots of love and a different kind of feeling around you and I felt like there could have been more of that. Of course I feel like what if she wants a woman doctor, things like that which isn't' really happening because of the sexism and the culture....I feel like that I have strong feelings about how birth should be and that woman's' experience at that time, that especially struck me. I wondered how it would be different if I witnessed a birth that was not in a hospital that was with a mid wife somewhere else.

Students also mention how they learn by observing and connecting with their

instructors:

> We were talking about trust and how that trust develops...because it also, part of the, the navigation, you know watching you guys. We're with you guys 24 hours a day...I mean we're watching you at all times you know on this trip, all of the students are watching you and Donna and we watch you navigate through the airports, and get our luggage together and make sure it doesn't get lost. And you obviously have credibility I mean even just the little pink scarves on the bags so that we can all get our bags quickly. It becomes obvious that you guys have done it before and you know what you're doing and so there's

that level. Yes you can navigate your way through the system, you've obviously done this before, okay yes, we've got some fact behind that now. And then we start to get to know you as people, and you're as good as your word you know you take us through activities and they work out. You say go to the market and it will be great and you might not even be there but it does work out and so we go oh yeah, it's great. And then you're willing to give us the time to sit down and talk to us. You treat us like human beings and even interesting human beings. So that's really where the trust comes in.

Laura then contrasts the typical non-experiential classroom learning relationship between student and professor with the kinds of connections that occur in Nicaragua. She also highlights the importance of sharing and listening to feelings and an important part of connecting:

> As opposed to being in a classroom where, I mean we're treated as students in the classroom. And some professors you know you can tell that they're not that interested in teaching, they'd rather be back in the lab. So we're treated as minions who need to learn this and we're not very interesting, you know the professor does not want to hear anything back from you, just I'm doing my job, you guys go home and do yours...I mean when we're down there, I mean you could make it like that. Oh well, here is what we're going to talk about today and what did you think of this, but don't come at me with any personal stuff. If you need to process something, you know don't give me any emotions. And the fact that you're willing to delve into the emotional bit is great. It's, because it's a huge part of learning, especially in that situation and in a classroom it's so much easier to ignore emotions. Professors can pretend that we're just little data banks that they have to fill up with their knowledge.

Katelin shares a similar experience in terms of strengthening and expanding the depth of the student-teacher relationship and connection in international service-learning:

> ...it's helpful to have someone who can give you feedback and kind of give you different ways of thinking about ways but also in a supportive way. And I felt like you did that...I guess I think about kind of the constant throughout everything that we did or everywhere that we went like even when we were kind of shopping, even when we went out to eat somewhere, I felt like you were really stead like as kind of a friend and a teacher. And it was like there was always the opportunity to be reflective about what we were doing...I remember we would like sit in the group and talk and I really liked that, hearing what other people had to say and getting to dialogue about it...you

definitely get to know each other more and kind of feel more comfortable with everyone

Ben also comments on the ways in which instructors and TC3-NICA students connected had an important role in the learning process:

> Well in other academic programs I've been, academic experiences, I've felt a greater distance between the professor and the teacher. Now part of that is probably because I was much younger then and you know here I was coming onto this trip and we're roughly the same age and Donna's a few years older and I felt that there was an opportunity for more exchange on a sort of a peer level although I also recognize coming into that environment, I've never been there, I'm not in a position of authority, I don't have the experience in that area but I feel like we could exchange ideas more and when you have that feeling of confidence of being able to exchange, I think it just helps your, helps you formulate ideas more. Sometimes in an academic environment I have a little bit perhaps intimidated or just feeling more like there's a bigger gap between me and the position of subservience to the position of authority that might interfere with my ability to just think on my feet.

Connecting stands out in terms of the abundance of data provided by students who stressed how much they learned through close, personal contact and interaction with community members. Connecting occurs when students actively participate in multiple community contexts of service-learning practice. Communities of practice that students consistently site include: Home health visits and home stays, and the various sites where collaborative service work takes place such as: health skits with community children and orphans, health clinics with various neighborhoods and communities inside and outside Puerto Cabezas.

Katelin depicts the general nature of connecting as an important part of how students experience the international service-learning process:

> Well I mean that was I felt like that was an important...everything that we did, every all the different interactions that we had with people on different levels, going to hear this person talk and even just sitting, even walking down the street and whatever we feel, whatever our feelings about being Americans in this foreign country and yes wanting to help but how do you go about helping

and I think it was just like this big learning of experiencing all these different feelings kind of gets you, kind of like helps teach you, how can I help. You want to help and you know you have to...the more you can kind of by talking to people and by learning about it helps, begins to open up to more of an understanding of why a place is how it is. And the more you have that experience, the more you have that feeling then the next time you approach it, it's different how you approach it. You're more sensitive to what someone's needs are. You're more sensitive to where they're coming from. So your approach may be more successful or may be more, I don't' know, does that make any sense. But I felt like that was an important message...

Carol shares her story connecting with "her Family" by spending a half day doing chores with them:

In spite of the fact that there was supposed to be a Miskito Indian uprising around that time, we all went ahead with our plans for a one-day health clinic in El Muelle, the nearest Miskito village. We were accepted with open arms. Each of us went to a home and a family to "help out" for half a day. We were terrified because many of us didn't know the languages (Miskito, Spanish). We wanted to buddy up with 2 of us to a home, but that idea was vetoed by the powers-that-be. So, in much trepidation, I was assigned to a Spanish speaking family. As it turns out, only the females of the family were at home...My 'helping out' included carrying water from a spring, which really didn't seem all that far away, but when I started carrying, I got about halfway to the hut before having to set the bucket down. I learned very quickly how difficult work is in the village. The next task I attempted, and was somewhat more successful with, was helping with the wash. Everything is washed with a bar of soap in a large basin of water. I thought that looked easy too. Wrong. After washing about 5 things, my arms were trembling from the effort. My next task was to hang the wash out on a barbed wire line. Simple, right? Nope. The clothing was heavy from the water (no spin cycle there). I was exhausted in no time flat. The mother took pity on me and offered me coconut milk. I accepted and she quickly hacked a coconut out of a tree, trimmed it down, and made an opening where I could sip. At this point I was thinking this was pure nectar. I shared it with one of the younger daughters. After laundry, we went upstairs into the house to make lunch. Lunch was white rice. A fire had to be started in the fireplace and the rice had to be rinsed thoroughly. After the rice was finished cooking, everyone ate. I was totally exhausted. I couldn't imagine how they could work so hard. And there was still half a day to go! It was time for us to go, and I'll never forget my first one-on-one experience with a Miskito family...

In the following series of short vignettes, Betsy relates vividly and powerfully the kinds of connections students make as a part of the learning process during home stays and health assessments. She first shares how easily she connected with the father of her "Nicaraguan family" in on a deep personal level during her home stay in one of the most economically poor and politically disenfranchised communities in Puerto Cabezas:

> I just remember we sat down on the front steps of his house...I felt connected to him immediately. I remember him telling me about the death of his son...either shortly after birth or he might have been even two when he died. But they buried him right in front of the house and there's a grave, you probably noticed it out front there's a gravestone and he was very emotional in telling me about it and the depth and breadth of his feeling were quite clear and he said you know we buried him right in front of the house so we'll never forget him, and he'll always be with us.

Betsy further describes nature of her connection learning from the stories her "Grandma" shared with her while getting to know her family in Muelle:

> Now ninety-three years of age, Julio's mother in law, Maria Luisa fought for the contras while in her eighties. She took up arms against what she perceived to be an oppressive regime, and she fought for a cause in which she truly believed....these are the things that take time for a person to divulge...it takes time and trust for a person to talk about painful and personal experiences. What an incredible story that will soon be lost, if not chronicled. So many life stories that are lost...

She then speaks to the long-term impact, difficulties and moral dilemmas in making such deep connections through service-learning with people who are experiencing struggle in their lives:

> ...not to give myself too much credit, I mean the credit is his is really because he was so willing to open himself up and did about any number of things. I mean he wept with me. And maybe he does that with everybody, I don't know. I can only see it as you said earlier, through my own lens. But it seemed

heartfelt...I'm sure on some level he sensed that I really did care about his family. I cared about him, I cared about his family and I think that's one of the reasons I'm left with this, some residual guilt/sadness that you know I feel that I, in leaving, finishing nursing school, taking care of my own responsibilities back here, ...So that was an amazing experience...I did have the feeling with the family that they were, there was a certain desperation I sensed. Wanting more out of life, wanting to excel, achieve, succeed and you know I did get the feeling that the family wanted more from me than I could give. And I felt inadequate in the sense that I could not, it's something I couldn't communicate to them...

The following story about "saving a baby's life" when Betsy identified a life-threatening health problem a small baby in her family was experiencing, highlights the depth and meaningfulness and the kinds of long-lasting impression and connections students make with Nicaraguan families in the context of service-work:

The baby had a serious staph infection...It was his daughter's baby. And I knew that the baby was, there was just something not quite right so I went to Donna and Donna of course picked up on it immediately and know what was going on and then we intervened. That is significant...Oh it would have died, I'm sure of it too. Absolutely. I mean the baby wouldn't eat, the baby would not feed, the baby wouldn't nurse, the baby was definitely lethargic and in trouble.

Betsy also discusses the value of mini-research projects of student's conduct in the community. Betsy was interested in understanding more about how the community practices in herbal medicine:

...we worked on specific projects. I was interested in herbal medicine, am still interested in herbal medicine and I think that that was a piece of it. He was willing to share information with me, knew I was interested in that...He did and the information that he had learned from his grandmother and she had passed it along. And I think that that was a way he felt that he could give back to me. I felt it was important to him that it be a reciprocal arrangement and relationship.

Betsy's concluding vignette about how "her grandma" traveled to the airport to say goodbye to her despite her fragile physical condition, speaks to the profound level of

connection and love that often occurs between Nicaraguan families and students in the context of performing service over such a short period of time:

> On the day that I left Puerto Cabezas, she traveled from el Muelle to see me off. After a long wait, our plane eventually arrived, and as I stood up to embark, she took my arm firmly and walked me to the plane. Finally she hugged me and kissed me, and cried out softly as she said goodbye. I will never know what she was saying. I will never know. My last image as the plane departed was that of Maria Luisa, at 93 years of age, strong, beautiful and proud, sitting erectly while surrounded by her grand and great grand children (Betsy).

Given that circumstances in the context of international service-learning can be so radically different and unfamiliar, a number of students also highlight the deep connections that that are formed within the TC3-NICA student group – particularly as a way to support each other in overcoming the challenges associated with a adapting and reacting to the low and high intensity dissonance that they experience together. Karen talks about how learning to overcome and adapt to new and difficult social, physical and environmental challenges in the orphanage help her forge a strong bond with her peers:

> Doris found a rather large spider looking her in the face while she was using the bathroom in the orphanage. At first we heard her scream, then she calmly walked out into the kitchen, brought a cast iron frying pan into the bathroom with her and then we heard a thud. Lighting yet another cigarette, Dawn said nothing could scare her much anymore! We were bonding more than I ever thought possible. Three total strangers ages 45, 24 and 18 and we had developed a mother-daughter, sisterly relationship that was so deep within days of being introduced. The group had developed a complex hierarchy and political system. There always seemed to be some sort of issue or episode but then it would pass.

Betsy also discusses the important of group trust and bonding in terms of learning how to plan and implement clinics and other service-work effectively as a team:

> I felt that we were able to 'come together' as a group and were able to function pretty effectively as a team by the time we had to staff the "clinic' during the second week. By the end of two weeks in PC, it seemed that we had become fairly well-integrated as a group, having experienced all sorts of growing pains that one would expect when any group is forming....I've learned that in a relatively short period of time...that I was willing to trust many or most of the people in the group...the trust that I came to feel was due to self-disclosing statements (made either privately or in group settings such as our nightly seminars)...

She later adds,

> Friendships were forged in the team house, and I reflect fondly on the nights when I helped Amanda clean her ankle wounds; the wee hours we would laugh ourselves to sleep as the roosters provided a noisy backdrop for what would soon be our dreams—especially Carol who on one occasion bounded from her bed and in one fell leap, appeared at the table side in the kitchen, and shouted, "there's a tarantula in my bed, there's a tarantula in my bed," and then there was the morning that Francine and I sang softly "We are not Alone," as we went on the wee hour "rat patrol" together...

She also points to the central importance of the group leaders in mediating and

facilitating group learning processes:

> ..the whining, complaining, and self-assertion that went on, it's pretty much par for the course when groups are forming and trying to get to the point where 'cohesion' exists...I do think that the group leaders, acted as buffers and conduits and in a way mediated the effects of some of the more deleterious and harmful behaviors of the group

Formal and informal community presentations and conversations were also

important to learning from and connecting to the community. Ben highlights the

importance of learning through local knowledge and being able to connect with

various community members through their stories and presentations. He also stresses

how connecting with the community and learning about their lives, struggles and

problems on a personal level echoes what other students commented regarding

necessity of having personal community connection for being able to "walk in their

shoes" and for "taking on his/her perspective" or "feeling what it's like to be in their position" and then importantly, contrasting it with their own relatively privileged position on the global map of socio-economic, political and cultural power:

> There's one other thing, as I'm thinking about the program, the times that I felt that were most useful to me was when I had a chance to sit down and talk with a Nicaraguan, what are you thinking, what's your life like. And so there was one day we went out, we were doing the head lice, so I spent the morning with a family...I had a chance to just sit down and talk about what he was facing and he was like expecting me and welcoming me, and we sat and we talked, it was short it was half a day but I feel like...I was practicing Spanish speaking communicating in Spanish in a way that wasn't just an academic exercise. We were really talking, we were struggling but I was having that exchange and I think anytime that the program can set up more opportunities for really direct exchange is very good...

Ben relates poignant example of making connections with a local doctor that the TC3-NICA team works with. Hearing Dr. Humberto's tragic story re-telling his direct experience in the civil war in Nicaragua is very moving. The Sandinista's burned Dr. Humberto's home along the Rio Coco to the ground, they put his family in a concentration camp which was given the misleading name "Tasba Pri" or "free land," and to make matters even worse, the Sandinistas forced him fight as a "soldier" for "their cause" – of which he had very little intellectual understanding as a 12 yr old.

> ...the times where I really felt like I got a connection or really heard from Nicaraguans was more powerful. Like that night Dr, Humberto's talking about his experiences as a soldier and a young, young person. And I'm just thinking my gosh if I was in his shoes. So I struggled with that. I'd go out and go down to the store and try to talk to people on the street. But you know it would be more hi, how are you, you're from America. It's hard to really get a real connection there...And any time that we could spend time really connecting with Nicaraguans was important. Just setting up, a lot of the onus to that goes to students, if you get in that environment you've got to make a connection but I think one thing that a program can do is set up those exchanges. But all in all it was a wonderful experience. I guess one sentence, I guess I would just say it makes me realize or isn't it strange that I was born in upstate New York in an upper middle class family and that's just where you get plunked down determines a lot of this whole world.

Betsy also identifies with Ben's sentiments and sheds light on the fact that often
students have a hard time discovering the truth of the matter upon hearing various
sides to the story:

> ...That night that Dr. Umberto spoke about his family's relocation from the
> Rio Coco to Tasba Pri and his stories about the war. His mother went without
> shoes for a year; and at age 12, he went to war and slept with a gun...I wonder
> how the course of history would have been altered had Pedro Chammorro had
> lived...one thing is clear: it's very hard to get at the truth, and that pertains,
> unfortunately to a large range of issues, if not nearly everything. Truth:
> slippery and elusive...

Jen talks about how community presentations and conversations changed her way of
looking at the concept of international charitable efforts:

> That evening two Creole men from the community Orlando and Jesse came to
> speak to our group and their comments helped change my thinking about
> charity.....The conversation evolved into how people in Puerto have become
> used to things being handed to them. They have not been encouraged to think
> for themselves, to become creative. They spoke of when people fled to
> Honduras, relief aid was given to them. Before and after the war there was no
> influence or incentive given, especially not by the government...,...My
> feelings have changed. I still feel I want to "give" but dumping a bag of
> clothes into a red bin in the states is different than knowing the names and
> faces of those you are giving to

Kendra also talks about making connections with the community as an
essential component in the international service-learning process and importantly in
fostering solidarity between people from the US and Nicaraguans in order to work for
greater social justice. Having multiple opportunities to make personal connections
with the community in Puerto Cabezas also helps her differentiate between charity and
social change as well as develop comfort level for connecting on a much deeper
spiritual level with Nicaraguans:

I really enjoyed connecting with some of the community leaders to hear their perspectives and get a sense of what kind of movement was happening on the local level in terms of developing solidarity and self-sufficiency within the communities. It appealed to me to work with them because their focus was less on the acuity of community situations and more on working long term on development to support individuals....And that's sort of what I came to within myself while we were there and even when we got back. Was that I know that I could go... Like if I went to Puerto alone, I could go and walk down the street to Pastor Earls and they would know who I was and they would welcome me. The reason that I want to work with people is because we are all brothers and sisters on this planet and it's not about... I don't know maybe this realization has been recent for me but it's all human connection and it's all like spirit connection...That was...I mean when we were there I had incredible connections with people and we...There was just that give and take and it wasn't about me like giving someone a Band-aid. It was about us saying "Hi my name is Kendra what's your name?" Like I'm a human being you're a human being that's great.

Through informal and formal conversations and dialogues, students are exposed each day to the powerful life stories of the "Nicaraguan" community they come into contact with in Puerto Cabezas. The stories they share with the local community shape the way they understand local problems. Stories help students make connections between theories they learn about in their readings and also challenge the assumptions embedded in those readings. Stories allow students to enter the world of the Nicaraguans' lived experience, to connect with it, feel it viscerally, - to share in their difficult history. It helps them begin to develop a contextual understanding of the social, political, economic and cultural issues they are experiencing. Problems that were once disconnected and detached from student's lives become real and are no longer abstract intellectual phenomena. Clinics also provide an important context for learning through participant observation and an important forum for connecting with the community. Joyce provides her view of some of the learning that occurs in the course clinic work:

So different little cultural phenomena. Watching people stand in line, how the children were treated, how the elders were treated with respect. There are a

couple of people with mental illness and just to see how they were treated by the community. It was interesting. And we saw the family structure and how dependent, at least in some of the places they were on...So you got to see different subcultures within the culture and it was fascinating.

Laura offers her perspective on learning through participation in health clinics:

...Even just showing up at the clinic and there's this beautiful building, I mean they're nice buildings, well constructed, cement, tile, clean, everything except supplies and medical staff....That was very frustrating you know. It's sort of like I felt like the government really tried, they started something here but couldn't carry through. For me it wasn't frustrating, but I thought for the people who lived in those villages it must have been frustrating. We're getting a clinic, we're getting medical care, but once again no...you get a great building but not medical to go with it. I just felt frustrated.

Kendra describes how she connected with people during the clinic in a Miskito community called Wawa:

When the clinics started it was overwhelming to see the extent of need and suffering present in the people. I did not break down like I had been worried about. I treated and cared for patients like I do at the hospital at home during clinical training. I used as few gloves as possible, I used whatever resources that we had with us, and my hands didn't shake or stop working. I smiled at those who were waiting for care, I held the hands of those who were sad, and I prayed for those in pain. In response to my giving I had gifts given right back. I didn't necessarily have the kind of medicine that someone needed but they knew that I cared and sometimes that was medicine enough...

Katelin describes the long-lasting impression and empathy one gets while connecting with people at the clinics and in other service locations:

That's part of why it does stay with people for their entire lives.
I mean you can't make it be a perfect trip, it's not supposed to be...You have to struggle to find the ability to communicate, to comprehend what the hell you just stepped into. You have to struggle to not just break down and recognize that oh these people are the most resilient people I have met and I can't even...I'd be way too embarrassed to break down considering what their daily lives are like.

Often during clinics people come to Donna (the other co-instructor of the program) or I or one of the students and ask if "the doctor" can do a home visit to check on a friend or relative that is unable to attend the clinic do to a more extreme illness. Often the extent of the health problem and the location and distance to the home are not very clear because of communication problems. Students sometimes, particularly if they're "ready to handle the emotional challenge" have the opportunity to accompany Donna and I on impromptu house visits and during our clinic in the village of Wawa, Kendra just happened to be with Donna for one such visit. Since I have accompanied Donna on a number of visits as a translator (and emotional supporter) it's hard to describe the intensity connected to the way one's heart pumps and adrenaline rises while waking toward an unknown sickness, possibly to encounter a person dying, in an unfamiliar environment. It's not unusual that such visits take you through dense jungle areas, where it seems as if there is no path and one is left to trust the guide that he/she has met just minutes before embarking on this mysterious journey. These visits have less to do with giving medicine and much more to do with giving of of one's heart for often medicine is not what is needed. It is a hard lesson to learn in the most difficult of circumstances. During one interview I asked Kendra to describe a critical incident that stuck out in her mind and she related the following account of her experience doing a home visit:

> You just said that and I felt tears come to my eyes. The first thing that pops into my into my head is that grim village we went to Wawa, that was first, we took the boat trip, the hour and a half boat trip to Wawa. Which was a trip within itself. (laughing). Then we got to Wawa and it was like Whoa! The community and village just took my breath away. It was so beautiful but so poverty stricken. What just came to my mind in terms of things sticking out, was the woman, the grandma. There was a woman who was maybe Donna's age who kept coming and saying, "can you come and check on my mother she's"... "Can you come and check on my mother." So she took us to the house and there's this woman with her leg amputated laying on the ground. The grandmother of the family and so they just wanted us to check and see if it was all right and....I think I had "adjusted" to being there at that point and like

seeing that nobody has any beds or nobody has anything. But the grandmother was on the floor and she was on, I mean they obviously spent so much time taking care of her and making sure that they could get her as comfortable as possible with what few sheets they might have to put on the floor under her. Of course it made me, my heart clench, but we took the bandages off and her leg is cut off like above the knee and it's just completely infected. She had had it amputated before and been taken to the hospital and they gave her antibiotics and then it ran out and then it got infected so she had to go back to the hospital and get it more amputated because the infection had got so bad. It's so huge of a wound that it's not something... and she had diabetes and basically they just sent her home to die, but with infection. What was really shocking and amazing to me was as we were looking at her leg and taking care of her the grandson went out and brought some coconuts for us. And just like chopped off the tops and he handed me one and I was sitting there rubbing her hair back and just kind of trying..., while Donna was looking at the leg, just trying to give her my caring, cause that's really all I could do. All she kept saying was drink, drink, drink the coconut. Like she wasn't even... She's sitting there probably in more pain than I ever could imagine in my life and she's like "drink the coconut milk." I was like "OK I'll drink it." I don't know... I have a picture of that family sitting outside their home and I look at it sometimes and the grandson that had got us, he was the one who got us the whole bag of coconuts to bring back with us on the boat as a gift... So that's one of the things that really sticks with me...

Karen discusses how she struggled with connecting with poor people at first but how she learned to value connecting more in observing one of her instructors give a dose of care:

> I knew that I should reach out and help the people who I had come to Nicaragua to help. I ended up being afraid of them and unable to touch them or treat them as equal human beings. I'm not very religious, but I am always reminded of the story of Jesus when he stops and touches Lazarus the leper and loves him. Our instructor Donna was very much like this, she hardly ever wore gloves and she always touched everyone with a loving, sincere touch that made them feel wanted, loved, human. Over the years and with more experience, I am working to be more like Donna but honestly, it may take a lifetime for me to learn to be as loving and generous and act on those feelings...

Joyce expressed that deep felt sense of empathy through connecting with the strength of Nicaraguan women who come to the clinics and who are suffering or who are experiencing tremendous pain:

> And the woman with the big, you know that big, black necrotic sore on her leg, you know, that was amazing to me that you would walk around with that and not be able to really do anything about it. What was also amazing was that the doctor gave her some antibiotics, we cleaned it up and it was better. We just ran into her, that was freaky, we ran into her at the dock...there she was and she was better. ...So that was like, that was kind of like one of those things you can't explain that happens, you know. But that was transforming....The way that people cope and the way that they tap into their dignity and strength and the way that they are so not self pitying about it, they're stoic and I think the women seem more stoic even, a lot of them.

Connecting with "Earlness." Earl, the Creole pastor who is the main contact and community mobilizer that the TC3-NICA group works with each year and his wife Domaris are mentioned by all of the TC3-NICA students as the most important "community connections" that contributes to their learning process in Nicaragua. Students describe Earl as "his Earlness," "our gracious host," an inspiration" and many other words of special praise. However, "Earlness" now represents the profundity of the affective learning that comes by connecting with the hope and despair of Nicaraguans particularly in Puerto Cabezas.

Students consistently mention that Earl's actions, along with Domaris, working for the benefit of the whole community, their kindness, relaxed social manner and deep spiritual commitment to work for social justice has a permanent impression as offering "a ray of hope" to their own vision and work toward social justice. In essence, their vision and commitment toward service to both the local community and to a larger global community becomes part of students' vision.

Students are surprised and impressed by the fact that when they arrive to Puerto Cabezas they are welcomed into Earl and Domaris' home as if they are part of

the family. They immediately lose the sense of feeling like an outsider when they are in Earl's family home. This is a very strange feeling at first especially since they expected that they would be treated like North Americans or worse yet, as representing colonizers and imperialists. Some students have the opportunity to live in Earl's home, to have informal conversations with him, to learn about his ability to mobilize diverse support for a number of ambitious community projects, a new school, computer classes, expanding the local orphanage. They learn of his community's vision by experiencing both words and actions.

Students are often amazed at how easily social and cultural boundaries disappear because of the manner in which Earl and Domaris act toward everyone, diverse local ethnic groups and other international "teams" as if they are all one big family. Students frequently comment Earl's "calm, cool and collected manner," his "pride in Fatherhood," his "unselfish acts of kindness" and his family's displays of "warmth and care" toward them and other community members in the face of what seems like overwhelming poverty and the stress. Earlness represents "peace and love."

Earlness, as students describe it, has become something more than Earl and his family. According to students, Earlness represents "hard work," "goodness," "care" and a "strong commitment to a larger social vision." Earlness means "having a compassionate heart, an active mind, and a commitment to going beyond one's own needs to help others in need." Earlness represents a powerful life sustaining force that helps students maintain a vision for making the world a better place. Earlness also assists student in staying committed to working for social justice when they return to the US and experience some of the challenges and resistance from people who are not as interested as they are in developing a collective vision for a better, more caring and more equitable world. They draw from it, the relive it when they feel overwhelmed by the thought of taking on a global system that they are beginning to benefits the few,

and harms the many – particularly Nicaragua. Earlness means envisioning, and imagining alternative possibilities for making the world safer, healthier and more equitable. Earlness inspires them to become and maintain a commitment to various forms of service beyond themselves. Students share their comments describing Earl and Domaris below:

> Yeah it's great, you know, and where else are you going to meet a guy like Earl who is like, you know, come on in and share everything and he gave us little talks, like he took me aside at one point and you know, talked to me about what he saw and stuff like, you know, I mean that's priceless, like you can't possibly get that kind of experience in going to a, you know, doing a foreign exchange, like a typical kind of foreign exchange thing. I mean, these people are real and they let you see who they were and who they are. And they told the truth.

> ...spending time with Domaris and her husband Earl and was really significant because I just remember their incredible hard work and like positiveness and like in the face of such struggle and the way that they've built the community around them and they always had people there and they always had things for poor people. And especially I was thinking about how Earl kind of created that team of those young men, or he kind of created, gave them jobs. Yeah, and I was thinking about how important that is that they, that he did that for them and that he kind of took them on...I just thought that its just so valuable to them in that to have him in that place...they just had so much like love I guess. So much positive energy in the midst of this struggle.

> I guess it also helped me to see, because you can come down with this OK now we're here what should we...like instead of having OK now that outside perspective that you should change what's happening but to see people who really live there and who are doing the change.

> ...it's really amazing. They're really special and how they help coordinate and how they welcome all these other groups. That we ate at their house, every meal you know...But they're so open and they're such a wonderful example of like the pillar of a building community

> ...I have an image of being in Domaris house and eating there with them which is us, the community that we made but being in the middle. I feel like especially being at their house because of who they are in the community and I feel like they have such an energy in the community and if we wanted to learned about the community there, a really good place to be at. And because of, not that we were doing religious things there but the church being an

important part of the community and how those men were doing, how those young men were working with them was happening right there. I remember her always giving clothes away, people would come. It was kind of like they were a central place. But I remember hearing about tragedy there also. Even though there was so much loss it was like hope and reality...

Earl and his wife, that was great. That, you know, and going out and she was like showing me how she cooked and all she had was like this kettle on a fire out back. Like a wood fire and a kettle over it and I'm like oh my God and she's cooking for 20 people! And her babies were so cute and they...It was neat to see and it was nice. That was like this refuge, you know where you could go, it was sanctuary. Where it was like, in my mind, a good, wholesome kind of lifestyle, a mom, a dad, two kids they loved. They had sufficient food, yeah the house wasn't fancy, but they had what they needed and that was nice to see. And just to see such good people that had that glow, that aura around them of just being wonderful people...That was...and that they were so welcoming and loving of us

There was one time on the beach with Earl that we launched this huge conversation of everything from the war to what his vision was for his church and his community and that was incredible... I could really find out what was going on in his mind...it was really interesting to see how people lived and to join in and do some work and kind of be part of that community

Processing and connecting represent transformational learning as a process of self-reflection and affective knowing. TC3-NICA students often begin to see themselves differently as a result of their participation in service-learning activities in Nicaragua. Students undergo a profound shift in social consciousness in terms of how they see themselves and their role in society. Through the process of critical self reflection and affective understanding students begin realize an emerging global consciousness in a number of realms.

Emerging Global Consciousness

As Angela, indicates below, something very profound occurred during her international service-learning experience in experience and it marks the beginning of learning process of trying to figure out how to apply it upon returning how and crossing the border as a new emerging self in an old, relatively unchanged context:

> The trip to Nicaragua for me was a mind-blowing experience. It impacted my ideology about the world and altered my perceptions of myself...,....I felt this trip made me think about some assumptions that I usually live by and fundamental aspects of my culture that I previously let pass me by without pondering their validity or their impact on the existence of others. I do not feel that the process is over as I have returned to my prior environment and have to implement and figure out what it means

Kendra's comments also exemplify the global consciousness that begins to emerge and the envisioning process that is stimulated by the learning processes and connecting that are part international service-learning especially as students start preparing for crossing the border from Nicaragua back to the US:

> In speaking with Matilde, Dixie, Cuthbert and both of the groups that work with street kids and drugs, I was deeply inspired. I have a great desire to partake in community development that works to instill solidarity and self-confidence. I want to help people to recognize their own strength and become support systems for each other...I am now working to reach that goal. I have less than a semester until I will be a registered nurse. I will go on to be a nurse Midwife. I want to work in communities like Puerto Cabezas to give support to local organizations that are working to mobilize people and create solidarity. I am not sure exactly how I will play that role without generating the dependence that happens to easily when a member of an elite society comes into a "developing" county. I have many ideas and questions about how to help the human race reach a place of equality, growth, stability and justice. I think it's a bit of a big project...

Three years after participation in the TC3-NICA program, Janice comments on how "weird" and "different" she felt upon return and speaks to how the transformational international service-learning process in ongoing:

> I'm definitely a different person and I like the person I am today rather than the person I was before Nicaragua....I felt weird returning...the fact that I have so much and I thought it was a pain in the butt to take those pills just to go on this trip and I was, I felt selfish actually. That I had all this stuff at my disposal yet these people had nothing and then here I am and I'm immune to all these things and yet here is this poor father and he's got three kids that are sick with it and I'm just like ooh where do I write? And from it, anger at the whole system actually...Just anger at poverty, the ignorance, the sanitation, the lifestyle, that was at the beginning of the trip. And partly at the end of the trip

too because I didn't change in 30 days…It took a couple of years before, and talking about it and looking at the pictures, that kind of stuff. I still, I have my own special Nicaragua album and coming to terms with what I learned in Nicaragua and using those terms in my life now…I'm still changing.

The following section describes more specifically how students experience the international service-learning process as an emerging global consciousness. The broader, more holistic long-term transformational learning process of developing global consciousness comes from the combination of all the constituent parts of that make up the process in international service-learning. Emerging global consciousness represents a process that has as its foundation the dynamic interplay of the various international service-learning components described by students such as contextual border crossing, dissonance, personalization, processing and connecting.

Emerging global consciousness develops over the course of student participation in international service-learning activities and continues to be shaped and re-shaped after students return to the US. Rather then an endpoint or outcome of participation in international service work in Nicaragua, emerging global consciousness represents a profound movement in one's frame of reference – what students describe as a "life altering experience, or as a profound shift in the way I look at the world." Others express that "it has rocked my world," the trip was a my blowing experience" and "I am no longer the same person."

More specifically, students report describe the experiencing emerging global consciousness in a number of ways. Emerging global consciousness means a heightened cognitive awareness of global poverty and inequality. It constitutes a shift in one's heart toward greater empathy, care and connection to the social, economic, political and health problems of poor women, and children in Nicaragua. It constitutes the development of a moral commitment to fight for social justice - seeing through eyes of others struggles students gain hope and vision in midst of despair. Through common struggle students develop a sense of greater solidarity and agency.

International service-learning is see as the "seed" or "incubator" but "future social action is unknown."

It reflects a re-evaluation of their initial assumptions regarding the concept of service as that "goes beyond Band Aid approaches" and focuses more on the "root factors" underneath social problems – a movement away from charity. It means re-evaluating and learning to work with one's personal strengths and weaknesses. It means constantly asking critical questions and learning to challenge the status quo. It represents contextualizing problems and issues by learning more about history, politics, culture, language, ethnic groups, who has power, who benefits and who doesn't. It means seeing global problems as complex and not uniform. Emerging global consciousness represents a new beginning for many students – a "spiritual re-awakening," a preemptive "mid-life crisis" or "wake-up call" for making a social difference in the world.

There are three sub-categories that help define the learning process entailed in what students describe as an emerging global consciousness: (1) Envisioning, (2) Transforming forms, and (3) Chameleon Complex: Re/Dis-integration (See Table 4.6)

Table 4.6 Emerging Global Consciousness

Emerging Global Consciousness	Characteristics
Envisioning	Imagining alternative possibilities for changing one's lifestyle, empowering others, institutional policies, and social, economic and political systems.
Transforming forms	Transforming forms representing ongoing political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal and spiritual changes in students' world view.
Chameleon Complex: Re/Dis-integration	Reconciling an old self in a new reality

Envisioning entails a process whereby students build on their international service-learning experience by imagining various alternative possibilities for changing

their lifestyle and the world so that both are more in tune with their emerging social awareness of global inequalities and disparities between the "haves" and have nots." Transforming forms represents six possible shifts in students' worldview. The majority of students report experiencing transformative learning in one or more of the following six domains: political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal, and spiritual. These six overlapping areas represent different sets of assumptions that have been identified as making up parts of students worldview that have shifted, and continue to transform in profound ways in relation to how students experience the process of international service-learning. Chameleon Complex reflects a constant struggle in reconciling a new identity in an old reality. The struggle results from the dissonance of attempting to re-integrate one's emerging global consciousness in US society whose dominant culture in many ways contradicts students' shifting world view.

Envisioning. Envisioning entails a process whereby students build on their international service-learning experience by imagining various alternative possibilities for changing their lifestyle and the world. Envisioning is an important part of the larger learning process entailed in constructing a new global consciousness that has begun to change in profound ways as a consequence of the dissonance, personalizing, processing and connecting students undergo as part of the international service-learning experience in Nicaragua.

Envisioning cannot be understood apart from the learning process that led up to it. It is a reflection of students experience with international service-learning. Because students experience poverty and disparities in wealth and social capital through listening, sharing, empathizing and connecting with Nicaraguans, students create covenants with themselves by thinking of ways to continue connecting with marginalized people on deeper level – to continue learning from their struggle, strengths, openness, knowledge and acts of kindness. Envisioning represents a mental

shift toward greater solidarity with the poor and means searching for ways to continue to build solidarity and ally with people struggling on the margins.

Envisioning also builds on the sense of accomplishment students feel after having successfully implemented a number of clinic as a collaborative effort with Nicaraguans. Students feel an increase in confidence and self-esteem through the act of performing service team. Envisioning constitutes a process of constructing a future plan of action in terms of acting on their international service-learning experience.

Students describe The TC3-NICA program is a "seed" and "incubator" for changing world views and part of the envisioning process is in creating a plan of action or "covenant" that builds on their international service-learning experience. The following student examples represent a sample of the process of envisioning a plan of action:

> "Think about ways to work with people in Third world countries"

> "Raise awareness with my friends at home and at least get them to think about working or advocating on behalf of poor people"

> "Getting more insight on global politics"

> "Search for information on international programs in Third World countries"

> "Complain less about my situation and minor problems"

> "Raise awareness about global poverty at home in my community"

> "Convince my friends and relatives to adopt a "Godchild" at the Orphanage in Puerto and help support his/her education"

> "Get information of service and community organizations at home that I can be involved"

> "Maintain a letter writing correspondence with my new friends in Puerto Cabezas"

> "Forever remember the impact that Puerto Cabezas had on my religious life. Each day I am thankful for that rejuvenation"

"Volunteer at least once a week at home"

"Assist the TC3-NICA program in bringing supplies and medicines to our friends in Nicaragua"

"Plan to spend at least three weeks a year in places less fortunate...We must band together so that all people can live in a fashion that is acceptable to them"

"Continue to improve and learn new skills not only in Nursing that will be appropriate and useful for working with people in a developing country"

"Encourage friends and family to get involved in programs like the TC3-NICA program and to volunteer for a community organization locally"

"Stop wasting resources and encourage others to do the same"

"Be available to schools to share my experience in Nicaragua and the problems facing people in Third World countries"

"Inform myself about what my government is doing in Nicaragua"

"We will all benefit greatly by doing what we can here and abroad to reduce the racial, and social barriers that have been artificially created!"

Sarah spent time working in the hospital in Puerto Cabezas and in conversing with

Peace Corps volunteers located in Puerto Cabezas. As a result of her experiences in

Puerto she determined that she might like to get more involved in the Peace Corps:

This trip has helped me in choosing the direction that I want my Nursing career to go into. After I finish at TC3 I want to get my Bachelor's degree in Nursing while working part-time at the hospital. After completing my Bachelor's degree, I want to obtain a Master's degree in International Health with a program that is affiliated with the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps has recently designed a program with several colleges where you spend part of your schooling studying your major at the college and then two years in the Peace Corps applying that major.

Kendra became very interested in working for women's reproductive rights on a

global level based on a number of experiences she had with women in Nicaragua who

had little access to heath care. She mentions a friendship she developed with a woman

she met informally while working in free clinic in Puerto Cabezas:

> I want to work with women who typically get the worst treatment but they're, in developing countries and minorities and women in poverty in this country and in other countries. And Rosa Mendosa reminded me of that....Yeah, I keep a picture of her in my room. I wrote her a letter, I sent a letter with Yani to get to her. He knows what village she was from...She walked four hours to get to a bus that took three hours to get to Port, because she knew her baby was transverse and something was wrong. The midwives they don't do transverse, that's when the babies are crossed the uterus like that. She thought she needed medical attention and she'd had five children at home and her mother had rheumatoid arthritis and was bedridden....and the husband left her when the baby was 1 month. She was one month pregnant. So yeah she had sort of a tough situation. But she was so beautiful and had this beautiful, happy spirit. Confident, competent, I don't know... and she was just so warm and the reason that she was touched most by us because we cared and we like recognized... like she never asked for anything from us. She just was so.... I remember she came to the airport with us and she started to cry and I just ...it made me just cry because she ...it was just so special for her to know that there were some people who cared...it was just really special and I and I guess she represented to me all the women of the world, not just in her country but the women of this world have gone through so much shit and had to struggle so much and that's where I want to put myself. I want to help because I was blessed with a situation in my life where I can be someone who gives and assists the people that were dealt hands like Rosa was dealt. I'm finding the balance of like not, you can't fix her situation, but I know that I want to be an educator and I know that a little of my mind is spinning right now.

Kendra continues to describe the kinds of actions she has been taking with a renewed

sense of working for women's rights

> I've been looking into different women's organizations that are predominately health orientated and I'm probably going to work for a year in a hospital doing general stuff for my own competence and confidence since I just graduated I don't really feel like I'm a nurse...I dream of being a midwife, a nurse midwife...I haven't totally decided if that's the route I'm going to go in...Because it's education oriented. It's women empowerment oriented, it's not as impersonal as the medical system is. That's also me as an individual. Of course there are nurse midwives who are just like some of those real schmucky doctors that you run into. But I want to be a friend to women who

are in, well really in any situation. I don't necessarily want to work just with pregnant women, I want to work with young teenagers...

Karen describes how the international service-learning experience influence her future academic direction and established a way for her to continue to process the experience on an intellectual level:

> I just said to myself well there are haves and there are have nots in the world and this is the, we have everything in one great big hog of all the wealth and natural resources and everything else and we have been milking this country for years. And I thought of that way and I thought of it due to a poor political background or past that in which just kind of follows. Once it starts, its like a, its just a snowball effect...See now I can reflect on other experiences now and when I came back see, that kind of influences the way I speak about it now to because when I came back, I got really interested in the politics and the sociology...so then I started studying education and reflecting on this trip all the time. Then I started doing, you know, politics and international relations and learning about how big corporations through globalization and global you know commodity chains and everything had gone through and caused these problems and it wasn't just one thing. See I just always thought of it as us being a very evil and being like hogs of all, really being just fat, wealthy whatever, first world and third world and I always thought that's just the way it was. But it wasn't that way before and when you talk to people in Nicaragua you would realize that, And...Nicaragua like, made me realize the whole depth of the political situation with the Miskito Indians...

Betsy describes her first attempts at envisioning and the initial confusion of trying to figure out aspects of her emerging global consciousness and "what next?" after having had a transformative the experience in Nicaragua: Decompression, not the same person, where have I come from, where am I going and time seems to pass so quickly and yet very slowly at the same time and all my notions about everything are up for reconsideration and reexamination. I've changed somehow and I know that I will never be the same, and I 'm on a mission now, but what exactly that 'mission' is, I haven't a clue really, but there seems to be some urgency and I will look back on al this verbal rambling someday and laugh or feel embarrassed. Will I feel that I was prematurely arrogant to imagine that I might really be able to so something meaningful with my life, or will I see 'Nicaragua' as a sort of turning point...

Doris, like Betsy, is beginning to envision the direction she would like her emerging global consciousness to take:
I know I can teach physical empowerment, can build homes, can help with literacy and work in the hospitals. What I have not come to owning is the 'when.' Being part of a 'team effort' has been my initiation to international

health and cultural development. The question of when to act is still being wrestled with...

Laura's emerging global consciousness took her in a more politicized direction:

> I've realized that the NICA trip is causing me to be more involved in my community at home. I have joined the Ithaca Health Care alliance which will one day, (after they get enough members), start a free dental clinic and a health care clinic that will give health care at cost. I want to look into people's movement's...People's movements are where it's at!

Transforming forms. Students examined in this research describe their transformational service-learning journey as a profound, life-altering experience. Although the transformational learning journey was unique for each participant, students accounts characterize the transformational learning process occurring in one or more of the following dimensions: Political, Moral, Intellectual, Cultural, Personal and Spiritual. Each of the six "transforming forms" is described in Table 4.7 and through an analysis of student narratives.

Political Transformation. Many students reported developing a more critically reflective disposition about power dynamics, and in an increased commitment to taking action against the root causes of social problems in order to improve communities and work toward social justice. These findings tend to support service-learning's transformative potential in developing political consciousness. However, students also described contradictions and challenges associated with channeling individual critical awareness into effective political action upon re-entry to the U.S. Findings from this study suggest that increased critical awareness of the political, structural and ideological constraints is a necessary but not a sufficient factor in taking political action.

Table 4.7 Transforming Forms

Forms	Meaning	Characteristics
Political	A movement toward increased global civic consciousness and local-global civic engagement heightened social consciousness – self-society connection locally and globally	Expanding role as global citizen; Heightened awareness of global poverty and connection to global capitalist system, questioning US foreign policy; more active involvement supporting issues of social justice, raising awareness, advocating, mobilizing on behalf of minorities, poor; supporting community based development, self-sufficiency, one-to-one empowerment
Moral	A movement toward greater solidarity with poor; Deep reciprocal and mutual connection with people living in poverty A recognition of global economic disparities & an expanded commitment to global social justice and to caring about the poor	Increased sensitivity to issues affecting poor, & minorities and to diverse cultural perspectives; intense visceral, affective connection with people living on margins on global level – particularly women and children; A felt resonance of living in midst of hope and despair; Networking & searching for like-minded community; valuing, learning and drawing inspiration, strength and knowledge from struggle and actions of poor – seeing them as "us" or as mutual friends and allies rather than recipients
Intellectual	A movement away from service as charity and relief; Reconceptualizing assumptions, issues, problems and solutions See structural constraints to access across borders	Questioning the status quo; challenging assumptions on development, health, knowledge and truth; seeing social and individual problems issues and concepts differently – more contextualized, non-uniform, structural, personal, and local factors and solutions; taking consideration of context; valuing local knowledge & bottom-up approaches to development; imagining alternatives; go top grad school...
Cultural	A movement away from the dominant US cultural perspective; Questioning US cultural, global hegemony	Challenging dominant US cultural values and beliefs; Resisting US cultural hegemony of consumerism, materialism and individualism; recognize privilege and social/cultural capital in on global scale; questioning their own and others' cultural assumptions
Personal	A movement away from previous lifestyle; Unpacking contextual "taken for granteds;" critically examining personal strengths and weaknesses;	Searching for more meaningful changes to lifestyle, career & educational choice; Increased confidence and sense of direction; challenging personal habits and routines related to social contribution, raising global awareness, and re-evaluating interpersonal & workplace relations; Recognizing privilege and power
Spiritual	A movement toward deeper (un) conscious understanding, purpose, connection & greater good	Searching for harmony; Meditation Reflection

Students reported experiencing "disorienting dilemmas" upon re-entry to the U.S. Students found it difficult to explain their new political consciousness to friends and family members. They also confronted numerous interpersonal and societal barriers in their attempts to take action based on new political perspectives in old ideological terrain, in finding sites for building solidarity and engaging in counter-hegemonic practices, and simply, in the timing of it all.

Data gathered from interviews with students after their participation in the TC3-NICA program indicate that perspective transformation in the political realm of learning, and the process of reconciling a transformed mind with social action, was the most challenging aspect of their transformational learning process triggered by their service-learning experience. The data also suggests that encapsulation in a collaborative community-based effort to implement service project that addresses the health needs of a community does not necessarily translate into collaborative action upon returning home. Although the collaborative work on a common social purpose physically disappears when students return home, it remains a part of their expanded consciousness – as a frame of reference that serves as a reminder that socio-economic and political disparities still persist. This new form of consciousness guides students' interactions and relationships in the US, but is not a part of the consciousness of their larger social network of friends, peers and colleagues.

This "reverse culture shock" or high intensity reverse dissonance causes confusion and communication problems for students and hinders their ability to find the same kind of solidarity they found during their participation in the service-leaning program. Rather than integrating their political consciousness in new ways, students dis-integrate as a form of adjustment to a new way of perceiving an old, contextual reality - characterized as the Chameleon Complex (to be discussed in greater detail at the end of this chapter). Karen describes the challenges

associated with actively applying and integrating her transforming political

consciousness after having returned to the US from Nicaragua:

> ...was the transformation like an epiphany, aha, or a cumulative long term,
> well it's both. It started out as an epiphany realizing that people were that poor
> and that they were people and kind of making that transformation in my mind
> and then, because I never realized how poor people could be and I didn't
> realize how much that was going to impact my life, like, like I said with my
> now feeling the need to get involved with things, kind of spreading the word to
> other people about, about what's going on down there and trying to be more
> active, proactive in life because I've seen how bad, you know how
> complacency can really be bad for you...so I see that in the U.S., like
> everybody is so complacent the rights of women...They don't care what's
> going on around them in their government, in their life, you know the world
> around them...If people aren't more proactive and paying attention, I mean,
> that's the important part of democracy.

Karen further comments with her frustration raising awareness and building solidarity

around an issue like recycling:

> ...Just participating and being aware and nobody is, nobody cares...
> I was thinking, implying was like the problem's so big that I wonder if I have a
> role (laughter) I mean you know you can't take on the mountain, maybe if you
> get millions of people to take chips at the bottom of the mountain, something
> will happen but I guess it would be to educate other people. That's the
> important, really at this point. It's like recycling, if I can do my part and you
> know, hope that others will do the same and maybe remind them. If not, it
> seems like at this point I feel like it's useless for me to get involved if it's just
> me. Which is frustrating, which is part of that challenge

Cara describes similar frustrations in terms of relating her heightened sense of political

consciousness to friends at school:

> When I returned from Nicaragua and tried to explain to a friend what I had
> experienced in Nicaragua and how it had changed me she didn't want to
> listen she said – 'oh, you'll get over that, it's just because you just
> returned.' Well, it's been almost six months and I haven't gotten over it. I
> still think about the conditions down there and I still think about her
> attitude and other friends who are more concerned with school and social
> life – not social change...I just don't say anything anymore...

Liz describes the need to learn to translate her emerging global consciousness:

> The trip to Nicaragua for me was a mind-blowing experience. It impacted
> my ideology about the world and altered my perceptions of myself...,...I
> felt this trip made me think about some assumptions that I usually live by
> and fundamental aspects of my culture that I previously let pass me by
> without pondering their validity or their impact on the existence of others.
> I do not feel that the process is over as I have returned to my prior
> environment and have to implement and figure out what it means...

Janice echoes the sentiments of other TC3-NICA students in terms of finding

solidarity with like-minded individuals to get more politically active:

> Actually I would say more frustrating, more frustrating than harder and after
> frustrating it becomes harder because of the fact that their political situation
> changes so much. You need stability. If you don't have stability then you
> never know what is going to be, what is going to come up next. You know
> there is no way to plan. It is kind of like New York weather...You know you
> can't plan for anything because you never know what is going to happen. That
> kind of thing. Where if you get involved on a more personal level than you
> have more control over just how personal you want to get...You can either
> choose to join the Peace Corp and go down there and live for 2 years like Suzy
> did.

She then talks about how reconciles her heighten political awareness and with her

inability to find others who share her commitment by getting involved on a more

"personal level:"

> ..Or you can take that frustration and that, on your own personal level
> and try to appease it by doing things in your own community, like the Loaves
> and Fishes and stuff like that that I have taken to doing and that helps that
> frustration go away because you feel like you are making a difference...I'm
> even volunteering at the fire department...I never thought I would do that. I
> thought that would be a cold day in hell before I put a little whoopie light on
> top of my car but here I am, taking the EMT course.

Intellectual transformation. Indicative of an emerging intellectual global awareness, students in this study reported a greater capacity to engage in various levels of processing and critical reflection on problems and issues that directly affected the community within which they performed health education services. Increased opportunity for critical reflection and processing enabled students to deconstruct distorted conceptions of the reality of poverty and wealth, harmful stereotypes regarding the Third World, and ideologically constrained ways of thinking. Student processing in the form of critical reflection often led students to re-evaluate their assumptions on the root factors and possible alternative solutions to social issues and problems. Emerging global consciousness in the intellectual realm means connecting global problems and issues to more complex, systemic, structural, contextual, and societal arrangements.

In processing their international service-learning experience TC3-NICA students engaged in various forms reflection and dialogue to negotiate contextually derived meanings and to uncover previously held assumptions on the cause and solution to problems in the community. Students reported a qualitative shift in their frame of reference toward finding both individual and structural solutions to the health problems that their charitable and relief-oriented service was meant to address.

Students' identified high intensity dissonance, service projects, direct interaction with the community, and structured critical reflection as activities that helped them process and problematize 'service' and look for alternative ways to confront the problems that the 'service' was supposed to address. The following comments from students in journals and interviews reflect a movement toward re-conceptualizing service and also indicate a change in the way they viewed the root causes and solutions to social problems. Angela begins to questions the notion of charity as a valid development approach in the following statement:

I had never really given much thought to sustainable development issues. In the face of such overwhelming needs my first response is that we should go in and fix it...,...we could relieve the immediate effects of certain problems for some of the people, but their suffering would continue because the underlying problems would continue to exist. This was a difficult problem for me to reconcile. I wanted to help and yet it was clear that we were providing a Band-Aid solution to a systemic problem.

Janice uses the metaphor of a chocolate cake to highlight the fact that she likes

to questions and challenge the assumptions embedded in the way people see causes

and solutions to problems as well as be sensitive to others' perspectives:

...there is a lot of different layers to them...Chocolate cake with many layers. My coworkers are looking at the top layers and only seeing what they hear and what they read in the social history, they're not seeing the person underneath...One of those triple layer cakes. They are seeing the icing, they're not seeing the layers...And I think in America we don't really take the time to get below the icing. Using my metaphor again....I'm trying to be the person that doesn't say fine all the time...I take a lot more into consideration...

She questions the idea of development through television relief programs:

Getting rid of poverty is not going to happen...for 28 cents a day...For 6 cents a day you can make a difference...you can feed...but you are not going to teach them how to, you know, they are going to come to expect after they have grown out of this childhood...They can't expect a handout for the rest of their lives because it is just not going to happen...what happens to these people when it runs out? They end up living on the streets and you know? It is and it is going to take a lot of time and a lot of money and a lot of cooperation from a lot of different people that I don't see cooperating with each other. It is and it is going to take a lot of time and a lot of money and a lot of cooperation from a lot of different people that I don't see cooperating with each other.

Kendra also challenges the assumptions underlying the "relief" and "charity"

model of development and in particular, based on her participation in the TC3-NICA

service-learning program, begins to critically question the way in which "service" is

provided through the TC3-NICA program:

As for the experience of providing health services to communities I am left confused and unsure of where I stand about the method we used. We delivered care that would be considered 'emergency care.' We treated acute symptoms and appeased worries stemming from insecurities and poverty. We brought bags of goodies, clothing, shoes, medicine, other medical supplies and hygiene items. This level of care and these donations are not sustainable and do not contribute to the attainment of self-sufficiency. The next team will come and the same amount of problems will present themselves, the same number of people will be there, and their symptoms will be treated. I believe in care and the distribution of love to our international family, but I do not believe in merely treating symptoms. That action is frustratingly superficial. I want to understand where the symptoms are rooted, where are the knots and kinks? How do we unravel this mess of cyclical suffering?

She adds further:

..the medical care that we provided just perpetuated the disease of dependency...I believe that we were appreciated and that we helped a lot of people out of potentially devastating situations; but I felt a heart pang and a moral doubt every time we walked, drove, or boated away form a community. What about their tomorrow? What about when the medicine runs out? What about the mid-wife and her grandson who we toted to and a half hours from Wawa on the boat with us to bring them to the hospital where they were turned away because they had no dinero or white faces there to represent them? I am so sorry about that...

Katelin speaks to the emerging intellectual aspects of her emerging global

consciousness:

...learning about how the broader economic and political and social impacts the poverty and kind of like why people are so poor because there aren't any jobs and kind of like why aren't there any jobs. What jobs are there and why are they limited and that kind of thing. And I think that was really important to when you say okay why is their poverty like this and then to be able to see that the bigger picture...the fact like there is no employment and what is the reasons for that and I think that was really important. Well it definitely made me think about it, and had an impact on my own experience. Definitely like capitalism of the US and Europe and isn't it a lot of the problem, and I kind of thought like the Nicaraguan government and they way they isolated that part of the country for one thing. And then...the loans of the WTO...

Karen comments the more complex, structural and contextual understanding she has

on development in Nicaragua and its position relative to the rest of the world:

> I think it's caused by history and politics and things that are like poor, bad luck, you know what I mean? had our country had the same problems it would have happened as well. It's unfair from the start...you know that they never had a chance and then I was thinking about solutions unless they got capital donations from other countries and like, input whereas and not like expecting output like, these loans that they have to serve the debt on that don't get them anywhere, that actually make things worse because they have to produce agricultural products that sell on the U.S. market that don't grow well there, that destroy the land or you know, it just takes to much input just to service debt. But then, no matter what you're always going to have, other countries go in and help fix this country and all its ills, its social, economic ills, whatever, you're going to have that country's personality, that country's personal gains in mind and what, whoever has, you know, a particular plan for that country, is going to push their, you know, it, it's, no matter what it's not going to be the best interest for Nicaragua...

Katelin describes her emerging global consciousness in terms of her in terms of relating the problems she was experiencing in international service-learning to larger structural forces:

> I got an amazing historical perspective and it really brought it home when I saw things in action. I saw the cause and effect of U.S. foreign policy over the last 100 years. I had an idea of the third world and it being poor. But then I'd been there before and not even seen the things that I saw in Nicaragua because my eyes weren't open to it. This forced you to reflect, to see it and reflect on it. Like you've learned to have 180 vision. I stop looking like this tunnel and this is what you see, when the whole is around you and you're not seeing it and you think, oh yeah, right...You really start to notice it and so it caused me to reevaluate the way I look at the world. And yes, it got bigger and then I realized it was the government

Kendra, likewise, speaks to her heightened level of intellectual awareness of the structural forces that shape social problems through a variety of lenses:

> As for understanding the multifaceted issues of politics, culture, race, economics, language and education all that I can say is that there is more than one way to look at it all. The situation in Nicaragua is very complex. I tried to gain comprehension through interaction with the local populace, observation, and reading the materials provided for the class. To say that I gained clarity is not completely true. I began to see patterns in the society; most of them

manifested as cultural division. I tried to understand the relationship between the Miskitos, Creoles and Spaniards. There were obviously some elements of separatism, judgmentalism, and stigmatism. The Miskitos seem to be perpetually at the bottom rung of the ladder, the Creoles somewhere in the middle, and the Spaniards trying to climb to the top. The lightest skinned folks seem to have a step up. The ladder in Nicaragua is very relative to Nicaragua. I am sure that to many people coming from rich countries, and some of the more affluent...that the ladder seems to be horizontal

She highlights the value of being exposed to local community perspectives in her service-learning work. She also stresses the importance of being sensitive to local knowledge as well as questioning the dominant view or theory – in this case a Westernized view on medicine and health:

One of the things that was really...and I really don't like the band-aid mentality but... I mean our group was a band-aid group and when those little Tylenol baggies ran out there weren't going to be any the next week and that made me feel really bad. I didn't like that. I didn't like bringing medicine in. I really liked talking with Dr. Cuthbert [Miskito separatist and herbalist using traditional medicine] because he is working really hard to join hands with the western medical society that is kind of like creeping into the Atlantic coast and just in general. He told people he's trying to solidify the traditional people, like the traditional doctors and midwives and herbalists. He's trying to get them so they are a more solid group and then present that to the ones who have been, the doctors who have been trained in the western model...Because it's not a sustainable resource. That medicine that comes in is dependent on some other country and it's dependent on money and it's dependent on....and the people who are most in need can't afford it...And he, I think that he sees some of the benefits but he also thinks that it's almost more detrimental to people because......because they won't listen to their grandmother's passing down what they already know about the plants that grow around them, that they can use for medicine. That's something that I'm really interested in looking into in the international work that I'll do. I really want to connect with the traditional people and support the re-growth of that because it's been beaten down so much that people have forgotten about it and they look at it...They are starting to question the traditional medicine and put more faith in the western medicine...it's the same thing in this country and having some sort of balance instead of just having this extremely technological mentality that's so based on these total chemical drugs. Really the medical system in America is based on economic growth, it seems like to me...

<u>Moral transformation</u>. The data indicated that moral learning represents a transformational learning process in which students recognize great disparities in wealth exist in places like Nicaragua and they have a responsibility for working to improve the conditions of the poor. Students also develop a deeper level of care and understanding of Nicaraguans living on the margins through engaging in meaningful, reciprocal international service-learning and by connecting with community members on more personally involved, affective and visceral level. The dissonance that students experience, the personal realization of the human face of poverty, the internalization, the processing and an particular the connecting often lead students commit to being allies with the poor. The moral learning that makes up students' emerging global consciousness was perhaps the most powerful set of findings to come out of this study which seems to indicate the importance of the intense affective and interpersonal component to the TC3-NICA international service-learning program.

Students consistently described the importance of making connections with people by listening and sharing stories with community members who were actively and collectively struggling to overcome community problems. They also emphasized how such stories helped them to recognize the importance of building solidarity across differences in religious faith, race, nationality and class to address poverty and other social ills and in imagining possibilities for greater grassroots involvement in creating change.

Students begin to develop a commitment to social justice on a global level. They feel a greater need to work and raise consciousness of behalf of poor, women, children and other social issues not given adequate attention in First world. Their emerging global consciousness in the moral realm means becoming allies and being more sensitive to different cultures and with people living on the margins.

As part of the transformational learning involved in the moral realm of international service-learning, Joyce describes the strong bonds that formed between the TC3-NICA female students and Nicaraguan women as a "sisterhood:"

> I'm thinking about Jane and the Creole group she did on menopause and stuff with the women in the village and just how like she really, and Donna, the way she talks about like breast feeding, she gets really like mujer [woman], you know, I mean, you see people getting all worked up about it and sort of being like, you know women together, and I really, I don't know, I think I felt more like a sociologist in that way. Like I didn't feel like a part of that, but I could see it, even Mandi, you know, like when she's talking to, there was this sort of like, I think it was kind of like discovering a sisterhood kind of thing, you know their culture is so different, but like some of these women were like, finding this sisterhood thing. It was like finding a commonality and tapping into it…

Kendra also talks about the value of experiencing a shared sense of community solidarity:

> I really enjoyed connecting with some of the community leaders to hear their perspectives and get a sense of what kind of movement was happening on the local level in terms of building solidarity and self-sufficiency within the communities…

Joyce described her international service-learning experience as a process of sharing, and developing relationships with the community based on reciprocity and mutuality. She also describes the importance of moving beyond the local level of sharing toward building community on a global level:

> …the other big thing is the whole concept of sharing that you get, sort of, or I got this sort of epiphany kind of thing about that very topic you know, when people say "why are you doing that when there's people in Dryden who could use help" because it doesn't matter, because sharing is sharing. You know, like you go there, you go wherever you go, it doesn't matter where you go. It's all about if you have a little bit more, then you share it with somebody who has a little bit less, you know, and that's, and they may share something back with you, whatever it is, you know whether it's, you know commodities or ideas…

..Yeah, how are you going to help, you know? And without recognizing that piece that it's…the back and forth answers, yeah its a reciprocal thing. It's the mutuality thing…You know these people were open enough to share their time and energy with us, you know, and sure maybe they got some benefits, I sure hope so, but the mutuality part and the sharing part, you know.

A number of students comments underscore their transformational moral learning in terms of an emerging sense of care and solidarity with the poor based on their experience in international service-learning:

> I am a different person since Nicaragua, a more involved, caring person. Nicaragua opened up my eyes and the doors to the world. It taught me that there is so much more to know and that the things I learn in school and on the news are real…

> It was only when I stopped my own thought process of how things could be and listen to the people who were working for change, that I began to realize that empowerment comes from the mobilization of the people, not throwing money or medical supplies at them…

> I saw first hand the universal power of faith through the families, the orphanage, the school and the church, music and faith education. I see a future being built one by one heart at a time...

> I am working now to reach a goal. I will go on to be a nurse Midwife. I want to work in communities like Puerto Cabezas to give support to local organizations that are working to mobilize solidarity.

Laura uses the "tree" metaphor to describe the need for understanding the commonality of human kind and the nature of global solidarity. She also points to the fact that despite common bonds that may exist among all human beings, there are times when one race neglects to see their mutual moral obligation to support each other and/or takes advantage of resources that everyone needs to survive:

> We are all one family interconnected to each other and to nature. We are all part of the same family tree, a complex web of branches and leaves...if one part of the tree suffers, the whole tree suffers, if there is not enough sun or water, the tree will become diseased, rot or dry up and die...if we don't make an effort to do the things that will sustain it's growth like proper care and

nurturing, removing bad elements in the soil, the tree will suffer and die....sometimes some branches block others sun, or break and leaves fall off, we can't reach those damaged areas, or harmful areas...this is natural, but we still need to figure out a way to reach out, we need to stay healthy and survive.... together as one big family tree...

Katelin expresses how her experience with international service-learning in Nicaragua led her to re-evaluate the depth of her moral commitment to advocating on behalf of the poor. This moral obligation has become an ongoing process as of her emerging global consciousness:

...this was the poorest place I'd ever been to and how that had a big effect on me. and it increased my sensitivity to the degree of poverty that people were, that so many people are actually living under. And it made me more aware of poverty in general... of course like to some degree that goes away and you continue to go about living your life like an American. But I feel like of course it will never go away, inside of me and I can, I feel like I kind of continue, I mean the work that I do right now is working with it's homeless people and I feel like that will always be important to me... and having the experience in Nicaragua was just, I feel like I was deeply touched by their struggle and having seen that I think it just raises by sensitivity, I guess and awareness of where people are coming from. And then I guess it's kind of been, I work with women who are immigrants and I've had some clients who are from Latin America and other countries too and I guess in that way it helps me too...I mean I have some picture of where they may have come from. Which I think is helpful...how does it translate into my life now. I feel like I've gained a huge thing to have witnessed. Helps my work as a case manager in understanding the depth of their experience. I want to, if I want my work, if I want in my life to help to empower people the more I learn about that the better it will be for me, the better job I can do...

She further describes the process of moral learning through her experience with international service-learning in terms of how the deep connections she made allowed her to "visualize" and sustain her vision of perhaps someday constructing a sister shelter in Puerto:

Well to have connections in other countries. Because I can feel that and I can, I mean, like I'm not going to okay here I am I'm ready to change everything. But I feel like its possible to build....Yeah it feels so nice to have that

connection even if I can't do something about it every day. It feels good like potentially in my future if I'm able, if I get involved in something that's more international Maybe I could have like some sister organizations in Puerto Cabezas some day...I feel like I want to do international human rights or something with like women's' rights internationally.

She continues to describe how she developed a broader vision of social justice for women in particular:

...I remember I went to an interview for somewhere and I said well I want to have a sister shelter in another country that was my dream. Well it made me feel like I can visualize this. I can fantasize maybe. I can think about that lady who is starting that center and think what can I do for her. I mean I think that's always been something that I knew was important to me, but I think the more like well obviously the job that I do now but I think knowing how to do it is different. I guess it...energized my spirit or my desire about, maybe I'm just like fantasizing about what I, or like dreaming but I think that I think about those things and I think about, I think about that lady [director of first women's center in Puerto Cabezas) who I never met you know.

Cultural transformation. Students report increased intercultural competence, tolerance, and openness to alternative cultural perspectives upon returning to the US. Surprisingly, findings from student narratives suggest that cultural learning as transformation has little to do with adapting to initial culture shock related to learning to adjust to differences in daily rituals like cooking, language, greetings, clothing and so on - becoming more competent living and acting out those norms. Rather, the process of transformational learning in the cultural realm of service-learning in Nicaragua had more to do with challenging American cultural hegemony that supports consumerism, materialism and individualism.

Students also describe experiencing high intensity dissonance related to the process of learning in the cultural realm particularly in maintaining interpersonal relationships that conflicted their new found passion for resisting cultural hegemony upon re-entry to the US. Comments include, "I feel so isolated surrounded by so many things," "no one understands me," "my co-workers think I am a radical," and

"my friends and family get defensive or don't want to talk with me about my experience in Nicaragua."

Student data suggests emerging cultural consciousness is a greater personal appreciation of the their "privileged lifestyle." Students no longer take for granted their wealth and privilege in comparison to Nicaragua and a large portion of the global community. Most students expressed feeling "conflicted" about their material wealth and American consumer lifestyle. Yet, the majority of students describe attempting to dramatically change their lifestyles particularly in reducing their habit of consumption and in challenging the status quo. Student comments include: "It takes a lot of discipline not to get sucked back into Americans' obsession with consuming," "I know I try to but things that have not been made in sweatshops and I raise awareness but I feel like I am facing a mountain." Another student, Martha, who was track athlete comments "it's like when I ran track in college, we would do these exercises...and you had to put an inner tube around your waist with a cord attached to it for resistance and you build up strength while people grab onto the rope to try to pull you back in...well, that's what it's liking to escape or resist the culture of materialism in the US – you have to build up so much strength to resist being pulled back in...and you keep fighting it...it's really hard..."

Students identified emerging cultural consciousness as being much more critically aware of the dominant culture of "materialism and individualism in the US." They also find difficulty in challenging dominant cultural norms and fear being "sucked back into American materialistic culture" by the temptation of succumbing to dominant cultural forces that compete with their emerging cultural identity.

Sarah comments on her initial arrival back into the US and already feeling somewhat fearful in succumbing to the American materialism:

But I remember us coming back and some point or something being in the car together and talking about how scary it was that we got back into the materialistic American routine. You know what I mean, like we were so impacted by it, I don't know in a certain way but then at the same time it was, you know we saw now like the differences of certain things, like of our consumer habits or that we used so many products or whatever it might be you know. I thought nothing of it of throwing out extra whatever but at the same time we felt ourselves falling back into that routine pretty quickly. That's what came to my mind then about how much exactly had a lasting impact.

Liz also discusses her emerging cultural consciousness initially upon returning to the

US:

The trip to Nicaragua for me was a mind-blowing experience. It impacted my ideology about the world and altered my perceptions of myself...I felt this trip made me think about some assumptions that I usually live by and fundamental aspects of my culture that I previously let pass me by without pondering their validity or their impact on the existence of others. I do not feel that the process is over as I have returned to my prior environment and have to implement and figure out what it means...

Carol begins to reevaluate some of her assumptions regarding materialism:

I was personally changed from the experience because I was able to see people living so simply and yet being very happy. They didn't need all the extras that we feel that we need here in our country. They were content without it. They have found happiness in spite of all of the hardships of living. The Miskito Indians have found a way to live from day to day in community with all of the other people of their village. How often do you see that in this country? Their relaxed approach to life and their generosity has left me with a lasting impression that I'll never forget.

Kendra also begins to question her assumptions about the American way of life:

Well I started to hate my culture more and more, and sympathize or empathize with theirs. I kind of liked the way they did some things more than ours...The same comparison that I've always had. They didn't need all the appliances, they didn't need all the whatever. They didn't produce mounds and mounds of garbage each day. They were very family oriented, they, more so than ours. I like that you know you keep your kids around until they get married. It was a lot of things that like that they were, so community, like Earl and Domaris, I mean not the whole community itself. I mean there were a lot of things I didn't like, like the rampant alcoholism, the unemployment--the two go hand in hand. Which is all caused by the war and things, you know, things just becoming. collapsing infrastructure...We can't donate anything or feed other

people or send you know, we feel like we don't have enough money but that's because we're so busy buying surround sound digital dvd and we see our cats and our pets like they're kings...I mean it's ridiculous.

Karen speaks the her new way of looking at the world and her emerging critique of the dominant consumer culture in the US:

> ...then I went to Nicaragua and saw the other side of it and I knew people were poor but not that way...So I started to really, really disagree with my culture, so consumeristic. I still have problems with it...now that like I moved out and I'm living in an apartment all of a sudden well you know, I'd really like a Kitchen-Aide so I can make bread because I don't have hours to make bread because I'm not unemployed or I'm not a housewife and I start this consumeristic thing. I refused to buy a TV and I refused to buy a dvd and any of that stuff. I have a radio, that's it. Now I'm like I'd really like a Kitchen-Aide and some nice pans so stuff doesn't stick and burn to it because then I'm wasting the food if it goes, you know...it's so hard to live here and not "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" has always been my motto. Wherever I go, ok if I'm in Spain I'll speak Spanish like they speak. I'll eat whatever I'm supposed to eat you know, like wherever I go I try to do like everybody else. Be like everybody else, fit in and actually understand and be a part of that culture so when I'm here it's hard to be different. Especially if I get picked on....questioning everything...

Laura also comments on re-thinking cultural perspectives of work and lifestyle:

> the other thing is the material extreme. I pull away, I guess remembering what's important in life. I'm guilty of looking through catalogs and thinking ohhh I'd like to get that couch and like sometimes I will. But remembering what is more important or what is more important that I work 40 hours a week in a job where I'm making money to live comfortably or working 40 hours a week where I'm not making much money but having real human connections with people...Or making them well not making but hopefully helping to increase individual empowerment...

Kendra who earlier used the metaphor of this intense inner struggle that went on with the recognition that her lifestyle after Nicaragua mirrored "being a queen in my palace filled with things," also speaks to some of the challenges with resisting the temptation of getting lured back into American materialism:

When I came home I was like this house is a palace and I know I wrote that in my journal a couple times. The way that we live here, like the poorest of the poor almost are well off.... though I already have that mentality, I mean I felt like I was a materialist. Because I got these new sneakers yesterday and I wanted these new sneakers. It is something that I struggled with daily before I went. But something that I struggle with even more now. Because I don't know, I like to live comfortably. I enjoy having a nice bed and nice comforter. I sometimes get into clothes, but not really, I'm not... but every time I buy something, I'm like I remember when I got back I felt like I was still rich when I got, I felt like I so I went and spent all my money. Because I was so used to having like one dollar be thirteen dollars.....

I got a CD player, one of those little ones for my car, and a couple CD's and I remember thinking I can't believe I'm buying this, I should have just.... it was $100 altogether and I was like I should have given that to Pastor Earl to put a student through school for a whole year. That's the kind of thing that goes through my head. This $100 could put a child through an entire year of school there. This $100 could feed a family for how long, probably a year.

She then draws from her international service-learning experience as a newly emerging cultural frame of reference:

...like all those kids without homes, without needs, without opportunities that we have, and still making, you know like making a lot of fun out of nothing. Without the things and that like, you know, and that like entitlement thing...You don't get that entitlement feeling, you know. Working in mental health, like that's amazing to me, you know, like there's people that just feel this sense of entitlement and where does it come from. I mean I know it comes from our culture, but when you don't, when it's not there, it's sort of fresh, you know, like, these people are just dealing with what they have.

Joyce who had a powerful high intensity type dissonant experience with the condition of many of the patients teeth in the clinics, talks about how the experience has become a permanent frame of reference for her. Her international service-learning experience is an ongoing reminder to raise greater awareness at home not to take things like clean water or dental hygiene for granted:

Not a day goes by that I don't think about the dental health and that whole thing, you know, I don't think about teeth and you know, dental care in terms of like that, where what it's like there and wishing I had more skills in that area and here with mental health, a lot of people with mental health issues have

horrible teeth...going to put like messages, you know, who knows, all kinds of different stuff, but their teeth are terrible and you just think about that whole, like how lucky we are to be able to have good dental health and yeah, good teeth. Just good teeth, you know...like those kids, seeing that Ricardo's level of decay in his mouth at 8 years old, yeah, it's just...Going to the dentist twice with Ricardo, it was awful. And that dentist was incredible...it wasn't that he was good or bad, he was just so, like, just like "Sit here" and you know mostly just like so flat, you know, yank and no kind of...I think he gave him a shot of Novocain, but he didn't give him anything for afterward. Antibiotics I think we gave him...because he was bleeding like crazy. So that part, the dental care and then, the worms of course, you know that whole, the water, you know that whole, just the appreciation for things that we take for granted so much. I mean doesn't that like, knock you over every time you come back?...I think imagine if there was a water fountain in Puerto Cabezas I mean they don't even have, you know people here always say, you know, I know there's poverty here and everything, but that is something that everyone has here, is water and even in the midst of poverty somebody can walk and find a drinking fountain and that is something they can't do there. And that is just a horrible feeling that you can't find any clean water anywhere.

Personal transformation. Findings in the area of personal learning referred to students' emerging sense of their identity through a process of recognizing one's strengths and of unpacking one's weaknesses – especially upon experiencing – personalizing, processing and connecting – with high intensity dissonance in Nicaragua. Students report that because the international service-learning experience situates them in crisis it compels them to re-evaluate their "self-worth" both in having the courage to take responsibility for dealing with the crisis and in the manner in which they respond. They often report seeing vulnerable and/or weaker – leas flattering - sides of themselves that they never knew about or had never understood prior to crossing the border into Nicaragua because they had never been put into a situation of such high intensity dissonance. It "strips one bare" and makes everyone "see what you are really made of," and makes one "wonder, can I really handle this, am I cut out for this kind of work?"

Ben discussed earlier felt shame and embarrassment in feeling a "double-helplessness" upon arriving to Nicaragua and feeling like his manhood or sense of

machismo and assumed intercultural competence had been put into question by his display of weakness in the face of extreme poverty. Katelin discussed self-reflection and grappling with understanding the reasons behind why she felt so fearful in Nicaragua and learning how to overcome her vulnerability as a women and her obsession with safety. Karen kept pointing out this feeling of shame and guilt not being able get close to or "physically comfort poor people" and how the international service-learning process triggered in her a need to "get better at showing empathy and care" to those who are living on the margins.

Students also report that the program assisted them in "coming out of their shell," or "dealing with crisis," "overcoming insecurities" particularly in learning "how to communicate better with people." Others describe their personal transformational international service-learning journey as "Sleighing dragons," and confronting "purging inner demons" or as an increase in self-confidence. While most students report experiencing a new self emerging as well as lifestyle changes, a number of students report feeling "conflicted," "confused," or "a mess" after having entered back into a relatively unchanged US culture.

Most students describe emerging global consciousness in the personal realm as having a new frame of reference in the international service-learning experience in Nicaragua. They report changing the direction of career, relationship and/or educational plans so that it is more meaningful in terms of contributing to the welfare of society.

The international service-learning experience becomes critical turning point in which many of their daily activities and stresses are shaped and influenced by constant reminders of the social and economic conditions that people they connected with in Puerto Cabezas still exist and cannot be ignored.

Students draw from the Nicaragua experience in times of struggle, they "don't complain as much," they "see the world differently" and find it hard to translate what

they learned in Nicaragua to others. As one student declares, the personal

transformation that results from participation in international service-learning

experience, "can't be spoken or described in words, it has to be lived to be

understood!"

> I have a midlife crisis everyday because I recognize the contradictions – but most people go through life and the world with their eyes closed and then end up with a mid-life crisis...one day they open up their eyes and see what they have not done...When I first arrived in Puerto I had an idealized, romanticized frame of reference, now it's a tangible frame of reference...it can't be intellectualized because human nature is not that easy to understand...it's gonna be hard to raise kids in this world...(Kendra)

> ...when I came back it was mind blowing and I remember the most disturbing thing...after like the end of the trip when we went back to Managua to the hotel, it was like it wasn't real to have the running water, because we were in the orphanage without running water and...it was frightening, it was like going back into it and instead of being like, oh we are happy we are going home and having all the amenities and stuff, I felt really guilty and I felt really disturbed by everything that had happened. Not just, just the how poor and horrible things were in Nicaragua and that it wasn't fair that I was going back to what I had, that was bad enough, me dealing with that guilt. I mean, it's still with me, like I always feel bad if I have extra money and I can blow it on something stupid and I think about people that need that and that don't have any shoes. Those little boys that didn't have shoes and things like that. But what really, at the time that we were there, that really messed me up was that all the relationships and the interactions that we had had as teachers and students all together, I mean it was one big group experience...and now...(Karen)

> I think it kind of helped me as a parent. But you know, because I have more of a scope and to help my son can kind of learn about appreciation. You know, because one of the other things you notice is how much people appreciate things, and how little we do, you're just struck by it, you know? (Joyce)

> the whole point was that we had so many disturbing experiences together and it just shocked our, our belief of what reality was. It redefined everything we had ever known and everybody was so different and so, feeling so conflicted when they went home and it was kind of a sad experience. It was really weird. It was extremely tiring, extremely, it wore you down. Emotionally and physically. I think we all came back a lot "lighter" (Angela)

> it's a totally different world here. I mean when I first got back I didn't know what to do with myself really because ...I did a lot of writing. I've continued

the journal after we got back...It was really hard to maintain connections with people when we got back. We just got back and school started and I was in my last semester of nursing. Midway through the semester I was like ohhhhh....It was hard to get back and jump back... I remember the first time I went into that hospital here for my first clinical after...after I went to that hospital and I just was in shock. We had our lab exams and we had to use the plastic gloves and I couldn't, I couldn't use them because we were throwing them in the garbage afterwards and like 20 of us were using these plastic gloves. I kept having the flashes of those gloves that were hanging in the sun after they rinsed them off in the hospital in Port (Kendra)

...talk about transformation that, the dental care blew me away, the hospital and the whole system, the way its so, sort of creepy and not at all like people focused. You know, it's not caring focus. Sickeningly wasteful convenience store...consumer society...It's kind of a combination like the work that I do trying to be really mindful of what it is I'm doing and really be mindful about people's accountability and what their skills are, you know, to really be like not in that mindset where I'm going to take over for, you know, helping people discover their independence and their highest level of functioning on their own, you know like being more of a facilitator rather than a, you know, "here, let me" bestow this or let me do that or whatever and the other piece to know that at some point I want to get back to working with kids, because I work primarily with adults. The other thing I want to do is build my skills so that I can be of use next time I go down in a more tangible kind of way (Janice)

You know, I haven't gone into the medical end of things, you know, I've been just in the psyche end of things and to me, like at some point I need to get my chops down so that I have more skills. Then I'd go back as part of a dental team or something, like I have this vision of going back but with something more practical and immediate in mind, you know. And with that idea, also of going down not just like "here let me fix your teeth" but like, you know, along with like the sponges, like try to figure out something...I would like to go back as part of a dental team at some point...Yeah that really happened down there, it just like seemed, you know when we did the clinic and we were looking at those mouths, I mean, I can't, I'll never get those images out of my head. I mean I haven't really tried, but they're there...its just decay in a bowl (Joyce).

At the time that I went to Nicaragua, I was still feeling unsure about my own future and what I wanted to do with it. The experience helped me to decide to go ahead and start nursing school. I decided that what I really wanted to do with my life is to do missionary nursing. We were very fortunate that there was a team of missionary healthcare workers there in Puerto Cabezas at the time we were there. They were from the "Mercy Ship." I was able to hear first hand what these good folks do to help the people of Puerto Cabezas. And I was lucky that quite by accident I happened to go to Church at the same time as the

one nurse that was on the team. After the service, we went over to a small cafe and had a wonderful cup of coffee and dessert. This kind lady had brought her son with her. And I had met other children of the other "Mercy" folks. They were being schooled in addition to this good experience. My chat with this lady seemed to confirm my plans for going into the field. She was honest in telling me that it could be very difficult, but that it is very rewarding. So, if my health holds up, and after my youngest son graduates from high school, I'm hoping to be able to give it a try. I have contacted the Mercy Ship people online, and they do have a need for trained nurses. And there are others as well. There is a team of health professionals who are located in Peru and go up and down the Amazon in a large boat giving health care to those who are in need. What a wonderful thing to do! And so inspiring to me, as you can see (Carol)

...for me going out into the world like that...I just remember I felt very conscious of everything I was doing and everything that was around me. I remember I went back and stayed at my parent's house and I guess that was my form of culture shock. I did have culture shock...to everything that we do here...it's just a huge difference...I think it made me...I just think it broadens your world view, so in any conversation that you're having or any kind of. ..as you exist in the world like you are aware, having been to a country like that you are just aware in a different way...I guess it's just like a way of living. That cuts through like racism or cuts through....it's just awareness so if someone says oh you know those central Americans...it's like god...it just makes you intolerant of that...Everything moves differently and you don't have as many like material things (Laura)

Going out and having to do things that I never thought I could do brought such a joyous feeling of accomplishment that I never thought that I would experience. I actually did something important and new and will be using this experience in making decisions for the rest of my life (Carol)

...I mean it's really overwhelming, taking it all in emotionally is a huge thing to get to the part where you can articulate and where you can think about it, you kind of have to get through all that emotional stuff...I think that from having my experience, from going to Nicaragua I gained a little bit of that and now that I can kind of reflect on it and I can think about kind of what I was saying, okay why aren't there jobs? How would jobs make things different?...I guess I feel like I am probably still working through emotional stuff but I guess if I was to go and approach right now would I feel emotional stuff, yeah probably but would be my like purpose I guess. I don't' know. You can see it's still emotional, it's still mixing up my mind (Katelin)

I found that my experience in Nicaragua was exceptional and unique. There are few opportunities in life where one can get the chance to live, learn and participate so much in a so little time. Never have I taken a class or read a

book or watched a movie that influenced me so much. I am a different person since Nicaragua, a more involved, caring person. Nicaragua opened up my eyes and the doors to the world. It taught me that there is so much more to know and that the things I learn in school and on the news are real, people around the world no matter who they are or what they are, they share the same human needs. Most importantly, it taught me to think and to be involved (Karen)

I'm more tolerant. You knew that, I wasn't very tolerant down there was I wasn't very tolerant in Nicaragua was I, I was pretty horrible at some points...I would also say more patient. I'm more patient with the people, like, okay case in point, my patients at work, rather than saying it's my way or the highway, I do the same kind of thing. I teach them ways to deal with their new diagnosis rather than saying okay, you've lost a leg, get over it. I take the time, I sit with them, I listen to them. I sit with their families, I listen to their families fears. I set up stuff at home, like outside resources, stuff like that... and I've more than once talked to somebody about their attitudes towards the drug seekers from the streets because the type of patient I get, it's a very real thing to them and while we can hope to cure their addiction while they are in the hospital we can't enable them either. It is a very fine line you are walking between, well needless to say, some of my co-workers see these drug seekers and see, if they would have a more open mind they could see that they are in genuine pain but they don't see it that way. They see that their behavior is drug seeking...So I'm trying to raise their awareness that just because they had a problem on the outside doesn't mean that what they are presenting with now isn't a very real problem. But they see poverty as they're going to bleed the system as much as they can and that kind of thing (Janice)

Spiritual transformation. Some students reported profound shift in their spiritual outlook as a result of their international service-learning experience. Having had there lives significantly interrupted by the extreme dissonance in seeing and experiencing tremendous human suffering, poverty, and injustice many students begin to reflect deeply on their existential role in society in making a difference. They began to search for deeper meaning in who they are and how to connect more meaningfully to their surroundings conceived much more broadly than in the past.

Their insights tend to center on searching for harmony in a world that is much worse in terms of greed, power, exploitation and social injustice than they had

previously imagined. Often this new heightened awareness triggers a deep spiritual exploration for finding solace from the restlessness, frustration and uncomfortable feelings that stems from the force of the high level dissonance students internalized in as part of the process of service-learning in Nicaragua.

Some students express a reaffirmation of the importance of having a spiritual base for renewing one's faith or for finding the strength for being able to work for greater social justice. Students report "having a new way at looking at their assumptions regarding religion," "the human spirit," "god" and a "larger life force." Other students look at their international service-learning experience as "a way to re-examine their spiritual beliefs" or as a "way to retreat from global problems that are overwhelming," or simply, as a "way to find harmony and inner peace."

Searching for harmony characterizes the ways in which students get to know and make spiritual sense of the dissonance that has become a part of their emerging global consciousness. Often this process entails a reflective or meditative process to find a more holistic spiritual understanding of their 'self,' what their role in the world might entail. It also seems to signify an ongoing process of making sense of the connections between a becoming 'self' and a yet to be defined 'community.' This spiritual reflection tends to transcend even their conscious understanding of the meaningfulness of their international service-learning experience, social justice and their continued role in acting on their experience. Students often report that it is hard to describe how they feel in words.

The movement toward a deeper spiritual connection to the world around them stems from the love and care that strangers in the midst of struggle shared with them in Nicaragua. Such profound displays of affection causes a tremendous expansion on notions of self and community, and this triggers a spiritual journey toward discovering greater depth in purpose, and meaning within an expanded notion of self and community.

Students explore metaphysical concepts like the role of god, fate, goodness, existence, morality, justice, the meaning of life, human consciousness and the cosmos. The international service-learning experience, as some describe it, stimulates an ongoing spiritual exploration of the heart, the mind and the spirit taken together and the possibilities of what that might entail. Their descriptions of spirituality also tend to envision a more profound sense of community as being connected in broad, limitless, and inclusive ways – a sense of an evolving, emerging self that is not necessarily defined, nor bound by neighborhoods, towns, cities and nation-states. Students explain the transformational learning process entailed in their spiritual re-awakening in the following ways:

> One thing I continue to ponder is this: How do I define existence? How do I define what the good life is opposed to the bad life? Is suffering an inevitable part of the human condition? I suppose it depends on whether one perceives life from a spiritual/cosmic/karmic standpoint or a moralistic/intellectual standpoint. From the former perspective the world looks perfect and every soul is going through whatever lives and lessons that it need to grow further toward enlightenment. From the latter perspective the world is a mess, with deep, yet tangible roots. There is starvation and excess; there is mutilation and development. There is a solution to the problems and equity is achievable. The discovery of this solution requires patience, flexibility in thinking and acceptance of differences. The accomplishment of this goal will take time, commitment and optimism. I think I fall somewhere in between both of these perspectives. My heart and soul plead with my mind to work with the people who feel weak within themselves to help them reach an inner strength. I will begin with my daily interactions. Going to Nicaragua expanded my world and decreased my fears of venturing into it (Kendra)

> Now I have reentered a reality I had known so well, but everything is different. Some choose to ignore it and follow along doing what they are doing, others acknowledge it, and do what they can to survive and keep going. Others might leave behind everything, doing their share to inform society that it is here and gaining momentum. We all talk about it, we all feel it, we are all a part of it. But no one knows what it is. We try to give names to it, arbitrary sounds, and meanings trying to grasp its essence. We call it change, revolution, anarchy, 2012, social awareness, social movements, the other day it was brought together under human rights, saving the earth, freeing Mumia and all political prisoners. Some say

spiritual enlightenment...Whatever it is we feel it on some level. It might just be life, or our souls, human nature, existence, but this generation knows it as real. Or maybe it is just something to bring us together as community. Or maybe it is just community...(Gretchen).

Yeah, I mean if your in like terms of affecting my life, its affected me as a parent, its affected me in my work and I think about the, I think about it every day. So in that way its been transformational because there is not a day that I don't think about it in some way, shape or form. So that's pretty significant. You know, and I think about like that short amount of time and how you can really be affected by not only the experience but by the people. And I did feel a connection with some of the people, like Earl, I definitely felt a connection with him. Spiritually when I came back, I mean I have always been kind of a seeker and I'm a very, like, I have a lot of faith but its not necessarily... What I was raised with, you know I was raised Catholic and so the way that people use Christianity as a hope builder, you know, like a way to kind of keep their fires burning, I thought that was really positive. But what was a transformation about it is it just, I have been reading a lot about Buddhists...and just how like, awareness and connection are really important, so you know, just making it more global instead of necessarily like, Christian or you know, any particular sect, just how spirituality is a connection maker...that that hit me down there, I mean, not that I hadn't had that with me before but I think it kind of locked it in more. You know definitely more and being able to like you know, meet people and you sort of have this, you sort of get each other and it's not just about spirituality or anything but it's again that mutuality thing. You meet people and you just sort of "get" each other and you're in a different culture, different language but you connect...its beyond language and its quick, you know like, 3 weeks seems like nothing, oh you're only there for 3 weeks, but no, that's not true...that sticks with you (Joyce)

Well have you ever read like the book that I was talking about like The Road Less Traveled or some sort of almost, I don't know what to call it, inspiration. So you read through and they make you feel good but you, they talk about, they give you definitions of things, because I think it's first line which I really liked in that particular book is life is hard, this is one of the great truths of life and its one of the Buddhists, one of the four pillars of Buddhism I believe and then it goes on to say once you understand that then you're free from the truth. It's incorporated you know you're free from it. And it doesn't weigh you down anymore. And so it's so easy when you're reading something, and I understand that...Okay, oh that makes sense to me...Yeah, there's no two forces or anything that really drives it home. And I think that's probably why there's such a big industry for these books. But no one, I mean you don't really see any great change in people from reading them...society as a whole doesn't seem to be that much better because all these books are out there. But that day it was like, 94% unemployment, it might have even been 96%, life is hard, oh my God, yeah life is hard. And that just blew me away. Oh life is hard. And I

had never had it that hard...I mean how is a person going to come up with breakfast tomorrow morning, you know they don't have any money to buy bread and oh life is hard. And I have to kind of get, bend my mind around the fact that it keeps going you know, life goes on as they say. And life is hard and you just have to deal with it (Laura)

And that's, see to me, like when you are doing those categories it was a spiritual kind of a catalyst for me too, you know, like talking to the different people, talking to Earl a lot. I spent a lot of time talking to him and looking at that whole piece when I came back and what that meant. I mean it sort of, whenever I think about it it's always kind of like I have a, I have kind of a core concept of what, you know, you know how it's changed things, but at the same time, like, there's all these things that, ideas that shoot out. You know, like one thing will, you know, there are all these little associations, like you think about all these things...: I don't know, I mean it wasn't a lot of time, but it was probably the most amazing trip I've ever taken (Jen)

there was like, this is unfair, who is their god? Why did their god put them in this position and us in this position, you know. I thought like I'd never thought before. It was mind blowing...I would like to read it [Nicaragua journal) now so I can go back and tear up those wounds. I mean I finally healed and it's like I don't even want to go back there, to those thoughts. Sometimes I'm just happy living without thinking about so much stuff. Is that, like I get really jealous of people that can go about their happy lives. (Karen)

Chameleon complex. Many of student illustrations above seem to suggest that TC3-NICA students experience the process of international service-learning as a transformational learning process that is developmentally progressive and positive in one or more of the above "transforming forms" that make up a part the emerging global consciousness indicated in the student data. Importantly, longitudinal findings from post-trip interview data, particularly with students who had participated in the TC3-NICA program prior to 1998, suggest that the "transformative international service-learning experience" continues to be an ongoing, and sometimes problematic struggle upon crossing the border and adjusting to life back in the US.

In each of the "transforming forms" identified above, students report a number of challenges associated with re-integrate, apply and coming to terms with aspects of their newly evolving global, political, moral, intellectually, cultural, personal and

spiritual consciousness on an intrapersonal, interpersonal and broader system-wide level.

Students report that their transformational international service-learning learning journey in Nicaragua continues to form itself as students return home and adjust to living in the US. Yet, post-trip findings indicate that while many students' worldview has changed dramatically, they experience frustration from the dissonance that emerges from the realization that the cultural context that they left in the US is still largely the same.

The personal and structural contextual baggage that made up their personal worldview before participating in the international service-learning program has changed, has been unpacked, examined and turned inside out, however, the structural, systemic and contextual forces that shaped one's worldview haven't – only their heightened awareness of them has. The experience of returning back to the US with an emerging global consciousness presents students with an uncomfortable dilemma – another round of high and low intensity types dissonance that connect in some way to one or two or all of the different "transforming forms" that they experiencing above.

The clash of a new emerging global self with an unchanging cultural reality produces dissonance which in turn motivates students to reshape and re-integrate their emerging global consciousness so that they can act on it more effectively. In some cases, however, students are unable to fit their new emerging consciousness into an old reality and they end up resisting and challenging the status quo and/or dis-integrating – "trying to escape" or "resist" or "not knowing how to deal" intrapersonally, interpersonally and more broadly, with US culture in general. The dis/re-integration dynamic constitutes a learning process described as the "Chameleon Complex."

Chameleon complex represents a constant struggle that results from the dissonance of attempting to re-integrate one's emerging global consciousness in US

society whose dominant culture in many ways contradicts with the various transforming forms that make up TC3-NICA students' newly emerging or shifting world view.

Students report having a hard time communicating their transformative international service-learning experience to friends and family. They also mention that "their friends and family don't seem to care" about the social justice issues that are now on the forefront students emerging global consciousness. They feel frustrated that people seem detached from issues of global poverty. They are distressed when their friends and family do not feel a similar passion and solidarity with people on the margins while they can no longer ignore issues facing poor women and children who are no longer invisible to their emerging global consciousness.

Chameleon complex also illustrates the different identities students have to negotiate and "act out" in order to function effectively, relate to and maintain relationships with their friends and family who they find do not share the same passion for challenging the status quo, or aspects of American cultural values. The Chameleon complex represents the continuing social and political risks students have to take in unmasking their emerging global consciousness for all to see. Frequently then, students are compelled to hide their "true colors," blend in so that they will not be chastised for having "radical views." They engage in a continual struggle in trying to balance the re/disintegration dynamic. Chameleon complex as an emerging global consciousness represents long-term struggle and resistance against cultural hegemony, political detachment, lack of global solidarity, social injustice and the status quo.

Chameleon complex over the "long haul" does not necessarily manifest itself as a progressive form of adaptation or integration. Rather, students' emerging global consciousness often surfaces and clashes with the dominant US cultural view. Depending on the level of dissonance that results from this clash in world views, students learn to undertake constant vigilance in knowing when to "do or don't do as

the Romans do." The following general descriptions and specific student cases

illustrate the ongoing and complex nature of the transformational learning process

entailed in negotiating the re/dis-integration dynamic of the Chameleon Complex that

makes up part of students' experience with their emerging global consciousness. See

Table 4.8 below for a summary of the meanings and characteristics that students

associate with learning process entailed in the Chameleon Complex component of

Emerging Global Consciousness.

Table 4.8 Chameleon Complex

Theme	Meaning	Characteristics
Chameleon Complex	Reconciling and re/dis-integrating shifting identities and emerging global consciousness with status quo of old world	Struggling and resisting not adapting; hiding and blending in & changing views and actions based on context as a defense mechanism; Metaphors: Fish out of water, grow legs and walk back in; inner tube around waist with cord and resisting being pulled back into dominant culture; a spinning caterpillar; struggling with inner demons; sleighing dragons

Students describe in general some of their frustrations trying to make meaning of their

experience on an intrapersonal level and in relating their experience to friends and

family when they return to the US:

> I think about gratitude and appreciation and about how you do it. We don't really see the difference, unless you go and actually be there, you don't see the difference and you can talk about it, you can show pictures of it, but you have to go and people like, they don't really want to hear, a lot of people don't want to. It's not like you or any of the people that have gone are going to be preachy about it, you just want to kind of share what you have experienced and people really don't want to hear about it. But if they went, they would get it...so the actual like going there and being part of something, like in the whole emergent thing is a really important thing, an important part of it...they are threatened by it. They don't want somebody, you know, they're scared by the thought that somebody might want to take something away or somebody, you know maybe there is like an edge of criticism, you know that they don't want

to hear, you know lots of things...people feel overwhelmed by that, you know, like you look at some of the pictures or you look at the video part of it or something, people are just overwhelmed by it, they just can't go there, "I don't want to talk, I don't want to look at that, I don't want to see that", you know? (Joyce)

One of these trips after I went to Nicaragua was with an international agriculture group that went to Honduras. This trip was more like a windshield tour. We never actually helped anyone. We just used the people as live textbooks. We observed them and played a pretend NGO game and then we went home having learned from them and taken their knowledge and friendship/trust, but not returning a damn thing. I didn't form the same bonds with the group members and I got to know my professors, but not on the same level. It was more hierarchical with professors talking at students and grad students given preference over undergraduates. I learned much less and found myself very disappointed at the end of the trip (Karen)

...but you know when I talk about this with my friends, they are like, "what are you talking about" its all these things that like really influence me, but I never realized it like Nicaragua is like, a divided country just like any other place. There's always somebody that's getting taken over and so now, now I'm really disturbed I don't understand anything. I thought I understood things before I went there. I thought that I understood why things were poorer and what not and now that I'm here... And its, so Nicaragua is a building block, it gave me the tools to start going in many directions. But it really messed me up in the head because now I still, in the sense that I will never understand what it was or what. The world doesn't make sense to me anymore. It did before because the world was a box and you could look and it was what it was and everything made sense and now, its just like one big jumble of events, everything. You start to look at all the things that happen and you get a spin on things and you realize that anything could change because of any one reason but it didn't, so you kind of, now I'm more like, really believe in fate. I'm really becoming more and more like, not the hippie mentality but, yeah less intellectual and more like things happen because they are supposed to...(Karen)

It was poverty exists, but I'm not a part of it and I'm in my happy American life where everybody has enough to get by pretty much except for the street people, that when I live in the country I don't see it. So I can live this blissful happy life cause being totally ignorant was fine and then to be put in that was bad. I mean it was really rough. And it still bothers me to this day and you know the sense of guilt that I get if I don't help or do something if I do pass somebody in the street, it's hard and I mean I feel like I should be doing more now that I've seen them and I think it's so unfair that their political situation has made them suffer...(Katelin)

...just coming home to the nice cushy frilly house. The toilet that flushes, the

> not wanting for anything, the not needing anything. And knowing that they're
> still there living the same way, doing just fine. It was hard for me to accept. I
> felt kind a mix of emotions. I felt very conflicted because I've always had this
> and my family's always had this. I don't think of us as being the big, bad
> Americans. ...I didn't think of, I mean it's just my family and our way of life
> and they have their way of life and I kind of accept that is their way of life, but
> like I say, I wouldn't, I thought thank God that I've got everything back. It
> was like being refreshed, you have got a new appreciation of everything. But
> there will always be guilt that you left them behind. And that knowing that I
> may or may not actually go back and do anything to help repay their kindness
> in some way. That really bothers me (Kendra)

To illustrate the deeper meanings in the long-term transformational learning process dimension Chameleon Complex, which is characterized by students ongoing struggle trying to re-integrate their international service-learning experience and emerging global consciousness into life back in the US, I to conclude the findings section of this study with a detailed description of Karen's ongoing experience with chameleon complex eight years after participating in the TC3-NICA program.

Chameleon Complex: Karen "I am not a beautiful butterfly, but a caterpillar spinning in circles."

> The Nicaragua trip challenged my entire value and belief system. I now have
> feelings of guilt over having so much, of being privileged enough to be born in
> a stable prosperous country and into an educated white middle class family.
> Everyday I am unable to ignore a world of Maquilladoras, global commodity
> chains, and suffering due to the curse of bad luck social and political events
> that have taken place in Nicaragua and the rest of the developing world. Is this
> poverty the way it has to be? Do I just accept it and buy cheap goods at Wal-
> Mart or do I boycott and do something about the treatment of people in the
> third world factories that are being used and abused. The imperialism of the
> 19th century has been replaced by globalism in the 20th and I can only wonder
> what is to come in the 21st? My Nicaragua experience has gotten me involved
> in all of this whether I like it or not. The Nicaragua trip planted the seed...

As indicated in Karen's statement above the Nicaragua program had a transformative impact on her. But how, and in what ways? Transformation for Karen stood our more than the rest of the students in this study because of the extent to which it occurred along political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal spiritual dimensions

and because her international service-learning experiences offer a unique look of the process of transformational over an eight year period. Karen's transformational journey is also unique because it represents an ongoing struggle to integrate her emerging global consciousness while living in the US. The following description of Karen's journey does not do justice to the depth of her experience, nonetheless, I attempt to the meaning of her transformation and the nature of the chameleon complex as it relates to her TC3-NICA program experience by emphasizing her voice and by highlighting significant events that she experienced during and after Nicaragua that shed greater light on the nature of transformation in international service-learning.

Karen participated in the first trip to Nicaragua in 1994. She had spent a year in Venezuela the year before where she went school, lived with an upper class family and learned to speak Spanish fluently. She had recently begun study toward an associate's degree in Liberal Arts at TC3 with the goal of transferring to Cornell to study international development. The TC3-NICA program was a way for her to see first hand what it is like to engage in development work as a young adult, white, women from the US. Prior to leaving she described herself very competent in her capacity to adjust to new cultures and to communicate in Spanish.

The following short vignettes describe some of the dissonance that Karen experienced in Nicaragua that later had an impact on the different aspects of her transformation. The first vignette has to do with her arrival in Managua and encounter with Machismo, the second vignette describes Karen's direct and visceral experience with poverty while living and connecting with children in an orphanage in Puerto Cabezas, the third vignette offers her perspective on participating in the health clinic and the last vignette describes a transformative event that occurred at the orphanage. Taken together, the vignettes offer a view of how participation in the TC3-NICA international service-learning program fosters transformational learning and how it profoundly affected Karen's life. Karen's experience as a participant in the TC3-NICA

program combined to provoke a lasting shift in her assumptions regarding unjust

social conditions in Nicaragua and her role in changing them.

Vignette I: Machismo. Our arrival in Nicaragua was met with customs. I will never forget it. The episode still makes my blood pressure rise! The customs officer in the airport would not listen to me when I tried to answer his questions regarding the baggage for the group like all of the prescription drugs we were carrying. I spoke with a fluent Latin American accent in Spanish and he was pretending not to understand me and would look through me because I was just some gringa, he wasn't about to listen to a little blonde girl. Then when the instructor came up from directing the back of the group, he began to speak with the customs official in a hard to understand accent from Spain and the man tried very hard to understand the instructor and then let him go on his merry way. This was the beginning of my being frustrated and bitchy since I felt exposed and helpless. I no longer had the protection of neither my country nor the assurance that the blue passport would do much good once we got out east to Puerto Cabezas. Nor did I have the confidence in my Spanish skills because I realized it did not really matter since I was a woman. It is hard to explain, but I felt I had been stripped of all my progress and safety that the US had achieved in the past 50 years. There was no stability or equality here in Nicaragua, especially for a foreign white female.

Vignette II: Living at the orphanage. So it was settled that two other women and I would stay at the orphanage. It was poor by western standards, but still much nicer than most of the homes in the area. I tried to keep this in mind as I sat on my cot that nearly sank to the floor surrounded by the dank stench of urine in the hot afternoon sun. Later I would learn that the daytime was the least frightening time of day to be in the house. This was before I learned about the critters. The rest of the evening we sat covered in curious orphanage kids who were touching us and wondering what we had in our bags and fascinated in our hair color. All I could think was how dirty they were and that these kids should have a bath and a better place to stay. I rolled to my side trying not to sink the mattress too low and tried to go back to sleep. It wasn't much later when one of the older children got up and began what I later learned was a morning ritual. She went to the bathroom (which I had intimate contact with through a hole in the wall behind my head) and I heard the sound of her diarrhea. That was unpleasant to say the least and worrisome as I learned that this happened everyday. The poor girl must have felt so sick, I was learning the painful reality of parasites…We got up and started our day by hauling water upstairs in order to flush the waste down the toilet. Then we made coffee over the fire the kids had going in the kitchen. The fire was composed of a metal can with a hole cut in the side and wood burning inside of it. I was startled and then humored by the chicken that had a perch in the kitchen next to the fire. We sat on the porch and drank our coffee when Dawn pointed out a Sandinista in uniform urinating in the side yard. We couldn't

help but laugh some more and then we ducked down and hid when we realized he had seen us laughing at him. Way to make friends with the neighbors! That morning taught me so more than I can ever explain. I began to really see and understand the cultural, political and health situation from being dropped in the middle of it all.

Vignette III: The clinic experience. We performed health clinics where we saw the truly poor and sick and we learned that being generous and helping wouldn't be as easy and truly fulfilling as we had thought. I didn't realize how upsetting it would be to see so many people living so poorly and in need. I counted myself lucky that I spoke Spanish so most of the time I interpreted for Dan while he gave physical examinations of everyone as they came through. This made it possible for me to be helpful even though I wasn't a nurse and it also made it easier for me to set myself back and not get too involved. I found that I was revolted by the sick, I feared that I would get lice, fungus, rashes and got knows what else from the people. This made me feel terribly guilty. It increased my personal dissatisfaction with my selfish, unacceptable feelings and the rich life that I took for granted in the United States. I had always thought that I treated everyone equal and could never discriminate, and here when challenged, I failed. I knew that I should reach out and help the people who I had come to Nicaragua to help. I ended up being afraid of them and unable to touch them or treat them as equal human beings. Donna was very much like this, she hardly ever wore gloves and she always touched everyone with a loving, sincere touch that made them feel wanted, loved, human. Over the years and with more experience, I am working to be more like Donna but honestly, it may take a lifetime for me to learn to be as loving and generous and act on those feelings.

Later, Karen reflects on the value of service in the form of clinics:

We had daily group meetings in the rented house. In these meetings we had heated discussions over poverty and disease and how to address these issues. We debated what exactly our role was and how we could most effectively work with the people of Puerto Cabezas especially since we were receiving so much from them. One of the issues I had a great deal to say about was that we may have been doing more harm than good by giving away the medicine to the people in the clinics. Now as I write this, I realize that I was learning about more than just misdirected pills. I was beginning to understand the complexity of people's reactions to extreme poverty, social welfare systems and their influences on the economy, the function of the black market, the economics of the area and our impact as the provider or charity and social welfare. There is no welfare system in place, if you are broke, you don't eat and if no one helps you or you can't get a job then you die. Simple as that…this was a hard pill to swallow. I still have a hard time deciding where to draw lines especially when it comes to doing good and whether it will do more harm than good…

Vignette IV: The Orphanage. Waking up at 4 in the morning, it would be dark out, you would hear a rooster crow and then the, you know, all the kids would have, I mean they must have had insane parasites, and just hearing them every morning, I felt so bad. And the smell, ugh, wake up to that and wonder why I was a bitch...you had to go down and get a bucket of water after you went and then, from the well and then dump it in the toilet and that would flush it down. Did I tell you I dropped a bucket in the well one time?...That really, really impacted my sense of reality. I was doing laundry at the orphanage and I was washing on the scrub board and I had done all that in Venezuela and that was fine, but there was no running water so I had to go get a bucket of water to use that for soap and wash and scrub and then I would rinse. Well, you know I had always hated hand washing because you have to rinse all the soap out, but when you have to go get bucket after bucket, its really a pain in the butt. So I went over to do it and my hands were soapy and I put the bucket down and the rope slipped through my hands and it wasn't attached to anything. It was just an old plastic bucket on a slippery rope, you know, on a cheap plastic rope.

...So I dropped it and I said to the kids, "oh no I dropped the bucket, ha ha" and they said "that's our only bucket!" and they went running and they grabbed construction material you know and I'm thinking, if I, when I take care of kids when I nanny and my nieces and nephews, you don't leave long, sharp metal poles around, you know, for kids to play with, but they just like, these kids were so smart. They grabbed, and I'm like "well we lost the bucket, I'm sorry, I don't know how we're going to get that out" looking for a stick, you know...And they just grabbed like a 20-25 foot long construction pole, dropped it down in the well and fished for a while and brought the bucket back up and the whole time I'm like "don't worry about sweetie, I'll go buy another one" and they were like "they may not have them at the market. They don't always have buckets at the market." And I'm just like "what do you mean?" You know, my instinct was, oh we'll just buy another. Because that is like the American consumerists egg, just buy another, it's not a big deal. And they were like there may not be another, we need the bucket so that we can flush the toilet, so we can get water, so we can do everything during the day. The markets way down the road, their concept was save that bucket at all costs because they didn't have money to go buy another bucket either, if the could buy another one. So that was, that was a hell of an experience but yeah the orphanage was sad. Any way it was really sad.

During my first interview with Karen two years ago and five years after she participated in the TC3-NICA program, she describes her personal transformational journey as one that involves a constant struggle trying to be more politically active, acting in solidarity with others to fight against global injustice and in personally changing her materialistic lifestyle to try and make a difference in her life and in the

world. Her story illustrates a pattern in some of the struggles students grapple with

upon return to the US to incorporate their newly emerging social consciousness at

home in terms of making difficult lifestyle changes, or in relating to family and at

work. She describes to alluring power of American materialistic culture and

indifference to global problems related to poverty and the environment. She depicts

the frustrations, guilt and struggle that go along with constantly questioning the social

injustices that make up her evolving global frame of reference that she continues to

feel and think about as a part of her life:

> ....when I came home I started volunteering which was nice. Took me a while to get used to the idea of it, cause at the time I was poor student, you know. Now I don't shy away from getting involved which is nice. Like I still haven't done as much as I'd like to, but Planned Parenthood, helped with their fund-raisers. Got something going on Thursday night. The Democratic Party, do calls for them and stuff like that. I donate money to different wherever I feel like donating to that month so like Sierra Club and things that I believe in and Planned Parenthood again. WSKG, you know whenever I think that you know like I love them for the news they give me and keep me involved. Things like that, but now I've gotten to be that lazy I'll just write a check instead of going and doing it. Well it's like the U.S. is like a great big nursery or playground. Like you've got this huge area to play and be safe and be comfortable and the daily rat race you have distractions ...when I think about international things and I feel so sad that it really bothers me right now I'm upset...I don't do anything about it anymore because I'm so complacent in my own world here and I'm you know not there.

Karen comments further on some of the challenges and risks associated with

translating her emerging global consciousness into social and political action:

> How am I supposed to drop everything and do something. I'm trying right now like I said quitting job, my apartment, everything. It takes detachment from here. I mean for you guys, for you and Donna to have done that must have been really hard. I mean it takes a lot of detachment, cause you have to let go of all the things you're doing here and go there. That's a big, it's just a plain right away mistake, but it's big mental barrier to get over I think. And there's the financial implications. There's the family issue. My family is just like, please don't take any more of those trips because in Honduras my friend got shot.

...just letting go of everything and going down there. Mentally it's a big risk, because like God do I want to give up what I have here? it's really hard, it's a conflict. It's being spoiled versus being broke, you know. I could see Donna donating it, like her services, her time and her life to service and I don't know if I could do it. That's very selfish, but we're raised very selfish people. And I mean I love my family and they're here and if I were to go do something like that. I did consider the Peace Corp and was accepted like I told you, but I chickened out cause I didn't want to leave my family for two years...

A lot of people to raise awareness about various social justice issues on a personal level by changing their lifestyle and/or daily habits so that they conform with their new way of seeing the world. Often, they try to replicate some of these changes by raising consciousness at work on social justice issues they feel are important and by encouraging their colleagues at change their habits as well. But they are often met with resistance or thought of as "strange" or "different" – so it's a significant personal risk especially in terms of keeping one's job, and possibly alienating oneself from one's colleagues and friends. Karen speaks to this ongoing dilemma with some of the actions she's taken to raise environmental awareness:

...people think I'm a little freaky......because I'm like this environmentalist, I don't leave the lights on so it's always dark in the lab, you know, I'll be in the back with the light on at my desk. Why should I have the lights on? You know they've got all these lights, imagine all the electricity uses, I don't leave my computer on and everybody is like why do you, you know, well it's a waste of electricity and I get irritated with people leaving their computer on, letting the water on, taking 20 minute showers. It all annoys me cause I'm like this. I mean my mom and I've gotten into this thing where we compost with worms now and we have, well we have compost, but in the winter it doesn't work as well so we have vermiculture that comes up, you know where we throw stuff in, worms eat it. We have this great way, but now we have one bag of garbage a week for the whole house and my roommate and I do the same thing now. It's spreads a little bit, I make sure I get the paper and make sure she reads it with me in the morning, you know. We, I kind of like to keep people aware and involved and, I don't always keep up. And yet I don't always keep up. I guess that's how I've influenced other people and that's why they think I'm a little weird and my friends in town call me a tree-hugger, but I'm not like that much of an environmentalist. Anyway...

Going to Nicaragua seeing the beaches were dirty and thinking, you know, the water, the seas have been over-fished. In exchange, they gave the Russians fishing rights so the Sandinistas could have oil. And so the Russians just ran in like aimlessly, scooped it all up, you know, and they can't fish the ocean for another seven years at the time they're talking about. That's awful. How can the environment just get raped like that and nobody cares. Or people care, but at the time that was the decision they had to make. So, I've come home and thought you know we're raping the environment and we have a choice. It's not like we were looking to support our war machine or something. We're just greedy. And why do we have to package everything so much? I start to question everything. We're so wasteful...it's all talk, though...You can't take on the mountain.

When asked to describe her transformational learning experience five years later

Karen challenges the view that it is like a metamorphosis in the following metaphor:

I like the cocoon metaphor the most. You can curl back into it...But you can't crawl back in once it's been opened and it's very scary. It's scary that they like, I mean think about it you're living in that little cocoon or that womb, you know, and then like boom, like it's like being born and you get ripped out into this world. It's cold, it's scary, it's not at all what you want it to be and it makes you, not, it makes you unhappy if not depressed to realize this and I guess what I was trying to say earlier is that I wish I could live in ignorance, but I can't now that I've seen it, it's there, it's always going to be there. But I guess the wounds, I haven't sealed the womb shut, or the cocoon but they have, they've kind of callused, like become callused so that I can deal with it. Because it took me awhile last summer I realized I can't feel bad for the world. I can't take the world's problems and make them my problems

She continues to "unpack" her metaphor for how the international service-learning experience is still affecting as an ongoing struggles with the transformational learning process:

You know we kind of come out. I don't know if it would be a cocoon because you don't turn into a butterfly (laughter)...You, there's a birth. You become aware of a new world. There's an awareness, then there's a lot of anger and anxiety and thinking unfair, things are unfair, the world is unfair. Then you begin to question your morals and God and your own culture, society, family network. Then you, I mean where do you go from there?

When we came home basically that sticks with you. You start questioning everything and you're not this beautiful butterfly.

> You see everyone's problems and you realize that everybody has problems so then you have to come up with coping mechanisms because you want to get involved but when you jump in and get involved my experience is that I would try things and I would question everything. Everything seemed to have contradictions, everything seemed critical or immoral, strings attached everywhere is what I started to see and I started to realize how my government and my world around me wasn't such a happy place and that we had all these wonderful things and had this wonderful place at the expense of everyone else. We have...to take advantage of other people, other countries that provide for us. And I started thinking about us being this global consumers and global polluters. Then you get into this okay so how do you live, how do you yourself cope and live in this world now that you see it for it is and how do you make things better for the people in Nicaragua, for the rest of the world.

> Usually I just try to live, try not to think about it and it will come up somewhere and I'll get involved in something and then when I get involved in something I'll question it, just feels like a cycle...you're a caterpillar going in circles. With seasons you know what I mean. Some seasons you feel great and you feel active and there are tons of leaves to eat and you're happy as can be. Then other seasons, this has been the longest winter of my life. It's just you kind of get down and you feel like you can't do anything and your self esteem plummets like I'm not helping, I'm not getting involved. I know what's going on and I'm not doing anything. And so then you start kicking yourself....

Karen concludes her comments recognizing the paradox in taking a course that's supposed to be for changing the world, and that when the course ends she's changed but the world hasn't:

> I'm thankful that you did [offer the TC3-NICA course]. I mean being the person that I am and being involved and always raised in an open environment where I was aware of things it was very, I mean it was wonderful for me to actually hands on understand it and have this happen. If I hadn't I think I would have been even more conflicted later on in life. Because I would have thought of myself as more a hypocrite because I wouldn't actually know and I wouldn't actually get involved at all...And now I realize the world isn't what I thought it was and so I'm glad that I'm not living under those ignorant preconceived whatever. It's just a lot harder this way. But...Would have had no meaning...
> We were perfectly aware of, that we were going to have our worlds rocked a

little bit, we thought. We didn't realize how big it was going to be. I think, go ahead...Maybe you could do a second course. Maybe you could do group therapy. (laughter) Psychological counseling when you get back.

A few months ago, almost eight years after her participation in the TC3-NICA program and post-September 11, I interviewed Karen a second time and she relates how she continue to struggle with integrating and acting on the service-learning experience in Nicaragua. This time she uses the metaphor of a "fish out of water but with feet and going back in the water" as a way to describe the "Chameleon Complex" (see Table 4.6) aspect of her shifting global consciousness:

> Anyhow...it's hard to put into words...it stirs up anger...I am more escapist now...my happy little world...my parents want me to just enjoy life...I am like a fish out of water...you know, you don't fit in anymore...but I am a fish with legs...so what do I do, I go back in the water with legs on...

She then describes what she means by relating the following story dealing with how she feels uncomfortable with the way most of her friends and family interpret the significance September 11 bombing of the World Trade Center the ways in which Americans tend to validate US military actions taken to respond to it:

> ...I was at my neighbor's playing cards and Afghanistan came up...
> Some time after September 11...my neighbor says... "I hope they take out Afghanistan." I shut up...He knows I am at the peace rallies...I think to myself "War against who...? We are just exercising our muscles, our planes are getting rusty, got to start your car, it needs gas to go on vacation..." but I think, "what did the woman and children of Afghanistan do to deserve this?" All the American flags...it's horrible...buy more trucks, lower gas prices..." I get cynical. Patriotism is so deadly. I hope we don't go to war. This [bombing] was long in coming, what did you expect? Look at the way the US treats the rest of the world...but no sense losing friendships over this...do I lose my village or society or do I just shut up? I put my reading glasses on sometimes to see things more clearly but there are situations I leave them off...You know words won't help, they don't change frames of reference...

She describes her ongoing struggle to re-integrate and act on her emerging global consciousness to make a difference:

> Nowadays I am staying involved, I signed up for Doctors without Borders to go to Honduras but they postponed the program...I volunteer with the Red Cross, bring people to blood drives...But with a lot of other stuff, I turn off the TV and radio...Sometimes I am tempted to dabble in politics to try and make a difference, but I stay out of everything now, daydreaming about doing something. I look at all the options to see if things fall into place...

She also talks about how she tries to deal with her sense of frustration with trying to reconcile her transforming self in an American culture that stays the same by searching for harmony and peace in spirituality:

> I have turned to the spiritual side of things...strategies for dealing. I "get off the fence" and go on retreats. Getting in touch with myself will be best for society until I figure out where I want to go. I am still finding myself, more cautious, more analytical...happier, not as bullheaded, not into fighting. It's a good thing, like the Sufis – we're all part of a big ocean. Once you get into your unconsciousness doing Yoga you can become part of the ocean...a spiritual energy. Instead of pretending you have control of your life, you stop trying to make your own destiny. It's more laid back, more at ease, I don't fight it, and I pick my fights more carefully. Does that make any sense?

Chapter Summary

This investigation confirms the value of the TC3-NICA international service-learning program as a useful pedagogy for fostering the process of transformational learning and the form of perspective transformation. TC3-NICA students consistently described the program as the 'seed' or 'incubator' for stimulating profound changes in the way they see themselves and the world. Findings also suggested that extreme dissonance from immersion through service projects that reposition TC3-NICA across borders of race, gender, nationality, combined with critical reflection, and direct community interaction, can have a significant impact on the quality of participants' transformational learning, and personal perspective transformation – intellectually,

morally, personally, culturally, spiritually and politically. TC3-NICA students experience the forms and processes of transformational learning as an emerging global consciousness. They finish their program having built a tremendous amount of solidarity with the people of Nicaragua and in particular, those people who are struggling to survive. However, students also reported significant challenges in communicating their change in consciousness to a larger social network and with transferring individual perspective transformation into collective action upon returning home. The chameleon complex represented the ongoing dilemmas associated with reconciling a transformed mind with the social arrangements within one's home culture that have remained largely the same. As a result students experience re-entry as an ongoing struggle to resist cultural hegemony through strategies of re/dis-integration; a transformational learning process of transgressing the status quo and also blending in, albeit at times, subversively.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Chapter Overview

The following section summarizes the findings and highlights the most important themes and insights that have emerged from this study. I discuss how the findings relate to the scholarly literature in the areas of adult learning, service-learning, and intercultural learning. In integrating the findings with scholarly literature, I will highlight the theoretical contributions the study makes to the three areas above as well the practical implications for improving the TC3-NICA program. I will conclude this section with recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

Two central questions guided the purpose of this study: (1) where's the transformation in international service-learning?, and (2) how do students experience the process of transformational learning as participants in the TC3-NICA international service-learning program? The results of this research contribute to our empirical and theoretical understanding of transformational learning in the areas of adult learning, service-learning and intercultural learning. The case study findings offer empirical insight into the role of service and study abroad in effecting transformational learning and build on previous research that combined transformational learning in the context of service-learning and intercultural learning respectively. In particular, the results of this research add important empirical insight to our understanding of transformational learning by identifying how students experience the forms and processes of transformational learning in international service-learning.

Summary of the forms of transformation in international service-learning. This study endeavored to locate where the transformation is in international service-learning. Findings from this study indicate that the TC3-NICA program did trigger

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various forms of transformational learning. Many of the study participants described their transformational service-learning journey as a profound, ongoing, recursive life-altering experience. Although the form of the transformational learning journey was unique for each participant, students consistently reported experiencing a similar pattern to the transformational learning process. The outcome of the transformational learning process, however, is not complete. Hence the term "transforming forms" was coined to describe the ongoing and dialectical nature of both the forms and process of transformation in international service-learning (discussed below). Study findings also indicate that TC3-NICA students' experienced the form of perspective transformation as occurring within one or more of the following transformational learning dimensions: intellectual, moral, political, cultural, personal and spiritual.

Summary of the process of transformation in international service-learning. The findings identified a transformational learning process pattern that emerged from the data. The transformational learning process represented the following six dimensions: contextual border crossing, dissonance, personalization, processing, connecting, and emerging global consciousness. Each of the six dimensions contain sub-categories that describe in greater detail how students experienced the transformational learning process as it related to their participation in international service-learning activities. The following discussion highlights both the theoretical and practical implications of the findings.

Theoretical Implications

Contextual border crossing. The transformational learning process characterized by contextual border-crossing represented the personal, structural, programmatic and historical contents of the "baggage" that TC3-NICA students carried with them as they crossed the border from the US to Nicaragua. Contextual border crossing confirms the important role of context in explaining how students make meaning of their international service-learning experience. The addition of

"border crossing" indicated that TC3-NICA students experienced the transformational learning process in international service-learning as a movement across socially and historically constructed geographical borders that represented unequal relations of power between a richer, more powerful US and a poorer, less powerful Nicaragua.

Contextual border crossing illustrated that the transformational learning process that TC3-NICA students experience during and after participation in the TC3-NICA program cannot be explained without understanding the individual, structural, programmatic and historical aspects of the context that they carry with them across the border between the US and Nicaragua. This finding adds empirical insight to theoretical critiques of Mezirow's transformational learning model for not providing an adequate explanation the role of context in shaping the learning process (Clark & Wilson, 1991; Hart, 2001; Tisdell, 2001). The study supports Hart's (2001) contention that as learners cross contextual borders of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation they develop greater critical awareness of unequal relations of power – what she labels "mestiza consciousness" (p. 168). The learning dimension of contextual border crossing also confirms Tisdell's (1998) post-structural feminist theory that one's shifting position and identity are socially constructed and defined by unequal relations of power along interlocking systems of gender, race, and class.

This study supports the results of empirical studies that found contextual factors play a role in shaping the nature of transformational learning in intercultural learning (Taylor, 1998, 2000) and service-learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Rhoads, 1997). For example, Taylor's study suggested that the transformational learning process of becoming interculturally competent is affected by the extent to which sojourners are ready to change based on former critical events, personal goals and/or previous intercultural experiences (1993, p. 129). Taylor's study focused largely on how personal contextual elements affect sojourner's readiness for change but failed to adequately address how historical, programmatic and structural aspects shaped

sojourners' transformational learning process. As a result, the learning experience of the sojourners in Taylor's study is explained solely in terms of the individual context as if the study participants' learning experience existed apart from the sociocultural and historical context. Furthermore, this study builds on Graybill's (1989) who explored the connection between the CCIDD program social justice-oriented goals and the effect on program participants and found that the CCIDD program "greatly contributed to their [study participants] experiential awareness, understandings and critical perspectives of the realities of the poor...and increased their sensitivity, empathy and commitment to actively responding" (p. 280). The findings of this study identified the programmatic context but also found that personal, historical and structural elements helped explain how TC3-NICA students experienced the process of transformational learning as unpacking socially constructed baggage. This finding also parallels Sparrow's (2000) social constructionist view of culture learning that "one might say that only members of dominant paradigms can have the luxurious illusion of objectivity or of a self which is free of social realities" (Sparrow, 2000, p. 181). This study expands on Sparrow's (2000) study by offering empirical insight on how members of the "dominant class" in this case TC3-NICA students who are primarily, white, middle class, Americans can broke free from that illusion. That is, the TC3-NICA international service-learning program provided the "context" (i.e., the four elements) for assisting students in developing a critical awareness of the socially constructed nature of their identity relative to the poorer other. Participation in service provided an educational structure to build solidarity with the poor as a way to collectively envision alternative ways to transform unjust social realities.

Lastly, by identifying the four contextual factors that influence the form and process of transformational learning in international service-learning, the study findings also contribute empirical and theoretical insight to prior service-learning studies that had identified the forms of transformation in service-learning but had

ignored the role of context factors in shaping the form of transformation (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Rhoads, 1997). While identifying "crossing borders" of race, class, and gender as an important part the learning process that occurs in community service, Rhoads (1997) does not give adequate attention to the relationship among the various structural, historical, personal and in particular, programmatic aspects of the context that lead some students and not others to develop a more caring self (p. 124). Similarly, Eyler & Giles (1999) suggested that "well-integrated programs" are strong predictors of perspective transformation, but they did not adequately explore the various dimensions of such programs (i.e., placement quality, diversity, reflection, application and community voice), the relationships among them and how contextual factors interact to foster the process of transformation. Because Eyler and Giles (1999) relied on interviews with students participating in a number of service-learning programs with different goals and purposes, the relationship between context and learning remained unconnected and undifferentiated. As a consequence, previous studies in service-learning did not explain or differentiate the forms and processes of transformational learning during service work in soup kitchens with service-learning programs that placed students more directly with communities living in poverty. Rather, a general notion of a "well-integrated program" was presented as a predictor of perspective transformation (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Based on empirical evidence this study implies that in order to understand the forms and processes of transformational learning in adult learning, service-learning, and intercultural learning programs, the relationship among the personal, structural, historical and programmatic contextual factors must be made explicit.

Dissonance. By immersing US students in a new culture and by connecting them through service work with Nicaraguans who are experiencing poverty firsthand, the TC3-NICA program purposely disrupts their world-view. The TC3-NICA program structures dissonance into the pedagogy. Students often described their

service-learning experiences as "shocking," "feeling like being in constant crisis mode" or "living in a totally different world." Dissonance occurred when TC3-NICA students' experience could not be adequately explained by using their prior frame of reference.

This research found that the dimension of dissonance played an important role in catalyzing and triggering the process of transformational learning in international service-learning. The study findings are similar to Mezirow's (1991, 2000) theory on the role of "disorienting dilemmas," as triggering the process of perspective transformation and theories of intercultural learning that see "culture shock" as a catalyst for significant learning and growth (Adler, 1987; J, Bennett, 1993a; M. Bennett, 1993b; Kim, 2001). The study findings also support prior empirical studies that substantiated the important role of culture shock as a trigger mechanism for initiating the process of transformational learning as a result of the incongruency between aspects of the new culture and the sojourners' previous experience (Taylor, 1993).

This study extended previous theories and empirical studies above by identifying and unpacking the concept of dissonance to help explain how TC3-NICA students experienced the transformational learning process. In particular, the research uncovered that there were various types and intensities of dissonance that affected TC3-NICA students for different periods of time. The type of dissonance represented the gap between the contextual baggage that TC3-NICA students carried with them as a North to South movement across the US border and their experience in Nicaragua. TC3-NICA students reported experiencing different types of dissonance that were historical, environmental, physical, cultural, linguistic, technological, social, economic, political, and spiritual. The intensity of dissonance referred to the depth and breadth of the gap between contextual baggage that is carried by TC3-NICA students as they experienced the cognitive and affective collision that occurred as a result of

crossing the border to Nicaragua. A new insight that emerged from this study is that if the gap between students' contextual baggage and their international service-learning experience was deeply intense then the dissonance stayed with students and continued to shape their transformational learning after return to the US. The identification and differentiation among the type, intensity and duration of dissonance has important theoretical implications for explaining the nature of transformational learning. This finding refutes the notion that culture shock and disorienting dilemmas simply act as internal, cognitive learning triggers that fade away once experienced as suggested by conceptual models provided by Mezirow (2000) and Kim (2001). Rather, if the type the dissonance is intense and structural, (i.e., experiencing poverty for the first time) then it continues to instigate ongoing learning and is shaped by both internal (the psychological impact) and external forces (dominant cultural ideologies, social relations and institutional arrangements).

The findings of this study seem to support Mezirow's conception of disorienting dilemmas as significant life crises (i.e., divorce, job loss, death of a loved one and so on) that sometimes trigger transformational learning processes and lead to different forms of perspective transformation. However, the longitudinal nature of this study provided a unique look at the role of dissonance over a longer period of time. As a result, the study not only identified an empirical connection between the type, intensity and duration of dissonance but also found that the more intense (and structural) the type of dissonance the less likely it could be managed by the learner. Instead, the dissonance remained. For example, Karen, and Amanda continued to draw from the dissonance that they experienced interacting with Nicaraguan children who were living in extreme conditions of poverty the orphanage as they tried to remain actively committed to raising awareness about social justices issues. Eight years after participating in the TC3-NICA program, Karen's attempts to stay involved in social justice issues are fueled by the dissonance she experienced living with the orphanage

children. Amanda still becomes emotional thinking about the children in Nicaragua when she eats cereal in the morning. Four years after going to Nicaragua, Beth continues to refer to the plight of Nicaraguan women and children and how she draws from that everyday for personal strength and also to continue to raise awareness about global poverty and human rights issues in her classes.

Thus, unlike Taylor's (1993) study that found that dissonance "cultural disequilibrium...just lessens in intensity over time and as a participant becomes more interculturally competent" (p. 198), this study indicated that certain types of high level dissonance can actually become more intense over time. The familiar adage "time heals old wounds" is not often the case in international service-learning. TC3-NICA students continued to draw on the dissonant experiences as reminders and inspiration for maintaining and acting on their emerging global consciousness and often became more intense and/or frustrated about being able to make a difference or remain committed to raising awareness about the plight of many Nicaraguans.

Theories of intercultural learning (Bennett, 1993a; Bennett, 1993b; Kim, 2001; Taylor, 1993) tend to subsume a wide range of cross-cultural dissonance under the monolithic concept of culture shock and therefore have neglected to consider the substantial distinctions among the type, intensity and duration of dissonance and the type of learning that is triggered. As a result, they end up equating transformation with successful affective, cognitive and behavioral adaptation to the host culture or intercultural competence (Kim, 2001; Taylor, 1993). This research disputes the notion that the dissonance (and the type of learning process) that results from adjusting to the physical environment is the same as the dissonance confronting ill-structured problems associated with human suffering and disparities in power and wealth. This study suggests that culture shock related to physical discomfort and the inability to communicate in a foreign language is low-level dissonance and tends to trigger instrumental forms of learning. For example, sojourners adjust to communication

obstacles by improving their language skills, or they adjust to water that isn't potable by learning how to boiling it. Low level culture shock does not lead to profound shifts in sojourners' frame of reference, it leads to increased competence communicating and living in the host country (i.e., sojourners might change their lifestyle and habits to adjust to a new environment but their world-view would likely remain the same). This research questions intercultural learning theories that equate transformation with intercultural competence (Kim, 2001; Taylor, 1993). This study indicated that high intensity dissonance (exposure to extreme poverty and injustice) initiated and affected various forms of perspective transformation, (i.e., communicating and empathizing with the poor, and questioning and choosing not to support sweatshops by making dramatic changes in one's consumption habits and raising awareness). Importantly, this research suggested that high intensity forms of dissonance – particularly the "culture shock" that stems from directly experiencing poverty for the first time – does not go away and remains with the sojourner as a permanent fixture within his/her new cultural frame of reference.

Also, the study found that the long-term nature of high intensity dissonance often remained in spite of the level of language fluency or previous travel experience of TC3-NICA students. This finding challenges intercultural learning theories that assume increased language competence and previous travel experience lessens the intensity of culture shock and adjustment and affords the sojourner greater control in overcoming dissonance (Kim, 2001; Taylor, 1993). If the dissonance pertains to ill-structured problems associated with poverty, then the sojourner is less apt to have control over the conditions that led to poverty. In addition, the reaction to high intensity dissonance may be exacerbated because some sojourners, particularly those sojourners who already feel interculturally competent, expect to be able to adjust easily. This study found that high intensity dissonance often led TC3-NICA students to question and later to resist social arrangements underlying economic disparities and

extreme forms of poverty that were incongruent with students' concept of well-being and humanity. High intensity dissonance therefore often led students to critique society rather than adapt to it. Moreover, the dissonance continues until the underlying conditions that cause it are reduced significantly or overcome, otherwise the dissonance remains, as Beth stated, "a restless spirit...always inside of me."

By further differentiating the type, intensity and duration of dissonance and the relationships among them, this study makes an important contribution to theoretical and empirical research in the areas of intercultural and transformational learning. This study sheds light on the long-term and disruptive nature of international service work in triggering transformational learning and helps explain why only certain types of disorienting dilemmas lead to perspective transformation (Taylor, 1998, 2000). Lastly, this study fills an important gap in previous service-learning research that has not explored in-depth the role of dissonance in initiating transformational learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Rhoads, 1997).

Personalizing. Personalizing described how students reacted to and internalized various forms of high-level dissonance that they experience in Nicaragua. The study identified three sub-categories that explained the transformation learning process entailed in personalizing: (1) human face, (2) internalizing, and (3) individualized contextual responses. Through service work, pedagogy and living arrangements, students interacted directly with the Nicaraguan community and experienced poverty on a deeply affective and visceral level. Poverty had a human face. Human suffering at such an extreme level required attention and could not be explained away and often produced a highly subjective reaction expressed in number of internal, psychological and emotional ways (i.e., fear, guilt, anger, frustration, sadness, confusion and helplessness). The ongoing direct contact with people's poverty, struggle, and hope made the problems of others deeply personal, immediately important, urgent, demanding some sort of response, internal examination and action.

The process dimension of personalizing is similar to the second step in Mezirow's model in which he theorized a pattern entailing "self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame" (2000, p. 22). However, unlike Mezirow's (2000) model, service-learning (Eyler& Giles, 1999) and intercultural learning theories, (Kim, 2001) which privilege rational, cognitive processing of dissonance through reflection and view emotions as something to be managed or controlled, this study confirms the central importance of the emotional and visceral aspects of transformational learning. The dimension of personalizing builds on and adds emotional and visceral knowledge to Rhoad's (1997) study where he found that students who were working with the homeless in D.C. were "more likely to personalize their social concerns and thus more willing to become involved in work for social change" (p. 7).

These findings also support previous empirical work in adult learning that highlights the important role that emotions have in understanding how adult learners and sojourners experience transformational learning (Taylor, 1993, 1998, 2000). Similar to Taylor's (1993) study, TC3-NICA students reacted to dissonance with a wide variety of feelings and emotions that went beyond Mezirow's limited list and included confusion, sadness, fear, doubt, pain, frustration, denial, cynicism, romanticism, shame, guilt, anger, helplessness, loneliness, and empathy. Since the role of emotions and visceral elements of learning are undertheorized in adult learning, service-learning and intercultural learning, the dimension of personalizing points to the importance of identifying and exploring the role emotions play in fostering transformational learning in intercultural and service-learning contexts.

The findings also indicate that the emotional aspects of the learning process are not part of the dissonance as Taylor (1993) study suggests but are responses to different types and intensities of dissonance. The visceral and emotional elements are so important in explaining the transformational learning experience of TC3-NICA

students that their central presence warranted a separate process dimension altogether. TC3-NICA students often commented that getting to know the human faces attached to the poverty on a deeper, more personal, emotional and visceral level meant that the conditions of poverty (and dissonance) cannot be fully understood on an abstract theoretical level. More importantly, the emotional and visceral understanding of poverty meant that, as many TC3-NICA students repeated over and over again during and after their international service-learning experience, "poverty cannot be rationalized away once you have experienced it and gotten to know it firsthand." In addition, they felt more responsible and accountable to doing something about it. The findings also support Evans' (1987) observation that part of the process of transformation for the non-poor when they encounter people living in poverty is "facing the problem or recognizing the plight of the poor, maintaining the restlessness or feeling uncomfortable with that recognition sustaining a vision for transforming the conditions of the poor" (pp. 264-274).

The study also found that personalizing dissonance led TC3-NICA students to reevaluate their identity differently often from the perspective of a Nicaraguan. They tended to see their identity take on a number of shapes relative to Nicaraguans (i.e., whiter, American, female, more privileged, more clothing, more money, better job, more education, greater ignorance and/or a limited "felt" understanding of poverty and so on). Many students described personalization as if they have been "stripped raw" and in the face of crisis represented in high-level dissonance saw themselves for what they were really worth. Their strengths and weaknesses became more apparent. They often asked, "why didn't the impoverished conditions I am experiencing here affect me so intensely before?" Or, "can I handle working in conditions of poverty?" and "am I willing to take risks to address what I am witnessing?" The highly subjective process of re-examination that TC3-NICA students experienced and that made up the process of personalizing, was integrally connected to the contextual baggage that they

brought with them as well as the dissonance caused by the process of crossing borders from the US into Nicaragua. An important part of this dimension for TC3-NICA students is working through dissonance by evaluating personal strengths and weaknesses so that they feel comfortable enough to take action to address the poverty that they see other Nicaraguans experiencing. The process of personalizing as a re-examination of one's identity relative to others who are less fortunate tends to confirm and elaborate on a major result of Rhoad's (1997) study that "participation in community service reinforces a student's relational or caring self" (p. 67).

Processing and connecting. This study found that processing and connecting were dialectical learning processes that students engaged in to better understand ill-structured problems and dissonant experiences. The processing and connecting dimension identified in this study make a theoretical contribution by suggesting the integration of divergent theories in transformational adult learning literature that tend to privilege either rational (Mezirow, 2000) or affective (Tisdell, 2000) learning processes for effecting perspective transformation. This study is integrative in that it found that there was an interdependent relationship between affective and reflective processes of transformational learning in international service-learning. Processing primarily represented the reflective dimension of learning, while connecting was an affective learning process. Processing represented the ways in which TC3-NICA students engaged in various reflection-oriented modes of transformational learning to find answers to the social problems they were witnessing firsthand. Connecting had to do with affective aspects of the transformational learning process in which TC3-NICA students developed deeper more empathic and compassionate relationships with Nicaraguans who were struggling with poverty.

The processing dimension supports previous theoretical and empirical studies that found the process of reflection as the most important component of the transformational learning process in transformational learning, service-learning, and

intercultural learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Gibboney, 1996; Mezirow, 2000, Rhoads, 1997; Taylor, 1993, 1998, 2000). For Mezirow (1990), "the most significant learning experiences in adulthood involve critical self-reflection – re assessing the way we have posed problems and reassessing our own orientation to perceiving, knowing, believing, feeling and acting" (p. 13). Rhoads also contends that "service without a reflective component fails to be forward looking, fails to be concerned about the community beyond the present, and in essence fails as community service...service projects ought to have reflective components that challenge individuals to struggle to identify various forces that may contribute to homelessness, rural and urban poverty and economic inequities in general" (p. 185). This study found that TC3-NICA students used a variety of written and oral reflection strategies to better understand the origins of and solutions to social problems in Nicaragua. They reflected on their service work to improve their practice in conducting clinics more effectively, sometimes during the clinic and sometimes afterward in their journals or as part of the daily group reflection. The research also indicated that participation in the TC3-NICA international service-learning program led students to engage in critical reflection. The findings suggested that TC3-NICA students critically reflected on their own and others assumptions which led them to question the nature of knowledge and power, the role of service work and existing social arrangements that influenced the problems their service work was meant to address.

Katelin offers a good example of the process of critical reflection in international service-learning:

> I was learning about how the broader economic and political and social impact of poverty and...why people are so poor is because there aren't any jobs...why aren't there any jobs? What jobs are there and why are they limited? And I think that was really important...to be able to see that the bigger picture...

The finding that TC3-NICA students critically reflected on assumptions related to ideology, hegemony and relations of power supports Brookfield's (2000) theory that critical reflection must be understood as ideology critique and is a necessary but not sufficient factor in effecting authentic perspective transformation such as a structuralized worldview. It also fills a gap in intercultural learning theories that have not explored learning processes such as critical reflection in any depth (Adler, 1987; J. Bennett, 19993a; M. Bennett, 1993b; Kim, 2001). This finding related to critical reflection also questions Taylor's research that identified a reflective orientation in intercultural learning but limited it to "a cognitive process where the participants make a conscious connection between their cultural disequilibrium, possible behavioral strategies and necessary change toward competency" (p. 203). By limiting perspective transformation to increasing competence within the host culture, Taylor neglects to consider the process of critical reflection as ideology critique, which means addressing unequal relations of power, challenging hegemony and questioning ideology. This minimizes the potential connection between critical reflection and social action in his study. By suggesting that sojourner's premise reflection or critical reflection led to perspective transformation as a form of intercultural competence within the host culture, Taylor concludes that "participants experienced a change in meaning perspectives despite the lack of social action" (p. 208).

TC3-NICA students consistently reported that their connections with the community through service work, listening to and sharing stories, participating in dialogues and informal interactions led them to develop a more empathic and compassionate understanding of the lives of people living in poverty. In addition to trying to "figure out" and or "question" the nature of the problems they encountered, they learned by caring, supporting and listening to community members and their peers. The comments by Kendra and Doris below reflect the importance of connecting

> I really enjoyed connecting with some of the community leaders to hear their perspectives and get a sense of what kind of movement was happening on the local level in terms of building solidarity and self-sufficiency within the communities (Kendra).

> It was only when I stopped my own thought process of how things could be and listen to the people who were working for change, that I began to realize that empowerment comes from the mobilization of the people, not throwing money or medical supplies at them (Doris).

The identification of connecting supports and adds empirical insight to transformational adult learning theories that support affective and more "connected" forms of knowing and learning that are essential for building solidarity across unequal relations of power as a necessary precursor for envisioning alternative and more socially just arrangements (Hart, 1990; Belenky & Stanton, 2000; Tisdell, 2000).

TC3-NICA students also reported that the connections led them to see their identities as relational and more connected to Nicaraguans. This finding adds empirical insight to the affective forms of learning that take place in service-learning and intercultural learning but are undertheorized in the scholarly literature (Delve et al., 1989; Kahne & Westheimer, 1999; Adler, 1987; J. Bennett; M. Bennett, 1993b, Kim, 2001). Connecting also supports previous empirical studies in service-learning that found that interaction with diverse members of the community through service work has an influence on student's perspective transformation (Eyler & Giles, 1999) and in becoming more conscious of the relational character of their identity (Rhoads, 1997).

Importantly, findings from this study make a significant empirical and theoretical contribution the three areas above by suggesting that critical reflection combined with affective forms of learning provided the necessary and crucial integrative link to fostering the process of transformational learning. The findings suggested that the reflection that occurs through processing has little meaning unless it

is understood in terms of affective learning, the intimate, personal, visceral, and deeply felt connections TC3-NICA students have with Nicaraguans living on the margins while situated in communities of service-work. Connecting, however, cannot be assimilated unless one processes it in some manner, whether it is through informal and formal reflective conversations with fellow students who together attempt to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct meaning in sharing the collective experience of service. One of the most important empirical and theoretical contributions this study makes to the previous research and theory in the areas of adult learning, service-learning, and intercultural learning is that transformational learning is more apt to persist over the long-term if both reflective and affective learning takes place.

Emerging Global Consciousness. Three sub-categories helped define the learning process entailed in what students describe as an emerging global consciousness: (1) envisioning, (2) transforming forms, and (3) chameleon complex: re/dis-integration. The process of emerging global consciousness represented the process and form of transformation as a combination of the aforementioned process components of transformational learning. Emerging global consciousness develops over the course of student participation in international service-learning activities and continues to be shaped and re-shaped after students return to the US. Rather than an endpoint or outcome of participation in international service work in Nicaragua, emerging global consciousness represents a profound movement in one's frame of reference – what students describe as a "life altering experience," or as "a profound difference in the way I look at the world." Importantly, the study identified further the "form of life" that was "altered." These forms included the political, intellectual, moral, personal, cultural, personal and spiritual assumptions that made-up TC3-NICA students shifting worldview during and after participation in international service.

The findings indicate that the forms and processes of transformational learning in international service-learning interact dialectically and therefore cannot be fully

understood unless taken together. That is, the form of transformation cannot be explained adequately without understanding the process of transformational learning and vice versa. The dynamic relationship among the forms and processes of transformational learning in international service constitutes TC3-NICA students' emerging global consciousness.

Emerging global consciousness also represented the ongoing actions TC3-NICA students reported taking after returning from Nicaragua and based on their shifting frame of reference. Emerging global consciousness is very different than the "evolving intercultural identity" found in Taylor's (1993, 1994a) study. Taylor represents as the outcome of transformational learning in the form of "a change in values, an increase in self-confidence and a change in perspective" (p. 172). Unlike evolving intercultural identity which Taylor (1993, 1994a) equates with intercultural competence or learning how to adapt to, and/or identify with the host culture, emerging global consciousness represents both the form and process of transformational learning and represents a process whereby participants learn to critique culture. The transformational learning process of emerging global consciousness found in this study is empirically similar to Hart's conceptual notion of "mestiza consciousness" – a process whereby students become critically aware of their privileged position on the global map of power relations, attempt to use their power and privilege to ally with people living on the margins, and to continue to learn how to collectively build enough support, trust and care to transform and create new maps that promote social justice (Hart, 2001, p. 173).

Envisioning described a process whereby TC3-NICA students drew inspiration and developed confidence from their international service-learning experience and began to think of ways to translate their emerging global consciousness by developing a plan of action. TC3-NICA students began to imagine alternative lifestyle choices and habits that were more in line with the different transforming forms shifting within their

emerging global consciousness. This finding parallels in some ways steps five through nine in Mezirow's (2000) conceptualization of the process of transformational learning which includes: "Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions; planning a course of action; acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans; provisionally trying out new roles; and building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships" (p. 22). This finding is also somewhat similar to Taylor's (1993) study where he found that the development of sojourner's evolving intercultural identity led to an "increase in self-confidence" (p 129). Upon returning home TC3-NICA students experienced a number of the processes described in Mezirow's model; however, the ways in which they engaged in the various dimensions of the transformational learning process as a result of their international service-learning experience did not follow the same sequence. Rather, like Taylor's (1993) finding, the transformational process for TC3-NICA students was ongoing and recursive.

The transformational learning process identified as envisioning also supports previous empirical studies in service-learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kellogg, 1999; Rhoads, 1997) and intercultural learning (Graybill, 1989) that found students "intended" to act on their perspective transformation. For example, Eyler and Giles (1999) claim that they "did find that involvement in service-learning, particularly in highly reflective programs, moved students toward a more systematic view of social problems and a greater sense of the importance of political action to obtain social justice" (p. 135, emphasis added). Similar to Eyler and Gile's (1999) study, prior studies (Kellogg, 1999; Rhoads, 1997) investigating perspective transformation in service-learning also tend to focus on short term cognitive outcomes measuring the "intent to act" rather than the action itself.

Because a majority of the TC3-NICA students examined in this research described their transformational service-learning journey as a profound, life-altering

experience, findings suggested that the TC3-NICA international service-learning experience triggered students' perspective transformation and, in contrast to prior studies (Eyler & Giles, 1999, Rhoads, 1997), occurred with greater frequency. Although the nature of the transformational learning journey was found to be ongoing, recursive and unique for each participants in this study, a number of TC3-NICA students reported experiencing transformative learning in one or more of the following six transforming forms: political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal, and spiritual. These six overlapping areas represented different sets of assumptions or presuppositions that had been identified as making up parts of students shifting worldview, and importantly, continued to transform in relation to how students experienced the process of international service-learning and their life circumstances.

The intellectual form of transformation that TC3-NICA students described experiencing is epistemological and problem- oriented and is similar to Mezirow's (1990) notion of re-evaluating the nature of epistemic distortions related to the nature and use of knowledge (p. 22) and Kegan's (2000) epistemological form of transformation. Participation in international service-learning activities often led to TC3-NICA students to reevaluate the origin and construction of knowledge, the value of service as charity, and the cause of and solution to social problems that students encountered in Nicaragua. This finding supports previous work in service-learning (Delve et al., 1989; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kahne & Westheimer, 1999; Kellogg, 1999; Rhoads, 1997) and intercultural learning (Evans, et al., 1987; Graybill, 1989) which conceived intellectual service-learning as perspective transformation. TC3-NICA students in this study reported their intellectual shift in worldview as a greater capacity to engage in critical reflection on problems that directly affected the community within which they performed health education services. Increased opportunity for critical reflection enabled students to critique distorted conceptions of the reality of poverty and wealth, harmful stereotypes regarding the Third World, and ideologically

constrained ways of thinking. Students reported a qualitative shift in their frame of reference toward finding both individual and structural solutions to the health problems that their charitable and relief-oriented service was meant to address. TC3-NICA students also identified extreme dissonance, service projects, direct interaction with the community, and structured critical reflection as activities that helped them problematize "service" and look for alternative ways to confront the problems that the "service" was supposed to address which confirms that certain program characteristics and learning processes contribute to intellectual forms of perspective transformation (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Rhoads, 1997).

The findings in this study were also consistent with earlier studies in service-learning that reported perspective transformation as in terms of moral learning (Kahne & Westheimer, 1999, Kellogg, 1999; Rhoads, 1997). The data indicated that students developed a deeper level of care and understanding of others through engaging in meaningful, reciprocal service and by interacting with community members from different cultures. Some students also reported transforming their sense of moral allegiance as a movement toward caring for and building solidarity with the poor in Nicaragua. The moral form transforming meant creating relationships by "working with" and "supporting" rather than "giving to" Nicaraguans who were struggling to survive, physically ill or experiencing poverty. This finding also supported previous studies in intercultural learning (Evans et al., 1987; Evans and Hajek; Graybill, 1989) that found that exposing the non-poor to poverty can lead to transforming their sense of cultural allegiance as one of global solidarity with the poor.

Students consistently described transformational learning in the moral domain in terms of the importance of making connections with people by listening and sharing stories with community members who were actively and collectively struggling to overcome community problems. They also emphasized how such stories helped them to recognize the importance of building solidarity across differences in religious faith,

race, nationality and class to address poverty and other social ills and in imagining possibilities for greater grassroots involvement in creating change. Transformational learning in the moral realm empirically supported adult learning theorists (Hart, 2001; Tisdell, 2000, 2001; Belenky & Stanton, 2000) who conceptualize transformational learning as building allies with people living on the margins on through storytelling, connected and relational forms of knowing in order to transform unequal relations of power across race, gender, class and sexual orientation. This study also highlighted the importance of developing a critical awareness of the distorting power and influence of national and cultural allegiance to the construction of our identity in order to take action to transform unequal relations of power based on nationality and culture.

In terms of the political form transforming, TC3-NICA students reported developing a more critically reflective disposition about power dynamics and an increased commitment to taking action against the root causes of social problems in order to improve communities. These findings tend to support service-learning's transformative potential in increasing political consciousness (Kahne & Westheimer, 1999, Kellogg, 1999, Rhoads 1997). TC3-NICA students who reported experiencing a political form transforming described it as a more politicized global consciousness that led them to reevaluate prior notions of citizenship and their role in making a difference in society on a more global level. However, unlike previous studies above, which only measured short term outcomes of perspective transformation as the intention to act (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kellogg, 1996; Rhoads, 1997), students described contradictions and challenges associated with channeling individual critical awareness into effective political action upon re-entry to the U.S. which I have labeled chameleon complex. Chameleon complex in the political dimension of transformational learning represented the ongoing struggles students experienced in attempting to reconcile and integrate their newly forming politicized and global perspective and identity through participation in various forms of individual and social action. Students reported

experiencing dissonance or "disorienting dilemmas" upon re-entry to the US. Students found it difficult to explain their new political consciousness to friends and family members. They also confronted numerous interpersonal and societal barriers in their attempts to take action based on new political and ideological perspectives in old ideological terrain, in finding sites for building solidarity and engaging in counter-hegemonic practices, and simply, in the timing of it all. Karen's metaphor of feeling like "a fish out of water but going back in having grown legs" and her frustration with participating in the democratic party which ended up reproducing the status quo rather than challenging it, represents the dilemmas associated with chameleon complex. Her struggle to make a difference by questioning the status quo suggests that increased critical awareness of the political, structural and ideological constraints is a necessary but not a sufficient factor in taking political action.

Data gathered from interviews with students after their participation in the TC3-NICA program indicated that perspective transformation in the political realm of learning, and the process of reconciling a transformed mind with social action exemplified with chameleon complex, were the most challenging aspects of their transformational learning experience. The data also indicated that encapsulation in a collaborative community-based effort to implement service project that addresses the health needs of a community, while producing a willingness to act (i.e., envisioning) does not necessarily translate into collaborative action upon returning home. Although the collaborative work on a common social purpose physically disappears when students return home, it remains a part of their expanded consciousness – as a frame of reference that serves as a reminder that socio-economic and political disparities still persist. This new form of consciousness guides students' interactions and relationships in the US, but is often not a part of the consciousness of their larger social network of friends, peers and colleagues.

The chameleon complex also manifested itself in the cultural dimension of transformation. Students who described transforming within the cultural realm of learning described it as a new way of seeing the hegemonic aspects of US cultural ideologies including excessive consumerism, materialism and the promotion of a world capitalist system. However, they also described difficulties in finding ways to communicate their emerging cultural consciousness with friends, family, and co-workers and reported challenges associated with engaging in counter-hegemonic actions. Beth used the metaphor always feeling like she is always at a "fork in the road" in terms of questioning the ideology of materialism in the US. This finding gives new meaning to the notion of "reverse culture shock" and causes confusion and communication problems for students and hinders their ability to find the same kind of solidarity they found during their participation in the service-leaning program. Cara describes returning to the US and trying to explain her emerging cultural consciousness to a friend who responded "don't worry in three weeks you'll forget about Nicaragua....let's just go shopping, you'll feel much better."

Rather than reintegrating their cultural and political consciousness in new action-oriented ways, as transformational adult learning (Mezirow, 2000), service-learning (Delve et al., 1989; Kahne & Westheimer, 1999), and intercultural learning (Adler, 1987; J. Bennett, 1993a; M. Bennett, 1993b; Kim, 2001) theories assume, TC3-NICA students experienced tremendous difficulty attempting to integrate shifts in the cultural and political forms of their consciousness on a personal and interpersonal level. Instead, they "dis-integrated" their new forms of consciousness by challenging and resisting dominant forms of cultural hegemony and political ideologies in the US. This ongoing struggle between learning how reconcile the force of integration (adaptation to society) and dis-integration (critique of society) represented the chameleon complex.

Almost all of the study participants reported greater ease in acting on their shifting consciousness within the personal realm of learning. TC3-NICA students described their ongoing personal transformational learning in terms of exploring aspects of their identity as well as questioning and challenging their lifestyle raising awareness on local and global problems. Often their actions meant making simple adjustments to their lifestyle particularly in terms of consumption habits, their career choice, and the nature of interpersonal relationships. These were changes that were relatively easy to manage and control and reflected the kind of increase in autonomy that Mezirow's (2000) theory of transformation professes.

Lastly, a few students described their international service-learning experience as a spiritual form transforming. They described their ongoing spiritual journey as rethinking their religious convictions, and as an ongoing search for deeper meaning as to who they are and how their emerging identity connects to their surroundings conceived much more broadly than in the past. Students also explored spiritual domains as support mechanisms for dealing with existential dilemmas related to their experience in Nicaragua. The movement toward a deeper spiritual connection beyond one's self stemmed from the love and care that strangers in the midst of struggle shared with them in Nicaragua. Such profound displays of affection causes a tremendous expansion on notions of self and community, and this triggers a spiritual journey toward discovering greater depth in purpose, and meaning within an expanded notion of self and community.

Their service-learning experience triggered in students a powerful (re) awakening or a search for deeper meaning in their life and its relation to all things – learning to see, as Parker Palmer suggests, in "wholesight" as a "vision of the world in which heart and mind unite" (p.1). The service-learning experience as they described it, stimulated an investigation into the heart and into the mind as an

in-depth exploration of the soul and imagining the possibilities of what that might entail.

TC3-NICA students also had a difficult time expressing their spiritual transformation in words since it often seemed to have to do with exploring deeper meanings beyond self and society. Gretchen described her emerging spiritual consciousness as an "exploration of the cosmic purpose of it all." This finding is similar to the way in which Tisdell (2000) described spirituality as having to do with "greater self awareness, a sense of interconnectedness and an experience with a perceived higher power" (p. 310). Their descriptions of spirituality also tend to envision a more profound sense of community as being connected in broad, limitless, and inclusive ways – a sense of self is not defined by nor bound by neighborhoods, towns, cities and nation-states. Importantly, students explored spiritual domains as support mechanisms for dealing with existential dilemmas related to their experience in Nicaragua. One student described her spiritual journey as a search for greater harmony in a world defined by a struggle between hope and despair.

By identifying the personal, spiritual and cultural forms transforming, this study additional empirical insight to previous studies in service-learning on the nature of perspective transformation in service-learning which had previously identified perspective transformation as political, moral and intellectual (Giles and Eyler, 1999, Kellogg, 1999, Rhoads, 1997). The addition of the personal, cultural and spiritual forms transforming provides additional insight on the nature of transformation in service-learning and intercultural learning contexts. The finding of the long-term relationship among transforming forms also indicated that perspective transformation in international service-learning is much more complex and contested in nature and is shaped largely by the social contextual forces. That is, although the form transforming within the mind of the learner may have shifted, the road to social action is not guaranteed.

Chameleon complex is perhaps the most compelling aspect of this study. Chameleon complex suggests that the form and long-term process of transformational learning that results from participation in international service-learning represents the constant struggle TC3-NICA students experience in attempting to translate the various shifting forms of their emerging global consciousness into individual and social action. The struggle results from the dissonance of attempting to re-integrate one's emerging global consciousness in US society whose dominant culture in many ways contradicts students' shifting world view. TC3-NICA students experienced the highly contested, complex and at times, frustrating aspects of chameleon complex on personal and interpersonal levels when they were stymied attempting to communicate and act on their emerging global consciousness particularly within the political, and cultural dimensions of transforming forms.

TC3-NICA students reported dilemmas associated with questioning friends, family and co-workers uncritical acceptance of American values, norms and ideologies and often had trouble resisting and instead, as a chameleon-like defense mechanism, resorted to "blending in." At other times students actively engaged in counter-hegemonic practices and activities meant to raise awareness about global injustices with friends, at work and within their communities. Emerging global consciousness represented an ongoing transformational learning process characterized by struggle and at times, dis-integration, that is a pulling away from engaging in social action either through blending in or through deciding not to participate in dominant cultural rituals.

An Expanded Conceptualization of Transformational Learning.

This case study, which was based on prior theoretical and empirical research, has contributed toward the development of an expanded conceptualization of Mezirow's model of transformational learning. By incorporating and exploring the relationship among context, critical reflection, other forms of knowing (i.e., affect, and

spirituality) and the learning link between individual perspective transformation and social action over the long-term this study provides a more holistic description of the forms and processes of transformational learning. In terms of the process of transformation, the findings from this study indicate that context, dissonance, emotions, reflection, affect, and relations of power are crucial to understanding the forms and processes of transformational learning in international service-learning

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the findings that suggest an expanded conceptualization of Mezirow's model for better understanding the complexities of transformational learning forms and processes. The findings confirmed that a number of TC3-NICA students experienced the form and process of transformation as an emerging global consciousness. Emerging global consciousness also represented profound shifts within the political, intellectual, moral, personal, cultural and spiritual structures of meaning. With regard to the form transforming, the study results suggest that transformational learning can occur across a variety of assumptive domains so that seeing epistemic, psychological and socio-linguistic assumptions separately as Mezirow (2000) does might distort one's understanding of the process of transformational learning.

Emerging global consciousness also reflected a number of processes including contextual border crossing, dissonance, personalizing, processing and connecting. Taken together the forms and processes of transformational learning in international service-learning provide empirical evidence that suggests an expanded conceptualization of Mezirow's model for understanding and explaining transformational learning.

Contextual border crossing also expands our understanding of the role of context in shaping the form and process of transformational learning. The findings illustrate that transformational process that TC3-NICA students experience during and after participation in the TC3-NICA program cannot be explained without

understanding the individual, structural, programmatic and historical aspects of the contextual "baggage" that they carry with them across the border between the US and Nicaragua. Crossing contextual borders of race, gender, class, and nationality explains how TC3-NICA students developed greater critical awareness of the social construction of their identity based on unequal relations of the power.

This study extended transformational adult learning theory by exploring the role of dissonance to help explain the how TC3-NICA students' experience the transformational learning process. This research found that there were various types and intensities of dissonance that affected TC3-NICA students for different periods of time. A new insight that emerged from this study is that if TC3-NICA students experienced high intensity dissonance, it stayed with them after they returned home and continued to shape the form and process of their transformational learning journey. By identifying and exploring the relationship among the type, intensity and duration of dissonance, this study finding questions previous notions that disorienting dilemmas simply act as internal, cognitive learning triggers that disappear once they have been experienced and rationally digested through critical reflection as Mezirow (2000) suggests. Instead, this research provides ample empirical evidence that certain types of high intensity dissonance continue to shape the form and process of transformational learning.

This research found an interdependent relationship between the processing and connecting dimensions of transformational learning in international service-learning. Importantly, results from this study make a significant empirical and theoretical contribution by suggesting that critical reflection combined with affective forms of learning provided the necessary and crucial integrative link to fostering the process of transformational learning. The findings suggested that the critical reflection that occurred through processing had little meaning unless it was combined with affective learning, personal, visceral, and deeply felt connections TC3-NICA students had made

with Nicaraguans living on the margins while performing service-work. What made this finding more compelling is that transformational learning is more likely to persist over the long-term if both reflective and affective learning takes place.

Lastly, the findings indicated a dynamic relationship among the forms and processes of transformational learning in international service-learning. That is, the form of transformation cannot be explained adequately without understanding the process of transformational learning and vice versa. Taken together the transformational learning processes and forms constituted the "where" and "how" of transformation in international service-learning as represented in the concept emerging global consciousness. Emerging global consciousness did not mean gaining knowledge of culture by "broadening one's horizon" or expanding one's world view. Rather, emerging global consciousness meant questioning and resisting the dominant culture. Emerging global consciousness meant developing a whole new set of lenses for viewing the horizon in order to recreate the horizon itself. However, the findings also indicate that emerging global consciousness over the long term presents problems for students seeking to translate their "intent to act" (i.e., envisioning) into counter-hegemonic action depending on the form of the transformational learning (i.e., political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal, and spiritual). That is, TC3-NICA students experienced further dissonance as they struggled to integrate shifts in the cultural and political forms of their consciousness on a personal and interpersonal level. This ongoing struggle represented by the learning process of chameleon complex, occurred as students attempted to reconcile the force of integration (adaptation to society) and dis-integration (critique of society).

Chameleon complex is perhaps the most provocative finding that emerged from this study because it challenges previous theories that assume that transformational learning is a progressive developmental shift in consciousness that is "integrative" of experience (Kim, 2001; Mezirow, 2000). Chameleon complex

suggests that the form and process of transformational learning that results from participation in international service-learning represents a constant struggle TC3-NICA students experience in attempting to translate shifting forms of their emerging global consciousness into individual and social action. At times students actively engaged in counter-hegemonic practices and activities meant to raise awareness about global injustices. At other times, similar to a chameleon-like defense mechanism, TC3-NICA students resorted to "blending in" to maintain relationships and avoid experiencing further conflicts with friends and family members and alienation from the dominant culture.

Practical Implications for Improving the TC3-NICA Program

The findings of this study contribute significant empirical and theoretical insight on developing pedagogical strategies based on an expanded conception of what constitutes transformation in international service-learning. By identifying and providing substantial descriptive empirical evidence on how students experience over the long-term the forms and the processes of transformational learning in international service learning, this study also makes a practical contribution to toward improving the TC3-NICA program. In particular, this study provides useful empirical insight for addressing practice-based problems described earlier. The study also points to the need to restructure pedagogical strategies that are related to pre-entry, entry and re-entry issues connected to how TC3-NICA students experience the process of transformational learning in international service-learning. The following pre-entry, entry, and re-entry pedagogical strategies address practical concerns related to my experience as an instructor and coordinator of the TC3-NICA international service-learning program and also draw from the research findings presented in this study.

Pre-entry recommendations. This research suggests a need to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship among personal, structural, historical and programmatic contextual elements that make up TC3-NICA students "baggage"

prior to departure. Having pre-course readings, discussions, case scenarios and role-plays prior to crossing the border to Nicaragua would serve to initiate the process of "unpacking" the elements of the contextual baggage students bring with them. Along with identifying the contents of students' contextual baggage, this study also indicates that the TC3-NICA program focus on pre-departure seminars that surface students' spiritual, political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal assumptions along with their fears, expectations, prior travel experience, beliefs, values and so on.

Entry recommendations. Findings that identified and explored the role of context, dissonance, personalizing, connecting, processing, and emerging global consciousness have numerous practical implications for fostering transformational service-learning on-site in Nicaragua. A few recommendations are briefly discussed below.

Given the disruptive nature of the program pedagogy, individual and group reflection strategies should be refined so that they help students articulate the type and intensity of the dissonance they experience while performing service in Nicaragua. Individual and group reflection should also focus on various strategies for sharing with others the problematic and often emotional aspects of dissonance. Reflection strategies should attempt to preempt the envisioning-social action dilemma that occurs upon re-entry by assisting students in developing an action plan that takes into consideration aspects of US culture and social arrangements and other mediating factors that might hinder taking action after re-entering the US. An action plan would serve to help TC3-NICA students in anticipating re-entry issues and also build solidarity with others so that students would be less apt to experience problems associated with chameleon complex upon returning to the US. Finally, the program should encourage greater relationship building with other students and community members as a way of furthering the benefits associated with affective transformational learning and as a way to enhance the reflective dimension of the learning process.

Re-entry recommendations. Based on this study, there is a strong need to develop a re-entry course that would focus on issues related to the chameleon complex and in particular, problems associated with re/disintegration and the ongoing struggle connecting personal transformation to larger social change. Seminars, readings and research oriented pedagogical activities should be directed at channeling high intensity dissonance more productively. Learning about how to connect with organizations and like-minded individuals to engage in social action, individually and collectively would alleviate the frustration and alienation students feel in challenging the status quo and existing social arrangements.

The empirical evidence provided in this study suggests that practiced-based problems identified earlier stem from a pattern that describes how TC3-NICA students experience the forms and processes of transformatonal learning in international service-learning. At the institutional level, this research provides compelling, in-depth, empirical data that points strongly to the need to develop a three-part course that addresses issues related to each the pre-entry, entry and re-entry stages of international service-learning. Future practical considerations meant to improve the TC3-NICA program should move in that direction.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study has provided a more holistic and expanded understanding of transformational learning by describing how TC3-NICA students experience the forms and processes of international service-learning. An expanded conceptualization of transformational learning provides the rationale for future research. Future research in the areas of adult learning, service-learning and intercultural learning should attempt to further clarify the complex and dynamic relationship among the transformational learning process components (i.e., contextual border-crossing, dissonance,

personalizing, processing, connecting, and emerging global consciousness) and forms (i.e., political, intellectual, moral, personal, cultural, and spiritual) identified in this study

The identification of contextual border crossing suggests the need for additional research that examines the role of context in shaping transformational learning forms and processes. For example, a mixed-method study that examines contextual factors at multiple service-learning sites would provide valuable information on how context influences the form of transformation in diverse program settings. What is the relationship among the programmatic, historical, structural, and personal elements of the context and how does each element shape and influence transformational learning? Are there other contextual elements that impact transformational learning? Do well-integrated programs with charity orientations to service-learning lead to learning that is transformative? How do students experience contextual border crossing in US-based, non-immersion programs? Research on diverse service-learning programs will contribute to our understanding of the role of context in shaping the learning processes in service-learning.

Additional research is needed that investigates the type, intensity and duration of dissonance. What other types of dissonance do students experience in other service-learning, and cross-cultural settings? Why are some types of dissonance more intense and long-lasting than others? What pedagogical strategies are effective in assisting learners in addressing strong emotional, visceral and personal responses to high intensity types of dissonance? The relationship between contextual factors and the type, intensity and duration of dissonance also needs further examination. How does the context influence the type, intensity and duration of dissonance? Also, what is the connection between the type of dissonance and the form of perspective transformation?

Since this study found that the dialectical relationship between processing and connecting has an influence on the long-term persistence of transformational learning, additional studies should focus on how the interaction of affective and reflective learning processes contribute to transformational learning. How does connecting with the community influence transformational learning in service-learning? Is there a reciprocal transformational learning experience for community members? If so, what dilemmas does the community face in translating personal transformation into collective action? Participatory action research approaches would be particularly useful in exploring the ways in which community members experience transformational learning.

Future research should also explore the dynamic processes that make up emerging global consciousness. Research that examines the linkages between the three facets of emerging global consciousness would further enhance or understanding of the relationship among the intent to act found in envisioning, the forms of perspective transformation (i.e., political, intellectual, moral, personal, cultural, and spiritual) and the challenges associated with taking individual and social actions represented in chameleon complex. Longitudinal research would be particularly useful in elaborating further the mediating factors that support and/or hinder individual transformation and social change.

Additional study in the above areas will enhance educators and practitioners understanding of how to strengthen transformative bridges for connecting individual transformation with socially responsible action in the areas of adult learning, service-learning and intercultural learning. Such theoretical and empirical bridges, no matter how small, provide important knowledge on how to best foster critical transformational learning that connects educational institutions with communities to more effectively address and change social, economic and political inequalities. An

expanded conceptualization of transformational learning offers an important avenue for future research.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION GUIDE

1. **General:** Be descriptive, watch interpretive/analytical adjectives and judgments. Think of "interdependence", and look for what's behind the words.

2. **Setting:**

    a. Physical: Space, Buildings, structures, roads, vehicles
    b. Senses: Colors, sounds, smells, weather,
    c. Animals
    d. Plants

3. **Social Interaction:**

    a. Activity and/or critical event: What is happening? (i.e., clinics, presentations, seminar, skits, hospital and other)
    b. Grouping (nationality, language, age, gender, race etc)
    c. People: Who is participating? Who is talking? What are they saying? What language? What style or format of Communication? (i.e., formal, informal, non-formal, non/verbal, stories, dialogue, one-to-one, group etc.)
    d. Personality of setting, activity and/or interaction (i.e., supportive, flexible, polite, democratic, authoritarian, controlled)
    e. Participation (voice, silence, emotions and so on)

4. **Chronology of event or activity:** (Beginning, Middle, & End. What happened?)

    a. What is it like to be a participant in these activities?
    b. How are activities implemented?

5. **Surprises, paradoxes, ironies, informal and unplanned interaction**

6. **Notable absence or non-occurrences**

7. **Direct Quotations**

8. **Sensitizing Themes and Concepts**

    a. My feelings about the event
    b. Initial Analysis and other comments

Aspects of the above P.O. Guide are based on Patton (1990, pp. 199-276)

PRE-PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill in the following blanks with an "X":

_____ Single   _____ Married   _____ Divorced/Separated

_____ Age   _____ GOA   _____ Year in School   _____ Major

_____ Live in Rural Area   _____ Urban Area

_____ Male   _____ Female   Employment _____

_____

Please answer the following questions:

KEY: 1 = Strongly Agree   4 = Disagree
      2 = Agree   5 = Strongly Disagree
      3 = Neither Agree or Disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
I adjust easily to new situations					
I have many coping skills to draw from					
I enjoy trying to communicate in another language					
I enjoy trying new food from a different culture					
I am comfortable as a minority in a new environment					
I would consider myself materialistic					
I am a very spiritual person					
I am careful with how I spend my money					
I live above my means					
I am very independent					
I am usually a conformist					
I am shy					
I have friends from many different cultures/ethnic backgrounds					
The society I live in values social status highly					
I consider social status very important for success					
I have high self-esteem					
I am very adaptable					
I work well with people					
Cooperation is essential for progress					
Communication is essential for positive a relationship					
I am from an upper class family					

I am from a family of poverty					
I have been involved with projects for the poor or homeless					
I have had many interactions with people of poverty					
I have been a volunteer on many occasions					
I am well versed in global affairs					
I get homesick when I go away					

1. What does poverty mean to you?

2. What is democracy?

3. What role does the U.S. have in Central America?

4. What material goods does one need to survive?

5. What material goods does one need for happiness?

6. Do you have a political ideology? Explain.

7. Do you have any spiritual beliefs? Explain.

8. Why do you want to participate in the Program in Nicaragua? What are your expectations for this trip? Explain.

9. What do you expect to learn as an individual and in terms of the group?

10. How would you define as differences/similarities between your culture and Nicaraguan culture?

APPENDIX C

POST-PROGRAM QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill in the following blanks with an "X":

_____ Single   _____ Married   _____ Divorced/Separated

_____ Age   _____ GOA   _____ Year in School   _____ Major

_____ Live in Rural Area   _____ Urban Area

_____ Male   _____ Female   Employment _____

Please answer the following questions:

KEY: 1 = Strongly Agree   4 = Disagree
      2 = Agree   5 = Strongly Disagree
      3 = Neither Agree or Disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
I adjust easily to new situations					
I have many coping skills to draw from					
I enjoy trying to communicate in another language					
I enjoy trying new food from a different culture					
I am comfortable as a minority in a new environment					
I would consider myself materialistic					
I am a very spiritual person					
I am careful with how I spend my money					
I live above my means					
I am very independent					
I am usually a conformist					
I am shy					
I have friends from many different cultures/ethnic backgrounds					
The society I live in values social status highly					
I consider social status very important for success					
I have high self-esteem					
I am very adaptable					
I work well with people					
Cooperation is essential for progress					
Communication is essential for positive a relationship					

I am from an upper class family					
I am from a family of poverty					
I have been involved with projects for the poor or homeless					
I have had many interactions with people of poverty					
I have been a volunteer on many occasions					
I am well versed in global affairs					
I get homesick when I go away					

1. What does poverty mean to you?

2. What is democracy?

3. What role does the U.S. have in Central America?

4. What material goods does one need to survive?

5. What material goods does one need for happiness?

6. After this trip has your political ideology changed? Explain.

7. After this trip have your spiritual beliefs changed at all? Explain.

8. Why did you want to participate in the Program in Nicaragua? What were your original expectations for this trip? Were these met? Explain.

9. What did you learn about yourself in the group living situation?

10. How would you define as differences/similarities between your culture (identify your culture) and Nicaraguan culture?

11. Was there anything that surprised/shocked you?

12. How did the experience of living in a developing country affect you?

13. Describe your experience of being a minority in this culture.

14. Describe your experience of needing to communicate in a language other than your native tongue.

15. What are your feelings about the teams' contribution in the clinics and in the health skits. Explain.

16. Describe how your understanding of Nicaragua's political situation fits into the larger picture of Nicaragua's struggle to improve their living conditions.

17. What would you say is the most important thing you gained from this experience?

18. What was the most valuable thing you contributed?

APPENDIX D

THE CRITICALLY REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

1. What is a Critically Reflective Journal?

A critically reflective journal is distinct from both a diary and a log. The former is primarily a confidential and personal expression of one's experiences devoid of linguistic and communicative constraints, and the latter offers a descriptive documentation procedure for expressing "what happened" (Ogden, 1996). In contrast, a journal usually contains three sections; description, analysis, and interpretation. A critically reflective journal is a personal notebook that contains a space for narrative, illustrative and imaginary descriptions that can be a useful tool to *critically reflect* on your experiences as a participant-observer in the TC3-NICA program. The critically reflective nature of a learning journal emerges as a dynamic interaction between description, analysis, and interpretation. The reflective process of description, analysis and interpretation should help facilitate greater understanding, and action.

A. Description:
The ideal critically reflective journal contains daily entries with detailed descriptive accounts of experience. Rather than describing the entire day's events, it is useful to begin by jotting down brief notes, illustrations, and/or words throughout the day. Make sure to establish a set time each day to "unload" thoughts, images and ideas that have been stored in your "experiential memory banks" throughout the day. Such descriptive "outpourings" represent "partial portraits" of personal experience gleaned from individual observations of, and participation in, daily activities with the group and community members. Whether you "jot," "illustrate," and/or "unload" notes, it is essential to establish a particular time during the day when you will have the time to consider your experiences thoughtfully and critically.

There are various types of note-taking and illustrative narratives that you can enlist for descriptive purposes. You may feel more comfortable choosing one or two significant events that you find particularly interesting and important to consider further. Or you might find it more comfortable to delineate the "good" experiences, from the "bad" experiences or to highlight a particular learning activity. Still another option might be to choose the "chronological method" to describe the sequence of activities that you engaged in throughout the day. Any one, or a combination of all of the above, as well as other methods, can be employed as a descriptive activity.

The important aspect of the initial descriptive phase is that enough time and space are left for thoughtful recollection and critical reflection. Generating more thoughtful "thicker" and "richer" descriptive journal entries regarding your experience will help the reader to live vicariously through your experience. As you review your notes, ideas and illustrations, try to conjure up as much information as possible and describe it so that the experience you recollect and describe in detail on paper enables

both you, and a friend to "relive it" (Posner, 1989, p. 27). Think of the physical context, direct quotations, social interactions, and non-verbal expressions. Finally, in the description section, try to avoid making attributions, inferences and comparisons on the events you describe, and/or on how people felt and/or thought (including yourself). Leave such categorizations, judgments and interpretations for the analytical and interpretive sections. It might be useful to create an observation guide to help you focus your observations and subsequent journal writing. Some helpful guiding questions might include: What do I see, feel, hear, taste and/or sense in the setting? What type of interaction(s) and/or activities are taking place? Who are the participants and what are their functions? What are they saying? Any surprises/irregularities?

B.   Analysis

Although it is difficult to distinguish between when description ends and analysis, (and interpretation), begins, there are some indicators to watch out for that will help you distinguish your ideas more clearly. In the analysis section, your focus is on gaining a better understanding of an event by comparing your experience with prior experiences, the literature, and/or seminars you are participating in. In this section you might also begin to identify patterns and/or relationships that are emerging.

Some questions to contemplate in the analysis section include: Why did the event or episode occur? , i.e., what feelings, thoughts, assumptions, norms, conditions may have influenced or caused the events to happen the way they did? What made the events important to consider? How does the experience compare, contrast and relate to prior experiences? What does it say about society, the workplace, human nature, relationships, you as a person, and so on? Does it reaffirm or contradict previously held assumptions and/or issues raised in class discussion and readings? (Posner, 1989, p.28.).

C.   Interpretation

Interpretation is also a "fuzzy" domain, especially as it relates to analysis. Its indeterminate nature gives interpretation an edge of uncertainty. The "fuzziness" and uncertain nature of interpretation is not surprising since it tends to be couched in highly subjective and speculative terms. It is the "I think" of the experience. Interpretation is making an assertion, inference and/or judgment about an experience that seemingly transcends the contingencies that made up the substance of the experience itself. As an "inductive leap" from the descriptive and analytical modes, interpretation allows you to "cast (your) lot with a creative human imagination capable of being informed rather than being bound by an ever-expanding universe of facts" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 40).

A simpler way to view interpretation is to think of it as "personalizing" the event, stamping your identity on it and/or giving it your own personal spin. It goes beyond analysis in the sense that you give your personal theory on the "why" of a particular experience in a larger social context. Some interpretive questions to think about might include: What did you gain, benefit, and learn from the events and activities that you experienced? What impact did the event have on you and others? In

what ways have you changed as a result of the experience? How does your experience relate to larger social structures? How does the experience you had relate to the literature you have read or previous interpretations from other sources? How will the experience affect future similar activities that you participate in? What questions does the experience leave you with?

2. Critical Questions and Future Action

Interpretation, reflection and journal writing sometimes leave us with more questions then answers (Posner, 1989, p.28). After you have gone through the descriptive, analytic and interpretive process, take a little time to reflect on what you have learned. Most likely, you will have learned a little more about yourself, others, the world, and concepts you have been learning about. At the same time, certain events, issues and concerns will surface as you reflect on your experience. The questions that linger provide an excellent basis for further empirical investigation, individual exploration and collaborative inquiry with others.

Get in the habit a documenting at the end of your journal entry one or two questions that seem to elude you, puzzle you, or just seem to linger. Share some of your experiences, your analysis, and interpretation, as well as your questions, with your peers, and see what their interpretation is. Perhaps they had a similar interpretation, or perhaps they will build on your interpretation by adding new insights.

Hopefully, by actively engaging with the experience you had, by evaluating its significance and its impact, the "critically reflective journal" will allow you to go beyond experience, to learn from it, and to act on it, in a more informed, critical and holistic manner.

3. Suggested Format for a Critically Reflective Journal

Entry heading with date, context/setting, people present, title; description of experiences, interactions, events and activities; analysis; interpretation; questions; interaction, action; further reflection...

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APPENDIX E

CRITICAL REFLECTION PAPER

The critical reflection paper is an effective medium for creatively and critically

reflecting on your service-learning experiences in Nicaragua. The following is a

suggested format for the types of things you might want to include in the paper:

1.   Preconceptions:

Discuss some of the assumptions and expectations you had with regard to
-the community interactions
-the students
-the course content, i.e., notions of service, civic engagement, community, democracy
and so on
-the activities
-global and local issues
-the history, culture and language of the region
-your participation – thing you thought you might accomplish and/or participate in
-possibility for social change and individual/community learning

2.   Actual Experiences: Describe some of the most significant events that you
experienced in Nicaragua. What were your thoughts, feeling and opinions about the
experience? The following are suggested themes:

-personal growth
-group interaction
-community interaction
-language learning
-critical reflection
-service activities
-group discussion
-seminars
-presentations
-facilitation

3.   Please analyze and interpret the experiences you mention above in terms of
what you read, your reflection and your dialogues with the instructors, students and
the community. Again, suggested themes below.

-Any personal changes taking place?
-Any surprises?
-Pros and cons/strengths and weaknesses/positives and negatives of the experience
-what kind of impact did the service experience have on your way of looking at the
world and your role in the world?

-any lifestyle changes occurring? future goals?
-did your experience have an impact on the way you view social problems?
-any questions...?

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. **Icebreaker:** Explain purpose, and intended use of interview. Reaffirm confidentiality and review consent form. Ask for permission to tape. Any questions?

2. **Pre-Program:** Why did you choose to participate in the TC3-NICA program? What were you feeling before leaving for Nicaragua? What were some of your expectations? How was your experience in Nicaragua different from your expectations? Had you ever traveled overseas prior to Nicaragua?

   Summary and member check

3. **During Program:** During your participation in the program, are there any events or incidents that have had a strong impact on you? Is there any story that you would like to share that stands out? Can you describe it? What was it like?

Feelings/Emotions:	How did that make you feel? How did you deal with those feelings? (Anger, guilt, happiness, frustrated, shame, embarrassed, jealous, sadness and so on)
Reflection:	How did you reflect on the experience, i.e. talking w/ students individually, as a group, community members, with faculty, in your journal (did you feel like you could express yourself candidly?)
Learning:	Did you learn any new skills, abilities, understandings, information, knowledge of history, culture, people, environment, personally, morally, politically and so on.
Transformation:	Did it challenge any of your values, beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions about yourself, others, the US, the world or certain problems or issues? In what way have you changed from the experience, i.e., personally, academically, politically, spiritually, habits, lifestyle etc.

   Summary and member check

4. **Program Setting:** Is there something about being in Nicaragua that contributed to your learning (as opposed to being in the classroom)? In what ways?

Summary and member check

5. **Relationships**: In what ways did you interact with people? Was it difficult to communicate? Was that meaningful in any way?

Summary and member check

6. **After Participation**: How did you feel when you returned from Nicaragua? What did your friends and family think? Are there ways in which the service-learning experience has translated into your life after participation?

What has the service-learning experience meant for you and if it continues to have relevance in your life? Do you draw on the experience in any way? Is it positive or negative? Did it have anything to do with your choice in career? Are you more active politically? In what ways?

Summary and Member check

7. **Course Improvement**: In terms of the program format and activities, what did you like and dislike? (i.e., communication, language barriers, activities etc.)

What did you think about the other activities? (i.e., Seminars, Community presentations, volunteering at the hospital, health clinics, and skits, interacting with the orphanage kids, family assessments, and visits to the Muelle neighborhood, staying w/ families, assessments, dialogue and opportunities for research. Are there ways in which the above activities could be improved?

What did you think of the approach to course facilitation? Did it differ in any way from you other classes? What did you think about reflection strategies? What were the most important and effective reflection strategies? What did you think about the living environment and accommodations?

Summary and member check

8. **Benefits**: In what ways did you benefit from participation in the service learning program? In what ways do to think others benefited from the service-learning experience? To what extent to do you think the Puerto Cabezas community benefited from the service-learning experience? Would you recommend this program to another person? Why?

Summary and member check

9. **Metaphor**: What metaphor or image describes best your service-learning experience? Unpack and probe for underlying meanings in the image and/or metaphor and how they relate to the program experience.

Summary and member check. Anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered that you think is important? Thank you.

APPENDIX G

CONSENT FORM

For Questions About the Dissertation Study, Contact: Richard Kiely, Cornell University, Department of Education, Kennedy Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853. Phone: 607-275-3588. E mail: rck6@cornell.edu

Description: You are invited to participate in a research study on international service-learning in higher education. You will be asked to answer questions about your experience as a participant in the TC3-NICA program. Interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed, and the audiotapes and transcriptions will be kept in a secure and confidential location by the researcher. After the research is completed, the audiotapes will be destroyed.

Risks and Benefits: There are no anticipated risks associated with this study. As a participant in this study, you may request a copy of the summary findings and dissertation after the study has been completed.

Compensation: Although your participation is greatly appreciated, there will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

Subject Rights:

To Whom It May Concern:

I have consented to be interviewed by Richard Kiely for his dissertation research. I participate voluntarily and understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any questions and can terminate the interview at any time. I also understand that I have the right to review the transcripts made of our conversations before these are used if I so choose. I can delete or amend any material or retract or review any of my remarks.

Everything that I say will be kept confidential by the interviewer. I will only be identified by a pseudonym in the transcripts, dissertation and subsequent publications related to this research. In addition, any persons I refer to in the interview will remain confidential. I also give my consent to Richard Kiely to review all course-work and prior interview data for his dissertation research. I can delete or amend any material or retract or review any of my remarks.

Verbatim quotes from me in interview data and course-work may be used, but they will be reported so that my identity is anonymous. Any specific organizations, faculty, supervisors, students, and other persons I refer to will be given pseudonyms.

I agree to have the interview tape recorded for this study: _____ Yes _____ No

Name_____ Signature _____ Date_____

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