

2015

# Experiential Empathy: The Impact of Service-Learning Immersion Experiences on College Students' Cross-Cultural Empathy

Amy Lynne Nicols  
*Taylor University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://pillars.taylor.edu/mahe>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Nicols, Amy Lynne, "Experiential Empathy: The Impact of Service-Learning Immersion Experiences on College Students' Cross-Cultural Empathy" (2015). *Master of Arts in Higher Education Thesis Collection*. 32.  
<http://pillars.taylor.edu/mahe/32>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Pillars at Taylor University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Arts in Higher Education Thesis Collection by an authorized administrator of Pillars at Taylor University. For more information, please contact [aschu@tayloru.edu](mailto:aschu@tayloru.edu).



EXPERIENTIAL EMPATHY:  
THE IMPACT OF SERVICE-LEARNING IMMERSION EXPERIENCES ON  
COLLEGE STUDENTS' CROSS-CULTURAL EMPATHY

---

A thesis

Presented to

The School of Social Sciences, Education & Business  
Department of Higher Education and Student Development  
Taylor University  
Upland, Indiana

---

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development

---

by

Amy Lynne Nicols

May 2015

© Amy Lynne Nicols 2015

**Higher Education and Student Development  
Taylor University  
Upland, Indiana**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

---

MASTER'S THESIS

---

This is to certify that the Thesis of

Amy Lynne Nicols

entitled

Experiential Empathy: The Impact of Service-Learning Immersion  
Experiences on College Students' Cross-Cultural Empathy

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the

Master of Arts degree  
in Higher Education and Student Development

May 2015

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Gaier, Ph.D.                      Date  
Thesis Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Moeschberger, Ph.D.                      Date  
Member, Thesis Hearing Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Skip Trudeau, Ed.D.                      Date  
Member, Thesis Hearing Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tim Herrmann, Ph.D.                      Date  
Director, M.A. in Higher Education and Student Development

### Abstract

The purpose of the study is to understand the impact of service-learning immersion experiences on college students' expression of cross-cultural empathy. The research question states: "How do intercultural service-learning programs impact a college student's expression of cross-cultural empathy?" The research represented insights about a shared experience from eight participants who attended a small, faith-based, liberal arts institution in the Midwest. These students are part of a living-learning community; however, they participated in four different programs in domestic and international locations that allowed them to work with orphans and vulnerable children in an intercultural context. The researcher employed a phenomenological approach and derived three distinct themes based on the essence of the participants' experiences. The three themes are as follows: the development of interpersonal relationships, the deconstruction of a savior complex, and fostering a sense of curiosity about other cultures. The study supports higher education's focus on globalization efforts and diversity initiatives. Furthermore, it implies that institutions need to implement, emphasize, and strengthen service-learning programs as a way to encourage the development of cross-cultural empathy in their students in order to help them understand themselves and others in the context of the larger world.

## Acknowledgments

To my Lord and Savior, thank you for being constant and ever-caring. Thank you for giving me strength and endless grace throughout this process. I am so grateful that you continue to allow me to see a glimpse of your Kingdom through your people. I love you, Jesus.

To my family, you are my strong support, my examples of sacrifice, love, and true compassion. I thank you all for the ways in which you empathize with me on a daily basis. Thank you for the encouragement and interest shown throughout this process. I love you all very dearly.

To my grandmother, who champions me daily, who gives all of herself for herself for the good of the family, you are a true example of what it means to love in all circumstances. Thank you for being interested in my research. I am so grateful for how much you support me and fiercely love me, Grandma. Love you.

To Scott Gaier, thank you for being such a tangible example of Christ's love in all that you do. Thank you for being such a wonderful thesis supervisor throughout this time. I have learned so much from you and will continue to learn because of your example. I appreciate your patience and flexibility with me throughout this process.

To the MAHE faculty, I cannot express how grateful I am for what you all have taught me in your own individual ways. You have shown me the importance of being a life-long learner and I will carry your wisdom with me throughout my life.

To Cohort 7, what would I do without you all?! I begin to tear up just thinking of how much you all mean to me and the memories that we have shared throughout these two years. We did it, friends. Thank you for the endless support, encouragement, and making me feel known. I am so blessed to have each of you in my life.

To all members of the Women's Programming Cabinet, both past and present, thank you for allowing me to be your GA, to know you, to ask you questions, and for you all to show me true examples of empathy in how you treat me. I am so grateful to call you all my first students and I have the fondest memories of all of you.

To los niños y la gente in Tijuana, thank you for allowing me to live alongside of you. You all have taught me things that I never imagined I would need to learn. Thank you for your example of unconditional love. It was a joy to be with you and I pray I will see you all in the very near future.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Chapter 1 Introduction .....	1
Empathy through Experience.....	2
Development of Empathy through Experience.....	3
Purpose Statement.....	5
Chapter 2 Literature Review .....	6
Service-Learning Defined.....	6
The Rise of Service-Learning in the University .....	7
Positive Outcomes Associated with Service-Learning.....	7
Intercultural Competencies .....	10
Cross-Cultural Empathy.....	14
Conclusion .....	16
Chapter 3 Methodology .....	17
Phenomenological Research .....	17
Participants.....	17
Interview Protocol and Procedures .....	18
Data Analysis .....	20
Benefits .....	20

Chapter 4 Results .....	21
Theme 1: Development of Personal Relationships .....	21
Theme 2: Deconstruction of a Savior Complex.....	23
Theme 3: Fostering Curiosity .....	28
Conclusion .....	30
Chapter 5 Discussion .....	31
Positive Outcomes of Service Learning.....	31
Cross-Cultural Empathy Development .....	37
Limitations of Research .....	37
Implications for Higher Education Practice.....	39
Suggestions for Future Research .....	40
Conclusion .....	41
References.....	43
Appendix A: Protocol Questions .....	53

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

*Empathy may in fact be the trait most essential to the human situation at least in our global community.* (Dyche & Zayas, 2001, p. 257)

In an increasingly globalized world, higher education has the obligation to encourage more transformational stories in the lives of their students. Experiences with diversity benefit the individual student and those around them (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002; Reade, Reckmeyer, Cabot, Jaehne, & Novak, 2013; Umbach & Kuh, 2006). Despite higher education's strides to prioritize the cultural emphasis, there always remains opportunity for improvement. Particularly within predominantly white institutions, they tend not to become as interculturally competent because of their "lack of knowledge about cultural backgrounds" (Nganga, 2006, p. 5; Reade et al., 2013).

Research indicated that, within the population of white students, many want to increase their intercultural competencies but need to have meaningful opportunities to do so (Hurtado, Gasiewski & Alvarez, 2014; Umbach & Kuh, 2006). While liberal arts institutions tend not to prove very racially diverse in terms of student enrollment, many institutions still provide significant experiences with diversity instrumental in a student's development (Bollinger, 2003; Umbach & Kuh, 2006).

In order to facilitate stronger connections between racially diverse groups and to increase intercultural competencies in Caucasian college students, educators should consider incorporating the concept of cross-cultural empathy into the fabric of university

life (Carrell, 1997; Church & Meznar, 2012). Empathy refers to the intellectual “ability to share someone else’s feelings” (Empathy, 2014). Moreover, empathy in a holistic expression of intellectual understanding and caring emotion can transform the lives of college students and the landscape of interculturalism in the university.

### **Empathy through Experience**

Kolb (1984) posited experience as the source for learning and development, two highly prioritized components of the college experience (Astin & Sax, 1998; Bowen, 1977). In an intercultural context, diversity experienced in relational and societal interaction proved more significant in students’ intercultural competencies development than diversity learned through traditional classroom methods (Gurin et al., 2002).

According to Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2010), higher education should focus primarily on student learning. In particular, liberal arts institutions value the concept of holistic education in which students learn both in and outside of the classroom. Whole-person education combines both classroom learning (the acquisition of knowledge) and experience with the surrounding environment. Bowen (1977) stated:

Education, or the teaching-learning function, is defined to embrace not only the formal academic curricula, classes and laboratories but also all those influences upon students flowing from association with peers and faculty members and from the many and varied experiences of campus life. (p. 24)

The influences of learning and relationship prove evident on the physical campus but even more visible in an environment in which the student feels challenged to adapt to new experiences. Service-learning (SL) immersion trips exemplify the idea of a learning

experience (Boggis, Kelly, Schumacher, Randt, & Erickson, 2013; Church & Meznar, 2012; Jones, Hatcher & Bringle, 2011).

Through these interculturally focused programs, students engage their intellect and emotion through cultural observations and personal interactions with those of a different cultural group (Amerson, 2010; Felten, Gilchrist & Darby, 2006; Kiely, 2005; Kollman & Morgan, 2011; Myers-Lipton, 1996). While these intercultural SL programs often present challenges for students, research discovered enormous benefits to their overall development (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001; Wang, 2011). Along with personal improvements in the student come the potential improvements for the intercultural climate of the university and the “opportunities for cross-cultural learning experiences” (Dyche & Zayas, 2001, p. 254).

Vast research looked at cross-cultural empathy in the context of psychological counseling and training for such (Dyche & Zayas, 2001; Lyons & Hazler, 2002; Nganga, 2006; Ridley & Lingle, 1996). In addition, research described the effect SL has on a student’s intercultural competence (ICC) (Bowen & Hackett, 2010; Deardorff, 2006; Green, 2001; Haber & Getz, 2011; Jones & Hill, 2001; Kiely, 2004; Tangen, Mercer, Spooner-Lane, & Hepple, 2011; Wang, 2011). However, little research examined how the impact of cross-cultural empathy on students in SL immersion programs.

### **Development of Empathy through Experience**

The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in the mid-twentieth century represented a time of extreme racial animosity between white and black U.S. citizens. Claiborne Paul (C. P.) Ellis stood out as one of the “Exalted Cyclops,” the president of the Durham, North Carolina Chapter of the KKK (Batson & Ahmad, 2009; Rothenberg, 2004; Terkel &

Ellis, 1980). As a poor white man with an inferiority complex, he wanted to feel part of something bigger; he wanted to belong. Later, C. P. was asked to serve as chairman of a community coalition; however, Ann Atwater, a “militant black woman,” served as the other co-chairman (Rothenberg, 2004, p. 428; Terkel & Ellis, 1980). C. P. hated her and had no desire to work with her yet agreed because of the opportunity to take part in something else (Rothenberg, 2004). As this unlikely duo worked together and began to understand one another, C. P. did not see her as a detestable black woman but as a human being—his friend. He poignantly stated,

I begin to see, here we are, two people from the far ends of the fence, havin’ identical problems, except hers bein’ black and me bein’ white. From that moment on, I tell ya, that gal and I worked together good. I begin to love the girl, really. (Terkel & Ellis, 1980, p. 207-208 as cited in Batson & Ahmad, 2009)

C. P. Ellis’ transformation from a leader of the KKK to a lover of cultural populations and advocate for impoverished African-Americans, demonstrated the power of empathy.

The powerful concept of empathy, the ability to share another’s feelings, integrates both intellectual and emotional capabilities (Empathy, 2014). As Dyche and Zayas (2001) stated, “empathy is an integrated expression of our intellectual and emotional selves in our relations with others” (p. 246). Essentially, empathy exists as a holistic construct because it integrates thinking and feeling, emotional and intellectual, heart and mind (Carrell, 1997; Lu, Dane, & Gellman, 2005). Empathy proves crucial in the process of whole-person development (a shared goal in higher education) as it develops both the mind and the heart, indicating holistic growth through experiences of awareness of the self and others (Bowen, 1977; Kratzke & Bertolo, 2013).

When applied to a global context, empathy holds even more power and influence. Cross-cultural empathy enables a person to respect others' cultural backgrounds, desire to gain knowledge about them, and value them as individuals (Bennett, 1993; Dyche & Zayas, 2001; Kegan, 1995). While difficult to uniformly define, cross-cultural empathy refers to the ability to connect intellectually and emotionally with others through the lens of cultural perspective (Dyche & Zayas, 2001; Nganga, 2006; Ridley & Lingle, 1996).

Cultural differences often cause confusion and miscommunication. However, cross-cultural empathy facilitates understanding, in relation to knowledge about the others' culture and in connection to them as individuals (Kollman & Morgan, 2011). The depth of intellect and emotion linked with cross-cultural empathy creates potential to foster intercultural relationships through empathetic experience (Nganga; 2006).

### **Purpose Statement**

The present study sought to observe the development of cross-cultural empathy in college students' SL experience, and accordingly, to see if the students underwent transformation in empathetic ability through relationships with culturally diverse populations. The study explored the experience of students in an intensive SL class accompanied by an intercultural experience working with vulnerable children in international and domestic settings. The study results illustrated the importance of SL in the university in developing cross-cultural empathy, a construct shaping multiculturalism in student development and higher education. To analyze the constructs of SL programs and cross-cultural empathy, the following research question guided the study:

- How do intercultural service-learning programs impact a college student's expression of cross-cultural empathy?

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Service-Learning Defined**

Although service-learning (SL) holds much attention in the world of higher education, the need still exists to define and distinguish it from community service or volunteerism (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin et al., 2000; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). One can interpret the definition of SL in many ways; however, for the purposes of the present study, the researcher used Bringle and Hatcher's (2000) definition:

A course-based, credit-bearing 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 personal values and civic responsibility. (p. 38)

Bringle and Hatcher included four distinguishing features of SL commonly found in literature. First, the program follows an academic activity design; second, it partners with the community to provide a meaningful and reciprocally beneficial experience. Thirdly, the program views reflection of the experience as essential, and, lastly, SL courses strive to produce a sense of civic responsibility as a learning outcome for their students (Eyler, 2002; Jones et al., 2011; Simons & Cleary, 2006).

## **The Rise of Service-Learning in the University**

Service-learning began in the 1960s and steadily gained momentum within the world of higher education (Astin et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2011; Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999). The proliferation of SL courses and programs in recent years gives researchers opportunities to analyze the outcomes SL has on a student's overall collegiate experience (Eyler et al., 2001). The experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) supported SL as an effective practice because it “emphasize[s] the central role that experience plays in the learning process” (p. 20). Furthermore, research suggested the educational component within SL contributes to a higher level of learning and more positive outcomes within the student (Astin et al., 2000; Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Jones & Abes, 2004; Sperling, 2007; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000).

## **Positive Outcomes Associated with Service-Learning**

Although students must acknowledge learning as an infinite process and not a set of fulfilled goals and results, the effects of SL remain evident in literature (Kolb, 1984). According to extensive research studies, SL programs and courses prove to create many positive outcomes in the students who engage in them (Astin et al., 2000; Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Eyler et al., 2001; Jones & Abes, 2004; McElhaney, 1998; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). Among the number of researched outcomes, most become categorized as intrapersonal (relationship with self), interpersonal (relationship with others), and global awareness (relationship with the world).

**Intrapersonal outcomes.** Kiely (2004) claimed that SL, especially in international context, “marks an important transformational event in their lives, one that will forever shape their sense of self” (p. 5). Studies showed students' ability for critical

thinking, overall awareness, cognitive maturation, self-concept, and personal sense of identity increase due to participation in SL programs (Amerson, 2010; Eyler, 2002; Eyler et al., 2001; Kiely, 2004, 2005; Jones & Abes, 2004; Sedlak, Doheny, Panthofer, & Anaya, 2003). Outcomes appear best when students can reflect upon their SL experience (Eyler, 2002). In a study of college students involved in an international SL program in Nicaragua, Kiely (2004) found that “final reflection papers tended to indicate that profound transformational learning had occurred” (p. 6). Furthermore, Felten et al. (2006) argued scholars and practitioners need to integrate emotion into the reflective process of SL to maximize learning and other positive outcomes. During their college years, students’ experience seems most powerful and personally beneficial when the SL course emphasizes the importance of reflection (Eyler, 2002; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Eyler et al., 2001; Felten et al., 2006; Kiely, 2004, 2005).

**Interpersonal outcomes.** Effective SL programs often cause the student to think about the “other” and to understand the context of caring for the “other” (Green, 2001, p. 18; Kiely, 2004; Kratzke & Bertolo, 2013; Lundy, 2007). SL gives students an opportunity to interact with populations with whom they would not normally interact, thus creating a perspective change of how students view those around them (Boggis et al., 2013; Kiely, 2005; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Sperling, 2007). Furthermore, if done effectively, SL facilitates relationships between students and members of the community because it gives them an opportunity to interact with someone of a different socio-economic or ethnic group (Eyler, 2002; Jones & Hill, 2001; Kratzke & Bertolo, 2013).

**Outcomes of global awareness.** The idea of whole-person education, present in many universities, involves a global component and a critical awareness of diversity

(Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007; Jones et al., 2011; Simons & Cleary, 2006). A study by Braskamp, Braskamp, and Merrill (2009) found the following:

Students now need to develop a global perspective while in college. They need to think and act in terms of living in a world in which they meet, work, and live with others with very different cultural backgrounds, habits, perspectives, customs, religious beliefs, and aspirations. (p. 101)

SL courses serve as vehicles to continue the development of global citizens. Studies showed a positive correlation between SL participation and multicultural competencies in students (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin et al., 2000; Bowen & Hackett, 2010; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Silver, Wilhite, & Ledoux, 2011; Simons & Cleary, 2006; Sperling, 2007).

Eyler and Giles (1999) found a college student's involvement in SL reduces negative stereotypes and increases positive interest in diversity. Additionally, students' participation in service activities throughout their college career positively corresponds with outcomes regarding civic responsibility, especially as they relate to racial understanding and acceptance of diversity (Astin & Sax, 1998). The SL emphasis on diversity encourages students to engage in global awareness and often provides them with their first opportunity to experience an "emerging global consciousness" (Astin & Sax, 1998; Einfeld & Collins, 2008; Kiely, 2004, p. 9).

Most SL programs provide students with a safe place for them to realize their own "global position on the map of power and wealth" and the privilege they have in context of the outside world (Kiely, 2005, p. 12). Often while participating in SL programs and activities, "self-described middle-class students confront for the first time poverty on a personal level" (Jones & Abes, 2004, p. 160). Through these experiences, students

realize what living in poverty means (Amerson, 2010; Green, 2001; Jones & Hill, 2001; Kiely, 2005). While this interaction with poverty proves difficult and raises issues of racial identity development, it often spurs students to take action in the future (Astin & Sax, 1998; Jones & Abes, 2004; Jones & Hill, 2001).

Many of these outcomes fall within multiple categories (interpersonal, intrapersonal, and globally aware). This overlap further emphasizes SL programs as a multi-faceted manner of advancing student development (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000).

### **Intercultural Competencies**

In the world of higher education, educators realize the relevance of cross-cultural discussion and the need to increase awareness within their students (Fantini, 2000). Since the 1980s, the number of students enrolled in the university steadily increased, and the proportion of cross-cultural students to domestic students remained consistent with those rising numbers (U. S. Census Bureau, 2012). Institutions need to recognize the globalization of the “Ivory Tower” and think of the best path in moving forward in the global community on and off campus (Eyler et al., 2001; Fantini, 2000).

Educators do not agree unanimously on a definition of ICC partly because this broad term encompasses many different abilities. “This lack of specificity in defining intercultural competence is due presumably to the difficulty of identifying the specific components of this complex concept” (Deardorff, 2006, p. 2). Despite the struggle to specify the exact components of intercultural competencies, the literature exhibited significant overlap of thematic concepts and emphasizes many central themes.

For the purposes of the current study, the researcher used a concise definition of ICC: “the effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural

situations” (Deardorff, 2009, p. 287) with the components of ICC defined as the knowledge, skills, attitude, and awareness of self and others (Boggis et al., 2013; Byram, Nichols & Stevens, 2001; Constantine & Sue; 2005; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2009; Jones & Abes, 2004; Sedlak et al., 2003).

**Knowledge.** In the 1997 Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, Byram used the word “knowledge” as knowledge of self, of others, of individual and societal interactions (p. 34). Byram argued the type of knowledge most found in someone with a high level of intercultural communicative competence most likely comes through story, interpersonal interaction, and conversation.

Through his study of a SL program in Nicaragua, Kiely (2004) also spoke to the importance of knowledge obtained through relationship within the context of college students’ SL programs. When given the chance to interact with the Nicaraguan locals, the white college students engaged in conversation about the Nicaraguan culture. With their recently gained knowledge, students identified similarities and differences among various cultures and tried to understand other aspects of the cultural context (Perry & Southwell, 2011). Cultural knowledge as a cognitive capability increases most when students willingly learn about others, simultaneously increasing their own self-awareness (Jones et al., 2011).

**Skills.** The skills associated with ICC center on the idea of effective cross-cultural communication and of acquiring and processing through new information as it relates to different cultures (Deardorff, 2009; Perry & Southwell, 2011). Knowledge proves fundamental in the development of cross-cultural skills, yet the skill of relating with someone of another culture remains even more crucial.

Non-verbal communication proves an important skill to relate with those from another country (Kiely, 2005). While linguistic skills and fluency aid in communication, individuals demonstrate high levels of ICC through the use of body language and other nonverbal communication to appropriately interact with those of another culture (Bowen & Hackett, 2010; Constantine & Sue, 2005; Kratzke & Bertolo, 2013; Wang, 2012).

Deardorff and Deardorff (2000) created a cross-cultural training tool to evaluate cross-cultural skills. The tool has a twofold purpose: it helps identify college students' stage in their path toward development of ICC and fosters this competence within them. The tool starts with observation and active listening and encourages students to employ critical thinking skills such as multiple perspectives and open-mindedness. To complement the skills developed by the tool, individuals collect further information through asking questions, contributing to their overall knowledge. (Deardorff & Deardorff, 2000; Kratzke & Bertolo, 2013).

**Awareness.** Carrell (1997) claimed awareness as an integral step toward developing multicultural competence. The categories of awareness include self, others, and systemic issues (i.e., poverty, privilege, socioeconomic status) (Jones, Rowan-Kenyon, Ireland, Niehaus, & Skendall, 2012). To begin this process, students must intentionally develop self-awareness for them to truly embrace the message of multiculturalism and to advance in ICC (Constantine & Sue, 2005; Jones & Abes, 2004; Jones, Sander, & Booker, 2013). Cultural self-awareness influences both the way in which individuals view themselves and the development of their worldview. For this reason, "self-awareness is difficult to gain without moving beyond one's own culture" (Savicki, 2008, p. 37). As students encounter situations of poverty and diversity, they

have “opportunities to examine their own beliefs, values, and lifestyles as they interacted with various populations” (Sedlak et al., 2003, p. 102).

The processes of self-awareness and awareness of others often occur simultaneously. Gardner (1999) described four components in effective cross-cultural communication in his multiple intelligence theory. Three components directly pertain to self-awareness—one’s own nonverbal language, cultural style, and how one’s own cultural style combines others’.

Jones and Abes (2004) echoed Gardner’s (1999) idea through a study that demonstrated how cross-cultural SL contributes to a more fully integrated identity in which student use critical thinking skills to think about themselves and relationships with others. Along with this idea, Amerson (2010) described awareness as an examination of one’s own biases and prejudices. As students develop ICC, they must become aware of themselves as an individual and in context of others. To advance awareness and develop ICC demands a critical examination of their culture and other cultures (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2009; Jones & Abes, 2004; Sedlak et al., 2003).

**Attitudes.** Attitudes toward cross-cultural situations and diverse populations also indicate ICC. When students remain ignorant of others’ presence, fail to ask questions, and refuse to learn about other cultures, they exhibit low levels of ICC. However, a student possessing “the ability to be extremely flexible and go into [a cross-cultural experience] with more curiosity is of utmost importance” to these competencies. (Boggis et al., 2013, p. 7). The ideal attitudes for ICC have curiosity, flexibility (i.e., adaptability), and open-mindedness (Bennett, 1993; Boggis et al., 2013; Byram et al., 2001; Constantine & Sue, 2005; Fantini, 2000; Kitsantas, 2004).

An attitude of cross-cultural curiosity comes with a “willingness to relativize one’s own values, beliefs and behaviors” and to understand that one’s home culture is not always correct (Byram et al., 2001). An open attitude demonstrates critical thinking skills in seeing beyond the simplicity of “right” and “wrong”; it mandates an appreciation for the differences between cultures (Sedlak et al., 2003). Through their international experience, students realize the complicated nature of cross-cultural issues and learn “how their attitudes may influence their perceptions about cultural differences” (Kratzke & Bertolo, 2013, p. 110). While accustomed to the simplicity of their mono-cultural past, students’ open attitude to new experiences begins to alter their way of thinking, changes their presumptions, and teaches them the cultural and global complexities of the world (Bennett, 1993; Chen, 1989; Jones et al., 2012; Kim & Goldstein, 2005).

### **Cross-Cultural Empathy**

**Empathy defined.** In higher education and student development, scholar-practitioners often discuss empathy as a learning outcome for students. Despite incorrect usage of the word, empathy may prove the most important of the intercultural competencies as it pertains to all four dimensions of ICC: knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes (Dyche & Zayas, 2001; Lundy, 2007; Lyons & Hazler, 2002; Nganga, 2006; Ridley & Lingle, 1996; Salovey & Mayer, 1989; Schutte et al., 2001).

While conceptualized as a relational ability, empathy actually entails both intellectual and emotional capability (Dyche & Zayas, 2001; Schutte et al., 2001). Dyche and Zayas (2001) stated, “empathy is an integrated expression of our intellectual and emotional selves in our relations with others” (p. 246). Empathy often strongly correlates with emotional intelligence (Gardner, 1999; Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2008; Salovey &

Mayer, 1989; Schutte et al., 2001). Those with high emotional intelligence note their own and others' emotions and "use moods to motivate adaptive behaviors" (Salovey & Mayer, 1989, p. 200). A study of 24 college students determined emotional intelligence positively correlates with the development of empathetic perspectives: "The ability to perceive and understand emotions in others is an important component of emotional intelligence; [therefore] persons with higher emotional intelligence should have a greater ability to experience empathy" (Schutte et al., 2001, p. 524).

**Cross-cultural empathy defined.** Empathy and cross-cultural empathy prove distinct from one another mainly because of the latter's emphasis of diversity and empathizing with those of another culture. Kegan (1995) identified three components of cross-cultural empathy: cognitive engagement with others and knowledge about them, interpersonal engagement with others using skills to communicate care to them, and intrapersonal engagement with one's own attitude toward others. Clearly, these elements reflect the characteristics of ICC. In joining the three components, Kegan noted cognitive engagement connects with cross-cultural knowledge and awareness, interpersonal engagement correlates with cross-cultural skills, and intrapersonal engagement with cross-cultural attitudes (Boggis et al., 2013; Byram, 1997; Carrell, 1997; Constantine & Sue, 2005; Deardorff & Deardorff, 2000; Jones & Abes, 2004; Jones et al., 2013; Kitsantas, 2004; Sedlak et al., 2003). The present study defined cross-cultural empathy as an individual's expression of emotions and intellect to bridge the cultural gap between two people (Dyche & Zayas, 2001).

**Methods to foster empathy.** Many researchers assert cross-cultural empathy and broader intercultural competencies as more than knowledge about other cultures.

“Although specific knowledge about a culture may be necessary, it is not sufficient in itself to achieve cross-cultural interventions. An empathetic stance that effectively acknowledges a client’s cultural values requires a step beyond tolerance or passive acceptance” (Lu et al., 2005, p. 91). Lu et al. (2005) claimed the development of cross-cultural empathy lies in contemplative practices oriented toward one’s attitude. These practices enable students to mindfully emptying themselves and embrace differences found in cross-cultural interactions. Students “let go” of themselves by emptying their thoughts and cultural presuppositions and contemplating the interpersonal and intrapersonal. Above all, they must become present with those of other cultures.

In a study of psychology students, Lundy (2007) found SL projects prove more effective in developing emotional empathy than research papers or interview projects. This study asserted that SL, the combination of interaction with others and the practice of reflection, benefits students in their development of cross-cultural empathy.

### **Conclusion**

Literature holds both SL and multiculturalism as important foci in higher education. Studies pointed to a connection between SL and the development of ICC in college students. Research also defined empathy as a powerful concept connecting the intellectual and the emotional and indicated its utility in college students’ development of a multicultural attitude. However, little research supported the development of cross-cultural empathy through SL immersion trips and programs. Therefore, the present study examined the need for the development of cross-cultural empathy in college students and explained SL programs as effective tools in meeting this need.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methods**

#### **Phenomenological Research**

The current study ought to examine if and how service-learning immersion trips impact students' expression of cross-cultural empathy. The literature offered little information about the development of cross-cultural empathy in college students involved in SL programs. Despite a wealth of information about the service-learning experience, the researcher desired to see if a connection existed between these service-learning trips and empathetic development.

Phenomenology seeks to discover the “essence” of an experience (Creswell, 2008). All participants in the study shared a similar experience. The study examined the impact of the experience on the development of their cross-cultural empathy. To gather information about the essence of this experience and the potential development of cross-cultural empathy, the researcher interacted with participants and allowed them to speak to their experience. Phenomenology seeks to gain knowledge through observing and learning about a specific experience as it is lived and known (Atkinson, 1972; Moustakas, 1994; Van Kaam, 1966).

#### **Participants**

The researcher interviewed ten participants from a small, faith-based, Midwestern liberal arts university of 1900 students. The participants all identified between the ages

of 20, and 22 and identified as current sophomores, juniors and seniors at the liberal arts university. The researcher interviewed two males and six females, and all self-identified as Caucasian individuals. All participants resided in the university's living-learning community focused on the care of orphans and vulnerable children. The first phase of their time together took the form of a service-learning program. At the beginning of the summer, students took a course focused on research pertaining to best practices of working with orphans and vulnerable children in addition to other issues of systemic poverty and effective service. After they completed their time in the classroom, they all pursued a variety of short-term service-learning immersion experiences. All eight participants went to four different locations either in a domestic or international setting that exposed them to members of another culture. Some participants spent three weeks serving in that context while others spent eight weeks at their practicum site. The program designed sought to stimulate questions and a widening of the students' worldviews in the context of their service-learning experience.

### **Interview Protocol and Procedures**

The researcher used an on-campus program to conduct research on the impact of service-learning experiences on cross-cultural empathy. The students applied to a living-learning community at the university with the intention of spending their year learning about vulnerable children, taking courses discussing orphan care, and going on an intercultural service-learning trip. To recruit the participants, the researcher first sent out an inquiry through email and asked the students to set up a time for an interview to meet with her to discuss their experience. The email included a description of the study, including its purpose and a consent form for participation.

During the face-to-face interviews, the researcher asked the participants eight well-developed questions (Appendix A) to elicit careful thoughts on their experience. The study used semi-structured interviews to allow the participants a certain amount of freedom in response (Sander, 1982). The researcher had specific questions in mind; however, if the student headed in a different direction or a tangent that may have benefitted the overall study, the relaxed structure allowed them to deviate in that way (Creswell, 2008). The guiding questions inquired about their experience serving in the orphanage, foster care system, or educational environment, how it impacted them, how it connected with the information they learned previously, and any potential new developments in cross-cultural empathy. Ultimately, the researcher wanted to identify the “useful and significant truths” of this phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2010, p. 31; Patton, 2002).

The researcher attended to nonverbal communication, the intonation of the participants’ responses, and facial expressions to best aid the method of observation (Van Kaam, 1966). Overall, the researcher used the conscious thoughts about the participants’ lived experiences to better understand the phenomena of cross-cultural empathy development in service-learning immersion trips (Atkinson, 1972). Also, after informing the participants, the researcher used a recording device during the interviews to ensure she could best remember and understand the participants’ answers when she analyzed and coded the data (Sanders, 1982). After the researcher had the data transcribed, she destroyed the recordings to prevent any breaches in confidentiality.

## **Data Analysis**

After having all the interviews transcribed, the researcher coded them to look for common themes that determined the “essence” of the participant’s common experience (Creswell, 2008). Through utilizing the data, a level of awareness and intuition, the researcher sorted the data into various categories to produce specific and relevant themes (Husserl, 1967; Sanders, 1982). The researcher then utilized member checking and sent the coded themes to the participants to verify their agreement with the themes gathered from the data. Two other people analyzed the overall themes to ensure the accuracy of the research. The researcher employed this entire method to produce specific themes to describe the overall essence of the experience and to learn more about the impact service-learning programs have on college students’ cross-cultural empathy.

## **Benefits**

The culture of higher education continues to emphasize student learning outcomes associated with intercultural education (Church & Meznar, 2012; Hurtado et al., 2014; Reade et al., 2013). The present study benefitted the landscape of higher education by further researching the topic of cross-cultural empathy, which transforms the way college students interact with those of other culture. The study investigated the attitudes and skills associated with cross-cultural empathy and how to best develop these skills in the hearts and minds of college students. Through studying the essence of the students’ service-learning experience, scholar-practitioners can observe if and how these programs benefit global learning outcomes and the broader picture of higher education. Furthermore, practitioners now can use the current study to determine if these programs can foster the skill of cross-cultural empathy in college students.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

The present study explored how college students expressed cross-cultural empathy through service-learning immersion experiences. This chapter presents three prominent themes derived from the eight interviews conducted. Through the interviews, student expressed three common themes that occurred as a result of their experience: the development of personal relationships with those from another culture, the deconstruction of a savior complex in both mind and action, and the fostering of curiosity about other cultures. The chapter discusses additional subthemes below as they relate to the primary themes.

#### **Theme 1: Development of Personal Relationships**

All eight participants mentioned a personal friendship or relational interaction during their cross-cultural experience. The relationships caused students to see value in members of cultures different from their own. From the new friendships, they began to grow in asking questions and understanding their new friends. The theme development of personal relationships included two sub-themes: the idea of humanity and avoiding generalizations to describe members of the other culture.

##### **The idea of humanity.**

Five participants explicitly mentioned the idea that “people are people.” They expressed the overarching idea of humanity. Shannon said, “I’m just thinking about . . .

the idea of like looking at someone and seeing that they're people first and um they're people before they're anything else.”

While the participants seemed aware of cultural differences, five explicitly mentioned the similarities they found between their home culture and the other culture. Amanda said, “I don't think I paid too much attention to the differences um like I noticed . . . we were there and I appreciated them but I realized a lot of how similar we are.”

When sharing stories about people from another culture, many students mentioned the difficulty present in their lives. However, even in the midst of learning about these difficult situations, five participants shared about the idea of mutual brokenness. Amanda drew connections between the lives of those she met abroad and her own while sharing about her experience with empathy:

[...] Hearing testimonies from the kids, from the students, or the leaders that we met definitely made me um empathetic towards them and appreciative towards who they were and just realizing their humanness and you know they have some of the same struggles that we do.

Beyond apparent differences, Elizabeth saw others as human beings before anything else:

I think when you approach people as like knowing their intrinsic value of just being, they are a person and not yeah, not measuring that by who they are, the color of their skin, or the culture that they represent, or their gender, or their age, um yeah, I think you are a lot more loving.

She made this comment in reference to how well she felt treated in the country where she went. She saw how members of the other cultural group modeled cross-cultural empathy and embraced the idea of shared humanity.

### **Avoidance of generalizations.**

All participants in the present study experienced a culture other than their own. During their time, they had ample opportunity to make assumptions and generalizations about the cultural context. However, seven identified that they actively tried to avoid making generalizations about the various cultures. While many of the cultural contexts involved examples of poverty, the participants did not make widespread comments about the social system as a whole. As George said, “I hate generalizations and I hate making them because it doesn’t apply to most situations.” Five in particular gave specific examples of how they saw poverty, and four talked about how societal factors such as privilege and systemic poverty perpetuate examples they saw.

While seven students admitted to the hesitancy of using generalizations to characterize the cultural groups, three in particular expressed difficulty in not jumping to conclusions about the social groups. They had to make themselves aware of certain biases and understand those biases in context of the different culture.

### **Theme 2: Deconstruction of a Savior Complex**

The second theme described by the participants proves one common in Christian subculture and easily developed through service and missions trips. All students experienced cultures that exhibited characteristics of systemic poverty. In sharing about her experience, Shannon referenced the difficulty in realizing she could not carry the burden for others in the midst of their struggles:

It’s like when someone you love is hurting so much and all you can do is pray for them because you aren’t God and you don’t control everything in their lives and you can’t carry their burden or take it away from them.

The extent to which the participants understood and accepted their inability to control the problems in the lives of those they met depended on several factors. Participants with more cross-cultural experience in the past seemed better able to understand they should not to assume the position of a savior in their experience.

While participants realized their incapability to solve individual struggles or systemic problems, a couple talked about the initial difficulty ridding oneself of that mentality or fully recognizing that reality. In describing the beginning of his summer and his initial tendencies, George said,

I was initially overly savior-oriented, . . . I think as I began to understand the situation, and in a way understanding helped me realize how much I don't understand. Kind of came down from that . . . high pedestal I put myself on.

Elizabeth echoed this tendency:

I think it's easy to think you have a lot of the answers or to . . . become arrogant about . . . I know how to do this and this is what I need to do to help people. And I'm going to solve all these problems and I know all these things.

However, through their experience, most participants realized their prideful motivations in wanting to help, but felt humbled by the fact that they did not have the responsibility to fix the situation or solve the problem.

### **Internal realization.**

Participants had the opportunity to reflect upon their experience both during and after the trip. During this time of formal and informal reflection, they used introspection and other methods to process through what they learned and thought about their cross-cultural experience. Their reflection and thoughts led them to discuss three sub-themes:

reframing the idea of missions trips, avoiding the superiority mentality, and broadening their perspective beyond that of their home culture.

***Reframing the idea of service trips.***

Five participants spoke to how they reframed the idea of a missions trip through their cross-cultural experience. In processing through what she gained from the experience, Joanna said,

I think the biggest takeaway was just about missions in general. Um we have this far-off idea . . . like oh I'm going to feel so good about myself and change the world or something and that's just not how it is.

Hillary commented, "These countries aren't just what you see from missions trips or see on the news, there's so much more to it." In their development of cross-cultural empathy, participants realized the need to understand the culture in a larger context than a one-dimensional experience.

***Avoiding the superiority mentality.***

Participants also expressed the idea of privilege and how Americans perpetuates "the cycle of shame and poverty" (George). Within their own minds, they wrestled with how to understand what they did and did not have responsibility for within their time of service. As George poignantly stated, "The change you want to see in the world may not be your job to change it." Connor talked about his thought process regarding cross-cultural interactions during his cross-cultural and asked, "What does it look like for two different groups to interact without there being an implication of that Western all those ways being superior?" Seven participants indicated the need to think about the way in

which missions trips and service-learning experiences can contribute to the savior complex, as well as how to begin to recognize and deconstruct that.

***Broadening their perspective beyond their home culture.***

Understandably, human beings tend to appreciate their home culture. They typically experience a greater level of familiarity and comfort with that known culture. However, seven of the participants spoke to how their cross-cultural, service-learning experience broadened their perspective beyond white, Western culture.

Through realizing their shared humanity, Elizabeth appreciated the differences and learned to embrace them. She said, “And like [the cultural difference weren’t] like so overwhelming because they’re still real human beings.” Even though five participants expressed initial discomfort or surprise at the differences, the same five students shared how they learned to acclimate to the differences and appreciate the cultural customs and context. Furthermore, four critiqued U.S. cultural customs, and two in particular talked about the hardship involved in re-entrance.

**External actions.**

As students expressed how they internally contemplated and understood the dangers of having a savior complex in cross-cultural situations, they also indicated ways in which they wanted their actions to reflect the destruction of this mentality of superiority. Within this idea, most participants mentioned two things: the importance of listening well and the prioritization of sustainability in service.

***Listening well.***

While difficult to acknowledge, participants saw they necessarily did not hold the responsibility to fix the many problems or broken systems present in the lives of their

cross-cultural companions. For her personally, Shannon shared, “A big lesson was just that God calls us into really broken situations and sometimes it’s not like we’re going to be equipped in some huge way to handle it. Sometimes it looks as simple as listening.” Through actively listening, four participants clearly expressed the attempt to place themselves’ in another’s’ shoes to imagine what their life felt like. In addition to the concept of listening, a few participants mentioned the way in which their mentality shifted from one of “doing” to one of “being.” They could embrace the stillness of sitting with someone instead of feeling a compulsion to constantly “do.”

***Sustainability of service.***

Five students consistently spoke to the necessity of approaching service with a mindset of sustainability. Both Joanna and Hillary said that the white, middle-class, American lifestyle proved unsustainable for the rest of the world. Hillary commented on the detriment of imposing American standards on other cultures: “Now we’re setting a standard that’s higher for them, and now their expectations of what they deem good or deem best, and putting the Western standards on them and imposing our culture onto their culture.” George further spoke to the troubles of this mentality—“Aid can, and often does prevent societies from developing”—and asked himself—“Will a short-term trip have a benefit or will we hurt people?”

To conquer negative effects of culturally insensitive aid, all students spoke to the importance of purpose in short-term service-learning trips. They mentioned things such as helping to empower people already in the culture and understanding actual needs of the cross-cultural community as to better meet them in a purposeful, intentional way. To emphasize the idea of empowerment, Shannon spoke to the importance of “. . . Instilling,

or like teaching about hope and like teaching about how capable you actually are of doing things for yourself to get yourself out of the situations that you're in.”

Brooke and three other students clearly stated the need to willingly seek out and understand the needs of the cross-cultural community. Also recognizing the need for understanding, George said, “I think a compassionate heart should really invest in understanding how systems work and how they can help.” In essence, solely a compassionate heart proves an insufficient expression of cross-cultural empathy. Such empathy requires a willingness to understand the cultural context and the people.

### **Theme 3: Fostering Curiosity**

Fostering a sense of curiosity emerged as the third and final theme expressed by students in their cross-cultural service-learning immersion experiences. All eight participants voiced a desire to learn about the culture in which the program had immersed them. Much of this learning came in the form of facts and figures during the service-learning course before their departure, but a great deal of learning occurred during and after their experiences. Connor's appreciation with his cross-cultural experience led him to say, “I just find it fascinating the ways that like human life sort of asks a lot of the same questions and in different places and in different scenarios we answer them very differently.” He acknowledged the cross-cultural differences yet continued to approach those questions with an inquisitive spirit.

Five students admitted to a lack of understanding of the culture but commented their cross-cultural friendships benefitted them in their overall learning experience. Demonstrating humility learned through curiosity, George stated, “What [my experience] showed me is that I learned much less than what I thought I knew. So if anything, it

showed me what I didn't know, which I think is a really good thing.” Within the idea of curiosity and inquiry, students expressed the importance of openness and an increased sensitivity due to their inquisitive nature.

### **Openness.**

Six students explicitly spoke of openness to learning about the other culture. They exhibited their openness to learn through asking good questions and adopting a “posture of learning and humility” (Elizabeth). In thinking about her experience beforehand, Amanda spoke to the necessity of having an open mind:

How can I take away something that's beneficial for my spiritual life, for me emotionally, for relationships? Just kind of going into it with an open mind of what this country, this place, this community, wherever I'm going, what can it teach me about myself, about other cultures and kind of what I was saying, I don't know anything about this so kind of coming in with a learning attitude.

The openness in approaching their service-learning experience transcended that period of time and allowed them to become more open to members of other cultures within their home lives. Four students stated their experience created a deeper empathy for international students at their institution and an increased desire to learn about other cultures. Joanna commented, “. . . I'm just very curious about how other people live and that's it like um so yeah I think definitely a little bit more sensitive to non-American cultures and um very curious now.”

### **Intercultural sensitivity.**

Because of their openness and desire to ask questions, six students experienced a sense of increased intercultural sensitivity and a deeper appreciation for other cultures.

After spending three weeks in a different culture, Brooke said, “But I think I do have yeah, just a greater appreciation for just kind of where they come from.” Hillary talked about how she chooses to avoid making assumptions about peers from other cultures and asks them questions that represent both a sense of inquisitiveness and sensitivity.

### **Conclusion**

While the eight participants had fairly unique cross-cultural experiences, they expressed common themes about the development of cross-cultural empathy through their service-learning immersion trips. Participants spoke about how their own personal relationships with members of another culture grew throughout their time. They described the deconstruction of the savior complex often involved in service and the internal and external ways of processing through that and acting in defiance of that. Finally, they demonstrated curiosity and an inquisitive spirit as they learned and continued to learn about other cultures apart from their own.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

The chapter below presents the findings in light of themes previously discussed in the literature and how they compare to past research. This section also presents the implications for professionals in the field of higher education and student development as well as the limitations of this research study. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research on the relationship between the development of cross-cultural empathy in college students and service-learning immersion trips.

#### **Positive Outcomes of Service-Learning**

As reported in the literature review, college students experience many positive outcomes due to service-learning programs (Astin et al., 2000; Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Eyler et al., 2001; Jones & Abes, 2004; McElhaney, 1998; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). The Experiential Learning Theory by Kolb (1984) foreshadowed this idea by claiming the learning process as solidified through experience in ways that cannot occur simply inside the classroom. Several participants in the present study echoed this idea, finding the material truly valuable once combined with tangible cross-cultural experience.

In their cross-cultural experiences, the participants exhibited three main themes related to the development of cross-cultural empathy: 1) the development of personal relationships with those from the other culture; 2) the deconstruction of the savior complex that glorifies the “helper” and that commonly arises within service-learning

trips; and 3) the fostering of curiosity about other cultures. The three themes mirror the three categories of positive outcomes for students who participate in service-learning programs (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin et al., 2000; Eyler, 2002; Green, 2001; Jones & Abes, 2004; Kiely, 2004; Kratzke & Bertolo, 2013; Sperling, 2007).

### **Interpersonal outcomes.**

As mentioned in previous chapters, the idea of empathy refers to “an integrated expression of our intellectual and emotional selves in our relations with others” (Dyche & Zayas, 2001, p. 246). Thus, to begin development of cross-cultural empathy, individuals must engage in relationships with those from another culture. In his definition of cross-cultural empathy, Kegan (1995) spoke to the importance of interpersonal engagement with the person of another culture and communicating care to them in a way they can understand. Truly interculturally competent, interpersonal relationships require care for the other and the development of an understanding and knowledge of the other (Deardorff, 2009; Deardorff & Deardorff, 2000).

To varying degrees, all eight participants in the current study spoke about a relationship they had while immersed in the cross-cultural experience. In describing their friendships, they mentioned how they grew in care for the other individual because they could experience a sense of shared humanity. While this idea of shared humanity did not emerge in the literature, students embraced this concept to create depth in interpersonal relationships. Their experiences facilitated conversations about cultural phenomena, personal interests, social systems, etc. However, many of the students expressed how much they enjoyed sharing a life journey with another person. Having a face-to-face encounter with another person brought more meaning to their overall experience.

What the students expressed in their responses remained consistent with the literature, particularly how students began to personalize social issues and see beyond stereotypes (Jones et al., 2012). While the students commented on the poverty and brokenness of the social systems they saw, seven participants actively avoided using generalizations to describe the people in that culture—their new-found friends. Despite the tendency to want to name common stereotypes, students gained an understanding of the danger of labels especially when applied in a cross-cultural context. These interpersonal interactions made them desire to look beyond the surface and explore more about the other person, instead of the stereotypes often cast upon them by society.

#### **Intrapersonal and global awareness outcomes.**

Studies showed students develop increasing self-awareness while participating in service-learning programs (Astin & Sax, 1998; Kiely, 2004; McElhaney, 1998; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). The exposure to another culture and the customs that contradict many of those from their home culture cause them to reevaluate their own set of beliefs and attitudes toward the larger world (Deardorff, 2009; Deardorff & Deardorff, 2000; Jones et al., 2012). The same phenomena occurred with the participants of the current study; however, some intrapersonal and global awareness outcomes became nuanced by the students' religious beliefs.

Many participants perceived their service-learning immersion experience as similar to that of a mission trips. Christians and non-Christians view these trips through a variety of lenses. Regardless of their opinions, the participants of the current study began to reframe the idea of a missions trip and deconstruct the idea of a “savior complex.” While helping others, particularly within the service-learning context, students often feel

encouraged and affirmed in their morality and goodness as human beings. However, Green (2001) in particular spoke to the danger that these experiences may increase racial and socioeconomic division if the students do not grow in their understanding of intercultural competencies and the need to view all human beings as equal, instead of asserting superiority over the ones receiving help.

Through introspection and lessons learned during the class portion of the experience, students wrestled with the idea that service can help but, at other times, have the potential to hurt members of the other culture. The participants of the present study recognized their own tendencies to view themselves more highly than they ought and to perceive their help as a reflection of their superiority to other racial and ethnic groups. However, through this experience, they quickly realized their role in serving other cultures and how to correct those attitudes to more closely reflect reciprocity and mutual respect in a cross-cultural context.

These internal thoughts led to external behaviors and actions that more closely aligned with their newly developed views on their motivations to serve. Participants mentioned they wanted to adopt behaviors such as listening well and gaining an understanding of the person with whom they talked in the cross-cultural context. Additionally, most participants talked about the sustainability of the service. They wanted to ensure that the ways in which they helped actually empowered members of the community instead of creating a culture of dependency. Their responses aligned well with the components of intercultural competence previously identified as the knowledge, skills, attitude, and awareness of self and of others (Boggis et al., 2013; Byram et al.,

2001; Constantine & Sue; 2005; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2009; Jones & Abes, 2004; Sedlak et al., 2003).

The description of interculturally competent attitudes includes the willingness to think critically about one's home culture (Byram et al., 2001). Interculturally competent students approach other cultures with a certain measure of openness and a willingness to embrace the differences, going beyond the labels of "right" and "wrong" as they begin to develop an increased global awareness (Sedlak et al., 2003).

Interestingly, all participants appeared in various stages in their own willingness to embrace difference. While almost all students spoke to how the experience broadened their perspective beyond their home culture, they responded differently. Some students rejected their home culture and felt enamored by the differences found in the other culture. Others felt a sense of homesickness and developed a deeper appreciation for their home culture. Regardless of their personal experiences, a unifying trend emerged: the student experienced an intrapersonal change in attitude and an openness to other cultures due to the service-learning immersion experience.

#### **Explanation of fostering curiosity.**

Prior research demonstrated certain attitudes lead to further development of intercultural competence—for the present study, cross-cultural empathy. The most positive attitudes included adaptability, open-mindedness and curiosity (Bennett, 1993; Boggis et al., 2013; Byram et al., 2001; Constantine & Sue, 2005; Fantini, 2000; Kitsantas, 2004). Despite their initial attitudes, all students exhibited a strong, curious desire to learn more about the country, citizens, community and overall culture of their immersion experience. Several defied their own boundaries and grew in adaptability and

willingness to embrace difference. The literature highly supported the ways in which these students exhibited a curious and inquisitive spirit in the cross-cultural setting.

Congruent with the Experiential Learning Theory by Kolb (1984), the information presented to the students during their service-learning class became further enhanced by their experiences within another culture. Many said the material came to life, and they could more easily draw connections between the teachings and their own experiences. However, many participants said they left their experience feeling as though they had more questions than when they initially began. Because the students' understandings of themselves, others, and the world increased, they experienced increased curiosity as they saw their own ignorance and lack of understanding about certain cultures (Green, 2001).

Many participants incorporated their curiosity into a growing self-awareness and their interpersonal relationships. They asked themselves questions about the future and how the immersion experience affected their vocation. They actively attempted to understand how to integrate into the different culture and how they could adopt some cultural practices and weave them into the fabric of their lives at home. They intentionally asked questions of friends about their culture, religion, and society and humbly admitted their lack of understanding in many areas. When the researcher asked about reflection and their return to their home culture, many expressed an interest in befriending international students and asking about their culture in order to deepen their understanding and emotional response to that particular demographic of students.

Service-learning immersion programs have the potential to increase critical thinking skills in students because they provide them with an opportunity to expand their own horizons beyond middle-class white American culture (Einfeld & Collins, 2008;

Green, 2001; Sperling, 2007). The students who participated in the current study exhibited thoughtfulness and reflective attitudes in recounting their cross-cultural experiences and asked many questions showing curiosity still actively ingrained in them, particularly when they think about other cultures.

### **Cross-Cultural Empathy Development**

Individuals always exhibit varying values and priorities through their behaviors and actions. No uniform standard assigns value to the idea of cross-cultural empathy, and one cannot expect all college-age students to choose to embrace this concept in their cross-cultural interactions. However, the students in the present study spoke of placing themselves in another's shoes to better understand their situation. They talked about the importance of listening and how to emotionally respond in an appropriate fashion to the brokenness of stories they heard. They described how their service-learning immersion experience currently impacts their interactions with those from different cultures.

While the researcher did not find a consistent definition of cross-cultural empathy across participant responses, all alluded to at least one of the three components outlined by Kegan (1995). He defined cross-cultural empathy as cognitive engagement with others and knowledge about them, interpersonal engagement with others using skills that communicate care to them, and intrapersonal engagement with one's own attitude toward others. Equally important, the themes that emerged proved consistent with prior research about intercultural competence and its development through service-learning programs.

### **Limitations of Research**

The most notable limitation to the study came with the overall demographics of the participants. Due to the small size of the program on campus from which she drew,

the researcher only could conduct eight interviews, which does not fully represent the experience of all college students as they develop cross-cultural empathy through service-learning immersion programs. Furthermore, a gender imbalance existed in the pool of participants with two males and six females, which did not accurately reflect how all students experience empathy through service-learning. The Christian faith of the institution could also influence the way in which participants view empathy or see it as a more desirable trait because of the expectation of Christian subculture.

Additionally, the nature of semi-structured interviews lends itself to a lack of control over all of the variables present. The researcher made all possible efforts to standardize the interview process for all participants; however, she knew several of the participants beforehand and had conversations regarding similar topics, which may have altered the honesty of their responses, both for more—or perhaps less—honesty.

Due to scheduling conflicts, the researcher conducted the first and last interview two months apart. This length of time may have altered the level of processing participants could express in their interview because some had additional time to process through their experience and others may have not had the opportunity to dedicate as much thought.

All participants lived as part of an intentional living-learning community on the campus of the small, faith-based, liberal arts institution. Because of close proximity, they had the informal opportunity to speak about the interview process and what they had said for their responses, which may have altered what other participants felt willing to share or not to share during their own interviews.

Lastly, the researcher participated in several service-learning immersion experiences and taught two service-learning courses at the same institution, which could emerge as researcher bias and thus a limitation to the study.

### **Implications for Higher Education Practice**

One would feel hard-pressed to find an institution of higher education not attempting to increase their globalization efforts (Pope, Mueller, & Reynolds, 2009). Moreover, colleges and universities, particularly predominantly White institutions, identify “appreciation for diversity” as a highly prioritized learning outcome for their students (Bowman, 2013). The current study provided evidence for the benefits that occur for students when exposed to another culture in a way that builds upon previous learning and knowledge.

Students could experience another culture in a tangible way that affected their cross-cultural relationships, thoughts about western thought and practice, and overall desire to remain inquisitive. All of these findings closely aligned with common learning outcomes determined by many liberal arts institutions. Students could experience goodness in their relationship with themselves, others, and the world as they developed further curiosity about these other cultures. Faculty, staff, and administration need to incorporate this concept of empathy into the curriculum, as it coincides well with the learning outcomes and raises cross-cultural competencies within students. The curricular benefits of service-learning immersion experiences could prepare students to better engage with others as competent global citizens.

Furthermore, all of the participants indirectly alluded to the need for empathy within cross-cultural relationships. While minor advances have been made, the current

state of higher education remains highly racialized and students fail to develop strong intercultural friendships (Park, 2014; Tatum, 2003). If done effectively, service-learning immersion experiences can create the first experience for students to understand a world outside of themselves and begin to interact positively with cross-cultural differences.

Empathy requires intellectual understanding of a person combined with an appropriate emotional response (Empathy, 2014). The participants' responses either directly or indirectly alluded to the importance of maintaining this balance in cross-cultural interactions. A few admitted to their savior-oriented approach and how quickly they realized its unhelpful nature because they lacked a sensitive understanding of the culture. Once they began to understand the implications of the culture and people's stories, they could develop an appropriate emotional response, deep care, and admiration for the other person. This attitude forms the essence of cross-cultural empathy.

Cross-cultural empathy can shape colleges and universities in positive ways on and off campus. Through programs that help them make personal connections with those from other cultures and then to reframe the idea of what helping another person truly means, students begin to see the larger world and how they can exercise empathy in their cross-cultural encounters. If students developed this way on a wide scale, institutions would begin to see a difference in the unity and overall mission present on their campuses. Furthermore, they would begin to see a difference in the students they graduate and send into the world.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

As the topic of cross-cultural empathy remains currently underdeveloped, particularly within the realm of service-learning, many opportunities exist for potential

future research. Specifically, when the researcher asked participants about how their cross-cultural, service-learning experience impacted their current interactions with members of members of other cultures, they alluded to developing an empathetic approach, particularly toward international students. Future study and research could measure how international students interpret demonstrations of cross-cultural empathy from their Caucasian peers.

The participants' overall understanding of cross-cultural empathy and the strength of the themes exhibited in their own life seemed to depend on prior cross-cultural experience. Several mentioned wrestling with many issues of poverty and White superiority in prior trips and consequently feeling more prepared to engage in those conversations. A potential research study could attempt to quantitatively measure if stages exist in the development of cross-cultural empathy within college students.

Finally, because empathy tends to have a feminine connotation, the researcher questioned if gendered expressions of cross-cultural empathy exist. Only two males participated in this study—a definite limitation that also begs the further question of how men and women express cross-cultural empathy and if that expression depends on societal cues and standards.

## **Conclusion**

Cross-cultural empathy serves as an important step for students in understanding themselves, others, and the larger world. Colleges and universities must provide strongly and purposefully structured service-learning programs with an immersion experience so that students have the opportunity to grow in the abovementioned ways. The literature

spoke to the importance of intercultural competencies and how these often develop through SL programs.

The present study answered the following research question: “How do intercultural service-learning immersion programs impact college students’ expressions of cross-cultural empathy?” The programs impact them on an interpersonal level by allowing them to develop relationships with members of another culture. They impact them on an intrapersonal level by providing them the opportunity to deconstruct the idea of a savior complex and what empowering those in another culture actually means. Finally, service-learning programs impacted the students’ expression of cross-cultural empathy in the form of curiosity in how they view the world and how they desire to ask questions in order to gain a greater understanding.

Cross-cultural empathy exists as a powerful construct involving both the mind and the heart in an emotionally appropriate response to the other. Service-learning immersion experiences can promote this idea of empathy within students by exposing them to a world outside of themselves. While the results clearly spoke to the need for cross-cultural empathy development in college students and the power of service-learning immersion programs, the future of higher education desperately needs further dedication to these initiatives and further research on this topic.

## References

- Amerson, R. (2010). The impact of service-learning on cultural competence. *Nursing Education Perspectives, 31*, 18-22.
- Association of American College and Universities. (2007). *Global learning for the new global century: Executive summary with findings from employer survey*. Washington, D.C.: AACU.
- Astin, A. W., & Sax, L. J. (1998). How undergraduates are affected by service participation. *Journal of College Student Development, 39*, 251-263.
- Astin, A. W., Vogelgesang, L. J., Ikeda, E. K., & Yee, J. A. (2000). *How service learning affects students*. Los Angeles, CA: Higher Education Research Institute, University of California.
- Atkinson, M. (1972). A precise phenomenology for the general scholar. *Journal of General Education, 23*, 261-297.
- Batson, C. D., & Ahmad, N. Y. (2009). Using empathy to improve intergroup attitudes and relations. *Social Issues and Policy Review, 3*, 141-177.
- Bennett, M. J. (1993). Toward ethnorlativism: A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (2nd ed., pp. 21-71). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.

- Boggis, T. L., Kelly, M., Schumacher, K., Randt, N., & Erickson, D. (2013). Navigating cultural differences in interprofessional, international service-learning. *Health and Interprofessional Practice*, 2(1), eP1052, 1-9.
- Bollinger, L. C. (2003). The need for diversity in higher education. *Academic Medicine*, 78, 431-436.
- Bowen, G. A., & Hackett, P. B. (2010). Developing cultural understanding through Spanish-language learning: A service-learning approach. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 21(2), 29-43.
- Bowen, H. R. (1977). Goals: The intended outcomes of higher education. In J. L. Bess (Ed.), *Foundations of American higher education* (2nd ed., pp. 54-69). Needham Heights, MA: Simon & Schuster Custom Publishing.
- Bowman, N. A. (2013). The conditional effects of interracial interactions on college student outcomes. *Journal of College Student Development*, 54, 322-328.
- Braskamp, L. A., Braskamp, D. C., & Merrill, K. (2009). Assessing progress in global learning and development of students with education abroad experiences. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 18, 101-118.
- Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (2000). *Meaningful measurement of theory-based service-learning outcomes: Making the case with quantitative research*. Ann Arbor, MI: Scholarly Publishing Office, University of Michigan Library.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Bristol, PA: Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M., Nichols, A., & Stevens, D. (2001). *Developing intercultural competence in practice*. Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters.

- Carrell, L. H. (1997). Diversity in the communication curriculum: Impact on student empathy. *Communication Education, 46*, 23-244.
- Chen, G. M. (1989). Relationships of the dimensions of intercultural communication competence. *Communication Quarterly, 37*, 118-133.
- Church, M., & Meznar, M. (2012). Educating for empathy and action. In J. Hendry & C. VanSandt (Eds.), *Proceedings of the International Association for Business and Society* (Vol. 23, pp. 298-308). Charlottesville, VA: IABS.
- Constantine, M. G., & Sue, D. W. (2005). *Strategies for building multicultural competence in mental health and educational settings*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 10*, 241-266. doi:10.1177/1028315306287002
- Deardorff, D. K. (2009). *Intercultural competence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Deardorff, D.K., & Deardorff, D.L. (2000). *Diversity awareness and training: Tools for cultural awareness*. Presented at North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC.
- Dyche, L., & Zayas, L. H. (2001). Cross-cultural empathy and training the contemporary psychotherapist. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 29*, 245-258.
- Einfeld, A., & Collins, D. (2008). The relationships between service-learning, social justice, multicultural competence, and civic engagement. *Journal of College Student Development, 49*, 95-109.

- Empathy. (2014). In *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/empathy>
- Eyler, J., & Giles, D. E. J. (1999). *Where's the learning in service-learning?* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Eyler, J. S. (2002). Reflection: Linking service and learning - linking students and communities. *Journal of Social Issues*, 58, 517-534.
- Eyler, J. S., Giles, D. E. J., Stenson, C. M., & Gray, C. J. (2001). *At a glance: What we know about the effects of service-learning on college students, faculty, institutions and communities, 1993-2000* (3rd ed.). Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University.
- Fantini, A. E. (2000). A central concern: Developing intercultural competence. IN. A. E. Fantini (Ed.), *About our institution: Addressing intercultural education, training, and service* (pp. 25-42). Brattleboro, VT: School for International Training.
- Fantini, A. E. (2009). Assessing intercultural competence. D. K. Deardorff (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence* (pp. 456-476). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Felten, P., Gilchrist, L. Z., & Darby, A. (2006). Emotion and learning: Feeling our way toward a new theory of reflection in service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 12(2), 38-46.
- Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Green, A. E. (2001). But you aren't "white": Racial perceptions and service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 8(1), 18-26.

- Gurin, P., Dey, E. L., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review, 72*, 330-367.
- Haber, P., & Getz, C. (2011). Developing intercultural competence in future student affairs professionals through a graduate student global study course to Doha, Qatar. *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice, 14*, 463-486.
- Hurtado, S., Gasiewski, J., & Alvarez, C. L. (2014). The climate for diversity at Cornell University: Student experiences. *Higher Education Research Institute*. Retrieved from <http://diversity.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/Qualitative-Study-of-Student-Climate-Full-Report.pdf>
- Husserl, E. (1967). The thesis of the natural standpoint and its suspension. In J. J. Kockelmans (Ed.), *Phenomenology* (pp. 68-79). Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Jones, J. M., Sander, J. B., & Booker, K. W. (2013). Multicultural competency building: Practical solutions for training and evaluating student progress. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology, 7*, 12-22.
- Jones, S. G., Hatcher, J. A., & Bringle, R. G. (2011). *International service learning: Conceptual Frameworks and research* [e-book]. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Jones, S. R., & Abes, E. S. (2004). Enduring influences of service-learning on college students' identity development. *Journal of College Student Development, 45*, 149-166.
- Jones, S. R., & Hill, K. (2001). Cross High Street: Understanding diversity through community service-learning. *Journal of College Student Development, 42*, 204-216.

- Jones, S. R., Rowan-Kenyon, H. T., Ireland, S. M., Niehaus, E., & Skendall, K. C. (2012). The meaning students make as participants in short-term immersion programs. *Journal of College Student Development, 53*, 201-220.
- Kegan, R. (1995). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kiely, R. (2004). A chameleon with a complex: Searching for transformation in international service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 10*(2), 5-20.
- Kiely, R. (2005). A transformative learning model for service-learning: A longitudinal case study. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 12*(1), 5-22.
- Kim, R. I., & Goldstein, S. B. (2005). Intercultural attitudes predict favorable study abroad expectations of US college students. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 9*, 265-278.
- Kitsantas, A. (2004). Studying abroad: The role of college students' goals on the development of cross cultural skills and global understanding. *College Student Journal, 38*, 441-452.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kollman, P., & Morgan, R. T. (2011). International service-learning in faith-based contexts. In P. Green & M. Johnson (Eds.), *Crossing boundaries: Tension and transformation in international service-learning* (pp. 190-214). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

- Kratzke, C., & Bertolo, M. (2013). Enhancing students' cultural competence using cross-cultural experiential learning. *Journal of Cultural Diversity, 20*, 107-111.
- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J. H., & Whitt, E. J. (2010). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley & Sons.
- Lu, Y. E., Dane, B., & Gellman, A. (2005). An experiential model: Teaching empathy and cultural sensitivity. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 25*(3/4), 89-103.
- Lundy, B. L. (2007). Service learning in life-span developmental psychology: Higher exam scores and increased empathy. *Teaching of Psychology, 34*, 23-27.
- Lyons, C., & Hazler, R. J. (2002). The influence of student development level on improving counselor student empathy. *Counselor Education & Supervision, 42*, 119-130.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2010). *Designing qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2008). Emotional intelligence: New ability or eclectic traits? *American Psychologist, 63*, 503-517.
- McElhaney, K. A. (1998). *Student outcomes of community service learning: A comparative analysis of curriculum-based and non-curriculum-based alternative spring break programs* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

- Myers-Lipton, S. J. (1996). Effect of service-learning on college students' attitudes toward international understanding. *Journal of College Student Development*, 37, 659-68.
- Nganga, R. W. (2006). *Impact of cross-cultural interaction on counselor trainees' development of cultural empathy and intercultural sensitivity* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (3233993)
- Park, J. J. (2014). Clubs and the campus racial climate: Student organizations and interracial friendship in college. *Journal of College Student Development*, 55, 641-660.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publication, Inc.
- Perry, L. B., & Southwell, L. (2011). Developing intercultural understanding and skills: models and approaches. *Intercultural Education*, 22, 453-466.
- Pope, R. L. & Mueller, J. A. & Reynolds, A. L. (2009). Looking back and moving forward: Future directions for diversity research in student affairs. *Journal of College Student Development*, 50, 640-658.
- Reade, C., Reckmeyer, W. J., Cabot, M., Jaehne, D. & Novak, M. (2013). Educating global citizens for the 21st century. *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, (49), 100-116.
- Ridley, C. R., & Lingle, D. W. (1996). Cultural empathy in multicultural counseling: A multidimensional process model. In P. B. Pedersen, J. G. Draguns, W. J. Lonner, & L. D. Trimble (Eds.), *Counseling across cultures* (4th ed., pp. 21-46). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

- Rothenberg, P. S. (2004). *Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integrated study*. New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1989). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition, & Personality, 9*, 185-211.
- Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Bobik, C., Coston, T. D., Greeson, C., Jedlicka, C., & Wendorf, G. (2001). Emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 141*, 523-536.
- Sanders, P. (1982). Phenomenology: A new way of viewing organizational research. *Academy of Management Review, 7*, 353-360.
- Sedlak, C. A., Doheny, M. O., Panthofer, N., & Anaya, E. (2003). Critical thinking in students' service-learning experiences. *College Teaching, 51*, 99-104.
- Silver, P., Wilhite, S. C., & Ledoux, M. W. (2011). *Civic engagement and service learning in a metropolitan university: Multiple approaches and perspectives*. New York, NY: Nova Science Publishers.
- Simons, L., & Cleary, B. (2006). The influence of service learning on students' personal and social development. *College Teaching, 54*, 307-319.
- Sperling, R. (2007). Service-learning as a method of teaching multiculturalism to white college students. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 6*, 309-322.
- Stanton, T. K., Giles, D. E., & Cruz, N. I. (1999). *Service-learning: A movement's pioneers reflect on its origins, practice, and future*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series.

- Tangen, D., Mercer, K. L., Spooner-Lane, R., & Hepple, E. (2011). Exploring intercultural competence: A service-learning approach. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(11), 62-72. 10.14221/ajte.2011v36n11.2
- Tatum, B. D. (2003). *“Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?” And other conversations about race*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Terkel, S., & Ellis, C. P. (1980). Why I quit the Klan. *Southern Exposure*, 8(2), 47-52.
- Umbach, P. D., & Kuh, G. D. (2006). Student experiences with diversity at liberal arts colleges: Another claim for distinctiveness. *Journal of Higher Education*, 77, 169-192.
- U. S. Census Bureau. (2012). College enrollment by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin: Statistical abstract of the United States, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s0281.pdf>
- Van Kaam, A. (1966). *Existential foundations of psychology*. Oxford, UK: Duquesne U. Press.
- Vogelgesang, L. J., & Astin, A. W. (2000). Comparing the effects of community service and service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 7, 25-34.
- Wang, X. (2011). Exploring the effects of a cross-cultural service-learning program on intercultural competence of participants. *New Horizons in Education*, 59(3), 41-50.
- Wang, Z. (2012). Enquiry into cultivating intercultural nonverbal communicative competence in college English teaching. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2, 1230-1235.

## **Appendix A**

### **Protocol Questions**

1. Please briefly tell me about your service learning experience (i.e., where you went through the program, which demographic of children with whom you primarily worked).
2. Briefly described the culture with which you primarily worked.
  - a. What did you know about the culture beforehand?
3. How did your experiences on the trip connect with what you learned in the service-learning course?
4. What was one significant learning experience that you had while on the trip?
  - a. Describe this experience to me.
  - b. Did you experience a new level of understanding or compassion or both due to this experience?
5. How did you react to the differences you saw in the surrounding culture?
  - a. How did this reaction change the longer your spent there?
  - b. Did you find yourself responding emotionally as a result of those differences?
6. In what ways did your knowledge of the other culture grow?
7. How has the service-learning course and the immersion experience affected how you interact with those who come from a different culture?
8. Is there anything else through the course and/or experience that impacted you?

