

Transforming Lives through International Community Service-Learning: A Case Study

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Abstract

Through a case study of the experiences of eight undergraduate students participating in the St. Thomas More College/Intercordia Canada international community service-learning programme (2008), this thesis seeks to assess whether the participants' learning has proved *transformational* through an analysis of the forms and processes of transformative learning as developed by Richard Kiely (2002, 2004, 2005). Content analysis of semi-structured student interviews (pre and post participation), programme materials, student journals, academic reflections and essays reveal transformative shifts across the political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal and spiritual learning domains. The study adds to the research on international community service-learning through an analysis of Kiely's transformative learning theory in a new context, and explores how context affects learning processes. Findings indicate the dynamics of participant vulnerability and acceptance from host communities can provide for transformational relationships of solidarity across difference.

Personal Inspirations

The impetus for following research on transformative learning within international community service-learning comes from both professional and personal interests. My responsibilities as Engaged Learning Coordinator at St. Thomas More College, at the University of Saskatchewan, include the management of the Intercordia Canada programme at our College. They also include the construction of local community service-learning opportunities, both co-curricular and academic, which see students working with non-profit agencies in Saskatoon and critically reflecting on those experiences in light of discipline specific theory and more general social justice principles.

My goal in this programming is to provide opportunities for students to encounter the radically “other,” the one distanced and marginalized via socio-economic status, ethnicity, or ability. It has been my experience and contention that to encounter in a personal way those experiencing such marginalization is to open oneself to being affected and transformed in powerful ways.

As a 20 year old undergraduate student at the University of Queensland, Australia, I became part of a community of young people responding to the needs of the homeless in Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Inspired by Catholic social thought, although very uncomfortable with religious language and public devotion, we became “Friends on the Street” with a street van, coffee and sandwiches. Our objectives were both simplistic and profound, to be-friend the marginalized on the streets, to help where we could, but mostly to seek companionship into the early hours of the morning and a safe haven on the street. It was here that I met Glenda, an indigenous woman who had had her children stolen from her by the Australian government when she was a young mother. She never saw her children again, and it almost broke her spirit. She was a 60 year old woman who slept rough, aged quickly, and battled alcoholism.

One night on the street Glenda, unexpectedly, gestured for me to come over her. She asked me to sit with her, on the ground, on her blanket. She put her arm around me. I knew it was sacred ground, it was “her country,” she told me, and she had welcomed me to it. Somehow, this intimate experience moved me. I felt a radical acceptance from Glenda, and her embrace gave me both the inspiration and confidence to align myself with those people who have been marginalized and with their struggle for human dignity and social justice.

When university students today encounter the excluded, they too can experience transformations in their lives, and discover how they can work towards social justice in their own communities. I continue to admire and be strengthened by the courage of our students who choose to leave the securities of their privilege and wrestle with the purpose of their lives in the face of human need. Often they venture out unsure of themselves and their motives, responding mostly to an intuitive sense of *dis-ease* with themselves and with the wider suffering of the world. When students learn that these two phenomena are related, as I did, then they are often transformed.

Finally, two texts have been inspirational for me as I have written this thesis, each providing hermeneutical departure points in their own way.

Being away from home is a situation, which makes us alien to ourselves. We are disposed in a number of senses, that of community, of status, of expectations of others, and of local knowledge. We experience a lack and are unsure of meaning, and what it means to be in the world. Yet finding a home in the languages of new worlds is our common lot, and one that we are destined to repeat over the course of life. To seek an understanding of how this takes place is to come home to oneself through what was once other, and to make one other than one once was.

Greg Loewen, Ph.D. (personal communication, February 24th, 2009)

If you have come here to help me, then you are wasting your time...But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

Aboriginal activist's group, Queensland, 1970s

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Finally, this thesis is dedicated to Bonnie, Aiden, Ellie and Rachael, my beloved family, whose sacrifices for me were made willingly and joyfully.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Programme Background

As the Engaged Learning Coordinator at St. Thomas More College, it is my responsibility to evaluate the student learning outcomes of the STM/IC¹, and to foster transformative learning through community service-learning. Transformative learning has been understood generally, in my practice, as involving a fundamental shift in a student's way of knowing, acting, and being in the world so as to be more committed to the ideals and practices of social justice.

STM/IC is a partnership between a Catholic Liberal Arts College - St. Thomas More College, at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon - and a small, Toronto based non-profit organisation which partners with Canadian Colleges and Universities to enable undergraduate students to live and work with, and learn from, marginalized² peoples throughout the world. Intercordia Canada, according to its programme Brochure (2007), "believes that through academic learning and living with others who are different, respect for diversity can be learned. We believe the first step towards true peace is to accept and value people of other cultures, religions and socio-economic backgrounds" (p. 2). Intercordia Canada was established by Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, an "international organisation of faith-based communities creating homes and day programmes with people who have developmental disabilities" (L'Arche, 2008, p. 2). Intercordia Canada can be seen as an extension of the L'Arche model of inter-personal encounter with the "other," where that "other" is now an international "other." Intercordia encourages "cultural sensitivity and moral responsiveness in students and invites them to discover a more compassionate worldview" (Intercordia Brochure, 2007, p. 2). By partnering with Canadian universities and colleges, who provide the academic frame for the

¹ I will use the term STM/IC to refer to the St. Thomas More College/Intercordia Canada international community service-learning experience throughout the rest of this thesis.

² I use the term "marginalized" in this thesis to refer to those persons or peoples that through a social process of exclusion have been made marginal to the dominant socio-economic, political and/or cultural processes of a community or society (Young, 2000).

learning and the academic credit, Intercordia challenges students to “become peacemakers,” and to “see the world through the eyes of [their] heart[s]” (Brochure, 2007, p. 2).

Intercordia Canada performs these educational tasks through partnering with small, non-governmental organisations throughout the world. In 2007, the first year of the STM/IC partnership, students were placed in communities in Honduras, Bosnia, Ukraine, Ghana, and Mexico. Coordinating non-governmental organisations then take the responsibility of placing students within (often smaller) non-governmental organisations working at the grass roots level in service organisations with marginalized persons. For instance, students in 2007 worked with medical clinics, with an orphanage, as teaching assistants in a rural school, at youth centres, and in community homes for persons with intellectual disabilities.

St. Thomas More College provides the academic frame and credit for Intercordia’s international community service-learning via two, three credit (or half-class) Sociology classes. Taught by a Sociology professor whose research interests focus around food security, the nature and effects of globalisation, global solidarity, and social justice, participants register first in a winter class (Jan-April) entitled “Social Change and Global Solidarity A.” A 200-level Sociology course, open to students from other academic disciplines that have completed an introductory Sociology class, the course:

...offers an examination of global inequality guided by theories of social stratification and social change. Special attention is devoted to the nature, causes and consequences of socio-cultural changes in the contemporary world. Key concepts utilized during the course include: social change, solidarity, globalization, social inequality and “othering” and social structure, action and agency. (McLaughlin, 2007a, p. 2)

As participants study “the impact of globalization on human development (education, health, income), human rights and democracy, and issues of social equity (inequality and poverty)” (McLaughlin, 2007a, p. 2), they develop their own, country/placement specific focus “on such diverse topics as trade and integration agreements, civil society and politics, local development, the environment, scientific and knowledge networks, transnational and local social movements, global religious activism, or other issues related to class, gender, race or ethnicity” (p. 2). Participants are also educated in “the processes by which the Global South has been constructed as ‘Other’ by the Global North” (p. 2). This theoretical framework is designed to assist the participants to interpret their community service-learning experience in the following

spring/summer while they are abroad, living with, working with, and learning from local people and organisations as they respond to the needs of their communities. In the STM/IC programme, participants do not study written texts while abroad. “Social Change and Global Solidarity B” (McLaughlin, 2007b) - the second, three credit Sociology class for STM/IC participants - is completed via a CSL pedagogy which recognizes the learning that the participants do abroad independently via academic reflections and a meta-reflection essay.

Prior to their departure from Canada, Intercordia Canada provides participants with an orientation seminar, three weekend pre-departure seminars in addition to a re-integration seminar upon their return to Canada. As well as preparing them logistically for international travel, these seminars help participants locate themselves personally, culturally and globally in preparation for their international encounters. Group solidarity is established intentionally through team building activities, and the narrating of significant personal life challenges and experiences.

The Problem: A Practice based Vignette

Upon their return to Saskatchewan, Tracy and Mark (pseudonyms) had been asked to present to the STM/IC programme’s supporters and the College’s administration a few stories of their experiences in Honduras and Bosnia, respectively. Tracy and Mark had both spent the previous May through August living with a local host family and working as volunteers with day programmes for marginalized children. Tracy worked at the Accion Humana de la Luz Eterna (A.H.L.E) project based in San Francisco de Yojoa, Honduras, which seeks to house, feed and educate orphaned boys in the community. Mark worked with children at the Omladinski Centre in Gornji Vakuf, Bosnia-Herzegovina, a dialogue centre for Christians and Muslims built after the war in the 1990’s.

Tracy proceeded to show a 12 minute black and white film, which she had edited from her photographs from the experience, entitled “The Reality of Black and White.” The first half of the film, set to powerfully discordant cello music in the key of E-minor, sketched out the marginalization of Honduran youth – poverty, drugs and alcohol and the allure of gang life. The second side of the diptych, introduced with new radiant, soaring melodies in the key of D-major, asked the audience to imagine the hope for these same youth through new forms of solidarity with those willing to care. The same youth were photographed in both halves of the movie; what changed were the perspective of the viewer, and the narrating key of the music. What was clear

through Tracy's movie was that the experience of the STM/IC programme had a profound impact upon her, an impact she was still processing, and which effects were resonating deeply, even painfully within her.

The interpretation of the experience through her movie was similarly unfinished; her hope for the Honduran boys with whom she worked was apparent, but so was her deep concern for their futures. Tracy was glad to have had her experience in Honduras, but it had not left her unscarred. Her new solidarity came with a new awareness of the fragility of life and questions as to her place within it.

Mark's experience in Bosnia was similarly powerful. He and another Canadian student took full responsibility for the children's educational activities at the dialogue centre, and his presence there was mutually beneficial to the staff and himself as he developed new capacities for cross-cultural education. Yet it was the experience of an illness that provoked Mark's most powerful learning experiences. Mark was hospitalized with appendicitis, and after his operation his wound became so infected he spent eleven difficult, painful days in hospital, without an English interpreter. Mark interpreted his time in Bosnia through the prism of his illness in the hospital, and through his encounter with the generosity of two patients in the hospital. Feeling depressed and fearful, Mark was reassured by an eight year old girl who had also had her appendix removed. The girl took it upon herself to tuck him into bed at night, and attend to any needs he had. Her willingness to befriend him, and even serve him, despite her own illness, challenged his feelings of isolation and sadness, and confronted him as an international community service-learner with the importance of concern for the "other." While sick in hospital Mark also had time to read more about the Bosnian war, and was befriended by a Muslim man, who had learned English through watching American movies. The man also told Mark of his first hand experience of war, and how he had a brother in the United States but could not get a visa to visit him. The man had been in hospital for over a year, and referred to Mark as "Mr. President" because of the extra attention he seemed, from his perspective, to receive from the medical staff. Mark claimed that this "put into perspective" his relative privilege, and he realized that his sufferings were "small potatoes."

The apparent profundity of the learning Tracy and Mark experienced in Honduras and Bosnia provoked the current inquiry into the nature of transformative learning via international

community service-learning. There was a visceral, emotional and cognitive dimension to the students' telling of their stories. Although separated by hemispheres, their experiences were both deeply felt. What provokes such learning? What learning processes led to this new awareness and expression of solidarity with the marginalized? Does the specific context of the student-community encounter matter for transformative learning? Was it something about the particularities of place and culture which led to what appear to be transformative experiences for Tracy and Mark? Or are there other, more generalizable contexts which educe transformative learning in international community service-learning? The experience recounted by Tracy and Mark, and that of the eight other STM/IC programme participants from the 2007 academic year, encouraged me to search the literature for further analysis of the nature of transformative learning, and how and why it is fostered or provoked through international community service-learning.

STM/IC and Transformative Learning

Although there seems anecdotal evidence to suggest the STM/IC does evoke transformative learning experiences in its participants, a more systematic study of the learning experiences of the student participants is warranted in order to make this claim. In one of the only empirical studies to date seeking transformative learning among participants in an international CSL experience, Richard Kiely (2002, 2004, 2005) found that student learning was found to be transformative in at least one of the following domains: the political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal, and spiritual. His case study of his three week international CSL programme in Nicaragua also found that his students experienced these forms (outcomes) of transformative learning through the processes of contextual border crossing, dissonance, personalizing, processing, and connecting (2002, 2005). Kiely's findings frame the questions for this study. The specific theoretical questions to be addressed are: a) Do the STM/IC students experience transformative learning in their international CSL contexts across any of the domains proposed by Richard Kiely (2002, 2004, 2005), and through his specified processes? b) Given the marked difference between the STM/IC programme and Kiely's original case study conditions, do the STM/IC student participants experience transformative learning *differently*, or in ways attributable to particular programmatic conditions?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The two main streams of theory that inform this study are community service-learning theory (e.g., Bringle & Hatcher, 2003a; Jacoby, 1996; Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999) developed over the last thirty years mostly through the education of undergraduate students, and transformative learning theory (e.g., Mezirow, 1978, 1981, 2000; Taylor, 2000) drawn from adult educational contexts. An analysis of both areas is necessary to set the context for interpreting students' experience of an international CSL programme influenced by transformative learning theory. Woven throughout both the CSL and transformative streams of learning theory are the questions that critical pedagogy and social justice education pose with regards to the purposes and practices of education. The STM/IC programme is intentionally designed to promote learning for social justice among its students.

Community Service-Learning

What is community service-learning? In general, one can say CSL joins two concepts - community action (the "service") and efforts to learn from that action and to connect what is learned with existing knowledge (the "learning": Stanton, Giles & Cruz, 1999).³ The first articulation of CSL arose in the United States in the 1960's within the wider movement of experiential education that encompassed internships, cooperative education, practica and the like (Jacoby, 1996). Experiential education has its roots in the United States within the extension programmes stemming from the land grant movement of the 19th century, in progressive educational reformers such as Dewey and Jane Addams, and took inspiration more recently from immigrant education and the civil rights movement (Jacoby, 1996; Stanton et al, 1999; Westheimer, 2001).

A pioneer in the field, Robert Sigmon in 1979 provided three key principles for CSL that have become touchstones: (a) those being served control the service(s) provided, (b) those being served become better able to serve and be served by their own actions, and (c) those who serve

³ There is some confusion over the terms service-learning, community service learning (the preferred option for peer reviewed Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning) and community service-learning. For the most part, these are synonymous terms for the same learning experiences. In the United States, "service-learning" has been most common. In Canada, after the Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning normalized its use, "community service-learning" is the preferred term, to highlight the community's voice within the pedagogy. I will use the term "community service-learning" (abbreviation CSL) throughout this thesis.

are also learners and have significant control over what is expected and what is learned (pp. 9-10). These principles firmly establish community partners as equal participants in CSL, as opposed to being simply recipients of services defined by others, as can be the case in traditional “one-way” volunteering done for the “less fortunate.” CSL programmes spread quickly in the 1980’s and 1990’s across campuses of higher education in the United States, often with very different designs and goals. In 1994, Sigmon proposed a typology for service and learning at universities and colleges as follows: “service-LEARNING,” which prioritizes learning goals over service goals, “SERVICE-learning,” which implies the service outcomes are more important than the learning outcomes, “service learning,” in which the absence of the hyphen suggests that the two activities are distinct and separate from each other, and “SERVICE-LEARNING,” in which service and learning goals are equally important and where the “hyphen is essential” (as cited in Jacoby, 1996, p. 6).

Jacoby (1996) and Furco (2003) argue that CSL is essentially a form of experiential learning. Jacoby defines CSL as: “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (p. 5). Jacoby adds here as well that reflection and reciprocity are critical within CSL, as will be explained below.

Jacoby’s (1996) inclusion of “student development” within CSL objectives echoes earlier CSL theorists such as Stanton (1990), for whom CSL is imbued with the values of service, community development and empowerment, and Kendall (1990), for whom CSL is a philosophy of “human growth and purpose, a social vision, an approach to community, and a way of knowing” (p. 23). CSL for Jacoby is a philosophy, as well as pedagogy, founded on a mutual reciprocity amongst participants.

Not all scholars see this wider humanistic vision as intrinsic to CSL. Jeffrey Howard (2003), for instance, insists that CSL is a “pedagogical model,” and “a teaching methodology, more than a values model, leadership development model, or a social responsibility model” (p. 57). Bringle and Hatcher (2003a) also restrict the definition of CSL to “course-based” educational events, although they too see within CSL the possibility for an enhanced civic sensibility for participants. Bringle and Hatcher (2003a) define CSL as a:

...course-based, educational experience in which students a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and b) reflect on the service

activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (p. 9)

The emphasis here is upon disciplinary learning.

The STM/IC is an international CSL programme whose structure meets the stipulations named by Jacoby (1996) and Bringle and Hatcher (2003a). Academically the STM/IC programme is rooted within six credits of Sociology. Experientially it is built upon the community partnerships mediated by Intercordia and other international non-governmental organisations, which set the terms and conditions for the students' participation according to their needs.

Yet the STM/IC programme experience to date questions Howard's (2003) narrowing of CSL to academic, disciplinary concerns, and hopes to inspire more than an "enhanced civic responsibility" (Bringle & Hatcher, 2003a) in its participants. Indeed, Intercordia explicitly encourages "cultural sensitivity and moral responsiveness in students and invite[s] them to discover a more compassionate worldview" (Brochure, 2007, p. 2). CSL when intentionally designed holds the promise for enriched, discipline based, academic learning as well as the affective, participatory knowledge which often results in renewed moral commitment and social commitment. In this thesis I assume that when transformative learning occurs for students in an international CSL milieu it will involve both critical, analytical knowledge through reflection, as well as the affective learning which often leads to renewed social alliances and commitments.

Dewey and Kolb.

For many CSL practitioners, it is the educational reformer, John Dewey (1933) who provides the primary rationale for CSL pedagogy through his pragmatic theory of knowledge and its uses in the service of democracy (Bringle & Hatcher, 2003b; Cone & Harris, 2003; Liu, 2000). For Dewey (1933), meaning is not self-evident from reason or experience, but is rather created or "constructed" through conversation in which persons with particular interests attempt to justify their own claims to knowledge through languages with specific norms.

Dewey postulates a six step inquiry or learning process: (a) encountering a problem, (b) formulating a problem or question to be resolved, (c) gathering information which suggests solutions, (d) making hypothesis, (e) testing hypotheses, and (f) making warranted assertions (as cited in Cone & Harris, 2003).

David Kolb (1984), another major influence upon the CSL movement within North America, interprets Dewey's theory in a four stage experiential learning cycle involving concrete experiences, reflection, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Here learners are engaged in a cycle in which work in community settings forms the basis for written or oral reflection. Instructors assist learners with reflection processes which generate abstract concepts and hypotheses, which are then tested in more concrete experiences.

Mary McEwen (1996) notes that Kolb's theory helps CSL practitioners understand the differing ways that students think. Effective learning for Kolb requires four differing kinds of learning abilities, corresponding to the four points of his learning cycle: Concrete Experience abilities (CE), Reflective Observation abilities (RO), Abstract Conceptualization abilities (AC) and Active Experimentation abilities (AE: McEwen, 1996). Kolb writes that:

Learners must be able to involve themselves fully, openly and without bias in new experiences (CE); they must be able to observe and reflect on these experiences from many perspectives (RO); they must be able to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories (AC); and they must use these theories to make decisions and solve problems. (AE: as cited in McEwen, p. 69)

Kolb also called these abilities "learning from feeling" (CE), "learning by watching and listening" (RO), "learning by thinking" (AC), and "learning by doing" (AE: as cited in McEwen, 1996, p. 70).

Both Dewey and Kolb's learning theories have given rise to the essential element within CSL methodology of *reflection* (Bringle & Hatcher, 2003b). Reflection activities are the "bridge" between community service and educational content, and reflection activities enable students to interpret and study community service, much like a written "text" is studied in class for deeper understanding (Bringle & Hatcher, 2003b). Dewey claims reflection is "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supported form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it" (as cited in Bringle & Hatcher, 2003b, p. 84). For Dewey, learning happens when reflection activities ask the learner to confront ambiguity and critically examine existing beliefs, and when the analysis of experience has prospective relevance for the learner and when it leads to informed future actions (Bringle & Hatcher). But as Dewey (1933) notes, experience can be "educative," leading to new ways of thinking and acting, or "miseducative," and reinforce existing worldviews and stereotypes. It is reflection that holds the key to making experience educative.

Dewey and Kolb, however, are not the only theoretical grounding for CSL. Practitioners from a radical or social justice oriented perspective have turned to Paulo Freire's (1970) critical educational theory for inspiration. Like Dewey, Freire shares the Marxist belief that education and knowledge become meaningful or useful when they result in action to change reality. Whereas Dewey sought to construct a vibrant and democratic society through education, Freire seeks to overcome material oppression through liberatory education. In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), the starting point for analysis is not the abstract individual, as it seems for Kolb, but rather the experience of material oppression that pervades the experience of the learner. The "banking" concept of education, in which the teacher "deposits knowledge" into passive minds, obscures the reality that the knowledge of the world, social conditions, and the world process itself, are not static and given, but are created by human beings and are therefore able to be changed through authentic "humanization." Freire writes: "Authentic liberation – the process of humanization – is not another deposit to be made in men. Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men upon their world in order to transform it" (p. 66).

Freire (1970) initiates this educational process of liberation with what he calls "problem-posing education," which certainly has resonance with Dewey. Yet for Freire, all people become teachers and students as *concrete oppression* is studied with the explicit desire of transforming the social conditions under which it flourishes. For Freire, *praxis* is fundamental to education. This involves not the liberal reforming of educational institutions, political processes, or individual learners; but rather the "humanization" and "conscientization" of the participants in the learning process of "reading the world" in an historical commitment to social justice and the liberation of the poor (1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987).

Community Service-Learning and Social Justice

The STM/IC programme is an international CSL programme inspired in part by Freire's (1970; Freire & Macdeo, 1987) educational philosophy, and aims therefore to be a CSL programme seeking social justice for its participants and the communities with which they engage and collaborate. Yet this social justice inspired form of CSL is not the only form of CSL practice. It is necessary at this point to move beyond highlighting definitions and components of CSL process and ask to what ends are being sought through CSL.

Stanton et al. (1999) note that the CSL movement has collectively pursued three agendas, described as service to society, social justice, and democratic education. Each of these agendas is somewhat different. The first, historically most prevalent agenda has sought to make education *serve pressing social needs*. The second, *social justice* agenda, informing the STM/IC programme, has sought to educate students for the more radical task of transforming society and dismantling the power structures which keep the poor excluded. The third agenda of CSL has been concerned with educating students for *greater participation as citizens* in democratic society. All of these agendas may be worthy, but they reveal substantially different conceptions of society and the purposes of education. For instance, volunteering at a soup kitchen in a core neighbourhood would probably be regarded by most as an act of service, as would a programme to encourage young people from those same neighbourhoods to vote in civic elections. What about student demonstrations? For instance, when Ralph Klein, the former Premier of Alberta, was visiting Saskatoon he was met by a vocal student mobilization and protest to draw attention to the environmental damage of the tar sands projects in Alberta (Kyle, 2008). Could this act be counted as a component of a CSL process? For those for whom CSL can be a means to educate students in acts of non-violent resistance to expose and fight unjust corporate and government activity, the answer might well be yes. For those who regard the point of CSL simply as education meeting pressing social needs through individual acts of charity, it would at least be more debatable.

There has been a tendency for CSL researchers and practitioners to assume that there is a natural, developmental continuum between service acts serving charitable purposes and those oriented towards more systemic social justice and social change. For instance, Delve, Mintz and Stewart (1990) argue that there is a developmental process for individual students so that as they progress within their CSL, their focus shifts from a charity emphasis to more of a social justice outlook. As students become more aware of the complexity of poverty, gender and class, they tend to move from blaming individuals for their own misfortunes to understanding the social contexts which contribute to marginalization. Marullo and Edwards (2000) critique CSL initiatives which fail to move students along a spectrum of inter-personal acts of care to social justice inspired change. They write:

Acts of community service can become political in two ways: (a) as part of a larger political strategy or process, in which charitable acts can lead to a redistribution of

resources that changes institutions, and (b) as a first step in a process of politicization that puts community service volunteers on the path to becoming active agents of change. (p. 900)

For Marullo and Edwards (2000), a students' engagement with community and service opens up the possibility for more critical actions for social justice.

Taking an opposing view, Morton (1995) argues that there are three, foundational paradigms for CSL: "Charity" models, "Project" models, and "Social Change" models. Accordingly for Morton, there is no natural continuum or progression from charity to social change for students within CSL. Rather, there are three relatively distinct paradigms of service, each with its own worldview. Instead of moving students along a continuum, educators should be challenging students to enter more deeply into the paradigm in which they work, and "intentionally exposing students to creative dissonance among the forms" (Morton, p. 21). In Morton's research, the charity paradigm for CSL (e.g., a soup kitchen) is most common, followed by the project paradigm (e.g., Habitat for Humanity), with the social change model least practiced (e.g., neighbourhood community organizers).

Westheimer and Kahne (1996) draw a helpful distinction between actions within a community and the theoretical or ideological purposes informing them. Their preferred agenda for CSL is the social justice agenda articulated by Stanton (1990), and they advocate for a "social justice" perspective across moral, political and intellectual domains. But it is the perspective informing the actions that is critical. Westheimer and Kahne (1996) argue that through a social justice perspective, relationships of "giving," or individual acts of service, can be transformed into relationships of "care" characterized by an imagination of the other's circumstances (the moral realm). Within the political realm, a social justice perspective critiques simple altruism, volunteerism, and civic duty (and more conservative notions of citizenship) and stresses the analysis of social conditions, the acquisition of skills of political participation, and the forming of social bonds. Finally, within the intellectual realm, typical learning goals of CSL (such as engaging in higher order thinking in contextually varied environments) can through a social justice perspective also combine critical inquiry with action and transform students' understanding.

The STM/IC programme seeks social justice as its end. As such, it intentionally invites its participants to critically analyze the socially constructed marginalization of persons and

communities, and to examine our own participation in these processes of marginalization. Yet following Westheimer and Kahne (1996), the programme does not rule out the practice of interpersonal acts of care or service and exclusively privilege actions at the structural or systemic level. When student participants come face-to-face with marginalized persons in acts of interpersonal care and solidarity, the potential exists for learning to become critical and profound. This is not guaranteed, just as there appears to be no necessary relationship between acts of service and acts for social justice. Transformative learning theory, arising within the Adult Education field, has proved particularly helpful in more clearly differentiating the types of learning that are possible through CSL, and which are best able to further social justice ends.

Transformative Learning Theory in Adult Education

Jack Mezirow is the pioneer of transformative learning theory. Using a phenomenological methodology, Mezirow (1978) studied adult women returning to education at community colleges in the United States. Through interviewing, Mezirow (1978) found a number of women performed a transformative learning process wherein they critically reexamined culturally defined gender roles and expectations they had previously been uncritically dependent upon (e.g., women's work is done in the home). Mezirow came to name this learning process "perspective transformation" (1981, p. 6).

For Mezirow (2000), most learners are unaware of the origin of their worldview and the justifications upon which they base their beliefs, values and actions. He claims our "frames of reference often represent cultural paradigms...learning that is unintentionally assimilated from for the culture – or personal perspectives derived from the idiosyncrasies of primary caregivers" (pp. 16-17). Transformative learning, involving the fundamental shifting of one's frame of reference, is a "process by which adults come to recognize the culturally induced dependency roles and relationships and the reasons for them and take action to overcome them" (Mezirow, 1981, p.7).

In Mezirow's (1997) view the "frames of reference" that shift in transformative learning can be cognitive, conative (motivational) and emotional, and are made up of meaning perspectives (habits of the mind) and meaning schemes (points of view). Meaning perspectives act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience (Mezirow, 2000). They are a set of assumptions encompassing the socio-linguistic, moral-ethical, epistemic, philosophical

(including religious), psychological, and aesthetic. As assumptions these meaning perspectives are developed uncritically, and are not often explicit. These meaning perspectives validate our experiences but simultaneously skew our reality. They simultaneously justify and explain but also distort the meanings we attach to our experience (2000).

Influenced by the theory of symbolic interactionism, Mezirow (2000) then claims that meaning perspectives also shape our *meaning schemes*, or the outward and tangible representations of our worldview that we communicate through everyday actions (see also Finger & Asun, 2001). These meaning schemes manifest themselves as beliefs, values, ideas, and points of view – more tangible expressions of our habits of mind.

The transformation of perspective, which defines transformative learning, is characterized by Mezirow (1990) as:

[T]he 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 on 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. (p. 14)

How does this perspective transformation take place? It requires critical self-reflection upon some fundamental assumptions and premises. Perspective transformation (Mezirow, 2000) follows a process through a set of eleven phases (though this is not necessarily a linear movement). It begins with the onset of (a) a “disorienting dilemma,” and problem which clashes with an existing frame of reference. This experience of contrast or difference leads to, (b) a self-examination of the learner often accompanied by feelings of anger, guilt, and even shame. These experiences lead to (c) a critical assessment of the learner’s assumptions and the (d) recognition that there is a necessary link between the discomfort felt and the transformation occurring. With this new knowledge the learner then (e) explores new roles, relationships and (f) courses of action, (g) acquires the necessary skills for these new roles and actions, and (h) concretely experiments with these new roles and actions. The learner (i) renegotiates existing relationships, and forms new ones, (j) builds competency and confidence in these new roles and actions, and finally (k) reintegrates into his or her life the conditions of living demanded by the transformed perspective (Mezirow, 2000).

Mezirow's work (1981, 1990, 2000) has been extremely influential in adult education generally, and has been expanded, augmented, and critiqued by many. Although his theory moves beyond the learning theories of Kolb and Dewey by explaining more clearly how learners must critically examine their prior assumptions to enable fundamental shifts in cognition and worldview, his transformative learning theory remains a cognitively based, individualistic, and rationalist theory which leaves little room for the role of feelings and the more symbolic and metaphorical modes of learning and knowing (Taylor, 2000). Taylor's (2000) review of the literature on Mezirow's theory notes a common theme: the failure to take into account the significance of the affective, connected, and spiritual dimensions in fostering critical reflection. The learner's emotions and feelings are often that which prompts the movement to critical reflection, and rather than simply being steps to be negotiated actually provide clues for the intellect to follow in the critical reflection process. One can see this expanded sense of transformation in the definition offered by Edmund O'Sullivan (2003):

Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and irreversibly alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race and gender; our body awarenesses, our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy. (p. 327)

For O'Sullivan, transformation is both deeply personal and opens out into new modes of social being in the world.

Parks Daloz (2000) argues that there are indeed four conditions for the kind of transformative learning sought by Mezirow and his followers. The first is "the presence of the Other," the different one, the stranger, whom enables "a crossing of some earlier boundary between "us" and "them" and makes available an alternative way of being" (p. 113). This "Other" challenges the learner's earlier assumptions about life and makes possible a new solidarity, a "new we."

Second, Parks Daloz (2000) acknowledges the necessity of conscious, critical reflection, but argues here for the role of the story or narrative in communicating a learner's perspective. The third condition Parks Daloz identifies for transformative learning is the need for a mentoring

community to support the learner's new perspectives, whilst the final fourth condition is the necessity for opportunities for committed action. Transformative learning does not guarantee transformative social practices, and the learner must have the means and opportunity to act in new fields of collective action and solidarity.

Mezirow has also been critiqued for failing to incorporate ideology critique sufficiently, particularly the theory stemming from the Frankfurt school (e.g., Horkeimer & Adorno, trans. 2002) and elaborated by Freire (1970), in order to expose the economic and socio-political dynamics of oppression within capitalism and educative practices (Brookfield, 2000; Schugurensky, 2003). Without a sustained *critical* perspective, Mezirow's transformative learning may in practice lead to the transformation of an individual learner's consciousness, yet leave intact social systems of domination and oppression. The root of the critique lies in Mezirow's decontextualized view of the learners' emerging critical consciousness (Clark & Wilson, 1991). In considering that experience and meaning are mediated by biography, class, gender, race and historical and socio-economic and cultural environments, it becomes clear that these influence the learning processes and actions which result from them.

Transformative Learning in Community Service-Learning

There have been a small number of empirical studies in CSL that have examined either the transformational impact on student learning or the processes of transformational learning within a CSL context. Kiely (2002) provides a précis of these studies and notes there has been a focus on outcomes, with little attention paid to the process of how learning is transformative for students in CSL contexts.

The work of Eyler and Giles (1999) entitled "Where's the Learning in Service-Learning" is a comprehensive account of their three U.S. wide empirical studies examining the effects of differing CSL programme types upon College student learning. CSL was found to have had a positive impact on outcomes related to personal and interpersonal development, academic learning and most significant for this study, perspective transformation. Eyler and Giles (1999) also discovered that particular programme characteristics were strong predictors of student learning outcomes, including perspective transformation. These programme characteristics were (a) placement quality, (b) application (the links between the classroom and the community

experience), (c) written and oral reflection, (e) diversity (opportunities to work with people of diverse ethnicities), and (f) community voice (wherein needs are named by the community).

Eyler & Giles (1999) specifically root their understanding of transformative learning within Mezirow's writings. They note that:

Transformative learning occurs as we struggle to solve a problem where our usual ways of doing or seeing do not work, and we are called to question the validity of what we know or critically examine the very premises of our perception of the problem. So while students who acquire more complex information about 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 about how society operates. This process of questioning may lead to a transformation of perspective (p. 133)

Eyler and Giles (1999) define perspective transformation as “the questioning and overturning of one's fundamental assumptions about society” (p. 135). Using both surveys and interviews, they found evidence of perspective transformation in CSL in five ways: (a) viewing social problems in a new way, (b) demonstrating a more systematic locus for causes and solutions to problems, (c) a belief in the importance of social justice, (d) the need to change public policy, and (e) the need to influence the political structure personally. Eyler and Giles (1999) note that “dramatic transformations of perspective are rare, and we would not expect service-learning to lead to this outcome routinely” (p. 148). Nonetheless, highly reflective CSL in which course content and community experience are well integrated can have an impact upon perspective transformation. Eyler and Giles (1999) also found that those students who spoke most clearly of the fundamental importance of social change were those engaged in intensive, longer term CSL programmes where social justice was explicitly emphasized. Kiely (2002) has argued that Eyler and Giles (1999) have advanced the field by linking transformative learning with “well-integrated” CSL programmes.

In Robert Rhoads' (1997) “Community Service and Higher Learning” study, transformative learning in CSL is not understood as an academic, personal and social *outcome* in relation to social justice, as it was for Eyler and Giles (1999). Instead the *process* of CSL is itself, for students, an opportunity for personal transformation toward becoming a “caring-self.” Through the CSL process, students can develop a critical consciousness, described by Rhoads as a profound concern for social justice. Through a longitudinal, qualitative study of student

experience of CSL across three campuses in the U.S., Rhoads (1997) was able to locate perspective transformation as a change in students' self-identity. Rhoads developed a typology of students experiencing CSL – the “do-gooders,” who are ignorant of the social contexts of poverty, the “cynics,” who are overwhelmed by the complexity of the challenge and become paralyzed by it, and the “critical idealists,” who manifest a more critical and caring self, who understand the structural nature of social problems, identify with the poor and intend to act on their behalf. Rhoads' study found the perspective transformation undertaken by these “critical idealists” to be relatively rare. Kiely (2002) makes a similar critique of Rhoads's study as he does for Eyler and Giles (1999) – that the *process* by which students experience identity change is not well explicated, and remains opaque.

With exceptions for the processes of reflection and reciprocity, Kiely (2002) argues that the empirical studies of CSL have generated little knowledge on the processes by which students experience perspective transformation. Prior to Kiely's (2002, 2004, 2005) empirical study of the forms and processes of transformative learning in an international CSL context, the elements of disorienting dilemmas, negative experiences, emotions and other affective learning processes had not been adequately investigated (Mezirow, 2000; Taylor, 2000).

Transformative Learning within International Community Service-Learning

For the past two decades, Study Abroad opportunities have increased throughout North American higher education. The field of international CSL, however, is a more recent phenomenon (Hartman & Rola, 2000). Empirical studies to date have found that participation in international CSL programmes can lead to intercultural competence and greater linguistic skills (Myers-Lipton, 1996; Pyle, 1981), the development of caring relationships that enable critical reflection on assumptions (King, 2004), an enhanced understanding of reciprocity (Porter & Monard, 2001), a greater understanding of societal issues, a growing sense of responsibility and greater demonstrated intention to commit to social action (Monard-Weissman, 2003), as well as some evidence of transformative learning and personal identity shift (Feinstein, 2004).

The International Partnership for Service Learning and Leadership evaluated the impact of its international programmes during the period of 2001-2004 (Tonkin, 2004). Their studies on student learning found an increased intercultural sensitivity (Pusch, 2004), an ability to critique the values of American culture, such as consumerism and individualism (Quiroga, 2004; Seigel,

2004), and some evidence of “transformative intellectual and moral development” (Seigel, 2004). When commenting on the students’ interpretation of their experiences, Seigel writes:

...students commented on situations and events that challenged their belief systems and caused them to reevaluate their own thoughts about morality, peace, justice, fairness, norms of behavior, citizenship, learning, decision making, and notions of race and sex...Service experiences also had a transformative effect on students’ sense of justice and treatment of others in society. (p. 157)

Just what distinguishes these reported learning outcomes as “transformative,” however, is under-theorized by Seigel, and is consequently ambiguous, as are the processes by which these transformations occur.

Richard Kiely’s (2002, 2004, 2005) work on the forms (outcomes) and processes of transformative learning for students in an international CSL context, however, represents the most substantive effort to date in the field. Kiely offers a new model for understanding transformative learning within international CSL. He expands Mezirow’s (2000) conceptualization of transformative learning by setting out how context, critical reflection, affective engagement and other forms of knowing (e.g., spirituality) are critical to both what is transformed and how it is transformed for the learner. He also provides new insights into the relationship between individual perspective transformation and social action.

Kiely was the coordinator and instructor of the Tompkins Cortland Community College, New York (TC3-NICA) international CSL programme from 1994 through 2001. Each January intercession (3 weeks), the College offered a six credit CSL programme in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, an area Kiely describes as ethnically diverse and resource poor (Kiely, 2002). The two courses taught in Nicaragua by Kiely, in a “make shift classroom,” were entitled “History, Language and Culture” and “International Health On-Site in Nicaragua” (2002, p. 2). It was while studying this latter health course that students performed their CSL by organizing and running health clinics, often in remote areas, participating in community dialogues, volunteering at a local hospital and visiting community based agencies.

Kiely (2002) notes that his CSL programme has “an explicit social justice orientation to transformative learning” (p. 2). Goals of the programme included raising consciousness of unequal power relations between the U.S. and Nicaragua and of living conditions in poor countries, promoting cross-cultural understanding, and providing experience with community

health issues. Kiely designed the programme purposefully to “disrupt students’ notions 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” (p. 2).

A phenomenological methodology and longitudinal case study design were used by Kiely (2002) to examine students’ perspective transformation (Mezirow, 2000) during and after their participation in the TC3-NICA programme. Throughout 1994-2001, a total of 43 students participated in the programme, and Kiely purposefully sampled 22 of these students from across the range of these years. Most of the students were female (19 of 22), mostly middle class, and were, as Kiely puts it, “white and US citizens except for one black, Creole, Nicaraguan” (p. 96). Participants’ ages ranged from 18-60, and many had recently finished a two year nursing programme. Data gathering methods included on-site participant observation, document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Documents analyzed included pre- and post-trip questionnaires, photographs, student journals, final reflection papers and post-trip contracts or “covenants” for future social action.

Kiely’s (2002) study found six forms of perspective transformation (transformative learning)⁴ among his participants, and found that each of his participants experienced at least one of these six forms of perspective transformation. Kiely names these “transforming forms” political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal, and spiritual (2002, 2004). He understands these forms to be part of a wider, overall pattern of student perspective transformation, which Kiely named an “emerging global consciousness” (2002, 2004, 2005). This emerging global consciousness Kiely describes as being comprised of three categories: (a) envisioning - the initial shift in perspectives through which most students intend to act for social justice following their return to the U.S, (b) the transforming forms through which each student experienced a “dynamic shift” in how he or she saw him or herself and the world - in at least one of the six named perspective transformation types, and (c) the chameleon complex, which represents the longer term challenges students experienced in attempting to shift their lifestyle and engage in social action (2002, 2004, 2005).

⁴ For Mezirow (2000) and Kiely (2002, 2004, 2005) these terms are synonyms, and used interchangeably.

The six “transforming forms” Kiely (2002, 2004) identifies are new insights into perspective transformation in international CSL, and are worth quoting in full. Table 2.1 illustrates the meaning of each of these transforming forms, and gives example characteristics of each form as follows:

Table 2.1

Kiely’s Transforming Forms within International CSL

Transforming Forms	Meaning of Transformation	Characteristics and Examples
Political	Expanded sense of social responsibility and citizenship that is both global and local	More active involvement to advocate on behalf of global poor, raise consciousness on poverty, and change unjust institutions and policies that oppress global poor
Moral	Develop a relationship of mutual respect and care and sense of solidarity with Nicaraguans	Learn from daily struggle of Nicaraguans. See Nicaraguans as friends rather than recipients of health care. Look for ways to build allies with people living in poverty
Intellectual	Question assumptions re: origin, nature and solutions to problems	Question relief model of service. Value local knowledge and see how contextual factors shape social problems
Cultural	Rethink dominant U.S. cultural and social values, norms, and rituals; question U.S. global hegemony	Resist dominant U.S. norms (i.e. consumerism, materialism, and individualism); see and act on privilege, power, and position relative to Nicaraguans in new way
Personal	Rethink previous self-concept, lifestyle, relationships, and career	Actively develop more individually and socially conscious lifestyle, relationships, career and education choices
Spiritual	A movement toward deeper (un)conscious understanding of self, society, and greater good	Search for spiritual practices and organizations to connect with community of likeminded individuals and to help sustain ability to challenge systemic injustice

Note. From “A Transformative Learning Model for Service-Learning: A Longitudinal Case Study,” by R. Kiely, 2004, *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 10, p. 11. Copyright (2004) by Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning. Reprinted with permission.

It is important to note that Kiely's (2002, 2005) "transforming forms" are *on-going changes* in worldview across these six domains, rather than outcomes observed at the end of specific period. The students' initial international CSL experience, for many students a "profound, life altering experience," acts as an ongoing stimulus to change across these forms of perspective transformation.

Kiely's (2002, 2004, 2005) global consciousness category of chameleon complex describes the struggle students experience in learning to translate their emerging global consciousness, demonstrated across any of the six transforming forms, into social action upon their reentry to the U.S. The struggle is manifest in some expected ways, such as general disinterest shown by others in their experiences, and in the perception of others that they have "changed" (presumably for the worse). Particularly for students experiencing perspective transformation within the political realm, there is a real struggle in the face of rejection from family, friends, or co-workers, who now regard the student as too "radical" (2002, 2005). In the face of resistance from others, and the difficulty experienced in affecting political change among American middle class society, some students "disintegrate" and fall back into older ways of acting. Students often feel compelled to hide their "true colours," and "blend" back into social norms and expectations. The challenge of integrating new political consciousness with old political structures seems too daunting.

The identification of the chameleon complex dynamic by Kiely acts as a critique against naïve, developmental approaches to transformative learning that assume a natural link between personal transformation and social change. There is no natural and progressive link (for Kiely, 2002, 2004) between a transformed consciousness and then actions for social justice and changing social systems and structures. There is instead an on-going and recursive struggle for the individual's transformed consciousness and reforming the collective systems and structures shaping his or her environs.

To understand why students feel these sometimes paralyzing anxieties upon their return to their homeland after an experience of international CSL, Kiely (2002, 2005) has also developed from his study a model of *how* students experience perspective transformation, or transformative learning. The transformational learning process pattern entails five components: contextual border crossing, dissonance, personalizing, processing, and connecting.

Contextual border-crossing. Contextual border-crossing involves “learning a process of re-positioning oneself – a cognitive, affective, and behavioral shift across physical, personal, social, cultural, political, economic, and historically constructed borders” (Kiely, 2002, p. 157). Kiely (2005) identifies four elements to contextual border crossing that affect students’ transformative learning before, during, and after their international CSL experience: (a) the personal, (b) structural, (c) historical, and (d) programmatic. The *personal element* includes the students’ personality traits, social roles, knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, motivation, learning style, and sense of efficacy; together the “biographical baggage” students bring with them to international CSL. The *structural element* is comprised of the students’ race, class, gender, religion and ethnicity. The structural element of contextual border crossing focuses the students’ attention on their own power (socio-economic status, privilege, etc.) they bring with them across borders to live and work with the international “other.” The *historical element* refers to the country specific -factors of culture, politics, and history, as well as the international relations history between the two countries (e.g., U.S. and Nicaragua). Once again, power relations operating at these macro levels are relevant for the framing of transformative learning. Finally, the *programmatic element* also explains how context affects transformative learning. The type of international CSL programme (considerations such as the extent of immersion, duration, social justice framing, disciplinary perspective of the courses, interactions with community, and general programme pedagogy) affects the transformative learning potential. Together these four elements of contextual border crossing shape the potential for transformative learning for students, which always involves the unveiling of hitherto taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations reflective of social location and global position.

Dissonance. Upon their arrival in Nicaragua, Kiely’s students’ experienced a radical encounter with multiple forms of dissonance. Kiely (2002, 2005) was the first to identify both different types of dissonance, as well as differing intensities and durations of dissonance. These variations are related to the gap or incongruency between students’ contextual baggage (what they bring with them, and are required to “unpack” when confronted with new conditions) and elements of the new cultural context. According to Kiely (2005), dissonance often occurs because what students see, smell, feel, touch, taste, hear and participate in is so new and incongruent with their prior worldview. Students are forced to function, think and learn

differently within new environments. Kiely enumerates the types of dissonance as historical, environmental, physical, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, social, communicative and technological. Kiely argues that low-level forms of dissonance (e.g., differing climate) lead to instrumental forms of learning that assist students in adjusting and surviving in unfamiliar conditions. In other words, the learning here is skill-based, and assimilative and additive, rather than transformative.

High-intensity dissonance, however, often related to the witnessing of extreme poverty and preventable illnesses, hunger and disease, can be shocking and overwhelming for students. Simple reflection on existing knowledge and belief is insufficient in managing the powerful emotions and confusion that result from these disturbing encounters. The dissonance remains, and provokes students into a reexamination of their existing knowledge and assumptions in search of solutions to these “ill-structured” and ambiguous problems (Kiely, 2005). Whereas low-intensity forms of dissonance tend to fade away or get resolved, the experience of high-intensity dissonance permanently marks the students’ frames of reference, and does not disappear through further cogitation or service work. In fact, they persist long after students’ return to their home country in ways that continue to affect students’ worldview, lifestyle, relationships and consumption habits.

Personalizing. This type of encounter with human suffering provides for students in an international CSL context what Mezirow (2000) calls a “disorienting dilemma.” This dilemma, or high-level dissonance, is felt and responded to *personally* by students. In the face of interpersonal encounters with the marginalized and with suffering, powerful, visceral emotions are felt which prompt students to assess and critique their own strengths and weaknesses. This individual learning process represents for Kiely (2005) the “personalized” nature of transformative learning. Encountering the human face of poverty, previously understood only abstractly, forces students to internalize and discern the meaning of the anger, shame, guilt, confusion, denial, sadness and moral outrage they feel. This suffering cannot be rationalized away, it is personal and relational. The learning requires not only cognitive learning but emotional engagement too, which can lead to greater compassion and empathy. This in turn can lead students to new-found confidence, personal strength and commitment to work towards action to address the suffering.

Processing. Kiely (2005) also identifies the interconnected and dialectical relationship between *processing and connecting*. Processing describes the ways students engage in rational, reflective and dialogical modes of learning to critically reassess their knowledge and assumptions in light of the social problems they are experiencing and witnessing. Techniques used here are typical of well-integrated CSL programmes – daily reflection undertaken individually and within groups, personal journaling, academic seminars, readings and community presentations, and post-programme reflective papers and meetings. These reflective strategies, Kiely suggests, lead students to a critical awareness of the root causes of the problems they encounter, including unjust policies and institutional arrangements, and power relations structurally embedded both historically and socially. Yet this cognitive learning could not have happened without the affective aspects of transformative learning previously mentioned, initiated through the interpersonal encounter with the marginalized and with suffering.

Connecting. When students *connect* with others in international CSL, they listen, understand, empathize, and struggle alongside the people whom they serve. According to Kiely (2002), the programme’s female students often found a new “sisterhood” and connection with women struggling to meet life’s challenges (2002). Transformative learning in international CSL, for Kiely, involves both “figuring out,” and “questioning,” as well as caring, supporting and listening to community members.

Summary of Literature Review

CSL is a form of experiential learning in which students work in structured ways to address community defined needs for the purposes of enhanced student learning and social responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 2003a; Jacoby, 1996;). There have been three major purposes or ends for CSL: service to society, social justice, and democratic education (Stanton et al, 1999). The STM/IC international CSL programme intentionally prepares and educates its participants for social justice. It attempts to create the conditions for critical analysis through its participants’ encounter with the marginalized and suffering through inter-personal acts of care (Marullo & Edwards, 2000).

Dewey (1933), Kolb (1984) and Freire (1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987) have each lent theoretical justification to the practice of CSL, and each provides a model of an action/reflection learning cycle in which the student learner brings together concrete experiences, social problems

and abstract thought. For social justice inspired CSL educators and theorists, Freire and Dewey provide potential for addressing root causes of poverty and injustice, or for renewed conceptions and practices of democratic citizenship.

However, the theory of transformative learning, articulated by Mezirow (1978, 1981, 1996, 1997, 2000) provides a more nuanced account of the distinctions among the varying types of knowledge and learning possible through CSL and how perspective transformation occurs. Using Mezirow's theory, Eyler and Giles (1999) identified the following transformative learning outcomes for CSL programme participants: the location of more systemic causes to social problems, the belief in the importance of social justice, and the need to become personally involved in the changing of political structures. Eyler and Giles (1999) also found transformative learning to be positively correlated with intensive, longer term CSL programmes where social justice was explicitly emphasized. These instances of transformative learning, however, Eyler and Giles (1999) found to be relatively rare among participants, as did Rhoads (1997).

Within the relatively newer field of international CSL, empirical studies have demonstrated student learning across linguistic, cultural and moral realms (Monard-Weissman, 2003; Myers-Lipton, 1996; Pusch, 2004; Quiroga, 2004). For example, King's study (1994) identified not so much a continuum as a mutual relationship between acts of interpersonal, caring relationships and critical reflection upon epistemic assumptions, where each drives the others' effectiveness. Siegel (2004) detected "transformative intellectual and moral development" in his students' sense of justice and treatment of others. Yet in each of these instances, transformative learning processes remain under-theorized, and opaque to their triggers.

By incorporating contemporary critiques of Mezirow's theory from a critical perspective (Schugurensky, 2003) and by the expansion of transformative learning to include the affective as well as cognitive (Parks Daloz, 2000; Taylor, 2000), Kiely's work (2002, 2004, 2005) critically expands transformative theory into an international CSL context. He finds evidence of transformative learning across six domains, only one of which is narrowly "intellectual." Kiely's (2005) model also suggests students experience transformative learning in an international CSL context through a process of shifting across socially constructed and physical borders,

experiencing the dissonance this brings, personalizing the experience, by critically processing the experience and connecting with others.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study seeks to examine how experience and learning processes are constructed and given meaning by students in an international CSL context. A qualitative, interpretivist-hermeneutical research methodology was determined to be best suited to this task. Because I am partially responsible for the coordination of the STM/IC programme and its processes and outcomes, and it was this context which provoked the research questions around transformative learning, a case study design was selected. The case study enables me to mine the in-depth meanings that students attribute to their experiences, and to provide a rich, thick and in-depth description of the STM/IC programme contexts (Patton, 1990; Stake, 2005).

By choosing the interpretivist-hermeneutical paradigm as an overarching research methodology, I have situated the research questions within the field of “qualitative inquiry,” which Schwandt (2000) describes as an “arena for social scientific criticism” in which there is a shared “general rejection of the blend of scientism, foundationalist epistemology, instrumental reasoning, and the philosophical anthropology of disengagement that has marked the ‘mainstream’ of science” (p. 190).

Crucial to the interpretivist paradigm is the distinction made by Dilthey in the 1890’s between *erklären*, or explanation, and *verstehen*, or understanding (Husén, 1988). Explanation is associated here with causality, natural sciences, and positivism while understanding is associated with the human sciences, which have been regarded as fundamentally different in nature and purpose (Schwandt, 2000). This difference between understanding human actions and the attempt to attribute causal explanations to the natural world, or even to human behavior via positivistic approaches within the social sciences, is also prominent within the work of Edmund Husserl, a “father” of phenomenology. Husén (1988) summarises the interpretivist paradigm’s first principles by noting of the German philosopher:

It [Husserl’s phenomenology] emphasised the importance of taking a wider perspective and of trying to ‘get to the roots’ of human activity. The phenomenological and later the hermeneutical approach is holistic. It tries, by means of empathy (*‘Einfühlung’*) to understand the motive behind human reactions. By widening the perspective and to understand human beings as individuals in their entirety and in their proper context, it

tries also to avoid the fragmentation caused by the positivistic and experimental approach that takes out a small slice which it subjects to greater scrutiny (p. 17).

Contemporary philosophical hermeneutics would dispute the literal possibility of knowing in an objective sense the psychological motivation of a human person behind an action (Schwandt, 2000). Yet interpretivism and hermeneutics can be seen to share in common the following: (a) the belief that all human action is meaningful, (b) an ethical commitment to, respect and fidelity to the life-world, and (c) a desire to emphasize human subjectivity in the act of knowing (Schwandt, 2000). Historically speaking the interpretivist paradigm has shifted, it seems, from clinging to objectivist epistemological foundations to incorporating more nuanced, hermeneutical understandings of meaning and truth (Lather, 2006; Schram, 2006; Schwandt, 2000).

Nonetheless there are still distinctions between what might be called a postmodern research paradigm (or what Schwandt, 2000, calls a social constructionist position) and what I am calling an interpretivist-hermeneutical position. What unites the philosophical hermeneutical and the postmodern streams of thought is (a) common critique of naïve realism, which posits an extra-mental and extra-linguistic reality (a world of things, and objects) that can be comprehended clearly and described objectively without the subjectivities of thought and language, and (b) an “expressivist-constructionist” theory of language wherein language is the arena through which we as humans express ourselves and bring our world into being (Schwandt, 2000). Yet there is a more profound pessimism within social constructionism (or post modernism) as to whether language can ever disclose meaning or truth. Many social constructionists (postmodernists), “hold that there is no truth to the matter of interpretation” (Schwandt, 2000, p. 198). Within philosophical hermeneutics, there is a greater trust that language (conversation or dialogue) can disclose meaning and truth in discursive practice.

This inquiry then, into the meaning of students’ experiences arising from international CSL, undertaken from an interpretivist-hermeneutical paradigm, assumed that there was meaning to be interpreted in these experiences both for the participants and for the observer and interpreter. It assumed that such interpretation of participants’ experiences also required an empathetic understanding and receptivity to the students’ subjectivity and intentions. Yet within the interpretivist-hermeneutical research paradigm, as I am articulating it, the representation of experiences by participants, and my subsequent representations of their meanings are not

objective, exhaustive or definitive. These interpretations remain negotiated meanings contextually bound to the personal, social and programmatic locations of the participants and my own research questions. Yet the research is entered into with a hope and trust that through this dialogical and discursive process some dynamics of transformative learning within an international CSL context may be disclosed in a way that is meaningful and useful.

Case Study Research Design

Case studies, according to Freebody (2003), “focus in one particular instance” of experience “and attempt to gain theoretical and professional insights from a full documentation of that instance” (p. 81). Case studies “offer a median between theorizing in a vacuum, and on the other hand, appreciating the complexity and uniqueness of practice without presenting inspectable procedures for interrogation and explication” (p. 81). Creswell (1994) argues that within a case study:

the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon (the “case”) bounded by time and activity (a program, an event, a process, institution or social group) and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time” (p. 12).

The case to be studied here was the STM/IC programme of 2008 during which eight students lived, worked and learned in an international CSL context. The study covered the period from May, 2008 through August 2008. This case was studied particularly to interpret the processes and outcomes of transformative learning.

Stake (2000, 2005) identifies three kinds of case studies: the instrumental case study, the intrinsic case study and the collective case study. An intrinsic case is studied for the insights that can be gathered from one particular case. The case is not studied for theory building, but because of a particular interest within that case. An instrumental case study is examined in light of a particular issue or to make a generalization (2000). The instrumental case is of secondary interest, and serves a supporting role in the understanding of something else extrinsic to the case. Finally, a collective case study is a study of a number of cases in order to investigate an even more extrinsic condition or phenomenon (Stake, 2000).

Stake (2000) sees these distinctions among case studies as more heuristic than determinative, and notes that researchers in practice bring multiple interests, particular and general to their research. So there is no clear line of demarcation, especially between the

intrinsic and instrumental case study. The case study of the STM/IC programme participants was instrumental in nature as it sought to identify whether and how students experience transformative learning, according to the forms and processes previously identified by Kiely's (2002) case study. But the case study of the STM/IC was also intrinsic to the extent that it could identify particular programmatic elements within the case which lead to differing forms or processes of transformative learning than those identified by Kiely (2002, 2004, 2005).

Merriman (1988) has noted that the place of theory within a case study depends in large measure on what is known in the area of interest. Where there is ample theory and a history of data collection and interpretation, case studies can be employed to clarify, refine or extend theory. Where the phenomenon to be studied has had little sustained attention or theorizing, case studies tend to generate theory more inductively. Although the theory of transformative learning has been studied extensively, the appropriation of this body of knowledge within the field of international CSL has been limited. To my knowledge, the only related empirical work to date has been Kiely's (2002, 2004, 2005) case study. In these circumstances, this case study research for the STM/IC programme examined whether Kiely's previously elaborated categories and processes for transformative learning within an international CSL context also found resonance with the STM/IC students' experiences. This work then, using Merriman's (1988) categories, was focused on theory clarification and refinement. At the same time, new patterns of experience and meaning were interpreted more inductively from the STM/IC participants' experiences.

Finally, Punch (2005) notes that case studies typically involve multiple sources of data and multiple collection methods, usually in a naturalistic setting. In the qualitative realm, case studies employ field methods from Sociology and Anthropology such as observations in natural settings, interviews, and document data.

Case study sample selection. Miles and Huberman (1994) note that sampling within qualitative research is non-random, non-probabilistic and purposeful, and involves intentionally systematic, sequentially conceptual and contextually bound choices as fieldwork evolves. Merriman (1998) notes that there are two sampling levels within case studies: the identification of the case, and then a second sampling within the case. In both instances, there needs to be

criteria for choice of the case and then for subsequent purposive sampling of participants within that case (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The STM/IC programme was identified as the initial, “bound” instrumental case study to examine transformative learning within an international CSL context in light of Kiely’s (2002, 2004, 2005) forms and processes of transformative learning. In all, there were nine participants in the STM/IC programme for 2008. Of these nine, eight agreed to participate in the study, and so these eight then became the case study sample selection. In the sixteen purposive sampling strategies Patton (1990) enumerates, criteria and intensity applied most directly to the present case studied.

The rationale for this choice comes from an assessment of this programme as a “well-integrated” service-learning programme, as defined by criteria elaborated by Eyler and Giles (1999). Eyler and Giles have found that well-integrated service-learning programmes are strong predictors of perspective transformation outcomes for students. A well-integrated service-learning programme is one in which placement quality is high (variety of service-work, challenges and responsibilities for students), where there is a high degree of applicability between the course themes and experiences in the community, where there are multiple and diverse forms of structured reflection, where there is significant community voice in the design and implementation of service, and where there is a high level of diversity among the student community service-learners and the community members. The STM/IC programme met these criteria for an information-rich case study.

STM/IC programme evaluation together with an initial inspection of prior students’ journalling and reflective essays were suggestive of transformative learning. The STM/IC programme therefore also met the intensity case-sampling criteria as an “information-rich case that manifests the phenomenon of interest intensely” (Patton, 1990, p. 171).

The opportunity I had as programme co-coordinator of the STM/IC to travel to Ecuador during the 2008 programme for both quality assurance purposes and also research enabled a profitable further purposive sampling within the case study. A “within-case sampling” (Punch, 2005) of the three Ecuadorian placed students was conducted to highlight the role that “dissonance” plays as the inspiration or catalyst for transformative learning within an international CSL context (Kiely, 2005). Three weeks into the participants experience, my

observations and interviews of the three Ecuadorian participants enabled a close up look at the way participants negotiated the radical differences they experience in a new socio-economic and cultural context. Strategic participant observation and interviewing strategies were employed (see below) for these three student participants (the case-within-the case) placed within Ecuador. Of Patton's (1990) sixteen purposeful sampling strategies, this case-within-the-case selection most closely resembles a "theory-based sampling" (in my case, interpreting the connection between dissonance and perspective transformation), and then an "opportunistic sampling" that takes advantage of an unexpected opportunity (my trip to Ecuador).

Data Gathering

Data collection methods used in this case study of the STM/IC programme included semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Punch, 2005) of participants at three points in time: pre-departure, in field (for the Ecuadorian participants), and final interviews completed two months after the participants return to Canada. Data were also collected through participant observation (Ball, 2007) and document analysis of programme artifacts, course outlines, student academic writings and reflections (Hodder, 2000).

Pre-departure data collection. Semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Punch, 2005) were conducted with all eight of the STM/IC programme participants prior to their May 2008 departures in order to assess basic demographic data to gain insight into the participants' "contextual baggage" they brought to international CSL (Kiely, 2005). The semi-structured interviews also sought basic opinions, feelings, beliefs, motivation, knowledge, and behaviours within the six "transforming forms" Kiely identifies as the political, moral, intellectual, cultural, personal and spiritual (Kiely, 2004). This data collection would assist me in any detecting changes for participants in these same forms after the completion of their programme. A guide for these interviews appears in Appendix A.

The STM/IC programme brochures and course syllabi documents were analyzed (Hodder, 2000) prior to participant departure in May, 2008, as were participant class presentations and essays from the preparatory "Social Change and Global Solidarity" course (McLaughlin, 2007a).

In field data collection. Because the STM/IC programme sees students going to multiple field sites throughout the world, it was not possible to include a formal observation of all

participants' experiences abroad. Nonetheless, a trip was booked to visit three students in Ecuador the first week of June, 2008. I accompanied an Intercordia staff person and used the week to meet with the community partners, host families and service sites for programme quality assurance purposes. The researching role was conducted at this point through the methods of participant observation (Ball, 1997) and semi-structured interview (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Punch, 2005; see Appendix B).

As a participant observer (Ball, 1997), I collected field notes observing the student participants within their service activities, engaging with community partners and members, and communicating (verbally and non-verbally) with host families. I carefully watched for, and documented, participant emotions and strategies used to negotiate the "multiple forms of dissonance" that were likely in their new setting (types and intensities; Kiely, 2005). Particular attention was paid as well to participant behaviours around "processing," such as journaling and reflective discourse, and "connecting" behaviours, such as relating, listening and empathizing with community members (Kiely, 2002).

I also conducted semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Punch, 2005) with the three student participants in their placement in Ecuador. Of particular interest at this point was whether and how students had experienced what Kiely (2005) termed the "dissonance" that arises through encounters with multiple forms of difference within the new environment (i.e. the historical, environmental, physical, economic, political, cultural, spiritual, social, communicative and technological). These interviews (see Appendix B) with the students in Ecuador a month or so into their experience provided for a concentrated analysis of any high intensity dissonance arising from students' personal encounters with marginalized and/or suffering persons (Kiely, 2005).

Post-programme data collection. After the participants had spent May through August abroad, and after their Sociology professor had received all of their journals, academic reflections and meta-reflection essays, I began analysis of these materials for changes in student consciousness and learning (See Appendix C). These meta-reflections in particular revealed shifts in participants' thinking.

Another key participant observation point was the reintegration retreat, upon the participants' return to Canada, in late August 2008. Over the course of two days at a retreat

centre away from home and family, the students were debriefed by the Intercordia staff. As a participant observer (Ball, 1997), I was present at these debriefings, in which participants shared information about their host families and work placements. The Intercordia staff also provided students with assistance in the crafting of their own significant stories from their experiences so as to communicate more easily with their family, relatives, friends and benefactors. Observation of the students' attempts to narrate significant experiences served to identify possible transformative shifts in learning that were taken up again in the final interviews. Field notes at this point were made as I heard the students speak of their experiences abroad, together as a group, and then separately by their country placement. Particular attention was paid to how the participants responded – affectively, cognitively, and socially, as suggested in their descriptions – to beginning their lives back in Canada once more, and to each other as comrade sojourners. My roles at this retreat included both researcher and programme quality evaluator. Because this latter role is shared to a large extent with St. Thomas More College's partner, Intercordia Canada, I was able to focus predominantly upon my role as a researcher participating in the debriefing process. The “ambiguity and anxiety” (Merriman, 1998) for the researcher engaged in both observing and participating is acknowledged. As a faculty member, I had experience with a prior reintegration retreat for students returning to Canada had prepared me to anticipate certain reactions and emotions from students – such as anger, frustration, and exhilaration - arising from my role as a faculty member contributing to programme quality. As any of these reactions, emotions or perspectives arose, I was careful to note my interpretations of them at the time as a participant observer.

Semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Punch, 2005) with each of the STM/IC programme participants were conducted in November, 2008, two months after their return to Canada. A similar interview process was undertaken as the first, pre-departure interviews, with similarly semi-structured questions (Appendix D). In the post-experience interview the interpretive lens was focused upon changes in participants' opinions, feelings, beliefs, motivations, knowledge, and behaviours, and intentions. Prior analysis of the participant's journals and meta-reflection essay (Appendix E) gave clues to any significant self-identified shifts in consciousness, which were explored further in the interviews.

Data Analysis

Ryan and Bernard (2000) argue that in the analysis of texts in qualitative studies there are two fundamental approaches. There is the linguistic tradition, which treats the text as an object of analysis itself, and then the sociological tradition, which treats texts as “a proxy for human experience” (p. 769). And yet Ryan and Bernard (2000) also recognize that interviews (conversations), narratives and performances are interpreted by researchers in both of these traditions, and that their respective procedures of analysis are often fruitfully exchanged. My interpretive-hermeneutical approach could be said to span both traditions of textual interpretation. The practice of hermeneutics seeks contextual understanding, so that the phenomenon under investigation (a text, an event, etc.) can only be understood through a dialectical moving back and forth between the phenomenon and its context. This is the hermeneutical circle – that to understand the whole, one must understand the part, and yet to understand the part, one must understand the whole which contextualizes the part (Ödman, 2007). For instance, the words “I love you” can be understood through researching the definitions of individual words, and the grammatical syntax connecting them (the part), yet the context is crucial to their understanding (the whole). When an adult whispers the words “I love you” in the ears of his or her partner, it most probably means something very different than when the same words are spoken between a mother and daughter after a disagreement. Finally, within hermeneutics, both text and context are interpreted through the lens of the researcher’s pre-understandings, or pre-existing biases (Ödman, 2007). The researcher brings to his or her interpretive task a priori theoretical and affective assumptions and expectations, both explicit and implicit. Understanding, in the hermeneutical tradition, happens when there is an oscillating movement between old experience and meaning, and then new experience and new interpretations. Of course, this is not guaranteed – the hermeneutical process requires openness to the strange, the different, the “other,” and a willingness to adapt and change perspective in the course of this dialogical encounter.

In this case study, the texts under analysis were semi-structured interview transcripts, documents, academic journals, essays and other writings and field notes of participant observation experiences. These texts were read hermeneutically, moving back and forth between their meaning within the world of the text itself and then their meaning informed by an

understanding of their context. Within the world of the texts themselves, “whole-text” analysis was employed through the use of content analysis (Ryan and Bernard, 2000) and thematic coding (Miles and Huberman, 1994). As for context, my proximity in time and space to the students’ experiences preparing for their experience abroad, with the programmatic context of the STM/IC, and with their reintegration to their university life in Saskatoon meant that I had familiarity with the contexts for the written texts for analysis. Aside from my experiences alongside the student participants in Ecuador, I did not have sensitivity to the immediate environmental context of the students’ international experiences, and so was dependent for my interpretations upon student texts. My pre-understandings as a researcher are informed by Kiely’s (2002, 2004, 2005) theory of transformative learning within international CSL, both his extension of Mezirow’s (2000) theory of transformative learning and his attention to the personal, social and programmatic contexts of the phenomenon. My pre-understandings have also been shaped by the philosophy of Intercordia Canada, an organization with whom I have worked closely for the past three years, and also through my experiences of social justice education generally.

Organisation of data occurred through an initial grouping of interview transcripts, journal entries, participant observation, and meta-reflection essays according to the particular participant (the profile). The content analysis (Ryan and Bernard, 2000) method was utilized to code the eight profiles’ texts, both in a deductive fashion, to determine whether they experienced transformative learning in the ways described by Kiely (2002, 2004, 2005), and more inductively, to generate themes particular to their experiences. To assist in my archiving, organizing and retrieval of the data, I used the NVIVO 8 qualitative research software.

Firstly, Kiely’s (2002) six forms of transformative learning acted as deductively determined codes: the political, intellectual, moral, personal, cultural and spiritual. Selections from each profiles’ texts were grouped according to these codes. Secondly, Kiely’s processes of transformative learning within an international CSL context were used as codes to group texts from each profile and included contextual border crossing, dissonance, personalizing, processing and connecting (Kiely, 2005). Thirdly, descriptive inductively developed codes of the particularities of the STM/IC programme experiences were used (e.g., witnessing of suffering/impoverishment; socio-economic status of host family; welcome and acceptance by

host communities; participant experiences of vulnerability and insecurity). Through analysis and coding I sought insight into the question of whether particular STM/IC programmatic contexts had any impact upon students' transformative learning.

Quality and Credibility

Within an interpretivist-hermeneutical research methodology, what are the criteria for interpretation? How is one to adjudicate the quality and credibility of the current case study? For Ödman (2007), within hermeneutical research it is critical to create a system of interpretations that has an acceptable logical coherence, what he calls an "inner control," and an acceptable logical connection to the data, what he calls an "outer control" (p. 126). He adds a final criterion that the tendered interpretations also cohere with what he calls "tested knowledge and known circumstances in nature and human life" (p. 126). Yet these quality criteria cannot, within a hermeneutical understanding, prevent the subjectivity of the judgements of interpreter in the decisions as to what is logical in any given instance. There is no a-historical escape from the hermeneutical circle of interpretation. Within the present case study, one should expect therefore a transparency of my own pre-understandings framing the interpretations, a rational justification of methodological options and consistency of their application (inner control), as well as ample reference to the source texts (e.g., transcripts, documents, notes) with rational justification for their selections (outer control). Finally, the findings must have some resonance, or relationship with, communally accepted interpretations of the literature on transformative learning, international community service-learning, and the experiences of both.

Trustworthiness. Guba and Lincoln (1989) helpfully developed the concepts of "trustworthiness," and "authenticity" to address the question of quality within qualitative research. Trustworthiness, for Guba and Lincoln (1989), is an epistemic criterion designed to determine the quality of the qualitative research, and encompasses (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability.

To ensure *credibility*, or the "fit" between the researcher's interpretations and the subject or respondents' multiple interpretations in the data, strategies such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis and member checks are suggested (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). My prolonged engagement with the STM/IC participants throughout their programme qualifies as persistent observation. This observation includes interaction

throughout their time of preparation (seven months) via seminars, email, interviews, and informal conversations; my time in Ecuador and participant observation at the reintegration retreat; interviews in November 2008, and informal contact with participants right up unto the present. This persistent observation also include memberchecks, or a clarification of interview data and informal sharing of my emerging ideas with the student participants, particularly between September and November, 2008, and then after their final interview. The openness to alternative theories and interpretations from the data, or negative case analysis, in addition to peer debriefing, happened primarily through my thesis supervisor and a colleague from Sociology.

For Guba and Lincoln (1989), *transferability* is a term appropriating the positivistic criterion of external validity or generalisability. The strategy would apply to my own case study to the extent that I was able to provide a “rich and thick” description (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p. 241) of the STM/IC programme and transformative learning for its participants so as to enable other researchers make their own judgements as to what was useful or applicable to their contexts.

Dependability refers to the “stability of the research results over time,” and reframes the positivistic “reliability” criterion (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p. 241) or the ability of another researcher to achieve the same results. Kiely (2002) in his case study interprets this criterion more in terms of the transparency of qualitative methodological procedures, including an auditing trail comprised of inspectable notes and reflections. For Kiely (2002), following Merriam (1998), this dependability criterion is more like an internal coherence criterion, so that the results are consistent with the data collected. In this present study, internal coherence is attested to by the transparency of my own pre-understandings framing the interpretations, a rational justification of methodological options and consistency of their application (see Ödman, 2007 above).

Guba and Lincoln’s (1989) final criterion for satisfying the trustworthiness of the results of qualitative research is the concept of *confirmability*, a reframing of “objectivity” (p. 243). In other words, is there a logical coherence (Ödman, 2007) between the interpretations of the researcher and their empirical grounding? The strategy suggested by Guba and Lincoln’s (1989) is for generous portions of the phenomenon’s texts to be included in the report. In this case

study, confirmability required ample use of interview transcriptions and other documents of the STM/IC programme.

Authenticity. Finally, Guba and Lincoln (1989) add a non-epistemic criterion to assure quality: authenticity. Authenticity here has a moral or ethical orientation, and indicates the extent to which the researcher has embraced reciprocity, surfaced otherwise diminished voices, and raised awareness for positive social action. The STM/IC programme has been designed by the author, Intercordia Canada, and the Sociology professor who teaches the associated St. Thomas More College-University of Saskatchewan courses as an explicitly humanistic enterprise designed to enlarge the students' capacity for understanding and compassion across difference. The students are intentionally placed with marginalized populations, via international community partnerships, to provoke this learning, and to inspire (though not guarantee) their informed social action both locally and internationally. Thus my own bias to the research here is that international CSL can be a catalyst for transformational learning inspiring renewed social commitments, however these may be played out differently within the particularities of the participant's lives.

Ethics

Ethics approval for this thesis was obtained from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board at the University of Saskatchewan, and followed Tri-Council policy standards. Participants were reminded at each data collection stage that they did not have to participate, that they had the right to skip questions or withdraw at any time without penalty of any kind, and that their non-participation would in no way effect their successful completion of the STM/IC programme. All participants are only identified by a pseudonym in the transcripts and thesis, as are other persons and other non-programme related organisations.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS/INTERPRETATIONS

STM/IC Programme and Study Participants

This study addressed two main research questions: a) Do the STM/IC students experience transformative learning in an international CSL context across any of these domains proposed by Richard Kiely (2002, 2004, 2005), and through his specified processes? b) Do particular programmatic conditions within the STM/IC influence the experience of transformative learning for the participants? The following section presents the findings from the case study that address the ways participants interpreted their experiences of transformative learning both in their host countries and following their return.

Before the findings are reported here for each of the eight individual participants, it is necessary to further delineate the specific programmatic differences between the STM/IC programme and Kiely's TC3-NICA case study conditions, and then the country specific conditions structuring each STM/IC participant's experience. These specific conditions, according to Kiely's model (2005), are part of the "contextual baggage" students bring with them to the international CSL enterprise and so can be expected to affect their transformative learning.

There is a similar social justice focus to the courses which academically undergird both Kiely's TC3-NICA programme and the STM/IC programme under study. Although differing in focus – the history of Nicaragua and community health for TC3-NICA (Kiely 2002), and two Sociology classes entitled "Social Change and Global Solidarity" for the STM/IC participants (McLaughlin, 2007a; 2007b) – they are similarly informed by a desire for participants to learn the wider socio-economic conditions that structure their encounter with marginalized peoples through a CSL pedagogy. For the TC3-NICA programme, there is the goal of "raising consciousness of unequal power relations" between North and South (Kiely, 2002, p. 2), while for the STM/IC programme courses there is the goal for participants to discover "the impact of globalization on human development (education, health, income), human rights and democracy, and issues of social equity (inequality and poverty)" (McLaughlin, 2007a, p. 2).

There are also many differences at the programmatic level. While TC3-NICA participants all travel together to Nicaragua to study and live together, STM/IC participants

travelled to differing places across the globe (for the 2008 programme participants lived, worked and learned in Ghana Ukraine, Ecuador and Nicaragua). The TC3-NICA programme lasts for 3 weeks in January, while the STM/IC programme takes place over three months (90 days), during which time participants live with a host family and work in a diverse range of community based, non-governmental organisations. While Kiely coordinated the TC3-NICA programme on-site in Nicaragua, and supervised the logistical, academic, and reflective components, St. Thomas More College partners with Intercordia Canada for it to manage the international community partnerships, logistical concerns, host family placements, work placements, supervisors, and community relations. There is no Intercordia Canada staff person present during the participants' experiences abroad. In the STM/IC programme, participants do not study written texts while abroad. "Social Change and Global Solidarity B" (McLaughlin, 2007b) - the second, three credit Sociology class for STM/IC participants - is completed via a CSL pedagogy which recognizes the learning that the students do abroad independently. Participants complete field notes, academic journaling questions, and then write a meta-reflection final paper upon their return to Canada to gain credit for the class. Although STM/IC participants live, work and learn more independently than those in the TC3-NICA, they are still often in contact with other Intercordia participants from other Canadian University and Colleges who work in the same communities or those close by.

Because of these programmatic differences, there appears to be more group reflection for the TC3-NICA participants while abroad, whereas the STM/IC participants appear to have more extensive pre-departure preparation and group bonding opportunities. STM/IC participants complete four, full day Intercordia-led seminars focusing upon personal discernment of strengths and weaknesses, personal identity relative to the international "other," intercultural dynamics, team building activities and bonding exercises, fundraising, and general logistical preparations. Many Intercordian participants have suggested this interpersonal preparation itself is a profound educational experience, and many draw strength from it and other participants as they process their experiences upon their return from abroad. As coordinator of the STM/IC programme, I intentionally introduce participants to STM/IC "graduates," who function to provide what Parks Daloz (2000) identifies as a mentoring community to support the learner's new perspectives, as an additional condition for transformative learning.

Another potentially significant programmatic difference in the two international CSL programmes arises from the sponsoring higher education institutions. St. Thomas More College is a Catholic Liberal Arts College at the University of Saskatchewan. Although there are no faith/religious requirements for entry into the STM/IC programme, nor for the Sociology classes academically undergirding the experience, it would be accurate to describe the STM/IC programme as inspired by Catholic social theory, particularly the “preferential option for the poor” (e.g., Sobrino, 1998). There is a section of the “Social Change and Global Solidarity A” class specifically on some foundational principles of Catholic social thought. The Jesuit Liberation Theologian from El Salvador, Jon Sobrino, when discussing the meaning of the “preferential option for the poor,” speaks of the profound and epistemologically significant experience of encountering the excluded. He suggests that the marginalized other can reveal to us, in a unique way, important truths about society and the dignity of the human person (Sobrino, 1988).

Although Intercordia Canada does not bring the same liberation theology perspective to their programming, as an organisation stemming from the L’Arche, Intercordia does value the transformative learning that might occur within the spiritual realm. Intercordia Canada might best be described as rooted in a type of Catholic inspired humanism, open to people of all faiths and none, which encourages participants to discover human dignity through an encounter with the marginalized “other.” The partnership between STM and Intercordia Canada, therefore, presents a real contextual difference at the programmatic level between it and the TC3-NICA, which is not connected institutionally with any faith tradition.

Table (4.1) describes the STM/IC participants’ names (pseudonyms), host country and type of work placement. Participants Lisa, Emma and Sarah travelled to the Ecuadorian highlands to and were placed in the town Cayambe. Home to approximately 55,000 people, the town is located around two hours from the Ecuador’s capital city, Quito.

Table 4.1

STM/IC participant placements

Participant	Country (town)	CSL Placement
Emma	Ecuador (Cayambe)	Teacher in a primary school; summer camp and English instruction
Fiona	Ukraine (Ternopil)	Assistant at orphanage
Hayley	Ukraine (Lviv)	Assistant with persons with intellectual disabilities
Jeff	Ghana (Kasseh-Ada)	Teacher in high school
Laura	Ghana (Addokpe)	Teacher in primary school
Lisa	Ecuador (Cayambe)	Assistant at Medical Clinic
Sarah	Ecuador (Cayambe)	Assistant at Medical Clinic
Steve	Nicaragua (Estelí)	Agricultural Cooperative

Intercordia Canada partners in Ecuador with the FRI (Fundacion Reto Internacional), which works with local communities to “facilitate sociocultural processes in which the participants learn (a) to develop a critical conscience, as well as an understanding and respect for other cultures, and (b) that respect unites us all and makes us responsible for the realities of and solutions to the currently existing problems in the world” (FRI, 2009). The FRI, in concert with Intercordia Canada and the participants, placed Lisa and Sarah in a medical clinic serving the town of Cayambe and surrounding areas. Emma was placed at a local primary school as a teacher-assistant responsible for English instruction, and then at a summer day camp.

I was fortunate to be able to personally visit our three participants in Ecuador, and so have a keener sense of their context than is the case for the other participants. Cayambe’s main economic industry is the commercial growing of flowers for a mostly North American market. The hills surrounding Cayambe are full of long, tent-canopies covering the flowers and their cultivators. The population is mainly *Meztizo* (mixed origin of Indigenous and Spanish descent),

although the surrounding communities of Juan Montavlo and Santa Isabelle are more rural and Indigenous. Emma stayed with a family in the town of Cayambe, Sarah was housed with a family in Juan Montavlo and Lisa's family was located further into the Santa Isabelle hills. The further the people lived from the town of Cayambe, the more rural, agricultural and poorer their circumstances were.

Other participants Fiona and Hayley travelled to Ukraine, firstly in Ternopil, where they spent three weeks of intensive language training at the Ternopil National Pedagogical University in Western Ukraine. This language training was unique among the eight participants, and stemmed from an agreement Intercordia Canada had with St. Thomas More College, the University of Saskatchewan and the Ternopil National Pedagogical University. Fiona lived with a host family (a University professor and her son) and worked at the *Internat*, a state-run orphanage for girls and young women.

While in Ternopil, Hayley lived with a young (25 year old couple) host family, but then travelled to Lviv for her work with the "Faith and Light" community. Faith and Light was founded in 1992 by a Canadian, Zenia Kushpeta, a former concert pianist and instructor with Queens University (Intercordia, 2008). Faith and Light is an "international Christian movement that unites people with intellectual disabilities, their parents and young people," (Intercordia, 2008) and is connected both to L'Arche and to Jean Vanier, the founder of Intercordia Canada. Hayley worked at one of Faith and Light's five workshops (*maysterni*) in Lviv for persons with intellectual disabilities. Intercordia Canada's (2008) website notes that the "*maysterni* are organized around producing jewelry, candles, textiles and pottery which also offer opportunities for creating meaningful work as well as an expression of the often unrecognized gifts of people with intellectual disabilities." While in Lviv, Hayley lived with a host family she described as "upper-middle class," owning an apartment with the extra bedroom for her, and English speaking.

Other participants Laura and Jeff travelled to rural villages in Ghana, approximately 60-80 km east of the capital, Accra. Intercordia Canada's partner here is Godwin Augdey and the Anmchara International School he founded in the agricultural and fishing town of Segra. Godwin's school has "grown to include a nursery, primary and junior secondary schools, as well as a kitchen and dining hall where over 300 participants are taught and fed every day"

(Intercordia Canada, 2008). The Anmcharra school and facilities serve as home base for the Intercordia participants who are placed in schools here and within 20 kms from Sega.

Jeff lived and worked in the village of Kasseh-Ada. He lived in a what he called a “compound looking structure” with another female Intercordia participant, with his host father “Joe,” a Human Resource official with the Ghanaian Education Ministry charged with the placement of teachers, and a few of Joe’s relatives. Joe was married to a teacher who lives with her daughter in Accra. Jeff noted that his host father Joe was not originally from the area, that his house was “modern” with a couch and television, that he preferred “western food,” rented out other accommodation in the area for extra income, drove a car and appeared a more “privileged” member of the community. Throughout the course of the three months, Joe would spend increasing amounts of time in Accra, and Jeff and his Intercordia room-mate would spend an increasing amount of time alone in the house. Jeff taught Math in English to Form One and Two students (grade eight and nine).

Laura lived with what she described as a “traditional Ghanaian family” on the outskirts of the village of Addekope. It was a large family made up of the parents, 60 year olds, their biological children, children they had “taken in,” and their grandchildren. At times there were close to 20 people living in the concrete houses in the compound. They ate “traditional Ghanaian food,” and blended their Christian beliefs with earlier Indigenous traditions. Laura noted that the father was a “Presbyterian catechist,” village elder and farmer. The family was respected in the community. Laura taught English at a primary school. Along with another Intercordia participant, Laura was the first “white volunteer” who had lived in the village.

The final participant, Steve, travelled to Estelí in Nicaragua, a city of around 120,000 people in the northern highlands, surrounded by forested mountains. Estelí was the site of the famous Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) resistance against the American backed Contras. One of Intercordia’s partners here is the Union de Cooperativas Agropecuarias Mirafior, a union of small agricultural co-operatives whose members farm on the Mirafior Nature Reserve (Intercordia, 2008). Those in the Mirafior Union aim to farm sustainably and environmentally and also run an eco-tourism programme. Steve had two host families, one in Estelí where he stayed on weekends (the mother ran the Mirafior office), connected with other participants and wrote his reflections, and the other one in the Mirafior reserve where he lived

during the week on a farm without electricity or vehicles. There Steve planted cabbages and tomatoes, helped in the building of three houses, milked the cows and cared for the cattle which tilled the land. Steve's host family on the farm consisted of a mother and father, five children including Arlen, the oldest, who was Steve's mentor, and their numerous grandchildren.

Participant Transformations

This section of the findings seeks to provide an empirical description and interpretation of the data collected that suggest signs of transformative learning across the intellectual, moral, political, cultural, personal and spiritual domains identified by Kiely (2000, 2004).

Transformative learning did appear to occur or begin to occur for the majority of the STM/IC participants, although its precise form was sometimes difficult to distinguish, particularly across the cultural, personal and spiritual domains.

Sarah

Sarah is a 19 year old student who is in the process of completing a three year Biochemistry degree with hopes to enter a professional health college such as Medicine. Sarah comes from a self described "upper-middle class," Catholic and professional family, and has travelled in the past to Mexico, Japan, and in the U.S. She described her political beliefs before her experience in Ecuador as "to the left" of her family. Sarah had been a participant in the STM Service & Justice Project prior to her trip, doing CSL in the Royal University Hospital's Paediatrics wing. She saw the STM/Intercordia programme as a way to experience something "a little less sheltered" than her day-to-day life.

Intellectual transformation. Transformative learning in the intellectual domain for Sarah can be seen to begin even before she leaves Canada. The Intercordia preparation seminars she participated in stressed the personal and inter-personal qualities necessary for cross-cultural encounters with marginalized persons, such as humility, attentive listening and patience. The Sociology class she completed before departure emphasized the structural determinants of global poverty and the participants' own privileged "social location" prior to interpersonal encounter. Together these preparations inaugurated for Sarah a critical awareness of how her own privilege in some way contributed to the marginalization of the poor of the global south. Sarah describes this intellectual transformation as a "revelation" in this exchange with me in her pre-departure interview:

David: You've just taken a class called Social Change and Global Solidarity, and looked at some of the contributing factors to inequality and injustice globally. What particularly struck you there?

Sarah: Umm... a few things. One of the things I've learned that really hit home quite strongly was the lack of women's rights, with different roles for women in the two-thirds world.⁵ And when I was doing my papers on Ecuador specifically, I read a lot of...56% of women report being domestically abused in Ecuador. I mean who knows if that's accurate, and that's the study I read. Even if that's off the mark a bit, that still was really alarming to me. And that's something I just take for granted. And I can be a strong young woman in Canada, not at risk, and there's women that don't have that right and I think that's a type of poverty for sure. Injustice. So women's rights is one thing. Umm... just the general effect of globalisation and how it's caused such a polarisation between my life and the people down in Ecuador growing the coffee beans for nothing, I don't know.

David: What do you mean by polarisation?

Sarah: Like the people who have more, have way more, and the people who have less. That's not the only case - there's some signs of improvement in the global south. Even with agricultural cooperatives and stuff like that for sure there's promise. It's not all awful, but yeah I just felt like, wow, and how much my decisions affect those people, was quite...I said the roses thing, and how roses and chocolate and coffee and everything, diamonds, everything that's like romantic and luxurious for us is at the expense sometimes of the life of people down there. People in the global south.

David: How does that make you feel?

Sarah: Aw, like sick! Really, like it hits you for sure. Like sometimes in Sociology I would literally have a pit in my stomach, because sometimes it's just like, wow, yeah. And then it's sometimes hard to take those things you learn and try to... sort of confusing how you try to incorporate those things. Like ok I know that women aren't really respected in the South and that like of the... I dunno... commerce practices that I benefit from.

David: So you can see that connection? That your life...

Sarah: Yeah (nodding).

David: ...is benefiting at the expense of others? Is that the way you would say it?

⁵ The term "two-thirds world," and related terms such as "global south," or "Third World," are all attempts to distinguish the socio-economic and political division that exists between wealthy developed countries and peoples, and the poorer or least developed countries and peoples. The term "global south" locates the disparity (inexactly) along geographic lines; the term "Third World" arose during the Cold War to divide the world into three categories of nation states, with the First World being the most wealthy; and finally the term "Two-thirds world" originally referred to statistics pointing to the proportion of the world's population that lived on one dollar U.S. a day or less (Escobar, 1995; Thrien, 1999; Thrudell, 2009).

Sarah: Exactly. That's like a major revelation in the class, from this. And then you still, I go out and... I dunno it sort of puts things in perspective. You worry about these final exams, stress about a few percent, and this sort of thing and then I sit back and think you know, why? Why is this such a concern, and yet, then you're in a society and if you're trying to get into professional colleges maybe that few percent does matter. You sort of grapple with putting that in context... I dunno.

Kiely (2002) notes that the intellectual form of transformation is epistemological, causing participants in international CSL contexts to reevaluate the origin and construction of knowledge, the value of service as charity and the cause and solution to social problems. Before Sarah departs Canada, she recognizes her own participation in global economic relationships that “polarise” her from the people of Ecuador, and privilege her over those people she is to encounter.

Once in Ecuador, Sarah’s intimacy with her host mother, Esmeralda, forms another context for a critique of her own assumptions around who it is that exercises public leadership in the global south. In an academic reflection completed while abroad, Sarah writes:

The one aspect of the social situation of host family that surprised me the most is how much of a leader my host mother is within the community. She spends her days working incredibly hard on agriculture and raising animals. She has a well-organized farm with large gardens, a greenhouse, and many various animals, including cows, pigs, goats, guinea pigs, and chickens. People from the community constantly stop and chat with Esmeralda, and ask for agricultural advice, ask her to come look at their crops and give her opinion. With the crops and animals she raises, Esmeralda is impressively self-sufficient. She grows many things herself or trades with neighbours for different crops.

Esmeralda holds weekly community meetings, where about 30 people gather and discuss community agricultural issues and initiatives, and arrange trading. She sets up numerous plastic chairs all around the main room of the house and holds these meetings which she said are “about half business and half fun” conversation.

Esmeralda can barely read or write. Anytime she needs to write something, she dictates to the daughter, who writes the letter for her. When she receives a letter or something written she also asks the daughter to read it to her.

The leadership role of Esmeralda surprised and impressed me. It shook my naïve impression of leaders as typically well-dressed, well-educated, often financially well-off, and often male. Esmeralda has none of the above traits and yet provides a tremendous leadership role within the agricultural community in Juan Montalvo. I am pleasantly surprised by the independence, work ethic, and leadership role of my host mother, and I feel very encouraged by her progress in the community.

Although Sarah had studied women’s movements among the Indigenous peoples of Ecuador before she arrived in her Sociology class, it was a personal relationship with her host mother,

Esmeralda that really enabled Sarah to understand that Indigenous peoples can be authors and leaders of their own development.

The depth of this intellectual transformation increases with Sarah's personal and painful encounter with marginalized persons at the medical clinic in Cayambe, her placement site.

Reflecting back on her experience once back in Canada, Sarah writes the following in her meta-reflection essay:

I really learned that many of the ethical and social issues which our society and the Church view as "black and white" issues are very complex and not as simple as we might like to think. One example of such an issue is unwanted pregnancies. First, I want to explain that before going to Ecuador I was Pro-life through and through; I was raised in an upper-middle class Catholic family and educated in Catholic schools, and abortion was one thing that I was quite strongly opposed to.

In Ecuador, abortion is illegal, although it still occurs for a large fee, in dangerous back house procedures. Since Ecuador's population is 96% Roman Catholic, contraceptives are viewed as socially unacceptable, despite being entirely subsidized by the current government. Additionally, the adoption programme in Ecuador is virtually non-existent; almost all children given up by their parents live in orphanages, which apparently offer very sub-standard care for the children (according to the obstetrician, Alicia). So with abortion illegal, birth control shunned, and no adoption programme, what is a young woman who finds herself with an unwanted pregnancy to do? Additionally, the people are very poor and literally struggling to provide for themselves, let alone a child.

The majority of the poor population in Cayambe work in large greenhouses where the employers make the women take routine pregnancy tests and often fire women from work if they are pregnant, cutting the women off from the minimal financial income they rely on. In one instance, a fifteen year old girl was brought into the ER by paramedics, unconscious and unresponsive to any stimuli due to extreme intoxication. She was three months pregnant with a baby who she felt she could not care for, and consequently drank over 50 ounces of hard alcohol in an attempt to abort the pregnancy. I stood there waiting as Alicia, the obstetrician, performed an ultrasound to determine if the baby had survived this terrible binge. After a few minutes the heart beat of the baby was found; it had survived. Unfortunately Alicia said that the damage to the baby would likely be quite substantial due to the severity of the mother's intoxication.

The saddest part for me was realizing that this girl is only a child herself, her tiny pregnant belly peeking out of her "Blue's Clues" children's flannel pajamas. I just thought to myself, "who am I to judge?!!" These were the situations that really made me open my eyes to see "black and white" issues as so much more complex than they are made to be. It was easy for me to judge abortion as morally wrong when I assumed that every girl has the same opportunities and support that are offered to me, but wow, are those women walking a very different mile than I ever have or ever will (or any priest ever will for that matter). Now I would not say that I disagree with my previous Pro-life stance as I believe that children and life are a blessing, but I believe that in issues such as

this, tolerance and empathy are needed where too often we place blame and judgment.

Sarah's encounters at the medical clinic trigger a questioning of the structural determinants of health, especially for women, and also challenge her prior understandings of Catholic teaching. Sarah is now seeing complicated social problems with new eyes, and refuses simplistic solutions.

Moral transformation. For Kiely, transformation in the moral realm involves a realigning of one's moral allegiance in the form of a greater sense of care and solidarity with the poor (2004, 2005). Sarah constructs the "unwanted pregnancy" narrative (above) in such a way that she aligns herself with the most powerless and marginalized person in the story - the young woman - and attempts to view reality from her socially disadvantaged position. Instead of presuming to adjudicate and assign moral blame in an abstract calculus from pre-established criteria, Sarah empathizes with the terrible predicament of the young woman. Therefore, not only does this experience contribute to her intellectual transformation around the vexing question of abortion/termination of pregnancy, it also evokes a moral transformation through her realignment with the struggles of the poor.

Political transformation. Transformative learning within the political domain, for Kiely (2004), involves a heightened sense of social responsibility and citizenship both locally and globally. It results in increased advocacy for the poor of the world, and an attempt to work at the structural levels to mitigate that poverty and oppression (2004). I see signs of a political transformation for Sarah in her concerns around impacts of industrial floriculture upon the workers in Cayambe, Ecuador. Once back in Canada, some of Sarah's first actions were to educate others in the exploitation of Ecuadorian floriculture workers and the alternative fair-trade flower movement. In my final interview with Sarah, she describes her first steps:

Sarah: I saw the greenhouses such a non-option. I was like, oh I know it gives these workers jobs but I can't support this because Ecuador exports these flowers to North America. Anyways it was my cousin's bridal shower and we were hosting it two weekends after I got back and part of my delegation of jobs was to get the corsage. This was right when I was writing my journal reflection on the flowers and so I was like, ok, I will kill two birds with one stone and call around and see if I can find a fair trade flower store in Saskatoon, and to no avail.

David: You couldn't?

Sarah: No, and everywhere, like every place in Saskatoon gets their flowers from Ecuador, so...

David: Do they know of the fair trade movement you're speaking of?

Sarah: No, I got into an argument with a lady from Sheena's Flowers (pseudonym) because she's like... ah! (exasperated) I just called and asked "do you sell fair trade flowers?" and all the time it was "no," and I said "well can I ask where your roses are from because that for me was what I was most familiar with, and every time, "well I think it's Ecuador." They either didn't know or they checked the website of their distributor. And then I went and they said "Ecuador," and the one lady was like "there's no such thing as fair trade flowers" and I was like "well there is actually" (laughs). And she's like "I've heard of coffee before but never flowers" (Sarah laughs) and she said "well why do you care?" and I said I was down in Ecuador and I just didn't like what I saw with the work conditions and there is an alternative so I would like to support it because it is there. Like these awful conditions are not nothing, there is this fair trade flower movement come one let's try and support it and she was like "well why don't you just support the families you met down there?" and I was like "oh gosh!" So anyways... it was a frustrating afternoon of phone calling but Bloomings (pseudonym) was really good like she [manager] said, umm, "oh I have been reading about it and inquiring about it and my distributor doesn't do fair trade flowers so I am looking to go." And in the UK she said it was pretty common so she was really interested in it... and she's actually be down to, I think she saw an orchid greenhouse in Thailand with a distributor there to make sure they were ok conditions. So now I support her because she is the best I saw there.

Sarah's awareness of the fair-trade movement in flowers provides her with a vehicle to begin to make political change at the local level. The success of these changes will depend upon more collective consciousness raising, but Sarah's experience in Ecuador has resulted in an expanded, global political consciousness, or what Kiely (2004) names as a political transformation.

Cultural, personal and spiritual transformations. In addition to the intellectual, moral and political forms of transformation, Kiely (2004) distinguishes another three transforming forms: the cultural, personal and spiritual. He defines cultural transformation as recognition of one's privileged lifestyle, calling into question "American cultural hegemony" that promotes materialism, consumerism and individualism" and actively resisting these values (p. 13). His definition of personal transformation involves the development of more "socially conscious lifestyles," reevaluating one's identity, relationships, career or educational trajectories, as well as increased self-confidence and efficacy. Finally, Kiely defines spiritual transformations existentially as a deepening movement towards a better understanding of the self, society and a commonly shared good.

Despite the porous boundaries between the cultural, personal and spiritual transformations in Kiely's (2004) model, as was noted earlier, it is still possible to trace Sarah's transforming perspectives across these same forms. Her spiritual reflective practices exercised throughout her experience abroad provide me with the hermeneutical key. Sarah reveals in her meta-reflection essay she wrote after returning to Canada that she would read a book of spiritual reflections by Mother Theresa of Calcutta each night before she slept. One of these reflections was upon the notion of living simply, or in voluntary poverty. From Sarah's meta-reflection:

I took with me a book of reflections written by Mother Teresa. A quote I found particularly relevant to this whole experience is: "we must pray, understand, love, and live the freedom of true poverty." I read this quote on one of the first nights in Ecuador and found it very interesting, I thought to myself, "How can poverty possibly be freeing?" My view was that poverty is an awful condition for people to have to live in.

Over the next three months I continually returned to this statement to reflect on its relevance to my experiences. I made a chart in my journal with the page split in half and kept a record of how I experienced poverty as both freeing and oppressing. As I lived in poverty, I was surprised to discover how poverty does bring a certain freedom with it.

On one hand, many of my experiences of life in poverty were very oppressing. I found myself often uncomfortable from situations such as taking cold showers to sleeping with not enough blankets. I found it difficult to watch the teenagers of families I grew close to as they sought low-paying jobs, with little opportunity for education past primary. Depression is rampant; I got a lump in my throat hearing about another participant's eight year old host brother's struggle with the mental illness. Poverty requires people to work hard; my host mom tended two grown cows and milked them twice a day, to sell to neighbours for a seemingly ridiculous 15 cents a day. At the hospital I saw many people who could not afford proper medication or treatments and would try to wait, and become far more ill than they might have if they had sought treatment earlier. I helped treat a little girl with a severe abscess on her foot; the infection was very aggressive and spreading up her leg and the mother waited ten days before bringing the girl into the hospital because she didn't have money to pay the fees or medication. Experiences such as these allowed me to feel empathy for this reality.

However, I also discovered some freedoms of living in poverty. At the end of my experience my tally chart for "poverty as freeing" included such things as: community and family more important, appreciation for what people have, little waste or excessiveness, more self-sufficient, less concerned with money (ironic!). I found that there was a true feeling of freedom in living more simply; my family and I had no evening commitments except to help out around the house, leading to hours of bonding and chatting a day. Originally I thought that living without many of the luxuries that I am used to living with at home would be a difficult adjustment; in some ways it was difficult,

but in many ways I found a certain sense of simplicity and contentment from living without all these extras. One example is that I took very few clothes, so consequently I washed all my clothes once a week and everything was clean for the next week. I will scarcely admit that I got in the habit of showering twice a week, since that was twice more than anyone else in my family. At first it was very difficult and I felt dirty all the time, but by the end of my time in Ecuador I hardly even noticed it anymore. In this way, I was able to truly separate myself and my life and my identity from all of the material things that are constantly surrounding me at home. I found myself reflecting numerous times on why I need a certain thing that I might have once considered necessary.

As a Catholic, Sarah turns to the writings of Mother Theresa to ponder the freedom of living simply and to synthesize her emerging shifts in consciousness across the cultural, personal and spiritual forms. Firstly, *within the cultural form*, she discovers a freedom in living simply in Ecuador that she had not experienced before as a young privileged woman, though is careful not to glamourize the crushing poverty she witnesses firsthand in her community. By recognizing the value of living more simply, and with more emphasis upon family and community, Sarah questions the materialistic, consumerist and individualistic influences within her culture.

Secondly, *within the personal form* of transformation, Sarah reexamines her personal identity, “separated,” as she says, from the “material” comforts and privileges of home. She finds “simplicity and contentment” without these things. Elsewhere in her final interview, Sarah describes a shift in the way she thinks about her future career. Sarah comes back from Ecuador and the medical clinic with a “renewed passion” and “resolve” for her chosen career in the health sciences, perhaps Medicine. Yet she says she has found a new “patience” so that if this ambition “takes a few years then that’s ok.”

Thirdly, *within the spiritual form*, Sarah describes in her final interview not only a personal transformation but a “spiritual peace” that comes through living more simply. She notes her expanded sense of the Divine, which now appears to be a more inclusive one encompassing people’s of all faiths and cultures:

I had this sort of question that I came up with in my head and I was thinking, “what is it that like am I doing this for God or what am I doing this for?” And I can’t explain it but I came to this, like do you do good for God or do you do good for you or whom, you know? And I sort of tried to think about it and I came to this... though that I don't know if I can say it well but I came to this idea that umm basically who is God? God is literally love and literally good and literally umm trust and acceptance and all those things and so I don't know I sort of came to that realization myself. Like I think I understand other people's faith better. So I think I kind of came to a truly like ecumenical realization or

something like that. Cause like those people, like everyone that is striving for good and love and positive change is striving for God and what I believe God is.

Within her spiritual transformation, Sarah experiences a renewed peace, contentment with less material luxuries, and a more inclusive perspective of the Divine's presence in the world.

In summary, Sarah experiences transformative learning in all forms identified by Kiely (2004). That is, Sarah experiences perspective transformation within the intellectual, moral, political, cultural, personal and spiritual forms. Sarah summarises in her meta-reflection essay her transformations as thus:

I believe that this learning experience taught me a tremendous amount about cross cultural solidarity and tolerance; my eyes were truly opened to see many social and global issues from a very different perspective... The many experiences I witnessed while living in Ecuador all helped me develop a greater appreciation of poverty, social issues, and global connectedness. After seeing and living many of the experiences in Ecuador, I feel I have developed a greater empathy for people from social situations different than mine. I really feel that by seeing these intercultural social issues on an interpersonal level I was blessed to have my perception of others' situations, as well as my own, challenged. I feel I learned an incredible amount in my three months in Ecuador; I look forward to further developing connectedness with people from different realities than myself, as I have seen how beautiful the results are for everyone involved

Emma

Emma is a 21 year old International Studies student. She is the second oldest child from a Catholic family with five other children, which Emma described as "one of the largest families in Estevan," a small town near the Saskatchewan-U.S. border. Emma had volunteered with the Saskatoon Open Door Society with a family from Burma, and had always wanted to travel internationally and volunteer. Emma writes:

Until I went to University I never really learned about any other religions, other cultures; you were kind of stuck in this nothingness, I guess (laughs). That sounds really bad, but. So yeah, my sister's friend, she went to Africa, and she volunteered and that really interested me. To do something with my life, something meaningful...I'm hoping to learn about their culture and just their way of life; to learn about their language; to fully embrace the culture. I think it's so interesting the way people approach problems in different ways, the people are treated in different ways in different societies. So that's what I'm hoping and expecting as well.

In her meta-reflection essay synthesizing her learning, Emma writes that at the end of her experiences abroad she comes home changed, although she is not entirely sure *how*. She writes, "I'm still the same old Emma... [but] home does not feel like home anymore. Something has

changed. I have changed. I have come home from my three month experience different.”

Indeed, it is difficult to discern through Emma’s narratives just where these transformative shifts have been in her learning.

Emma expresses disappointment, at least initially, that she did not get to stay with an Indigenous family in Ecuador. Like many of the families from the township of Cayambe, Emma’s host family was *Meztizo*. They were also middle class small business owners. In the following excerpt from Emma’s meta-reflection essay written on her return to Canada, Emma is explicit how she has *not* been changed through her experience, and connects this with her being sheltered from poverty within the community.

The one change that many people expect, when someone returns from an impoverished nation, is that that person has a new appreciation for life and the things they have. It is also expected that the person becomes more compassionate. I do not believe that I have changed in this way. This is not to say that I am not compassionate or appreciative, by any means. Rather, I did not gain these qualities from my experience in Ecuador. My experience in Ecuador was very different from what others may expect. My host family was middle class. From pictures, their house looks like it could be a house in Canada. They had hot water, wood floors, several TVs, a computer and even a washing machine. Thus, I was never without the material possessions that surround me in Canada. I had no direct contact with poverty. I never saw or experienced the struggles that many families go through just to survive.

In fact, my host family made a point to shelter me from poverty. They were always reminding me that I should not wander far from the house. In particular, I was not allowed to wander up the road, which is a poorer area. I was also not allowed to go to Juan Montavlo, the neighbouring community, by myself. Juan Montavlo is a poorer community and it is where a couple of the other Intercordians stayed. My family did not appear to feel comfortable going there. Besides the one fiesta that they danced in each year in Juan Montalvo, they never went there. My little sisters were rarely allowed to go to their cousins’ house, which was in Juan Montavlo. My host mother Theresa said that the kids over there were allowed to run wild and were always dirty. She spoke with disdain whenever I asked her something about Juan Montalvo, especially when my questions had to do with the fiestas. She was utterly disgusted at all the drinking that occurs every weekend in that community during the month of fiestas.

My isolation from poverty was also a result of living in downtown Cayambe. I rarely saw the characteristically poor people that you would see on a World Vision commercial. The only real sign of poverty that I saw was this one crippled old lady who sat outside of the Red Cross building every day and begged for money. Poverty in that region is mostly concentrated in the rural areas and thus, far from where I was. Accordingly, I could not experience the same dramatic change as those who were surrounded by poverty.

Sheltered from the lives of the Indigenous poor in the Cayambe surrounds, and performing community service-learning in a school within the township of Cayambe itself, Emma is direct in her assessment that she has not been transformed through an encounter with the marginalized. She has not become more compassionate through her Ecuador experience, and thus has not experienced a moral transformation, as defined by Kiely (2004). A careful reading of her writings, academic reflections, meta-reflection, and interview transcripts also suggests to me no clear signs of transformative learning in Kiely's intellectual, cultural, political or spiritual domains. So where was the transformative learning for Emma that she recognized in herself since coming back to Canada?

Personal transformation. Emma's intimate relationship with the children, developed over three months, provided the context for her *transformative learning within the personal realm*. Despite her host family experience being less than she had hoped for, Emma nonetheless expresses thanks for her learning from the two children in the household, Amy and Jocelyn. In her meta-reflection essay she writes:

Before coming to Ecuador, I did not particularly like children. These girls changed my opinion of children forever. I needed them, especially in my first few weeks in Ecuador. I was also instantly drawn to them. They were so accepting and happy to have me there. I felt at ease with them. There was no pressure when I was with them. I did not need to struggle through Spanish in order for us to understand one another.

The children taught Emma "patience," and she felt she "grew to love them." These relationships became very significant for Emma. She writes: "I have never invested so much time into another person or persons. These girls changed me. They made me a better person, a more caring and nurturing person."

Personal transformation, for Kiely (2004), also includes an increasing sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy. The STM/IC programme is consistently called the most difficult experience the participants have ever endured. For Emma, a young woman without any international travelling experience, the sheer completion of the STM/IC programme is regarded as an accomplishment:

From this experience I did gain something extremely important: strength and courage. It took a lot of strength and courage for me to hop onto that plane and leave my family for three months to go live with another family in a different country. I went to a country not knowing the language or the culture. Essentially, I dove into the unknown. Despite all the uncertainties, I boarded that plane. While in Ecuador, I chose to not let fear stop me.

I tried everything and anything. I adopted a mentality of “just do it.” I ended up holding a tarantula, dancing in a fiesta and teaching an English class all by myself, among other things. By pushing through my fears I felt free. I am so proud of myself for doing all the things I did and for not letting anything hold me back.

The STM/IC programme became the experience through which Emma overcame personal fears, confronted uncertainty, and discovered a strength and resiliency that she would otherwise have not known. Emma’s increased confidence and self-efficacy can be seen in her actions since her experiences in Ecuador. Emma has joined a collaborative project on campus with other students to document the lives of young people in Rwanda acting for justice and healing. Increased personal confidence and an at least incipient global consciousness have both enabled and provoked Emma to venture out again into the unknown, with the hope to be inspired by other young people working for justice and in turn to inspire more local movements for change in Saskatoon. Emma’s transformative learning in the personal domain gained through her experience in Ecuador may yet provide opportunities for transformative learning in other forms as she progresses through her university life.

Lisa

Like Sarah, Lisa also travelled to Cayambe, Ecuador to work in a medical clinic. Unfortunately, Lisa’s life circumstances were such that I was unable to interview her upon her return to Canada. Nonetheless, my interview with her on location in Ecuador and her meta-reflection essay written after she returned to Canada give me enough data to make some remarks about her transformative learning.

Lisa comes from what she calls an “upper middle-class” family, which “has never not [*sic*] been not able to get anything we’ve ever wanted.” Lisa has previously travelled to Australia, Papua New Guinea, Egypt, Hawaii and the Dominican Republic, and initially saw the STM/IC programme as another opportunity to travel. She also had taken two Spanish classes. Upon commencing the Intercordia pre-departure seminars and the Sociology class, however, Lisa saw the programme differently, and as a chance:

just to learn to be a little bit more grateful for things, because we take advantage of things, or I take advantage of a lot of things. I think seeing it, and actually living in it will open up my eyes a bit. I'm hoping.

Lisa had come to some important life decisions through the preparations for STM/IC, including the decision not to return to University and to go back to High School to upgrade her math and science with a view to a career in medical radiology as an MRI technician.

I visited Lisa around three weeks into her Ecuadorian placement, and she had already been shaken by her experiences. As anticipated, my visit with the Ecuadorian participants in the field enabled me to witness some high intensity “dissonances” participants were struggling with. Lisa’s first host family situation had been less than optimal for all concerned through an illness to the host-mother. I actually accompanied Lisa to her new host family, further up the track into the steep hills of Santa Isabelle, where she was graciously received by her new host mother, a respected, Indigenous leader within the community. But prior to this move, three incidents in particular had decentred Lisa, and made her painfully aware of both the suffering of the local people and her own social location and status as a privileged Caucasian woman from North America.

Intellectual transformation. The first incident to contribute to Lisa’s intellectual transformation was the time when she was asked to assist in caring for a four year old girl, who had been badly burned when boiling water fell from a stove and covered her neck and chest. The girl came in to the medical clinic to have her wounds cleaned. Lisa, in my interview with her on-site, picks up the narrative:

And she was terrified, absolutely terrified about having to come to the doctors. They took the wrapping, the gauze, off her, and she was screaming. Like balling and screaming...and kicking and trying to get away. So I had to hold her down. And the nurse was just trying to clean it at first, like wipe it with some alcohol and get it cleaned up a bit. And then [the nurse] had to pull some skin. I don't understand why they would take the skin off; it was extra loose kinda, but it was still attached, fully attached. Yep, it was really, really... it was graphic, and it was... holding her down was probably the worst. I felt sick to my stomach, very, I felt very ill. Started getting woozy, very light headed. I had to stare at the wall and try to think about... dogs, or something else to keep my mind off this screaming pain from the 4 year old.

David: Did they have any local anaesthetic to lessen the pain?

Lisa: There was nothing. There was nothing, it was just pouring alcohol on her, holding her down, taking pieces of skin off the already burnt sore. That was really, really hard.

The event provoked Lisa to reflect upon the resources present in a hospital in Saskatoon versus those in Cayambe, and how the costs of medical treatment at the hospital that Lisa worked at in Cayambe was a deterrent for the poorest in the community to come and receive care. She writes in a journal entry: “I assume that the people are too poor to afford antibiotics so they do not even bother going to the medical clinic for care because they know that they cannot afford the treatment.” This very intimate witnessing of the girl’s suffering was the trigger for critical reflection upon the radical differences in opportunity that existed between Lisa and her young patient at the clinic.

A second incident also prompted critical reflection and *transformative learning in the intellectual domain*: Lisa discovering something of what it was like to be a visible minority. When riding a bus from her family home down the path to the medical clinic, Lisa was made to feel unwelcome and eventually ordered to get off. From my interview with Lisa in Ecuador:

The bus driver...stopped the bus and told me to get off the bus. And I wasn't understanding, why would I get off the bus? I'd just got on the bus stop before. And then they were saying gringo, gringo, gringo. Get off the bus. And I was like, no. I wasn't going to back down. So, and then afterwards I was like, that was the first time that I'd really felt that there was racism towards me. That was very uncomfortable, and thinking that the next time something like that happens of course I'm going to get off the bus. I was very shocked that I even stayed on. I wasn't really understanding everything that was going on, but... the more I sat there, and the more they talked, and I was just like, I was feeling very uncomfortable. Now when I go to get the bus I try to make sure it's not that bus driver. Because I won't get onto that.

Lisa was shocked to be on the receiving end of this racism, although in time she was able to contextualize it somewhat through discussions with the other students around the history of Caucasian people coming to Ecuador for oil, their owning the flower plantations and generally being regarded by some as an exploitative. The bus she was on likely carried workers to their industrial flower growing operations.

This very personal and painful experience for Lisa did provoke her to think more critically about racism in Saskatoon, and the experience of minorities at home. From my interview with her in Ecuador, Lisa continues

After that, all I could think about was this has only ever happened to me once, and I knew how bad it made me feel, uncomfortable, unwelcome, unwanted. Then I thought about all of the people in Saskatoon that aren't even say from Canada, when they get on a bus if there's comments or whispers about them. Or walking down the street, or even, like

there's still racism towards a lot of, like our natives in Saskatoon. There's a lot of racism towards natives. And that just made me feel more, um, like I understood what they go through a little bit. So it really opened up my eyes, and how one comment can make a person feel really bad. So I think I definitely have a better understanding for others, for the “others,” I guess, of Saskatoon, Canada. Whoever else isn't the majority.

For the first time in her life, Lisa painfully discovers a reality that many live with daily, and the shock of that event shakes her naïveté around the power that dominant cultures often exercise vis-à-vis minorities.

The event, however, that seems to have been most important to *Lisa's intellectual transformation* was an incident with her (first) host family mother. Programme rules dictate that there is to be no transfer of money between STM/Intercordia participants and host families. Yet difficult circumstances still arise, when the gap in resources and power becomes painfully obvious for all concerned. From my interview on site, Lisa narrates:

They [host mother and family] were asking for money, borrowing money. For phone cards or whatever. And that, I wasn't, like it was 4 cents one time for the bus, and it was 20 cents for the bus. So really to me, 20 cents is nothing. But, when the...[Lisa starts crying, visible shaking] when the host Mom turned around and gave me the 20 cents back, it was more like a, it wasn't like “here's the 20 cents that I borrowed from you,” it was “here's the 20 cents that you obviously don't need.” And it was something to me like the tone in her voice, the look on her face, and I so badly wanted to just say don't worry about it. It's 20 cents, you know. Just don't worry about it. But also, I mean the whole point... Fernanda [programme partner] had given her...talked to her about whatever and it was just the point of them taking money when they shouldn't be, and I just felt like the lowest person in the world, taking 20 cents from a family that doesn't even have enough chairs at the kitchen table for everyone to sit at...and enough food for the whole family to eat. So that was the hardest, so far the hardest thing that I've experienced here. 20 cents to me at home? That will buy me three five cent candies. Like nothing. Here, that's a bus ride to town. It's a big difference.

David: What do you think about the way your host Mum reacted?

Lisa: I think it just it opened up my eyes more to... it wasn't, the whole thing wasn't about the 20 cents. But it was also just that so little can be worth so much. Just really opened up my eyes. It's not even the money that's, the issue, or maybe her seeing that power difference and looking at me at a different level.

Through these three painful experiences, Lisa experiences an *intellectual transformation* around the social determinants of health, the difficulty faced by visible minorities vis-à-vis the

dominant culture, and the power imbalances between those “serving” in international CSL and those “being served.”

Moral transformation. Kiely (2004) argues that the types of visceral, personally painful encounters experienced by Lisa also can provoke transformative learning in other realms, especially the moral realm. Lisa also exhibits some transformative learning within the moral realm, as she discovers a new appreciation for the daily struggles the poor of Cayambe and surrounds, and an admiration for the hope and resourcefulness that the people manifest in that struggle. In her meta-reflection essay, Lisa writes:

In the midst of poverty in despair I saw optimism and hope in the people. I witnessed the need for communities to work together in solidarity for basic resources. The sense of community brings value and importance to the lives of the people. My host mother was the secretary of their community and the president of the woman’s group in her community. She did not get paid for the work that she did for the community and yet she worked to the best of her ability because it was important to her and to the community. She knew that what she did was important and was valued.

A couple examples of community solidarity would be the “mingas” and “fiestas.” A minga is where everyone in the community gets together for a day and helps build or repair something. Some mingas that our community went to were to help build a road for another community, and to repaint the daycare. The fiestas were also very large part of the community especially during the summer months. While I was in Ecuador there was a fiesta every weekend, most of which my family would go to with the rest of the community. The fiesta would be an all day affair, at about nine in the morning they would all start to get ready. The women dressed in traditional outfits and the men wore fur pants, scarves and masks. Everyone that was participating in the dancing in the community would meet at the president of the community’s house, then as a group the community would dance into town. All of the surrounding communities participated; they all had different music and a little bit different outfits. When all of the communities met up it was like a competition, but a very friendly and enjoyable competition, they all sang and danced with more enthusiasm trying to make their group stand out more than the one’s next to them. They would dance up and down the streets, into people’s homes and shops where everyone else that wasn’t dancing was watching. This would last all night, when the streets died down they would go back to a member of the community’s house and sing and dance, many of times not going home until four in the morning or later.

Through her immersion and intimacy with the people and culture of the Ecuadorian highlands, Lisa displays a new solidarity with and care for people very different from her. She becomes transformed in the moral domain.

Cultural transformation. Immersed in the work and play of a people, also Lisa discovers an absence of community in her own life, and how human happiness cannot be reduced to the

acquisition of economic wealth. In her meta-reflection essay Lisa critiques her own individualistic and materialistic culture, and sees in her Ecuadorian hosts an alternative value system:

The dancing was so important to the people of the community; I've never seen people so happy. This was something poverty could not take away from them. Seeing them glow from gatherings and fiestas made me realize the importance of community; making me wish that we had a sense of community in Canada, in Saskatoon. For five years I have been living in my house and I do not even know my neighbours' names. This experience has made me realize that we need to not only think of ourselves as individuals but also as a group of people and that the decisions that we make as individuals affect others around you, the community or lack thereof

In summary, Lisa's experience in Ecuador has seemingly prompted transformative learning across the intellectual, moral and cultural realms.

Fiona

Fiona, a 21 year old Psychology undergraduate student, grew up in Prince Albert. Her parents are "first generation Canadians," and have provided an "upper-middle class" home for Fiona and her siblings. Fiona's grandmother was particularly thrilled with news that Fiona would be going to Ukraine, as she was born in an area of Poland that is today a part of Ukraine. Fiona had been active in her community growing up, with some experiences of working with marginalized Indigenous peoples. At the outset of the programme, Fiona hoped to have a career in the Law, working in prosecutions.

Fiona's experience in Ternopil, Ukraine at the *Internat* (orphanage) was clearly transformational for her. In her meta-reflection essay written back in Canada after her experience in Ukraine, Fiona notes that the STM/IC programme "exceeded [her] expectations," "was way more intense than I had ever anticipated," and "has been the most difficult, yet the most rewarding challenge thus far in my life." Fiona writes that: "I wanted to learn from marginalized people, and I think I succeeded in that, with respect to the Ukraine people. And now I think I can apply it like to homelessness or poverty in Saskatchewan a lot better."

Fiona demonstrates transformative learning within the *intellectual, moral, and personal domains*. The most critical context for these changes for Fiona was her work placement, her experience of working with the girls and young women at the *Internat* (state-run orphanage).

The *Internat* provided the context for both deep personal connections and disturbing encounters with poverty and oppression.

In my final interview with Fiona she describes one particular incident where she felt overwhelmed by the living conditions at the *Internat*:

There were four little girls who were considered “normal,” and they were like between the ages of eight and 14. And they had so much responsibility at that *Internat* that it wasn't even funny. They would be given a room of 10 girls that had severe autism, or the babies, um... down syndrome babies. And they would be told to look after them. They were told to put them to bed, and bath them. Everything that a mother would do. And when I had to look after those kids and when I was by myself I thought I was going to go nuts. I don't know how they did it. Like I had to yell to get one of the kids to go and get Jolene[child at orphanage] to come and help me, because I couldn't handle them. So in that sense those kids don't get to be kids. At eight years old, some of them, they're mums. And they'll be with these kids 24/7. So when we're doing the concert, those kids couldn't be at the concert. Because they had to look after the babies. So I don't think that's fair. Like they totally took their childhood away from them.

These extreme conditions, for Fiona, trigger difficult questions and transformations in the intellectual domain.

Intellectual transformation. Kiely (2004) notes that perspective transformation (or transformative learning) within the intellectual domain occurs when learners see anew the origins, structural causes and complexity of social problems and realize they cannot be solved simply through interpersonal acts of care and charity. Fiona shows signs of recognizing the complexity of the social issues leading to the oppression of the young women in the *Internat*. She paints a bleak picture of the future for many of them. When it comes time for the so called “normal” women to leave they are given \$200 by the government and taken to downtown Ternopil and “released.” Without any social security, Fiona notes, these women often are forced into prostitution, and/or are trafficked into other countries for prostitution. The young women are targeted even while in the orphanage, as Fiona describes it:

And like there's no doubt in my mind... there's six girls with cell phones, and there's one man that would come all the time. And there's another girl who received a cell phone while I was there from this man. And she would ask me, like, “where did you get your ring?” And I said well my parents gave it to me. And she said, “oh, well I thought maybe a man had given it to you. What did you do to get that ring?” Like they don't process that you don't have to do something, to get something else in return. So I have a pretty strong suspicion that six of those girls are in prostitution, or are starting the process. Because they were all 16 and up, so close to being released, as you can call it.

These experiences drive Fiona to ask questions around why these girls and young women end up in such degrading circumstances. In my final interview with Fiona, I asked her why she thought that the government of Ukraine was not providing more for orphans or persons with intellectual disabilities. In her reply, Fiona looks to the wider geo-political context for the difficulties Ukraine faces, and also observes the shame and stigma that persons with intellectual disabilities evoke both in her host family and within the wider society:

Fiona: Learning from my host family, and Luda [host mother], who was really into her politics because of her diplomat position, people with intellectual disabilities are seen as not giving anything to society, and so it's like, why should the government give anything to them. If they're in an institution, just forget about it, almost. It was kind of... a lot the politics had bigger things to worry about, such as the invasion of Russia. That's very real to them right now. And getting their economy stable. They have one of the cheapest currencies in the world. Those were the primary concerns, and social programmes were at the bottom of the barrel. That may change in 10 years, but I really can't see it changing before that.

David: So there are huge social problems, and this one doesn't rate very highly?

Fiona: Right. Women are kind of at the bottom, so if you're a female with a disability, and an orphan, you're just at the bottom. And there's no coming out of that. And disabled people have such a huge stigma against them that I think there'd almost be an outcry if the government started putting money towards them. 'Cause even my host family was like, oh it's so sad, all of our host families, they refused to come to the concert because they don't like seeing sick children.

Fiona recognizes here that the social location of the women at the *Internat* means they are unable to advocate for their own government resources, or defeat entrenched cultural fears around persons with disability, and so their marginalization continues.

Fiona also showed signs of *intellectual transformation* through her struggle in coming to understand the other workers at the orphanage. Initially, she admits she was influenced by other participants in being biased against them, and as seeing them as uncaring and austere towards the children. Fiona has strong suspicions that the Director of the orphanage was indeed corrupt and skimming money from the government's allocation to the children. Yet she displays a change of heart when it comes to Edyta, a woman who had worked at the orphanage for 20 years. Although Edyta could be cold and indifferent towards the two Intercordia participants, Fiona witnessed the love and respect the children had for Edyta. In doing so, Fiona began to appreciate

that although her work at the orphanage was much appreciated by the children, she was unable to be this on-going presence in their lives, and so saw the limited nature of “help” that she could provide. From my final interview with Fiona:

Fiona: So I talked to a girl who worked there before, and she said that this woman [Edyta] had raised these kids, basically, and she was the only one there that cared about their school work and worked with them one-on-one. So after that I was like, ok so I'm just looking at the surface, and I need to look deeper into this. And I did start to notice that she would hug the kids and she would tell them she loved them whereas I didn't see a lot of other workers do that... I came to the end, I came to start thinking that they're here for eight, 12 hour shifts, and it's gotta be draining on them every day. I can't imagine - like I was exhausted after every day and I loved what I was doing.

David: So some of the workers have been doing that for a number of years?

Fiona: Yeah, like Edyta had been there for 20 years. And it's been open for about 20 years, and she was one of the one's that started. A lot of the workers were retired, so they were older, probably about 50, a lot of them. So I can see how they get tired, like I'm 22 years old and very active. It's a huge difference. And I couldn't understand how they could just sit around on the park bench and just watch the kids play, but now that I'm gone, I kind of can.

Fiona recognizes the difficulty in helping the women in the *Internat*, and gains new insight into the role local people have played over the years in caring for them in poorly resourced conditions.

Moral Transformation. Fiona's opportunity to personally connect with the girls and women at the orphanage stirs a *moral transformation* for her as well, or, as Kiely (2004) defines it, a realigning of one's moral allegiance in the form of a greater sense of care and solidarity with the poor. Fiona makes a special connection with a girl “Rosa,” whom Fiona describes as a “13 year old that has the mentality of a 6 year old.” Rosa becomes Fiona's “buddy” and never leaves her side. Fiona describes Rosa as “full of energy,” and “with a “stubborn streak that I adored.” When Fiona writes in her meta-reflection that she “saw of lot of [her]self in Rosa,” she evinces a type of moral alignment with the marginalized. In a tender account, Fiona reflects upon her acknowledgment to Rosa that she would indeed be leaving the *Internat*, and that their relationship would have to change:

We were sitting in one of the bedrooms talking about when I would be leaving the *Internat*, as the girls had just come to realize that I would leave in a week. It was a difficult conversation and I was doing everything possible not to cry. Rosa was sitting on me, concentrating hard on a bead, and listening to the conversation. Usually, she would

be happily chatting away to me so this quiet behavior was uncommon. Very quietly and without looking at me, she said, “I don’t want you to leave. Why can’t you live here with me?” It took every ounce of strength inside of me not to burst into tears as I held her silently crying body. Leaving Rosa was the hardest thing I had to do. I left a piece of my heart with her, and she will always be special to me.

Despite the enormous distances between Fiona and Rosa’s social location within the world – geographic, linguistic, intellectual capacity - they form a relationship of mutual care and concern. Rosa appears to be a catalyst for Fiona’s transformative learning in the moral domain through her invitation to relationship across difference.

Personal transformation. Since her return to Saskatoon, Fiona has noticed shifts in her relationships, lifestyle and career ambitions, all pointing to transformative learning within the personal realm. She is less materialistic, more relationship-focused, and has hopes for a career in Law as a “children’s advocate” to provide a voice for the rights of children. From my final interview with Fiona:

Fiona: Like I used to be such a little shopaholic. And I find that I save my money. I used to buy whatever. Just because I could. And now, I find I'm like why not use what I have until it's gone? And I get really frustrated with my roommate because she throws out so much food, and I'm like, oh my God that could be feeding my kids at the orphanage. But it's the relationships; I realized how much my family matters, how much my friends matter to me. Like for instance I used to think oh I'm going to move out to Nanaimo as soon as possible and start a new life out there and now I'm like I could never leave my friends and family. Like Saskatoon is my home. So I realized a lot about relationships while I was in Ukraine.

David: Have your academic or career ambitions shifted as a result of your experience?

Fiona: I still want to do Law. So that definitely hasn't changed. But it was always focused to crime, but it's almost shifted away from that to working with youth. I can really see myself being a child's advocate now. And, kind of cliché, giving a voice to those who don't have one, or who can't be heard. Just because, if those little kids in Ukraine had someone, changes could be made, eventually. So my definite thing now is working with kids. And even working within children's rights, or human rights, which was never... I always liked working with youth, but not in the context of law. I was interested in prosecutions for crime, and now it's more like child advocate. So I was surprised when I was writing my law statements, and they asked what I wanted to do, and I had to reflect on it, and I looked back to my last year's application I was like, holy cow, this has totally switched. And I didn't expect that at all.

The form of Fiona’s transformation is *personal*, as well as intellectual and moral.

Hayley

At the time of entering the STM/IC programme Hayley was a 20 year old Sociology student hoping for a Social Work degree and career. Her motivations for entering the programme were to “get out [her] comfort zone,” and “for probably the first time in [her] life do something on [her] own” away from her family. Hayley has Ukrainian heritage from her father, comes from Yorkton, and has a history of volunteering in the community (Big Brothers/Sisters, Autism Services). Hayley looks forward to working as a counsellor with at-risk teenagers.

After her experience abroad, Hayley noted in a journal that Ukraine and its people taught her about “World War II, communism, poverty, corruption, Russian exchange rates, the language, gardening, cooking, and the Ukrainian traditions.” Her experiences at the Faith and Light community in Lviv left her with the sense the greatest way to foster solidarity with the people of Ukraine was by assisting in funding education programmes around the rights of persons with disabilities. But *transformative learning* for Hayley is apparent when it comes to the *moral, personal and spiritual realms*.

Moral and personal transformations. Although Kiely (2004) distinguishes the moral and personal forms of transformative learning, with the former being related to new modes of solidarity with marginalized peoples and the latter encompassing self-identity shifts, increasing self-confidence, and more socially oriented academic and career trajectories, for Hayley these two forms of transformation are intertwined. What brings them together is the profound experience of “friendship.”

The title of Hayley’s meta-reflection essay for her STM/IC experience was simply entitled, “My Friends.” In a concluding paragraph, Hayley synthesizes her learning from her friends:

I did not know that eight intellectually disabled adults working in a small workshop in Lviv, Ukraine would be able to have such an impact upon me and change my perspective of myself. I am proud to say that I met caring, intelligent, and talented people in Ukraine who soon became my friends, teachers and role models. I entered Ukraine assuming I was going to be the teacher and the helper to intellectually disabled adults. As foolish as it may sound, I never thought I would learn much from them. I could not have been more wrong. These intellectually disabled adults, my friends, taught me more than I could ever imagine. Unknowingly, my friends taught me lifelong lessons that I never hope to forget. They taught me about compassion, patience, and friendship. My friends taught me to love others as well as myself, with all my flaws and talents. Finally, they taught me to simply live for right now, in this moment, and enjoy it.

Through being invited and welcomed into mutual relationships of care in the Faith and Light community (moral transforming form), Hayley's self-identity and sense of purpose shifted from "teacher and helper" to "friend and learner" (personal transforming form)

Hayley recognizes that persons with intellectual disabilities are well cared for within the Faith and Light community, but face daily discrimination in the wider Ukrainian society. They have "endured multiple hardships, such as being harassed on a street corner by someone who does not understand disabilities." Nonetheless Hayley finds remarkable that her friends "still continue to be so happy, loving, and accepting" towards her. They received her, "a stranger," and so she was "able to discover how wonderful it feels to be on the receiving end of compassion and acceptance." Hayley narrates an illustration:

All of my friends at the workshop were creating complicated designs on their necklaces and I would simply put beads on a string. Even though my friends knew I was not good at beading necklaces they still examined my work and told me how beautiful it was. Also, everyone at my workshop often played chess together. One day they wanted me to join in on a game, but I told them I didn't know how to play. Every time I made a move everyone would cheer and Luba even let me win sometimes. Throughout all of this my friends never once pointed out my flaws and weaknesses, they simply accepted them and accepted me. From their acceptance I have come to understand that I should not be ashamed of my flaws. My flaws are a part of me just like my talents and my flaws and weaknesses have helped shape who I am today.

Hayley's aligning of herself in moral solidarity with the people of the Faith and Light workshop in Ukraine leads to feelings of acceptance, which leads to her own personal transformation, described as an increased ability to "live today and find happiness today." Hayley had described herself as a "compulsive worrier," concerned with "money, weight and school." Now back in Canada, Hayley still experiences anxiety, but looks to her "role models and friends" in photographs to give her perspective. "Whenever I look at their pictures they remind me that I need to appreciate the many blessings I have in my life right now."

Hayley's experiences in Ukraine have connected her more closely with her father, and given her more confidence in her daily life:

I am teaching my dad how to read and speak in Ukrainian. As well, I am trying to cook new and healthier foods, instead of grilled cheese and Kraft dinner for every meal. Living in Ukraine has increased my confidence through all the things I have learned.

Although she does not know exactly what job she will take as a Social Worker or with whom she will work, she has found through her experience in Ukraine that she is “happy working with marginalized people,” and is convinced “that's what I need to do with my life.” Since her return to Canada, Hayley has also sought part-time work at the Sexual Assault Centre in Saskatoon and as a counsellor at Camp Easter Seal. Although it is very difficult to discern where Hayley’s personal transformation ends and her moral transformation begins (and vice-versa), it is clear that she has been transformed in both domains as constructed by Kiely (2004).

Spiritual transformation. The Faith and Light community differs from other Ukraine, state-run facilities for persons with intellectual disabilities in its explicitly spiritual focus. There are deep Catholic roots in Ukraine, despite the history with the Russia, and Faith and Light is an expression of the faith of many Ukrainian people. Hayley notes in a reflection while abroad that: “Religion plays a huge role at my work placement. The core members pray together daily, sing religious songs, discuss Bible verses, and learn about God's life.” Hayley writes that before the experience abroad she “was a religious person and went to church and everything but I really didn't know what exactly I believed in because I was just going to church my entire life, that's just what you do.” Witnessing the role that faith plays in the lives of members of the Faith and Light community, however, Hayley seems to reassess the value of religion generally. She writes in her meta-reflection essay:

After volunteering at this particular workshop I have come to appreciate religion so much and am now aware of how important religion truly is. Religion helps one understand that they are loved unconditionally, that they have someone to talk to all the time. Having faith in God and love enriches the spirit and therefore creates happiness and an increase in happiness means an increase in one's quality of life.

Hayley now sees how spirituality can provide community and meaning to the lives of people experiencing oppression and discrimination. Her experience at Faith and Light seems to have inaugurated a spiritual transformation in her too.

Steve

Steve is a 20 year old English major with interests in Drama and History. He had travelled before to France and to the Dominican Republic, and had experience tree planting in Northern Canada. His mother is a University professor with interests in organics. Steve was attracted to the STM/IC programme because he had always wanted to do humanitarian work but

had up to this point “never had a good feel for it,” or “really made a connection with it.” The host family experience also appealed to him.

Steve writes that the experience at the Miraflor agricultural cooperative “exceeded all of my expectations. How welcoming the host families were, that was excellent too.” Steve worked hard to inculturate himself to a self-sufficient, agricultural way of life in keeping with his host family and community, and because of this effort was accepted and respected by the local community as a real co-participant in their work. From my final interview, Steve comments:

Steve: If you actually try to experience it, I mean you might like it. I mean I loved living without electricity where, you know, if you wanted supper you found wood and made a fire with it or, you know, you went up in the morning and collected eggs and milked the cows kinda thing.

David: So you were generally welcomed into both family life and to the work you were doing?

Steve: Umm into family yeah, into work they were actually quite surprised at how eager I was to work with them. It was just such a... like a 'I thought you wanted to just come and watch' and I was like 'no I wanna help you, what do you guys do' - 'oh ok we do this and this'

David: Yours seemed a very physical experience. I have seen picture of you in the rain, it was wet, you had no electricity, you were probably filthy a lot of the time. Did you enjoy that?

Steve: Yeah I enjoyed that, absolutely!

David: Did you think that them seeing you doing that and enjoying it gained you a type of respect?

Steve: I think it definitely did... like there was just nothing I wouldn't try. Umm... also they asked me “oh do you play any sports” and I would be like “yeah I wrestled with the huskies.” Of course the first thing that comes to their minds is what they see on TV and I'm like, “No it's not quite, but I do know how to throw a guy,” and eventually it's like “well can you demonstrate on my little brother” and I'm like, “yeah why not, bring him over he's not doing any work” (laughs). I remember Arlen would be like a few times “we are gonna go to my grandma's.” “Ok, what for?” “Oh just to say hi kinda a thing,” and then we'd go and he would be like, “oh and he's a wrestler, so don't mess with him.” (laughs)

Despite these positive encounters with the community, Steve's narrating of his experiences in journals, interviews and academic writing *do not suggest any transformative learning* across the intellectual, moral, political, cultural, personal or spiritual domains, at least as defined by Kiely (2004). Of all the STM/IC participants comprising the case study, Steve is the one person who does not appear to have experienced transformative learning.

Steve's reflections do suggest a growing recognition for the purpose and efficiency of the agricultural cooperative to redistribute land and work towards food security. While abroad he writes:

Miraflor, a war-beaten, three zone, self sustained, family farm project, (run under what most North American would consider a Communist system) could sustain the northern region of the largest country on a continent... it is an effective way to distribute food... and keep farm production balanced and in the hands of families, unlike many Honduran practices which involve Free Trade Zones, bulk deals, heavy amounts of exports.

Yet Steve questioned the reliability of much of what he has heard, especially from what he calls "second person sources," and indeed doubts his own comprehension of what was being communicated to him in Spanish. This doubt surfaces particularly with regard to what he feels is the community's "glorification" of the results of the revolution. Steve writes:

This is maybe what baffled me the most about Nicaragua is how people can love a revolution that has left the country to be the poorest in the continent. Revolution in Nicaragua can mean anything from Marxist ideals to a war where thousands are killed.

Steve does express an admiration for some aspects of Nicaraguan society, such as their emphasis upon family "above money and social-status." Upon his return to Saskatoon he is surprised at seeing the "materialistic" emphasis in his own culture. Yet there seems little concern to change any of the ways he lives in Canada in light of his experiences.

Instead of discovering new clarity of purpose, Steve discusses being more confused than ever about what he wants to do with his living at home:

David: Have your academic plans or career plans changed? Have those changed since the Nicaragua experience?

Steve: Oh I am just more lost than I was before. It's just like well... I thought I might want a job in this but... it is just a downward spiral.

David: Did Nicaragua confuse things then?

Steve: Umm if anything it was more of a relief even but just so many times you hear , “oh these poor people they do this, they have this, they have nothing and yet they live on nothing” and it's just like they are the happiest people I have ever seen. And then you see all these people who are so shallow and focused on how much things they have and they're so pissed off and yet they have more than these people could even imagine and it's just like money really doesn't buy you happiness. That's maybe the one thing I affirmed the most there.

David: So are you trying to live differently now in light of that insight?

Steve: Umm... I can't really say it has changed me that much. I mean I was expecting to see a lot of what I saw. I mean I wasn't expecting... to see how happy people were but like coming through I am very glad I was because I don't know how people would have accepted me if they weren't sort of thing.

When Steve is asked explicitly in my final interview with him whether he feels he has changed through his Nicaraguan experience, he tells the following story about a Thanksgiving meal with his family:

Steve: I remember there was a really funny conversation that came up at Thanksgiving dinner where it was just like “you have told me so many stories about how much you've seen and how much people have and you can just do this without feeling guilt?” and I'm like “oh I really can” and it's just like...like how much I was eating for Thanksgiving. And they're just like “you can do that guilt free?” and I'm like “I sure can” (laughs). And yeah they are just like “that hasn't changed you at all.” And I'm like “no not at all.” I mean it sounds bad but I just I haven't noticed that much change. Like I know a lot more facts, dates, information, I mean I know a lot more first-hand experience... it was really just like one thing I mean my room-mate he did an exchange to Thailand for a while and we were just discussing how you know they have so much less but they are so much happier than we are so who should be jealous of who sort of thing. I guess that's more of a philosophical question but...

To learn more “facts, dates and information” and to gain more “first-hand experience” of a phenomenon is a worthwhile goal. It is not, however, indicative per se of a transformational learning process, and I can discern no signs of transformative learning for Steve across the intellectual, moral, political, cultural, personal and spiritual domains.

Jeff

Jeff, 23, is a Business Management student from an “upper-middle class” family. He has had some international experience, participating three years ago in a Canada World Youth programme in Thailand. Jeff's parents have also previously volunteered for two years in Nigeria

with CUSO. Jeff hopes to be an entrepreneur in the future, earn some money, and then operate an NGO. He regards himself as “more socially responsible than a lot of business[es] out there,” and as having “a conscience” that cares for people.

It is difficult to discern signs of transformative learning through Jeff’s experiences. There seems to be small signs of transformation within the intellectual and moral domains, but they remain, at least within the timeframe of this case study, incipient and lacking definition .

Intellectual transformation. Within the intellectual domain, the “Social Change and Global Solidarity A” class Jeff participated in before departure certainly qualified his views on globalisation. An excerpt from the pre-departure interview reads as follows:

David: So what do you think about that process of globalisation?

Jeff: I think it should happen, in certain places, but other places should be untouched, personally. As of right now. And my frame of thought changed through the course on that one. 'Cause I came in with the Commerce mind, that globalisation is awesome, you could make money, blah blah blah. And now I'm realizing that maybe, they don't want it. Maybe they don't need it. I'm already changing from this experience.

As Jeff left Canada for his experience abroad, the phenomenon of globalisation was not as simple as it once seemed.

Once he arrived in his Ghanaian village (Kasseh-Ada), Jeff was certainly surprised how “Westernized” it seemed. He writes in a reflection while abroad:

I was preparing myself for living in a hut and eating only when the food is available. Within a few days of being here, I realized this was not the case and I realized that life is a lot more modern here than I initially imagined. The first time I realized this was when I first walked into my new home and saw couches and a television. My fellow Canadian, Jacqui and I just looked at each other but didn’t say anything as we realized our views of Ghana were wrong.

Jeff lived with his host family a short distance from a group of young teachers from Accra. He describes a scene during one night of socializing:

We went with Cynthia one night to a gathering of her friends and it really struck me about the similarities between her group of friends and mine. The night started with food, drinks and jokes and eventually progressed into drunkenness, more obnoxious jokes and everyone sitting around a computer watching videos of a local comedian, Basket Mouth. This reminded me so much of my group of friends as I have spent many nights drinking, joking and watching YouTube with my friends. It all felt the same.

These initial impressions of village life certainly convinced Jeff of the reaches of globalisation and the ubiquity in Ghana of its technological forms.

I asked Jeff about the question of globalisation once more, three months after his return from Ghana:

David: So is globalisation a good thing for Ghana in your opinion?

Jeff: That's a big question. I dunno... umm... I don't think it is a bad thing totally... umm they do have their issues which they need help with and I don't see money coming into the country as a bad thing because most people make less than a dollar a day. Globalisation tends to bring money with it and... I think they need it. But as long as they are not getting abused and taken advantage of.

Jeff retains a more nuanced view of the globalisation phenomenon, but one that does not significantly advance upon his thinking prior to leaving Canada

In my final interview with him after his return to Canada, Jeff articulates his rationale for being in Ghana through the Intercordia philosophy around inter-personal encounter and cultural exchange. He also acknowledges the persisting assumptions of village members that he was a “rich white guy.”:

I don't feel I taught them anything in Math above and beyond what they would have learned, they probably would have learned more with the other teachers. I don't, like I think the main thing we did there was just kinda be one of them and they just realized we're not all stuck up snobs... I just sort of wanted to change their mind that not every white person is the type that you see go by the road because the people you see are the ones on vacation with the three kids and they are gonna go sit at the resort all day. But they knew that I had more money than them and they saw me buy a loaf of bread every day or whatever, they knew, but we just tried to change their minds that we're not all as rich as you think we are but we are better off, it's true, and they know this...

Jeff's reflections here seem to express the genuine desire to bridge cultural differences and learn from his hosts.

Yet, despite Jeff's humility as a teacher, and signs of awareness that his own privilege shapes his interpersonal encounters, he seems somewhat conflicted about what kinds of solidarity are helpful for the people of Ghana. He still harbours a desire for some kind philanthropic response. His inspiration comes, Jeff shares, from a book he read in Ghana called “Leaving Microsoft to Change the World” (Wood, 2006). The author would travel to villages around the world bringing computers for children. So I asked him in our final interview, given

the fact that, as he says, that many Ghanaians live on a dollar a day, whether he thought there was anything he could give to them to help in this way?

David: You have been in Ghana for three months in this village so you may have some insight. Do you think there is something that you could pack in a suitcase and take there which could help?

Jeff: Money [laughs]. I dunno umm... they have everything we have and it's just that they can't afford it that's the thing.

It appears to soon to be able to say whether Jeff's shifting views on globalisation and his discovery of the limits to interpersonal assistance for others living in poverty represents any significant epistemological change in his worldview, or transformation within the intellectual form.

Moral transformation. Signs of transformative learning for Jeff within Kiely's (2004) political, cultural, moral, personal or spiritual forms are also difficult to discern. Jeff expresses in my final interview with him that his experience in Ghana certainly led him to appreciate what he had materially. "No, if there is one thing I learned it's just to appreciate what we do have here. That's the one lesson I brought out of this and I definitely like small things now." For this learning to be transformative, we would expect to see signs of different ways of living back in Canada. Here Jeff is enigmatic in his response, saying the change is "nothing to drastic," but that he does indeed "have a new mind-set."

David: Are you trying to live a little more simply since you got back to Canada?

Jeff: Yeah. Nothing to drastic like I will definitely rethink going to the bar one night for no reason; thinking I don't want to spend 50 bucks or whatever but umm... Yeah I definitely... I have a new mind-set; I just notice that, like it's not totally apparent what but even my friends tell me 'yeah, you're different'.

Jeff's career ambitions remain the same, to make money from his own business and eventually run an NGO (personal form). He shows little interest in politics or community activism (political form). And yet there remain hints that suggest some slowly moving transformation within the moral realm, and how Jeff aligns himself with those on the margins. He narrates a story around the particular attention he pays to a person with an intellectual disability.

David: Your friends say you are different how? What would make them say that?

Jeff: Even...just them seeing me interacting with people. Like afterwards they have been like “wow, you are a really nice guy when you're not around your friends” or something like that, because I am kinda a joker and I goof off a lot around my friends. But once I am in a situation they notice that I can change and I can be a different person in front of other people. I think there was one case where there was a garage sale a couple houses down from us, and I don't know why this sticks out, but this mentally handicapped man was selling coffee and I was talking to him, buying coffee from him whatever and my roommate Ashley afterwards was like "wow, why were you so nice to that guy, what was your deal?" And I was like “he was somewhat special so I was being a nice guy” and she was like “oh, ok I didn't even notice but I could tell that you changed.” I dunno I am trying to explain how it happened but it was kinda different she was just kinda like, “oh, ok. You're very different appropriate when you need to be,” because before I might have just bluffed off people. Yeah, I have definitely noticed a change for the better.

Finally, as is the case for Emma, Jeff has become a part of the Rwandan documentary group since his return to Canada. Working with other students, Jeff hopes to document the struggle for justice and healing of the local youth. Perhaps this too is an incipient sign of transformative learning in the moral realm? In summary, I cannot discern with any certainty whether Jeff had an experience of transformative learning through his experiences in Ghana. I can see incipient signs, however, of the potential for such transformation within the intellectual and moral domains.

Laura

Laura is a 21 year old student working towards an International Studies degree. She came to the STM/IC programme via the Service & Justice Project, through which she worked with children in a community school in Saskatoon. She also has been active in the Catholic, International Development agency, Development and Peace, where she has learned some of the “underlying issues to problems in the world” and how she can respond. Although not sure what she wishes to do with her life, Laura wants to bring together her “Catholic faith and social justice.”

Intellectual transformation. Laura begins to see the larger, socio-political context for Ghanaian development through the preparatory course for the STM/IC programme. In my pre-departure interview with her, Laura states:

I've been learning about how in the past the leaders went to different institutions like the World Bank, and IMF, and they came in and built a lot of infrastructure and a lot of

money was cut from social welfare programmes. And in seeing that as advancement and progress we've forgotten where the value really lies.

By seeing how structural adjustment programmes have affected Ghana, Laura understands that any solutions to the social exclusion and poverty for many in Ghana lie beyond simple philanthropic responses.

While in Ghana, Laura's academic reflection tells the story of how the village she was staying in had little contact with foreigners. "White people," as they are called, were mostly tourists who bypassed the village in search of beach resorts, or American philanthropists seeking some kind of change in the community. Laura notes that the legacy of these encounters was a mistrust of the white man, or "blefeno":

The community had little exposure to people of any different race or culture. This exposure ranged from tourists passing through in expensive cars to find resorts along the Ocean, or backpackers travelling through the country spending very little time in Kasseh, the town nearby. From talking to my family members I know that Americans from World Vision spent a couple of months in Addokope back in the '90's. They built a nursery, bungalows and factories. My sister Matilda told me that these factories weren't sustainable and ended up breaking down. The money from the rent of the bungalows was supposed to go to school fees, but this doesn't happen anymore. She said that now parents from the community were not paying school fees because they were not used to paying them for some time, and felt they shouldn't have to. This was the only time I heard anything about these people from World Vision, and through the conversation it felt as though there was some tension. I'm not sure if this was the case, but I can imagine having white people come in and think they can enforce change without knowing the people or the culture can be damaging especially if the changes were not sustainable.

Laura is very conscious of the harm that well intentioned but ultimately oppressive philanthropic responses to poverty can be. In critiquing a development model which seeks to solve community problems without appropriate ownership and control by the local culture and community, Laura displays transformative learning within the *intellectual form*.

Influenced explicitly by the programme philosophy of Intercordia, Laura did not see her role in Ghana as "service," nor working to "fix" a social problem. Social justice, she tells me in my final interview with her, begins for Laura with "bridging the gaps" between peoples and cultures, especially when connecting to marginalized peoples.

Moral transformation. It is apparent throughout Laura's reflections that she regarded the purpose of her time in Ghana primarily as a *moral, personal and spiritual challenge* to connect

with a radically different “other” in a respectful way. She begins her meta-reflection essay, written after she returned back to Canada, with the following story:

By faith he has made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country (Hebrews 11:9). The roof is thatched. The ground is sand. The pews are old, crickety benches. The choir is simply voices that perfectly and eerily compliment the wind through the trees...I’m sitting beside a woman that I’ve known for less than three months. I feel at home. .. We come across this verse during a sermon. I’m struck by the words as I comfortably sit on my bench wrapped in a piece of Ghanaian material. These words feel true to my heart. As we read these words out loud, the woman next to me, my sister Matilda, leans over to me and says, this is you.

Here we find the task Laura sets herself in Ghana - to make a home in a foreign land. To be at home for Laura meant to form relationships with local community members that would show how her and others how it was possible for mutually enriching inter-personal relationships to be constructed across difference

Laura immersed herself in the daily rhythms of Ghanaian village life. She “fought to eat bangku and stew or soup,” “wanted to eat with my fingers when they gave me a spoon,” “stopped buying comfortable food from the store to help fill my stomach,” and tried to learn the local dialect. From Laura’s meta-reflection:

I got on the troto (mini-bus). A little while later some ladies came in. They were just coming from a funeral and I think they probably had a little to drink. Ghanaians love their celebrations. They asked me my name. I responded in Dang-me. *Atchay mi ke Adikie*. They were amazed. They asked what tribe I was from and I responded, *Adiboway*. Then they asked where I was going and I responded, *I ya Addokope*. They hooted and hollered, then one of the ladies bent over the seat and gave me a kiss on the cheek.

Laura made herself vulnerable, and gave humour to the local community through her attempts to participate in their daily tasks. “I carried water on my head, tied scarves on my head, carried one of the babies on my back as I walked to the store, grinded food when I helped them cook, played drums...” She continues:

One day I insisted that I helped peel the cassava. My family is always surprised when I learn how to do anything and always tell me that I don’t have to, that I should relax. I’m not strong enough or they don’t want me to get dirty. This day I sat under the lemon tree and helped them peel baskets upon baskets of cassava. Every time someone entered the yard they were amazed to see me peeling their staple food. I will always remember when mama came home, threw her hands up in the air, and yelled “white man peeling cassava, Thank God!”

Laura's determination to learn from her host family and community was received favourably by them, and opens up new possibilities for mutual respect.

A major challenge for Laura throughout her experience in Ghana was the practice of the corporal punishment of children, both in her host family and in the school at which she was taught English. Classrooms, Laura tells me in my final interview with her, were often "run by fear and rigidity," and the children in her host family were "not shown much compassion and affection." In the face of these cultural differences, which disturbed Laura, she would try "to be positive, be open-minded, humble, be compassionate, and be appreciative." In this passage from her journal written while abroad, Laura describes a realistic personal response to the practice of caning:

Instead of judging, I tried to focus my energy on asking questions and observing lifestyles so that I could get a better understanding of cultural difference. I knew I wasn't going to spend the whole three months trying to change something that was culturally acceptable. This wasn't my right to come in and think I could do so. Every culture has its positives and negatives, but what I could do is form friendships with people. I could be open-minded and build respectful relationships with my family and members of the community, and if or when the conversation arises, only then would it be my right to talk about certain issues and I needed to do so in a culturally sensitive way. I could teach the children without caning them and encourage them to try. I could use my body language, take into consideration what is culturally acceptable and be humble and respectful.

Transformative learning within the moral domain involves forming sympathetic relationships of care with marginalized persons. For Laura, this meant not only a basic concern for the children experiencing the pain of corporal punishment, but also a desire to respect and understand the adults for whom the practice was customary, and to support the Ghanaians seeking to reform the practice.

This respect and understanding led Laura into relationship with Isaac, who she calls her "big Ghanaian brother." Isaac taught year six at the school and was against the practice of corporal punishment. He made special efforts with his family to feed and care for Laura. "He even told me," writes Laura in her meta-reflection,

how before he met me he was starting to form negative conclusions about white people. He said: "Excuse me for saying this, but white people can be very cruel." He told me how I had changed his assumptions. I felt incredibly blessed that we were able to give this gift to each other.

Laura's humility in the face of a difficult cultural practice enables her to form a mutually enriching and transformative relationship with a local teacher.

Laura's efforts also are recognized by her host family. The night of Laura's farewell, her host father, who at times could be from Laura's perspective a harsh disciplinarian, recognized Laura's ability to inculturate to and learn from Ghanaian culture. In her meta-reflection Laura writes:

At my farewell gathering my pap was making a speech about us, and he said that from the very beginning I wanted to be Ghanaian. I wanted to learn so much from them, but they also learned so much from me. He was proud that I had come into his family because I was me, not because I was white or Canadian. I think when this sort of intimate transaction of getting to know someone occurs it makes a powerful impact upon you and alters the stereotypes you hold. I didn't think that making connections with my family would be one of the hardest things struggles, but in the end I know these struggles tested me and in them I found wisdom. In the same way, I felt like I had enough patience, love and determination to get through these moments and keep an open mind and stay humble.

Laura's efforts to form relationships across vast cultural and socio-economic differences were successful, and clearly demonstrated her genuine care and compassion for her hosts. She experienced transformative learning within the moral domain.

Personal transformation. Personal transformation for Kiely (2004) is expressed through more "socially conscious lifestyles," reevaluating one's identity, relationships, career or educational trajectories, as well as increased self-confidence and efficacy. The mutually beneficial relationships Laura participated in with her host family and community were the cornerstone of a transformative learning shift across the personal domain.

From my final interview with her, Laura expresses a new "confidence" within herself and is "less concerned with material things and more "superficial ways of living." Laura says she "no longer values my worth on how I looked nor measure myself upon what other people think or perceive of me." She now has a "renewed ability to be in the present." Laura says the Ghana experience "gave me a direction and a taste of inner peace."

But Laura also feels the challenge of slipping back into old ways of being back in Canada. The focus, for Laura, is to "be content with myself so I don't need those things to feel like a better person and I don't need material things to have confidence or be friends with certain people."

David: And that's more of a challenge here than it was in Ghana?

Laura: Yeah. I felt like I was getting sucked back in to this culture and that was really hard... That and just what I said before those numbing... like it is so easy to go on facebook or go watch TV and then like all of a sudden life passes you by and you're like oh I'm thirty (laughs). And what have I done? I've just been watching TV and like I don't want that but it's hard... But yeah it's been hard to keep that up here. I think adjusting back here was really hard for me and I'm still trying to figure it out but I am at a better place than I was when I first went.

Since returning to Saskatoon, Laura chose to apply and then work at the Crisis Nursery in Saskatoon, which provides respite care for children from parents experiencing various forms of stress. She articulates her decision as follows:

Well when I came home I just wanted to be involved with something where I was really connecting with people and I wasn't just like, "what kind of coffee do you want?" or (laughs) "have a good day," I didn't want that. I wanted to keep those connections so I have some friends who worked at the Crisis Nursery and I thought that would be a good place to try and umm have those connections. Umm... yeah when I came home it was like now I just want to concentrate on those connections I don't want to like... it's so easy to get back into those... I don't know just those superficial ways of living. Yeah I don't know. And just like to be able to be in the moment and see the beauty of the moment and you know looking at life as not just what I wasn't doing or my failures but recognizing that as an opportunity for me to grow and learn and you know. Just that new positive spin on life that wasn't there at all before I left like... yeah I still am working on it.

Laura's experience abroad helped her overcome some personal fears and inspired a new confidence in her abilities to align herself with the marginalized in Saskatoon.

Yeah and even taking that job at the Crisis Nursery like before I left like that... I probably wouldn't even have applied because I would have been thinking about all the things I would have done wrong and I would've you know. And coming home I was like I'm ready for a new challenge and I have never thought like that before like I'm just yeah so... yeah I was ready for what life had to offer me and not scared.

With increased self-confidence and a renewed desire to work with marginalized peoples, Laura clearly exhibits signs of transformative learning within the personal domain.

Spiritual transformation. As was indicated earlier, Laura's key metaphor to interpret the meaning of her experience abroad comes via a Judeo-Christian text from Hebrews: "By faith he has made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country" (11:9). The journey to encounter the "other" across an immense cultural and socio-economic divide was ultimately, for Laura, a journey of faith, a spiritual quest. Laura's experience outside of all of her

comfortable surroundings found her more dependent upon her God, whom she relied upon more intensely to give her strength. As Laura's experiences a new culture and new ways of being present in the world, so her understanding of God becomes more inclusive and ecumenical.

From my final interview with Laura:

I sort of renewed my faith in that way and it allowed me... taught me to just really trust in God and let him take me where I was supposed to go and really see the beauty of that moment instead of trying to figure out how I can get there all the time. Yeah, sometimes I felt like I couldn't be me and I couldn't have that umm... those values of living in a compassionate way and accepting way and still have that relationship with God. Like I felt like I had to be this intense Christian and hang out with Christian people or be total opposite, well not opposite but umm yeah so in Ghana it just showed me that... I can have that relationship with God and he's going to love me for me no matter what's going on I don't have to change who I am.

For Laura, being a Christian now does not mean being closed to the "other." Laura has experienced transformative learning in the spiritual domain, as she has in the intellectual, moral and personal domains.

Summary of Transforming Forms

The individual participant profiles described above provide empirical grounding for my interpretation of where transformative learning was happening, or was not happening, for participants within the STM/IC programme. Using Kiely's (2004) previously identified forms of transformative learning within an international CSL context, I will summarise the changing frames of reference for the STM/IC participants with the help of a table (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2
Transforming Forms for STM/IC participants

Participant	Intellectual	Moral	Political	Cultural	Personal	Spiritual
Emma						
Fiona						
Hayley						
Jeff	?	?				
Laura						
Lisa						
Sarah						
Steve						

Note. A solid pattern within a rectangular box represents my interpretation that a transformative shift is happening within that domain for that participant case. A question mark represents my interpretation that while there are some signs that this transformation may be taking place, a more confident judgment would depend upon more longitudinal data. A blank rectangle represents my interpretation that within the time period of the study (ending 3 months after the participants' return to Canada) there appear no signs of transformative learning within the domain specified.

Table 4.2 schematically represents my interpretation that clear signs of transformative learning are occurring for a majority of the STM/IC participants within the case study (six out of eight). Table 4.2 also represents my interpretation that one other participant might be experiencing signs of transformative learning as a result of the STM/IC programme, but it is more ambiguous. There was only one participant who did not appear to experience any transformative learning as a result of participating in the STM/IC programme. The intellectual, moral and personal forms of transformative learning were most pronounced for STM/IC

participants, with five participants out of eight experiencing transformative learning in one of these domains. Three participants experienced transformation within the spiritual domain. Transformations within the political and cultural domains were least evident for STM/IC participants.

How Were STM/IC Participants Transformed?

Kiely also furnishes this case study with a *model of the process* of transformative learning within an international CSL experience (2005). In this section of my findings I will seek to (a) show how Kiely's model illuminates the transformative learning process of the STM/IC participants, or how it is that they came to be transformed (or did not experience transformative learning), and (b) discern (using Kiely's model) whether STM/IC participants experience transformative learning *differently*, or in ways particular to STM/IC programmatic conditions.

To reiterate briefly, there are five components within Kiely's (2005) model describing how students undergo transformative learning within international CSL: contextual border crossing, dissonance, personalizing, processing, and connecting.

STM/IC and contextual border-crossing. As the student re-positions him or herself across international borders, the student's "biographical baggage" is unpacked. Personality traits, structural identity (gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc), the history of the host country he or she is entering and its historical relationship with the student's country of origin, and subsequent relationships of power – all collectively shape the border crossing (Kiely, 2005). The particular contours of the international CSL programme also frame the inter-personal encounter for hosts and guests. The programmatic differences between Kiely's TC3-NICA programme and the STM/IC programme thus could, according to Kiely's model, have implications for the transformative learning of the participants.

The STM/IC programme is in reality a series of separate international experiences, in multiple contexts, across the globe. Even when three participants experienced life and work in the same vicinity in Ecuador, their host family experiences and/or work placements were sufficiently distinct to provoke diverse learnings. Nonetheless, as a whole, the findings of this case study suggest the STM/IC programme seems to provide for transformative learning within the moral, intellectual, personal and spiritual realms *over* the political and cultural realms. In Kiely's original case study conditions, there was an explicit emphasis upon the history of the

geo-political relationship between Nicaragua and the United States, and how this contextual element structured his students' learning. This was not the case for the STM/IC programme. For instance, participant Steve found his local community not to be conscious of any direct Canadian-Nicaraguan history or interaction. As a Caucasian North American, Steve was a privileged outsider to the community, but one who did not come with the same "baggage" as the "Americans" his community "fought to keep out." The fact that the STM/IC participants come from Saskatchewan, Canada, and not the United States (as in Kiely's case study) may mean that they travel more lightly, without the burden of being from the country that is often experienced as the most dominant force within the world. At the geo-political level, Canada's international relationships with the countries visited by the STM/IC participants are simply not as deep rooted and impacting upon the inter-personal relationships developed by participants and their host community members.

Another salient programmatic difference between the STM/IC and the TC3-NICA programmes is the academic courses framing the learning of the participants. Within the pre-departure Sociology course for STM/IC participants, there is less emphasis upon country-specific political histories (as for Kiely's programme) and a more generalized focus upon processes of globalisation and development. There simply is not the time for detailed analyses of each country's political structures and histories, although participants do prepare case studies around particular issues that relate to their destination country. In this way the STM/IC programme itself structures the "contextual border-crossing" for participants in such a way to place *less emphasis upon political analyses*. This may be a contributing factor to why there appears *less transformative learning within the political realm* for STM/IC participants.

Within the *cultural domain*, Kiely sees transformative learning in an international CSL context when there is a sustained participant critique of the "hegemonic" force of U.S. consumerism, materialism and individualism. Although two of the STM/IC participants mounted an analogous type of critique (critical of their participation in a more generalized "North American" or "Western" culture), the rest did not. As has already been indicated, there are overlapping elements to Kiely's category of personal transformation (development of socially conscious lifestyles) and this cultural transformation. It is possible that I simply coded the participants' texts more frequently into the personal transformation category than the cultural

transformation category, when it could well have gone either way. It is also possible that there was an overlap between the intellectual domain and the cultural domain. For Jeff and for Sarah, for instance, I coded their reflections on the effects of globalisation as an intellectual transformation (a possible one for Jeff). Yet a critical view of the effects of globalisation could also easily be coded as a form of cultural transformation, wherein globalisation becomes a vehicle for the Kiely's (2004) "cultural hegemony."

Another reason there may have been less signs of cultural transformation for the STM/IC participants relates to the infrequent accounts of political transformations –the Sociology course preparing participants before departure did not provide participants with a vocabulary around "culture" and the legacy of "western culture" particularly, especially its hegemonic aspects within the "global south." Although the course was a thorough investigation of the socio-economic effects of (often western driven) globalisation, some participants were less equipped through their experience for a critical look at the *cultural* dimensions to this globalisation process. If this is the case, then Kiely's (2004) contextual border crossing element of the programmatic context (the Sociology course for the STM/IC programme) explains why there were fewer signs of cultural transformation for participants.

A final element of the STM/IC programme – and so an element of the contextual border crossing for participants – that might have influenced transformative learning is the role of reflection. As was pointed out earlier, the STM/IC programme differs from Kiely's programme in that the latter has more scheduled group reflection activities, through which participants discuss and articulate experiences in light of academic content, community presentations and lectures. Within the STM/IC experience, the theoretical learning is all upfront and pre-departure. Critical reflection, bringing together that prior academic learning with immediate experience, is mostly conducted in a solitary manner via journals and academic papers emailed to a professor in Saskatchewan. Local community leaders typically have not provided assistance for participants by speaking to their own understandings of the challenges for their regions. This more independent learning context may be a contributing factor to the more ambiguous signs of transformative learning in the cases of STM/IC participants Jeff, Steve and Emma. Perhaps these participants' learning styles required more dialogue and public discussions?

STM/IC and dissonance. The international CSL process sees participants confront multiple and often intense forms of “dissonance” (Kiely, 2005) as they are immersed in a new environmental, cultural context. For transformative learning to begin to occur, there needs to be an experience of dissonance that is of high-intensity, persisting in duration, and able to leave a “permanent marker” in a participants’ “frame of reference” (2005, p. 12). This happens mostly when participants encounter extreme poverty and suffering in such a way that they cannot rationalize it away through further reflection or service in the community. Instead, the experience provokes participants to reexamine existing knowledge and assumptions regarding any solutions to these “ill-structured” and ambiguous problems (2005, p. 11).

The experience of the STM/IC participants verifies Kiely’s insight on dissonance and transformative learning. In my final interview with participants, I asked two questions that touched on these themes. Firstly, I asked whether participants were disturbed or shocked by anything they witnessed or experienced abroad. Secondly, I asked directly whether they had been in some form of relationship with persons living in poverty. Despite experiencing the dissonances of crossing linguistic, geographic, socio-economic and other environmental boundaries, Jeff (Ghana), Emma (Ecuador) and Steve (Nicaragua) did not experience the impacts of poverty and suffering in an intimate and personal way, nor were they left disturbed or shaken through their experiences abroad. There was poverty, of course, in Cayambe, Kesseh-Adah and Estéli and surrounds, but these participants were not engaged in close relationships with persons living in these conditions. Their host families were comparatively more privileged (Jeff and Emma), or their work did not involve them in inter-personal relationships with persons who were suffering through poverty (Steve). All other STM/IC participants experienced poverty and were left disturbed in some way by what they had encountered. For Laura the beating of marginalized children in the community left an indelible mark in her memory; for Hayley, the witnessing of the hopelessness of the elderly lining up at a Ukrainian bank to withdraw money that had long been taken away by the Russian government; for Sarah, the encounter with the 12 year-old pregnant girl; for Lisa, her shame at receiving 20 cents back from a host mother; and finally for Fiona, the experience of being overwhelmed by the injustice of orphaned young girls caring for the needs of younger children with intellectual disabilities – all of these experiences shaped the consciousnesses of these STM/IC participants and triggered transformative learning.

STM/IC and personalizing. Highly intense, dissonant experiences in Kiely's (2005) model are expressed personally through feelings of "anger, shame, guilt, sadness, confusion, denial, and moral outrage," (p. 12) and often lead to greater compassion and empathy. This was certainly borne out in the experience of the STM/IC participants that experienced clear signs of transformative learning. Fiona, for instance, cried out in anger and sadness against the injustices in the orphanage. Hayley felt hopeless and confused for the lives of the poor as they experienced institutionalized corruption in Ukraine. Laura too felt guilty for the extra attention and care she received from her host family compared to other siblings, a painful experience prompting reflection on her position as a "white" outsider (or "blefeno," as she was initially called) within an African village. Lisa and Sarah felt guilt, shame, anger and confusion through their encounters at the medical clinic. When asked about her feelings around the incident with the young mother, Sarah responds:

Ah sick... I just felt sick when the baby was born. Like just I don't know if it's guilt or... you just feel like almost pain for them so... yeah physically I felt sick. And I think it's partially guilt although I never thought in my head, like at the time I wasn't thinking oh my God this wouldn't happen in Canada, I was thinking oh my goodness this is happening here and I wasn't yet making that transition. So I don't know if it was guilt already but just an awareness that was just hard to stomach, like I don't really know how to explain it.

STM/IC and processing and connecting. Sarah's description above of "an awareness that was just hard to stomach" rings true for the kind of transformative learning possible through international CSL. Crossing contextual borders, often experiencing intense dissonance and encountering poverty and suffering, STM/IC participants then analytically *processed* their experiences through written reflections and *connecting* relationally with host communities. For Kiely (2005), both processing experience critically and connecting personally with local people are essential components for transformative learning in international CSL. For STM/IC participants, these processes worked interdependently, so that connecting with host communities provoked critical processing of experience, which in turn, informed further connecting.

Yet for STM/IC participants, it is the experience of an extended three month stay with host families and communities, in a full immersion experience, which undergirds the transformational learning process. In the absence of gathered, group reflection activities to make sense of the participants' experiences, STM/IC participants rely exclusively upon the welcome,

acceptance, and wisdom of local people to live, work and learn. These relationships are mediated via the international programming partner in each country, with whom participants are in contact with for problems and concerns. The immersion into the host culture is more complete with STM/IC than in many other programmes, and so the task of constructing relationships across difference becomes paramount not simply for their academic study but also for their general well-being while abroad. As a consequence, affective learning through relationships, (Kiely's "connecting"), becomes necessarily more pronounced for STM/IC participants, than in other programmes such as Kiely's (2002, 2004, 2005).

The host family experience was not a universally positive experience for the STM/IC participants. Fiona, Jeff, Emma, Lisa and Sarah all experienced some sort of difficulty with their host families. Lisa moved to another host family after a family illness. Fiona and Jeff spent considerable time alone in their accommodation while the host mother or father was away. Emma felt unnecessarily constricted in her movements and "sheltered" from the surrounding poverty. And Sarah was a witness near the end of her stay to a disturbing incident of domestic violence within the family, which led to her moving into alternative accommodation.

Nonetheless the host family experience provides a crucial first experience of welcome, acceptance and reassurance for participants. The immersion within family and community in the STM/IC programme provides the relational context for sustained affective learning, which in turn often leads to critical reflection. As time progresses and as participants discover the complexity of their host families' lives, a less romanticized interpretation of culture appears in the participants' writings. In her final essay, Sarah traces this shift in her perceptions:

It was interesting to reflect on my initial feelings and observations of Ecuador's culture and people and then compare these to my feelings at the end of my three month stay. My first observations of the country were very positive and perhaps lacking honesty, as I wanted so badly to appreciate and love everything about my new home. During the course of my three month stay, I inevitably began to see my surroundings with a more honest view; I really felt the "blindness" come off during my last month, I was able to be honest of both good and bad in the things that I witnessed and experienced. I think I stated this shift in perception well in one journal entry: "As the weeks went on and the honeymoon stage of my relationship with Ecuador ended, I began to see my experience with really opened eyes. I saw beauty and filth, joy and pain, pride and hopelessness, solidarity and division"

The maturing of these perceptions is made possible because of the three month stay, and a more thorough commitment to relationships, and consequently affective learning and "connecting."

As was indicated earlier for Fiona, the three month stay also enables her to form a deeper understanding of the roles played by staff at the orphanage, which she initially judged negatively. In short, the STM/IC participants' experiences support Kiely's contention that processing (the analytical) and connecting (the affective) are mutually interdependent processes within international CSL, and that transformative learning is more likely to occur when there are structures to support both.

To summarise, Kiely's (2002, 2005) process model of transformative learning within an international CSL context helps explain how the STM/IC participants experienced transformational learning, but also assists in interpreting why some did not, particularly within the cultural and political domains.

Firstly, the STM/IC requirement for host family stays ensures participants experience an extended opportunity for affective and relational learning. This embedding of participants in family and community for an extended period also leads to increased opportunity for critical and analytical insights, and transformative learning.

Secondly, the STM/IC participants' transformative learning was indeed provoked, as Kiely's model posits, through a personal encounter with poverty and suffering, producing high intensity dissonance felt personally. This was the case for five of the eight STM/IC participants. Significantly, the three participants who did not experience this poverty and dissonance exhibited fewer signs of transformative learning.

Thirdly, the lack of emphasis upon historical, political and specifically cultural analyses within the STM/IC programme may also hinder its participants from transformative learning within the political and cultural realms. This finding needs to be qualified by noting the "fuzziness" across Kiely's transforming forms, particularly between the personal and cultural forms, and the possibility therefore that I have underestimated the cultural transformations within the STM/IC participant data during the coding process.

Finally, the comparatively independent learning context experienced by STM/IC participants, without regular, gathered critical reflection activities supported by local community leaders and educators may have negatively constrained the transformative learning potential of some of the STM/IC participants.

STM/IC: Constructing Relationships Across Difference

Although the STM/IC participants' experience of transformative learning within their diverse international CSL contexts clearly supports Kiely's (2002, 2004, 2005) model of transforming forms and processes, there are novel themes as well arising from their experiences. In this section of the findings of my case study, I wish to highlight those elements I believe have been influential in transformative learning for the STM/IC participants which are not named within Kiely's schema. They are the themes of *vulnerability, discovery of persisting differences in interpersonal relationships, and an experience of radical acceptance*.

Vulnerability. As has been indicated, the STM/IC programme requires participants to be thoroughly immersed in a new web of intimate relationships. STM/IC participants, through the Intercordia seminars and Sociology class, prepare to encounter the radically "other," an "other" separated by language, socio-economic status, innumerable cultural differences, and vast geographical distances. Sarah describes how she prepared for such an encounter:

I knew before I left that I was *making a choice to make myself vulnerable* in a way. I was knowingly allowing myself to be exposed to things that I will not be able to forget, things that will change who I am and my views, and that was frightening! (emphasis added)

To encounter and learn from the "other," one must become vulnerable. One must allow oneself to be exposed, or affected by what one senses and feels and thinks, and to open oneself to difference. STM/IC participants approach their host families and communities without the surety of linguistic competence, technical skill and detailed analysis "about" their hosts. They approach the "other" humbly, openly, and effectively place themselves in the care of the "stranger" who houses, feeds and protects them. Laura describes her ongoing desire to form relationships in her community in a similar way:

I think I was more involved with trying to get people to understand... that... yeah I am a white person and yeah Emma the girl that I was staying with is a white person but we're still two totally different people. And I wasn't going to be able to change everyone's mind like just seeing me as a white volunteer but that's part of that experience of just getting close to people and you know starting to become *vulnerable* with each other. Having conversations with each other and forming friendships because that's how people learn that we aren't just white volunteers and that's how I learn that they aren't just black Ghanaian people (laughs) you know? (emphasis added).

For Laura, as well as Sarah, to make meaningful communication across difference requires vulnerability from the international CSL participant.

STM/IC participants have been influenced in these reflections by Jean Vanier, founder of Intercordia Canada, for whom the possibility of genuine interpersonal encounter across difference begins from a position of weakness, and not strength. In his *Becoming Human* (2003), in which he sketches out a humanistic anthropology infused with 30 years experience of working with persons with intellectual disabilities, Vanier writes:

To be human is to be bonded together, each with our weaknesses and strengths, because we need each other. Weakness recognized, accepted and offered, is at the heart of belonging, and so is at the heart of communion with another (p. 40).

For STM/IC participants, cross-cultural encounter is as much about a discovery of their own weakness and need for “belonging” and “community” as it is about service to the poor. Living and working in contexts in which the other’s “weakness” is immediately apparent, participants are challenged to see the strengths of their hosts, and to discover their own weakness, psychologically, spiritually, and through their implication in ways of life which further marginalize the poor of the world.

Canadian educational philosopher Sharon Todd, in her book *Learning from the Other* (2003), similarly argues that in order to truly learn from the “other,” one must assume a posture of non-violent passivity, and through an attentive listening become vulnerable and susceptible to suffering. Learning, for Todd (following Levinas, trans. 1987) arises not through knowledge about the other, but via relationship with the other, who remains, ontologically, ultimately unknowable. When STM/IC participants effectively relinquish, at least for a time, the securities of place, identity, status and role, and are immersed in the strangeness of a new family and community and language, they more closely approximate Todd’s attentive listening, and open themselves to the unpredictable learning mediated by the other’s presence. Vulnerability, then, is a critical dimension to the STM/IC participants’ experience of forming relationships across difference. This personal vulnerability is at once both a structural demand of the STM/IC programme and a personal choice of the participants. It begins with extensive personal sharing in pre-departure seminars and continues with the prolonged immersion into family and community without the ability for participants to anticipate or control the outcomes. It is a voluntarily vulnerability, entered into freely by the participants’ agreement to encounter the unknown “other,” face-to-face.

A discovery of persisting difference. Yet it would be naïve to think that the STM/IC participants do not carry with them the real vestiges of their power and privilege into their new relationships. Their “social location,” (Dube, 2003) as they are informed through Sociological theory before their departure⁶, continues to structure their interpersonal relationships in their host communities. This is a necessary, and sometimes painful, realization for participants, who might too easily and dishonestly fall into *identification* with their new friends. The reminder of the participant’s otherness to the local community is a necessary step to a reconfiguring of relationships across difference in social solidarity.

Sarah narrates how difficult this reminder can be:

Yeah that was a frustrating night umm my fourteen year old host sister invited me to go for pizza with her and her friend and I said “oh sure thank you” and I went to my room and got ready and she popped her head back in and said “oh you'll pay ten dollars and we'll pay five” and it was five dollars difference it wasn't a big deal but I said why? And she said oh because your rich, like straight up and I was insulted and I said oh no thank-you I would rather not go and she said “oh sorry, sorry, sorry” and I said “that's ok I don't want to go” and we hugged at the end of it and it was fine but it was just... yeah it really rubbed me the wrong way and then when I was writing my journal I was thinking but I am rich compared to them I really, really am. That's not even a point for discussion and like things they'd ask me like “do you have a car?” and I would say “yeah.” And then they would ask me “well what kind of car does your dad drive?” and I would say “oh a black one” (laughs) like try to avoid the issue but the reality is we have four nice cars for four people, you know? And so time and time again it was like I'll try and pretend that I'm not but I am and they knew that, I knew that. It caused a barrier to becoming fully... like fully... in their situation, fully like them. That's something you can't change but yeah I would feel so much like I was a part of their family and a part of their culture and their reality because I did live quite humbly while I was there like I had one pair of pants and you know I made an effort because I was trying to live like them. And it was just like oh geez I am so not, so that was good too.

Sarah’s transformative learning comes not only through her willingness to be vulnerable with her host family and community, but also her realization of her wealth and privilege.

When describing her life back home with her family in Canada, Sarah uses the words of “accountability” and “responsibility” as a way of describing her new awareness:

⁶ The term “social location” arises in the participants’ preparatory Sociology class. It originates within feminist intersectionality theory which seeks to “locate” the social, cultural, economic and political contexts of an individual via axes of determining social organisation (Stasiulis, 2005). Patricia Hill Collins (2000) also uses the term “matrix of domination” to refer to a system wherein race, class and gender intersect at the level of personal experience, community, and social institution.

My family is sort of seeing things differently and making changes just because they feel through me a bit of a connectedness and a bit of a responsibility so yeah... accountability I guess. Like a sort of... like oh geez we could go our lives living with our heads down or you could lift them up but I don't know I think it is just that effort to make a connectedness and an awareness as best as we can.

The discovery of persisting difference, via an honest acknowledgement of the participant's more privileged social location, is a necessary step in forging a new solidarity. And as Sarah notes here, this new solidarity is accompanied by a commitment to live responsibly back in Canada.

Laura too becomes aware of her privileged difference in the midst of her intimate relationships in her African village. In my final interview with her, Laura describes trying to provide a more nuanced account of her own Canadian culture to the community, which she feels has a "glamourized" version of "western" culture without poverty. Yet she realizes the difficulty:

Laura: I think they saw our culture being a superior culture because we have all these [things] like I don't know how to explain it... like we don't live in huts and yeah a lot of sort of material things and a lot of umm really rich people to their standards. Like if we can afford a house like mine, which isn't a very... like I don't think you would say my family was rich because of the house I have but if I showed them a picture of my house like that in Ghana that's like you are doing really well, you know.

David: So you are wealthy in comparison?

Laura: Yeah and that was hard... to explain to them. Yeah and I really wanted to let them know that it wasn't all it was cracked up to be, you know?

As we have seen earlier, ultimately Laura would judge her experience as a successful construction of relationships across difference. Yet it involved a process for her of becoming vulnerable, careful listening without judgment, and openness to uncertainty. Laura's transformative learning across the intellectual moral, personal and spiritual domains manifests itself in a new solidarity with the people of her village in Ghana, and the poor in Saskatoon. And as for other STM/IC participants experiencing transformative learning as well, the solidarity forged is not oblivious to differences of social location, privilege and power, but called forth because of them, through a discovery of the participants' own need for transformation.

Acceptance. There also seems another related dynamic within the transformative learning process for the STM/IC participants' experience. When participants become vulnerable

in the face of the “other,” an offer of *acceptance* becomes the gift of the “other” in return. This experience of acceptance from host communities - a welcoming into homes, communities and workplaces - can trigger transformative learning for the STM/IC participants’ and new patterns of solidarity across difference.

Hayley articulates this process most succinctly through her experience of acceptance by the Faith and Light community members in Lviv, Ukraine.

I found it strange how openly loving, affectionate, accepting my friends were to me, a stranger... I was able to discover how wonderful it feels to be on the receiving end of compassion and acceptance.

This radical acceptance of Hayley, whom we have seen did not possess the same skills or abilities as her friends in the workshop, began a process of personal liberation for her, a transformation within the personal domain:

From their acceptance I have come to understand that I should not be ashamed of my flaws. My flaws are a part of me just like my talents and my flaws and weaknesses have helped shape who I am today.

Acceptance is at once, like vulnerability, an experience that is both structurally designed at a programmatic level and personally felt by STM/IC participants. Host communities, through Intercordia Canada’s international partner agencies, are involved in the construction of family stay experiences - finding appropriate families, resourcing them with money for costs of providing them food and general care, and also in finding suitable work placements at which participants can make meaningful contributions serving community identified needs. This gift of acceptance is a freely chosen gift, arising from a community that hopes to share its wisdom and culture, while also teaching and challenging participants to understand both the joys and struggles of its members’ lives.

The experience of acceptance for STM/IC participants is also personally felt. Participants express their surprise and delight at how welcoming and accepting their host communities are, despite their materially poor circumstances. In fact, as for Lisa, participants begin to make connections between poverty and generosity and community, and how material wealth can lead to barriers between people. When Fiona receives the loving embrace of girls and young women in the orphanage in Ternopil, Ukraine they release in her a compassion and commitment for them and ultimately for the marginalized generally. As Sarah quietly and

persistently learns from the expertise of the local medical professionals in the clinic, she is accepted as a co-worker, and given responsibilities simply not possible for a volunteer in a Canadian hospital.

Host communities and families understand when they are being respected, listened to, and approached in a vulnerable sincerity, and they respond with open arms, and accepting hearts. Their acceptance of STM/IC participants into their lives in intimate ways is experienced at once by participants both as an act of affirmation and a challenge. Within a welcoming embrace, participants recognize their privilege vis-à-vis (literally face-to-face) the other in a new way, and are empowered to reconfigure their relationships in light of a new solidarity and responsibility for the “other.”

Concluding Interpretations

This study addressed two primary research questions: (a) Do the STM/IC students experience transformative learning in an international CSL context across any of these domains proposed by Richard Kiely (2002, 2004, 2005), and through his specified processes? (b) Do particular programmatic conditions within the STM/IC influence the experience of transformative learning for the participants? This case study has confirmed empirically that the STM/IC programme was clearly conducive to transformative learning for six of its eight participants studied, in ways consistent with Kiely’s (2002, 2004, 2005) model of the forms and processes of transformative learning within an international CSL context. During the time frame considered under the case study (May 2008-November 2008), these STM/IC participants experienced transformative learning mostly across the moral, personal, intellectual, and spiritual domains. They have been transformed at least in part because of their experience of high intensity dissonance, felt personally through a personal encounter with poverty and suffering.

Unique characteristics of the STM/IC programme also were found to have both facilitated and hindered transformative learning. The extended immersion within communities (both host families and work places) provided crucial opportunity for the construction of meaningful interpersonal relationships, and so expanded the potential for the affective and “connected” learning for STM/IC participants that was intrinsic to their transformative learning. The lack of opportunity for group reflection processes among participants may have made transformative learning more difficult for some participants. Less emphasis upon the historical, political and

cultural contexts for the participants' host countries in pre-departure courses may have made transformative learning within the political and cultural domains less accessible to participants.

The STM/IC case study also suggests the transforming forms identified by Kiely (2002, 2004) can be overlapping forms, and do not allow in practice for mutually exclusive identification of transformative learning modalities, particularly amongst the cultural, personal and spiritual domains. For participants in the STM/IC case study generally, these three forms of transformative learning overlap, and are not easily separable. How could a spiritual transformation, for instance, such as a new awareness of the connectedness among peoples and all living things, also not be simultaneously a personal transformation? Or how could a cultural transformation for a participant – for instance, a critique of excessive consumerism and an effort to change consumption patterns - not be at the same time a personal transformation? In at least few instances, I had particular trouble deciding whether participants efforts to curb consumption patterns post-experience were due to, as Kiely puts it, the development of more “socially conscious lifestyles” (personal transformation), or the “recognition of one’s privileged lifestyle,” and the calling into question of the “cultural hegemony that promotes materialism, consumerism, and individualism” (cultural transformation: Kiely, 2004, p. 13). Perhaps Kiely (2004) has in mind for the level of cultural transformation a higher level discourse, where participants are able to see greater systemic causes to social inequalities? If so, it would then be difficult to see how such awareness for a participant would not also (or instead) be an intellectual transformation, which Kiely (2004) defines in part as the ability to “question assumptions around the origin, nature and solutions to problems” (p. 11). Despite these ambiguities, Kiely’s (2004) “transforming forms” proved a useful heuristic to detect signs of transformative learning for the case study participants. Their greatest strength is their breadth, or their ability to encompass transformative learning across the cognitive and affective domains. In this way they successfully re-contextualize Mezirow’s (1997, 2000) theory of transformative learning for the international CSL field, and provide a helpful framework for describing possible forms of transformation for participants.

The STM/IC case study also confirms findings from the existing literature on international community service-learning generally. Participants experienced the development of caring relationships that acted to foster their critical reflection on epistemic assumptions

(King, 2004). As a result of their experiences, most STM/IC participants demonstrated a greater capacity for understanding social justice issues, and showed a growing sense of responsibility for and solidarity with the marginalized, whilst some participants also demonstrated a greater intention to commit to social action (Monard-Weissman, 2003). Transformative learning for the STM/IC participants, when it occurred, was also often accompanied by personal identity shift (Feinstein, 2004) and, in fewer instances, an ability to critique the cultural values of consumerism and individualism (Quiroga, 2004; Seigel, 2004). The majority of STM/IC participants also experienced what Siegel (2004) called “transformative intellectual and moral development.”

Additionally, this study connects more generally with earlier research on transformative learning within community service-learning. When Eyler and Giles (1999) sought perspective transformation within community service-learning participants, they found it most prevalent in those students who articulated clear beliefs around the importance of social justice and social change, and participated in intensive, longer term CSL programmes where social justice was explicitly emphasized. The STM/IC case study supports these findings. A thorough going three month immersion experience, preceded by a lengthy preparation process requiring sustained critical reflection both the academically and personally prepares the STM/IC participants for the opportunity for transformative learning. Of the four conditions for transformative learning identified by Parks Daloz (2000) – the presence of the “other,” critical reflection and the importance of narrative, a mentoring community and opportunities for social action - the STM/IC case study was able to confirm the first two. In preparation for their experiences, participants were enabled opportunity for narrating their own life histories, including identification of their own “social location” as they met the international “other.” Because the case study seeks transformative learning in participants only up until two months after they return to Canada, the roles of mentoring communities and post-experience opportunities for social action have not been studied. Nonetheless participants of the STM/IC programme from previous years to this case study’s cohort did indeed act as a kind of peer-mentoring community during the participant’s preparations, sharing their experiences and subsequent actions for social justice.

The STM/IC case study originally identifies the themes of vulnerability, a discovery of

persisting differences in interpersonal relationships, and an experience of acceptance as crucial to participants' transformative learning. Intrinsic to the STM/IC programme, the lengthy and intensive pre-departure seminars and the three month immersion experience appear to elicit an openness and receptivity from participants to learning transformations. This voluntary vulnerability is met with an often radical acceptance from the host communities who shelter, nourish and care for the participants. What often results for STM/IC participants is a reconfigured solidarity with their host communities, in which participants are at once reminded of their privilege and challenged and invited into new modes of interpersonal relationships across difference.

The dynamics of vulnerability, discovery of persisting difference, and acceptance within the STM/IC programme experience help to further elucidate how Kiely's (2005) process of "connecting," or affective learning, can lead to transformative learning. The dynamics of vulnerability and acceptance correlate with transformative learning in the personal, moral and spiritual domains (Kiely 2004), but they also bear some relation to wider cultural and political transformation as well. As STM/IC participants discover strengths in their host communities, and share in their struggles, they can also become aware of their participation in systems which further marginalize peoples, and so attempt to lead more "responsible" and "accountable" lives back home.

Scope and Limitations of Study

The STM/IC case study sought to describe and account for any transformative learning for its participants in their experiences of an international community service-learning programme. Unlike Kiely's (2002) case study that searched for transformative learning for its participants anywhere from a few months to seven years after the completion of their international community service-learning, the STM/IC case study had a shorter longitudinal design over a period of six months. Signs of transformative learning were sought within a briefer time-frame (May 2008 through November 2008), from one cohort of students, and with an awareness that transformative learning is a process, and not simply an outcome, which unfolds over time and even years after the participants' re-entry to their country of origin. The present study sought signs of the onset of transformative learning processes and forms, and not their longer term resolution in established, alternative ways of being and acting in the world.

Kiely's (2002, 2005) "chameleon complex," explicating the ongoing and recurring struggle of returning students in changing their ways of life back in their country of origin, is not examined in this case study.

Qualitative studies such as the present one have inherent limitations. The student sample was small, mostly female and quite homogenous in terms of ethnicity, age, and other background factors. The case study method employed, while offering a detailed description useful for comparison, does not lead to universally generalizable claims.

Recommendations for Future Research

International community service-learning is a relatively recent phenomenon within higher education in North America, and there remains much to be learned from its processes and impacts, both upon participants and upon host communities. This empirical case study of the transformative learning for the STM/IC programme participants provides support for Kiely's (2002, 2004, 2005) model, and suggests new dynamics within the "connecting" processes by which participants form relationships with host communities which inspire transformative learning.

I have also detailed how programme context can shape both the form and processes of transformative learning for participants. In this case study, the STM/IC programme seemed more conducive to transformations within the intellectual, moral, personal and spiritual domains than for the cultural and political domains. Further empirical research at the programmatic level between international CSL programmes might yield insights into how the transformative learning of participants is either helped or hindered by specific programme features. For instance, does the length of time participants are abroad influence the form and prevalence of their transformative learning? Or are there other programmatic features that are more important, such as the emphasis upon social justice? Does the host family stay increase the likelihood of transformative learning for participants? This study suggests at least that the host family stay provides increased opportunity for the connecting, affective learning that has been shown to be a prerequisite for transformative learning (Kiely, 2002, 2004, 2005).

Does gender impact transformative learning processes and forms? This case study found that six of eight participants experienced transformative learning in a least one of Kiely's (2004) transforming forms, and these six participants were all women. The two participants that did not

were the only male participants in the case study, although in one instance (Jeff) there are ambiguous signs of transformative learning within the intellectual and moral realms. Current research on gender and CSL is minimal and mixed. There seems little doubt that female students have participated in CSL programmes at a greater rate than male students (e.g., Astin & Sax, 1998). Eyler, Giles, and Braxton (1997) have found that participation in CSL programmes led to female students self-reporting higher outcomes for citizenship and social justice indicators than their male counterparts. Bernacki and Jaeger (2008), however, when exploring the impact of CSL upon moral development and moral orientation of participants, found gender had no effects upon any variable considered. Qualitative study on the role gender plays within CSL generally, and for transformative learning outcomes and processes within international community service-learning specifically, seems warranted.

In light of this case study's findings on the dynamics of vulnerability, discovery of persisting difference, and acceptance, further avenues of research include empirical study of host communities and how they experience participants in their homes, workplaces and communities. Do host families themselves experience transformative learning through their acceptance of international CSL participants into their lives? How might this learning differ from that experienced by the guests? What do they regard as beneficial in hosting these "strangers" from Canada? Are there any negative impacts experienced through the presence of outsiders, either in the family or in the community? How are these experiences interpreted by community leaders and by international partner organisations?

This case study has suggested that preparing participants for a transformative encounter with an "other" involves fostering an open mindedness, susceptibility and vulnerability. How might educators provide environments conducive to this level of personal honesty and sharing prior to departure? Are there any ethical concerns to such an endeavour? Is it ethical to, or even possible to, *require* students to expose their personal vulnerabilities in order to affect transformative learning?

Further research into these identified areas would continue to illuminate any transformative learning processes for international CSL participants and their host communities, and would also assist in enabling programme administrators, and host community partners, to have clearer guidance as to the possible benefits and detriments to international community

service-learning generally.

Implications for Practice

As a study of transformative learning among its participants, this thesis was not constructed as a formal evaluation of the STM-Intercordia programme. The research nonetheless has implications for the design of this international community service-learning programme. Intercordia Canada is explicit in its pedagogical goal to encourage “moral responsiveness in students and [it] invites them to discover a more compassionate worldview” (Intercordia Brochure, 2007, p. 2). This study suggests that it is succeeding in meeting this objective: STM/IC participants experienced transformative learning mostly across the moral, personal, intellectual, and spiritual domains. Most STM/IC participants demonstrated a greater moral alignment with and concern for the marginalized through their participation in the programme.

The extended immersion within host communities (three months), coupled with host family stays, has been clearly conducive to transformative learning for STM/IC participants. The STM/IC programme has provided opportunities for participants to develop often intimate interpersonal relationships, and this “connecting” (Kiely, 2005) or affective learning has in turn provoked a more critical analysis and transformative learning.

There are two implications from this study, however, that call attention to the way the STM/IC programme is structured. Firstly, without consistent opportunities for group reflection processes, authored by local community educators and activists, some participants struggled to make the necessary connections between their experiences and the wider socio-political and cultural processes affecting their host communities. Finding ways to increase community input into participant learning processes and providing gathered, group reflection activities for participants may provide conditions more conducive to transformative learning. For instance, if the STM/IC participants were gathered every two weeks by the international partner in Ecuador (FRI), they might be able to collectively discuss academic reflection requirements in light of input from local community members around, say, the health impacts of the export driven floricultural industry. Participants then would more clearly be able to see the lines between their North American consumption patterns (e.g., buying flowers for Mother’s Day) and the health and well being of people of the “global south,” such as the greenhouse workers in Cayambe.

Secondly, because participants are received by host communities across three continents and a diversity of contexts, their common, academic preparation is necessarily general in nature. Greater pre-departure emphasis upon an individual country's historical, political and cultural context may assist participants in transformative learning across the political and cultural domains identified by Kiely (2002, 2004). Yet this seems difficult to achieve as the programme currently is structured.

One suggestion may be to focus upon a smaller number of international host countries and communities, thereby allowing greater concentration of academic attention to the range of historical, socio-economic, political and cultural processes that structure the learning context for participants. A smaller number of host countries might also deepen the institutional relationships between Intercordia Canada (and through them St. Thomas More College) and its international partners. As relationships are deepened, and institutional reciprocity is nurtured, more focused learning may result for all actors within the international community service-learning process.

A final implication for practice is the need to follow the transformative learning effects upon STM/IC participants over time in a longitudinal study. Kiely (2002, 2005) has shown the difficulty students often face when returning to their North American communities as they attempt to live *differently* in light of their transformation (chameleon complex). The cultural forces of materialism and consumerism are resistant to individual opposition, and whether and how participants are able participate in communities of resistance and solidarity to achieve social justice ends is worthy of study.

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APPENDIX A

PRE-DEPARTURE INTERVIEW FORMAT

1. Why did you choose to participate in the STM/IC programme? What are your expectations for your time abroad? What do you hope to learn?
2. Could you tell me something about your family of origin? How would you describe the financial well-being of your family?
3. From what you know in advance of your trip, how would you describe the differences and similarities between your own culture and the culture of _____ (Bosnia, Ukraine, Ghana, Ecuador, Nicaragua). Are you aware of any links between Canada and your country placement?
4. How would you describe your political ideology (general beliefs, opinions, perspectives)?
5. What does poverty mean to you?
6. In your mind, what are some of the causes of global poverty and injustice? Have they influenced your decision to participate in the programme? If so, how?
7. How would you describe your spiritual beliefs and practices?
8. What material goods do you need to survive?
9. What career do you hope to begin after studies? Why is that important to you?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW FOR ECUADOR PARTICIPANTS

1. Having been in Ecuador now for approximately 1 month, how have you found your host family?
2. What has your experience been to date of your work placement?
3. What daily challenges are there for you in your new Ecuadorian context?
4. What have you found most difficult, to date, about the shift from Canada to Ecuador?
5. What has surprised you most to date about your experience?
6. What questions, concerns or problems are you wrestling with now?

APPENDIX C

COURSE OUTLINE SOCIOLOGY 298.3 (PART B)

To fulfill the requirements for their Sociology 298.3 (Part B) course, students, while abroad, are expected to complete both personal journal questions and then academic reflection questions. These texts were given to the course instructor, Dr. Darrell McLaughlin for grading, and will be forwarded to the author (prior to grading) for analysis. The following material comes from the course outline (McLaughlin, 2007b):

3 Academic Reflection Papers will be done during the time spent in your host country (May-August). The reflection papers will be three to five pages in length and done in conjunction with information gathered from informal interviews, participant observation and/or the popular media as well as information recorded in your field notes/personal journals. Each reflection paper will be based on one of the general questions or topics provided below. The questions are intended to encourage you to think critically and sociologically about your experiences. As we have discussed, reflection is a core component of Community Service Learning (CSL). CSL works best with “structured opportunities” for students to critically reflect upon their service experience, and examine and form beliefs, values, opinions, assumptions, judgements and practices, and construct their own meaning and significance for future action. Reflection papers should be seen as providing the space for you to make connections between your service and lived experiences and course material.

When completed, send the reflections by email, if possible. If emailing proves impossible, mail the first two and submit the third once you return to Canada. If mailing is difficult, submit all three once you return. When feasible, Academic Reflection Papers will be posted on PAWS so that class members can continue to developing a collective understanding of their experiences abroad.

Reflection Question One (Due June 1, 2007)

Tell me about your host family and/or community. How is the “social situation” in your host family or community similar to and/or different from what you anticipated?

Reflection Question Two (Due July 1, 2007)

Describe, or draw a “map” (to use the concept from institutional ethnography) of, the local social relations that you have observed which you consider the bases for:

- 1) maintaining the status quo or social continuity;

- 2) contributing to social change and the movement towards a new social order (give special attention to those that are making a difference and what makes this possible).

Keep in mind that a “thick understanding” of social life requires combining the micro and the macro levels.

Or

One of the important skills that micro sociologists must develop is the ability to see the world from the standpoint of the “Other.” This is also essential to understanding the concept of the “Preferential Option for the Poor.” This Reflection option requires that attempt to describe an event or observation (mundane or extraordinary) from three different perspectives:

- 1) as a stranger;
- 2) as the most privileged person in the family or community;
- 3) as the most marginalized person in the family or community.

Conclude by accounting for the social factors that might explain these different perspectives.

Reflection Question Three (Due Aug. 1, 2007)

For your third reflection paper, I would like for you to consider how you see people in Canada working in solidarity with people in your host country to increase the quality of life for marginalized people in both countries.

Journal writings are to encompass a broad range of information - description, first person narrative, emotional reaction and interpretation, and critical analysis. Students will record in their journal, for example, information about: what they see, hear, taste, smell and feel; organizations present, the physical environment (natural and person-made); infrastructure; culture (material and non-material); a record of specific conversations; questions arising, and things that were surprising. As students create their journals, they are asked to remember our discussions in class about symbolic interactionism (how people create meaning), ethnomethodology (people’s practices), and institutional ethnography (linking local activities to “extra-local” social relations in which actual people’s lives are embedded). The general questions associated with each journaling exercise are intended to open up your experiences while focussing your attention as you place your personal experiences in a wider sociological context. You are encouraged to use the journaling questions as starting points and you should not feel obligate to limit your observations to what I have identified. I am not in a position to anticipate all the important aspects of your experiences. Remember, the local people are experts in understanding daily life. The scheduled guide for journal entries:

- Week 1 What are your most vivid first impressions of the site? Describe settings (institutional and physical), people and roles, actions and positive and/or negative feelings you are having.
- Week 2 Describe who you work with, their lives, their views, their goals in life, and the barriers and opportunities they experience. Include some personal reaction to the individual or individuals with whom you are working.
- Week 3 Discuss the activities (including the purpose) you have been doing with the person(s) with whom you have been working.
- Week 4 Describe your relationship with the people you interact with whom you work.
- Week 5 How do the people with whom you interact with react to you? Cite specific examples.
- Week 6 How does their reaction make you feel and shape your responses?
- Week 7 How do you think your presence in the community impacts the person(s) with whom you work?
- Week 8 What impact has your work in community service had on you? Illustrate your points with experiences you have had.
- Week 9 Describe in detail the work you are doing, including bits of conversation or examples of your work. What is the significance of that which you have described?
- Week 10 Having been in the community for several weeks now, how have your initial impressions been altered? What are the major points that you now know that you were not aware of earlier? If your impressions have not changed, describe observations that confirm initial impressions.

APPENDIX D
FINAL INTERVIEW FORMAT.

Completed November, 2008, 2 months after return.

1. Why did you choose to participate in the STM/IC programme? What were your original expectations for your time abroad? Were these met?
2. Describe your host family, and work placement and typical daily activities.
3. How did the experience of living and working in a “developing” country affect you?
4. What does poverty mean to you?
5. How would you describe the differences and similarities between you own culture and the culture of _____ (Bosnia, Ukraine, Ghana, Ecuador, Nicaragua). Are you aware of any links between Canada and your country placement?
6. Was there any particular relationship you formed with a local community member that stands out for you? Why?
7. Was there anything that surprised or shocked you? What did you find most challenging or difficult about your time abroad?
8. After this experience, has your political ideology (general beliefs, opinions, perspectives) changed?
9. In your mind, what are some of the causes of global poverty and injustice? Can you see anyway of contributing to their overcoming?

APPENDIX E

META-REFLECTION ESSAY QUESTION

According to the course outline (McLaughlin, 2007b), students are asked to complete a meta-reflection paper upon their return to Canada:

A Meta reflection paper (an integrative essay,) will be done at the conclusion of the experience abroad and is due Sept. 1. The paper will give students an opportunity to draw connections between material from the classroom and their summer experiences. This writing will build on the insights that arise for students in their academic reflection and journal writing. You are asked to think over your community service-learning experience. What was learned by both you and the person(s) with whom you worked? Include special experiences or highlights you might have had. Use concepts from the course where appropriate. The meta-reflection should eight to ten pages (12 point font, double spaced) in length.

APPENDIX F
CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a study entitled International Community Service-Learning: Transforming Lives. Please read this form carefully, and feel free to contact the researchers if you have any questions.

Researcher(s): David Peacock (MCED candidate) Department of Education, University of Saskatchewan, 966-4828 and Dr. Marcia McKenzie, Ph.D., Department of Education (Foundations), University of Saskatchewan, 966-7551.

Purpose and Procedure: The purpose of this study is to investigate whether students' completing the St. Thomas More College/Intercordia Canada international community service-learning program exhibit transformative learning through their experience. Students who participate in the study will be asked to complete either two or three interviews with the researcher, one before departure (April, 2008), one while abroad for students in Ecuador, and one upon return to Canada (November, 2008). Each interview is expected to last around one hour, and preparatory questions will be forwarded to you in advance of the interview to consider. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Participants will have the right to review the transcripts should they choose, and amend any material or retract or review any remarks.

In addition, students will be asked to contribute their ungraded presentations, journals, academic reflections and meta-reflection paper (the academic requirements for the Social Change and Global Solidarity A and B) to the researcher for research on signs of transformative learning. You will be offered the opportunity to receive a summary of the findings. Upon completion of your second interview upon return to Canada you will have a chance to win one certificate valued at \$100 (University Bookstore or Future Shop). The winners of the draw will be contacted so that they can pick up their prize.

Potential Risks: There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. However, some students may feel that they would like to talk to someone about some issues that are raised by the interviews. On campus there are many centres where students can go to talk to someone about any difficulties that they may be having. The Student Health Centre is in Room 145 Saskatchewan Hall (966-5768). The Student Help Center is located in Room 27 of Place Riel (966-6981). You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time; there are no penalties for

doing so. The researcher has no control over students' academic grades or their international placements.

Potential Benefits: There are no direct personal benefits associated with participation in this study other than a chance to win one of three gift certificates in November, 2008. Although personal benefits and/or benefits for the greater community are not guaranteed, developing a better understanding of the transformative learning possibilities of international community service-learning will assist in the construction of better educational programmes.

Storage of Data: The data that are collected in connection with this study will be stored with Marcia McKenzie and David Peacock during the course of the study, and on files kept secured and locked by both researchers for a period of five years.

Confidentiality: The findings from this study will be used in completion of a Master's Thesis project. They may also be published in a scholarly journal and presented at a scholarly conference. However, all participants will only be identified by a pseudonym in the transcripts, thesis, and subsequent publications related to this research. Because the participants for this research project have been selected from a small group of people, all of whom are known to each other, it is possible that you may be identifiable to other people on the basis of what you have said. After participants interview, and prior to the data being included in the final thesis, they will be given the opportunity to review the transcript of their interviews, and to add, alter, or delete information from the transcripts as they see fit. Any persons referred to in the interview processes will also remain confidential. Verbatim quotes from participants in interview data and course work may be used, but they will be reported under a pseudonym. Any specific organisations, faculty, supervisors, students, and other persons referred to by participants will also be given pseudonyms.

Right to Withdraw: You may withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort (and without loss of relevant entitlements, without affecting academic or employment status, without losing access to relevant services etc). You also have the right not to answer individual interview questions. If you withdraw from the study at any time, you are free to contact the researchers and request that the data you have contributed be destroyed. Your consent to participate will be sought at the beginning of both the first and second interviews.

Questions: If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to contact the researchers at the numbers provided above. This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board on (insert date). Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Office of Research Services (966-2084). Out of town participants may call collect. At the end of the second interview, you will be asked if you would like to receive a summary of the results of this study. If you indicate that you would like to receive such a summary, you will be asked to provide your e-mail. In addition you may contact the investigators using the contact numbers to request a study summary.

Consent to Participate: I have read and understood the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my/our questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project, understanding that I may withdraw my consent at any time. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

(Name of Participant)

(Date)

(Signature of Participant)

(Signature of Researcher)