

Designing Good Global Service-Learning Projects in Challenging Contexts: A Case Study

by

Cynthia Bourne

B.A., University of British Columbia 1995

M.A., Saint Francis Xavier University, 2008

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The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the College of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis/dissertation entitled:

Designing Good Global Service-Learning Projects in Challenging Contexts: A Case Study

...submitted by Cynthia Bourne in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dr. Susan Crichton, School of Education

---

**Supervisor**

Dr. Lynn Bosetti, School of Education

---

**Supervisory Committee Member**

Dr. Wisdom Tettey, Vice-President, Principal – University of Toronto

---

**Supervisory Committee Member**

Dr. Philip Balcaen, School of Education

---

**Supervisory Committee Member**

Dr. Martin Blum, Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies

---

**University Examiner**

Dr. Colleen Kawalilak – Associate Dean, International - University of Calgary

---

**External Examiner**

## Abstract

This case study explored how an intentional design thinking process, reflected in a set of project design principles, influenced the outcomes of a global service-learning (GSL) project for teacher candidates situated in the challenging context of rural Ghana, West Africa. While GSL in such settings can contribute to both a teacher candidate's professional learning and satisfy a community need (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Hartman, Paris, & Blache-Cohen, 2014; Jagla, 2016), there tends to be increased risks for all participants. Critics argue universities must pay closer attention to how such experiences are designed and consider intentional ways to create good GSL projects - projects that are worth doing for all concerned (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Chapman, 2016; Epprecht, 2004; Esteva, 2010; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen, 2007; 2012).

The 18 participants in this study included nine teacher candidates and nine in-country partners. The research probed the extent to which intentional design influenced the lived experience of the participants in a GSL literacy project situated in two rural schools. Data was gathered through a variety of research methods – participant observations, surveys, individual and focus group interviews, discussion sheets, student reflective journals. Data was analyzed using two processes - Goffman's (1974) frames and codes and Argyris a Schon's (1974; 1978) Gap Analysis.

The findings from this study suggest intentional design can contribute to good GSL projects and advance student learning while addressing a specified need. At the participant level, the findings suggest learning and contribution are possible through service learning, but also illustrate the importance of ensuring the values of reciprocity, respect, and reflection are central to the design. At the institutional level, the findings from this study inform a framework to guide

the work of instructors, course designers, and administrators when designing learning experiences in challenging contexts.

Key words

Global service-learning, design thinking, intentional design, challenging contexts, teacher education.

## **Lay Summary**

This study describes the experiences of teacher candidates and in country partners who collaborated in a global service-learning (GSL) project to support literacy in a rural school district in Upper East Ghana, WA. The GSL project was the final course of the teacher candidates' Bachelor of Education program. The study was inspired by the growing demand for global opportunities that combine travel, learning, and service. Universities and faculties seek to meet this demand through programs such as GSL. GSL connects student learning and experiences with projects that support communities and that are often located in places where daily life can be a challenge. Such settings increase the vulnerability of students and hosts alike. Although there are examples of successful GSL projects, there are also examples of unsuccessful ones, suggesting a need for a more intentional design process. The study explored the extent to which a set of design principles, drawn from the literature and from previous experience, contributed to the outcomes of a GSL project. The findings from this research provide a set of research informed, reusable guidelines for instructors and designers to consider when creating similar GSL experiences for their students.

## **Preface**

Approval for this research was granted by the University of British Columbia, Okanagan Research Ethics Board, Certificate # H15-01141.

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## **Dedication**

This research is dedicated to the women of the NGO Project GROW (Ghana Rural Opportunities for Women <https://www.projectgrow.ca/>) who continue to inspire my work in challenging contexts, and to students the world over who desire to make their education a force for good.

## Chapter 1

What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.  
(Nelson Mandela, 2002)

### 1.1 Preamble

This research began as a passion project. My desire was to address adult literacy concerns in a rural part of Ghana that our university has been involved with for two decades. I became aware of these concerns through my work as co-founder of an NGO, Project GROW (Ghana Rural Opportunities for Women; see <https://www.projectgrow.ca/>). Project GROW is located in Upper East Ghana, where this research was conducted, and was the inspiration for my doctoral work.

Project GROW began in 2007 when I met a graduate student from Upper East Ghana who was conducting research on maternal/infant health in her community. We became friends and eventually colleagues, co-founding Project GROW as a way to increase women's access to health care and education, as well as their economic capacity. Our guiding principle was that local women knew best what problems they faced and held the key to finding sustainable solutions. The solutions the women suggested have provided the development framework that has now guided the NGO's activities for more than a decade. Although we did not know to call our approach design thinking at the time, our framework is an example of the human-centred design (IDEO, 2015) discussed in Chapter 2.

In 2011, I visited the communities in the study setting in order to conduct an adult education needs assessment for Project Grow that probed the daily challenges adults (both men and women) faced due to limited or no formal literacy. My assessment reflected a myriad of

challenges. Adults spoke of their embarrassment when they were forced to sign with their thumbprints, which left stains that identified them as illiterate and took time to disappear. Other issues included the frustration they experienced waiting all day for an appointment because they could not read time or tell time, or the sense they were being exploited because they could not read directions, prices, or instructions. For adults who are situationally literate (Freire, 2000), during the transition from a subsistence, agricultural economy to one that is more multi-literate and inter-connected, traditional knowledge is not enough.

As a result of this first visit to Ghana, I began to consider pursuing a doctorate in adult literacy. As I explored the literature, it appeared that a contributing factor to low literacy levels has been the lack of material with which to learn to read. Although some adults may have developed basic reading skills before being forced to leave school at an early age, these skills have often been lost due to a lack of access to reading material (Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, 2014; Windborne, 2004).

This lack of relevant material was obvious when I had visited a local school in the NGO's region. On a desk, I had noticed a book about a little girl who lost her mittens (*The Missing Mitten Mystery*, Kellogg, 2002). Although I realize any book is better than no book, at the time it seemed inappropriate for children to read about contexts so far removed from their daily reality. During and following this visit, conversations with in-country NGO members revealed there was a rich oral tradition, and that stories were passed down through generations of elders and storytellers. However, these stories were in danger of being lost as the people who knew them were aging. The adult education needs, the challenges young readers faced due to a lack of reading material, and the fear that traditional stories might be lost combined to plant the seeds for what would become the Global Service-Learning (GSL) project that is the subject of this case

study.

The catalyst that shifted my thinking from adult literacy to informing and enabling GSL on campuses was a conversation with the Dean of Education at our university. The Dean was exploring potential global experiences for students in her faculty and expressed interest in my literacy work in Ghana. Her interest raised important questions for me. How might a university position student learning in the service of others? What were the risks, responsibilities, and potential learning outcomes associated such learning experiences? What value could a student, a novice in their field, bring to a service experience?

People often cite the adage “Give a person a fish and he’ll eat for a day; teach a person to fish and he will eat for a lifetime.” In my experience with Project GROW, I have come to realize that while this holds some truth, whoever is doing the teaching ought to know something about fishing in general, and the local context in particular.

## **1.2 Introduction to Chapter 1**

The purpose of this study was to explore, from the participants’ perspectives, the extent to which intentional design influenced the learning outcomes and personal goals of a global service-learning (GSL) project situated in rural Ghana, West Africa. The GSL project was an opportunity for teacher candidates to further their learning through service. The GSL project was developed using a set of design principles that drew from the literature and from previous experience. The setting for the GSL project was in a rural school district in Upper East Ghana, a location that this research will refer to as a *challenging context*. To ensure that the project would have specific learning outcomes, it was situated in a course, the Guided Reflective Inquiry Project (GRIP; see Appendix A), which was the final course of the Bachelor of Education Program at the University of British Columbia’s Okanagan campus.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the context for the study and present the problem statement and the research questions. I also discuss my personal background and interest in the study as well as the assumptions I made regarding the research process. I close the chapter with a discussion of my rationale for conducting this research, its significance to the field, and key terms used in this dissertation.

### **1.3 Background and Context**

In Canada, as in most countries throughout the Global North, participation in a global learning experience is increasingly perceived as an important component of an undergraduate education (Tiessen, 2007; 2012). Policy directions from organizations such as the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) encourage opportunities for students to develop global competency, and business leaders encourage the development of a globally competent workforce required for an increasingly globalized economy (AUCC, 2014; CBIE, 2015; Biggs, McArthur, Higgins, Maloney, Sanchez, & Werker, 2015; Paris & Biggs, 2017).

Currently, Canada lags behind other Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations when it comes to student participation in a global learning experience (commonly referred to in the literature as *outbound student mobility*). Peer nations have developed strategic programs that support and subsidize student participation in global experiences. Initiatives such as Australia's New Colombo Program, Europe's Erasmus Program, or the United States 100,000 Strong Program recognize the contribution that such learning experiences can make through the cultivation of global "knowledge and connections, particularly with emerging countries" (Paris & Biggs, 2018).

Until recently (April 2019), Canada did not have anything comparable, and it shows in the numbers. Compared to France, which has a 33 percent participation rate, or Germany at 29 percent, Australia at 19 percent, and the United States at 16 percent, the participation rate in Canada was 11 percent (Paris & Biggs, 2018). Recent budget announcements suggest this pattern is poised to change. The Government of Canada (n.d.) has allocated \$148 million in new funding over the next five years, to be shared between education promotion and outbound mobility, and this is a step which may “foreshadow the promise of a distinct OSM<sup>1</sup> program for Canada – a first ever” (Barbaric, 2019)

With respect to expanding global experiences, however, not only do policymakers throughout Canadian higher education encourage a significant expansion in the number of students who participate in a global experience, they stress much of this expansion should focus on “emerging or developing economies” (Biggs et al., 2015; Paris & Biggs, 2017). The emphasis in emerging or developing economies is significant to this research. Although study abroad is the most common form of global experience, over the past decade students have demonstrated increased interest in non-traditional locations and in experiences that combine learning and service. Some scholars suggest this trend may be inspired by the proliferation of volunteer travel opportunities found through a simple search of the Internet (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Chapman, 2016; d’Arlach, Sanchez, & Feuer, 2009; Epprecht, 2004; Martin, 2016; Plum & Jorgenson, 2012; Sichel, 2013; Slimbach, 2013; Tiessen, 2007; 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> Outbound student mobility

While most volunteer travel opportunities are not situated in formal learning contexts, their “change the world” messaging has been credited for inspiring students to seek global learning experiences that can make a similar contribution (Epprecht, 2004; Martin, 2016; Sichel, 2013; Tiessen, 2007). This desire has increased interest in service models such as global internships, practicums, work study, or global service-learning (GSL). Given their service orientation these models are often situated in what is commonly referred to as the *developing* or *third world* or what this research will refer to as *challenging contexts* (discussed in Chapter 2). While opportunities to position learning in service to others are heightened in such contexts, so too are the risks for unintended, negative consequences.

A review of the literature revealed that while universities are quick to embrace the potential of global learning opportunities in such settings, there is little focus on how such opportunities might be designed (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Chapman, 2016; Epprecht, 2004; Gaudelli & Laverty, 2015; Tiessen, 2012). Further, metrics for GSL success appear to be heavily skewed toward managerial objectives such as meeting student participation targets rather than to specific learning outcomes (Bamber & Pike, 2013).

This lack of attention to design may not be a concern for typical study abroad programs where students spend a semester or two in a partner university and transfer the credits to their home institution. However, in settings where conditions make life a daily challenge, it can be highly problematic. The literature is rife with examples of learning experiences that are little more than glorified volunteer work (McDonald, 2017), or worse, that reinforce dominant perspectives that expertise and knowledge flow from north to south, with those in the south helplessly waiting for assistance from novices (Bamber & Pike, 2013; d’Arlach et al., 2009; Epprecht, 2004; Esteva, 2010; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen, 2007). Student overconfidence

or hubris (Chapman, 2016; Epprecht, 2004; Huish, 2012; Tiessen, 2007; Tiessen & Huish, 2014) or projects that are inappropriate to students' skill levels and expertise (Chapman, 2016; McDonald, 2017) can disrupt the potential for the transformative learning that is a desirable goal of global experience in general and GSL in particular (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Butin, 2008; Cameron, 2014).

The potential for students to perceive in-country hosts/partners/colleagues through a deficit framework (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Chapman, 2016; Esteva, 2010; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012, Tiessen, 2012), can be problematic. Critics also argue for more intentional reflective activities that can help students make sense of, and find ways to apply, this global learning once back at home (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Cameron, 2014; Crabtree, 2013; d'Arlach et al., 2009). Thus, a combination of issues has led to calls for better, more intentional design (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Cameron, 2014; Chapman, 2016; Crabtree, 2013, Epprecht, 2004; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen 2007; 2012; Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012; Tiessen & Kumar, 2013).

There can be an additional concern regarding positioning GSL in challenging contexts, which is the tendency for third-party organizations such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), non-profit or for-profit organizations to provide students with opportunities to learn and serve. Chapman (2016) points out that in some

cases the university has a direct partnership with a community-based organization (CBO) or international NGO (INGO). In other cases, students must make their own connections and arrangements directly with the placement provider (p. 3).

Given that third-party organizations may have greater understanding of project settings and logistics, and/or a history of in-country experience than the university would, there can be

benefits to such partnerships. In fact, National Association for Study Abroad's (NAFSA) annual conference features an expo that “showcase[s] hundreds of exhibitors from all parts of the globe—meet with current and prospective partners and find the solutions you need in one place” (NAFSA, 2019).

However, using third-party organizations also leaves important issues such as ensuring the GSL experience is an appropriate match for student skills, or that established learning outcomes are met, mostly up to the organization, and therefore out of the university's control (Chapman, 2016; McDonald, 2017). These concerns become even more complicated when universities themselves do not have established requirements for their own programs. By what standards do they ensure aspirations and program objectives are met when organizations outside the university provide the service-learning experience? An additional benefit of the current study is that it can provide instructors and program designers with a research-informed framework for partnering with third-party organizations.

Despite more than a decade and a half of critical discussion, it appears little has been done to address the issues associated with situating GSL and similar learning experiences in challenging contexts (Epprecht, 2004; Tiessen, 2012), leading to the question of how universities might design good learning experiences that are worth doing for all participants. It is this gap in the literature—how to intentionally design GSL in challenging contexts—that this research seeks to address.

## **1.4 Statement of Problem and Research Questions**

Currently, there appears to be little attention paid to how GSL projects situated in challenging contexts are designed. This study set out to explore how GSL projects might be designed so that they draw on student learning, provide practical experience to advance this learning, are respectful to in-country partner needs, and can help students develop global awareness and competency.

The overarching question that drove this research was: How might we understand the extent to which a set of design principles influenced the outcome of a global service-learning project situated in a challenging context? To answer this question, the following sub-questions were asked:

1. To what extent did the participants consider the GSL project worth doing?
2. To what extent did the participants' intentions differ from the researcher/designer's intentions?
3. To what extent did the design principles appear to influence the project's outcomes?
4. What challenges did participants face in this GSL project?
5. How might the goodness of a GSL project be evaluated based on these design principles?
6. How might the findings of this study inform higher education policy and practice related to designing GSL projects in challenging contexts?

## **1.5 Research Approach**

To answer the research questions, I adopted a qualitative case study approach. Methods used to gather data included participant observation, interviews, open and closed question surveys, formal and informal discussions, and reflective journals. In the field, I also drew on

design-based research methodology which allowed for modifications to the research process. Initially, my research objective had been to gather participant feedback on my design principles, which would then lead to a participant/researcher collaboration to discuss, test, assess, and revise the principles (see Appendix K, Original Research Questions). However, once the project was underway, it was evident the richness of the data lay in the participants' lived experiences rather than the design principles that had informed the project. In qualitative research, it is important that the participants speak for themselves (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008); therefore, I modified the original research questions and some of the research instruments to better reflect the participants' experiences.

Data was analyzed using Goffman's (1974) emergent frames and codes approach, a framework which allows for changes as the process of analysis evolves and new patterns emerge from the data. One might argue that both design-based research and Goffman's emergent frames and codes may be similar to grounded theory, an approach often used to "gradually evolve into a core of emerging theory" (Merriam, 1998). However, I did not set out to use grounded theory, rather I chose to explore how intentional design influenced the GSL project's outcomes. The use of multiple data collection methods over a sustained period provided opportunities for triangulation of the data, which in turn contributed to the reliability of the findings.

## **1.6 Assumptions**

This research is based on four key assumptions. The first assumption is that higher education in Canada is committed to expanding the number of students who engage in a global learning experience, and to ensuring that some of these learning experiences are directed toward building a better world (Paris & Biggs, 2017). This assumption is based on policy directions in

higher education (Biggs et al., 2015; CBIE, 2014; Paris & Biggs, 2017, 2018) and common messaging in university mission statements and strategic plans.

A second assumption is that global service-learning (GSL) can offer a way for universities to meet global learning commitments. This assumption is based on the premise that experiential learning has also become embedded in most university strategic plans, and that as an established model of experiential learning, GSL may offer an attractive way to for universities to combine learning and experience with global engagement.

A third assumption informing this study is that universities want to situate GSL projects in some of the world's most challenging regions and that, therefore, they seek to support projects that embed student learning, reflect institutional values, and are of value to in-country partners. This assumption is based on higher education's commitments to student learning, global engagement, and addressing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (see <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/envision2030.html>) in an increasingly complex world.

The fourth assumption is that intentionally designed GSL projects can contribute to a project worth doing for students and in-country partners by appropriately matching student learning with needs identified by those partners.

## **1.7 Researcher Background**

As noted in the preamble, my personal background and work with an NGO in Ghana (<https://www.projectgrow.ca/>) influenced my choice of research setting and topic. Previous conversations with NGO colleagues had revealed some of the unintended negative consequences that can occur when well-intentioned students from the Global North engage in work with

schools, clinics, and other organizations. These conversations suggested a lack of intentional design that is not unique to our institution; a review of the literature appeared to confirm it (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Chapman, 2016; Epprecht, 2004; Gaudelli & Laverty, 2015; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen, 2007). In fact, given the potential harm that can result, some critics go so far as to recommend that universities end the practice of placing student learning opportunities in such settings altogether (Chapman, 2016; McDonald, 2017; Martin, 2016).

With student preferences and institutional objectives increasingly focused on challenging contexts or non-traditional settings, simply ending such opportunities because of potential harm does not seem sensible. If managed well, these learning opportunities offer the potential to do good by leveraging the knowledge, impact, and energy of the university and its students.

In my professional role as a university program designer and administrator, I have witnessed firsthand the positive effects that can occur when students position their learning in ways that benefit others. Much of my work in higher education has involved designing research-informed programs to connect academically successful senior students with those who struggle with complex material. These programs are successful in part because they are designed to include specific training and specific pedagogical frameworks, as well as to provide opportunities for continuous feedback and iteration, all of which reflect an intentionally iterative design process. The programs also include a rigorous tracking process to help staff assess their impact (see, Nilson, McKeown, & Bourne, 2014).

The success of these programs rely on the commitment of the undergraduate students who lead them. Undergraduates are often at a unique stage in their lives, prepared to engage in higher-order thinking that can in turn, lead to critical discussion and raise questions about their place in the world. It is a time of transformation and learning; a well-designed opportunity could

potentially make this learning a force for good. It is my belief in this potential that fuels my passion for this research.

## **1.8 Rationale and Significance**

The overarching rationale for this study was my desire to understand how universities can design GSL projects that advance student learning, address a specified need, and mitigate the potential for unintended, negative consequences. Done well, positioning student learning in a well-designed project can advance global competency (Cameron, 2014) and provide opportunities for critical reflection and action beyond the duration of the project. Increased understanding of how to design good GSL projects can also inform other experiential models such as internships, practicums, or work-study placements in challenging contexts, both local and global.

Recent global events, such as an increase in the number of refugees due to climate change and war, xenophobic responses to changing demographics and shifting global powers, have combined to create complexities that would have been unheard of a decade ago (Paris & Biggs, 2018). It seems more important than ever to direct the resources of higher education toward addressing these complex issues. Intentionally designed projects that include learning, experience, and reflection (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1983) are one way to do so.

## **1.9 Definition of Key Terminology in this Study**

This study contains several key terms. Although some of them are discussed in detail in Chapter 2, a preliminary understanding of the terms is necessary for the reader to make sense of the discussion presented in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

**A good GSL project.** In this research, the practical definition of a good GSL project is that it is one all participants find worth doing for all participants. A good project is also one in which participation can encourage a deeper understanding of, and potential contribution to, challenging social issues, both local and global. The definition of a good GSL project is more fully explained in Chapter 2 (section 2.5).

**Challenging contexts.** A term for regions that are typically referred to in the literature as the *developing* or *third world*, or *global south*. Challenging contexts is becoming recognized as a term that is more respectful of individuals who live in these regions. It also implies a recognition that contextual challenges are not restricted to specific regions and can exist anywhere in the world, including in many locations in Canada (fully explained in Chapter 2.3).

**GSL.** An acronym for global service-learning (also referred to in the literature as international service-learning or ISL), which is the experiential learning model upon which this study was based. Global service-learning situates students in a credited, real-world learning experience that can also contribute to a community or organization.

**Outbound student mobility.** This term is commonly used in higher education literature to describe student participation in global experiences.

**Third-party organizations.** In this research, third-party organizations are organizations outside the university that provide GSL placements for students. These can include non-governmental organizations, community organizations, companies, and non-profit or for-profit volunteer organizations that provide global service opportunities for travel, partnerships, and access.

## **1.10 Chapter Organization**

In Chapter 2, I present a review of the literature that informed this study. The review includes an overview of global experiences in higher education and provides an in-depth discussion of global service-learning, the experiential model upon which this study is based. The literature reviewed provides a critical discussion of development discourse, as well the philosophical and pedagogical frameworks that guide my definition of a good GSL project. I also draw briefly on literature related to human-centred design, and because the GSL project was a literacy project, I provide a brief overview of literacy challenges in rural Ghana.

In Chapter 3, I present the methodology used in this study. I provide a rationale for my choice of methodology and outline the methods used to collect data. I also discuss my role as researcher, the efforts I made to address researcher bias and the study's limitations.

In Chapter 4, I present the findings from the data gathered in this study. These findings are presented in relation to the themes that arose from my initial review of the literature and from my analysis. The various methods used to collect the data provided numerous opportunities to honour the participants' voices and ensure triangulation and reliability of the findings.

The findings discussed in Chapter 4 revealed that one participant had a significantly different experience than the others. Because this research is intended to inform higher education policy around situating GSL projects or similar experiential opportunities in challenging contexts, the fact that this participant's experience was so different raised new questions. To better understand why this difference, I explored the data a second time to identify potential gaps between the stated intentions of the GSL project, as presented in the course outline, and her experience.

In Chapter 5, I analyze these potential gaps. I first present the *stated intentions* of the GSL project as presented in the course outline, then discuss what happened in *actual practice*. I then provide an analysis of the gap between the stated intentions and actual practice, using Argyris and Schon's (1974, 1978) *double-loop learning* approach.

In Chapter 6, I discuss the findings presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 in relation to the first four research questions that guided this study. I then detail the extent to which intentional design contributed to the goodness of the project, which provides the answer to question five. I close the chapter with recommendations for future practice, providing the answer to question six.

## **1.11 Summary**

In this chapter, I have provided a brief introduction to this study. I began the chapter by providing a context for the study which included an overview of the current trends associated with providing global experiences in higher education. I outlined some of the key policy frameworks that currently influence these trends, specifically policymakers' and students' increasing focus on non-traditional, or challenging, contexts. I then provided a problem statement, along with research questions and some of the assumptions that guided this study. I also offered an overview of my background as researcher, my relationship with the communities in the study setting, and the interests that led me to this research. Finally, I defined some of the key terms used in this dissertation. In the next chapter, I present a review of the relevant literature.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

The purpose of this case study was to explore, from the participants' perspectives, the extent to which intentional design may have influenced the outcomes of a global service-learning (GSL) project situated in rural Ghana. The project was created using a set of design principles that were informed by the literature and drawn from personal experience. In this chapter, I review the literature informing this research and provide an overview of the research topic. The review also sets the boundaries of the study, defines key terms, and identifies the gaps in the current research this study will address.

I begin this chapter with an overview of global experiences in higher education, outlining the various models typically offered to students, and positioning GSL (also referred to in the literature as international service-learning or ISL) within the framework of global experiences. I then provide a more detailed and descriptive definition the one of two key terms central to this dissertation, challenging contexts, which describes locations more often referred to as the developing or third world, or global south. After presenting some of the more common issues associated with situating GSL projects in challenging contexts, I explain the second key term, *a good GSL project*, and indicate why designing good GSL projects is critical in challenging contexts.

The GSL project in this study was developed using an iterative design process and informed by previous projects (Bourne, Crichton & Carter 2015; Bourne, Crichton & Yakong, 2016); therefore, I also provide an overview of design research and human-centred design. Finally, because the GSL project in this case study was focused on literacy, I draw briefly from research related to literacy challenges in rural Ghana in order to provide additional context. I

conclude the chapter by presenting current gaps in the literature and providing the conceptual framework and research questions that guided this study.

## **2.1 Global Experiences in Higher Education**

Over the past two decades, youth and volunteer travel have become significant sectors of the global travel industry, and higher education is a part of this trend (Hartman et al., 2014). Canadian universities are no exception, with an overwhelming majority (97 per cent) of Canadian institutions offering global experiences for their students (AUCC, 2014; Biggs, McArthur, Maloney, Higgins, Sanchez, & Werker, 2015; CBIE, 2015).

These global experiences come in a variety of formats, with the most common being study abroad programs. Study abroad continues a tradition rooted in the educational “Grand Tours” of the nineteenth century, in which aristocratic young men travelled to Europe’s capital cities to explore and learn as part of a classical education (Lewin, 2009). Today, study abroad is a way for students to spend a semester or more in another country, receive opportunities for cross-cultural engagement, increase language skills, and/or combine travel and study. An advantage to study abroad programs is that they generally provide academic credit which can be applied toward a degree at the student’s home university (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011).

Other models that provide students with a chance to learn and work in a global setting fall under the broad framework of experiential learning, and typically include practicums, internships, volunteer placements, international field schools, co-op placements, and GSL. Johnston, Drysdale, and Chiupka (2013) note although each has its own structure and method of delivery, it “can also be classified within a single framework of experiential learning in higher education” (p. 56).

Canadian universities offer global experiences to their students for a number of reasons. On a basic level, offering these experiences is part of a strategy to recruit students (Jorgenson & Schultz, 2012). Indeed, Desjardins (2013) suggests two key reasons behind the push for global experiences in higher education are economics and jobs – economics because “universities with strong study and volunteer abroad programs tend to attract more students” (p. 217) and also that “students who have participated in these international programs are also typically more attractive to employers” (p. 218). The emphasis universities place on global engagement is clearly evident to anyone attending National Association for Study Abroad’s annual conference (NAFSA) (NAFSA 2019 <https://www.nafsa.org/conferences/nafsa-2019/2019-annual-conference-expo-sales>) which can often resemble a travel trade show rather than a higher education conference (Epprecht, 2004). On an aspirational level, university mandates and strategic plans tend to promote global experiences as opportunities to help students develop global competency (see Trent University, n.d.; University of Alberta, 2011, 2016; University of British Columbia, 2010; Wilfred Laurier University, n.d). These mandates and plans also often stress institutional commitments to address some of the world’s most pressing challenges (University of Alberta, 2011, 2016; University of British Columbia, 2010).

The motivation for student participation in global experiential learning opportunities varies. For education students, participation is often a way to gain classroom experience while working in another country (Bourne et al., 2016; Jagla, 2016; Pillion, Malewski, Sharma & Wang, 2009). In the highly competitive application process for medical school, aspiring practitioners are often reported to participate in global health opportunities because they are considered valuable to include on curricula vitae (Huish, 2012; 2014). The practice has become so commonplace that one in three applicants has participated in a global health experience;

indeed, for many medical schools, “it has become an expectation” (p.162). At the current rate of interest, this ratio is expected to increase to two in three by the end of the decade (Huish, 2014).

Global experiential learning is common in other faculties, including, but not limited to, Business (Petkus, 2000), Engineering (Reynolds, 2016), Global Studies (Chapman, 2016; Epprecht, 2004; Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012), Nursing (Mill, Yonge, & Cameron, 2005), and Social Work (Heron, 2005). In a study that explored the motivation behind 68 students’ participation in global opportunities, Tiessen (2012) found that 75 per cent cited developing “work-related skills” as their reason for participation and 60% cited “test[ing] a career choice” (p.10).

While building a CV and gaining practical experience are of interest to students, Tiessen’s (2012) study also revealed that 75 percent of the students cited a desire to contribute as a motivation for service-oriented opportunities. Programs for youth to engage in some form of global service or volunteer opportunity have been around for many years, beginning in earnest with the United Kingdom’s Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO) program which was launched in 1958, and in the United States, with the establishment of the Peace Corps in 1960 (Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen, 2007). In some ways, GSL builds on these earlier programs.

## **2.2 Global Service-learning (GSL)**

In this section, I provide an overview of GSL, situating it within the larger framework of global experiences in higher education. I begin by introducing service-learning as a pedagogical approach to civic engagement that links learning, experience, and reflection in a tradition introduced by Dewey (1938) and expanded by Kolb (1983), Freire (1996), and Boyer (1996). I then move to discussing the more specific practice of GSL, which has roots not only in service-

learning, but also in other areas of higher education such as study abroad and international education.

### 2.2.1 Service-learning.

Service-learning is an experiential learning opportunity that positions student learning in the context of real-life, real-world experience (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Butin, 2008; Deans, 1999; Eyster & Giles, 1999; Furco, 2012; Petkus, 2000). Although a service-learning opportunity may sometimes be situated within a specific organization or business, it is more often a collaborative project in which students and local partners address a specific need that might otherwise be unmet (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Dostillio, Brackman, Edwards, Harrison, Kliever & Clayton, 2012; Johnston et al., 2013; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Tonkin, 2011). Ideally, community and academic partners design a GSL project to situate student learning in a way that can address an identified need. Thus, a GSL project should have specific learning outcomes for the students and address clear objectives identified by community partners (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Hartman et al., 2014). Table 1 is an example of the relationships and objectives that should be present in a credited GSL project.

**Table 1. Service-learning relationships**

<b>Community Partners</b>	<b>Academic Partners</b>	<b>GSL project</b>	<b>Learning outcomes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local organization, school, clinic, etc.</li> <li>• Non-governmental organization (NGO), etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculties</li> <li>• Professional schools</li> <li>• Vocational and trades Programs, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situates student learning in a way that can address a Community need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionally recognized</li> <li>• Credit bearing</li> </ul>

Service-learning can be viewed through a variety of lenses. For some, there is the potential to contribute through projects that balance service and learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Chapman, 2008; Woolf, 2008); for others, service-learning provides opportunities to probe

social justice issues (Chovanec, Kajner, Mian & Underwood, 2016; Mitchell, 2008). However, all service-learning typically shares the common framework of “intentional learning objectives, meaningful service, and organized reflection activities that connect the learning and service components” (Furco, 2012, p. xii).

For this study, I draw on Bringle and Hatcher’s (2009) definition of service-learning as a program-based, credit bearing experience in which students:

- a) participate in an organized activity that meets 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 responsibilities (p. 38).

Linking student learning with meeting a specified need in a community or organization reflects a key premise of service-learning: the reciprocal exchange of benefits between students and community or organizational partners. In service-learning, this reciprocity is considered central to student learning outcomes (Bringle & Hatcher 2009, 2011; Butin 2006, 2008; d’Arlach, Sanchez & Feuer, 2009; Dostillio et al., 2012; Hartman et al., 2014; Woolf, 2008).

Dostillio et al. (2012) have identified three distinct forms of reciprocity associated with service-learning: *exchange reciprocity*, *influence reciprocity* and *generative reciprocity*.

*Exchange reciprocity* results from participants giving and receiving something from the other that they would not otherwise have. *Influence reciprocity* occurs when process, outcomes, or both are changed by the participants’ ways of knowing or being. *Generative reciprocity* happens when participants become, or create, something new together that would not otherwise exist.

Reciprocity can act as a bridge between students and community participants. Later in this chapter, I discuss how student participants, enabled by privilege, education, and relative

affluence, may perceive themselves as benevolent *helpers* when working with communities in need (Bamber & Pike, 2013; d’Arlach, 2009; 2004; Tiessen, 2007; 2012). In advance of that discussion, it is useful to point out that drawing on service-learning’s focus on reciprocity may be a way to mitigate the potential for students to see themselves in any way other than as *learners* working in a collaborative partnership (Bamber & Pike, 2013; d’Arlach, et al., 2009; Dostillio, et al., 2012; Hartman, et al., 2014; Woolf, 2008).

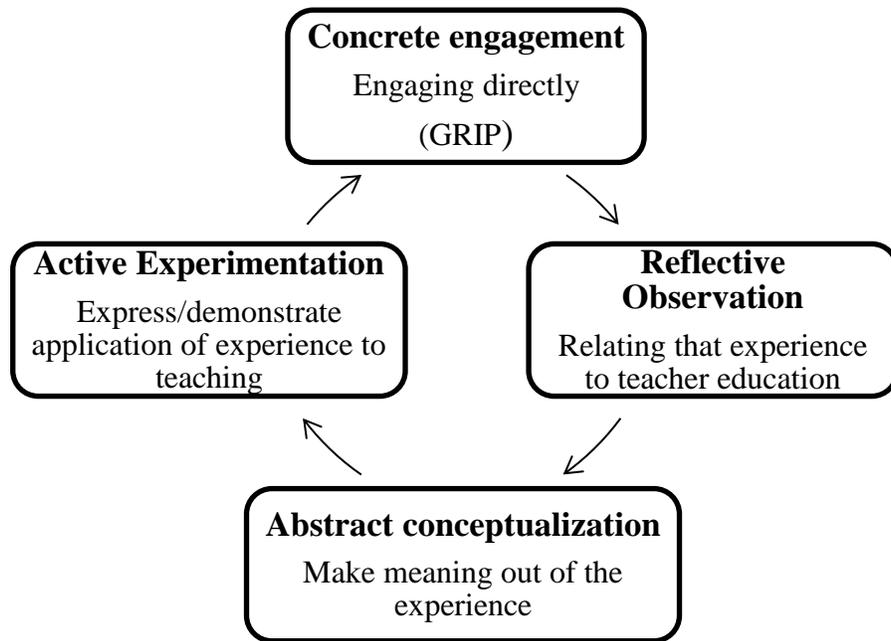
### **2.2.2 Service-learning in higher education.**

Service-learning first appeared as an educational pedagogy on campuses in the United States during the 1960s (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Butin 2006; 2008, McNamara, 2012). By 1985, service-learning had become more integrated through the establishment of Campus Compact, “an organization that advances the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility” (Campus Compact, n.d.). In Canada, service-learning was first incorporated as a formal part of higher education activities in 1996, when Saint Francis Xavier University established community service-learning, thus building on a long-standing tradition of community engagement that began with the Antigonish movement in the 1920s (Saint Francis Xavier University, n.d.).

Service-learning draws from Dewey’s (1938) connections between learning and experience. Although he did not refer to service-learning by name, Dewey is credited with influencing the educational framework that combined learning, experience, service, and reflection, which in turn led to the modern service-learning movement (Deans, 1999; Eyler & Giles, 1999; McNamara, 2012; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Petkus, 2000). Dewey considered it

essential for students to learn through experience and then to reflect on that experience and integrate this reflection back into their learning. Experience and reflection are core tenets of service-learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Furco, 2012; McNamara, 2012; Petkus, 2000).

Another theorist who strongly influenced service-learning pedagogy was Kolb (1983). Drawing from Dewey's work in education, Kolb developed the *experiential learning* cycle model (Petkus 2000, p.1). Kolb suggested that experiential learning cycles through four stages: concrete engagement, reflection/observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. While it is common to begin Kolb's cycle with the concrete engagement step, one can start anywhere in the cycle depending on the service-learning opportunity. Regardless of where one begins the process, it is generally agreed that learners must complete all four steps for the learning to be most effective (Petkus, 2000). For the GSL project in this case study, the first step—engaging directly—was enabled through the course Guided Reflective Inquiry Project (GRIP; see Appendix A). Various activities in both in the classroom and during the GSL project ensured that the teacher candidates progressed through the various stages (see Figure 1 below).



**Figure 1. Kolb's experiential learning cycle: GRIP Ghana**

Service-learning can also have a social justice orientation, one credited to the work of Paulo Freire (2000). Like Dewey, Freire developed his educational philosophy “around core concepts of experience, growth, inquiry, communication, mediation, problem posing/problem solving, consciousness raising, ethical social action and confirmation” (Deans, 1999, p. 19). While both Dewey and Freire viewed education as a way to transform society, Freire’s model was rooted in Marxism, which tended to view education as a road to both social and political transformation.

Freire’s (2000) view of education as transformation has been influential in the critical and social justice interpretation of service-learning (McNamara, 2012; Mitchell, 2008). Critical service-learning stresses the need for students to question the causes of inequality, often probing issues such as privilege, contextual and geographical challenges, and global patterns that reinforce inequality (Chovanec, et al., 2016). Critical service-learning questions the status quo, a

practice that can trace a clear line back to Freire's consciousness-raising, socially oriented ideas in education.

Freire (1996) also stressed the need to democratize higher education. He advocated for a lessening of "the distance between the university (or what is done in it) and the popular classes ... without losing rigor and seriousness, without neglecting the duty of teaching and learning" (p. 133). Freire maintained a university needed to connect its activities more closely with the needs of the wider community, "to become part of the city and expand its influence over the whole city" (p.133).

And finally, a theorist whose work has been considered a catalyst for the development of service-learning in higher education was Ernest Boyer (1996). Boyer proposed that post-secondary institutions, and particularly research universities, needed to move beyond their traditional framework of discovering knowledge to "integrating knowledge, communicating knowledge, and applying knowledge through professional service" (p. 29). For Boyer, the distance between "town and gown" could be addressed through civic partnerships and engagement. His emphasis on applying knowledge through service is considered to have been a major catalyst for the development and expansion of service-learning, and by extension GSL, throughout higher education (Crabtree, 2008; Erasmus, 2011; Marullo & Edwards, 2000).

However, there are some who suggest connecting the knowledge of the university with the needs of the community risks implications that the world exists to be acted upon by academics (Beilke 2005; Erasmus, 2011). Although the ideas of Freire, (1996) and Boyer, (1996) connect learning, community, resources, and service to the university, d'Arlach et al. (2009) suggest that this can be problematic. It can be "easy for the university, financially independent and entrenched in its expert role, to see the community as deficit-based and impose expert

solutions [which the authors argue is little more than] tutoring the poor” (p. 5). Projects focused on activities such as tutoring the poor are a “safe choice because the university benefits from . . . exposure and the community gains needed help” from the university (p. 5). Unfortunately, the reciprocity so central to service-learning can be lost when potentially collaborative partnerships are reduced to helper/helped relationships. Such relationships can compromise the transformational promise of service-learning (d’Arlach, et al., 2009; Mellom & Herrera, 2014; Woolf, 2008) and worse, position partners within a deficit framework.

One of the more strident critics of service-learning, or of any suggestion that higher education focus more on civic engagement, has been the postmodernist legal scholar Stanley Fish (2008). In his critique *Save the World on Your Own Time*, Fish posits that the role of the university is to educate, not to foster a moral imperative or focus on creating democratic citizens. He states,

the moment a teacher tries to promote a political or a social agenda, mold the character of students, produce civic virtue or institute a regime of tolerance, he or she has stepped away from the imminent rationality of the enterprise (p.81).

For Fish, the role of academic work is centred on learning and the production of knowledge. When academic work touches on issues related to politics, civics, social justice or similar areas, these issues should be “discussed in academic terms” (Fish, p.25) and analyzed critically. He suggests these discussions should not be taken as calls to action but presented as academic arguments. He also argues that the academic classroom is not designed for social activism and solving social issues. Fish’s stance that the role of the university is to *academicize* and understand issues runs counter to Boyer’s (1995) call for a shift toward civic engagement.

Using women's studies as an example, Fish (2008) illustrates how academization, rather than activism, can contribute to the breadth of knowledge. As in any other discipline, the objective of Women's Studies was not "about cultural or political goals [but enhanced the role of the academy by introducing] students to bodies of knowledge and traditions of inquiry that had not previously been part of their experience" (p.13). Fish considers women's studies' influence as a field of inquiry, rather than as a form of activism, to be its real contribution to academia.

In a rebuttal to Fish's (2008) suggestion service-learning is not academic work, Butin (2008) has suggested service-learning can, if viewed through an educational rather than activist lens, bring about precisely the kind of analysis Fish advocates. Butin has pointed out that "service-learning is (if we open ourselves up to it) a truly destabilizing pedagogy that implodes our grand narratives and fixed truths exactly because of its contingent character" (p.68). Butin's concept of "destabilizing pedagogy," also described later in this chapter as a *pedagogy of discomfort* (Boler & Zemblyas, 2003), requires students to step out of their comfort zones and question deeply embedded systems that can contribute to inequality and that may generate the need for the service-learning project to begin with (Boler & Zemblyas, 2003; Brukardt, Holland, Percy & Zimpher, 2004; Butin, 2006, 2008; Hartman, 2015).

Butin (2008) draws on Fish's example of women's studies to make his case that service-learning can be a potentially destabilizing pedagogy. He agrees that women's studies has expanded "the academy's notion of what constitutes the academic" (p.492), a process that came about when the field became less of a political project and more of a form of academic inquiry. However, Butin (2008) argues the same results are possible with service-learning and has suggested Fish's (2008) concerns might be addressed by framing it less as a form of activism and civic responsibility and more as a mode of inquiry. Service-learning, according to Butin, is a

“real-world, real time pedagogy of engagement that confounds any simple or simplistic textbook notion of a fixed and stable truth [and] thus becomes a paradigmatic example of what Fish envisions as the ideal of higher education” (p. 68).

Although Boyer’s (1995) work sparked interest, service-learning has yet to achieve its potential as an academic activity, and for most part remains outside of most academic discourse. In many cases, service-learning is “often positioned as a co-curricular practice” (Butin, 2006, p.474) and, by extension, is not included in most base funding. Put simply, while the service-learning appears to be embraced in theory, it faces challenges in practice.

Butin (2006) has suggested this marginalization may result in part from the unrealistic expectations of proponents, who regard service-learning as a way to shift higher education’s orientation toward greater involvement in social justice. For example, the *Wingspread Statement* (Brukardt, et al., 2004) suggests service-learning can radically transform higher education through key practices such as integrating service-learning projects for credit, forging community partnerships, and re-defining scholarship in relation to civic engagement, all of which could result in radical institutional change (See <https://community-wealth.org/content/calling-question-higher-education-ready-commit-community-engagement>). Viewing service-learning through such a lofty framework appears to miss its potential to add to the academic enterprise. Butin has suggested that rather than “think[ing] about service-learning as a [way] to transform higher education and society, we might more fruitfully reverse the terminology and begin to think through service-learning about the politics of transforming higher education and society” (p. 492). For Butin, if service-learning is to become embedded in academia, it must be positioned as a disciplined academic and analytical enterprise.

In the preceding section, I presented a general overview of service-learning, its

theoretical premises, and the challenges it faces to become more aligned and accepted as an academic activity. I now turn to global service-learning (GSL), a more nuanced model of service-learning, upon which this case study is based.

### **2.2.3 Global service-learning in higher education.**

Although GSL has roots in service-learning, it also has roots in other areas of higher education. Bringle and Hatcher (2011) have suggested GSL is situated at the confluence of three separate areas of higher education: service-learning, study abroad, and international education. It draws from each area to create a “distinct pedagogy of its own” (p.5). Typically, through a GSL project, students combine the objectives of study abroad with those of service-learning, thereby broadening their learning goals while working with another culture (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011). When GSL is combined with other international pedagogical approaches that include culture and language courses, international relations, development studies and/or similar globally focused curricula, student learning can be put to use in ways that contribute to communities and organizations while also contributing to student learning and collaboration (Brown, 2011).

Defining GSL as an integration of programs also illustrates what it is not. GSL may or may not focus on social justice. However, its main objective is typically to situate student learning in experience and civic engagement with communities, services, or organizations (Butin 2006, 2008; d’Arlach et al., 2009; Dostillio et al., 2012; Tonkin, 2011; Woolf, 2008). Although a service-learning project may be a collaboration between community and students, and may address a specific need, it should always intentionally link what is learned in the classroom to real world experiences and opportunities for critical reflection and analysis through doing (Butin 2006; 2008; Eyler & Giles, 1999). As noted earlier, for Butin (2006; 2008) it is through this reflection and analysis that service-learning becomes a form of active inquiry.

As an educative, collaborative and reflective learning opportunity, GSL also differs from global volunteering, an important distinction given current preferences for non-traditional travel opportunities and locations. Woolf (2008) has suggested this distinction lies in the intent of each program, noting the purpose of volunteering to make a contribution by donating time and/or labour, while the purpose of GSL is to combine classroom learning, practical experience, and civic responsibility in a global setting. Thus, GSL should not be viewed as being similar to youth volunteer abroad (YVA) programs. YVA programs offer opportunities for travelers to combine a desire for travel with a stint of volunteer work (see for example <http://canadaworldyouth.org/about/programs/>; <https://www.metowe.com/volunteer-travel/>); <http://www.projects-abroad.ca/voluntourism/>). In contrast, GSL projects typically seek to “enhance the core academic function of the university . . . [and should be] demonstrably serious, intellectually challenging opportunities and, crucially, have clear integration into the curriculum” (Woolf, 2008, p. 23). While it may provide benefits to recipients, volunteering is not necessarily situated in learning or academic inquiry. Therefore, understanding the underlying framework of GSL is an essential first step in conceptualizing projects that reach beyond travel or volunteering and connect student learning with real-life experience.

#### **2.2.4 Challenges for global service-learning in higher education.**

Like its domestic counterpart, service-learning, GSL struggles to be recognized as an academic enterprise. Proponents of GSL echo the optimism of the *Wingspread Statement* (Brukardt, et al., 2004) when they suggest it can be something of an academic “break-through” in higher education’s pursuit of global learning:

If a medical researcher discovered a cure for cancer, or some other serious illness, there would be great enthusiasm about the development and urgency for publicizing its availability to the benefit of as many patients as possible. By analogy, what if higher education identified a pedagogical approach that had educational outcomes that are extensive (influences a broad array of desirable educational outcomes), robust (are evident across a variety of conditions and for a wide range of students) transformational (produces deep, permanent changes in present and future lives) and distinctive (produces educational outcomes that are not as effectively attained using other pedagogies). International service-learning (ISL) holds this potential and may be a pedagogy that is best suited to prepare college graduates to be active global citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (Bringle & Hatcher 2011, p. 3)

In this instance, Bringle and Hatcher (2011) appear to regard GSL as a pedagogy that could underwrite higher education's outbound student mobility programming, an approach that brings to mind Schulman's (2005) work in *signature pedagogies*. Signature pedagogies are "forms of instruction that leap to mind when we first think about the preparation of members of particular professions" (Schulman, 2005, p. 52). Signature pedagogies generally reflect a three-structured approach—*surface structure*, *deep structure* and *implicit structure*. Schulman describes these structures as follows:

- Surface structure –the material is taught by an authoritative teacher requiring active dialogue, questioning by the teacher, and discussion;
- Deep structure – theoretical assumptions underlying how best to impart knowledge in the profession, i.e. the case dialogue in law as a way to impart the theory of law; and

- Implicit structure – moral dimensions, beliefs, values, and dispositions of the professions (see p. 55).

Signature pedagogies introduce standard, routine knowledge, thus freeing students to learn more complex material (Schulman, 2005). Examples of signature pedagogies include the case dialogue method between student and professor in law, or bedside teaching in medicine (Schulman, 2005).

It would be a considerable leap to expect GSL to move from its current marginal position in higher education to becoming embraced as a guiding or signature pedagogy. Indeed, Tiessen and Epprecht (2012) have suggested Bringle and Hatcher's (2011) equating of GSL with the analogy of a cure is somewhat "hyperbolic" (p.5). However, setting aside skepticism for the moment, Bringle and Hatcher do make the point that GSL can potentially provide an experience that connects learning, experience, and critical reflection, all while engaging with another culture. This kind of experience can be particularly valuable in professional fields with a service orientation, such as education, medicine, nursing, or social work, where in an increasingly multicultural world, experience with other cultural backgrounds may be an integral part of one's professional skill set (Guo, 2012; Heron, 2005; Pillion, et al., 2009; Ragoonaden, Sivia & Baxan, 2015). While this study does not necessarily aim to provide a signature pedagogy, the final design principles discussed in Chapter 6 have the potential to provide a pedagogical framework in which to conceptualize opportunities that combine learning, experience, reflection, and civic engagement.

Significant issues remain for GSL. For one, service-learning has yet to become fully embedded in academic institutions. It is seldom housed within faculties and commonly falls within the purview of student affairs (Butin, 2008; Chapman, 2016), making it difficult for it to be discussed as an academic activity. Perhaps of greater concern is the fact that often service-

learning opportunities are not actually offered by the university per se but are developed by third-party organizations or partners (see Chapman 2016; Tonkin & Quigora, 2004). This practice raises serious considerations around learning expectations and outcomes.

Currently, some Canadian universities work with organizations such as Me to We (<https://www.metowe.com/trips/volunteer-travel/university-trips/>), Projects Abroad ([www.projectsabroad.ca](http://www.projectsabroad.ca)), or VESA Abroad (<https://www.vesabroad.org/>), all of which are examples of organizations that market service-learning opportunities for university students. In the United States, such organizations proliferate, leading to a suggestion that the service-provider floor at national conferences such as the National Association for Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA) can resemble a travel trade show rather than an educational conference (Epprecht, 2004).

There may be considerable benefits to such partnerships, given that well-established organizations and partners can have greater experience and understanding of the project setting and logistics, and/or a longer history of in-country activities, than the university. Unfortunately, using third party organizations/partners can also leave much off the table in terms of matching student skill sets to projects, or achieving specific learning objectives and outcomes (Chapman, 2016). It is possible that if the demand for opportunities in non-traditional locations discussed in Chapter 1 does increase, universities may increasingly turn to third-party organizations to meet the demand, and thereby risk a possible commodification of global learning. While handing off GSL and similar experiential learning opportunities may eliminate significant logistical challenges for the university, it may also compromise the university's ability to determine learning expectations and outcomes (Chapman, 2016; McDonald, 2017). At the very least, it appears that universities might want to consider some kind of framework to ensure specific

learning outcomes and institutional needs are met. Currently, there is a lack of such frameworks in higher education.

Debra Chapman is a scholar associated with Wilfrid Laurier University's Global Studies program. Through her work with the Mexico segment of a global food security initiative which began in 2012, Chapman has witnessed a number of issues which have caused her to question the value of global experiences designed by third-party organizations. Using a snowball sample of students, and conducting in-depth, recorded interviews, Chapman (2016) probed the experiences of 12 students who participated in a variety of projects in Mexico. The projects included teaching English, providing health interventions and presentations on HIV/AIDS, building infrastructure, painting buildings, or working in orphanages. Although one student described her experience in glowing terms, most indicated they struggled with what Chapman terms "the integrity of their experiences" (p.10). Some students stated their projects were "very unorganized" (p.10). For others, accommodations often placed them with privileged families in gated communities and cut them off from locals with whom they were working, and still others questioned the integrity of working with *for-profit* organizations rather than directly with community members. As well, language barriers and little or no experience in teaching English limited the potential learning and contribution for participants.

Chapman presented ethical issues that arose from these off- campus placements and which are listed below:

- Students teaching English with no TESL certification or teacher training (something that would not be permitted in most institutionally organized ESL placements).

- Students working in an orphanage with no ability to speak the local language (creating an insurmountable gulf between student participants and the children with whom they were working).
- Students teaching adults about HIV, AIDS and social issues such as violence against women and sexual health without context or experience (and otherwise replicating work that is already done by local healthcare and social workers who better understand the social context).

Perhaps most significant for Chapman (2016) was the lack of communication between participating universities and partnering, third-party organizations. Her study revealed there was no communication between the University and the NGOs, or the university and the community where the placement was held. In fact, the interconnection of the objectives of all the people and organizations involved was unclear. One Canadian NGO stated that it had never visited the NGOs in Mexico where it sent students (p.11).

Such a lack of accountability has led Chapman to suggest the whole practice be ended.

Chapman's (2016) concerns are raised elsewhere in the literature. For example, Crabtree (2013) also shares concerns from her decade of designing and leading GSL projects which include, but are not limited to:

- Local children enamored with foreign students and their possessions;
- Donations of used clothing and items as gifts after project completion;
- Reinforcement of the idea that development requires external benefactors; and
- Students returning to pursue study and careers "with little apparent divergence from their original path of or toward privilege" (see pp. 12-13).

The above list is problematic for a number of reasons. In some settings, local children enamored of foreign students can form attachments that may become difficult to overcome when the students return home (Chapman, 2016; Crabtree, 2013; Martin, 2016). In other instances, donations of clothing etc., can appear to be acts of generosity on the part of student participants, but can lead to dissention between those who have access to receiving such donations and those who do not (Crabtree, 2013). Donations, no matter how well-intended, can divide some of the population out and create unnecessary competition between local members of the community. As well, since GSL projects tend to situate students from comparatively privileged backgrounds in a service-learning opportunity has the potential to increase a perception that foreign intervention and expertise is required to solve persistent problems (Black, 2007; Chapman, 2016; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Schumacher, 1973). And finally, without the critical reflection essential to Butin's (2008) "destabilizing pedagogy," students may not take the time to question the deeply embedded systems that contribute to patterns of global inequality. Both Crabtree and Chapman (2016) present examples of GSL projects that offer little of the "real time destabilizing pedagogy" suggested by Butin (2008) or the pedagogical objectives that can result from connecting student learning to community engagement (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011).

Such GSL projects raise important questions about whether promoting student learning experiences in challenging context is even worth pursuing. Most supporters and critics are somewhere on the continuum between viewing GSL as an educational breakthrough that can transform higher education (Brukhardt et al., 2004; Bringle & Hatcher 2011) to ending the practice altogether (Chapman, 2016; Fish, 2008). They recognize both the challenges and the learning potential inherent in GSL, and they suggest that rather than ending the process, universities should develop a more critical and intentional approach that emphasizes learning and

reflection while mitigating unintended, negative consequences (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Cameron, 2014; Crabtree, 2013; d'Arlach et al., 2009; Dostillio et al., 2012; Hartman, et al., 2014; Mellom & Herrera, 2014; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Slimbach, 2010; Tiessen, 2012). Given the emphasis on, and desire to increase, global learning opportunities for students, ending GSL or similar experiential opportunities does not appear to be an option (AUCC, 2014; Biggs et al., 2015; CBIE, 2015; Paris & Biggs, 2017). Currently, what is missing is a design framework to address the concerns of those who question the value of GSL, while supporting the objectives of those who believe in its value to learning and social engagement.

The literature identifies the need for a design framework that can both advance student learning and respect the geographical, economic, social, and contextual challenges of project settings (Crabtree, 2013; Crichton, 2014; Hartman et al., 2014; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Slimbach, 2010). This research seeks to provide such a framework which would appear to be crucial locations described here as challenging contexts (Crichton, 2014; Crichton, Bourne, & Carter, 2014). In the next section, I discuss the term challenging contexts and the rationale behind my decision to use this term in my work.

### **2.3 Challenging contexts**

In positioning this research in West Africa, I consciously avoid the use of terms such as *developing world* or *third world*, opting instead for Crichton's (2013) term challenging contexts. The latter term avoids positioning GSL projects within the deficit model framework that can typify much of the development process (Bourne et al., 2016; Crichton, Bourne & Carter, 2014; Crichton, 2014, Yakong, 2013).

I choose the term challenging contexts because it is respectful of the fact that globally, all populations can face challenges that are situational and not unique to the Global South (Crichton, 2014). The term challenging contexts enables a more nuanced representation of situational and contextual challenges that traditional development terminology may overlook (Sen, 1987), suggesting challenges can be found in multiple contexts in all parts of the world, including Canadian settings. The term challenging contexts can lessen the binary between north/south; developed/undeveloped; rich/poor nations.

The term challenging contexts is also reflective of the problem-*finding*, design thinking approach that informs this research. Although I present an in-depth discussion of design thinking and human-centred design later in this chapter, at this point it is useful to note that there were two design challenges that informed the design of the GSL project discussed in this study. The first challenge was to explore how I might design a project to position the teacher candidates' learning in such a way that it could be useful in addressing local challenges. The second design challenge was how the teacher candidates might collaborate with local schools and district teaching staff to record traditional oral stories and cultural practices and develop them into print-ready books that could support the Ghanaian curriculum.

### **2.3.1 Development terminology as problematic.**

The literature suggests development terminology is problematic in several ways. First, it sets up rich/poor, have/have not binaries between what are considered *developed nations*, many of which are situated in the Global North or some Pacific Rim regions, and *undeveloped nations*, many of which are former colonies located in the Global South (Black, 2007; Esteva, 2010). As these former colonies emerged as independent nations, many lacked capital and resources, and needed financial and technical support from their northern, developed counterparts (Black,

2007). This support of privileged Northern and Western concepts of *development* reinforced overt political and strategic objectives, and placed the language, objectives, and metrics for success in the hands of donor or more *developed* nations (Black, 2007; Esteva, 2010; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Schumacher, 1973). Some critics suggest development has, in many ways, simply replaced one form of colonization for another by creating a framework that guides development along a path favoring the trade and economic objectives of developed nations (Black, 2007; Dostillio et al., 2012; Epprecht, 2004; Esteva, 2010; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Schumacher, 1973).

Throughout the GSL project in this case study, students were encouraged to use the term challenging contexts, to question typical development patterns, and to treat their experiences and partnerships as learning opportunities. Pluim and Jorgenson (2012), along with others (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Chapman, 2016; Dostillio et al., 2012; Epprecht, 2004; Marullo & Edwards 2000; Tiessen 2007, 2012; Tonkin, 2011), have insisted learning opportunities in these contexts must include extensive consultation and collaboration. Students must learn with, and from in-country partners.

A second concern with development terminology is its potential to patronize. Latin American scholar and social critic Gustavo Esteva (2010) has suggested that development has largely focused on encouraging economic growth modeled on matrices established by, and favorable to, developed nations and World Bank objectives. However, he extends this discussion to include the impact development terminology can have on those living in conditions described as *developing*. Esteva has suggested the term development “always implies favorable change...a step from the inferior to the superior and indicates that one is doing well because one is advancing toward a desirable goal” (p. 6). He has argued while this change may appear favorable

in the eyes of those who guide development, for two-thirds of the world's population, the “positive meaning of the word development – profoundly rooted after two centuries of its social construction - is a reminder of what they are not. It is a reminder of an undesirable, undignified condition” (p.6). This meaning of *developed* can encourage a deficit mindset toward people living in such conditions that can in turn, limit local perspectives and/or objectives. Pluim and Jorgenson (2012) concur, suggesting an unintended consequence of development terminology can be a potential loss of voice on the part of those being developed through the “spreading of dominant values such as the culture, language, and ideas of the donor society” (p. 29).

This lack of local input can result in what Schumacher (1973), more than four decades ago, identified as a form of “unintentional neo-colonialism” (p.205). In their critiques of volunteer, learning, and travel opportunities, Tucker (1999) and Moffatt (2006) note that development remains a “process whereby the lives of some people, their plans, their hopes, their imaginations, are shaped by others who frequently share neither their lifestyles, nor their hopes, nor their values” (cited in Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012, p. 29). Scholars suggest that when in challenging contexts, students need to constantly interrogate their own assumptions around dominant values and ideas (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Chapman, 2016; d’Arlach et al., 2009; Dostillio et al., 2012; Epprecht, 2004; Huish, 2012; Mellom & Herrera, 2014; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen, 2007, 2012; Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012). To encourage students to reflect on these assumptions, designers of GSL projects need to provide space that allows for local voices and other ways of knowing to be both recognized and respected (Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012).

A third problem with current development terminology is its focus on economic indicators which may obscure the actual challenges of daily life in low-income countries. Since

the mid1950s, development metrics have relied on economic growth rather than economic distribution (Schumacher, 1973), so that measures of a nation's economic success are linked to its GNP (Burns, 2011; Nussbaum, 2003; Sen, 1999). Unfortunately, measuring a nation's GNP does not always reflect the actual conditions of people living within its borders (Black, 2007; Burns, 2011; Nussbaum, 2003, 2009; Schumacher, 1973; Sen, 1999, 2005).

In recent decades, there has been a push for new measures that move beyond the traditional theories of economics to consider the lived experience of individuals (Burns, 2011; Nussbaum, 2003; Sen, 1999, 2005). One example of this alternative thinking is found in the work of Nobel Prize laureate (Economics), Amartya Sen (1987, 1999, 2005). Sen has argued that while traditional theories of economics focus on GNP, which may indicate an improvement in a nation's output, they do little to capture the realities of those members of society who may be unable to participate in these economic improvements. He has suggested a more accurate measure of a nation's well-being might be what he has called the capabilities approach (CA). The CA views poverty as a failure of basic capabilities, capabilities being what people are able to do. As Sen has said, "Capabilities are notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead" (1987, p. 6). It should be noted the CA approach has its own limitations, because *opportunities* themselves are context-dependent, difficult to define, and therefore problematic in terms of measurement (Gaertner, n.d.). However, since not all citizens enjoy equal access to national gains in productivity, focusing on individual capabilities can nevertheless offer a more nuanced understanding of a nation's economic well-being (Sen 1987, 2005).

Legal philosopher Martha Nussbaum (2003, 2009), drawn to Sen's concepts of capabilities, has taken the further step of operationalizing his ideas by developing a framework

of ten basic human capabilities. The result is a list of “ten capabilities as central requirements of a life with dignity” (Nussbaum, 2003, p.40). A lack of these capabilities may illustrate gaps in well-being that traditional economic indicators leave out—gaps that include, but are not limited to, bodily health, bodily integrity, political involvement, and access to education<sup>2</sup>. Nussbaum suggests it is necessary to focus on human situations, analyze them, and make recommendations. Nussbaum’s rationale for a defined list of capabilities is directed toward issues of social justice, policy frameworks and action, whereas Sen focused on offering an alternative view of opportunities, or what people could do, and be, but both view a capabilities approach as preferable to traditional development metrics (Robeyns, 2005).

Nussbaum’s (2003) human capabilities list has been controversial, in part because the capabilities are still defined using a Northern and Western ideological framework (Charusheela, 2009; Nzegwu, 1995). For example, Sen (2005) expressed misgivings around Nussbaum’s (2003) list of capabilities. He argues that capabilities are situational and therefore should not be defined by theorists which would preclude public participation in discussions as to what should

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<sup>2</sup> The list of capabilities: *Life*. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one’s life is so reduced as to be not worth living. *Bodily Health*. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter. *Bodily Integrity*. Being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction. *Senses, Imagination and Thought*. Being able to use the sense, to imagine, think, and reason, and to do these things in a “truly human” way...cultivated by an adequate education. Being able to use imagination; Being able to use one’s mind in ways protected by freedom of expression. Being able to have pleasurable experiences and avoid non-beneficial pain. *Emotions*. Being able to have attachments to things and people. Not having one’s emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety. *Practical Reason*. Being able to form a conception of the good and engage in critical reflection about the planning of one’s life. *Affiliation*. A) Being able to live with, and toward others and B) Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation. *Other Species*. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature. *Play*. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities. *Control Over One’s Environment*: A) Political. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one’s life, the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association. And B) Material. Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods) and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on equal basis with others. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising reason (Nussbaum2003, pp. 41- 42).

be included. It should be noted that although they differ on whether to operationalize the capabilities approach or not, Sen and Nussbaum are united in their belief that capabilities, rather than GDP, should be considered when measuring a nation's economic well-being. In fact, they are united to the extent that they have collaborated to establish the Human Capabilities and Development Association (<https://hd-ca.org/>).

Bhutan's 2009 development and adoption of the Gross National Happiness (GNH) index offers yet another way to assess a nation's well-being. Bhutan's GNH reflects the country's established pattern of promoting wellbeing over material development, a pattern that began in the 1970s through measures emphasizing education, health, rural development, conservation, communication, and subsistence (Bates, 2009; Burns, 2011). King Jigme Singye Wangchuck sought a path to development that combined "Bhutanese values, culture, institutions and spiritual beliefs" with approaches that worked from developed countries," thus "preserving the centuries old traditions that worked for Bhutan" (Burns, p. 74).

Bhutan's GNH includes nine domains—health, education, standard of living, governance, environment, community vitality, culture and spirituality, time use, and emotional well-being—and is considered less subjective than other methods for measuring well-being (Alkire, 2010). Alkire has suggested this range of domains or conditions for happiness is important because happiness can often reflect one's personality or their mood at a certain time. A strength of the happiness index is this recognition that several factors impact happiness.

Bhutan has received much attention for its introduction of GNH, and Bothe (2017) has suggested that perhaps the greatest contribution of GNH has been its influence in causing other nations to consider happiness as an element of national well-being as well as metrics that move beyond GNP. Despite the interest shown in Bhutan's GNH, it has not always lived up to its

promise. For example, Bothe (2017) has suggested that with its heavy emphasis on tradition, GNH does not necessarily address inequality because tradition can often enable entrenched systems that lead inequality to persist.

More recently, elements of both Bhutan's GNH and the human capabilities approach to human flourishing informed the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs were established in 2015 to replace the original eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established in 2005. The SDGs build on the accomplishments of the MDGs and reflect a more inclusive consultation process as well as increased emphasis on peace, quality education, gender, environmental issues, and a more nuanced distinction between poverty and hunger (UN Sustainable Development Goals, 2014). Although more detailed analyses of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, Bhutan's GNH index, and the human capabilities approach are outside the scope of this dissertation, all three reflect alternative ways to consider a nation's development and invite the use of alternative terminology.

Even if one is committed to rejecting the colonialism and patronizing nature of, and the misleading metrics associated with, the term *development*, there is still a need to replace it with something else. Black (2007) has pointed out that even "if you dislike the term and its derivatives 'developing, developed' – and try to avoid using them, nothing else quite works" (p.137). Biggs et. al. (2015) have also suggested development terminology is "outdated" (p.4). In their work, they have adopted the term global sustainable development (GSD) in order to promote "the pursuit of a stable, inclusive, healthy and thriving global society that lives within nature's means and provides an adequate resource base for future generations" (p. 6). New terms such as *developing* or *emerging economies* also reflect this shift away from traditional development terminology (Biggs, et al., 2015; Hartman, et al., 2014). Yet while they may reflect

greater optimism and respect, even these terms imply that economic frameworks count above lived realities.

Crichton's (2014) term challenging contexts comes closer to representing the actual conditions of what many in *developing* or *third world* contexts experience, but that are not restricted to the Global South. In the next section, I introduce Crichton's definition of challenging contexts, a term that is both more reflective of localized conditions and more respectful of the communities in this research setting than traditional terminology (Yakong, 2013). I also provide a rationale for my own use of the term.

### **2.3.2 Challenging contexts versus developing world.**

Crichton (2014) defines challenging contexts as situations where, due to a variety of factors such as “environmental, social or technical constraints, individuals are prevented from reaching their potential” (p. 27). In helping to define the term, she offers examples suggesting challenging contexts as settings where individuals do not have access to:

- consistently available and affordable electricity;
- reliable, unfiltered or uncensored internet;
- previous formal learning and/or opportunities for ongoing formal learning that support individual learning needs;
- non-formal but appropriate learning opportunities;
- participation in learning activities due to cultural or religious reasons;
- transportation and mobility;
- clean water and adequate sanitation; and
- prior learning.

Crichton's (2014) examples might appear to differ little from Nussbaum's (2003) list in that it can reflect a northern framework. However Crichton's term was developed collegially with fellow academics in East Africa. Through these discussions, her examples expanded to include additional challenges to reflect their insights:

- fair and just leadership;
- adequate nutrition and safe food supply;
- a safe environment free from hostilities; and
- support for the disabled (Crichton, 2014a, pp. 3-4).

Yakong (2013) conducted doctoral research exploring the reproductive health of women in Upper East Ghana. Her research extended Crichton's definition to include challenges surrounding maternal and infant health. In other doctoral research, Onguko (2013) used Crichton's term to frame his study of teachers' professional development in rural Kenya through the lens of challenging *educational* contexts.

The above challenges are not restricted to the Global South, yet terms such as *developing*, or *third world* or *global South* can imply the developed world does not experience similar issues to those presented in Crichton's (2014) definition and examples. This, of course, is not the case. For example, in Canada the issues faced by many rural First Nations communities can include, but are not limited to, inadequate housing, inadequate schools, limited access to clean drinking water, sanitation, education and healthcare (Kappo & King, 2016). As well, Palameter (2011) has pointed out that colonization and modernization have turned "once thriving Indigenous Nations into small communities of peoples, some of whom are barely surviving" (p. 122). As in much of the Global North, Canadian challenging contexts can extend to urban settings, where they can be characterized by issues of homelessness or the lack of adequate and affordable housing,

unemployment or underemployment, food insecurity, addiction, and other hardships.

Slimbach (2010) has also noted that challenging contexts can be found anywhere.

Referring to media images of African-American survivors stranded in New Orleans after the flooding that resulted from Hurricane Katrina, Slimbach has reminds readers that “in nations of the Global North, the chasm between places of privilege and places of poverty continues to deepen” (p. 21). Like Crichton (2014), Slimbach has also offered examples of challenges, but examples are of challenges that plague many areas:

- communities of affluence contiguous with communities of poverty and crime;
- little access to quality schools and affordable health care;
- decline of low-skill jobs and devaluation of wage labour;
- unaffordable housing and rising homelessness;
- pathologically high levels of family breakdown and criminal activity;
- minority communities alienated from the dominant English-speaking culture;
- spatial concentration and stigmatization of the poor;
- overburdened infrastructure of water, power, and transportation; and
- loss of shared hope and transcendent meanings (p. 22).

While Slimbach’s examples may differ from Crichton’s in some ways, it also illustrates that common issues such as poor infrastructure, underemployment, increasing poverty and marginalization, and inadequate education are present even in the most developed nations. Thus, it is important to recognize that gaps in development are not geographically confined (Slimbach, 2010). Few would define the contexts identified by Kappo and King (2016), Palameter (2011) or Slimbach (2010) as developing, largely because they are situated in pockets of what are considered developed nations; a reminder that challenging conditions can be found anywhere in

the world.

Crichton's (2014a) examples of challenging contexts, combined with Yakong's (2013) inclusion of maternal and infant health and Onguko's (2013) inclusion of challenging educational contexts, describes many issues that currently face Upper East Ghana, the setting of this case study. What these examples do not do is present the individuals living in these communities through a deficit framework. Moving beyond a deficit framework to acknowledge contextual challenges can encourage a more empathetic approach to solving problems.

Thus, my choice of the term challenging contexts reflects an attempt to position both this research and the GSL project in a way that avoids the North/South binary, the paternalism, and limited economic framework typically associated with more common terms such as *developing* or *third world* and, perhaps more importantly, invites students to do the same. It is in a sense, an invitation for students to consider their experiences in terms of addressing a local challenge and embracing a design-informed, problem-finding approach. Further, it is hoped this term can help participating students become more cognizant of current global practices that contribute to or sustain global inequality and question those practices.

When service-learning experiences are situated in challenging contexts—be those contexts local or global—these experiences need to reflect the institution's best efforts if they are to avoid producing unintended and/or negative consequences (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Chapman, 2016; Crabtree, 2013; Epprecht 2004; Hartman, et al., 2014; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen 2007, 2012).

#### **2.4 Issues with GSL in challenging contexts**

For more than a decade, there has been increasing debate around how higher education positions student learning opportunities in challenging contexts (Bamber & Pike, 2013;

Cameron, 2014; Chapman, 2016; Crabtree, 2013; Epprecht, 2004; McDonald, 2017; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen, 2007; Tiessen, 2012; Tiessen & Kumar, 2013; Woolf, 2006).

Hartman et al. (2014) have pointed out that “[w]hile many programs start off with good intention, there have been a variety of very valid criticisms of and documented mistakes in the volunteer tourism [and] service-learning” (Hartman et. al, 2014, p. 109). Examples of those criticisms found in the literature include:

- Overconfidence/hubris (Chapman, 2016; Epprecht, 2004; Huish, 2012; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen, 2007, 2012; Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012; Tiessen & Huish, 2012);
- Use of challenging contexts as learning labs (Chapman, 2016; Epprecht, 2004; Huish, 2012; Tiessen, 2007, 2012; Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012);
- Potential for cultural imperialism and the marginalization of host perspectives (Bamber & Pike, 2013; d’Arlach et al., 2009; Dostillio et al., 2012; Epprecht, 2004; Hartman, et al., 2014; Higgins-Desbiolles, & Russell-Mundine, 2008; Khan, 2011; Mellom & Herrera, 2014);
- Use of limited local resources (Epprecht, 2004; Huesca, 2013; Tiessen, 2007; 2012);
- Unethical partners, be they in-country or global (Epprecht, 2004; McDonald, 2017);
- Lack of ethical frameworks or guidelines (Chapman, 2016; Crabtree, 2008; Epprecht, 2004; Hartman et al., 2014; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen 2012; Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012); and
- Lack of extensive pre-departure and structured re-entry programming (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Chapman, 2016; Crabtree, 2013; Epprecht, 2004; Hartman et al., 2014; Huish, 2012; Tiessen, 2007; 2012; Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012).

While this list of concerns is not exhaustive, it is representative of a need for a deeper understanding of the contextual challenges that can negatively impact both the student learning opportunity and the vulnerable host communities. Below, I offer a detailed examination of the above concerns.

#### **2.4.1 Overconfidence/hubris.**

A common concern in situating novices in challenging contexts is the potential for the student to be overly optimistic about their ability to solve complex problems. Martin (2016) has described this tendency as the “reductive seduction of other people’s problems” (para 7), whereby solutions from outside often fall short due to a lack of contextual understanding of the root causes of a situation. Epprecht (2004) has suggested common marketing images that reinforce this line of thinking, providing can be problematic because they inflate students’ expectations and perceptions of what can be accomplished.

Tiessen (2007) has concurred, arguing such marketing implies that the simple act of wanting to help implies that a student is qualified and leads to “[a] paternalistic logic [that] underlies a large number of the study/volunteer abroad programs. Students feel they are especially well suited to help the poor, because they have a desire and commitment to do so, and (partial) training” (p.82). Both Tiessen (2007) and Epprecht (2004) have suggested it can be devastating for students who genuinely want to contribute but fail to achieve the satisfaction expected from this type of experience (Tiessen 2007, p.76). When an inflated sense of ability collides with an on-the-ground reality that requires more than their limited expertise, the experience can result in “an emotional, academic paralysis” (p. 77) for novices.

### **2.4.2 Challenging contexts as learning labs.**

In some cases, challenging contexts may serve as learning labs in which students with limited skills participate in activities they would not be doing in their home country (Chapman, 2016; Huish, 2012; Tiessen, 2012). Huish (2012) has cited ethical issues around this practice and to make this point, he offered the example of an aspiring medical student who was unable to assist with basic, life-saving steps to treat a severely dehydrated patient:

I found the saline and the needle, but when I got to the woman, I didn't know what to do. Here is someone dying in front of me from something as basic as dehydration and I have no idea how to properly insert the needle into her collapsed veins (cited in Huish, 2012 p. 2).

Particularly demoralizing for the student in this case was the fact that he had to call the already busy field nurse to complete the task. The global experience in which he was participating had been designed as a way for medical school aspirants to build their CVs while also providing medical supplies and support to resource-strapped clinics. The learning opportunity fell short because it failed to adequately prepare him for the kinds of medical situations he would face. While such programs may offer genuine support for the clinics, incidents like the one above can lead to unintended, negative consequences that impact all concerned.

Viewing challenging contexts as extensions of the university classroom is problematic in another way, for it suggests that the stakes are lower if there are errors, or that any contribution is good enough. If anything, the opposite is true. Given the issues that characterize such contexts, any contribution is not good enough; challenging contexts deserve better than good enough. They deserve projects that are intentionally designed to ensure the activities engaged in are

appropriate for the students' skill sets, and that contextual challenges are not only understood, but reflected in the design.

In his discussion of school voucher programs for low-income families Milton Friedman (1997) pointed out that “programs for the poor are poor programs” (p.1) because advocates of voucher programs for low-income families may consider the problem solved with vouchers and overlook the deeper causes. In the case of experiences such as GSL, good design recognizes the systemic issues behind the problems in challenging contexts and accounts for them. However, it also acknowledges the importance of designing learning experiences that would be as appropriate in a mainstream Canadian setting as in those contexts.

### **2.4.3 Potential for cultural imperialism.**

GSL and similar opportunities situated in the post-colonial Global South can potentially reinforce images of a benevolent, dominant North working to develop a largely passive, needy South. There is a risk sending people who have many advantages to influence and “shape the lives of others” who have few of those advantages (Tucker, 1999, 1; Moffat, 2006 cited in Pluim & Jorgenson, p.29). In their critique of a longstanding GSL program at their university, Bamber and Pike (2013) reflected Pluim and Jorgenson's point, noting that prior to departure, students tended to use language “framed in patronizing notions of ‘what we can do for you or what we can give you’ [and reflective of] an ethnocentric perspective that views one's own culture as superior to others” (p.546).

Over time, and through their collaboration with in-country partners, students recognized the need to reconceptualize their approach. As one student pointed out, “we soon realized that the approach ‘this is how you should do it’ was totally inappropriate” (Bamber & Pike, p. 546).

Bamber and Pike note that while this kind of shift in thinking occurred for some students, it was not universal. To encourage students to make this shift, they suggested designing projects around questions such as:

- Who is the project intended to benefit?
- What are its aims?
- Whose lives are being changed?
- Which values underpin the project? and
- How are the answers to such questions to be negotiated? (see p. 552).

Such questions can help students identify their biases and may mitigate the potential for them to see themselves as experts when working with in-country partners.

Sharpe and Dear (2013) provide an example of cultural imperialism that can occur even with the best of intentions. They describe two situations which they, as faculty leading a global service-learning project in Cuba, found unsettling, and which had the potential to negatively affect their relationship with host partners. In the first situation, the many tasks related to hosting students in their country resulted in the Cuban hosts (faculty and students) taking full responsibility for meals and other supports. After making overtures to help, the Canadian team soon gave up offering. “[W]ithin a couple of days our offers to help with mealtime chores dried up and we settled into the comfortable and familiar habit of sitting at tables and waiting to be served” (p.52). In a second example, when the visiting students became increasingly uncomfortable with unfamiliar food, poor plumbing and other challenges, they sought a night in town as a respite from camp life. Although five cabs arrived to take the students into town, nobody thought to offer their Cuban partners the opportunity to join them. Sharpe and Dear’s reflection on the ease with which they had slipped into ethnocentric, northern tourist patterns is a

reminder to all planners of the subtle ways in which privilege can be re-established when the opportunity arises.

Cultural imperialism can also take other, less obvious forms. Bamber and Pike (2013), Epprecht, (2004), Huesca, (2013) Pluim and Jorgenson (2012), Sharpe and Dear (2013) have all pointed out that while in country, students have access to resources and technology often unavailable to or financially out of reach for the majority of those with whom they work. Students may also have other advantages. For example, their proficiency in English can be beneficial in contexts where English may not be the first language for many yet is the official language of learning and economics (Epprecht, 2004). Given the need for GSL projects to have a support infrastructure on the ground, foreign students may also enjoy privileged access to in-country professionals and community leaders that is unavailable to, or results in reduced access for, others in the community (Epprecht, 2004; Huish, 2012; 2014; Tiessen, 2007; Tonkin, 2011). These advantages can often set students apart from the daily lived realities of their hosts.

#### **2.4.4 Use of limited resources.**

GSL projects can strain already limited resources, especially when students' use exceeds that of locals (Epprecht, 2004; Sichel, 2013; Tiessen, 2007; 2012). For example, when students arrive with the above-mentioned technology, they require access to electricity, and often expect access to the Internet, both of which are often unreliable or limited in challenging contexts (Crichton, 2014; Epprecht, 2004; Sichel, 2013; Woolf, 2006). Students also require other resources, such as access to safe food and reliable food sources, bottled water, transportation, and access to banking systems in countries where cash flow can be irregular, all of which can strain local resources. Thus, the impact of what he calls academic tourism which can be highly

wasteful of resources financially and environmentally [and can] also obscure power dynamics and shelter [academic tourists] from unhappy or unpleasant realities. We need, at the minimum, transparent accounting for the percentages of money and time that go to the fun and comfort of the Northern participants (Epprecht 2004, p. 695).

The real cost for communities to comfortably support students must be considered and factored in so that the learning opportunity results in work that is of value to community participants while limiting negative consequences (Crabtree, 2013; Dostillio et al., 2012; Hartman, 2015; Tonkin, 2011). At the same time, students also need to understand the impact of their stay, critically reflect on their use of resources, and consciously strive to not take advantage of their privilege (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Epprecht, 2004; Plum & Jorgenson, 2012; Sharpe & Dear, 2013; Woolf, 2006).

The time required for in-country professional staff to support student learning is another way in which GSL projects may strain limited resources. In Huish's (2012) example of the medical student, the already-occupied nurse the student had been sent to assist had to leave what she was doing to complete the student's assigned task. Taking busy professionals away from their own duties to support GSL projects is perhaps an unavoidable consequence (Epprecht, 2004), so it is incumbent on the students to be adequately prepared and have the necessary skills for their activities (Chapman, 2016; Huish, 2012, Martin, 2016; Tiessen, 2007). Although even well-designed GSL projects may never fully achieve an ideal balance between resources consumed and contribution made, involving in-country professionals in the design of a project may limit occasions where they might be expected to fill gaps that could have been addressed through pre-departure programming (Epprecht, 2004; Huish, 2012; Tiessen, 2007, 2012).

#### **2.4.5 A need for ethical frameworks.**

Epprecht (2004), with his experience in leading work study projects in Lesotho, has argued for the establishment of ethical frameworks to guide student learning opportunities in challenging contexts. While not advocating for the bureaucratic step of a full ethics board review, he has pointed out that global experiences such as service-learning remain largely exempt from the guidelines that govern most higher education activities. More than a decade ago, Epprecht advocated for the introduction of ethical guidelines to limit the potential for negative consequences, naming issues such as student volunteers replacing paid workers and the burden students can place on scarce resources. Along with others, he also stressed the need for greater consideration of the role of photography, social media, and other forms of communication that can be exploitive in the hands of students unfamiliar with the ethical protocols that govern faculty and graduate students (Bynam, Kinard & Evert, 2015; Chapman, 2016; Epprecht, 2004; Khan 2011).

It is this last issue that is of particular concern to Epprecht (2004), who has suggested students should have at least an idea of the practices that guide researchers in the field. He has pointed out that students are not considered researchers and local partners are not considered subjects; therefore, key details such as consent forms for use of photographs, naming, and other protocols are rarely covered. Epprecht's (2004) thoughtful commentary around ethical concerns, although referred to for more than a decade and taken up by others in recent discussions (see Bynam, et al., 2013; Chapman, 2016; Crabtree, 2013; Hartman et al., 2014; Khan, 2011; Tiessen, 2012; Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012), has yet to be reflected in practice. The pre-departure program introduced in this study was, in part, designed to address ethical gaps raised by Epprecht that are typically left out when preparing students to engage with vulnerable communities.

Ethical partnerships need to be based on commitment, reliability, and trust if they are to benefit both parties (Epprecht, 2004; Hartman et al., 2014). Unfortunately, in some instances, the benefits to both parties are not equal. As noted earlier, students have many advantages in challenging contexts, and sometimes they can abuse those advantages. Chapman (2016) shared an example of a student who returned from his experience at an orphanage in India to start his own NGO, which would offer similar opportunities at the same orphanage. It could be argued his gesture reflected his own commitment, reliability, and trust, and that he simply wanted to support, or build on, the work of the existing organization. In some ways, starting his own NGO could also, in some circumstances, be considered a tangible result of his own learning and reflection. However, Chapman implied neither of these things was the case:

What I found problematic about this is he saw it as a way to pay for his university tuition. His decision was based on financial need rather than a community need; he could see how he could profit from other students by arranging similar service-learning opportunities (Chapman, 2016, p. 10).

It appears this student saw his global experience in terms of entrepreneurial opportunity, or personal gain, suggesting a potential exploitation of already vulnerable people, not to mention direct competition with the original NGO (Chapman, 2016). Such opportunism can occur without clearly defined, ethical expectations of students who are learning in challenging contexts.

There is also the potential for exploitation to work in the opposite direction. Black (2007) and Epprecht (2004) have suggested that locals who work with donor agencies and volunteer organizations can sometimes also be unethical. Although integrity and commitment guide the work of many NGOs and volunteers in challenging contexts, “[t]he fact remains, however, that

some of them are corrupt, ineffective, and or downright harmful to development, often in ways that are fatally obscure to partners unfamiliar with the local context” (Epprecht, 2004 p. 695). Others may, intentionally or unintentionally, steer the project in ways that support their own interests and away from those who may be in greater need (Epprecht, 2004). One way to limit the potential for unethical partnerships is to develop clearly articulated outcomes drawn from discussions with the widest possible number of community members and based on extensive observation (Epprecht, 2004; Hartman et.al, 2014; IDEO, 2015).

#### **2.4.6 Lack of pre-departure and re-entry programming.**

A final issue associated with situating global service-learning in challenging contexts is the need for extensive pre-departure and re-entry programming (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Crabtree, 2009; Epprecht, 2004; Hartman et. al, 2014; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012). Indeed, many of the issues I have outlined in the previous sections can be addressed, or at least considered, through an intentionally designed pre-departure program. However, the literature suggests implementation of such programming is either limited or non-existent (Crabtree, 2009; Hartman et.al, 2014; Huish, 2012; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012). While it may not be possible to fully prepare students for the realities they may face, instructors can at least introduce them to contextual and cultural challenges, help them to understand the ethical issues they need to consider, and equip them with information to mitigate the potential for unintended negative consequences. Projects can be compromised when students arrive without having been introduced to ethical, cultural, historical or post-colonial issues, or provided with a framework for navigating the complexity of challenging contexts (Epprecht,

2004; Hartman, et al., 2014; Martin, 2016; Mellom & Herrera, 2014; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen, 2007).

Crabtree (2013) has led numerous service-learning experiences to Latin America and offers an example of a pre-departure program that “mixes historical and socio-political study with leadership and team-building exercises, construction and public health preparation for special projects, and reflections on spirituality, morality and social justice” (p. 22). In Crabtree’s model, students are offered contextual training for the project during the preceding semester, providing time to explore the historical and social issues of their destination. Unfortunately, preparation such as Crabtree’s (2008) is rare, with the most common reason cited being a lack of time (Chapman, 2016; Hartman et al., 2014; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012). Yet in view of the concerns associated with GSL projects or similar experiences in challenging contexts, time must be set aside for pre-departure programming (Chapman, 2016; Crabtree 2008; Epprecht, 2004; Hartman et al, 2014, Heron, 2005; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen, 2007, 2012).

As for re-entry programming, providing a structured and reflective debrief when students return home is also recommended to help students make sense of their international experience and to help inform the design of future programs. Crabtree (2008) has suggested an ideal re-entry program should include advocacy projects, speaking opportunities, and reflection on ethical issues that may have emerged during the project. However, developing re-entry programming is easier said than done. A good number of projects take the form of a final practicum or capstone program. As a result, many students do not return to campus, thereby missing the reflective re-entry component. Equally important, the university, faculty, and program designers miss an opportunity to use student feedback and experiences to inform future initiatives.

The issues outlined in this section present examples of concerns raised in the current discourse surrounding student learning opportunities such as GSL, practicums, internships, and volunteer opportunities situated in challenging contexts. They also reveal that despite over a decade and a half of critical discussion, universities have done little to address the way these projects and learning experiences are conceptualized. This is a gap I address, using a design process that considers the vulnerability of the participants, contextual challenges, and the potential for unintended, negative consequences.

The literature (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Chapman, 2016; Epprecht, 2004; Hartman et al., 2014; Huish, 2012, 2014; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen, 2012; Woolf, 2006) suggests that it is a matter of academic integrity on the part of the universities to consider a more intentional framework if they are to create good projects—projects that that are worth doing and that benefit students, in-country partners, and sponsoring institutions. But what is meant by a good GSL project? While it may appear presumptuous to provide a definition of good, a term that is open to interpretation on many levels, in the following section, I explain both practical and philosophical dimensions of a good GSL project as presented in this dissertation.

## **2.5 Good GSL Projects**

### **2.5.1 Practical definition of a Good GSL project.**

In this research, my practical definition of a good GSL project is that it is a project worth doing for all participants. By situating a GSL project in a credited course, the initial intentions are defined in the course outline, providing a direction both of the project's intent and the anticipated learning outcomes for the student participants. In the case of in-country partners, the project is a collaboration that addressed a specific challenge or need, which in this research

resulted from my understanding of the context and from my conversations with in-country partners who identified a need for culturally relevant material to support the Ghana curriculum. This definition is further informed by the experiential learning theories that inform GSL (Boyer, 1996; Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Butin, 2008; Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1996; Furco, 2012; Kolb, 1983; Petkus, 2000). And finally, this definition is also informed by the literature surrounding GSL in challenging contexts, which suggests a good GSL project:

- is situated in the student's education (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Butin 2006; 2008; Chapman 2016; Woolf, 2008);
- is an appropriate match for student skills (Chapman, 2016; Crabtree, 2013; Huish, 2012; 2014);
- is of contextual value to in-country partners or organizations (Black, 2007; Chapman, 2017; Epprecht, 2004; Martin, 2016); and
- is based on reciprocity (d'Arlach et. al 2009; Dostillio et al., 2012; Hartman et al., 2014).

As an academic activity, GSL should be a component of a credited course and have clearly stated learning outcomes and objectives. Situating GSL this way can mitigate the potential for a mismatch between student skills and the project (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Chapman, 2016; Crabtree, 2013).

For in-country partners, a good GSL project should, at the very least, address a need or objective they have identified. The project should also:

- Emphasize respect for in-country knowledge and experience;
- Resist defining the project through a deficit framework; and
- Recognize that contextual expertise does exist in the global south (Epprecht, 2004; Esteva, 2010; Plum & Jorgenson, 2012; Schumacher, 1973; Tiessen, 2007; 2012).

Novices may have enthusiasm, but lack expertise, while in-country professionals may hold contextual experience and cultural understanding, but lack access to resources. Indeed can often be that a lack of access to necessary resources is what faces many in-country professionals, rather than a lack of skills.

In practical terms, a good GSL project is one that recognizes established pedagogical and theoretical approaches associated with GSL in relation to student learning, service, and reciprocity. The design intentions that guided this project reflect this practical definition. The pre-departure programming introduced the parameters of the project and the skills required for storyboarding and digital publishing, ensuring that the project respected, and was an appropriate match for, student learning, while also responding to needs identified by in-country partners. It also introduced the ethical considerations and safety concerns. The design also provided opportunities for structured reflection both during and after the project. The results of these intentions are reflected in the design principles presented in Table 2.3., *Design Principles for a Good GSL Project*, which appears at the end of this chapter.

### **2.5.2 Philosophical definition of a good GSL project.**

Three themes frame the philosophical definition of a good GSL project. The first theme centres on Aristotle's ideas of deliberation, choice, and the intellectual virtue of *practical wisdom*. The second theme reflects the importance of *intention*, or aim, which draws from human-centred design (Berger, 2010; IDEO 2015; Nelson & Stolterman, 2012). The third theme reflects *empathy*, both in its relation to human-centred design (discussed later in this chapter), and to what Boler (1997) has described as "active" empathy, or Cameron (2012) "thick global citizenship".

**Aristotle, practical wisdom/phronesis.** The first theme that informs my philosophical definition of a good GSL project is the importance of practical wisdom, also referred to as phronesis. For Aristotle, virtue was deeply concerned with choice and the role of practical reason in helping us to make good choices (Kraut, 2018; Lacewing, n.d.; & Celano, 2015). Unlike theoretical reasoning, which explores what cannot be changed, practical reason requires one to deliberate deeply upon what can be changed, and then, based on this deliberation, to make good choices for action that can bring about those changes (Lacewing, n.d.). In this conception, virtue could be linked to one's ability to make good choices through practical reasoning, and include

- a general conception of what is good or bad related to human flourishing;
- the ability to perceive, in light of that general conception, what is required in terms of feeling and choice and action in a particular situation;
- the ability to deliberate well; and,
- the ability to act on that deliberation (Lacewing, para 3).

For example, being a naturally kind person does not necessarily demonstrate the practical reasoning that results in making a good choice, since being kind by inclination is not the same as choosing to be kind (Lacewing, n.d.).

**Teacher education and practical wisdom.** Aristotle's ideas around practical wisdom are significant for teacher education. An objective of teacher education is to create opportunities for new teachers to develop such wisdom. In their discussion of practical wisdom and teacher education, Kemmis and Smith (2008a) define it as the "moral disposition to act, wisely and prudently with practical common sense...Phronesis is guided by the general aim (telos) of wise and prudent judgement and informs good or right conduct" (p.15). For Kemmis and Smith, doing

what is right is sometimes more than following rules; it is making wise choices. The action that can lead to practical wisdom for novice teachers is *praxis*:

the kind of action people are engaged in when they think about what their action will mean in the world. Praxis is what people do when they take into account all the circumstances and exigencies that confront them at a particular moment, and then, taking the broadest view they can of what is *best* to do, they *act* (Kemmis & Smith, 2008a, p. 4; emphasis in original).

Kemmis and Smith (2008a) argue the role of praxis in education is “endangered” and that education is becoming more and more a case of “following the rules” which may not necessarily mean doing the right thing (p.5). In keeping with Aristotle’s ideas of practical wisdom, novice teachers need to engage in experiences that can encourage deliberation and choosing wisely. For Kemmis and Smith, practical experience can provide moments where novice teachers develop praxis.

Teaching is more than rules; it is deeply relational, “a fact that makes this profession so unique and appealing to many” (Jagla, 2016, p.139). Thus, opportunities for teacher candidates to develop praxis can be provided through experiences that connect their learning to practical action in the field. Jagla encourages service-learning as a way to:

socialize candidates in the essential moral and civic obligations of teaching, to enhance candidates’ ability to reflect critically on current educational practices and their own teaching, to develop . . . the dispositions and abilities needed to easily and fully adopt educational reforms and to develop human service-oriented teachers (p. 139).

Service-learning offers teacher candidates an opportunity to develop personal values and a sense of their civic responsibilities, both of which are objectives in teacher education (Jagla, 2016; Kemmis & Smith, 2008b). These objectives are also rooted in Aristotelian concepts of practical wisdom. The GRIP course (Appendix A) in which the GSL project was situated was an opportunity for the candidates involved in this research to reflect critically on their teaching, to develop praxis, and to develop as human service-oriented teachers (Jagla, 2016).

### **2.5.3 Intentional design and good GSL projects.**

The second theme that informs my philosophical definition of a good GSL project is the importance of deliberation and intent. For Aristotle, “the highest good, virtuous activity, is not something that comes to us by chance” (Kraut, 2018, para 9) but rather the result of reasoning and deliberation.

However, “getting away from what we don’t want does not guarantee that we will get what we do want” (Ackoff, 1978, cited in Nelson & Stolterman, 2012, p.111). Designing good GSL projects is about more than avoiding negative consequences; the design should encourage specific learning outcomes and have specific disciplinary, philosophical, and pedagogical frameworks.

Nelson and Stolterman (2012) suggest designers consider intention in terms of aim. Intention “is not the target, not the outcome, nor the purpose, nor an end state, but is principally the process of choosing or giving direction to effort ... the aiming and subsequent emergence of a desired outcome” (p. 112-113). In this study, the design intention, or aim, was to create a credited course based on a GSL project that would have established learning objectives and outcomes, and that would contribute to resolving a need specified by in-country partners.

**Empathy and good GSL projects.** The third theme that informs my philosophical definition of a good GSL project is the need for empathy. Aristotle suggested practical wisdom requires the ability to perceive “insight into human flourishing (Lacewing, para 5). Empathy can encourage this insight. Baron-Cohen (2011) has defined empathy as “the ability to identify with what someone else is thinking or feeling and to respond...with appropriate emotion” (p. 72).

However, empathy can be more than an appropriate emotional response to what another person is thinking or feeling. In my definition of a good project, I suggest empathy can also be a form of *action*, a suggestion informed by Boler’s (1997) discussion of *active* versus *passive* empathy. On the surface, participating in a global service-learning project may appear to be a form of active empathy, given that students travel halfway around the world to address a specific need. However, if the project is viewed as a one-time opportunity to help, the opportunity for students to reflect critically on broader issues such as privilege and global inequality can be overlooked. Without this critical reflection, the GSL experience may be limited to what Boler describes as “passive empathy” and the potential for action and change may be lost. Empathy for action reflects the core tenets of critical service-learning, which also include questioning one’s privilege and potential complicity in contributing to persistent global inequality (McNamara, 2012; Mitchell, 2008).

This idea of complicity has been raised elsewhere. Cameron (2014) has suggested learning experiences in challenging contexts can be opportunities for students to develop what he calls “thick global citizenship” (p. 21). Thick global citizenship engages students in preparing for and participating in global learning experiences, but it also requires them to “research and analyze the implications of their everyday actions, both direct and indirect, for the well-being (or suffering) of people in other parts of the world” (p. 35). Cameron draws his concept of thick

global citizenship from Dobson's (2006) idea of "thick" cosmopolitanism. Dobson, like Boler (1997), has stressed the importance of understanding one's role in contributing to global inequality, suggesting "we are more likely to feel obliged to assist others in their plight ...if there is some identifiable causal relationship between what we do, or what we have done and how they are" (p.171).

In his role as professor of international development studies, Cameron (2014) notes that students are typically unwilling to take the step of questioning their privilege in the face of global inequality. Instead, they prefer to engage in "thin" or "soft" global citizenship. Thin global citizenship allows students to participate globally, and even to help others, but to do so on their terms, without having to make personal changes or sacrifices that may bring about real solutions. Cameron has suggested that unless these linkages are critically examined and debated, global experiences in challenging contexts may never progress beyond "voluntaristic, charity based, and neocolonial approaches" (p. 37).

Brookfield's (2017) work on critical reflection may be another way to help students develop a form of active empathy. Brookfield emphasizes the need to question assumptions behind common accepted hegemonies which benefit a small minority, but that are accepted as natural and even desirable by the majority. He provides a range of examples that include simple everyday acts like striving for perfect attendance at work (which benefits an employer) to more deeply embedded hegemonies such as the acceptance of a natural patriarchy. For Brookfield, a crucial purpose of critical reflection is that it can both uncover and challenge these assumptions. In the case of global service-learning, Brookfield's suggestion a critical examination of dominant ideology, power, and existing systems can provide a form of active learning that extends beyond the project's completion.

Critical reflection, however uncomfortable, is part of the transformative learning potential offered by GSL projects (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Butin, 2008; d’Arlach et al., 2009; Dostillio et al., 2012; Hartman et al., 2014). Mezirow (2000) and Cranton (1994) have argued that for transformative learning to occur, critical reflection, particularly reflection that challenges one’s assumptions, is necessary. Such reflection can lead to perspective transformation and new ways of being. However, challenging one’s assumptions and changing one’s way of being is not easy; and as noted by Cameron (2014), students can be reluctant to identify actions in their own lives that may contribute to the unequal positions of others. Active empathy, thick cosmopolitanism, or transformative learning—all require critical reflection if they are to result in a good GSL project. To be achieved, they require deep questioning of current practices, both global and personal, that may contribute to persistent inequality.

So how might program designers go about creating good GSL projects? Can there be a set of principles that can help to mitigate the issues raised above, and that might at the same time encourage the kind of active empathy, or thick global citizenship, advocated in the literature (Boler, 1997; Cameron, 2014; Dobson, 2006). For this research, I drew on the iterative process of design research, particularly design thinking and human-centered design, in order to create the set of design principles that informed the GSL project that framed the GRIP course in this case study. In the next section, I explain the role of design research, design thinking, and human-centred design in this study.

## 2.6 Human-centered Design

Design thinking influenced this research in two ways. Human-centred design informed the design principles and will be discussed later in this chapter. Design-based research was used as a methodological approach; it will be discussed in Chapter 3.

The issues raised in the literature and presented earlier in this chapter informed the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for this study. IDEO (2015) suggests designers need to gather

unifying ideas [that] will start to guide the design [and become] Design Principles...the guardrails of your solution...These principles describe the most important elements of your solution and give integrity and form to what you are designing (p.106).

Principles will “serve as *dictums* or key premises open to revision as we move deeper into the design process” (p.106, emphasis in original). This flexibility has also been stressed by Herrington and Reeves (2011), who have noted that while they may become essential to one’s own design, “[i]t is unwise to consider design principles to be ‘set in stone’. Instead, they are best regarded as informed, reusable guidelines for others wishing to create their own solutions” (p. 598).

Given the complexity of issues associated with positioning GSL projects in challenging contexts, one might think principles used to design these projects would need to be equally complex. Indeed, Hartman et al. (2014) have provided a framework to encourage “fair trade ethical standards” for GSL and volunteer travel (p. 108). I include an example of one the standards below.

*Commitment and Sustainability:* International education programming should only be undertaken within a robust understanding of how the programming relates to the

continuous learning of the student and community-defined goals of the host community. For students, this translates as a relationship between the program, preparatory courses, and re-entry programming. Such programming should support the development of the individual student and/or continuous connection to the community partnership or ethical question addressed after returning to campus. Ideally, on-campus faculty, activities, and programs support students' efforts to engage in ongoing global civic engagement and social change programming related to their immersion experiences. For community partners, this means clarity regarding the nature of the commitment with the university or international education provider, as well as a clear vision of likely developments in the partnership and community-driven goals for the next year, three years forward, and even as many as five years in the future (pp. 112-113).

This example represents a great deal of thought, collaboration and research. The larger question, however, is whether it and the 30-plus other principles can offer the flexibility and adaptation recommended by IDEO (2015) and Herrington and Reeves (2011). Although I have drawn on the work of Hartman et al. (2014) for this study and do not suggest disregarding the extensive research their standards represent, the objective of this research is more closely aligned with IDEO's suggestion of simple, flexible guidelines.

In the case of global experiences in higher education, where marketing objectives tend to centre on dramatic increases (AUCC, 2014; Biggs et al., 2015; CBIE, 2015; Gaudelli & Laverty, 2015), extensive guidelines, policies and practices may appear counterproductive to institutional objectives. As Bamber and Pike (2013) have suggested, "in the brave new managerialist world of targets, avoidance of ultimate questions is all too common" (p.550). Therefore, while this research acknowledges the value of the standards outlined by Hartman, et al., (2014) it also

recognizes that in the rush to increase outbound student mobility, there is the possibility that such complex guidelines may be ignored.

An alternative approach may be to develop what Sull and Eisenhardt (2015) have defined as *simple rules*. This notion aligns with IDEO's (2015) concept of elemental guardrails, in which designers "boil [principles] down to the essentials. They should feel like the most elemental operating instructions of your product or service" (IDEO, p. 105). In a complex design problem such as creating GSL projects in challenging contexts, the value of simple, elemental principles may be that they are more likely to be taken up, remembered, and followed (Sull & Eisenhardt, 2015). More importantly, simple key premises guide the complexity, rather than the other way around.

An example of simple, key premises discussed by Sull and Eisenhardt (2015) is Michael Pollan's (2008) book *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. Pollan provides three basic rules for healthy eating: "Eat food; not too much; mostly plants" (p.1). What Pollan does not provide is an exhaustive list of requirements that would be dependent on an individual's preferences, activity level, dietary restrictions, or what is available. With Pollan's approach, the design can be adapted to individual needs or preferences; the rules just provide the key premises that encourage a healthy diet. Pollan's simple rules boil down decades of research (see also *Omnivore's Dilemma*, 2006) into three adaptable, easily followed references that leave the final, more complex decisions around healthy eating up to the individual.

The advantage of simple, rather than complex rules lies in their flexibility. For example, Hartman et al. (2014) have suggested that a re-entry program for students returning from a global service-learning project should include "on-campus faculty, activities and programs [to] support students' efforts to engage in ongoing civic engagement and social change, [and] programming

related to their immersion experiences” (p.113). Because the lack of re-entry programming can be an issue given that many GSL projects are undertaken in the students’ final year of study, therefore this approach may not be feasible. In addition, the range of activities to support re-entry may be difficult to establish as standard practice for many institutions, especially in situations where no re-entry programming exists. If re-entry programming is considered through Sull and Eisenhardt (2015) model, simplifying the principle to “provide a structured re-entry program” may allow institutions to adopt a reasonable program that can be matched to resources.

Human-centred design is based on the premise that those who face those problems may be a designer’s best resource when designing solutions to complex problems:

Embracing human-centered design means believing that all problems, even the seemingly intractable ones like poverty, gender equality, and clean water are solvable. Moreover, it means believing that the people who face those problems every day are the ones who hold the key to their answer. Human-centered design offers problem solvers of any stripe a chance to design with communities, to deeply understand the people they’re looking to serve, to dream up scores of ideas and create innovative new solutions rooted in people’s actual need (IDEO, 2015, p. 109).

Scholars have stressed the importance of listening to and empathizing with end users to come up with solutions when one is designing solutions for challenging contexts. Schumacher (1973) pointed out more than four decades ago that the development process has generally failed to recognize that project objectives need to begin with people. More recently, Black (2007) has called for an “empathetic transition that begins by understanding where people are, and by understanding their challenges and lived realities” (p. 140).

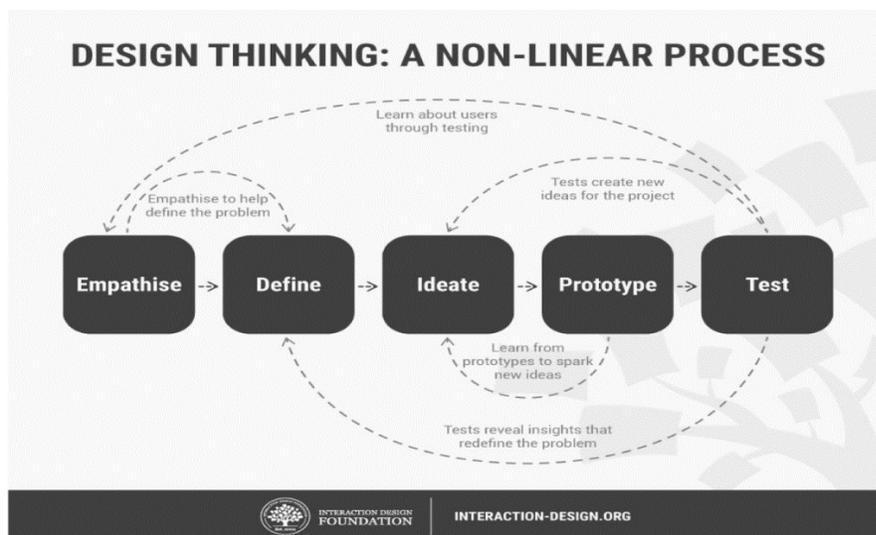
In a study exploring the ethnographic perspectives that influence women's reproductive health in Upper East Ghana, Yakong (2013) offered an example of the need to involve local voices when designing solutions to persistent problems. Yakong noted that women faced numerous cultural and economic barriers to accessing maternal health care:

In most resource poor nations, including Ghana, maternal health has been compromised due to several factors that hinder women's access to maternal health care services; yet these factors often remain either unexplored or ignored... There is often an overemphasis on empowering women with decision-making skills directed towards making the necessary decisions to access reproductive health care while the cultural constraints that disempower women are overlooked (p. 4).

Yakong's (2013) study reveals a common issue surrounding the development discourse - a lack of empathy for, and consultation with those who experience the challenges (Black 2007; Schumacher, 1973). In human-centred design, empathy can provide the key to understanding the needs of those for whom the design solution is intended to serve, often referred to as the *end user* (Stanford d. school, 2009; IDEO, 2015). "For too long, the international development community has designed solutions to the challenges of poverty without truly empathizing with and understanding the people it is looking to serve" (IDEO, 2015, p.22). Empathy allows designers seeking solutions "to leave behind preconceived ideas and outmoded ways of thinking . . . and keeps the people you're designing for squarely grounded in the centre of your work" (p. 22). In the context of design thinking, it means developing a deep understanding of the problem from the perspective of the end user.

Stanford d.school (n.d.) describes a similar approach to human-centred design, suggesting the process begins with gaining *empathy* for the challenge by engaging with the end users in

multiple ways, such as observing, interviewing, listening to stories, and immersing oneself in their lives. Once this information is gathered, the process moves through additional steps: the *define* stage, which unpacks and synthesizes empathy findings to develop a specific design challenge; the *ideation* stage, which moves from problem finding to exploring a wide range of solutions; and the *prototyping* stage, to deepen understanding by getting ideas one's ideas or point of view into the real world. Prototyping allows designers to make visible these ideas and to test them. The final stage of the design process is the *testing* stage which provides a chance to get feedback on the solution, to learn more about the needs of the users, and to refine the results of those tests into new prototypes (See Figure 2 below).



**Figure 2. Design thinking: A non-linear process** (Copyright Teo Yu Siang and Interaction Design Foundation, CC BY-NC-SA 3.0).

While the design process may be messy, it is also inclusive and allows for maximum opportunity to gather feedback and consult with the people one is designing for and who hold the key to answers (Berger, 2010; Black, 2007; IDEO, 2015). More importantly, this process can help designers identify design flaws early, and envision various outcomes and consequences

(Berger, 2010). Although using a human-centred design process does not guarantee success, “good design can at least increase the ratio of intended versus unintended consequences. And too, [we] can hope...the unintended consequences that do arise may occasionally turn out to be pleasant surprises” (Berger 2010, p. 209).

Nelson and Stolterman (2012) have made an important link between human-centered design and design as service:

Design is, by definition, a service relationship. All design activities are animated through dynamic relationships between those being served – clients, surrogate clients...customers and consumers, or end users – and those in service, including the designers. Design, ideally is about service on behalf of the other...Designers are not self-serving but *other-serving* (p. 41).

For Nelson and Stolterman, the design process relies on communication. It is about listening, asking open questions, problem-finding, and coming to understand the needs of the other (Berger, 2010; IDEO, 2014; Nelson & Stolterman, 2012; Stanford d.school, 2009). Given that one of the pillars of service-learning is collaboration with community partners, design thinking has the potential to contribute to service-learning pedagogy because designers “empathetically draw out” the desires or needs of those they are designing for (Nelson & Stolterman, 2012, p. 46). The communication, listening, empathy, and relationship to service reflected in design thinking and human-centered design are also desirable characteristics for GSL projects (Bamber & Pike, 2013; d’Arlach et al. 2009; Dostillio et al., 2012; Hartman et al., 2014).

As noted, one of the design challenges for this project was the need for culturally relevant reading material for beginning readers. In Chapter 1, I discussed the desire on the part of local

educators and NGO members to record traditional stories in danger of being lost because the elders who knew them were fewer in number every year. The project would allow these oral stories to be turned into print-ready books that could support the Ghanaian education curriculum and help to address literacy concerns in the broader community. Consultations with community partners and local school administrators identified low literacy as a significant issue at all levels of the community, confirming my earlier findings from the 2011 needs assessment (see Chapter 1). For context, I provide an overview of the literacy issues that led to the current project below.

## **2.7 Literacy in Ghana**

In subsistence farming communities such as the one where this research was situated, it is common for more than 70 percent of adults to be what is considered functionally illiterate (Rosekrans, Sherris, & Chatry-Komerck, 2012; Tagoe, 2008; Windborne, 2004). As well, this rural culture is a predominantly oral one, with limited or no access to written content in members' own language, and with limited interaction in English, the national language of Ghana (Rosekrans, et al., 2012; Windborne, 2004). In this environment previous success has generally depended upon an understanding of agriculture, soil, weather, and traditional farming practices, a form of situational literacy, or what Freire (2000) would refer to as a *reading of the world*. While situational literacy may have been adequate in the past, it may no longer be enough for agrarian communities which are transitioning to a more multi-literate and interconnected world.

The transition is driven by an increasingly globalized economy and by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2014). The SDGs carry forward the unfinished work of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (United Nations, 2000) and Education For All (EFA) (UNESCO, 2000) (Kumar, Kumar & Vivekadish, S., 2016). In

particular, SDG #4 – the goal to “ensure inclusive and equitable, quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (United Nations, 2014) provides an impetus for this book project. Although MDGs and EFA did increase access to primary education, an unintended consequence was that this access did not necessarily lead to quality education, but to under-resourced, overcrowded classrooms as there was no corresponding increase in resources. The SDG’s emphasis on improving the quality of education provides an opportunity to design an intervention that might increase the amount of contextually relevant resources for beginner readers that could also support English language acquisition.

Such interventions are needed. The Ghana Ministry of Education (2014) has reported that “fewer than half of [students in primary grades] had an English language reader (47%)” (p. 10), and that in many schools, it is common to have two or three children share a reader. With just 31 percent of schools having a library, access to materials for practice is both limited and problematic. “Simply having exposure to reading materials and time for practicing reading are two of the most basic and necessary elements for literacy acquisition” (Ministry of Education, Ghana, p. 10), but although Ghana has been successful in increasing primary enrolment, there has been no corresponding increase in staff or resources. The result is a case where a seemingly simple solution designed to improve educational attainment—access to primary education—has created another problem in the form of overcrowded, under-resourced classrooms.

A second consequence of the MDGs has been increased life expectancy, and Ghana has been no exception (Molini & Pasi, 2015) which means that already stretched agrarian economy may no longer provide a future for or adequately support a growing population. There must be alternative futures beyond subsistence farming; alternative futures where multiple forms of literacy and numeracy will be necessary requirements for success. Lankshear (2002) has made

this point in his discussion of 1995 literacy initiatives in Nicaragua, noting that “there would be no great benefit for the illiterate becoming literate unless the skills and understanding they acquired as a consequence played an integral role in enhancing their daily practice and their development as human beings” (p. 111). While reading, writing, or abstract and more complex numeracy may have not been required for survival in the past, the introduction of new technology and a more integrated economy require a grasp of basic reading and numeracy skills.

The need to increase literacy levels is not confined to formal education. Adults with low literacy face significant barriers. Globalization in the twenty-first century means almost no society is isolated, and that individuals and societies who are not functionally literate may be open to exploitation by those who are. My conversations during an adult education needs assessment in 2011 revealed multiple daily challenges experienced by adults in this region who had little or no literacy.

This lack of literacy puts those adults at a serious disadvantage in an age when situational forms of literacy no longer suffice. As Walter Ong (1982) pointed out more than three decades ago, “[t]here is hardly an oral culture or predominantly oral culture left in the world today that is not somehow aware of the vast complex of powers forever inaccessible without literacy” (p.15). The rural communities of the Nabdam district remain a predominantly oral culture with low literacy levels, representing the gap identified by Ong.

Tagoe (2008), Windborne (2004) and Yakong (2013) have identified a range of factors that include, but are not limited to,

- lack of access to school, particularly secondary school;
- gender discrimination that keeps girls out of school, or prevents them from completing school due to early marriage or family commitments;

- subsistence farming that requires children to miss school in order to help with farming;
- severely limited resources and overcrowded classrooms;
- limited accessibility to reading material that can improve or maintain reading levels outside of school. What resources do exist are usually economically out of reach for most families, and or often donated and therefore culturally irrelevant; and
- lack of exposure to both spoken and written English (the language of instruction in Ghanaian schools).

In Ghana, the last point is particularly problematic. Although school is taught in English, little English is spoken in rural communities and there are virtually no texts in English that are readily available. The language spoken in the communities where this study took place is the Nab't dialect; as a result, few children are exposed to English until they attend school for the first time.

This disconnect between the English used in school and the language spoken at home is common throughout rural Ghana and contributes to low literacy. According to Rosekrans, et al., (2012), in rural areas “77% of all sixth-grade children are unable to meet minimum requirements for reading and writing in English and 91% do not meet the minimum mathematics requirements” (p. 595). The authors suggest a significant factor in this low performance is the lack of exposure to English before school starts, meaning that formal learning begins in a language not used at home. However, some effort is being made to connect mother tongue literacy and formal education. In 2009, the Ghana Ministry of Education initiated a project to introduce mother-tongue instruction in primary grades, and continues, at least in some regions of the country, to move in this direction today (Rosekrans et al., 2012). To foster mother-tongue literacy, the ministry encourages using local language speakers and cultural organizations, and

provides in-service professional development opportunities for teachers to develop competency in mother-tongue instruction (Rosekrans et al., 2012).

The lack of accessible reading material in rural schools and communities provided the motivation for the global service-learning project on which this case study was conducted. Discussions with in-country partners revealed the value they placed on reading and on the accessibility of relevant material:

When small children [are] read a story at bed time, even the simplest story, that gets their brains thinking and they have an advantage when they start school because they have been read to. We do not have resources to do this and these stories, with their moral message, are good to read to children. They will be very important (Bourne et al., 2016, p. 242).

The in-country partners in this study asked for reading material that would reflect the local culture, its values, morals, and traditions. Findings from the pilot study reflect the importance community members gave to sourcing local information, knowledge, folklore, and traditional cultural practices as the subject material for the books.

Designing a GSL project for teacher candidates enabled me to address several of the requirements identified in the literature. It reflected the reciprocity that is fundamental to GSL (Bingle & Hatcher, 2011; d' Arlach et al., 2009; Dostillio et al., 2012; Hartman et al., 2014). It reflected an empathetic approach to the needs of the end user (Berger, 2010; Black, 2007; IDEO, 2015; Schumacher, 1973). As well, in keeping with service-learning pedagogy and teacher education, the GSL project was an appropriate setting for teacher candidates to gain experience

and develop the practical wisdom essential to novice teachers while also working on a project suitable for their skill set (Jagla, 2016; Kemmis & Smith, 2008a; Pillion et al., 2009).

The preceding sections of this chapter outline key concerns associated with situating learning experiences in challenging contexts and demonstrate the need for a more structured, intentional process if higher education is to provide experiences worth doing for all participants. In the final sections of this chapter, I discuss the gaps this research seeks to address, and present the conceptual framework and research questions that guided this study.

## **2.8 Research Gaps**

A review of the literature raises key concerns around higher education's current approach to situating GSL projects and similar experiential learning opportunities in challenging contexts. As pointed out both earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 1, policy and practice point to increases in these kinds of experiences (AUCC, 2014; Biggs et al., 2015; CBIE, 2015; Paris & Biggs, 2017). Students' interest in positioning their learning in ways that can make a difference is also on the rise (Hartman, et al., 2014; Tiessen & Epprecht, 2012). Currently, there is little research being done on how higher education institutions design such projects, a gap this research seeks to address. The literature offers evidence higher education can do better.

As discussed earlier, university mandates reflect a willingness to engage in some of the world's most challenging regions. The current study took place at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and was in part a response to the institution's global intentions, as articulated in its strategic plan, *Place and Promise*. *Place and Promise* has guided almost a decade of global engagement. The plan articulates not only UBC's commitment to internationalization, but also its commitment to addressing global challenges, and is worth revisiting in relation to this research.

The critical challenges of our day transcend borders. Our ability to address them depends

on transcending borders, too: those dividing disciplines and nations. UBC assumes its responsibilities at the centre of dialogue and activity, leading an ethical approach and working with sister institutions to strengthen Canada's role on the world stage (University of British Columbia 2010, p. 22).

The plan goes on to suggest that the actions required to meet these objectives would include fostering "student participation in learning and service abroad" and strengthening "UBC's role in international development" (p.23). While the recognition of global challenges and the actions set out by UBC are admirable, increased participation in challenging contexts without a clear policy framework increases the risk of unintended negative consequences such as those described earlier in this chapter, potentially increasing the vulnerability for all participants.

With participation numbers poised to increase, universities have an obligation to ensure the learning opportunities they support are worth doing for students, in-country partners and sponsoring institutions (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Epprecht, 2004; Hartman et al., 2014; Tiessen, 2007, 2012). One way they might do this is by embracing a more considered, design approach (Paris & Biggs, 2017). The results of this research can inform this approach.

## **2.8 Design approach**

I came to this research as an adult educator with a personal interest in the question of whether or not universities should position learning experiences in challenging contexts? Did the risks outweigh the rewards? Given the evident interest in increasing such opportunities, the question became how universities might design such experiences, which in turn led me to the world of design. Drawing from IDEO' (2015) concept of core, or elemental design principles I created a list of initial principles (see Table 2.2, *Design principles for a good GSL project*) which

in turn provided the design framework for both the design of the course in which this study is situated, as well as questions that guided this study.

## **2.9 Conceptual Framework and Research Questions**

This research shares a set of 14 project design principles drawn from the literature, from previous experience (see Bourne et al., 2015; Bourne, Crichton, & Carter 2015; Crichton, Bourne & Carter, 2014), and from the theoretical work of Crichton and Virku (Crichton, 2014), who used a design thinking approach to create an initial theoretical set of principles that considered contextual challenges for global service-learning projects. This combination of literature, experience, and theory resulted in the design principles presented Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Design principles for a good GSL project**

A good GSL project should:	Literature
Be of educative value to student participants	Bamber & Pike (2013); Boyer (1996); Bringle & Hatcher (2011); Chapman (2016); Crabtree (2013); d’Arlach et al. (2009); Dewey (2004 [1916]); Dostillio et. al (2012); Hartman et. al (2012, 2015); Jagla (2016); Pillion et al. (2009); Woolf (2008).
Be of contextual value to in-country partners by addressing a need or benefit otherwise unmet.	Bamber & Pike (2013); Chapman (2016); Crabtree (2009, 2013); d’Arlach et al. (2009); Dostillio et. al (2012); Hartman (2015); Marullo & Edwards (2000); Mellom & Herrera (2014); Pluim & Jorgenson (2012); Tiessen (2007; 2012); Woolf (2008)
Not replace work that is done by in-country partners	Bamber & Pike (2013); Chapman (2016); Crabtree (2013); d’Arlach et. al (2009); Dostillio et. al (2012); Marullo & Edwards (2000)
Include a pre-departure program that reflects on current challenges and introduces historical, geographical and contemporary factors that have led to or continue to perpetuate localized challenges	Bamber & Pike (2013); Chapman (2016); Pluim & Jorgenson (2013); Slimbach (2013); Tiessen (2007; 2012)
Include a pre-departure program that addresses ethical considerations around the potential use and abuse of photography and social media, that reflects on the potential for power and privilege, and that explores responsible ways of working.	Bynam, Kinard & Evert (2015); Epprecht (2004); Esteva (2010); Huesca (2013); Khan (2011); Pluim & Jorgenson (2012)
Include a pre-departure program that introduces student participants to the required skills for planned in-country activities	Chapman (2016); Crabtree (2013); Epprecht (2004); Huish (2012); Pillion et. al (2009); Pluim & Jorgenson (2012)
Encourage in-country involvement in as much of the work as possible, and cede authority and control to partners wherever possible.	Bamber & Pike (2013); d’Arlach (2009); Dostillio et. al (2012); Black (2007); Esteva (2010); Hartman (2015); Hartman et. al (2012); Marullo & Edwards (2001); Mellom & Herrera (2014); Pluim & Jorgenson (2012); Schumacher (1973)
Be informed by the principles of sustainability	World Commission on Environment and Development (1987); Oxford University Press (1987); Crichton (2014a); Crichton et al., (2014); Slimbach (2013)
Be informed by the principles of appropriate technology	Crichton (2014b); Crichton & Onguko (2013); Darrow & Saxenian (1986); Schumacher (1973)
Be affordable for all parties	Biggs et. al (2015); Crichton, et al., (2014); Paris & Biggs (2017).
Attend to the safety and well-being of all participants	Crichton, et al., (2014), Crichton (2014b); Dupuis, Bowdon & Schwemin (2011); UBC Safety Abroad ( <a href="https://registry.safetyabroad@ubc.ca">https://registry.safetyabroad@ubc.ca</a> )
Provide a structured re-entry process that allows students the opportunity for discussion and reflection on their experiences.	Bringle & Hatcher (2009, 2011); Dewey (1938); Eyler & Giles (1999); Dostillio et. al (2012); Hartman et. al (2012); Kolb (1983); Mellom & Herrera (2014); Stoker (2013)

**Table 3. Design principles for a good GSL project (continued)**

A good GSL project should:	Literature
Provide a follow-up process for in-country partners to comment	Bamber & Pike (2013); Black (2007); Dostillio et. al. (2012); Esteva (2010); Hartman et.al (2012); Pluim & Jorgenson (2012); Schumacher (1973); Tonkin (2011)
Prioritize the happiness and well-being of all participants	Crichton, et al., (2014); Nussbaum (2003, 2009)

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) suggest the purpose of a conceptual framework is to “focus and shape the research process” (p.61). The literature reviewed in this chapter, along with the researcher’s previous field experience, inform the design principles used to create the GSL project included in the GRIP course, develop the research questions that guided this study, and influence the methods used to collect the data. In keeping with Bloomberg and Volpe’s definition, the research questions provide the overall framework for data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

### 2.9.1 Research Questions

The overarching question guiding this research asks: How might we understand the extent to which a set of design principles influenced the outcome of a GSL project for student participants and their in-country partners when the project was situated in a *challenging context*? the following sub questions were included to answer this question:

- 1) To what extent did the participants consider the GSL project worth doing?
- 2) To what extent did the participants’ intentions differ from the researcher/designer’s intentions?
- 3) To what extent did the design principles appear to influence the project’s outcomes?
- 4) What challenges did participants face in this GSL project?

- 5) How might the goodness of a GSL project be evaluated based on these design principles?
- 6) How might the findings of this study inform higher education policy and practice around designing GSL projects in challenging contexts?

## **2.10 Summary**

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature pertaining to the broad topic of global experiences in higher education, before focusing specifically on global service-learning (GSL) projects situated in challenging contexts. I provided examples of issues related to situating student learning experiences in such contexts, which supported the argument that GSL and similar experiences must be intentionally designed if they are to be good projects, worth doing for all participants. I also presented an overview of design research, and of the literacy issues in rural Ghana, to provide additional context for the study. I then highlighted the gaps in current practice; this, in turn, led to a discussion of the conceptual framework and research questions that guided the study. In the next chapter, I explain the methodology I used to answer those research questions.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the study's context, research design, and the methodology used to conduct the research. I also discuss my positionality as researcher, describe the study participants, and explain how those participants were recruited. I provide a detailed discussion of how I collected, organized, and analyzed my data. Finally, I share the efforts I made to address issues of researcher bias and describe the study's limitations.

### 3.1 Study Context

As discussed in Chapter 1, the GSL project in this study came about as a result of my conversation with the previous Dean of the University of British Columbia's School of Education (2010). In response to this conversation, my dissertation advisor and I created a global service-learning project (GSL) which we then positioned within the existing Guided Reflective Inquiry Project (GRIP) course framework. GRIP was a required course for the Bachelor of Education degree program (since replaced by the community field experience in 2018).

At the time, GRIP could be considered a final capstone offering. Teacher candidates received credit for GRIP and gained practical educational experience. Since the initial GRIP GSL offering in 2013, I have used an iterative design process (Herrington & Reeves, 2011; IDEO, 2014) to refine and facilitate this course. The case study for this dissertation is situated in the second of the four Ghana offerings (2015) described in Table 3, *GRIP Ghana GSL project*.

**Table 4. GRIP Ghana GSL project**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Community Partners</b>	<b>Institutional Partners</b>	<b>Situated in Learning</b>	<b>Project</b>
2014	• Nabdam District/NGO GROW	UBC Faculty of Education (FOE)	GRIP – 4 credits	Books/Ghana
2015	• Nabdam District/NGO GROW	UBC FOE	GRIP – 4 credits	Books/Ghana
2017	• Nabdam District/NGO GROW	UBC FOE/ HMKN	GRIP – 4 credits EDUC- 465 3 credits	Books/Ghana Health literature
2018	• Nabdam District/NGO GROW	UBC FOE/ HMKN	GRIP – 4 credits EDUC- 465 3 credits	Books/Health promotion

The GRIP GSL project was situated in the English classes of two rural junior high schools in the Nabdam District, Upper East Ghana. These schools fit Onguko’s (2013) definition of a challenging educational context. Classrooms are overcrowded, resources are minimal, and students have limited exposure to and skills in English, which in turn can prevent their advancement to high school. In-country partners felt situating the project in the English classes and having native English speakers teach the bookmaking process would benefit the Ghanaian students’ English writing and speaking skills.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The overarching question guiding this research asks: How might we understand the extent to which a set of design principles influenced the outcome of a GSL project for student participants and their in-country partners when the project is situated in a *challenging context*?

To answer this question, the following sub questions were included:

- 1) To what extent did the participants consider the GSL project worth doing?

- 2) To what extent did the participants' intentions differ from the researcher/designer's intentions?
- 3) To what extent did the design principles appear to influence the project's outcomes?
- 4) What challenges did participants face in this GSL Project?
- 5) How might the goodness of a GSL project be evaluated based on these design principles?
- 6) How might the findings of this study inform higher education policy and practice around designing GSL projects in challenging contexts?

To answer these questions, I adopted a qualitative research stance. Qualitative research is concerned with how the sociocultural world is “experienced and interpreted at a particular point in time” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p.80). A quantitative approach would not have elicited the kind of data that would provide an in-depth understanding how participants make meaning of a global experience in a challenging context. Qualitative research, however, can provide a “complex, holistic picture [that] takes the reader into the multiple dimensions of a problem or issue and displays it in all of its complexity” (Creswell, 2007, p. 15). To build this holistic picture, the researcher enters the world of the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Merriam 1998). The characteristics of a qualitative stance suited my research objectives, allowing me to observe the lived experience of study participants.

Two qualitative methodologies were used in this study: a qualitative case study approach and a design-based research approach (DBR). Both are discussed in the following section.

### **3.3 Rationale for Case Study Approach**

Within the range of qualitative approaches, a case study design appeared appropriate for this study. Merriam (1998) and Creswell (2007) described case study as a methodology that

explores and describes a bounded system, explored in context and delimited by boundaries of time and place. Merriam expands on the idea of a bounded system by suggesting a case is “a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries. [The researcher] can fence in what” is going to be studied (p. 27). In this study, the bounded system was the GRIP GSL project that took place during a specific period (the month of June 2015). The context was a rural community in Upper East Ghana.

A further reason for choosing a case study methodology is that the case study can be particularly appropriate when *context* is central to what we want to learn (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Context was central this research. The design principles used to develop this project—particularly those dealing with pre-departure, safety, cultural understanding, sustainability, and the use of appropriate technology—were a direct response to the contextual challenges of the setting. Thus, the findings from this study have the potential to contribute to the kind of “context-dependent knowledge” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 223) that can support the design of similar experiences in similar conditions.

I also chose a case study approach because of its suitability for exploring program interventions and outcomes. Because case study allows for deep examination of educational activities that inform practice, Merriam (1998) has suggested it is “particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy” (p.41). Citing the strengths of case study research, namely that is “anchored in real-life situations” and has the ability to offer “insights and illuminate meaning,” she notes “case study plays an important role in advancing a field’s knowledge base” (p. 41).

It is important to stress that while this study reflects Merriam’s (1998) points—chiefly gaining a greater understanding of how instructors or course designers might design good

projects and informing policy—it is not intended to be an evaluation of the GSL project itself. Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) have made a distinction between case study used for evaluation and case study used for research. They have suggested case study evaluations commonly guide a decision around policy, practice, or some other objective, whereas case *study as research* seeks to “develop an understanding of a particular phenomenon” (p.681). While I do anticipate my findings may inform policy and future practice, the objective of this study was understanding the extent to which my use of intentional design may or may not have contributed to a good GSL project for the participants.

### **3.3.1 Limitations of the case study approach.**

Flyvbjerg (2006) has provided an overview of early critiques of case study research. Critics tend to argue that tightly controlled, context-independent studies are more reliable than context-dependent studies (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner, 1984 cited in Flyvbjerg, 2006); that researchers cannot generalize from a single case and therefore case studies offer little toward scientific development (Campbell & Stanley, 1966 cited in Flyvbjerg 2001); and that case studies can be slanted toward the researcher’s bias (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Flyvbjerg (2006) has suggested such misunderstandings threaten “the very status of the case study as a scientific method” (p. 221). For Flyvbjerg the focus should be on *learning* from case studies, rather than on *proof*, because “predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context dependent knowledge can therefore be more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 72). Earlier in this chapter, I discussed the importance of context to this research, and I continue by taking up Flyvbjerg’s other two points, which are directly related to this study: 1) that we cannot *generalize* from a single case; and 2) that there is the potential for researcher *bias*.

Although case studies may not be *generalizable* in the way that a broad, context-controlled study can be, they can still be applied to a wider population (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Flyvbjerg, 2001, 2006; Gall et al., 1996; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2003; 2014). Berg (2007) has proposed that “the researcher clearly articulate what areas are investigated and by what means” (p.294). This clear articulation can provide a systematic description of the research process, the methods used, changes and adaptations made in the field, and the process used to analyze the data. Careful articulation of processes and steps taken by the researcher can be replicated by other researchers, and thus inform the field like any other methodology (Yin, 2014). In addition, while a case study may not apply to a broader population, the reader can recognize aspects of his or her own experience in the study (Patton, 1990, cited in Stake, 2005) and draw from them where appropriate.

As for concerns around researcher bias, defenders of case study research point out that subjective decision-making is present in most forms of research (Berg, 2007; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005). For example, quantitative research relies on decisions ranging from statistical acceptability to sample size, so the challenge of subjectivity is not limited to case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2001; 2006), or to qualitative research in general. Recognizing that researchers must attend to the risk of confirming rather than challenging existing biases, Berg (2007) has insisted that a clear articulation of steps and rationalization of those steps can reduce the potential for decisions that might compromise objectivity (Berg, 2007; Flyvbjerg, 2006). Later in this chapter, I discuss the potential for researcher bias in my study and the steps I took to mitigate them in my research decisions.

### **3.4 Rationale for Design-Based Research**

I also adopted a design-based research (DBR) methodology to conduct this study. Barab and Squire (2004) have defined DBR as a “series of approaches” (p.2) whereby the researcher moves beyond the role of observer to actively intervene in the research, developing and implementing “new theories, artifacts, and practices” (p.2). When conducting research in challenging contexts such as the one in this case study, researchers often need to be flexible and adapt the research process to the setting. When one research approach does not appear to work, or does not generate meaningful data, another approach may be necessary (Barab & Squire, 2004; Kelly, Baek, Lesh, & Bannan-Ritland, 2008; van den Akker, et al., 2006, Onguko, 2013). Such interventions allow researcher to adapt the research process to reflect real world situations.

In this study, DBR allowed for adaptations in the research process in the following ways. First, as touched upon in Chapter 1, my original objective had been to explore the design principles from the perspective of the participants, and my initial research questions, as laid out in the research proposal, reflected this objective (Appendix K). However, once the project was underway, it was evident participants preferred to discuss the project in relation to their actual experiences in the field rather than in relation to an abstract set of design principles. Thus, the research question, instruments, activities, and interview questions were modified to reflect participants’ lived experiences.

Merriam (1998) has suggested revision of research objectives and instruments is common in a qualitative case study. Because the researcher explores the case from the perspective of participants rather than from the perspective of the researcher, so the study’s design must be “emergent and flexible, responsive to changing conditions of the study in progress” (p.8). Yin (2003) has concurred, pointing out that “very few case studies will end up exactly as planned.

Inevitably [the researcher] will have to make minor, if not major, changes ranging from the need to pursue an unexpected lead (potentially minor) to the need to identify a new case for study (potentially major)” (p. 61). Adopting a DBR methodology provided me with the flexibility to modify research questions and instruments.

A second way in which DBR methodology was used during the research process was in my data collection methods. Although I discuss it in greater detail in the methods section of this chapter, my introduction of large flip-chart sheets as a data collection method is an example of my adapting the research process to the setting. A design-based research methodology provided opportunities for me, as researcher, to introduce interventions and additional methods during the research in response to shifting realities in the research setting.

### **3.5 Researcher Positionality**

In Chapter 1 of this dissertation, I provided an overview of my personal background in relation to this study, describing my role as co-founder of the NGO Project GROW, my connections with the community, my passion for the context, and the origins of the basic book project. My personal background provided me with access to community leaders and a limited understanding of the study context gained through my involvement in the region. In-country members of the NGO were essential to enabling the project, serving as gatekeepers, while also providing the necessary infrastructure to support the project.

As might be expected, this connection with the community had implications for my positionality as researcher. While my relationship with the NGO gained me a degree of trust with the community, it also resulted in my occupying a complex and often shifting insider-outsider position as a researcher. Herr and Anderson’s (2005) description of a continuum rather than an

insider/outsider dichotomy provides a useful framework for describing that position as researcher. Herr and Anderson suggest possible positions the researcher might fit into, depending on the circumstances of the research and the participants he or she might be engaging with:

- insider;
- insider in collaboration with other insiders;
- insider(s) in collaboration with outsiders;
- Reciprocal collaborations; and
- Outsider(s) studying insiders.

This continuum is illustrative of the many variations of researcher positionality in qualitative research and implies a recognition that a researcher might embody them all over the course of a complex study.

In her discussion of positionality in community-based research, Kerstetter (2012) has also noted this researcher fluidity, suggesting many scholars accept that positionality may seldom be either fully insider or fully outsider, and have moved beyond framing the role through a false dichotomy. Kerstetter suggests that depending upon who the researcher interacts with, positionality can shift from fully outsider to somewhere in between, or what she has described as a “space in between insider or outsider” (p.101). Whether we refer to the fluid nature of researcher positionality as a continuum or a space in between, it is commonly agreed that the position of the researcher can often fluctuate during the research process (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Kerstetter, 2012; Merriam, 1998).

When I made my first visit to Upper East Ghana in 2011, I had been involved with the NGO for four years. At the time, I regarded myself as an *outsider*. In subsequent trips, through my work with the schools, I have moved along Herr and Anderson’s (2005) *continuum*, building

a relationship of trust based on a history of collaboration and mutual respect. Due to my race, Canadian citizenship, limited ability to understand or speak the local Nab't dialect, and my periodic rather than long-term visits to the region, I will always be an outsider, no matter how often I am in Ghana or how comfortable my relationship with the community. However, in the context of my role as the instructor facilitating the Global GRIP course, my relative familiarity with the community means I am also never fully an outsider because students recognize this connection and the position of privilege it provides in terms of community access and respect.

In this study, my positionality shifted depending on who I was speaking to at the time, and/or the activities I engaged in as a researcher. When facilitating the project between the teacher candidates and the community, I drew on my relationship with the community, which made me something of an *insider in collaboration with outsiders*. For example, I served in this capacity when designing the book project and the activities of the teacher candidates. When creating professional development opportunities for in-country teachers and the teacher candidates, I worked closely with administrators in a role that could be considered *reciprocal collaboration*.

My involvement with Project GROW provided a limited understanding of the research context (Herr & Anderson, 2005) and contributed to a position of trust with in-country partners. Hartman (2015) has suggested long-term relationships are an important factor for GSL so that “trust, clear communication, and open dialogue [can be] developed as norms” (p. 236). My history of collaboration with the communities created a space for such communication and dialogue to occur.

### **3.6 Previous Experiences**

Although I intended to make the Ghana project the subject of my research in 2014, the opportunity to test the ideas that would lead to Global GRIP course came up a year earlier when a faculty member who was involved in an NGO in Tanzania and who, knowing of the intended project for Ghana, suggested that we pilot it in Arusha, Tanzania. This offer provided me with an opportunity to test ideas that would become central to my research.

Drawing on what I had learned in Tanzania, I next piloted the GSL GRIP course in 2014 and returned in 2015 to conduct this study. This timing was based on my coursework, candidacy, work obligations, and a language project underway in the district. The language project was the subject of a master's thesis (Giffen, 2015) and developed a writing system in the for the Nab't language. Combining the literacy project with the language project allowed for the inclusion of Nab't text in the books created during the GSL GRIP course.

### **3.7 Role as Researcher**

My role throughout this study was that of a participant observer. Merriam (1998) has described participant observation as a “schizophrenic activity in that the researcher usually participates, but not to the extent of becoming absorbed in the activity” (p.103). The role was challenging, given that as designer of the project, I needed to look beyond my instructional role and focus on design, facilitation, and data collection. This participant observer role was essential because allowed me to introduce the project into the schools, as well as to develop and be part of a supportive infrastructure to maintain the project.

### **3.8 Study Participant Profiles**

There were three groups of participants in this study:

- Group One: Four teacher candidates, referred to as TC1, TC2, TC3, & TC4, who participated in the GSL project that is the subject of this case study;
- Group Two: Five teacher candidates who took part in the pilot project, and who are referred to here as TCP1, TCP2, TCP3, TCP4, TCP5.
- Group Three: Nine in-country partners, seven of whom were directly connected to the GSL project in this case study (ICP1, ICP2, ICP3, ICP4, ICP5, ICP6, ICP7) and two of whom served as hosts and gatekeepers to the local community (ICP 8 and 9).

Data from the teacher candidates in Group 1 was gathered chronologically through introductory surveys, meetings, observation, field notes, exit interviews, analysis of student journals, and follow-up surveys. Other data was gathered informally, through casual conversations and the discussion sheets described in the previous chapter. Data from teacher candidates who had participated in the pilot study (2014) was limited to the introductory survey, occasional comments at the end of the survey, and information offered during an informal meeting with the current study participants.

Data was gathered from the in-country partners through the introductory surveys, observations and field notes, conversations, focus group interviews, and follow-up surveys. Time constraints and transportation challenges limited opportunities to gather this data. However, the combined methods provided numerous opportunities for inclusive representation of in-country partners, as well as for triangulation of the data (See Table 4, *Study participants*).

**Table 5. Study participants**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Participant Role</b>	<b>Formal Education/Experience</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>
1	TC1	Teacher candidate	3-month practicum	Surveys, interviews, group discussions, journals, return survey
1	TC2	Teacher candidate	3-month practicum	Surveys, interviews, discussion sheets, group discussions, journals, return survey
1	TC3	Teacher candidate	3-month practicum	Surveys, interviews, discussion sheets, group discussions, journals, return survey
1	TC4	Teacher candidate	3-month practicum	Surveys, interviews, discussion sheets, group discussions, journals, return survey
2	TCP1	Teacher candidate – Pilot	1 year	Surveys, comments
2	TCP2	Teacher candidate – Pilot	2 years	Surveys, comments
2	TCP3	Teacher candidate – Pilot	2 years	Surveys, comments
2	TCP4	Teacher candidate – Pilot	2 years	Surveys, comments
2	TCP5	Teacher candidate – Pilot	1 year	Surveys, comments
3	ICP1 Gatekeeper	Administrator: in-country partner	District administrator – 2 years	Focus group interviews, surveys, discussions, conversations
3	ICP2	Administrator: in- country partner	Headmaster – 2 years	Focus group interviews, surveys, discussions, conversation
3	ICP3	Administrator: in-country partner	Headmaster – 1 year	Focus group interviews, surveys, discussions, evening debriefs,
3	ICP4	In-country partner	Teacher – 4 years	Surveys, focus group interviews, discussions, conversations
3	ICP5	In-country partner	Teacher	Surveys, Focus group interviews, discussions, conversations
3	ICP6	Teacher – In- country partner	Teacher	Surveys, focus group interviews, discussions, conversations
3	ICP7	Teacher – In- country partner	Teacher	Surveys, focus group interviews, discussions, conversations
3	ICP8 Gatekeeper	NGO – In-country partner	University professor/NGO Chair	Focus group interviews, surveys, discussions, conversations
3	ICP9 Gatekeeper	NGO – In-country partner	Community Nurse	Focus group interviews, surveys, discussions, conversations

### **3.8.1 Teacher Candidates – Group 1.**

The four teacher candidates (TCs) who participated in this study were enrolled in the final course of their Bachelor of Education degrees at the University of British Columbia's (UBC) Okanagan campus. The GSL project in this case study was one of several options offered for this final course. At the time of registration, the teacher candidates were informed there was a research project associated with the course. They were told they could participate in the course without participating in the study, but all four indicated they wished to participate in both the course and the study. Three of the teacher candidates were enrolled in the 12-month-long Secondary Education Teacher Program (STEP) and one was enrolled in the two-year Elementary Teacher Education Program (ETEP). I assigned the pseudonyms TC1, TC2, etc. to the teacher candidates.

**TC1.** TC1 was enrolled in the STEP program and held a Bachelor of Science, biology. The Ghana GSL project was her second experience in a challenging context, the first having been a high-school global service-learning project in El Salvador. She was motivated to join the Ghana GSL project because she felt it would be a positive teaching experience. "I thought this would be a great opportunity to see how teachers and education systems work in other parts of the world. I thought it would be a good chance to add to my Education [sic]" (TC1, Follow-up survey, December 2015).

**TC2.** TC2 was also enrolled in the STEP program and held Bachelor's degree in biochemistry. During her undergraduate program, she had completed one year of linguistics and expressed a personal interest in the Nab't language research project that had been initiated in the region (Giffen, 2015). She had participated in a previous global exchange program to the UK. TC2 chose to participate in this project to contribute professionally. She also noted that she was

looking for something more meaningful and interesting for her GRIP course option than merely writing an essay, and “Seeing the world was a bonus. I liked the idea that the work would be impactful, contributing, and leaving a legacy” (TC2, Follow-up survey, December 2015).

**TC3.** TC3 was enrolled in the ETEP program and had completed the second of two required practicums. She had lived abroad in France and in Abu Dhabi. Throughout the project, she was especially interested in the opportunity to gain ESL teaching experience. She intended to put this experience to use almost immediately upon completing the program, having accepted a two-year teaching contract in Abu Dhabi. She participated in the Ghana course because “it seemed like an opportunity that would be both challenging and rewarding” (TC3, Follow-up survey, December 2015).

**TC4.** TC4 was enrolled in the STEP program. She held an undergraduate degree in geography and had a background in Indigenous Studies. She believed the GRIP Ghana would provide an opportunity for her to contribute and build teaching experience:

I truly wanted to be a part of this project because it is making a positive difference for many people in another part of the globe. I was bored of doing projects that had no impact, therefore I chose to do this project as a way of giving back and making a difference. It was also an opportunity for me personally as an educator to grow and develop (TC4, Exit interview).

Of the four teacher candidates, TC4 was the only one who had no prior travel experience. Ghana can be challenging even for seasoned travellers, let alone a novice one. Although the cultural complexities initially proved difficult for her, over time and through conversations with our host, TC4 became increasingly comfortable. As the data reveals, she commented appreciatively and

often on the opportunity to participate in the project, learning a new skill while simultaneously learning about the Nab't culture.

### **3.8.2 Teacher Candidates – Group 2.**

As noted, I also included the teacher candidates from the pilot project (2014) by inviting them to complete the initial surveys and to provide any comments or feedback on the principles or other aspects of their experience that they felt were important. Although data collected from the pilot participants was restricted to the initial surveys and their comments on the principles or other aspects they felt were important, pilot project participants were included in part, because the design principles used to guide the GSL project in this case study resulted from the feedback they provided following the pilot study. Their response to the principles could provide a reflective perspective of the principles from a student who had experienced the project. A second reason they were included was because at the time the course was accepting applications concerns about the Ebola virus in neighboring parts of Africa and the kidnapping of Nigerian schoolgirls appeared to affect the number of students who signed up. Neither incident was related to Ghana, but their proximity and press coverage understandably influenced student participation.

**TCP 1.** During the pilot project, TCP1 was enrolled in the ETEP program. Prior to enrolling in the Bachelor of Education program, she held a Bachelor of Arts degree. At the time of this case study, TCP#1 was working as a teacher on call.

**TCP2.** TCP 2 had been enrolled in the STEP program. She held a Bachelor's of Science degree and hoped to teach either senior students or adult learners after completing her Bachelor of Education degree. She was particularly drawn to teach in rural, northern settings. At the time

of this case study, TCP2 was working full time in a rural high school in northern Saskatchewan, teaching adult basic education and upgrading.

**TCP3.** TCP3 held a Bachelor of Science and was enrolled in the STEP program. This participant had family who had been involved with UBC's engagement in Upper East Ghana through its nursing program; thus, she had some familiarity with the context and had long hoped to do something similar during her undergraduate degree.

**TCP4.** TCP4 had a Bachelor of Science and was enrolled in the STEP program. At the time of this study, she had received a teaching contract in a rural, farming community teaching high school math and physics.

**TCP5.** TCP5 held a Bachelor of Education and was part of the ETEP program. She was the only member of the pilot project who had never travelled outside Canada. Despite being a novice traveler, she adapted quickly. TCP5 returned to Canada with the news that she had obtained a full-time teaching position.

### **3.8.3 In-country Partners – Group 3.**

There were nine in-country partners who participated in this project. Seven were members of the Nabdam School District (ICP 1–7). In-country partners included the district administrator who selected and served as both gatekeeper to the participating schools, two members of the NGO that co-hosted the project and the school headmasters and teachers who hosted the project in their schools. The headmaster and teachers had been selected by the school district. Two further in-country partners were members of the NGO Project GROW (ICP 8 & 9) and served as gatekeepers to the community at large, as well as facilitators for the project in the schools.

**ICP1.** ICP1 is a school district administrator, as well as a member of the Nab't language committee, and holds a master's degree in education. ICP1 invited the pilot project as a way to introduce student-centered learning practices in his district, and he co-hosted and co-facilitated the professional development workshop. He also served as gatekeeper to local government leaders and provided the necessary introduction to local authorities (i.e. district administrators, Nabdam elders, chiefs, and local spiritual leaders), a necessary protocol when outsiders engage with community organizations in the Nabdam region.

**ICP2.** ICP2 was in his first year as headmaster (School #2), had participated in the professional workshop during the pilot, and had expressed interest in becoming involved in future opportunities. During the current study, he provided background for the cultural content of the books and often helped the teacher candidates resolve questions that arose when junior high school students narrated conflicting versions of the stories.

**ICP3.** ICP3 was headmaster of the pilot school (School #1) and new to this role. During the pilot project, he had served as assistant headmaster for School #1, and later became headmaster when ICP1 assumed the role of district administrator. His previous involvement meant he was familiar with the project's objectives.

**ICP4.** ICP4 was one of the host English teachers (School #1) and worked closely with the teacher candidates. He had been a host teacher in the pilot project and was eager to participate again. He was particularly interested in increasing his skills in student-centered learning.

**ICP5.** ICP5 was a French teacher in School #1 and had been involved in the pilot project. His interest in the cultural subject matter covered in the book topics (traditional marriage and funeral practices), and the practical skills used to make books drew him to the project. He also

supported the teacher candidates in explaining English grammar to the junior high school students

**ICP6.** ICP6 taught English for Form 1 and 2 in School #2. Initially this teacher held back from participating, as he was unsure of his role and did not wish to interfere with the teacher candidates. Once ICP6 realized co-teaching, rather than merely observing, was the objective, he became enthusiastic and deeply involved.

**ICP7.** ICP 7 was the only female teacher to participate in the GSL project. Like ICP6, she was hesitant to step into an active role, a hesitancy that was in part because she missed the first few days the teacher candidates were in the schools due to caring for a family member who had been ill. It was not until the professional development workshop that she began to understand her role and assume more of a leadership role in the classroom.

**ICP8.** ICP8 has a Master of Science in nursing and a doctorate in medical anthropology. She was a faculty member with the University for Development Studies (UDS). She was also a member of the NGO Project GROW that, together with the Nabdram School District, invited the project to Ghana in 2014. She served as a gatekeeper to the elders, traditional leaders and local community members. She had also facilitated opportunities for UBC staff and faculty to conduct other professional development initiatives at UDS.

**ICP9.** ICP 9 holds a certificate in nursing and serves as a community health nurse in a rural health clinic. He took a leave from his position to facilitate the project, and his salary was replaced through the Go Global funds collected for the GSL project. As touched upon in Chapter 2, taking busy professionals away from their current work to support students can be an issue in challenging contexts (Epprecht, 2004; Huish, 2012). When one of the teacher candidates (TC1) inquired if this was the case for this GSL project, ICP 9 noted his leave “provide[d] a month-long

employment opportunity for another field nurse who need[ed] the work” (ICP9, personal communication, June 15). Therefore, this absence from his regular position was not problematic.

ICP9 oversaw the infrastructure for the project (i.e. transportation, rentals, printing resources, etc.), facilitates in the schools, and serves as translator and interpreter in the schools and as liaison with traditional leaders. He also provided the in-country orientation and joins the group most evenings for discussions and debriefs. The role of ICP 9 was critical, as captured in the following comment:

As I watched [ICP9] walking around the room taking pictures [I realized he is] so much more than a photographer and someone who organizes or transportation. He is a great link to the Ghanaian culture, helping us understand (TC1, Journal entry, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

His ability to help students make sense of cultural issues they struggled to navigate was also appreciated. “What I found really helped me in the last little bit was talking with [ICP9] ...I found my discussions with [him] to be the most comforting” (TC4, Journal entry, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015). Evening debriefs with ICP9 provided a safe space for the teacher candidates to raise questions and an opportunity for him to address their concerns.

### **3.9 Methods**

Data collection methods included participant observation, initial surveys, discussion sheets<sup>3</sup>, interviews, teacher candidates’ journals, and follow-up surveys distributed six months after the completion of the project. Where possible, I also included methods such as “hanging out, [or]casual conversations” (Maxwell, 2013, p.88) and field notes. Using multiple methods

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<sup>3</sup> Discussion sheets were large sheets of flip-chart paper with each sheet representing one of the 14 design principles, posted to provide space for comments (see Fig 3.1).

allowed for triangulation by identifying trends, similarities and differences in the data (Schwandt, 2001) and provided a rich, “thick description” (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998) of the case.

### **3.9.1 Participant observation.**

Participant observation can be both a researcher role and a data collection method. Participant observation is used extensively in studies where the researcher spends an extended “period immersed in the culture and activities of the group under study, observing the group’s naturally unfolding world” (Berg, 2007, p.151). As facilitator of the GSL project and course instructor, my participation was necessary to get the project underway. However, once the teacher candidates became comfortable in the classroom my role as participant became less important and the observer more so. As well, in the interest of the teacher candidates gaining teaching experience and achieving the course outline’s learning objectives (see Appendix A) it was important to move from actively participating at the start of the project, to the role of observer.

Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2000) suggest a risk with participant observation is the potential for “observer bias” that can result from the researcher’s choice of what observations might be recorded. Later in this chapter I discuss the steps I took to reduce this potential for bias, but because my field notes were an integral part of the data I made a point each evening to revisit them and flesh them out. I also maintained two journals throughout the study. In the first journal, I recorded observations, personal reflections, and field notes. I also noted initial steps in the data analysis, and my rationales for the changes to research focus, objectives, and data collection instruments as the project unfolded. I used a second journal to record interviews.

### 3.9.2 Surveys.

Once the study participants had signed their consent forms (Appendices D and E), I provided them with two short surveys in which I presented the course design principles in two formats. Survey #1, *Rating the Design Principles*, presented those principles in the form of a Likert survey (Appendix B). The survey asked participants to rate the extent to which they felt each of the 14 design principles was important to a good project, with 1 being most important and 5 being least important. After collecting these surveys, I next provided the participants with Survey #2, *Ranking the Design*, a set of 14 random-ordered cards (Appendix C), each with one of the design principles printed on it. I asked participants to take some time to think about the principles and then rank them in order of importance, with 1 being most important and 14 being least important. My use of surveys was based on Fetterman's (2009) suggestion that simple surveys can provide "grand tour questions" or frameworks to help focus the investigation, identify categories of significance, and to "shape and inform a global understanding" before moving to specific or detailed questions (p. 555). I had also intended to distribute these surveys a second time at the end of the project; however, as will be discussed later in this dissertation, a lack of interest in discussing the design principles on the part of the study participants resulted in the cancellation of this second survey.

To survey the Group Two participants from the pilot study, I sent an electronic copy of Survey #1. Once the survey was returned via email, I followed up with Survey #2 and included a stamped, self-addressed envelope. One participant's original cards became lost in the mail; however, she forwarded an electronic copy of the 14 principles ranked in importance by numbers in the margins.

### **3.9.3 Conversations.**

Although I planned to collect data through conversations, evening debrief discussions in-country, and hanging out (Maxwell, 2013), these unobtrusive methods proved more difficult than anticipated due to challenges I faced as the result of a lifelong hearing loss. During daytime conversations, my practice of using visual cues and lip-reading served me well enough. However, evening conversations and debrief discussions were difficult because they took place in inadequate lighting when we had electricity, or under flashlights and solar lights when we did not. The poor lighting made it difficult to see faces in the dark, limiting my ability to lip-read. While I made a point of noting key conversations and comments, capturing exact quotations was challenging and required follow-up for accuracy.

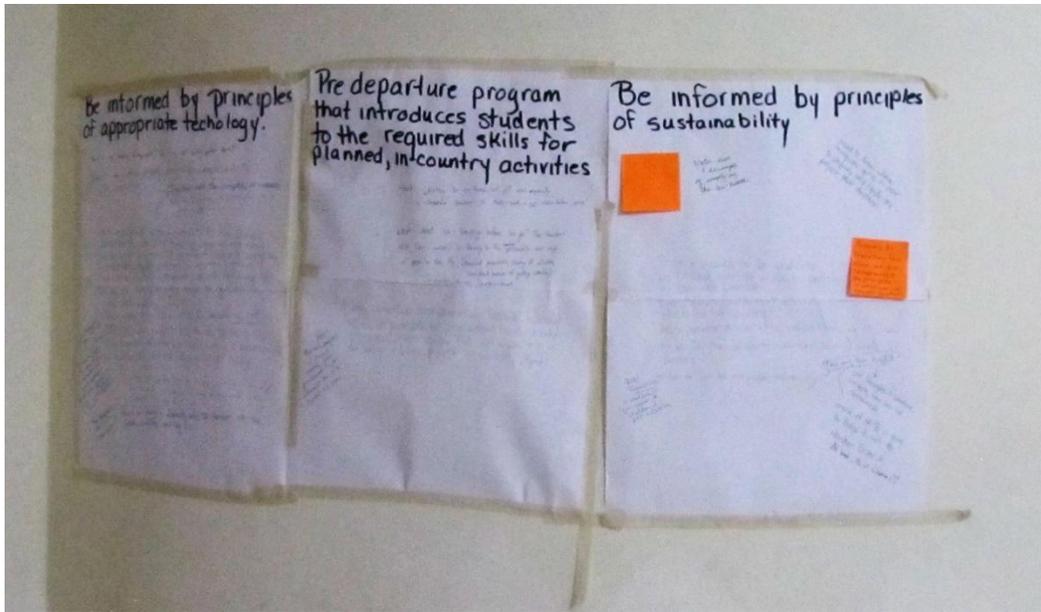
I had planned to use a Livescribe™ recording pen for conducting interviews and evening debriefs, and I did bring the pen with me for the first evening. However, recording conversations was problematic for two reasons. First, the limited range of the pen meant I needed to place it near each speaker in order to accurately record what was being said. This continuous re-positioning of the recording pen was disruptive to conversation. Second, recording the sessions brought a level of formality to what were meant to be spontaneous, informal opportunities for discussion, conversation, and debrief. I had learned during previous projects that these casual discussions are an important component of evening downtime. Thus, while I did gather data during daytime conversations, evenings proved to be problematic. To compensate, I gathered additional data from the teacher candidates through *discussion sheets*, as well as through field observations, personal communications, interviews, surveys, and document analysis.

### **3.9.4 Discussion Sheets.**

The discussion sheets offered a casual method of capturing the teacher candidates'

insights and comments on the project's design principles. I wrote each of the 14 principles on a separate sheet of flip-chart paper and then posted the papers around the foyer of the guesthouse beginning on the fourth day of our stay (Figure 3). I also encouraged the teacher candidates to use the sheets freely as a way to discuss topics outside scope of the design principles. Because they were posted in a space limited to our group, the discussion sheets were a safe way to discuss topics such as points of discomfort (Sharpe & Dear, 2013), attempts to navigate cultural differences, and suggestions for the design of future projects based on the teacher candidates' lived experiences.

Although the discussion sheets could not fully replace casual conversation, they provided a way for students to give feedback on the design principles, offer recommendations, and share reflections. They also offered me, as the researcher, a way to provoke further discussion. Use of the sheets for commenting was initially limited, but by the end of the project they became a valuable research tool, generating comments on a variety of topics, and drawing responses from the other participants. It should be noted that these discussion sheets were posted for the majority of the project, and the teacher candidates were able to comment randomly between June 11, 2015 and June 24, 2015. As a result, there were no specific dates attached their comments.



**Figure 3. Example of Discussion sheets posted on the guesthouse walls**

### **3.9.5 Semi-structured Focus Group Interviews.**

Data was also collected using semi-structured focus group interviews (Appendix F). Patton (2002) describes a focus group interview as an interview “with a small group of people on a specific topic...who participate in an interview for 1 – 2 hours” (p. 385). Focus group interviews allow researchers to interact directly with study participants to enable clarification, probing and follow-up questions, and provide opportunities for participants to build on each other’s answers (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2009). *Semi-structured* focus group interviews go slightly further, becoming what Merriam (1998) has described as a conversation with the purpose of obtaining specific information from a small group of people.

There were logistical advantages to conducting group interviews. This study was limited to the four-week GSL course, so semi-structured focus group interviews allowed me to maximize my interactions with participants and provided an efficient way to collect data (Patton, 2002).

Given the challenges of the transportation, teaching schedules and regular workloads of in-country partners, there was not enough time or adequate opportunity to conduct individual interviews. The framework of a semi-structured interview allowed for consistent questions across multiple groups, as well as opportunities for individual perspectives, reflection, and authentic discussion (Barbour & Shostak, 2011; Merriam, 1998). The focus group interviews also reduced the need for travel because we were able to hold them at the end of the school day which made it easier for all participants to attend.

Focus group interviews can have disadvantages. Barbour and Shostak (2011) have suggested focus groups can be compromised by inherent power structures within groups or between the researcher and the group. As well, there is a possibility for “group speak” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008 p. 84), which is the potential for individuals to feel reluctant to provide a response different from that of the majority. Group speak did not appear to be a problem in this study.

For the teacher candidates, participation in the interviews tended to vary depending on the student. Although I strove to ensure all participants were represented, some students were more reticent than others, and I could generate only as much input as students were willing to provide. Group dynamics also played a role in teacher candidates’ participation.

Semi-structured focus groups can be logistically challenging for researchers who must manage conversations while also extracting and recording data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Based on my previous research experience (Bourne et al., 2015; Bourne et al., 2016), my preference has been to transcribe interviews by hand, providing an ongoing check for accuracy with the participants. I do this both to offset my hearing impairment and to ensure subsequent probes or questions are clearly related to the initial answer.

Teacher candidate 2 (TC2), aware of the hearing challenges I faced, offered to take a second set of notes during our semi-structured focus group interviews with partnering schools, an offer I accepted and appreciated, as it provided two records of the conversation. This second transcription was a valuable resource that allowed me the opportunity to check my transcription for accuracy and identify any discrepancies.

Given my previous research activities, I approached this case study aware of the challenges I would face conducting interviews and understood the importance of verifying the interview notes. I also knew the value of drawing from other data sources such as my field notes, one-on-one conversations, exit interviews, surveys, and student reflective journals. Using multiple data collection procedures and including the newly introduced discussion sheets, enabled me to provide a trustworthy representation of the participants' experiences.

### **3.9.6 Document Analysis/Student Journals.**

As part of the requirements for the Global GRIP course, the teacher candidates kept reflection journals throughout the project. I informed them in the consent form that this journal would be part of the data collection procedures. I also advised them at the start of the project that if they preferred to keep a more personal account of their experience, they might wish to do so in a separate journal. Of the four teacher candidates, three chose to keep a single journal in which they recorded their personal and professional reflections. The fourth chose to keep two separate journals.

Reflection is a key component of service-learning throughout all stages of a project, providing students with opportunities to link theory, practice and learning in the field as a way to reinforce the learning in the classroom (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Eyster & Giles, 1999; Hartman, et al., 2014). In reviewing the journals, I sought connections between the

stated intentions of the project, as reflected in the design principles, and the teacher candidates' personal experiences. I also sought insight to the challenges and positive moments they may have experienced.

### **3.9.7 Exit interviews.**

On our final day in Ghana, I met with each teacher candidate individually for an exit interview. These interviews were provided as a debrief opportunity as well as a chance to revisit their original motivation for participating. The interviews also explored what candidates felt worked and where they felt challenged. The interviews were semi-structured (Appendix G) to ensure a consistent line of inquiry with each participant (Merriam, 1998). However, I also allowed space for students to open up other areas of discussion. The students also offered final comments about the design as part of the reflective process.

### **3.9.8 Follow-up Surveys.**

Aside from the initial surveys—the Likert scale in Survey #1 and the ranking in Survey #2—I also provided a qualitative survey to all participants once the project had ended and participants had had a chance to look back on their experiences (see Appendices H and I). The second part of the survey was composed of open-ended questions designed to probe reflection on a deeper level. These surveys were sent out approximately six months after the completion of the project, allowing the opportunity for reflection on the experience after some time had passed. All participants responded to the follow-up surveys.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

I followed Creswell's (2007), Gibbs' (2007), and Merriam's (1998) recommendations to make data collection and analysis a simultaneous process. While in the field, I reviewed my data

most evenings, creating broad categories or themes (Goffman, 1974) based on the literature, research questions, the design principles, and the lived experiences of the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe 2008; Creswell, 2007; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gibbs, 2007; Merriam, 1998). Data was analyzed in two phases. In Phase I, I analyzed the participant responses to the surveys distributed at the beginning of the project. In Phase II, I analyzed data gathered in the field and through the follow-up surveys. These two phases are discussed below.

### **3.10.1 Phase I: Analysis of Initial Survey Data.**

The intention of the surveys was to introduce the principles that had guided the project's design, and to get feedback on those principles. To analyze the data collected in these initial surveys, I used simple tallies, looking for commonalities and similarities between participants' responses to the design principles. I also compared individual participants' preferences with the qualitative data to seek overall patterns between and across participant groups.

### **3.10.2 Phase II: Analysis of the field data.**

The amount of qualitative field data gathered from the study participants (N=13) was substantial. I turned to Goffman's (1974) emergent frames and codes analysis as a way to organize and make sense of this data. Goffman identified the frame or *theme* as a way to organize the big ideas, whereas *codes* reflect common patterns within these big ideas. I initially sorted the data, both from the initial surveys and from the field observations, and follow-up surveys through the thematic framework arising from the design principles (Table 5).

**Table 6. Initial framework of themes, codes, and literature**

	<b>Principle/ Theme</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Literature</b>
1	Be of educative value to student participants	Credit ESL Practical exp. New skills Global exp. Contribution	Bamber & Pike (2013); Boyer (1996), Bringle & Hatcher (2011); Chapman (2016); Crabtree (2013), d'Arlach et al. (2009); Dewey (2004 [1916]); Dostillio et. al (2012); Hartman et. al (2012, 2015); Jagla (2016), Pillion et. al. (2009) Woolf (2008).
2	Be of contextual value to in-country partners by addressing a need otherwise unmet.	Satisfy a need Support schools Professional dev.	Bamber & Pike (2013), Chapman (2016), Crabtree (2009, 2013) d'Arlach et al. (2009); Dostillio, et. al (2012); Hartman (2015), Marullo & Edwards (2000); Mellom & Herrera (2014); Pluim & Jorgenson (2012) Tiessen (2007; 2012); Woolf (2008)
3	Not replace work that is done by in-country partners	Collaboration	Bamber & Pike (2013); Chapman (2016); Crabtree (2013) d'Arlach et. al (2009), Dostillio et. al (2012); Marullo & Edwards (2000)
4	Include a pre-departure program that reflects on current challenges and introduces historical, geographical and contemporary factors that have led to, or continue to perpetuate localized challenges	Historical Geographical Environmental Economics	Bamber & Pike (2013); Chapman (2016); Pluim & Jorgenson (2013); Slimbach (2013); Tiessen (2007; 2012).
5	Include a pre-departure program that addresses ethical considerations around the potential use and abuse of photography and social media, and that reflects on the potential for power and privilege and explores responsible ways of working.	Ethics Use of resources Photography Social media	Bynam et al., (2015); Epprecht (2004); Esteva (2010); Huesca (2013); Khan (2011); Pluim & Jorgenson (2012)
6	Include a pre-departure program that introduces student participants to the skills required for planned in-country activities	PD Digital books	Chapman (2016); Crabtree (2013); Epprecht (2004); Huish (2012); Pillion et. al (2009); Pluim & Jorgenson (2012)
7	Encourage in-country involvement in as much of the work as possible, and cede authority and control to partners wherever possible.	Reciprocity Autonomy	Bamber & Pike (2013); d'Arlach (2009), Dostillio et. al (2012); Black (2007); Esteva (2010), Hartman (2015); Hartman et. al (2012); Marullo & Edwards (2001); Mellom & Herrera (2014), Pluim & Jorgenson (2012); Schumacher (1973)
8	Be informed by the principles of sustainability	Continuity Light footprint	World Commission on Environment and Development (1987); Oxford University Press (1987); Crichton (2014a); Crichton, et al. (2014); Slimbach (2013;)
9	Be informed by the principles of appropriate technology	Local sources Transferability	Confey (2003); Crichton (2014b); Crichton & Onguko (2013); Darrow & Saxenian (1986); Schumacher (1973)
10	Be affordable to all parties	Costs	Biggs et. al (2015); Crichton et al., (2014); Paris & Biggs (2017).

**Table 7. Initial framework of themes, codes, and literature (continued)**

	<b>Principle/ Theme</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Literature</b>
11	Attend to the safety and well-being of all participants	Go Global Pre-departure immunizations	Crichton, et al. (2014); Crichton (2014b); Dupuis, Bowdon, & Schwemin (2011); UBC Safety Abroad @( <a href="https://registry.safetyabroad@ubc.ca">https://registry.safetyabroad@ubc.ca</a> )
12	Provide a structured re-entry process that allows students the opportunity for discussion and reflection on their experiences.	Reflections Recommendations	Bringle & Hatcher (2009, 2011); Dewey (1938), Eyler & Giles (1999); Dostillio et. al (2012); Hartman et. al (2012); Kolb (1983); Mellom & Herrera (2014); Stoker (2013)
13	Provide a follow-up process for in-country partners to comment	Reflection Recommendations	Bamber & Pike (2013), Black (2007); Dostillio et. al. (2012); Esteva (2010) Hartman et.al (2012); Pluim & Jorgenson (2012), Schumacher (1973) Tonkin (2011)
14	Prioritize the happiness and well-being of all participants	Moments	Crichton et al. (2014); Nussbaum (2003, 2009)

As I analyzed the data, it became clear that the teacher candidates preferred to share their experiences of working in a Ghanaian classroom, co-teaching, teaching ESL, and engaging with the community. In-country partners, meanwhile, preferred to discuss the project's impact on students' confidence in English, the potential contribution of the books to the community, and their own professional development.

Using a design-based research methodology (DBR) allowed me to respond to these emergent patterns by modifying my data collection processes and instruments (Barab & Squire, 2004; van den Akker et al., 2006). I noted and recorded both the modifications and my rationales for them in my research journal. The first modification was the cancellation of the second rating and ranking survey for in-country partners. The reason for this modification was that the participants were simply not responding to questions related to the principles, either because they were too abstract, or because they were more interested in discussing their experience. At the start of the project, I introduced the principles to participants through the rating (Appendix B) and ranking (Appendix C) survey process. My intention was to do the same exercise at the end of the project. However, given that probing participants to comment directly on the design

principles had yielded little data and even less interest, I eliminated the proposed second round of surveys, along with specific questions around the design principles. Merriam (2009) has described such a point in the research process as one where there is simply no point in probing further, be it as a result of data saturation, or as in this case, where there was no point in pushing for data that participants were reluctant, or uninterested in sharing.

The second modification was to reduce the number of focus group interviews. Although I was able to hold combined focus groups with in-country partners and teacher candidates, I had hoped to hold a separate focus group with the partners. I did not do this partially because of time constraints that resulted from rain delays, but also because I felt I had used enough of their time between our work in the schools and our request for the first group interview. The group conversations during the lunch breaks at the individual schools had also generated data. Asking for additional time for a meeting seemed intrusive and unnecessary.

In Phase II of the analysis, I explored the field data through the research questions presented earlier in this chapter. These questions differed significantly from the original questions in my research proposal (Appendix K), revealing new themes and codes. For example, viewing the data through the lens of whether or not the teacher candidates felt the project was worth doing allowed me to explore their experiences outside the more rigid framework of the design principle that a *good project be of educative value*. In the case of in-country partners, the objective of the project had been to create culturally relevant resources that could support literacy and the Ghanaian curriculum. Analysis of the data via the modified research questions revealed that the value of the project also included improving junior high school students' English skills, boosting cultural engagement with the community, and increasing professional development for teachers. Thus, Phase II analysis resulted in the collapsing of themes and codes

that were not reflected in the data, the inclusion of new ones that emerged. A consolidation of these principles is presented in Table 6, *Final themes and codes from field data*.

**Table 8. Final themes and codes from field data**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Meaningful cultural engagement	Cultural engagement
Educative value for teacher candidates	Practical and professional experience ESL experience Contextual value to in-country partners
Benefits for junior high school students	Increased proficiency in English Use of multiple skills
Connection to culture	
Professional Development – in-country partners	
Value in the pre-departure program	Teacher candidates In-country partners
Sustainability	Environmental sustainability Project sustainability
Appropriate technology	
Cultural tension	Teacher candidates' perspectives In-country partners' perspectives
Co-teaching	
Recommendations for future GSL projects	Co-teaching practice Additional ESL instruction Advanced communication Structured orientation

### 3.11 Gap Analysis

Phase II of data analysis provided a range of common themes and codes. However, one of the participants had a significantly different experience than the others, resulting in her becoming what the literature describes as an *exception* in qualitative data (Phoenix & Orr, 2017; Wells, 2014). In this study, the data represented by the exception suggested a possible a disconnect between the intentions of the GSL project as stated in the GRIP course outline and her actual experience.

I turned to Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978), who have defined this perceived mismatch as a gap between *espoused theories* (theories individuals act on that are based on a set of values they espouse) and *theories in use* (the habitual, behaviors that guide the actions individuals

actually take). Argyris and Schon have stated that as individuals, we often think our actions are grounded in our *espoused theories*, when in fact these actions are so habitual that they do not always reflect the values we espouse.

To address such a gap, people tend to adjust their actions to try and achieve a different result (single-loop learning) without actually probing and critically examining the governing values they espouse (double-loop learning). Argyris and Schon have suggested that a researcher can either choose to change strategy by employing single-loop learning, or they can probe deeper to critically examine and question their governing values (double-loop learning). In this study, I explored the data a second time to identify and explore any potential gaps between this one participant's experience, which was so different, and the stated intentions of the project as presented in the course outline. Then, using the double-loop learning approach, I critically examined this gap in relation to the espoused values that guided the GSL project. I provide a detailed discussion of this gap analysis in Chapter 5.

### **3.12 Bias**

My position in relation this research created a potential for bias, and I found it necessary to balance my tendency to feel a bit like a two-way gatekeeper. I am cognizant of the implications of situating relatively affluent students from the Global North in a *challenging context*. At the same time, I am also cognizant that the students spend a significant amount of money to go to Ghana and have a significant amount of trust that the project will be worth the expense.

My work with the NGO places me in a position of privilege, access, and unearned power due to circumstances that allow me to be situated in the Global North. Further, as co-founder of

GROW, I am able to provide support, revenue and programs. In my work, I draw on Spivak's (1988) concept of *un-learning* this privilege, recognizing that while Upper East Ghana is a challenging context, it is important to reach beyond the challenges to see the culture and the potential for partnership.

Also, as noted in my role as instructor / participant observer, both in the pilot and in the current study, I maintained a reflective journal in which I explored collected data; recorded observations; made comments; and noted my own challenges, responses, and uncertainties. This reflective process provided the space for me to make changes in the data collection and research questions to more closely reflect participants' experiences and values, rather than my research objectives. More importantly, the reflective journal was also a tool for critical reflection and self-study of my own role in the project, providing me the space to record my personal responses to issues that arose in the research, as well as the concerns and questions I had as the research unfolded. These steps represented my attempt as researcher to reflect on potential for personal bias and mitigate the potential for this bias where possible.

### **3.13 Limitations**

This case study was limited to a specific group of individuals involved in a specific GSL project in Upper East Ghana West Africa, and as is common to most case studies, this specificity makes it difficult for results to be generalized to broader populations (Flyvbjerg, 2006). However, *transferability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as discussed earlier in the chapter, is possible. Using Berg's (2007) suggestion of clear articulation of what is investigated and how it is investigated, as well as documenting methods, processes, modifications, and adaptations, can both increase the potential for transferability and lessen the potential for researcher bias.

Another limitation of this study was that it involved a small number of teacher candidates. I attempted to mitigate this limitation by including feedback from teacher candidates who had participated in the pilot, which to some extent, could provide additional opportunity for the students' perspectives. The teacher candidates in the pilot had been, like those in the current study, also enrolled in their final GRIP course. The feedback they provided from the initial pilot helped to inform the design principles. The fact that they had contributed to the principles, and also that they had a chance to reflect on the project after a year provided the potential for an informed and experienced perspective.

However, the limited number of teacher candidates in the current study was not without its advantages; in a small sample, exceptions may be more obvious than they would be in a larger group, where their potential to be noticed might be buried. As Welles (2014) has pointed out in her study of online gaming behavior among older women who have logged 10,000 hours or more, honouring the experiences of the exception is a worthy research objective in itself. In the case of this study, the small sample group did reveal an exception whose experience significantly contrasted with that of her colleagues, requiring considerable introspection, accommodation and patience in my role as researcher. As discussed in Chapter 4, this exception also revealed limitations of intentional design in ensuring a good GSL project for all participants and will be discussed in chapter 5.

### **3.14 Summary**

In this chapter, I have presented the research design I used to conduct this study and provided a rationale for my choice of case study. I provided an overview of my role and positionality as a researcher and the processes I used to recruit participants. As well, I presented

the procedures I used to collect and analyze the data and accounted for modifications in both my research questions and adaptations I made to the study both in the field and in my analysis. In the next chapter, I present the findings of the study.

## Chapter 4 Findings

In this chapter, I present findings from Phases I and II of this case study. The evidence informing the findings was obtained from a variety of data sources, as described in Chapter 3. The findings are presented in two phases and reflect the iterative nature of the data collection and analysis processes. Phase I presents the findings from the initial and follow-up surveys. Phase II presents the findings from the field data, organized in response to the first four questions that guided this study. Findings related to Questions 5 and 6 are presented as part of the discussion, while conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter 6.

The overarching question guiding this research asks: How might we understand the extent to which a set of design principles influenced the outcome of a GSL project for teacher candidates and their in-country partners when the project was situated in a *challenging context*?

The following sub questions were also raised to help answer this question:

- 1) To what extent did the participants consider the GSL project worth doing?
- 2) To what extent did the participants' intentions differ from the researcher/designer's intentions?
- 3) To what extent did the design principles appear to influence the project's outcomes?
- 4) What challenges did participants face in this GSL project?
- 5) How might the goodness of a GSL project be evaluated based on these design principles?
- 6) How might the findings of this study inform higher education policy and practice regarding designing GSL projects in challenging contexts?

In the following sections, I discuss these findings, presenting illustrative data to provide an understanding of the lived realities of the participants in this case study. While some participants provided more detailed information than others, I chose the broadest range of data that was

representative of individual participant voices. The presentation of the findings is preceded by a description of the study site and participants.

#### 4.1 Study Site

This case study is situated in a GSL project that partnered UBC teacher candidates with teachers and students in two schools in the Nabdam District, Upper East Region, Ghana, West Africa. The Upper East Region is a sub-Saharan, rural farming area that faces challenges including food insecurity and limited access to reliable electricity, Internet, health care, and education (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Ghana Map 4186 R3, February 2005** (Copyright permission, H. Postlewait, United Nations, November 18, 2019)

The Upper East Region also fits Onguko’s (2013) description of a challenging educational context where schools face environmental, social, and technical constraints...including location in a community where many school children remain out of school or formal learning, with

many consistently dropping out of school. [M]any school children work on farms during the peak seasons. (Onguko, p. 119).

In the Nabdam District, as in much of rural Ghana, school attendance can be irregular. For some students, school fees and uniform costs can mean school is economically out of reach. For others, attendance may be sporadic due to family responsibilities, and for girls, education can be cut short because of early marriage (Yakong, 2013). As in Onguko's example above, because the study location is one where subsistence farming is the main economic activity, school attendance can also be compromised when children are needed to work on the farms (Yakong, 2013).

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Nabdam School District struggles with overcrowded, under-resourced classrooms, in part the result of the significant increases in school enrolment resulting from Ghana's adoption of UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) Goals (UNESCO, 2000). This initiative has resulted in rapidly expanding enrolment in primary education, but such enrolment has occurred without a corresponding increase in resources (Ministry of Education Service, 2014). For the teacher candidates, the crowded classrooms and minimal resources faced by the local teachers were a significant contrast to their own experiences in Canadian schools. The following comment from TC3 reflects the overall perspective of the teacher candidates when they realized the challenges teachers in this district faced:

It was so interesting to see the classrooms as well. To be honest, whenever I hear[d] 'little to no resources', I still always thought there must be something. While I was searching for a piece of chalk I now understood (TC3, Journal entry, June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

## 4.2 Findings: Phase I

I distributed two introductory surveys at the start of the project as a way to introduce the design principles to the participants. *Survey #1 - Likert Survey* asked participants to rate the design principles used to develop the project, with 1 being most important and 5 being least important. The response rate for Survey #1 was N=15 of 18. For *Survey #2 – Ranking Survey*, I presented participants with a set of 14 cards, each with a design principle. I then asked participants to sort the cards in ranking order, with 1 being most important and 14 being least important. The response rate for Survey #2 was N=13 of 18.

Originally, the surveys were intended to address one of the original research questions, “To what extent did participants identify the design principles as being important to the project’s outcomes?” (Appendix K – Original research questions), but as noted previously, participants demonstrated little interest in the project’s design. Overall, findings from the initial surveys support the field data, although the information they yielded was limited.

### 4.2.1 Survey #1 - Likert scale.

In *Survey # 1 – Likert scale*, the participants rated each design principle’s importance to informing the development of a good GSL project. A significant finding from this first survey was that all participants indicated the project must be of *contextual value to in-country partners*, reflecting a pattern that would appear across all data sets. Also rated highly were the design principles related to *sustainability* and the need to *include and eventually cede authority to in-country partners*. As noted, there were two interpretations of the principle related to *sustainability*, one being *environmental* sustainability and the other *sustainability* of the project.

This ambiguity as to the meaning of sustainability suggests my definition should have been more precise. However, as my field data analysis reveals later in this chapter, both

interpretations were important to the participants. Given the emphasis participants placed on the principle related to need to *concede authority to in-country partners* (Principle 7), it is possible to infer that, in this survey, participants considered the sustainability of the project from both perspectives. Other important principles were *affordability for all participants* (although more important for teacher candidates than in-country partners), the need to *attend to safety and well-being of participants* and the need for the project to be of *educative value to student participants*.

Of the pre-departure programming, participants considered introducing the student participants to the *skills needed for in-country activities to be most important*, although *ethical* considerations were also important to in-country partners. As far as principles related to the completion of the project, the teacher candidates appeared to consider a *follow up process for in-country partners* to be more important than a *structured re-entry process* for themselves. The least important principle for all participants was pre-departure training concerning *historical, geographical and contemporary challenges that perpetuate localized challenges*, which rated the lowest. The findings from Survey #1 are presented in Table 7, *Survey #1 – Likert Scale*. The low rating of this principle suggests that in spite of recommendations from the literature which encourage comprehensive pre-departure preparation and an introduction of the systemic causes of global inequality, (Cameron, 2014; Crabtree, 2013; Pillion et al., 2009), however conversation with the student, it is difficult to really grasp these issues until one has actually been to places where this inequality exists.

**Table 9. Survey 1: Likert scale**

	<b>Design Principles: A good GSL project should:</b>	<b>TC 1</b>	<b>TC2</b>	<b>TC3</b>	<b>TC4</b>	<b>TCP1</b>	<b>TCP2</b>	<b>TCP3</b>	<b>TCP4</b>	<b>TCP5</b>	<b>ICP1</b>	<b>ICP2</b>	<b>ICP8</b>	<b>ICP9</b>
1	Be of educative value to students	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1
2	Be of contextual value to in-country partners and address a need otherwise unmet	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	Not replace work done by in-country workers	1	1	1	N/A	1	3	2	2	1	3	3	2	1
4	Pre-departure - introduces current challenges; historical, geographical, contemporary factors that perpetuate localized challenges	3	2	3	4	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	3	2
5	Pre-departure - reflects on the ethical use of photography and social media, potential for power and privilege, and explores responsible ways of working.	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	2	1
6	Pre-departure program to introduce student participants to skills required for in-country activities.	2	1	1	5	3	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
7	Encourage in-country involvement as much as possible, and cede authority and control to partners wherever possible.	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	4	1
8	Be informed by the principles of sustainability	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	N/A	2
9	Be informed by the principles of appropriate technology	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	5	N/A
10	Be affordable to all parties	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	5	1
11	Attend to the safety and well-being of all participants	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	5	2

**Table 10. Survey 1: Likert scale (continued)**

	<b>Design Principles: A good GSL project should:</b>	<b>TC 1</b>	<b>TC2</b>	<b>TC3</b>	<b>TC4</b>	<b>TCP1</b>	<b>TCP2</b>	<b>TCP3</b>	<b>TCP4</b>	<b>TCP5</b>	<b>ICP1</b>	<b>ICP2</b>	<b>ICP8</b>	<b>ICP9</b>
12	Provide a structured re-entry process that allows students opportunity for discussion/reflection	1	2	3	4	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	5	2
13	Provide a follow-up process for in-country partners	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	1	1	1	5	1
14	Be situated in the happiness and well-being of all participants	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	5	2

**Table 11. Summary-Average Likert Scale Response by group.**

Principle #	#1	#2	#3	#4	# 5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	#13	#14
TC	1.75	1.25	1 1 n/a	3	2.25	2.25	1.25	1.25	1.5	1	1.25	2.5	1.75	1.5
TCP	1	1.2	2.2	2	1.6	1.75	1.4	1.4 1 n/a	2	1.4	1.6	1.8	2	1.4
ICP	1.5	1	2.25	2.25	2.25	2	1.75	1.33	1.75	2.25	3	3	2	2.75

Key findings from Survey #1 suggest that all participants considered principle #2, that the project must be of contextual value to in-country partner the most important principle. Principles that state the project should be of educative value to participating students, some of the predeparture programming around ethics and skill preparation were also considered important. However, participants did not appear to regard the principle #3 which introduced current and historical, environmental, or geographical challenges to be least important, yet there were many discussions around these topics during the pre-departure. This may have been that in-country partners simply considered the background knowledge that these discussions provided was self-evident. For the teacher candidates who had been motivated to position their GRIP course in a way that could make a contribution, these sessions were less about being introduced to new concepts but rather discussing issues they were already aware of.

#### **4.2.2 Survey #2 – Ranking Survey.**

After the participants completed Survey #1, I distributed the cards for *Survey #2 – Ranking Survey*. Participants were asked to sort and number the cards in order of importance, with 1 being ranked as the most important principle and 14 being ranked as the least important. This ranking of the design principles revealed little discernable pattern. In many cases, participants rated a principle highly on the Likert scale (Table 9), yet ranked it considerably lower in the cards.

The difference between the rating and ranking process may have resulted from the fact that the ranking process came second, and participants may have been slightly more familiar with the design principles in ways that impacted the second activity. A second possibility was that the ranking process was more interactive, requiring consideration as to how they might organize the order of the cards.

**Table 12. Survey 2: Ranking survey**

Pr. #	A good GSL project should:	TC 1	TC2	TC3	TC4	TCP1	TCP2	TCP3	TCP4	TCP5	ICP1	ICP2	ICP8	ICP9
1	Be of educative value to students	4	2	3	7	4	2	7	6	3	6	13	2	5
2	Be of contextual value to in-country partners/address otherwise unmet	2	4	4	1	7	1	1	1	2	3	12	4	1
3	Not replace work done by in-country workers	3b	1	5	2	2	14	2	12	1	4	7	7	11
4	Pre-departure - introduces current challenges; historical, geographical, contemporary factors that perpetuate localized challenges	5	5	2b	9a	13	13	4a	9	12	1b	9	6	2
5	Pre-departure - reflects on the ethical use of photography and social media, potential for power and privilege, and explores responsible ways of working.	6	6	2c	9b	6	8	5	3	11	1a	10	1	4
6	Pre-departure program to introduce student participants to skills required for in-country activities.	7	8	2a	9c	12	7	4b	10	10	1c	1	10	3b
7	Encourage in-country involvement as much as possible, and cede authority and control to partners wherever possible.	3a	11	1	3	5	3	3	2	6	12	11	8	3a
8	Be informed by the principles of sustainability	11	13	11	4a	9	9	9	5	13	2	8	9	7
9	Be informed by the principles of appropriate technology	10	14	12	4b	14	12	12	11	14	8	5	11	8
10	Be affordable to all parties	8	12	8	6c	11	6	6	7	9	11	2	13	6
11	Attend to the safety and well-being of all participants	1a	10	7	6a	1	4	13	8	4	10	14	3	9

**Table 13. Survey 2: Ranking survey (continued)**

Pr. #	A good GSL project should:	TC 1	TC2	TC3	TC4	TCP1	TCP2	TCP3	TCP4	TCP5	ICP1	ICP2	ICP8	ICP9
12	Provide a structured re-entry process that allows students opportunity for discussion/reflection	9a	7	10	10	10	11	10	13	5	4	6	14	13
13	Provide a follow-up process for in-country partners	9b	9	6	8	8	10	11	14	8	9	4	12	10
14	Be situated in the happiness and well-being of all participants	1b	3	9	6b	3	5	9	4	7	7	3	5	12

**Table 14. Summary-Average response by group – Ranking survey**

Principle #	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	#13	#14
TC	4	2.7	2.7	5.3	5.8	6.5	4.5	9.8	10	8.5	6	9	8	4.8
TCP	4.4	2.4	6.2	10.2	6.6	8.6	3.8	9	12.2	7.8	6	9.8	10.2	5.6
ICP	6.5	5	7	4.5	4	3.8	8.5	6.5	8	8	9	9.3	8.8	6.8

## **Summary of Survey #2 - Ranking Survey.**

In *Survey #2 - Ranking Survey*, all participants appeared to consider principle #2, - the project be of contextual value to in-country partners - to be the most important principle. This ranking is similar to the results from *Survey #1 Likert Scale*. Other principles of importance were not replacing in-country workers, pre-departure programming related to skill preparation and ethical considerations, and that the project be situated in the happiness and well-being of all participants. In this survey, participants were placed less value on the need for appropriate technology or that the project be sustainable. Few participants felt ranked follow-up processes as important.

### **4.3 Follow-up surveys**

Six months after the completion of the GSL project, I distributed follow-up surveys to the participants all participants in the current study (N=13). All participants returned the surveys. *Survey #3 – Outcomes Survey, Teacher Candidates* and *Survey #4 – Follow-up Survey, In-country Partners* included both closed and open-ended questions. These surveys were analyzed in relation to following research questions:

Question 1. To what extent did the participants consider the project worth doing?

Question 5. How might the goodness of a GSL project be evaluated based on these design principles?

#### **4.3.1 Survey #3 – Outcomes Survey, Teacher Candidates.**

The outcomes survey explored the extent to which the teacher candidates' experiences in Ghana may have resulted in personal change. In Chapter 2, I discussed the potential for a global experience to promote *thick cosmopolitanism* (Cameron, 2014; Dobson, 2006) or *active empathy* (Boler, 1997), both of which suggest service-learning opportunities in challenging contexts can

lead to a greater awareness of global challenges and inspire action. In *Survey #3 – Outcomes Survey*, I explored whether or not this potential had been realized. I also explored how participating in this GRIP course had affected their futures as teachers. To respond to the questions in the survey, teacher candidates were presented with statements that described specific outcomes and asked to check all boxes that applied. I chose the check box for the teacher candidates' responses because there was also opportunity for open ended answers in the follow-up survey which provided space for comments and observations. In retrospect, a sliding scale might have provided a more nuanced understanding of the outcome of their global experience.

**Table 15. Survey 3: Outcomes Survey, Teacher Candidates**

Survey #3 – Outcomes Survey, Teacher Candidate: Check all that apply	TC1	TC2	TC3	TC4
I have a greater capacity to accept differences in others and to tolerate other peoples' actions and ideas.	x	x	x	x
I am more knowledgeable about another culture and lifestyle.	x	x	x	x
I have improved my ability to communicate with people for whom English is not their first language.	x		x	x
I have a greater ability to empathize.	x		x	
I am more flexible and open to change.	x		x	
I now understand and appreciate how much educational systems can differ across cultures.	x	x	x	x
I have a greater willingness to take on roles and tasks to which I am not accustomed.			x	x
I find myself regularly reflecting about the overseas experience and its meaning for me.	x		x	x
I see the world as more interconnected than ever before.	x	x	x	x
I have a greater sympathy for the struggles of international students and immigrants as a result of my experience.	x	x	x	x
I can see myself more objectively (i.e. I see my own day to day problems in a broader context).	x		x	x
I feel that this experience helped clarify my goals and values.	x		x	x
I see my own cultural values more clearly and understand how and why they differ from others.			x	x
I am sensitive to subtle features of my own culture that have not seen before	x		x	
I have a both a greater appreciation for Canadian culture and a clearer critical sense of its limitations and problems.	*		x	x
I appreciate Canadian efficiency but miss the different pace of life abroad.	x			x
I have deepened my understanding of diverse development approaches.	x		x	x
I have a greater awareness of how I can contribute toward sustainable international development and appropriate ways that I can support the fight against global injustice.	x	x	x	x
Comment *I struggle with this wording. I have a greater appreciation for being Canadian and a clearer critical sense of the limitations and problems of Canadian culture (TC1)				

In response to Question #1—To what extent did the participants consider the project worth doing?—the outcomes surveys suggest that teacher candidates appreciated the cultural experience and developed a greater awareness. Significantly for their roles as future teachers, all

(N=4) noted that as a result of their participation, they had developed an appreciation for education systems in challenging contexts and a greater empathy for the struggles of ESL and international students. From a global citizenship perspective, the teacher candidates indicated an increased tolerance toward others, saw the world as more interconnected than before their experience, and had developed a greater awareness of global justice. TC1, TC3, and TC4 noted an improved ability to communicate with ESL learners. They also noted they reflected regularly on the experience and saw themselves more objectively. Two teacher candidates (TC1 and TC4) noted they appreciated Canadian efficiency while they missed the pace of life overseas. This question may not have relevant for TC2 and TC3, who, at the time of the survey, were teaching overseas. TC1 and TC3 also noted they had a better ability to empathize and felt they had become more flexible to change. Overall, the results of *Survey #3 – Outcomes Survey*, suggests that the teacher candidates considered the project worth doing.

In response to Question #5—How might the goodness of a GSL project be evaluated based on these design principles? — the findings suggest the project had positively influenced their attitudes as citizens and as teachers. Based on my definition that a good GSL project should encourage reflection, empathy, and a form of “thick global citizenship” (Cameron, 2014), the data from the outcomes survey suggests the teacher candidates felt this had happened.

#### **4.3.2 Survey #4 - Follow-up Survey, In-country Partners.**

As noted in Chapter 2, poorly-designed GSL projects can negatively impact in-country partners. In response to the literature, I had designed the GSL project to:

- be inclusive of and of value to in-country partners;
- respond to an identified need;

- consider contextual challenges such as resources, sustainability, and appropriate technology;
- to be appropriate for the teacher candidates' skills.

As with the survey for the teacher candidates, the two-part follow-up survey for in-country partners was distributed six months after the project was completed (December 2015) to allow time for reflection. Participants returned the surveys in late February 2016. All in-country partners (N=9) responded to the survey. In this section, I present the responses from the closed questions; the open-ended questions are presented in Phase II of the findings.

The closed questions for *Survey #4 – Follow-up Survey, In-country Partners* were presented in a Likert scale format, with 1 being the highest rating and 5 being the lowest. The survey sought in-country partner perspectives on the following topics:

- the extent to which they felt included in the project;
- the extent to which the project addressed a need or provided a benefit to the school;
- the cultural sensitivity of the teacher candidates;
- the competency of the teacher candidates;
- the extent to which the project reflected available technology;
- the extent to which the project was sustainable;
- its contribution to the Nabdam community;
- its contribution to professional practice; and
- its potential contribution to literacy in the Nabdam District.

**Table 16. Follow-up survey, In-country Partners**

Survey #4 - Follow-up Survey In-Country Partners - Likert Scale								
Follow-up Survey In-Country Partners	ICP1	ICP2	ICP3	ICP4	ICP6	ICP7	ICP8	ICP9
To what extent did you feel included in this project?	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	5
To what extent was this project effective in addressing a need or benefit identified by your school district?	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
To what extent do you rate the teacher candidates as being culturally sensitive?	3	4	5	5	5	4	2	5
To what extent do you rate the competency of the teacher candidates?	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	5
To what extent was this project effect in reflecting available technology in your school district?	2	4	4	5	5	3	5	5
To what extent was this project effective in reflecting principles of sustainability in your district?	3	5	4	5	5	4	5	4
To what extent was this project effective in contributing to the well-being of Nabdam students?	3	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
To what extent was this project effective in contributing to your professional practice?	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4
To what extent do you feel this project can contribute to literacy in the Nabdam district?	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5

In response to Question #1—To what extent did the participants consider the project worth doing?—findings from Survey #4 suggest in-country partners found the project was worth doing. The majority (N=8) also indicated the project addressed a need identified by the school district, and that the teacher candidates were competent, although ICP5’s responses to both of these questions were neutral. Although some areas such as cultural sensitivity and appropriate technology were rated slightly lower, overall the follow-up survey indicated that for in-country partners, the GSL project was worth doing.

Findings from Question #5—How might the goodness of a GSL project be evaluated based on the design principles?—suggest that designing the project around in-country partner goals and objectives had contributed to the goodness of the project. All (N=9) in-country partners felt that they had been included in the project, that it contributed to their professional development, and that it could contribute to literacy in the Nabdam District. A majority of the in-country partners (N=8) also indicated the project contributed to the well-being of Nabdam students. Overall, the results suggest my criterion that a good GSL project should be of value to in-country partners was met.

#### **4.3.3 Summary, Phase I survey results.**

Key findings from Surveys #1 – Likert Scale and #2 Ranking survey suggest that although other principles such as sustainability, ethical preparation, and certain aspects of pre-departure programming were important to participants, the most highly rated and ranked principle for all participants was a GSL project must be of contextual value to in-country partner. Aside from this one area, there were few commonalities between these two initial surveys. In some cases participants rated a principle highly on Survey #1 Likert Scale, yet ranked it considerably lower on Survey #2.

As noted elsewhere, these initial surveys were intended to be a starting point that would provide me with a sense of which design principles participants felt were important to a good GSL project. I had intended to hold the surveys a second time and to explore ways in which participants' perspectives may have changed. However, as the GSL project progressed, and as I continued to probe the participants' responses to the design principles, it became evident that their interest lay in discussing their experiences. Attempts to foster discussion in evening conversations fell flat. In the case of in-country partners, five of the nine did not

return the surveys to me. Although I did not directly ask, one might infer participants were simply not interested in pursuing the discussion of abstract set of design principles.

In retrospect, it appears I may have distributed the surveys too early. Perhaps I may have been better off to distribute Surveys #1 and 2 later in the project, when participants had had time to become familiar with the concepts the principles represented and could have related them to their experiences.

Questions (both open ended and closed) in the follow-up surveys for teacher candidates and in-country partners provided opportunities for the participants to reflect on those experiences. Findings suggest the GSL project increased the teacher candidates' global awareness and fostered empathy for international and ESL students. Findings from *Survey #4* suggest that for in-country partners, the project was inclusive and of contextual value, that it contributed to student learning, that it advanced teacher professional development, and that it had the potential to increase literacy—all of which had been part of the original design intentions.

#### **4.4 Findings Phase II – Field Data and Follow-up Surveys, Open-Ended Questions.**

In this section, I present the major findings from the field data and open-ended survey questions, which provide answer, to research questions 1 – 4. When reporting the data, I specify the number of participant responses rather than percentages. For example, three of four teacher candidates would constitute a majority of the teacher candidates, and a majority of in-country partners would mean seven (or eight) of nine. For less than a majority, I specify the number of participant responses (i.e., “for two of the four” teacher candidates or “four of the nine in-country partners”). Although there was no field data gathered from the pilot participants, several offered comments on Survey #1 and during one of the pre-departure

meetings, which some attended to share their experience with the current teacher candidates. These comments are also included in this phase. Findings are reported in order of frequency, from highest to lowest (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

#### **4.4.1 Finding 1: The project was worth doing for teacher candidates.**

A key finding in this study was that the project was worth doing for the teacher candidates. There were three dominant themes under this finding: *the GSL project provided opportunity for meaningful engagement with another culture, the GSL project was of educative value to teacher candidates, and the GSL project was of contextual value to in-country partners.*

**Theme: Meaningful cultural engagement.** For all four teacher candidates, the opportunity to engage with the Nab't culture contributed to a good project. For example, TC1 organized several opportunities field trips with her class in order to take photographs for the books. She described one of these experiences during the exit interview:

I got to go out into the community with a group of eight students to take the background photos for the books. While on our walk, I got to see where many of them lived including meeting mothers and grandmothers. I was also offered meals throughout our journey. (TC1, Exit interview, June 30, 2015)

On another occasion, she accompanied the students to a local shrine that would be featured in the books. In the follow-up survey she commented on the privilege she associated with visiting this shrine: "I loved my hike up to Zebrakok. Those two hours showed me how important these stories are; they are their history and their culture, and I am privileged enough to get to be a part of it. Now that is special!" (TC1, Follow-up survey, December 2015). TC1 placed great value on these opportunities to engage with the community.

The findings suggest that for TC2, who struggled in many areas of the project, engagement with the Nab't culture accounted for most of her positive experiences and made "it worth [her] coming" (TC2, Exit interview, June 30, 2015). As noted elsewhere, the opportunity for to work with ICP9 on the Nab't language project was particularly gratifying for her. Although the language project was outside the GSL project's scope, partners expressed a desire to expand the Nab't text used in printed materials. TC2 created a digital alphabet resource that could be easily shared on a laptop, tablet, or computer. She points out her "most positive experience" in the GSL project resulted from this opportunity "to contribute to the Nab't language translation project" (TC2, Follow-up survey, December 2015). She also noted other positive experiences such as her relationships with the junior high school students, the process of story creation in the class, and the elder's visit to the classroom (TC2, Follow-up survey, June 30, 2015).

TC3 noted her appreciation for the importance of storytelling in the Nab't culture. In her journal, she reflected on a moment when she witnessed the power of storytelling in the community: "It was pretty beautiful and amazing. We were sitting underneath a tree with the cool wind blowing. Also, everyone started to gather around to hear the story" (TC3, Journal entry, June 25, 2015). The occasion she refers to occurred when the community adult educator read a copy of one of the books from the pilot project, complete with Nab't text, to elders in the chief's household. As the story progressed, people working nearby paused to gather around, listen, and share a moment when a traditional story in their own language was, for the first time, represented in a book. By the end of the story, a sizeable group had gathered. The laughter, clapping, and enjoyment of those listening created a lasting impression for TC3, and she returned to this moment again during at the end of the project: "I loved seeing the local

verbal stories turned into books and the effect that it had on not just the students, but the community” (TC3, Exit interview, June 30, 2015). This widespread appreciation for the books was an example of a point where, for TC3, personal connection and project objectives meshed.

For TC4, who had an interest and background in Indigenous Studies, the GSL project was an opportunity to learn with and about another culture. During the exit interview, she noted that co-creating the books with the junior high school students provided a window to learn about the Nabdam people: “I enjoyed learning about the culture and the language through the bookmaking project. I learned so much about the culture. It was an amazing experience!” (TC4, Exit interview, June 30, 2015). Working with the junior high school students to develop stories around traditional celebrations (School #1) or traditional legends (School #2) provided TC4 with an opportunity to further her interest in learning about a traditional culture.

The findings under this theme reflect one of the few occasions where all four of the teacher candidates shared similar experiences. Elsewhere in the data, a more common pattern would emerge whereby the majority of the teacher candidates (three of the four) shared similar experiences, while one Teacher Candidate would be an exception. This exceptionality will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

**Theme: The GSL Project was of educational value.** The project was designed to combine learning with practical experience, and reflects the GSL framework (Bringle & Hatcher, 2009; Butin, 2009; d’Arlach et al., 2009; Crabtree, 2008; Dewey, 1938, Eyler & Giles, 1999; Hartman et al., 2014; Woolf, 2008). On a practical level, because the project was part of a for-credit course, it contributed toward the completion of the teacher candidates’

degrees. It also provided an opportunity for them to gain practical experience. The findings suggest that for three of the four of the candidates, the opportunities for *practical and professional development* and *ESL experience* contributed to their learning.

**Practical and professional development.** TC1 noted many occasions where the GSL project contributed to her skills as a teacher. For example, in a journal entry, she indicated the extent to which the experience allowed for learning from others and learning new strategies: “This is a great experience for me as a learner and as a person. I am enjoying co-teaching, new viewpoints and strategies” (TC1, Journal entry, June 11, 2015). She also identified the following connection between the project and the course objectives: “In a lot of ways this project is an inquiry for us; into ourselves and our teaching. As learners and teachers” (TC1, Discussion sheets). For TC1, the co-teaching and reflection introduced through the project contributed to her practical and professional development.

TC3 also appreciated the opportunity for professional development. Although she initially found the language barrier challenging, her confidence in the classroom increased over time. The two journal entries below, separated by a week, demonstrate an increasing confidence as she learned to navigate language barriers and the complexity of teaching much larger classes than she had experienced in her practicum:

Today was a tougher day. I hate to start off with that but it was. When we tried to storyboard at [School #2], it didn't go as well as we had planned. The language barrier was a struggle and we were explaining something that was not simple. Our storyboarding didn't turn out but we went on trying. We tried various approaches but absolutely felt the power of numbers (TC3, Journal entry, June 12, 2015)

Today was a good day. In fact it was my favorite day so far. There wasn't anything in particular, I just left with a sense of satisfaction. After [School #2], I felt like I made a connection. There was a moment where I was teaching my students to edit and there was no accent barrier. I was simply a teacher, teaching. (TC3, Journal entry, June 19, 2015)

The first entry shares the challenges TC3 experienced in the classroom and in particular the size of the classes which in both schools exceeded 70 students, while the second shares a moment where those challenges faded, and she simply enjoyed the opportunity to teach. As for the practical skills, she noted on the discussion sheets that GSL project provided “practice in co-teaching, practice working with English language learners, [and] practice working.

TC4 spoke positively of the impact the project had on her learning. The following quotation summarizes what she saw as the value of the experience to her future as a teacher:

I would say this project has educative value. It is [a] completely new teaching environment than what would be at home. It is also a project that most of us have never done before, which adds value to our teaching practice. We get to experiment with something new in a new environment. (TC4, Discussion sheets).

In the follow-up survey, TC4 reiterated this point, stating that her participation in the GSL project “had a huge, positive impact on my professional training. I learned a new, valuable skill – that skill being how to make books” (TC4, Follow-up survey, December 2015). She also noted in the exit interview bookmaking was something she would “for sure do in her own classroom” (Exit interview, June 30, 2015).

During the professional development workshop, TC4's enthusiasm for the book project appeared to encourage the interest of the local teachers in the group she facilitated. While the majority of the teacher candidates viewed the workshop as a valuable learning opportunity, TC4's experience appeared particularly positive. The local teachers caught onto storyboarding immediately, and in a journal entry written at the end of the workshop, she reflected on her day with a sense of satisfaction:

The [professional development] day was very successful. I felt like the majority of the teachers were really engaged in the project. Once the teachers got going [on storyboarding] they worked like wildfire. I felt that they took a lot away from the project. (TC4, Journal entry, June 17, 2015)

My observations of the professional development workshop revealed that TC4 appeared to "be having a lot of fun" and her group seemed to "pick up the idea of storyboarding fastest" (Field notes, June 18).

Although three teacher candidates felt their participation in the GSL project was of educative value, this was not the case for TC2. In an early comment on the discussion sheets, she sought clarity: "Define educative value. I am not sure I'm learning the vague intent of this project. This feels more like a project than educative. Is that bad?" (TC2, Discussion sheet). I responded directly to this comment, saying, "Most service-learning is usually conducted as a project – that is the pedagogy" (Discussion sheet). I thought little more about this exchange until the project ended and I read her journal. More than one entry suggested she expected to share knowledge with Ghanaian teachers:

I'd like the value to be in working with global partners intimately as a shared knowledge trade...That's why I'd come again. I didn't come to learn to make

a book. I came looking to connect with teachers (Ghanaian or otherwise).

(TC2, Journal entry, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

TC2's apparent frustration with the project's objectives was unexpected. These objectives were discussed throughout the recruiting, application, and admission processes, and in the course outline. I felt she should have been aware that she was participating in a GSL project that provided first-hand teaching experience that would result in culturally relevant books. Storyboarding and digital publishing skills were introduced during the pre-departure programming and through readings and examples (Crichton, McAffrey, & Brown, 2011; Willems, 2004). Given the attention directed to the project's proposed objectives, TC2's frustration was surprising.

**ESL experience.** The majority of the teacher candidates considered the ESL experience they gained through the project to be beneficial. TC1 stated that she “developed confidence in teaching ESL” (TC1, Exit interview, June 30, 2015), and TC4 she felt she would be better able to support ESL learners in her classroom (TC4, Follow-up survey, December 2015). For TC3, the ESL experience was especially valuable. Shortly after the project ended, she accepted a two-year teaching position in Abu Dhabi. She had been in Abu Dhabi for four months when she completed the follow-up survey. In response to the question of whether or not participation in the GSL project contributed to her professional training, she stated, “It has right now. It taught me ESL training that I did not (could not) learn just sitting in the classroom” (TC3, Follow-up survey, December 2015). For TC3, the GSL project offered a practical introduction to teaching internationally and ESL experience, both which helped to prepare her for the next step in her teaching career.

Three of the four teacher candidates felt their global experience was an opportunity to build experience in teaching ESL, noting in the follow-up surveys that this experience built confidence that carried over to their classrooms at home. However, TC2 did not find the experience of teaching in a predominantly ESL setting to be valuable, suggesting a lack of training influenced her confidence in the classroom. She noted:

I don't feel I had enough ESL training and my teaching education had a heavy Canadian skew so it was like going back to basics... Even then I didn't feel specifically equipped to deal with the situation at hand. I don't know if I learned anything before or during, at least in terms of specific strategies I can use as a teacher now. I have ESL students in plenty, I don't think of Ghana when I need to help with their needs. (TC2, Follow-up survey, December 2015)

Unlike her colleagues, who found the transition to an ESL setting challenging at first but who appeared to gain confidence as the project got underway, TC2 did not appear have the same experience either in-country or afterwards. As the above quote suggests that her ESL experience in Ghana did not carry over to her teaching position after she returned.

When asked how the project might be improved, all four teacher candidates suggested more ESL would be helpful. For most, the issue was not so much a lack of ESL preparation in their academic program, but rather the timing of it. ESL instruction was offered earlier in the degree program, whereas the GRIP course came at the end, leaving a relatively long gap between developing ESL skills and using them in a global setting. "In future projects, maybe bring in [the ESL professor] during pre-departure for a refresher before we go, as it has been a

while for all of us,” one candidate suggested (TC1, Exit interview, June 30<sup>th</sup>). However, in spite of this time lag between the course and the project, I observed the teacher candidates in the classroom drawing on recognized ESL practices. In-country partners confirmed across all data sets that working with native English speakers had a noticeable impact on the junior high school students’ English skills. This appreciation suggests that regardless of how prepared they may have felt, as the findings from in-country partners will demonstrate later in this chapter.

One pilot participant, TCP4, also noted the ESL experience had been valuable. At the time of this study, she was teaching a rural agricultural region with a fairly large immigrant population.

The ESL experience was very valuable. I have a lot of ESL learners in my classroom and I often draw on my Ghana experience to help them. It was probably the most valuable part of the experience for me.” (TCP4, Personal communication, May 2015)

**Theme: The teacher candidates perceived the GSL project to be of contextual value to in-country partners.** Three of the four teacher candidates indicated that they felt the project to be of value to in-country partners. They especially noted the appreciation and interest the books had generated among elders, community members, and local dignitaries. The excitement demonstrated by the junior high school students after completing the books was also confirmation the project had resulted in something of value. However, for TC2, the value of the GSL project was less clear.

As discussed earlier in this section, TC1 recognized the value in-country partners placed on recording local stories and traditions during her field trips with the students. This importance was reconfirmed when the finished books were presented in the classroom on the

last day. In the following quotation, she expresses satisfaction in leaving a tangible result for the schools:

As I read the two books, I saw them nudging each other, pointing out their drawings. They were so excited about seeing their names in the back. Even the teacher was pointing out her name and showing everyone. Watching her read the books really showed me how important these books are for everyone. When we left we saw a group of students leaning against the school reading the books together. (TC1, Journal entry, June 25, 2015).

This journal entry reveals the pride and excitement of school partners. TC1 also shared her enjoyment when watching an elder tell one of the stories to the junior high school students. She noted the importance of this elder's visit when the normally noisy, busy classroom became deeply engaged with the elder's version of the story they had been struggling with: "I had never seen them so quiet" (TC1, Journal entry, June 11, 2015).

For TC3, the response when the books were present demonstrated the project's value. Initially she had struggled with intense heat, language barriers, and very crowded classrooms. These struggles were overcome as she grew more accustomed to the conditions. Her comment regarding the moment the books were presented reveals a novice teacher's journey from intense discomfort to immense satisfaction:

There have been moments where I have wondered "What am I doing?" It has been hot and challenging at times. After seeing the students listening to and reading [the books] everything was worth it. (TC3, Journal entry, June 26, 2015)

The Upper East region is a challenging context and adjustment can be difficult for some. While not much can be done to mitigate the physical challenges, it appears that for TC3,

participating in a project which contributed to the community may have helped to offset those challenges.

As noted earlier, for TC4, the book project offered an opportunity to learn about the Nab't culture. Delivering the finished books to the schools and watching the students share and read them to each other was a high point. She noted with some satisfaction in her journal that "showing the books to the students was truly a powerful moment. They were so ecstatic when they saw their finished product" (TC4, Journal entry, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015). For TC4, as for two of her colleagues, the satisfaction of the moment when the books were shared in the school indicated that they felt the project to be of value.

TC2's perception of the project's value to in-country partners was not revealed in her data. In her only entry regarding the impact of the project, she commented favorably on the work done by the high school students but did not see her role as instrumental: "I am proud for the work the kids did; it was their work, not ours" (TC2, Journal entry, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015). A careful search of the data reveals that beyond this expression of pride in the junior high school students' work, she made no other connection between the results of the book project and the appreciation of the community. This lack of connection between the book project and the value the community placed on those books is probed in Chapter 5.

**Summary:** The teacher candidates felt the GSL project had been worth doing. All four indicated that they valued the opportunity to engage with the Nabdam people. Three of the four indicated that they had gained practical and professional experience and had benefitted from teaching in a predominantly ESL setting through participating in the project. TC2 did not feel the experience had been of educative value. Her role as a consistent exception to the data in Group 1 is explored in depth in Chapter 5.

#### **4.4.2 Finding 2: The project was worth doing for in-country partners.**

As noted previously, the GSL project in this case study was intentionally designed to reflect hosts' values and objectives. In fact, the project could not have been completed without significant involvement by in-country partners. Findings revealed that for in-country partners, the GSL project was of contextual value and worth doing. The three themes under this finding suggest the project offered *benefits to student learning, connection to culture, and professional development*.

**Theme: Benefits to student learning.** All nine in-country partners suggested the project had a favorable impact on the junior high school students' learning. Although they noted a number of ways that involvement in the project advanced student learning, the examples most often mentioned in the data are discussed under the codes *increased proficiency in English, the use of multiple skills to create the books, connection to culture, and professional development*.

**Perceived increased proficiency in English.** In challenging educational contexts (Onguko, 2013) such as Upper East Ghana, where English is the language of instruction, the lack of English proficiency can be a barrier for students progressing to senior high school (Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, 2014; Rosekrans et al., 2012). At the behest of in-country partners, the GSL project was intentionally situated in Form 1 and 2 classrooms as a way to increase the junior high school students' skills in reading, speaking, and writing English prior to Form 3, which is when students take government exams required for progression to high school. Building proficiency in English at this level is thought to be a crucial step for passing those exams (ICP2, personal communication June 7, 2015).

Analysis of the focus group interviews and follow-up surveys suggests the choice to place the project in Forms 1 and 2 was appropriate. Virtually all in-country partners indicated the project had a positive outcome on junior high school students' speaking and writing in English. In a representative comment regarding the ESL learning opportunities for the high school students, ICP7 noted the students' "English improved greatly as a result of working with teachers who were fluent" (ICP7, Focus group interview #3, June 25, 2015). In the follow-up survey, she reiterated this point, suggesting the "project should not only focus on the development of one organized group, but should be extended to the entire district, [adding that to sustain the project] it should be developed locally instead of depending on donor support" (ICP7, Follow-up survey, February 2016). For ICP7, the gains in English proficiency experienced by her students were a key benefit, and her comments are reflected by other in-country partners across the data sets.

**Use of multiple skills to create the books.** Seven in-country partners noted the extent to which the project advanced student learning through the use of multiple skills. Two partners, ICP1 and ICP8, were not in the classrooms and therefore did not witness the students' work on the book project. ICP3's comment during a focus group interview reflects the overall appreciation of the way the project drew from a variety of skill sets:

So many skills for our students are used in this project. Skills of drawing, skills of English, skills of research, learning Nab't through the collecting, translating, and illustrating of the stories." (ICP3, Focus group interview, June 25, 2015).

ICP4 concurred, adding "This project provides something unusual. Usually students are spoon-fed but this is different. Enquiry. The students are learning how to do research and find answers" (ICP4, Focus group interview #2, June 25, 2015). These two comments

reflect an overall appreciation of the skills used in the book project, and the instructional strategy of inquiry used to develop those skills.

Although ICP5 did not officially host the GSL project in his classroom, as the French teacher he helped with grammar and sentence structure. Observing the way the project connected students to speakers of Nab't and English, he noticed a boost in the students' confidence, not only in English, but in their interactions with adults in the community: "This project provides students with opportunities for interaction with many people of their community with accents and with English too. It builds their confidence" (ICP5, Focus group discussion #2, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015). The statement from ICP5 suggests the project's ability to inspire students' confidence during their interactions with adults was an important contribution.

For in-country partners, the time spent with native English speakers was considered one of the most significant benefits, although developing research skills, writing, and drawing were also considered valuable. Constant engagement with Canadian teacher candidates and community members was also perceived as being beneficial to the overall confidence of the junior high school students.

**Connection to culture.** All nine in-country partners suggested the GSL project had contributed to the Nab't culture. Even teachers not originally from the Nabdam community (ICP3, ICP4, and ICP5) saw the value of connecting local culture with classroom activities as a way to develop confidence, self-direction, and research skills. ICP9's comment captured the overall perception that learning through a culturally relevant project was beneficial to the junior high school students:

Providing students with a chance to learn the stories, and right from the elders builds pride in their culture. It also gives the elders a role in this process. We should involve them when we can.” (Personal communication, June 12).

It appeared some elders readily embraced the opportunity to become involved.

During a meeting with the chief, one elder observed (translated to me by ICP8) that “we are gray-haired now. We should be involved in the story-telling” (Field notes, June 19, 2015), making it clear that he welcomed a chance to see the stories accurately recorded. On another occasion, an elder had come to the school in order to clarify one of the stories which had become confused as the various students shared various interpretations. Both examples demonstrate that for at least some elders, ICP9’s suggestion they be more involved was a welcome one.

The cultural value of the project was particularly significant for ICP1. As part of the Nab’t language committee, he regarded the books as a way to both preserve traditional stories and cultural practices and to introduce Nab’t-language text. He also felt the books could contribute to the mother-tongue literacy objectives encouraged by the Ghana Ministry of Education (Rosekrans, et al., 2012; Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, 2014) and reflect the wider UNESCO goals of Mother Tongue Literacy (UNESCO, 2007). During a focus group interview, ICP1 noted that the inclusion of Nab’t text could “contribute to local language goals that are encouraged by the Ministry of Education (ICP1, Focus group interview #1, June 19, 2015). He returned to this point again after the project was completed.

This is the beginning of studying and writing the language, and about nature studies in our own language... the project has reawakened my conscience to the need to play an advocacy role in teaching the vernacular language.” (ICP1, Follow-up survey,

February 2016).

For ICP1, the project was of contextual value because it provided an opportunity to increase resources in the schools through books that were culturally relevant and that included text in the mother tongue.

ICP8, who collaborated with the school district to initiate the GSL project, also noted the project contributed to learning and built pride in the local community. When questioned about the extent to which the project contributed to the learning and well-being of the Nabdam students, she said, “This project helps to build the image of Nabdam in terms of their cultural identity and provided improvements in teaching and learning” (ICP8, Follow-up survey, February 2016). She also noted that the project’s inclusion of cultural resources provided a way for local teachers to enhance their practice by using local content for the books. In fact, she saw this inclusion of local content as a way to ensure the “project [could be] sustainable because participants do not have to look elsewhere for resources needed for the books” (ICP8, Follow-up survey, February 2016). For ICP8, the local sourcing of stories provided innovative and relevant teaching material that at the same time, reinforced cultural identity. She considered both of these things to be significant contributions.

**Professional development.** Five in-country partners commented upon the opportunity for professional development offered during the GSL project. For ICP1, a second objective had been to provide professional development opportunities for local teachers. As a result, he sponsored and co-facilitated a professional development workshop for local high school teachers. It was his second time co-facilitating a workshop in collaboration with the GSL project (the first was during the pilot project). In the follow-up survey, he commented favourably on these experiences, stating that for him, professional learning resulted “through

the workshops every time [the project] comes” (Follow-up survey, February 2016). During the pilot project, ICP1 also joined the teacher candidates in the classroom on occasion, observing and sometimes participating in the narration of the stories when the junior high school students were struggling.

For ICP2, some of the professional development he gained occurred informally, while working with the teacher candidates. During a focus group interview, he told the teacher candidates: “How you talk with students—I have gained lots from this. Your interaction makes them relax and open up. [We] will be able to imitate this” (ICP2, Focus group interview #3, June 25, 2015). ICP6 concurred, noting that hosting the project in his classroom had “added another method of teaching skill to my lessons” (ICP6, Focus group interview #3, June 25, 2015). Observing interactions between the teacher candidates and the junior high school students offered these two candidates ideas for their own practice.

For ICP8, a faculty member at the nearby university, the professional development workshop introduced ways to encourage inquiry-based learning in her classes. She suggested her involvement in the professional development opportunities offered informed her teaching role at the university: “My skills in inquiry-based teaching and learning have been developed further with a much better understanding of how to handle my class” (ICP8, Follow-up survey, February 2016). During the course of the project, ICP8 collaborated with me to host a professional day at her university in order to provide similar opportunities for her colleagues. Five in-country partners found that participation in the GSL project contributed to their professional learning. The workshop provided opportunities for professional development, and in some cases, observing teacher candidates in their schools also contributed to their own

practices. Responses from in-country participants suggest that ICP1's objective of providing professional development opportunities for his district had been met.

**Summary.** The data suggests in-country partners found the GSL project worth doing. They noted benefits to the junior high school students' learning, confidence, and English skills. They also noted the value of situating a learning project within local cultural practices. Five of the nine in-country partners valued the opportunities for professional development associated with the GSL project.

#### **4.4.3 Finding #3 – Intentional design contributed to the GSL project's outcomes.**

As the findings above reveal, the design principles that focused on educative value to the student participants and contextual value to in-country partners were particularly important to the participants. The field data suggests other design principles were also effective. The principles that received significant comments were those dealing with the pre-departure programming, sustainability, and appropriate technology. Below, I present participant responses to these principles under the themes *value of pre-departure programming*, *need for sustainability*, and *need for appropriate technology*.

**Theme: Value of pre-departure programming.** I facilitated a pre-departure program to help mitigate the potential for unintended, negative consequences. The program

- included readings and activities for reflection;
- included discussions about ethics, cultural and professional expectations;
- photography, and social media;
- introduced contextual, geographical, and historical contexts;
- outlined potential challenges and safety protocols;

- developed the digital skills the teacher candidates would need to accomplish their work in-country; and
- introduced the context and culture of the Nabdam community, as well as basic phrases and greetings in Nab't.

The pre-departure program was based on my previous experience leading GSL projects (Bourne et al., 2016; Bourne et al., 2015) and on recommendations from the literature (see Table 3.3), and was informed by the GRIP course outline. To some extent, as illustrated by the comments below, the objectives of the pre-departure program appear to have been met.

**Teacher Candidates.** All four teacher candidates indicated the pre-departure programming prepared them, to some extent, for the GSL project. For TC1, the readings were valuable in “helping me get out of my comfort zone” (TC1, Follow-up survey, December 2015). However, in discussing a dilemma she faced regarding the appropriateness of taking pictures in the market, she also illustrated the limitations of the readings:

I would have liked to discuss this more before going. Day one when [ICP9] took us to the market, my gut reaction was to take my camera and I did. It was only when I got there that I felt how inappropriate it would be to take pictures so I did not take my camera out. (TC1, Follow-up survey, December 2015)

Although TC1 suggested she may have benefitted from further discussion, her mention of the assigned reading suggests that she made at least some connection between reading about the potential use and abuse of photography and her opportunity to take pictures in the market. It also suggests that this reading may have informed her decision-making.

TC3 valued the pre-departure to the extent that she felt there could have been additional sessions. One of her final journal entries suggests, “[I]f anything have even more [pre-departure meetings]. Helped me with everything from cultural values, language, even packing” (TC3, Journal entry, June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015). Like all the other teacher candidates, she noted the bookmaking workshop was especially valuable: “I found all of the pre-departure programming helpful, I think I got the most out of the visits from the previous participants and the book workshop” (TC3, Follow-up survey, December 2015).

Because she was enrolled in the ETEP program, TC3 was on a different schedule than the other teacher candidates. As a result, the timing of the pre-departure bookmaking workshop provided her with the opportunity to incorporate bookmaking into the final stages of her practicum placement. Introducing the book project to her own class before leaving for Ghana provided valuable experience that informed much of her technical layout and storyboarding process in-country.

For three of the four of the teacher candidates, the opportunity to meet with pilot participants during the pre-departure program was also valuable. One previous participant introduced Nab’t greetings and key phrases. Another session provided an opportunity for the pilot participants to share what the teacher candidates might expect in a Ghanaian classroom, what to pack, etc. TC4 noted that she while she found much of the pre-departure program beneficial, she particularly appreciated the bookmaking session and the two occasions to hear from the pilot participants. She wrote, “[T]he discussions about what we were to experience helped. Having past year’s participants come and talk to us about their experiences was so valuable” (TC4, Follow-up survey, December 2015). In fact, TC4 found

this to be so helpful she continued the practice by attending a pre-departure session for the next iteration of the book project.

For TC2, the benefits of the pre-departure program were mixed. In the follow-up survey, she credited the pre-departure readings and activities with supporting her as much as readings and ‘head knowledge’ can. I was already quite aware about the voluntourism concept, so I was personally aware of the idea, although I think it was key to read about. Cultural practice was also valuable and could have been more so (TC2, Follow-up survey, December 2015).

She also stated that she found the “bookmaking, Nab’t greetings and photography session most useful” (TC2, Exit interview, June 30, 2015). However, findings suggest these pre-departure activities did not necessarily provide confidence in the Ghanaian classroom. Two of her journal entries from the first few days of the project reveal an uncertainty that remained consistent throughout:

Were we prepared enough for the activities of in-country? I feel without a skeleton to refer to I’m floundering in ideas with nothing substantial! Maybe that’s how it should be but I’m not comfortable. I struggle with no clear, solid direction (TC2, Journal entry, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

Two days later, in her journal, she continued to note this lack of direction:

While it is hard to plan in advance when we have no idea what we are doing, I’m struggling without a skeleton. An exemplar: someone saying we are bookmaking is more forest and I suffer for trees. Is this sustainable? How do we know? Will the books fly when we leave? (TC2, Journal entry, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

Even TC2's final journal entry suggests she never achieved the sense of progress and satisfaction that her colleagues had. She noted, "I love kids, I love the opportunity but it feels empty if there is not a heart to beat in the body of this project" (TC2, Journal, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015). Unlike her colleagues, TC2, indicated the pre-departure preparation was helpful, but key journal entries reveal this preparation did not grant her confidence in the classroom.

**Pilot participants.** Given that many aspects of the pre-departure program had also been offered to pilot project participants, space was provided in *Survey #1 – Likert Scale* for their comments on the design principles or any other aspect of their experience in the pilot project. Reflections from participants on the pre-departure programming included, "The most important piece of the pre-departure program was the ethical and cultural considerations to pay attention to while in-country. The second most important was the training for the projects we were leading" (TCP4, *Survey # 1, Likert Scale*). TCP5 noted that she felt the pre-departure program was "helpful," also suggesting, "Having more pre-departure training would be helpful too" (TCP5, *Survey #1, Likert Scale*).

**In-country partners.** Although in-country partners were not directly involved in the pre-departure program, four had been involved in the pilot GSL project. Their recommendations from the pilot project were integrated into the current study's pre-departure programming. These recommendations included Nab't language preparation, introduction to cultural considerations in a Ghanaian classroom, appropriate dress, and a discussion of the challenges that can undermine student learning in the Nabdam school district.

In-country partners' comments reflected positively on the professionalism and competency of the teacher candidates. Five of the nine in-country partners commented

favorably on their work in the schools, in the professional development workshops, and in meeting the goals of the project. One comment from ICP9 at the end of focus group interview #3 sums up the in-country partner view of the teacher candidates' abilities: "I am always amazed at how much you and your team accomplish in the time they are here. Although the final book did not get printed properly, they were still able to share it with the schools" (ICP9, Personal communication, June 25, 2015).

ICP3, who had been in the project both during the pilot and the research study, spoke for the majority of in-country partners when he noted during the focus group interview, "It is a good exchange; we would like it to continue" (ICP3, Focus group interview #3, June 25, 2015). As noted earlier, for ICP2, the teacher candidates' engagement with the junior high school was something for his staff to emulate, and he suggested that they "should be more encouraged to share their good practices" (Follow-up survey, February 2017).

Although there can be risks associated with placing students in projects that are situated in challenging contexts (Epprecht, 2004; Huish, 2014; Tiessen, 2012), the pre-departure programming appeared to contribute to the success of the project's outcomes. While candidates faced challenges in terms of cultural tensions and co-teaching relationships, both of which will be discussed later in this chapter, neither appeared to interfere with their professionalism in the classroom.

**Sustainability.** The findings reveal two interpretations regarding the sustainability of the GSL project. The first interpretation relates to the Brundtland Commission's (1987) definition that "sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (p. 43). This is discussed in the findings under the code *environmental sustainability*. The second

interpretation of the term sustainability relates to the ability of the project to sustain itself over time and is discussed under the code *project sustainability*.

**Environmental sustainability.** All teacher candidates (N=4) discussed the environmental footprint resulting from the transportation needs associated with the GSL project. Flights to Ghana, flights within Ghana, and taxis to the schools resulted in a significant carbon footprint. One candidate noted during an evening discussion that “by travelling here alone, we are not adhering to the principle of sustainability. Coming back year after year is also not sustainable” (TC1, Personal communication, June 13, 2015). Later that evening I placed her comment on a sticky note on the discussion sheet representing the principle of sustainability. The sticky note drew a further response from TC4 that in order to be really sustainable, the project “needs to be able to be passed over to in-country partners as soon as possible” (TC4, Discussion sheets).

The teacher candidates also expressed concern about the amount of garbage they generated throughout their stay. Seeing the amount of garbage rise as a direct result of their presence was an uncomfortable reality. “I hate the garbage we are creating just being here” (TC4, field notes, June 14, 2015). In keeping with this theme, another teacher candidate inquired on the flip-chart discussion sheet, “How can we deal with our garbage and recycling” (TC2, Discussion sheets), generating the recommendation for “greater discussions before leaving on how to be sustainable (with water, food, energy) while in-country” (TC4, Discussion sheets).

Although the issues of resource use and minimizing garbage *were* covered during the pre-departure, it was only once they arrived in-country that the teacher candidates became fully aware of their impact in terms of waste production. The fact of being in a place where

everything one would normally throw in a recycling bin at home simply accumulated or was burned in the mornings was a revelation. As a result, waste and consumption were common topics of discussion throughout the GSL project.

The candidates made an effort to minimize their footprint. In spite of TC4's suggestion that they needed more pre-departure discussion on the topic, the readings and discussions appeared to be influential. I observed this "careful use of the air-conditioning and an effort to minimize their use of water" almost from the start of the project (Field notes, June 13, 2015). Throughout their time in Ghana, the candidates tried to limit their use of resources. Part of their effort may be due to the fact that when we arrived at our accommodation, both air conditioning and showers were unavailable due to a wide power outage for the first 24 hours. This lack of resources at the start of the project underscored the reality of limited access to electricity and drove home the need to be careful with power and water use. Whether because of pre-departure readings or the lived reality of the *challenging context*, or both, the teacher candidates tried to be respectful and responsible.

The theme of sustainability did lead three of the teacher candidates (TC1, TC3, and TC4) to note that as a direct result of their participation in the project, they would be more mindful of their own environmental impact when they returned home. After their visit to the slave castles, which occurred near the end of the trip, the group had a lively discussion about the waste associated with over-consumption. This discussion took place within the larger picture of how consumptive lifestyles fit into current forms of slavery and oppression (a topic raised during their tours of the slave castles). This conversation provoked considerable introspection from three of the teacher candidates, raising questions about their own practices. TC1's journal included comments on these issues:

As much as I feel guilt about the slavery, it is in the past and I really need to focus on the present and the future. There are many forms of slavery and genocide going on in the world right now...I do not feel like a good global citizen, I actually feel quite ignorant. My first steps will be trying limit/decrease/eliminate as much to possible the non-fair-trade goods in my life...I am already asking myself “[D]o I really need this?” (TC1, Journal entry, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015)

TC1’s comment links personal consumption, environmental degradation, and persistent global inequality, reflecting Cameron (2014) and Dobson’s (2006) concepts of “thick cosmopolitanism, or thick global citizenship,” and Boler’s (1997) concept of active empathy. These reflections suggest a genuine desire to mitigate, through change of habits at home, the environmental and global challenges that she witnessed in Ghana.

**Sustainability of the project.** All teacher candidates felt the long-term sustainability of the project was desirable and expressed hope that the project could eventually be sustained in-country. A discussion that took place on the flip-chart sheets pointed out that in-country partner ownership was key to the project’s continuity. “The project has to be transferable; the training of in-country teachers is paramount to handing off this project,” TC4 said. Her colleague agreed. “Absolutely, I think the training should be the majority of the reason we are here, assisting teachers in the class as they work through the process for the first time” (TC2). Although transferring the project to in-country partners would ultimately end the GSL opportunity in that setting, for the initiative to be truly sustainable, it would be desirable for in-country partners to assume responsibility for its continuation. While teacher candidates could always participate in future projects in other locations, having in-country teachers eventually guide the project objectives and outcomes is

a recommended goal in the literature and in the project design (Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Slimbach, 2013).

Six of the nine in-country participants also commented on sustainability, although the interpretation of sustainability differed depending on the individual. Four in-country partners suggested that the sustainability of the GSL project relied on involving the wider Nabdam community, a point that had been raised earlier by ICP7. This point was also raised in ICP2's comment in the follow-up survey: "The district assembly should be deeply involved in this project; parents should be equally involved to give their children the support needed" (ICP2, Follow-up survey, February 2016). ICP9 suggested that "this program could be done more than once a year. Some people could be sampled to lead the project" (ICP9, Follow-up survey, February 2016).

Four of the in-country partners stated the potential linguistic and cultural contributions of the project were worth sustaining, but that this sustainability should entail spreading the project to the wider community and including additional schools. For some in-country partners, sustaining the project meant expanding it, both to the wider community and to the schools; for others, sustainability meant leadership by local community members and teachers, which would not entail a need to rely on teacher candidates.

Two in-country partners indicated that sustainability depended on building the project into the schools' planning strategies. ICP6, who had hosted the GSL project in his English classes, suggested, "The project can be sustained by encouraging head teachers and teachers to add the program to their yearly action plans" (ICP6, Follow-up survey, February 2016). ICP3 noted that sustainability should also include planning ahead: "Now we know we need to design a time frame for our teachers, then you can just enter" (ICP3, Focus group

discussion #2, June 25, 2015). For these two participants, planning for and embedding the project into teaching plans would contribute to its sustainability.

The majority of in-country partner comments around sustainability focused on the continuity of the project and paid little attention to environmental impact. However, one in-country partner suggested in the follow-up survey that the contextual, local content included in the books could lead to a greater appreciation for the environment. “Naturally the project seeks to bring us close to nature so that pupils will recognize the value of improving on our environment, e.g. recycling waste for use” (ICP1, Follow-up survey, February 2016). For this participant, appreciating the Nabdram district and culture included recognizing its environmental challenges.

**Appropriate technology.** A final principle that generated discussion among participants was the importance of appropriate technology. The idea of making digital books that would be printed on laptops brought from Canada may in some ways appear to conflict with the design principle that a good GSL reflect the principles of appropriate technology—meaning that the project should consider the potential constraints of local, available technology (Crichton, 2014; Crichton & Onguko, 2013; Darrow & Saxenian, 1986; Schumacher, 1973). The main constraint was that neither schools nor most teachers had access to computers. However, several of the school district personnel and NGO partners did. I was aware through previous projects and visits to Ghana that there was technology available to store completed books for continued printing. The books were created using PowerPoint™, which is available on most computers. This use of a ubiquitous program over a more complex, proprietary digital publishing option was selected to increase the likelihood that in-country partners could ultimately download the books onto local computers,

including those in local print shops. The relative familiarity of PowerPoint™ would also allow teachers and local print shops to use the original books as templates for future projects.

However, even when using a relatively appropriate technology, the project still faced technological challenges in the country. Lack of reliable access to power meant that a laptop might go days on end without being charged. Printing could be a challenge because of poor equipment. For this GSL project, making the books on laptops brought from Canada was possible because the teacher candidates were housed in a guesthouse in a nearby town. Although the guesthouse did experience power outages, it had fairly reliable power sources compared to the schools in the region.

Despite the advantages of PowerPoint™ and the fact that there was technology available to store the digital copies, most of the teacher candidates still questioned the use of laptops. TC2 raised the question of who defined the appropriateness of the technology we used: “What is our measure of appropriate? Do in or out of country partners decide? Could they do everything with a smart phone and process elsewhere?” (TC2, Discussion sheets). Another candidate questioned the whole concept of appropriate technology in relation to the project’s overall sustainability:

How appropriate is the project if the schools don’t have computers? Or teachers do not know how to use the programs? It makes it almost impossible to hand this project off to in-country partners if they cannot access a computer or know how to use the programs. This leads to questions of sustainability (TC4, Discussion sheets).

Although particular care was taken to ensure that the books could be readily downloaded, saved, and printed in any local print shop, the majority of the teacher candidates did not think that ease of printing adequately addressed the wider issues of available technology in the school district.

The issue of appropriate technology was also raised by one of the pilot project teacher candidates, who noted:

[I]t made me a little sad to think that we did this great book project with them, but they themselves don't have the technology or resources to produce anything like that themselves. I know when I go to a pro-d day that sounds out of my reach I get a little frustrated (TCP3, Survey #1- Likert Scale).

I specifically chose PowerPoint™ because it appeared to be a simple way to design print ready books. The teacher candidates, familiar with schools where technology is widely available, perceived the lack of computers as a barrier to the project's sustainability.

In-country partners also commented on the technological constraints. Four partners suggested that tablets, rather than laptops, might be a more appropriate way to create books. Tablets were mentioned because they require less power and are less susceptible to dust and moisture, both of which are challenges with laptops. More importantly, tablets are more commonly available to teachers, increasing the potential for the project to be sustainable. The following comment by ICP8 comment reflects the preference for tablets. "It would be helpful to provide tablets to facilitate learning and the production of the books. This would help build capacity which is sustainable" (ICP8, Follow-up survey, February 2016). Others also noted that tablets would contribute to the sustainability of the project. For ICP3, who used one in his work, creating the books on a

tablet would make the process simpler: “I think tablets are highly recommended which will be able to promote the smooth process of the project” (ICP3, Follow-up survey, February 2016).

There were other technological challenges. Rolling power outages that occurred on an almost daily basis made it difficult to get a print copy to the schools by the end of the project. Four books were completed during this project, but only two were printed in time; the others had to be presented on a laptop. TC1’s comment on the follow-up survey captured the teacher candidates’ frustration with using a laptop to present the finished books. “I wish we didn’t bring the computers in, on the last day. It was unavoidable, but it rubbed me the wrong way. We all knew it was wrong, but we had no other option” (TC1, Follow-up survey, December 2015). Not using a laptop would have meant the final drafts of the books would not have been shared with the junior high school students. However, presenting the books on the laptop highlighted the tremendous gap between the teacher candidates’ access to technology and that of their hosts.

**Summary.** Findings suggest that a number of the design principles that underpinned this GSL project did positively influence the project’s outcomes. As the data revealed in Finding #1, the project was of educative value to three of the four teacher candidates, and the project was of contextual value to all in-country partners. Other principles that influenced the GSL project’s outcomes were those underpinning the pre-departure program, which, for three of the four teacher candidates, provided a foundation of information and skills on which to draw when they were in-country. Although the pre-departure could not cover everything, the majority of the teacher candidates identified it as helpful. Pre-departure programming also promoted understanding of the contextual

challenges of the study site and helped teacher candidates understand its limitations, and the need to adjust to challenges such as the relative lack of resources. For in-country partners, pre-departure programming led to a perception that the teacher candidates were well prepared. When in-country, the candidates appeared to be well aware of the need to be sustainable and conscious of their use of resources. However, in spite of efforts to use appropriate technology, the teacher candidates did question the choice of laptops to make the books.

#### **4.4.4 Finding #4: Challenges the design principles did not address.**

While there were indications that the design principles were to some extent effective, the data also revealed challenges that intentional project design did not account for. The key challenges were *cultural tension*, *co-teaching*, and a *lack of communication*.

**Cultural tension.** Cultural discomfort is part of any global experience, but it can also be part of the attraction (Mellom & Herrera, 2014). Although pre-departure programming discussed common challenges other students had experienced and provided some solutions to deal with those challenges, it was difficult to prepare students much in advance. As Molinsky (2013) has pointed out:

[L]earning about cultural differences is not enough. What the books don't tell you is learning about differences across culture is only a first step. It's not only the difference that most people need to understand to be effective in foreign cultural interactions; it's global dexterity, the ability to adapt or shift behavior in light of these cultural differences (paragraph 4).

Molinsky's observation that learning about cultural differences is not quite the same as experiencing them is reinforced by findings in this study. Participants needed more than

information about cultural differences that they would face, and they needed strategies to adjust to those differences.

**Cultural tensions - teacher candidates' perspectives.** Three of the four teacher candidates found the flirting and repeated marriage proposals that occurred wherever they went somewhat embarrassing, but especially so when those things occurred in professional settings. One candidate's comment on the discussion sheets reflects their overall discomfort about these marriage proposals:

Our work is professional, therefore we should be viewed and treated as professionals. It undermines the work we are doing here when local officials do not respect us as professionals, whether it is undermining us or asking us about our husbands. (TC3, Discussion sheets).

The above comment generated a number of responses from two of her colleagues who agreed professionalism needed to be mutual. TC4 reflected on her frustration when opportunities for conversations about the day in the classroom descended into flirting:

The teachers need to be discussing with us after each lesson, about the project. Essentially a debrief with in-country colleagues. Rather than asking if we are Japanese, or married! Not acceptable in my opinion. I would prefer to debrief the class and the project process. (TC4, Discussion sheet)

For TC4, discussion times in-country teachers were meant to focus on the project in the classroom or to share ideas. In-country partners on the other hand, apparently perceived these discussion times as social opportunities. This disconnect between participants' expectations of one another suggests a need for a more intentional orientation for in-country partners, identifying a gap in the project's design that is taken up in Chapter 6.

I brought the teacher candidates' concerns to the attention of ICP9 one evening, inviting him to share his thoughts and recommendations. He explained that for the most part, the flirting and marriage proposals were intended as flattery. While he sympathized with the candidates' frustrations around the teasing in professional settings, he noted it was not considered unusual and he offered strategies to help them shrug off the comments and flirting. Two entries from TC2's journal, written one day apart, demonstrate the struggle the teacher candidates' had in reconciling ICP9's discussion with everyday practice:

Having history on why men propose and what it means is much more effective than "men do that in Ghana, get over it." Everything comes with a history. For sure what makes it worse is the grumbling of colleagues and their culture shock manifested as outrage. That's the hardest to deal with (TC2, Journal entry, June 18, 2015).

TC2's perception that the frustration of her colleagues was simply a form of culture shock was challenged once she returned to the classroom the next day:

If we need to take pre-departure cultural sensitivity, why don't our in-country partners? In one school I am treated respectfully, working with a bright woman. In the other, they propose and can't explain why a boyfriend is not enough (TC2, Journal Entry, June 19, 2015).

This comment reveals the extent to which the marriage proposals and flirting in a professional situation discomfited the teacher candidates, even when armed with ICP9's explanations and strategies. While they eventually learned to shrug off incidents of flirting in public settings, the occurrence of marriage proposals in professional settings remained a source of irritation for TC2, TC3 and TC4.

For TC1, the marriage proposals were less of a concern. During discussions in the evenings or on the discussion sheets, she made little mention of the issue. When I commented on this during the exit interview, she replied that “mostly, I think of it as just a form of flattery” (TC1, exit interview, June 30, 2015). Part of her relaxed attitude may have come via an interaction with the junior high school students who accompanied her on a hike one afternoon. A journal entry provides insight into that experience:

Along our way we passed through a group of eight men...I greeted them “toma” [hello] and they spoke back. One of the girls with me translated, saying “Madam, they want you to pick one of them as a husband.” I told them I already have one at home and the children laughed, saying “Madam, not for real. It is just for fun.” Hearing it from the students made me feel a lot more relaxed about the proposals. I even replied, “Maybe I’ll pick one on our way back.” (TC1, Journal entry, June 18, 2015).

As noted earlier in the findings, TC1 seldom missed a chance to engage with the culture throughout the project. The above journal entry suggests this engagement with, and appreciation for, the local community was helpful when navigating uncomfortable moments and cultural differences.

**Cultural tensions - In-country partner perspectives.** The challenges teacher candidates faced in navigating intense heat and the demands of a time-sensitive project, all while getting their bearings in an unfamiliar culture, were understandable. To some extent, in-country partners sympathized with these struggles.

How do we even start to address big cultural differences? Culture you enter.

You are going to be stressed out if you are a newcomer ... [but] part of the

educative value of a project like this is the culture. They need to ask questions and not give in to feelings of anxiety. (ICP8, Focus group interview #1, June 19, 2015).

A colleague agreed, commenting, “When you enter a culture, you must adjust to it; it will not adjust to you” (ICP1, Focus group interview #1, June 19<sup>th</sup>). Yet despite their position that the teacher candidates ought to be prepared to make cultural adjustments, seven of the nine in-country partners also recognized the need for mutual adaptation and respect, which supports Molinsky’s (2013) suggestion of a need to develop global dexterity. Four of the nine suggested that a more formal, structured orientation would be helpful. That belief was captured in the comment, “It is important to plan a good orientation before you come to discuss the issues raised this year, right at the beginning of the project” (ICP9, Focus group interview #1, June 19, 2015). Although an orientation had been provided, ICP2 agreed that this programming could be increased, suggesting that visiting students should “always be given a cultural or acculturation talk before visiting Ghana and upon arrival. It should be done first thing” (ICP2, Focus group interview #1, June 19, 2015).

Another suggestion was “to learn about our culture in common with local people” (ICP6, Follow-up survey, February 2016). In this case, ICP6 was suggesting the teacher candidates would benefit from engaging in common local activities as a way to break down barriers. This approach had been, albeit unconsciously, embraced by TC1, who consistently sought out opportunities to interact with the community and learn the stories alongside the host teacher and the junior high school students.

ICP8 noted that although preparation and a structured orientation could be helpful, efforts should ideally extend beyond pre-departure programming and orientation to include a

more formal approach that might encourage students to raise questions about their own culture.

I almost think you need a course where students can develop these skills, critique their own culture you know? Yes, they need to know how to make books but critiquing their own culture can prepare them for here and help them avoid comparison because they miss the real experience. Part of the fun is the culture (ICP8, Focus group interview #1, June 19, 2015).

The point that part of the fun is the culture was reinforced in the data, which revealed that in spite of tensions, the cultural engagement the GSL project provided was one of the most valuable parts of the experience for all four teacher candidates.

Two in-country partners suggested opportunities to exchange cultural practices would also be helpful in smoothing cultural differences. ICP2's suggestion that "we should know about your cultural practices in relation to what you come to learn from us" (ICP2, Focus group interview #2, June 25, 2015) reflected a desire for more opportunities to learn from and about each other. In-country partners also noted that although they could help visiting students navigate cultural challenges to some extent, ultimately it was up to the students to adjust to working in their culture, rather than the other way around.

It should be noted that although the in-country teachers welcomed the project into their classrooms and identified areas where the project benefitted their students, the decision to position the book project in their school was made at the district level. Although time constraints may have limited the number of occasions where teacher candidates and in-country partners could discuss expectations, the findings suggest that more attention should have been paid to meeting and planning, prior to starting in the classroom. The data reflects

the degree to which the school administrators did not consult much with the teachers once they had invited the project to their district.

**Co-teaching for Teacher Candidates.** When in the classroom, the teacher candidates worked in pairs. After some discussion around partnerships for the teaching experience, I decided to pair each candidate with someone other than their roommate, thereby providing them with opportunities to engage with each other in various settings. For the professional development workshop, the roommates planned and co-presented a session. This arrangement of partnerships ensured each of the teacher candidates had at least one opportunity to work with each of her colleagues (see Table 13, *Teaching partnerships*).

**Table 17. Teaching Partnerships**

<b>Roommate</b>	<b>School #1</b>	<b>School #2</b>
TC1 & TC4 Pro-D workshop	TC1 & TC2 Co-teaching	TC1 & TC3 Co-teaching
TC2 & TC3 PD workshop	TC3 & TC4 Co-teaching	TC1 & TC3 Co-teaching.

For the first few days in the classroom, my role was to be a participant observer and facilitator, supporting with the teacher candidates and the in-country teachers who were hosting the project. However, once the project was underway, I left the teacher candidates on their own, checking in periodically rather than being a constant presence in the classroom. During previous GSL projects (Bourne et al., 2016; Bourne et al., 2015), I had learned my presence in the classroom as an observer could become a distraction.

My absence from the classroom may have been a mistake. The findings reveal the co-teaching relationships among the teacher candidates that I had anticipated would develop ultimately failed to materialize. Three of the four candidates stated they found co-teaching a

significant challenge. It was a challenge that resulted in tensions in two partnerships which, although not obvious during much of project, became a serious issue toward its end.

For TC2, tension appeared to exist almost from the outset. Two reflections from her journal reveal an early discomfort with her colleagues. The first was a journal entry written on the first day in the study setting, following three days of travel to get there. The project had not yet gotten underway in the schools, although the protocol meetings with gatekeepers at the school district and community district level had been completed. TC2 noted she was “feeling a lack of group community. Need more team-building. There is a lot of leadership potential and instead of being negotiated, it is quietly fought for” (TC2, Journal entry, June 8, 2015). This comment was somewhat surprising, given that the project had not yet started and most of our activities consisted of meeting host teachers and dignitaries and arranging logistics with ICP 9; there had been little opportunity to establish leadership potential. Two days later, she added the following comment in her journal:

Today I experienced various struggles. I am at the inconvenient place where no-one will wait to listen to me yet no one tolerates my interruptions. Besides calling out such behavior openly, I don't know how to foster deep listening with a group of unknowns (TC2, Journal entry, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

Curious to see if this tension had been mutual, I compared the journal entry with those of the other teaching partners regarding the same day's experience. Below are the two journal entries that suggest that the tensions experienced by TC2 were not shared by her colleagues:

Today we focused on community building. I am paired up with [TC2] and with us both taking middle methods, we meshed really well. We played a game where

they group up with similarities. At first the students were really quiet, but they fed off my energy. This project is going to be so much fun. I am so pumped! (TC1, Journal entry, June 10, 2015).

The students worked really well. We started to brainstorm ideas about funerals and marriages. We also played a fun community building game that I feel the students loved. When we got back to the [guest house] we went out as a group of four to get fruit and fabric (TC4, Journal entry, June 10, 2015).

My field notes from the same day reflect on this moment when the teacher candidates went to the market. I had not only noted that they seemed to adjust to the large classes in the schools, but that they were getting comfortable with going to the market and “the group seemed to be bonding” (Field notes, June 10, 2015).

This camaraderie was short lived. The next day TC4 noted she felt she was being forced to take charge of the class over her partner (TC2), noting that while it was good experience, “It would be nice if my partner stepped up a little more. If there is not a change by the next class, I will say something. I don’t think I should be heading the class (TC4, Journal entry, June 11, 2015).

The issue of being left in control of the class came up again the following day. This time, TC1 and TC2 were paired up at School #2. It was a busy day in the classroom because there were corrections to one of the stories that had to be made when an elder joined the class to provide clarity by telling the story to the students in Nab’t. TC1 found herself left on her own to make these changes:

I looked up and I was all alone. I was physically trapped in the back corner, surrounded by very passionate, excited students. I loved it, but it was

overwhelming and I was frustrated that I was the one writing it. That is not how it is supposed to be. Then I look up to see my teaching partner has finally returned (after 10 minutes) [parentheses in the original] with a baby! She just plays with it and doesn't try to help at all. Then she starts distracting the female students by having them show her how to wrap the baby on her back. Maybe I am reading too much into this but today I did not have a teaching partner, I was abandoned. I hope I am strong enough to leave my frustrations on this page and move on, not let it affect our future lessons (TC1, Journal entry, June 12, 2015).

I compared this comment with TC2's entry from the same day (one of only two journal references to her actual teaching experience in Ghana) which revealed a different perspective. "A challenging day in the teaching world. Lots of hands at School #2, very few at School #1" (TC2, Journal entry, June 12, 2015). What TC2 perceived to be a "lot of hands" was to TC1, a feeling of being overwhelmed and alone with a large group of students. During the exit interview, TC1 reflected on this moment, stating that for her, the most challenging aspect of the project, was "working with someone who wasn't engaged" (TC1, Exit interview, June 30, 2015). Despite their common experience in the secondary teaching program (STEP) TC1, TC2, and TC4 appeared to struggle with co-teaching in the classroom.

In contrast, TC3 did not appear to have co-teaching challenges with her colleagues. Unlike the one-year STEP program, the elementary program (ETEP) has two academic years, a fact she suggested allows for more emphasis on co-teaching. In the follow-up survey, she noted:

ETEP spends two years and countless projects involving co-teaching, whereas

STEP does not. Co-teaching is never easy, but it definitely builds skills like being open to others' opinions and integrating yours (TC3, Follow-up survey, December, 2015).

TC3's observation is notable because she had been paired up with TC1 and TC2 in the alternate partnerships when they were not working with TC2.

**Lack of in-country partner engagement.** The Ghana GSL project returned to the original pilot school (School #1) and was introduced in a second school (School #2). Based on the model established in the pilot study, the teacher candidates worked with junior high school students and in-country English teachers to record, storyboard, and digitally publish local stories and traditional practices. On the first day, during the introduction of the project into both of the schools, I explained that the GSL project's objectives were to provide practical teaching experience for the teacher candidates, and to leave behind print-ready, culturally relevant resources that could be published locally.

In spite of these initial discussions, it appears I did not make the collaborative nature of the project clear enough. For the first few days, there appeared to be a lack of willingness on the part of in-country partners to participate in the classroom, particularly at School #2. There were numerous comments from the teacher candidates that suggested a lack of participation on the part of the host teachers. In one example, TC4 generated the following conversation with a comment on the discussion sheet: "I think we need to be very clear that in-country teachers are our partners. They need to be there with us in the classroom (TC4, Discussion sheet). TC2 responded, "Agreed, the project objectives need to be driven by our partners' desire for new ideas as much as UBC/our desire to participate"

(TC2, Discussion sheet). TC3 also responded, “in-country partners need to be equal partners” (TC3, Discussion sheet).

This exchange suggests the teacher candidates perceived the local teachers’ limited involvement in the classroom as a lack of interest. In her journal, TC2 reflected on this perceived apathy through a post-colonial framework:

Is (School #2) slow to take on what is professed to be a good idea? (We believe they aren’t lying) [*parentheses in original*]. Or are they reluctant. As a cultural outsider how can I ever know? It’s impossible to untangle the colonial past from the present apologies. Is our white help a reminder of old wounds or a sign of new partnership? We wish to move on – truly, positively, realistically – to give them their own feet...How we do this misses a key principal [sic] seen in Nursing, and Science: Watch one, do one, teach one. We the teacher candidates are doing the books but we have not followed through in assuring the teachers we want them to carry our idea. They are merely spectators – we steal their thunder once again as white intruders. What if we taught the teachers this skill and implanted it with feedback and mentoring...I think this is the gaping hole in this project. The kids get it and love it, so do admin, but there is no buy-in amongst teachers (TC2, Journal entry, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015).

When I discussed these concerns with the headmasters, they explained that what appeared to be a lack of engagement on the part of local teachers was simply that they “did not want to get in the way or interfere with [the teacher candidates] in the classroom” (ICP2, Personal communication, June 12, 2015). His observation reinforces the importance of establishing an in-country orientation.

Shortly after this conversation, collaboration in the classroom improved. TC1 noted that “once the teachers at School #2 knew we wanted them in the classroom they became super energetic and involved, asking for clarification” (TC1, Journal entry, June 19, 2015). The professional development workshop also helped because it introduced the book project to 40 teachers from the district, a group which included the host teachers from the two participating schools. The combined effect of more clarification from the headmasters and the professional development workshop eased the tension to the extent that TC1 commented, “I wish we had done the pro-d day sooner” (TC1, Journal entry, June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015). By the time we were halfway through the project, comments regarding lack of teacher involvement in the book project had all but disappeared from the conversation.

The data suggests the teacher candidates had assumed they would have a more interactive and collaborative relationship in-country partners than they did. This expectation may have been due to the fact the course outline implied more collaboration with in-country partners than what had initially occurred, although collaboration became more established as the project progressed. Alternatively, the expectation of more interaction with in-country partners in the classroom could also be linked to having just completed a recent practicum experience where they were fully supported by a mentor with whom they discussed curriculum and teaching strategies (Berson & Breault, 2000; Clement, Enz, & Pawlas, 2000). TC4’s earlier comment about discussing the classroom activities rather than personal information suggests she was seeking a similar experience with Ghanaian teachers.

In-country partners did not seek interaction beyond the book project. This was perhaps most clearly demonstrated by a reluctance to increase the time the teacher candidates would spend in the schools. Throughout the project, TC1, TC3, and TC4 often

expressed their desire to spend more time in the schools, to have an opportunity to observe the in-country teachers, and to help in the classroom. On more than one occasion when they made their interest known, they were politely, but routinely, turned down. TC1 brought up the idea of learning from in-country teachers during a final focus group interview. “I wish I had more teacher interaction. We didn’t learn as much from your teachers as we could have. I wish we had time to work with teachers” (Focus group interview #2, June 25, 2015). In response, ICP3 stated “Your timing would make it hard to observe, teach a class” (ICP3, Focus group interview #2, June 25, 2015).

The GSL project took place a few weeks before the school year ended. Although in-country partners deemed the book project valuable for the English classes, there were other “curriculum needs that had to be met for all subjects before the year ended” (ICP3, Focus group interview #2, June 25<sup>th</sup>). Given that the presence of the teacher candidates was something of a disruption for the host schools, in-country partners suggested there would be no advantage to having them in the classroom for longer. They were prepared to have the teacher candidates in the classroom for the English classes, but supporting English was only part of the curriculum. There were also preparations for end of term exams and other curriculum obligations.

**Summary:** The data reveal three key challenges that the design of this GSL project did not address. For three of the teacher candidates, the cultural norms they perceived as inappropriate behaviour in professional settings proved to be a source of irritation throughout much of the project. While in-country partners sympathized with the teacher candidates and recognized a responsibility to help them adjust, they also noted that much of the adjustment was up to the candidates themselves. Co-teaching between three of

the four teacher candidates also proved to be a challenge, resulting in increasing disengagement on the part of one of the teacher candidates and an increase in frustration for her partners. A third challenge was the perceived lack of engagement on the part of the local teachers who hosted the project in their classrooms, which was partly a result of poor communication between the host schools and local administrators, and partly a result of their teaching responsibilities and curriculum requirements.

#### **4.4.5 Finding #5. Participant recommendations for future GSL projects.**

I sought recommendations from the participants to inform future GSL projects. The final finding in this case study reveals that although the design principles, had to some extent, helped to create a good GSL project, participants had a number of recommendations related to how future projects might be improved. The most common recommendations from the teacher candidates were *co-teaching practice* and additional *ESL preparation*. The recommendations from both teacher candidates and in-country partners were *advanced communication* and *structured orientation*.

**Co-teaching practice.** Three of the four teacher candidates suggested including opportunities to develop co-teaching strategies during the pre-departure program. Analysis of the data reflects many challenges between three of the four teacher candidates around shared teaching responsibilities, prompting TC2 to ask, “What about co-teaching before we go? The hardest skill, non-context is flexing to personality of peers on the fly. Dominant personalities handing off activities” (TC2, Discussion sheets). This comment suggests that TC2 may have felt overpowered by her teaching partners. During the exit interview she recommended, “Teambuilding, co-teaching, getting to know each other and work

expectations, learn and practice expectations of project” (TC2, Exit interview, June 30, 2015).

Recommendations for more practice co-teaching were put forward by others as well. TC4 reflected on the challenges of the project on the final pages of her journal, noting “I must say co-teaching has been a huge challenge. It would have been nice to have strategies in place to deal with co-teaching” (TC4, Journal entry, June 30, 2015). Noting that much of her time in the classroom was spent explaining grammar, she suggested that teacher candidates might address co-teaching and better prepare for the grammar lessons associated with narrating and translating by preparing lessons in advance:

One thing that could be of benefit is to get teacher candidates individually or in pairs, prep a few grammar lessons before leaving. They could then use these grammar lessons throughout their time in-country (TC4, Follow-up survey, December 2015).

It is notable that out of five GRIP courses I have taught, I have rarely encountered issues around co-teaching such as those in this case study. While it is important to be objective, it is clear that most of the co-teaching frustrations existed within the partnerships of three teacher candidates (TC1, TC2, & TC4). The source of this frustration appeared to result from the perceived apathy of TC2 toward the book project. As the data reveals, TC2 began the project questioning its objectives, which did not appear to match up with her expectations. As a result, she appears to become increasingly disengaged as the project progressed.

**Additional ESL instruction.** As noted earlier in this chapter, the four teacher Candidates felt they would have benefitted from additional ESL instruction. TC1 noted, “I

...wish I reviewed my ELL notes (TC1, Follow-up survey, December 2015). Other participants noted that refreshing ESL skills would have been helpful, with TC4 suggesting we “bring in [the ESL faculty member] to one of the pre-departure meetings for an ESL refresher” (TC4, Discussion sheets).

**Advanced communication.** Another recommendation was the need for better communication with in-country partners in advance of the project. The teacher candidates expressed concern that host teachers had not been given enough information prior to our arrival, which in turn resulted in the initial lack of in-country partner involvement in the project. TC1’s comment concerning communication reflects the general view held by the majority of the teacher candidates:

We could have been more transparent with the teachers from the beginning in order to incorporate more co-teaching in-country teachers to help things go smoothly (TC1, Follow-up survey, December 2015).

In-country partners also recommended better communication in advance of the project so that schools and their teachers could be more prepared for the project. One partner suggested that future projects would be able to be planned more carefully now that they were aware of the project’s objectives: “Now we know we need to design a timeframe for our teachers. Then you can just enter...it is a very short time, but we pick it up and we make meaningful the time used (ICP3, Focus group interview #2, June 25, 2015). He further suggested future projects “pre-inform us about what you are coming to learn. Now that we know your expectations, we can prepare our teachers and you can just enter (ICP3, Focus group interview #2, June 25, 2015).

**Structured orientation.** Five of the nine in-country partners recommended a more structured orientation for future projects, both to orient visiting students to the culture of the community and to orient in-country partners to the project. Although an orientation was provided, it was mostly centred on safety and protocol meetings. While visitors must ultimately accept the responsibility to adjust to a host culture, having one of the in-country partners provide background on certain traits and practices might have been helpful. As ICP8 suggested, experience was an important guide for future projects and “the issues raised in this year’s project can provide the topics for orientation” (ICP 8, Focus group interview #1, June 19, 2015).

Orientation for in-country partners was also recommended. Although the project faced significant time constraints, spending at least one afternoon with host teachers might have contributed to a smoother project. As ICP7 noted, the project seemed to be “too prompt, and there was not enough time for class entry. Not enough research time for the stories” (ICP7, Focus group interview #2, June 25, 2015). An orientation to the project with local teachers could be built into the first days to avoid misunderstandings.

It should be noted that issues around orientation, in-country participation, and even to some extent, technological challenges were issues that stem from the short duration of the project. Ideally, a longer time in-country would address many of the issues. Unfortunately, short-term, rather than long-term global experiences have become increasingly common due to student preferences, course requirements, and economics (Epprecht, 2004; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen, 2007; 2012)

**Summary of recommendations.** The data revealed four key recommendations that participants felt would benefit future projects. Teacher candidates felt that co-teaching

practice and additional ESL instruction would have been helpful. In-country partners felt that more communication in advance of the project would have allowed time for the junior high school students to prepare for the project by researching the stories in advance. As well, a structured orientation may have helped to dispel some of the culture shock experienced by the teacher candidates and would also have provided opportunities for in-country teachers to become familiar with the project objectives.

#### **4.5 Summary**

This chapter presented the key findings of this case study. Phase I of the findings discussed the quantitative results from four survey questionnaires presented to the participants, two of which were presented at the beginning of the project to introduce the design principles to the participants, and two of which were presented in a follow-up survey distributed six months after the project was completed. Although the initial surveys yielded limited data, they did suggest that participants considered a good GSL project would be of contextual value, inclusive of in-country partners, of educative value to student participants, sustainable and affordable. It would also provide pre-departure programming. The results from the follow-up surveys suggested that the teacher candidates felt their participation in this project had influenced their roles as both future teachers and global citizens. In-country partners indicated they felt the project had been inclusive. They felt it contributed to junior high school student learning. They also felt it had affected them professionally and had been beneficial to the community.

The primary findings from the field data position the GSL project as worth doing for both teacher candidates and in-country partners. For the teacher candidates, cultural engagement, practical and professional experience, and the value that in-country partners

placed on the project made it worth doing. For in-country partners, the project's value lay in its contribution to student learning, professional development opportunities, and the connection to culture and classroom.

Another key finding was that the design principles did, for the most part, have a positive influence on the GSL project's outcomes. Pre-departure programming did provide foundational knowledge for the teacher candidates, resulting in a level of competency that was appreciated by in-country partners. Efforts to ensure issues of the project's sustainability and environmental impact were demonstrated as teacher candidates consciously sought to minimize their impact, and participants from both groups offered recommendations as to how to sustain the project in-country.

Technological challenges were also recognized, and recommendations were provided for future projects. Findings also revealed a number of challenges that included co-teaching, cultural tensions, and lack of communication.

Analysis of the data reveals that for the overwhelming majority (N=17 of 18), it was a good GSL project. Analysis also reveals that for one participant, TC2, this was not the case. In a quantitative study, such an exception might be more easily dismissed, but in a qualitative study that seeks to provide a thick description of participants' lived experience, dismissing such the exception is neither easy nor responsible. As a researcher, I gradually came to realize that much could be learned from honouring the experience of the TC2 because as the exception, she revealed a gap between the espoused theories of the GSL project and the actual experience of one of the participants. This gap caused me to pause and reflect on the values that guided the study, and to continue to analyze the data using Argyris and Schon's (1978) gap analysis approach.

In the next chapter, I analyze the gap between my stated intentions as the designer and instructor of this global service-learning project and the lived experience of TC2. While the findings suggest that she did contribute to the project outcomes, her overall stance was one of disappointment in the project objectives. This was reflected in journals, discussion sheets, and follow-up surveys and perhaps overlooked, the value that in-country partners placed on the project's outcomes.

## Chapter 5 Gap Analysis

The findings in Chapter 4 reveal that although the majority of participants (N=12 of 13) indicated the GSL project was worth doing, there was one participant, TC2, who was an exception. While the data offers evidence that she found aspects such as cultural engagement and working with the local language project worthwhile, it also suggests much of her experience was shaped by frustration and disappointment.

In a qualitative study, where the emphasis is on encouraging participants to speak for themselves (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008), there is value in allowing the exception's voice to be heard because their experience can reveal what might be considered different or unique. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) have stressed the need for researchers to pay attention to exceptions in the data, as these voices can bring about new insights or raise new questions.

Data from TC2 reveals an experience that did, in fact, raise additional questions for this study. Given the small sample size (N=4), if even one other teacher candidate had a similar experience, there would have been significant implications regarding the value of intentional design in relation to the student experience. It is also worth noting that in such a small group, a frustrated team member could have negatively affected the success of the project, yet this did not happen. Despite her frustration, TC2 stepped up to make important contributions, demonstrating a greater commitment to the project's intended outcome than her data implied.

As the course instructor and designer of the project, I struggled with TC2's data on both a personal and professional level. Initially, it forced me to confront the possibility that by overlooking or missing her frustration, I may have contributed to it. Analysis of the

data suggests that possibly more involvement in the classroom experience on my part, more one-on-one meetings, and more opportunities for group reflection could have mitigated some of her frustration with the project's goals. It is also likely that more involvement on my part could have mitigated some of the co-teaching tensions that developed over the course of the GSL project. This analysis is useful in informing subsequent projects, but it did not contribute to my deeper understanding of the *causes* of TC2s frustration and disappointment.

As I matured as a researcher and as I designed subsequent projects, I came to regard TC2's experience more objectively. I became less sensitive to, and more curious about, the fact that her experience differed so much from that of her colleagues. A thematic analysis of the data from her three colleagues revealed similarities – they found value in gaining teaching experience and professional development and the potential contribution the books could make to the community. However, there appeared to be a gap between TC2's expectations and the project's intentions, a suspicion that led to the further questions:

- What were her expectations of the GSL project?
- How did these expectations differ from the stated intentions of the project?
- What contribution to this research might be made by exploring this gap between TC2's expectations and experience and the project's intentions?

I felt that identifying and understanding this gap might provide insights that might answer the above questions and inform future project designs.

### **5.1 Identifying the gap.**

TC2's experience in the GSL project can viewed through what Argyris and Schon (1974; 1978) describe as a gap between *stated intentions* and *actual practice*. In this study,

the stated intentions of the GSL project are reflected in the GRIP Course outline (Appendix A) and represent the values and learning objectives that underpin the project and the design principles that informed it. Actual practice is represented by the data provided by TC2 and reflects what she shared as to her expectations of, and lived experience during, the project. To highlight the gap between stated intentions and actual practice, I first revisit the course outline and promotion materials that represent the stated intentions of the project, as well as the data obtained from TC2, my observations, and my field notes, which were illustrative of the actual practice.

### **5.1.1 Stated intentions of the GRIP Ghana course outline/GSL project.**

The learning objectives articulated in the Guided Reflective Inquiry Project (GRIP) course outline (Appendix A) communicate the stated intentions of the GSL project. These intentions also reflect the values that guided the design. In creating them, I drew extensively from research concerned with situating student learning experiences in challenging contexts (Bamber & Pike, 2013; Black, 2007; Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Butin, 2006; 2008; Chapman, 2016; Crabtree, 2013; d’Arlach et al., 2009; Dostillio et al., 2012; Epprecht, 2004; Esteva, 2010; Hartman et al., 2014; Huish, 2012; 2014; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Pluim & Jorgenson, 2012; Tiessen, 2007; 2012). The project was designed to offer the students

- a safe, appropriate opportunity for the teacher candidates to gain experience;
- an opportunity to reflect on what the candidates had learned in their program and practicum;
- an opportunity for meaningful and respectful collaboration through a professional workshop with interested teachers; and

- an opportunity to address a specific need identified by in-country partners (i.e., the preservation of traditional stories through the creation of locally sourced books that could support literacy).

Thus, the GSL project was intentionally designed to stay within the teacher candidates' skill set, align with the learning and reflection expectations articulated in the GRIP course outline, and satisfy a request from in-country partners. The stated intentions that guided the GSL project are presented below in Table 14 (*Stated intentions – course outlines/promotional materials*).

**Table 18. Stated intentions – course outlines/promotional materials.**

<b>Stated Intentions (Course Outline/Promotional materials)</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Course objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reflect upon personal practice as teachers.</li> <li>● Synthesize/construct knowledge from coursework and practicum.</li> <li>● Engage in independent inquiry.</li> <li>● Develop expertise about a topic or issue.</li> <li>● Reflect on supporting teachers to create their own content.</li> <li>● Reflect on collaboration with international partners in an ethical and responsible manner.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learning outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understand the notion of intellectual imperialism, power of traditional publishing.</li> <li>● Understand the potential and promise of digital publishing and the importance of context for literacy.</li> <li>● Develop media competency, skills for project management.</li> <li>● Develop skills for digital photography, digital layout, prepublication, and print ready design and development.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Project description in promotional materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This program offers an opportunity for students to participate in a Global Service-learning to create relevant material to support literacy in rural Ghana (Appendix J).</li> </ul>

### 5.1.2 Actual practice – Data from TC2.

The data suggests the stated intentions appear to have been appropriate for the majority of the teacher candidates (N= 3 of 4) and that the learning outcomes of the course were met. The request specified by the in-country partners was also met, suggesting that for

the majority of the project's participants, the project was a good project worth doing (N= 12 of 13). However, that did not appear to be entirely true for TC2. Her data suggests her experience differed from the course objectives in three ways:

- 1) how she embraced the course/project objectives,
- 2) how she anticipated teacher to teacher relationship, and
- 3) how she appeared to want to show local teachers how to make books.

In the next section, I present and discuss the data that reflects these differences.

**Did not appear embrace the course/project objectives.** One of the objectives of the GRIP course in the Faculty of Education was for the teacher candidates to develop expertise about a topic or issue (see Table 5.1, *Stated intentions/GRIP course outline*). In the instance of GRIP Ghana, that topic was the role of digital publishing and the potential of creating contextual support for local literacy initiatives in challenging contexts. In spite of the Go Global advertisement (Appendix J), circulated course outline, workshops, readings, and the practical skills introduced during pre-departure meetings, TC2 did not appear to understand this course objective, a point clearly made in her comment that she did not “come to learn how to make books” (Journal entry, June 25, 2015). As the designer of the course and project, I found this comment in TC2's data to be interesting, given that the digital publishing aspect of the project was promoted as the focus of the GRIP Ghana option. As noted in Table 5.1, the course outline lists four references to digital publishing in the Learning outcomes, and the promotional material also clearly stated the project's objectives.

A second course objective was to provide an opportunity for the teacher candidates' continued learning and professional development (Table 5.1, *Stated*

*Intentions/GRIP Course Outline*). TC2 initially appeared to embrace this goal, noting that she hoped “to learn how to become a more effective, more compassionate teacher with bigger ears and a quieter mouth when necessary” (TC2, Go Global Application statement, December 2014). However, this aspiration became lost during the project. In fact, teaching took such a low position on her agenda that there were no references made regarding her actual teaching experience among the 19 entries she made related to the project, other than her reference to “lots of hands” on one of the days in the classroom. As well, her only references to the junior high school students appeared at the end of her journal, when she noted she was proud of their work, and in the follow-up survey, where she noted she found value in the “story creation process” (Follow-up Survey, December 2015).

The journal assignment that was part of the course requirements was intended to provide an opportunity for ongoing critical reflection and planning that could further the teacher candidates’ professional learning. In TC2’s case, the journal mentioned the classroom so little that a reader might be forgiven for not realizing this GSL project had been a teaching experience. This lack of reflection on her teaching experience is especially notable given that the students went as a cohort to engage in the schools. The rest of the cohort’s journals were filled with lesson plans, reflections on classroom experiences, comments on the challenges they faced in adjusting to teaching in a global setting, and their professional and personal experiences

**Appeared to anticipate a teacher to teacher relationship.** TC2 also appeared to expect a teacher-to-teacher relationship with the local teachers who sponsored the project in their classrooms. There are two possibilities for this expectation. The first is that the course outline likely set up the expectation that she would be working more closely with Ghanaian

teachers. Two of the course objectives “reflect on supporting the teachers to create their own content” and “reflect on collaborating with international partners in an ethical and responsible manner” suggest the teacher candidates would be working with local teachers. In fairness to TC2, the course outline implied a closer alignment in-country teachers that, as illustrated in Chapter 4, did not materialize. In an early journal comment she notes “we do more preaching to kids and less of the idea sharing than we say we do” (June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015), suggesting she saw may have felt this disconnect.

A second possible explanation is that TC2 may have anticipated a similar experience to her recent practicum experience where she had worked with a mentor with whom she had held curriculum discussions and developed teaching strategies (Clement, et al., 2000). She noted in one of her final journal entries that she had anticipated an opportunity for “shared knowledge exchange” between the teacher candidates and Ghanaian teachers (Journal entry, June 25, 2015).

As noted in Chapter 4, she was not alone in this expectation. The findings suggest the other teacher candidates initially shared this expectation and reflects an ambiguity in the course outline which emphasized a collaboration in-country teachers that failed to materialize. However, over time, the other teacher candidates soon came to view the project as a teaching opportunity and embraced it. This gap is discussed further in Chapter 6.

**Appeared to expect the teacher candidates would teach local teachers.** On more than one occasion, TC2 referred to her participation in the GRIP Ghana course as an opportunity to “leave a legacy” (Journal entry, June 25, 2015). The data suggests she anticipated sharing book-making skills with local teachers. This expectation is reflected early in the project when she noted that she was “feeling unsure of P[ro]D . . . should we

have made a game plan earlier?” (Journal entry, June 6, 2015). The journal entry suggests TC2 felt unprepared to offer professional development to local teachers.

It is not surprising that TC2 felt unprepared. As a novice teacher she would not have been called upon to provide professional development to the more experienced teachers in her recent practicum experience. Beyond a role in co-facilitating a well-supported professional development workshop with local administrators and with me, the teacher candidates were not expected and therefore had not been prepared to provide professional development instruction for Ghanaian teachers by themselves. They had been prepared to facilitate a student-centred learning opportunity through the book project in response to a request by in-country partners. Although this preparation included sharing what they had learned about making books, that sharing would be through an activity situated within the broader context of student-centred learning, the facilitation of which would be a team effort.

Throughout the project, TC2 appeared to maintain the position that in-country partners should be the ones to learn how to make the books, and that the teacher candidates were there to teach them how. Again, the course outline may have contributed to this expectation, given that it stated an objective of collaboration in working in-country teachers to create resources, a collaboration which failed to occur thereby suggesting a need for a more intentional orientation process for all participants. Two entries reflect the importance she placed on collaborating in-country teachers. In the first, she wrote, “This hasn’t been as frequent a journal. I’ve spoken most of it out . . . the need for equal teacher partnerships, the value of educating educators and not necessarily children, as a long-term goal” (TC2, Journal entry, June 25, 2015). In the second, she noted, “I struggle with personal fulfillment. I am told I should be so proud of what I’ve been doing but I don’t feel proud or brave or of

value” (TC2, Journal entry, June 25, 2015). The first entry suggests she would have preferred to work with local teachers rather than junior high school students; the second suggests when this did not happen, she felt both undervalued and unfulfilled by the project.

It should be noted that if there is interest, having local teachers take on the book making would be an eventual goal of the literacy project. As TC2 notes in her journal, teaching the project to the host teachers “would lend huge sustainability to any project with an education root” (Journal entry, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015). She is correct; however in this early iteration, the book project was in its infancy and in-country partners would need to decide the extent to which they would pursue it further. If it eventually becomes a locally-led project, any instruction of local teachers will be the purview of the local school district and other in-country professionals. Resources and templates have been left with the local district administrators to support the possibility for continued work.

From the perspective of designing the course, I felt it would have been inappropriate to have novices, no matter how confident they might be in their own skills, instruct experienced professionals in alternate teaching practices and the adoption of new forms of pedagogy. The course was designed intentionally so as not to put them in that position. Novice teachers have neither the experience nor the practical wisdom to facilitate deeper learning with more experienced peers, especially within the challenging contexts found in the host schools.

TC2’s confidence that she had something to offer experienced teachers in an unfamiliar context may have been an overreach, but it is not uncommon in novice teachers. According to Berson and Breault (2000):

As a student teacher, under the direct guidance of the cooperating teacher, the novice rarely makes a decision in isolation. The cooperating teacher creates the organizational framework, establishing management routines and behavioral expectations and determines the curriculum. With a teaching “safety net” beneath them, the novice works to develop teaching strategies and management techniques. Therefore most novices graduate with a well-deserved sense of accomplishment but an exaggerated sense of confidence and competence (p. 49).

TC2 had been academically strong throughout her undergraduate programs and had just completed a successful, six-week summative practicum experience. Given her academic success, her practicum and pre-service teaching experience, and her recent introduction to the digital storyboarding and publishing processes, she appeared eager to share this knowledge with local teachers.

The discussion above offers examples of a gap between TC2’s expectations and the GSL project intentions. While this discussion draws on the data provided, it is perhaps equally instructive to point out what does not appear in the data. TC2 rarely mentioned teaching experience in her journal, she did not comment on the professional development day, and she did not note one example of a positive experience. Of the four teacher candidates, she was the only one who kept two journals; one can hope the other journal contained more positive reflections. However, based on the data provided, it is evident that much of her frustration rested with the fact that project’s intentions did not align with her desire. When she realized that this desire would not be realized, she became disinterested in the classroom activities and retreated from the project for much of the time.

**Table 19. Actual Practice/TC2 Data**

<b>Actual Practice TC2 Data</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● I am proud for the work the kids did. It was their work, not ours (June 25<sup>th</sup>).</li><li>● Doesn't feel as good as my room where I knew names, could grasp management, and my English was understood (TC2 Journal entry, June 15, 2015).</li><li>● Didn't come to make books (Journal, June 25, 2015).</li><li>● [Came] to leave a legacy (Journal, June 25, 2015)</li><li>● Feeling unsure of ProD. Should we have made a plan? (Journal entry, June 6, 2015).</li><li>● What if we taught the teachers this skill and implanted it with feedback and mentoring...I think this is the gaping hole in this project (Journal, June 9, 2015).</li><li>● Participate in a shared knowledge exchange (June, 25, 2015).</li><li>● I've spoken most of it out . . . the need for equal teacher partnerships, the value of educating educators and not necessarily children, as a long-term goal (Journal, June 25, 2015).</li></ul>

Despite her frustrations, TC2 made significant contributions that suggest a greater commitment than her data implied. She voluntarily stepped up to help on more than one occasion, particularly in areas where she excelled. For example, after the teacher candidates had struggled with the process of embedding the junior high school students' drawings in the books using the cropping tool in the software, I noted that "TC2's introduction to cutting pictures out has been a godsend! A huge contribution given the hours it took in the pilot" (Field notes, June 18, 2015). On a second occasion she was able to provide support for Nab't language project because a background in linguistics allowed her to embed the newly created orthography into the stories. In my journal, I noted that the "Language committee came from 4:00 – 8:00, did two books and then TC2 told us she could do the next steps" (Field notes, June 14, 2015). These occasions, along with the cultural opportunities such as engagement with elders and the relationships she formed with in-country partners provide instances where TC2 reflected positively on her experience. They were significant moments

for her, referred to more than once in the data and suggest they contributed to making the project worthwhile for TC2.

In the preceding sections, I discussed the objectives of the GRIP course outline, which represented the stated intentions of the GSL project, in relation to TC2's lived experience. This comparison revealed a significant gap between these two areas. Having identified this gap, my next step was to analyze it.

### **5.1.3 Gaps between the Stated Intentions and Actual Practice (TC2 Data).**

To analyze the gap that emerged between the learning outcomes articulated in the course outline and TC2's actual experience, I turned to Argyris and Schon's (1974; 1978) notion of *double-loop learning*. Argyris and Schon suggest people's actions are based on two things: 1) what they believe and the values they hold, their *espoused theories*; and 2) the actions they actually take, their *theories in use*. When something does not turn out as intended, people tend to adjust their immediate actions, believing that doing so will lead to different outcomes. Argyris and Schon (1974; 1978) refer to this as *single-loop learning*. Noting that single loop learning may not provide the critical reflection that can lead to more informed choices about what might be changed to achieve outcomes, they have suggested that if people instead take the time to critically question the espoused theories that underlie their theories in use—*double loop learning*— they might make more informed choices or changes that can encourage different outcomes. Alternatively, people can use this same process of reflecting on and analyzing the gaps between theory and practice to confirm that the values guiding their espoused theories are in fact appropriate. They can then begin to seek other causes for the separation between their intentions and their actions, such as confounding variables or other factors that affect outcomes.

As noted elsewhere, there were learning outcomes associated with this project that appeared to have been met for three of the four teacher candidates, and in-country partners appeared satisfied by the contribution the project made to their students' educations and to their community. If the espoused theories that guided the GSL project's intended outcomes were, in fact, appropriate for the others then changing those theories would not have been appropriate. However, the question remains: Why was TC2's experience so different?

The data suggests TC2's interpretation of the project's objectives may have differed from the learning outcomes articulated in the course outline. As noted previously, in some ways this misinterpretation can be justified, particularly given that the course outlined a collaborative relationship with in-country colleagues which failed to materialize. Although the project's design intended more collaboration between the teaching partnerships, the reality was that the project was invited by administrators and assigned to teachers who had little control of how it unfolded. In retrospect, more communication and orientation directly with host teachers may have resulted the collaborative relationship or legacy that TC2 was seeking to develop.

However, the data also reveals a significant gap between the stated intentions of the GSL project and TC2's actual practice in the field. In Table 16, *Gap between stated intentions and actual practice*, I present possible reasons for the gap between the stated intentions of the GRIP Ghana course and the actual practice experienced during the project. In the next section, I address each of these possible reasons in detail.

**Table 20. Gap Between Stated Intentions and Actual Practice.**

<b>Stated Intentions/ (Course Outline/Promotional Material)</b>	<b>Gaps (Possible Reasons)</b>	<b>Actual Practice (TC2 Data)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Gain experience in peer presentation.</li> <li>● Reflect upon personal practice as teachers.</li> <li>● Synthesize/construct knowledge from coursework and practicum.</li> <li>● Engage in independent inquiry.</li> <li>● Develop expertise about a topic or issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Did not appear to read/understand course outline</li> <li>● Did use opportunity to synthesize coursework &amp; practicum.</li> <li>● May have found the project more challenging than anticipated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Doesn't feel as good as my room, where I knew names, could grasp management, and my English was understood" (TC2 Journal entry, June 15, 2015).</li> <li>● I am proud for the work the kids did. It was their work, not ours (Journal entry, June 25, 2015).</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Learning outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understand the notion of intellectual imperialism, and the power of traditional publishing.</li> <li>● Understanding the potential and promise of digital publishing and the importance of context for literacy.</li> <li>● Develop media competency, skills for project management.</li> <li>● Develop skills for digital photography, digital layout, prepublication, and print ready design and development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Did not embrace opportunity to develop expertise around digital publishing and the importance of context for literacy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Didn't come to make books (Journal entry, June 25, 2015).</li> <li>● [Came] to leave a legacy (Journal, June 25, 2015)</li> <li>● We do more preaching to the kids and less of the idea sharing we say we do.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ICP Collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reflect on supporting teachers to create their own content</li> <li>● Reflect on collaboration with international partners in an ethical and responsible manner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Appeared to view ICP through deficit framework who would appreciate learning new skill from novice teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do we facilitate so that teachers follow the learn, do, teach model?</li> <li>● What if we taught the teachers this skill and implanted it with feedback and mentoring...I think this is the gaping hole in this project (Journal entry, June 9, 2015).</li> <li>● Participate in a shared knowledge exchange (Journal entry, June 25, 2015).</li> <li>● I've spoken most of it out . . . the need for equal teacher partnerships, the value of educating educators and not necessarily children, as a long-term goal (Journal entry, June 25, 2015).</li> <li>● Feeling unsure of ProD. Should we have made a plan? (Journal entry, June 6, 2015).</li> </ul>

**The actual project was more challenging than expected.** The GRIP Ghana was a challenging learning opportunity for the teacher candidates. The project's setting presented significant physical and logistical challenges. Add in a teaching experience in a predominantly ESL setting, cultural tensions, and the fact this would be the candidates' first teaching opportunity without the safety net of a mentor teacher (Clemens et al., 2000), and it is easy to see how the project may have been more than TC2 expected.

In her journal TC2 expresses anxiety, noting her classroom in Ghana did not “feel as good as my room where I knew names, could grasp management and my English was understood” (Journal entry, June 15, 2015). Given that this comment was made a week into the project as her colleagues reported they were beginning to settle into their roles, TC2 appears to have struggled to feel comfortable. Complicating this anxiety was the fact that she was also making the adjustment from the supportive practicum environment that had directly preceded this course to an independent teaching experience in a global setting (Clement et al., 2000). Anxiety might also have been a factor in her preference for engaging with in-country partners rather than junior high school students, but the data collected during the field experience did not reveal anxiety nor did she bring up these issues in person. In fact, I did not learn of the anxiety in the classroom because the journals were submitted after the project was completed and the team was leaving Ghana.

**Did not appear to read/understand the course outline.** The reason that TC2's expectations and the intentions of the project differed could be that she simply did not read or did not fully understand or embrace, the course outline. The learning outcomes articulated in the course outline were intended to provide the teacher candidates the opportunity to “reflect on their professional practice as teachers” (Appendix A, GRIP Ghana course outline). To

enable this reflection, they would be situated in a classroom, gaining experience and reflecting on that experience and using daily debrief sessions, the discussion sheets and their journals as a way of reflecting personally and collectively on that experience.

**Did not use the opportunity to synthesize coursework and practicum.** Data suggests TC2 did not perceive the GRIP Ghana course as an opportunity to reflect on her personal practice as a teacher or to build on the skills she had developed during her practicum and coursework. Indeed, as revealed in Chapter 4, a number of comments from her colleagues indicate co-teaching challenges and apathy in the classroom. And unlike her colleagues, who used their journals as an opportunity for lesson planning, ongoing reflection on their classroom experiences, and personal reflection, TC2's journal was a catalogue of frustration and disappointment. The data also suggests that while the other candidates recognized their time in the Ghana schools as an opportunity to build on the skills learned in their program, TC2 did not appear to make a connection between the opportunity in Ghana and her future as a teacher, a key GRIP course objective.

**Did not embrace opportunity to develop expertise around digital publishing and the importance of context for literacy.** As noted in the stated intentions, the GRIP Ghana course was designed as an opportunity for teacher candidates to develop expertise in simple technologies as a way of using digital publishing to support literacy in challenging educational contexts. The project introduced a new skill to teacher candidates and provided an opportunity to further their expertise and understanding of the importance of context for beginning readers. In spite of all of this advance preparation, and in spite of numerous references to these objectives in the course outline, TC2 did not appear to acknowledge or embrace the centrality of these learning objectives and outcomes.

Regardless of why she did not embrace the project, its intentions were articulated in the promotional material, in the GRIP course outline, and in the pre-departure program. Applicants to this project stated a willingness to realize the project's intentions. TC2 had signed on to teaching the book project to English classes, but then she appeared disinterested as the project got underway.

**Appeared to view in-country partners through a deficit framework.** TC2's data suggests a possibility that she may have viewed in-country partners through a deficit framework. The comment "What if we taught the teachers this skill and implanted it with feedback and mentoring" (Journal, June 25, 2015) suggests an assumption that local teachers would embrace the opportunity to learn how to make books alongside their students, while also welcoming mentorship from the teacher candidates. Arriving in Ghana with a successful practicum under her belt, and having mastered the process of storyboarding, she appeared to assume her sharing this knowledge would be welcomed and that teachers either did not understand how to do it, or needed help learning it. As noted elsewhere, this assumption can be common for students who travel to learn and work in challenging contexts. Armed with limited experience and partial training in their field, they can make the mistake of thinking their hosts will be eager to learn from them (Tiessen, 2007). In the case of TC2, with more than one comment indicating she felt the teacher candidates' time would be better spent instructing teachers, and no data to indicate otherwise, the findings suggest regardless of her good intentions, she might have perceived in-country partners through a deficit framework.

Mitigating the potential for the teacher candidates to adopt a deficit framework was something the pre-departure program sought to address. Programming included readings, activities, and discussions to encourage critical questioning of the assumptions reflected in

current development discourse. The readings stressed the need to consider historical, contextual, and environmental factors associated with challenging contexts.

Despite this preparation and possibly feeling empowered by her recent practicum experience and strong academic background, TC2 still may have fallen into the trap of viewing in-country partners through such a deficit framework. This hubris illustrates Tiessen's (2007) concern that when armed with a little knowledge and a desire to help, students can unintentionally make assumptions about the other that are both disrespectful and potentially damaging. TC2's desire appeared to be to teach experienced teachers, or at least to interact with them through an equal, "shared knowledge exchange" (Journal entry, June 25, 2015).

It is useful to point out that TC2's other colleagues did not appear to perceive Ghana partners through a deficit framework. They may have been annoyed over an early lack of engagement or frustrated by what they considered to be unprofessional behavior, but evidence across all data sets suggests they understood that they were in Ghana to further their own learning and development as teachers.

**Summary.** The previous discussion explored possible factors that caused TC2's experience to be different from the others. The reasons for the gap between TC2's experience and the stated intentions of the GSL project could have resulted from one or many of the above factors. The more important finding from this gap analysis is that in spite of her intentions, the GSL project's actual design prevented her from going outside the project's intentions, which says something about the value of using intentional design to create good GSL projects. In the next section, I discuss these implications for design.

#### **5.4. TC2's experience and designing good projects.**

The GSL project in this study was situated in a course for a reason. It was not merely an exotic travel opportunity; it was a learning opportunity with intended outcomes. The students were expected to satisfy those learning outcomes in order to complete the course expectations and receive a final grade. TC2's consistent, contrary responses suggest her objectives did not align with those of the GSL project. By bringing "enthusiasm and good ideas, but very few street smarts" (Berson & Breault, 2000, p. 33) to a new teaching opportunity, TC2 appeared to want to introduce seasoned teachers to new practices without understanding the context well enough to do so. This gap analysis suggests that the course objectives and project design intentions bounded TC2 in a way that would not allow her to pursue objectives that might be inappropriate, disrespectful, or outside the teacher candidates' skill set or the project's scope.

TC2's willingness to step into the project when needed also illustrates the value of intentional design. The project's design required specific skills in which she excelled and thereby recognized her ability to add that expertise. This opportunity made space for her to make contributions when she chose to re-engage. For example, her technological skills were a significant contribution which allowed for completion of the books which would have been a significant challenge had she not stepped up.

However, the findings from the field data and this gap analysis also reveal weaknesses in the project's design. TC2 clearly expected to have a more collaborative relationship with host teachers, a justifiable expectation given that the course outline specifically referred to the need for such relationships. The lack of advance consultation with, and orientation for, in-country teachers resulted in a situation where in-country

teachers simply hosted, rather than actively participated in the project, particularly at the start. It appears that I had incorrectly assumed the district administrator who invited and facilitated the project had done more to inform the teachers about the project that they would be hosting had been. In retrospect, sharing the course outline's intentions with all in-country partners ahead of the project may have resulted in a closer partnership between the teacher candidates and in-country partners.

Aside from a lack of flourishing partnership between and among the teacher candidates and host teachers, in most ways the espoused theories that guided the design of the GSL project in this study and that were represented in the GRIP course outline, were appropriate. Although some her frustration and disappointment can be traced to the absence of a truly collaborative relationship with host teachers, it also resulted from an inability to alter the project in ways that would meet her expectations. When these expectations ran counter to the project's objective, the project's design kept those objectives—co-creating culturally relevant books in the junior high schools—in focus.

## **5.2 Summary**

TC2's experience contributed to this research because it offered additional insights. The fact that her experience contrasted so sharply with the experiences of her colleagues left me, as designer and instructor, wondering what I could have done better and forced me, as researcher, to review my own assumptions and practices in the field. The gap analysis revealed both weaknesses in the project's intentional design that may have contributed to a negative experience and the importance of ensuring opportunities for constant feedback and reflection.

However, the gap analysis also reveals that in spite of the intentions of the course outline, TC2 did not embrace the opportunity to gain additional teaching experience. Her data suggests that unlike her colleagues she did not find satisfaction in the teaching opportunity and revealed a preference to spend time teaching and mentoring in-country teachers. She appeared to assume that experienced teachers would welcome being mentored by novices who had little experience and knew nothing of the context. The project's design prevented her from acting on her assumptions, and while this resulted in frustration and disappointment for TC2, it also prevented unintended negative consequences that could have resulted.

## **Chapter 6 Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

In this chapter, I discuss the findings in relation to the research questions. The answers to Questions #1 through 4 are presented as a discussion of the major findings and conclusions in relation to the participants' lived experiences of this project. As might be expected with an iterative design process, the findings also inform a revised set of principles, which I present as a conclusion at the end of the answer to Question #4. I follow with a discussion of how using these revised principles might contribute to the *goodness* of other GSL projects (Question #5). Next, I offer a view of how these revised principles might inform a pedagogy, one informed by Schulman's (2005) work on signature pedagogies in professional faculties (Question #6). I close the chapter with an overview of the limitations of the study and opportunities for further research.

### **6.1 Question #1. The GSL project was worth doing for all participants.**

Chapter 2 provides my practical definition of a good GSL project—that it should be a project worth doing for all participants. The first major finding of this study was that all participants indicated that this project was a worth doing. All four teacher candidates valued the opportunity to engage with the Nab't culture, and three of the four also valued the project's contribution to their professional and personal development. Findings from the gap analysis suggest that one teacher candidate had different expectations of the project's intentions and, as a result, did not fully embrace all the opportunities it provided. However, she did embrace the chance the project provided for her to further her expertise in linguistics and technology, which offered her a way to contribute.

The majority of the teacher candidates (N=3 of 4) valued the professional and practical experience they gained. This finding suggests the project was an appropriate match

for their developing skill sets. Although the remaining candidate (N=1 of 4), may not have embraced the learning outcomes articulated in the course outline, other opportunities matched her skill set and interests. This finding suggests that Design Principle #1, that a good GSL project must be situated in the context of, and be of value to, student learning, contributed to the goodness of this project. However, the findings from Chapter 5 suggest the wording of this principle be altered to reflect a need for the project to be an *appropriate match* to that learning (Chapman, 2016; Huish, 2012). Although this objective was implied in the initial version, it was not specifically articulated in the principle.

Structuring a GSL project in response to a specific need resulted in a project worth doing for in-country partners. Implicit throughout the GSL project, but not clearly articulated in the actual principles, was the need for inclusiveness. The conclusion that can be made from this finding was that Design Principle #2 —A good GSL project should be of contextual value to in-country partners and should address a need that would otherwise be unmet—did contribute to a good project. However, the principle might usefully be revised to make specific reference to the inclusion of in-country partners in the understanding of the actual project intentions.

## **6.2 Question #2. Intentional design did contribute to a good GSL project.**

A second finding was that overall, intentional design did contribute to a good GSL project. As the answer to Question #1 indicates, the first two principles positively influenced the GSL project's outcomes. Other principles also directly or indirectly contributed to a good project, while still others had limited influence or required further consideration. Below, I discuss the findings and conclusions drawn from the research in relation to the influence of Design Principles #3 – 14. I also discuss the lack of participant

interest in the design principles and the possible conclusions that can be drawn from this lack of interest.

**Design principles that directly contributed to a good GSL project.** A major finding drawn from participant feedback in both this study and in the pilot (N=18) was that principles related to pre-departure programming contributed to a good GSL project. The readings, discussions with previous participants, and practical workshops helped prepare the teacher candidates for the project.

Principles related to the involvement of in-country partners (#2, 3, and 7) also contributed to a good project. However, what this involvement should look like depends on the participant group. For the teacher candidates, involvement meant host teachers would be deeply invested in, and collaborate on, the book project. For in-country partners, it was less about personal involvement and more about supporting the project in their schools. As the findings indicate, although there was considerable confusion at the beginning of the project as to the role of in-country partners, this role became clarified as the project got underway and the collaboration and support of in-country partners was significant to its overall success.

**Design principles that indirectly contributed to a good GSL project.** Although participants did not specifically refer to the design intentions related to safety and well-being (Principles #11 and 14) or to reflection and follow-up (Principles #12 and 13), the findings suggest that designing for both did indirectly contribute to a good project. Teacher candidates indicated the pre-departure discussions and activities contributed to feelings of safety and preparedness. The additional context and safety information provided by in-country partners, and our guide ICP2 in particular, also contributed to their sense of safety.

Despite its contextual challenges, the study setting proved to be safe and welcoming to students. As noted in Chapter 1, there is a well-established relationship between our campus and the study setting that has existed for two decades. This relationship has allowed for the development of an established infrastructure of partnership and support. Regardless of how intentionally I may have designed for safety, credit must also be paid to the existence of this established relationship and the partners' ability to make considered recommendations concerning transportation, accommodation, and school selection, etc.

A good GSL project must also attend to the safety of in-country partners. Although my position as outsider/insider limits my role in ensuring the physical safety of in-country partners, it does not limit my responsibility to attend to their emotional well-being. The respect implied in the GRIP course overview question — “What does it mean to collaborate with international colleagues in an ethical and professional manner?”— intentionally positioned in-country partners as experienced professionals. However, this intention may not have been clear enough given that one teacher candidate expressed her preference for teaching the experienced teachers rather than high school students. To do so would have been a serious overreach on her part, given that she had little understanding of the context and of introducing student-centred learning in a classroom of 70+ students and no resources. Furthermore, this preference could have been potentially insulting to local teachers who had not requested it. The project's design and the course's learning objectives prevented this possibility, and thus indirectly attended to the well-being of in-country partners.

There are three conclusions that can be drawn from this discussion of safety and well-being. The first is that although it cannot be determined that intentionally designing for

safety concerns in challenging contexts actually kept the teacher candidates safe, pre-departure activities did raise an awareness of safety concerns and offered solutions to address these concerns, which in turn contributed to their sense of safety and well-being. A second conclusion is that the strong, on-going support of in-country partners contributed even more to their sense of safety. Although the gap analysis raises the possibility that one teacher candidate may have struggled with anxiety during the project, this anxiety was expressed only in the journal that was submitted after the project was completed, making it difficult to address her anxiety issues in-country. In retrospect, more frequent one on one meetings with the teacher candidates may have surfaced this anxiety. A third conclusion is that positioning the project in a course with specific learning outcomes mitigated the potential for the pursuit of personal agendas that might have been inappropriate.

Other principles that indirectly influenced the GSL project's outcomes were those related to follow-up and reflection. Although these did not attract much attention from participants, they generated rich data once participants had time to reflect on their experience. Dewey (1938) and Kolb (1983) have both stressed the importance of combining learning with real-world experience, and then taking the time to reflect on this combination. For the teacher candidates, the process of exit interviews, re-entry debriefs, and follow-up surveys provided opportunities for reflection, and the data that resulted informed subsequent projects. For in-country partners, the follow-up survey provided an opportunity to comment on the project's contribution after some time had passed, and informed subsequent projects as well.

A conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that the design principles regarding reflective activities should be considered a component of all GSL projects. This is

especially true if one of the objectives of a GSL learning opportunity is to encourage students to develop active empathy (Boler, 1997). The same holds true for in-country partners. Although some reflective activities have been revised in subsequent projects (discussed later in this chapter), reflection can both deepen student learning and produce important insights and recommendations that contribute to the iterative design process.

**Design principles that require further consideration.** Design principles that require further consideration are those related to sustainability (both environmental and project), appropriate technology, and affordability. Environmental sustainability was of particular concern for the teacher candidates. They sought to mitigate their environmental footprint wherever possible, although some wrestled with the contradiction of travelling halfway around the world and trying to be sustainable at the same time. The sustainability of the project, itself, appeared to be important to the majority of the participants in this study (N=16 of 18). However, for the project to be sustainable, in-country partners would ultimately have to take control of it, which would require them to have access to the appropriate technology. Thus far, this technology remains financially out of reach in this rural school district. Combined with the technological challenges of printing books in-country, that fact raises concern about its capacity building amongst local educators and its overall sustainability as a project with the goal of producing local materials to improve literacy.

A conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that while the easily transferable technology associated with PowerPoint™ may have been appropriate, the technology available in the form of computers and tablets needed to sustain the project is currently beyond the capacity of in-country partners. I return to the discussion of these two

challenges, sustainability and appropriate technology, in the recommendations section of this chapter.

Another design intention that requires further consideration is Design Principle #10, which states that a good GSL project is affordable for all parties. Affordability was not an issue for in-country partners, as the project's budget covered their travel costs and expenses. However, a global experience is an expensive proposition for many Canadian students. This GSL project was no exception, especially since it came at the end of their undergraduate programs when the teacher candidates had already incurred significant student debt. Flights, in-country transportation, and accommodations make up the majority of the costs. Although accommodations are shared and costs are modest compared to a Canadian equivalent, the prolonged stay still adds up.

The affordability of this project points to the larger discussion raised in Chapter 1; cost remains a significant barrier for many students who might otherwise participate in a global learning opportunity. The Ghana project is a typical example. Interest starts out high each year the project is offered, but the number of potential applicants drops considerably when students must make their deposit. The most common reason is because of the cost. The UBC Go Global award can help offset those costs, but the students participating in this project still spent close to \$5,000.00 CAD for the experience, in addition to their tuition.

Addressing the issue of affordability is a major challenge for proponents and designers of most global learning opportunities. The recent commitment some federal funding in the 2019 Federal Budget (Barbaric, 2019) is good news for higher education in Canada, and it is a promising start toward an organizational structure such as Australia's Colombo program, Europe's Erasmus program, or the United States' 100,000 Strong

program (Barbaric, 2019; Biggs et al., 2015; Paris & Biggs, 2017). Although I discuss ways in which institutions might address the cost barrier in the recommendations section of this chapter, the simple fact remains that post-secondary education is expensive and global service-learning opportunities may be beyond the reach of many students.

**Limitations of intentional design.** The findings reveal some of the limitations of intentional design. For example, Principle #14 suggests a good GSL project takes into account “the happiness, fun, and well-being of all participants.” The gap analysis revealed that no matter what a project or course intentions might be, participants may not necessarily understand and/or embrace those intentions which can in turn compromise their happiness. In this study, the overwhelming majority of participants (N=12 of 13) were clearly satisfied—one might even say “happy” with the project’s outcomes, one participant was clearly not satisfied which in turn significantly impacted her experience. While more frequent, one on one meetings to probe her experience may have mitigated some of her unhappiness, the book project did provide opportunities for her to apply her unique skills in linguistics and technology. Her data indicate these opportunities did ultimately bring her some satisfaction and made the project worth doing to some degree.

Another significant limitation of the project’s intentional design was that it proceeded on the assumption that in-country partners were made aware of the project’s requirements and therefore I did not consider a formal orientation for in-country partners. Because the district administrator had participated in the pilot project and sought to expand it to other schools I made the assumption that he had shared the project’s objectives with teachers, an assumption that turned out to be incorrect. Had there been an orientation, perhaps the anticipated collaboration set out in the course outline would have occurred

sooner in the project, and perhaps more importantly, may have encouraged intercultural respect and reduced tensions between local and global participants. The assumption that in-country partners had been adequately informed proved mistaken and surfaced the need for a formal orientation for all a participants prior to the start of the project.

A conclusion that can be drawn from the findings from Chapters 4 and 5 is that although more could have been done to ensure in-country participants understood the project's intentions, the teacher candidates were aware of the project's objectives and the course's learning outcomes which were reinforced throughout the pre-departure programming. Once implemented, the project cannot adjust to an individual and this is especially true in challenging contexts. If, in spite of objectives in the course outline, promotional material, and pre-departure program, a participant decides once the project begins, that it is not to their liking, it is up to the participant to adapt.

**Lack of participant responses to the design principles.** Before leaving the discussion of the design principles, I want to return briefly to the original intention of this study, which sought data from the participants regarding their perspectives on the design principles. As noted in Chapter 4, findings revealed participants had little interest in a set of abstract principles, preferring to discuss their actual lived experiences. Two surveys distributed at the start of the project reveal this lack of interest. While Survey #1 – *Likert Scale* did provide limited feedback, not all participants returned it (N=15 of 18 surveys returned). There was even less response for Survey #2 – *Ranking Survey* (N=13 of 18 surveys returned). Although I had asked for the surveys to be returned during our next meeting, those I received were returned immediately, suggesting limited time had been spent on considering and responding to the design principles.

There are two possible explanations for this limited interest in the surveys. The first explanation is related to my methods. Introducing the surveys at the start of the project may have been too early, given that the project was still something of an abstraction for most. As one participant noted, “I am not sure I’d be able to suggest what is a good project. It is too early for one thing. I think a good project will take some time to unpack” (TC4, Personal communication, June 8, 2015). It may have been wiser to let the project run its course and to seek feedback on the design near its completion.

However, lack of interest extended beyond the surveys. Attempts to encourage discussion around the design principles as participants became more familiar with the project also did not produce much data because most discussions would end up being about their experience, not my design. Thus, a second possible explanation for the participants’ lack of interest was that for them, discussing and evaluating the project’s design was redundant. Previous course outlines encountered during their programs had offered little room for feedback. Those designs were already established, so in their minds, perhaps nothing more needed to be said.

A final possibility is that participants may have felt the design did not require any discussion. In his discussion of web design, Jared Spool (2009) touched on the idea that if design is good, most people will not notice it:

Good design, when it is done well, becomes invisible. It’s only when it is done poorly that we notice it. Think of it like a room’s air conditioning. We only notice it when it is too hot, too cold, making too much noise, or the unit is dripping on us. Yet, if the air conditioning is perfect, nobody says anything and we focus, instead, on the task at hand. (Spool, 2009).

In this study, the intent of the project was to provide a safe and stable global teaching opportunity that would result in culturally relevant books being produced to support the Ghanaian curriculum. It is what the project set out to do, and it is what happened. As with the air conditioning unit in Spool's example, had something gone wrong and these outcomes not been met, the project's design may have been questioned by the participants, as they had been by TC2

**Summary.** Overall, the findings from this research suggest the design principles contributed positively to the GSL project's outcomes, and thus answer Questions #1 and 2. The GSL project, situated in a course that had specific learning objectives and responding to a need identified by in-country partners, was worth doing for participants. Pre-departure programming provided the teacher candidates with the skills needed to complete the project, provided an understanding of the context and safety issues, and raised awareness of sustainability issues. From a research perspective, the opportunities for reflection provided indications the GSL project objectives and learning outcomes had been met. Reflection also provided insight into the extent to which participation in the project may have influenced the teacher candidates' global perspectives and understanding, and the extent to which in-country partners had felt included.

### **6.3 Question #3. Differences between participant expectations and designer intentions.**

Findings reveal some differences between participant expectations and my intentions as designer. In the case of the teacher candidates, the most significant difference, TC2's expectations, has been discussed in the gap analysis in Chapter 5. However, the other teacher candidates had two notable expectations that differed from their actual experiences.

The first expectation was that they anticipated a closer working relationship with local teachers. As noted elsewhere, in fairness to the teacher candidates, two questions from the course outline likely contributed to these expectations: 1) “How best can teachers be supported to create their own content?”, and 2) “What does it mean to collaborate with international colleagues in an ethical and professional manner?” Both questions do suggest a greater degree of involvement on the part of in-country teachers than what actually occurred, and do not clearly define what is meant by collaboration. However, the majority of the teacher candidates eventually came to recognize the project as a teaching opportunity, and one in which the host teacher role was not the same as that of a mentor teacher supporting their previous practicum experiences.

Three of the four candidates also expected to spend more time working in the schools. The project was designed as support for the English curriculum, not as a volunteer teaching opportunity. The findings demonstrate a reluctance on the part of in-country partners to have the teacher candidates in the schools to any greater extent than what was required, suggesting anything beyond the English classes would be a distraction and not as valuable.

Findings reveal that the only difference between my intentions as designer and the expectations of in-country partners was that I too, anticipated more involvement by the host teachers than what occurred. The wording in the course outline suggests in-country partners would be collaborators, but collaboration was slow to evolve. However, it should be noted the data reveal that by the end of the GSL project, a majority of in-country partners did take on a more collaborative role.

Although it is hard to know completely how all the nuances of a project will unfold, a conclusion that can be drawn from the findings is that it is important to be clear about *all* participant roles and project expectations. As the findings in Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate, it is not enough to assume that participants will read and understand the course or project outline or that the intentions of the outline are going to be clear to everyone. A more thorough discussion about the objectives and learning outcomes with the teacher candidates, and a clearer definition of all participant roles, may have helped to mitigate the gap between intentions and expectations. A better orientation for all participants may also have lessened this gap. Subsequent projects have included a more concrete explanation of course and project expectations and a more structured orientation. There has been less confusion as a result.

#### **6.4 Question #4. Challenges GSL intentional design did not address.**

The findings reveal five challenges that either fell outside the design framework or that the design principles did not adequately address. These challenges include cultural tensions, co-teaching challenges, communication, project sustainability, and technology constraints. I discuss each challenge separately below.

**Cultural tension.** Although there were readings and discussions to introduce the teacher candidates to the history and culture of Ghana, findings reveal the benefits of these activities were limited. It appears they did not adequately prepare the teacher candidates for the cultural differences they would need to navigate. A conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that more than reading about the culture and learning a few phrases of the local language, students need to develop strategies or global dexterity (Molinsky, 2013), which may help them navigate differences or issues they find uncomfortable. A more

intentional, pro-active slate of pre-departure activities and orientation may have helped encouraged this global dexterity.

**Co-teaching challenges.** The findings reveal co-teaching challenges among the teacher candidates, especially in situations involving TC2. Given that there were no significant issues bin the other partnerships, these challenges likely stemmed from TC2's frustration with the project's intentions. As noted in Chapter 5, she did not reflect on her teaching experience in her journal. The data reveal that her teaching partners began their partnerships on a positive note, whereas from the beginning, TC2 expressed frustrations with colleagues. My exploration of the gap between TC2's expectations and course intentions indicate she never fully embraced the project's intentions, which in turn resulted in what seemed to be apathy toward the teaching opportunity and set up the conditions for co-teaching issues.

A conclusion that can be drawn from the findings regarding co-teaching issues is that it might have been more helpful if I had been in the classroom more often and had held regular debriefs with each of the teacher candidates. The data from TC1, TC2, and TC4 reveal serious issues, yet none of them shared these issues with me.

Berson and Breault (2000) have pointed out that as novice teachers begin to navigate their transition into becoming professional teachers, their need to develop independence can “contribute to ambivalent feelings about turning to supervisors for advice and support during periods of high stress” (p. 30). This may have been the case for the teacher candidates in this study. Although I did meet with them regularly in this project, and they knew they could come to me at any time (and often did when it came to issues around health or wellness) not one teacher candidate shared their co-teaching challenges. My having

more consistent presence in the classroom may have helped surface the co-teaching issues and TC2's apathy about the teaching experience early enough to address both issues, possibly resulting in a better project for all.

**Communication.** Data gathered from the focus group discussions suggests better communication about requirements may have prevented the confusion about the host teacher roles at the beginning of the project. Although this was the second iteration of the GSL project, one school was new to the project, so this confusion was not unexpected, but the pilot school participants were also unsure of their role.

As noted elsewhere, some of this confusion may have been tied to my not being clear enough when I introduced the project and my assumption that the district administrator had made the project's intentions clear to the teachers. At the time, I presented information related both to the project and to my research objectives. In retrospect, introducing the project, discussing the research activities, and gathering consent forms all on the first day of the project was a lot to ask participants to take in; it is not surprising there was confusion.

On the other hand, in more recent projects, while there has been more communication between in-country partners, there can still a great deal of confusion. Planning happens at the district level, but the project takes place in the host teacher's classroom, so communication between district office and school is crucial. In some cases, this communication works well, and has resulted in some of the schools having their stories ready. As well, this advance preparation means that permissions have been arranged, and that the elders and storytellers have the opportunity to vet the stories.

However, communication issues have also very nearly derailed one of the subsequent projects altogether. In 2018, a district administrator did not read the

correspondence that had indicated our proposed arrival dates and sought feedback on them. The communication had been sent months in advance to ensure the dates were appropriate for the local schools. It was not until a month before departure that one of the school headmasters noted the project coincided with the annual two-week school vacation. Flights and accommodations had been booked and paid for, so changing dates was out of the question. A great deal of rearranging in-country activities was necessary so the teacher candidates could have at least part of the teaching experience they signed up for.

Because this incident occurred during the fourth iteration of the project, the host teachers knew what was expected and had their students prepare stories before the school vacation, giving the teacher candidates something to work with when they arrived. It is to their credit that the schools were able to prepare with very little notice and that the project worked out. However, the breakdown in communication demonstrated the challenges that hosting a GSL project of this complexity can create for a rural school district where not all partners have access to information, or where the information is either misunderstood or not shared and discussed.

A conclusion that can be drawn from the findings regarding communication issues is that no assumptions can be made about key details, and that following up on the planning process is essential to the project. Because there were communication strategies in place from previous projects that included directly contacting the project's host, ICP2, to confirm his leave dates, it was possible to adapt the project to some extent. However, the communication issues of 2018 reveal ongoing challenges associated with complex, globally situated projects.

**Technology and Sustainability.** Technology and sustainability are discussed together as challenges because they are both vital to the book project. Related concerns are valid because technological issues persist in this project, a fact which has implications for the project's sustainability. Although the program used to create the books, PowerPoint™, is readily available and easily transferable, some teachers may not be comfortable with technology, or their access to tablets or laptops may be limited. For rural teachers in challenging contexts, simply keeping a laptop or tabled device charged can be difficult.

Given the limited printing services available in challenging contexts, local printers who do have copy machines may struggle with issues such as poor equipment or unreliable access to electricity. Consequently, printing the books also remains a challenge. Sustaining the project will be difficult without better access to more appropriate technology. A conclusion drawn from the findings regarding sustainability, appropriate technology, and communication issues is that the project's complexity appears to exceed the capabilities of the local NGO and rural school district. There is continued interest in the book project, and there are currently more than 1000 books printed and available for the schools, but sustaining the project without access to more reliable technology makes it challenging. Later in this chapter, I provide recommendations for addressing these issues.

The above challenges reveal areas where the project's design could be improved, as well as areas that intentional design did not address. As might be expected, these challenges, combined with the findings that answered the other research questions, resulted in modifications to the original set of design principles. In the next section, I discuss these revised principles and provide a rationale for my revisions.

#### **6.4.1 Revised Design Principles.**

As noted in Chapter 2, design is not a linear process, but rather an iterative one in which designers ideate, prototype, test, and revise their design (IDEO, 2015; Stanford d. school, n.d.). The principles used to create this GSL project were no exception. As might be expected, they changed as the research unfolded, and as I continued to design two later projects (2017; 2018). In the next section, I present the revised design principles and provide an explanation of why these principles changed following the findings from this case study (Table 17, *Revised design principles*).

**Table 21. Revised design principles.**

	<b>Revised Principles</b> <b>A good GSL project should</b>	<b>What Changed</b>
1	Be situated in, and an appropriate match for, student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being situated in student learning does not necessarily mean the project is an appropriate match.</li> <li>• An appropriate match is one that accounts for both the strengths and limitations of students' knowledge.</li> </ul>
2	Be inclusive of and collaborate with, in-country partners while addressing a specified need that would otherwise be unmet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collapses #2 and 7 and stresses inclusion and collaboration.</li> </ul>
3	Not replace paid work that is done by in-country workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good GSL does not replace the paid work of an in-country worker.</li> <li>• A good GSL project is intended to meet a need that cannot be met in-country. Replacing a worker suggests that this need may already be met.</li> </ul>
4	Avoid deficit model frameworks in the language used to promote, recruit, and define the GLS project. (NEW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Findings reflect a need for more specific language.</li> <li>• Encourages an asset point of view or framework, rather than assuming students will adopt one.</li> </ul>
5	Prepare students by introducing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical/safety considerations</li> <li>• Historical/geographical context</li> <li>• Strategies for global dexterity</li> <li>• Skills for in-country activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simplified – combines all of the pre-departure ideas into one principle.</li> <li>• Shifts focus from cultural information to global dexterity.</li> <li>• Provides a more structured in-country orientation for all participants.</li> </ul>
6	Encourage sustainable projects that are environmentally responsible and that can eventually be supported locally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is mindful of limited resources and project's environmental footprint.</li> <li>• Recognizes that sustainability should eventually result in less dependence on global partners.</li> </ul>
7	Be adaptable to challenging technological contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on available technology wherever possible, to reduce reliance on global partners and enable in-country partners to take on authority for project.</li> </ul>
8	Provide a structured in-country orientation for all participants, both local and global. (NEW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets out expectations for project, establishes roles for participants, and encourages collaboration between all partners.</li> </ul>
9	Provide students with opportunities for reflection and follow-up throughout and after the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides opportunities to reflect on learning outcomes, make meaning of their global experience and their place in the world and apply what was learned.</li> </ul>
10	Provide a reflective follow-up process for in-country partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides opportunities for inclusion and participation of in-country partners throughout the project, from initiation to follow-up.</li> </ul>
11	Be safe and affordable, and contribute to the well-being of all participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlights institutional obligations to create safe environment, be mindful of costs and mitigate unintentional negative consequences.</li> </ul>

Analysis of the data resulted in changes to the original design principles. Some principles, such as those related to safety and affordability, have been combined in the interest of simplicity. Other principles have been revised to more clearly reflect respect, reciprocity,

and reflection. In the next sections, I discuss my rationale for revising these principles based on the findings of this study.

**Rationale for changing original principles.** There were a number of reasons for the revisions to the design principles. For example, principles related to pre-departure programming were combined. The original objectives of pre-departure training were to introduce students to the context, provide cultural background, introduce project expectations and safety information, and ensure the teacher candidates had the basic skills needed to complete the project. Owing to the cultural tensions experienced by three of the teacher candidates, I added a fourth consideration to the pre-departure training, which was to introduce strategies that might help student participants develop global dexterity.

As well, I revised and combined the principles related to in-country partners (#2 & #7). Again, part of the reason was simplicity, but it was also important to more clearly articulate the importance of respect and collaboration. As Leonardo Da Vinci was attributed to say, simplicity is the ultimate sophistication, so simplifying the principles was not an act taken lightly. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is an unfortunate tendency for students to apply a deficit framework to professionals who work in challenging contexts. A deficit framework can position expertise as flowing from North to South, which in turn can compromise collaboration and learning between in-country professionals and novice students. Articulating a collaborative relationship may help to mitigate the tendency for participants to make this assumption, while acknowledging the students are going to learn through their participation.

As well, there were numerous issues that may have been avoided had there been a structured orientation in-country. An orientation would have clarified the roles and

expectations of all participants; in-country partners would have had insight into the project's objectives prior to it being placed in the classroom. As well, outlining these objectives may have also established a more professional framework for collaboration between local and global partners fostered by mutual respect and shared knowledge. This was a missed opportunity for the project in this study.

Other principles that were combined or revised were those related to affordability and to the safety and well-being of all participants (#10, #11 & #14). All three principles were combined to reflect institutional obligations to ensure a safe learning opportunity, while also acknowledging the importance of limiting the cost of the global experience whenever possible.

Findings revealed the need for more specific wording of some principles. For example, the importance of Principle #1, that a good GSL project be of educative value to student participants, does not necessarily guarantee that the project is an appropriate match. Rephrasing the principle to read that "a good GSL project should be situated in, and an appropriate match for, student learning" recognizes both the strengths and limitations of students' knowledge and expertise. It also addresses the potential for students to develop the hubris described by Tiessen (2007) in Chapter 2 or to be placed in a role that is either beyond or outside their skill set (Chapman, 2016).

Two final principles that have been slightly revised to reflect the findings from this study are the principles related to sustainability and appropriate technology (Principles #8 & #9). With respect to sustainability, while the original addresses the need to consider environmental sustainability, it does not clearly address the project's sustainability, which would, over time, involve building capacity in in-country partners through professional

development and professional engagement. This capacity would eventually decrease reliance on global partners and become part of the ongoing work the school district. As far as the need for appropriate technology, the original principal does not quite capture the importance of adapting the project to meet challenging technological contexts. It should be noted that this rewording is also informed by findings from the two subsequent projects in this setting, both of which revealed the difficulty in-country partners would face in taking over the book project.

**Rationale for two new principles.** Aside from collapsing some principles and eliminating or rewording others, I also added two new principles. The first principle is the need to be mindful of the terminology we use when we position learning experiences in challenging contexts. Terminology must consciously avoid encouraging deficit-model thinking or positioning student participants in roles that imply expertise and in-country partners in roles that are in need of this expertise.

The second new principle was to include in-country partners in the orientation process. There may have been less confusion around host teacher roles and teacher candidate expectations had I done so. Building on the pilot study in one school did not necessarily mean that the host teachers were aware of the roles they would have. Although the roles were eventually sorted out, and in-country teachers did become more engaged in the project, I believe that the teacher to teacher relationship that the teacher candidates had anticipated, and the collaboration that I assumed would be a natural process, did not materialize until about halfway through the project. Subsequent projects have ensured schools are better prepared and there is a more formal orientation process when we start. It is hard to say if this

has made a difference give that the project is no longer new and all of the schools (4) know the objectives,

**Summary.** Although the original design principles appeared to contribute to the GSL project's outcomes, there is always opportunity for revision in an iterative design process. This study is no exception. In the interest of simplicity, some principles were combined, while others were re-worded, or added. In other cases, the findings pointed to a need for more precise language.

#### **6.5 Question #5. Evaluating the goodness of the GSL project based on the design principles.**

One way in which we can evaluate the goodness of the project based on the design principles is through the participants' experiences. In the case of the teacher candidates, participating in the GSL project did enable them to make a contribution. They got on the plane intending to do good, and the project provided space for them to do so. Because the project was part of a for-credit course, the design provided space for both learning and contribution even though one participant may have had other ideas. In the case of the in-country partners, the goodness of the project was in the learning offered to the junior high school students, the fact that the project met curricular objectives, and that there was a tangible output at the end.

A second way we can evaluate the goodness of the project is by exploring the values represented in the design principles. One of the merits of engaging in double-loop learning was that it forced me probe the espoused values that guided the design of the project. As Ciccione (2009) has suggested, “[n]othing uncovers hidden assumptions about desired knowledge, skills, and dispositions better than a careful examination of our most cherished

practices” (p. xiv). Critically examining the espoused values that guided the GSL project and the GRIP course outline enabled me to discover three core values that underpin the design principles—*respect*, *reciprocity*, and *reflection*—and my passion for this work. The three values might, in some ways, be viewed as similar to Pollan’s (2008) simple rules around eating right, discussed in Chapter 4.

The *respect* demonstrated in the project’s design was respect both for student learning and for the hosts’ knowledge and experience. In the case of student learning, the project provided a teaching opportunity that would match and advance their skills in teaching, classroom management, and ESL instruction. In the case of in-country partners, the project intentionally sought to avoid a deficit framework through the language used, readings assigned, and discussions throughout pre-departure and in-country activities. While the gap analysis reveals that this messaging was not necessarily picked up, it was implicit in the design and has been emphasized more clearly in subsequent projects. This *respect* was also demonstrated by designing a *reciprocal* project in which all partners collaborated to address an unmet need, and one in which all participants gained something of value. For the teacher candidates, this was an additional teaching experience, and for in-country partners, it was the creation of the books that represented their culture and enabled further English language proficiency.

*Reflection* is the third value that guided the design of the project. As discussed in Chapter 2, service-learning and global service-learning create an educational framework that combines learning, experience through service, and reflection on that learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 2011; Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1983). In my definition of a good GSL project, students are not only encouraged to reflect on their learning, but also to critically question the broader

issues that allow challenging contexts to persist. Such reflection can challenge students’ assumptions and encourage active empathy, action, and change (Boler, 1997; Cameron, 2014; Dobson, 2006). Reflection was also stressed in the GRIP course outline and supported the overall objective of the GRIP course—encouraging teacher candidates to reflect on their practices (see Appendix A).

Although these three values were implicit in the initial design, their influence on the principles became even clearer after the gap analysis. In Table 18 below (*Revised principles and core values*), I connect the values of respect, reciprocity, and reflection to the list of revised design principles.

**Table 22. Revised Principles and Core Values.**

	<b>Revised Principles A good GSL project should</b>	<b>Value</b>
1	Be situated in, and an appropriate match for, student learning.	Respect/Reciprocity
2	Be inclusive of, and collaborate with, in-country partners while addressing a specified need otherwise unmet.	Respect/Reciprocity/ Reflection
3	Not replace paid work that is done by in-country workers.	Respect
4	NEW: Avoid deficit model frameworks in the language used to promote, recruit, and define the GLS project.	Respect/Reciprocity/ Reflection
5	Prepare students by introducing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical/safety considerations</li> <li>• Historical/geographical context</li> <li>• Strategies for global dexterity</li> <li>• Skills for in-country activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Respect/Reflection</li> <li>• Reciprocity</li> </ul>
6	Encourage sustainable projects that are environmentally responsible and that can eventually be supported locally.	Reciprocity
7	Be adaptable to challenging technological contexts.	Respect/ Reflection
8	Provide a structured orientation for all participants, both local and global.	Respect/Reciprocity
9	Provide reflective re-entry, and follow-up processes for student participants.	Reflection
10	Provide a reflective follow-up process for in-country partners.	Respect/ Reciprocity/ Reflection
11	Be safe and affordable, and contribute to the well-being of all participants.	Respect

A third way we can evaluate the goodness of the project based on these design principles is to return to the practical and philosophical definitions of a good GSL project

presented in Chapter 2. My practical definition was that a good GSL project would be worth doing for all participants. As the findings reveal, overall the project met this definition.

My philosophical definition of a good GSL project is that it embraces Aristotle's ideas around *practical wisdom*, *intention*, and *empathy*. The GSL project created an opportunity for the teacher candidates to develop practical wisdom through their teaching experiences; this was implicit in the stated intentions of the course outline. The opportunity to combine theory and practice was part of the design.

Intention is also implicit in Aristotle's discussion of goodness and virtue. For Aristotle, "virtuous activity is not something that comes to us by chance" (Kraut, 2018, para 9), but is the result of reasoning and deliberation. Reasoning and deliberation were influential in the creation of the design principles and were reflected in the stated intentions of the GRIP Ghana course outline. These stated intentions were aimed at creating a valuable learning experience for the teacher candidates and a tangible outcome that was of value to in-country partners. Again, although participants did not always take up the intentions, the design created space for these intentions to be met.

A third philosophical theme underpinning the design of the project was the need to help students develop empathy and a greater sense of social justice through participating in a GSL project. Aristotle's suggestion that practical wisdom requires the ability to perceive "insight into human flourishing" (Lacewing, paragraph 5) also influenced the design of this project.

Empathy can encourage this insight—particularly the idea of *active* empathy (Boler, 1997) or *thick* global citizenship Cameron (2014). In keeping with university aspirations that global experiences will increase students' potential for global citizenship and

awareness, it is hoped that by learning through service, students will bear witness to, and gain a better understanding of, what life is like for those who live challenging contexts, both local and global. It is also hoped that this understanding can inspire students to become agents of social justice and change. Findings from the follow-up surveys indicated that for the teacher candidates, this objective was met.

In answer to Question 5, then, we can evaluate the goodness of the project based on the design principles in three ways. First, the project provided the teacher candidates with space in which to gain practical experience and to learn through service. They made a tangible contribution that was valuable to in-country partners, and for the majority, this resulted in a good project. Second, the goodness of the project was also reflected in the extent to which the design principles communicate values of respect, reciprocity, and consideration that are called for in the literature. Finally, the goodness of the GSL project is evident from the extent to which the project met both the practical and philosophical definitions of a good GSL project that guided this research.

## **6.6 Recommendations for policy and practice**

In this section, I discuss the implications of this research in relation to Question 6, which sought to understand how the findings from this study might inform policy and practice regarding designing GSL projects in challenging contexts. There are three recommendations that arose from the findings of this study.

- First, I recommend project designers or instructors build in significant opportunities for structured reflection both during and after the project is completed.

- Second, given the challenges the project has faced over four iterations, I recommend that, wherever possible, GSL projects and similar learning opportunities be situated within parallel relationships.
- Third, I recommend that designers adopt a pedagogical framework to ensure learning outcomes are met.

I discuss each of these recommendations below.

**Structured reflection.** There is a need for structured reflection after a learning experience. Reflection can help determine whether or not learning outcomes are met and produce recommendations for future practice. Without this reflective process, the learning opportunity runs the risk of being little more than a volunteer or travel opportunity.

The reflection aspect of the GRIP Ghana project has evolved as a result of this study. As discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, the exit interview was an opportunity for the teacher candidates to reflect on their experience in the GSL project. In early iterations, the exit interviews were one-on-one discussions with each teacher candidate using a semi-structured interview process (see Appendix G).

In more recent projects which have involved more teacher candidates, I have turned to what I describe as empathy interviews, and which draw from the iterative design process outlined in design thinking. In the empathy interview process, I create pairs of participants (preferably two people who have not worked together during the project). I then ask each pair questions to guide the reflective process. After posing a question, I ask one partner to share their response to the question with their partner and have that partner record the response. After allowing three to four minutes for them to answer the question, I have the

partners switch roles and repeat the question. I also provide a few minutes at the end of the process for participants to review their recorded answers for accuracy.

These empathy interviews draw from on Stanford's design thinking process and have the potential to provide rich data. The participants appreciate hearing about each other's experience, and appear to gain empathy, while the sharing of stories can prompt new insights for both. The process also provides a bit of a reset for the students because it encourages them to revisit their motivation for participating in the GSL and probes whether or not the project satisfied those motivations. Students have shared how much they appreciate the process, and often they ask for more time in which to share and record their experiences.

An added advantage of these empathy interviews is that for me, as a qualitative researcher with a serious hearing impairment, I am assured that the answers the students give are accurately recorded. From a research perspective, the empathy interviews also are more efficient way to gather data from a large group of participants than individual, one-hour exit interviews.

A last point regarding reflection is that many universities do subsidize student global experiences, as was the case in this study. However, without structured reflection, institutions would struggle to determine the impact of the experiences or to use the information gained to inform other projects. Exit surveys rarely offer the same degree of insight that empathy interviews appear to provide.

**Parallel partnerships.** A second recommendation is that GSL projects in challenging contexts involve parallel partnerships. I did not begin this research questioning the role of an NGO as partner. However, after five projects in which I have partnered with NGOs, I have come to question whether it is fair to either an NGO or the student participants

to develop GSL opportunities that can strain an already stretched infrastructure. Given the challenges that this specific project has experienced over four iterations, it may be beneficial to seek parallel partnerships (university-to-university/faculty-to-faculty).

Parallel partnerships would not be intended to shift the burden of responsibility to in-country partners but rather to share some of the challenges while building capacity for both parties. The recent Statement of Cooperation signed between UBC Okanagan and the University for Development Studies in Ghana (September 2019) is an example of such a partnership with each party bringing its own expertise and contextual knowledge to the partnership (see Office of the Provost, Oct 2019). An MOU provides an opportunity to formally establish the values of respect, reciprocity, and reflection that underpinned the design of this study.

On an operational level, the infrastructure, access to technology, and communication available through a university-to-university partnership may be more stable and reliable. At the institutional level, there are more opportunities for shared practice between faculty members. On the student learning side, the opportunity for peer-to-peer engagement with other university students in a global setting can enrich both the learning experience and enhance opportunities for cross cultural engagement. Parallel partnerships may also provide a more familiar framework for student participants who struggle, or provide an extra layer of support for students like TC2, who appeared to miss the formal structure that had existed during her program. The relationship with an NGO does not carry the same emphasis on student learning that would occur in a university and offers little infrastructure to build capacity and create and share new knowledge. Parallel partnerships may also limit the potential for the learning experience to be viewed as part of a development agenda, lessening

the chance that students will be asked directly for funds or other forms of charity from in-country partners. More importantly, parallel partnerships may also reduce the potential for students to adopt a deficit mindset in their relationships with those partners.

If higher education is sincere in its desire to position resources, research, and learning in ways that can contribute to activities in challenging contexts, the question of how it positions this contribution matters. Parallel partnerships that provide opportunities for shared practice and learning can help to ensure projects are appropriate and can be sustained over time. In the case of the book project in this study, for example, it might be more appropriate for a teacher education program at a local university to take up the project, thereby providing continuity and academic insights into literacy, language, and culture.

**Pedagogical approach.** What this thesis tried to do, in part, was to emphasize the learning for all participants that is possible when serving others in challenging global contexts. It should be noted that originally, this was not my main objective. I began my doctoral studies from the position of what might be considered a gatekeeper to a vulnerable community situated in a *challenging context*. My first instinct was to ensure that in-country partners were respected, that teacher candidates were prepared, and that the project would generate an output that was of value to in-country partners. I was aware of the issues raised in the literature around sending underprepared students to engage with vulnerable populations, and I was determined to avoid making the same mistakes. Armed with a checklist of issues I wanted to sidestep, I designed a GSL project for teacher candidates in East and West Africa. However, over time, and as my experience in the field increased, I gained clarity about my obligations as a designer in relation to the students who participated.

GSL embraces the possibility of learning through service. Typically, GSL is part of a for-credit course. To be fair to students and the instructor, a good GSL project should include an instructional strategy or pedagogical approach. Based on seven years of research, the findings from this study, and two subsequent projects, I would suggest that the revised design principles could inform this pedagogical approach.

To support this suggestion, I draw from Schulman's (2005) work in signature pedagogies for the professional faculties, which I introduced in Chapter 2. Schulman has developed a three-part structured approach to knowledge in the professions:

- Surface structure: concrete, operational acts that are taught and that will demonstrate a surface knowledge.
- Deep structure: theoretical and practical learning that deepen this knowledge through experience.
- Implicit structure: the moral dimensions, beliefs, values, and dispositions of the professions.

Schulman's approach provides a way to consider the design principles as a pedagogical framework that can inform the intentions, partnerships, and course objectives and outcomes of a GSL project (see Table 19 – *Design principles and Schulman's three-level approach*).

**Table 23. Design principles and Schulman’s three-level approach**

	<b>Revised Principles</b> <b>A good GSL project should</b>	<b>Schulman’s Three Levels</b>
1	Be situated in, and an appropriate match for, student learning.	Surface, deep, implicit
2	Be inclusive of, and collaborate with, in-country partners to address a specified need that would otherwise be unmet.	Implicit
3	Not replace paid work that is done by in-country workers	Implicit
4	NEW: Avoid deficit model frameworks in the language used to promote, recruit, and define the GLS project.	Implicit
5	Prepare students by introducing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical/safety considerations</li> <li>• Historical/geographical context</li> <li>• Introduction to the Ghana classroom/EFA challenges/Literacy in Ghana</li> <li>• Strategies for global dexterity</li> <li>• Skills for in-country activities</li> </ul>	Surface/Deep/Implicit
6	Encourage sustainable projects that are environmentally responsible and that can eventually be supported locally	Deep, implicit
7	Be adaptable to challenging technological contexts	Deep
8	Provide a structured orientation for all participants, both local and global.	Surface, Deep, Implicit
9	Provide reflective re-entry and follow-up processes for student participants.	Deep, Implicit
10	Provide a reflective follow-up process for In-country Partners	Deep, Implicit
11	Be safe, affordable, and contribute to the well-being of all participants.	Implicit

In Schulman’s model, the three levels of knowledge can be useful in defining what counts as knowledge in a GSL project (Schulman, 2005). In the table above, some principles align with all three levels, while others are more specific. For example, the pre-departure programming reflects all three levels: surface knowledge is provided through the practical, hands-on workshops that introduce bookmaking; deep knowledge occurs when the teacher candidates link their practicum and classroom learning to larger global concerns (i.e., EFA, limited resources, literacy challenges etc.); and implicit knowledge is achieved through the ethical considerations and strategies for developing global dexterity.

The design principles that resulted from this research are beneficial in two ways. First, they are general enough to inform policy at the institutional level, and granular enough to inform learning outcomes at the course level. Secondly, they provide a research-informed checklist that can offer a starting point for other instructors or designers as they consider their own projects or learning experiences. They represent over seven years of research and reflect five iterations of a global service-learning project for teacher candidates. The principles are informed by the literature, have been tested in the field, and are based on my findings regarding what might contribute to a good GSL project. In the spirit of design, they should be considered as “informed, reusable guidelines for others” (Herrington & Reeves, 2011) who might wish to design good global service-learning projects in challenging contexts.

## **6.7 Further Research**

Research often leads to further questions, and this study is no exception. Reflection on my findings has led to opportunities for further study.

**Opportunity 1.** Conduct further follow-up with participants. The findings presented here focused on the lived experiences of these teacher candidates during the project and shortly after it was completed. It would be useful to explore changes that may have occurred in their personal and professional lives as a result of the project now that some time has passed. The same can be said for teacher candidates who participated in the initial GSL project in Tanzania and in the Ghana pilot, as well as those who participated in the later projects.

**Opportunity 2.** Explore the research around parallel partnerships with other universities in challenging contexts, particularly universities that offer their own service-learning opportunities both locally and globally.

**Opportunity 3.** Further explore the potential for developing a signature pedagogy for global experiences in challenging contexts. The revised principles presented in this final chapter represent a starting point, but there is considerable work being done in this area (see Hartman et al., 2014, for example). It is incumbent on universities to ensure the experiences they provide for their students are situated in learning contexts, and my work suggests that developing a thoughtful pedagogical approach informed by clear principles can help to achieve this end.

## **6.8 Final comments**

Aristotle invited us to do good, but he also invited us to deliberate on what is good and to choose wisely. This research provides an example of how deliberation contributed to the design of a good GSL project. For Aristotle, goodness was also connected to civic responsibility (Celano, 2015). University mandates demonstrate a similar sense of civic responsibility when they articulate the need to position student learning in ways that can contribute to good. This research offers a set of design principles that universities might consider as they design good GSL projects that reflect their civic goals.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, part of the reason Canada has lagged behind other OCED nations in the number of students it sends abroad each year has been the lack of a national program to support outbound student mobility. There is reason to believe this pattern is about to change. The recent federal budget includes \$148 million that will, in part, support an Outbound Mobility Program for students, a change that raises important considerations going forward. Given that policies increasingly stress engagement in challenging contexts (Biggs et al., 2015; Paris & Biggs, 2017, 2018) and student interests point in the same direction, some of these funds will no doubt support experiences in such settings.

With this potential in mind, I return to a point I made in the introduction to this research about the appropriateness of situating learning experiences in challenging contexts and the adage about “teaching a person to fish.” We need to ask ourselves about the value novices can bring to a GSL project, and then we need to design programs that enable this value. For example, if students want to serve through teaching, then they need to know enough about teaching to do so, and by the end of the project they should also have been able to deepen their knowledge of teaching. It is equally important, given institutional objectives that cite global competency and citizenship as desirable objectives, that institutions of higher education ensure the projects they support align with these objectives.

The timing is right for higher education to come up with a more intentional approach to ensuring these experiences are worth doing. Indeed, I believe higher education has an opportunity to set a higher standard for meaningful engagements with challenging contexts, both local and global. Our institutions can begin to do so through projects that build global understanding, global dexterity, and empathy. Providing our students with learning experiences that encourage these attributes is an important step because it has the potential to introduce a new generation of change-makers who bring an empathetic, rather than development, mindset.

Akhavan (2017) has noted, “We need to take seriously the immense impact of our own empathy, our own engagement” (p. 333). His statement is a call to action, and the empathy piece is key. Even if an empathetic mindset is not necessarily taken up, this study demonstrates that good design can also help to prevent unintended negative consequences. If policymakers’ objectives are met, and Canada establishes outbound mobility programming, I believe intentionally designed projects that situate learning in the context of service to others

may indeed contribute to a better world. Our task as project designers and educators is to ensure that these are good projects, worth doing, for all participants, for “self worth comes from doing something worthy of our self” (Akhavan, 2017)

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: GRIP Course Outline

#### EDUC 430 Guided Reflective Inquiry Project

Instructor:	Dr. Susan Crichton with Cynthia (Cindy) Bourne as TA
Office:	EME 3139
Telephone:	(250) 807-8638
Email:	susan.crichton@ubc.ca
Office Hours	Via <a href="http://blogs.ubc.ca/grip2/?cat=99">http://blogs.ubc.ca/grip2/?cat=99</a> and email
Class Times	June 2015
Showcase	In Ghana at the conclusion of the field experience

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#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Guided Reflective Inquiry Project (GRIP) is a project-based and learner-centered capstone project that allows students to extend their acquired knowledge of educational theory and practice by investigating an educational issue or question that develops from course studies, readings, or field experiences. The GRIP also provides an opportunity for students to further examine the foundation and structure of their own educational knowledge and beliefs (including their developing personal professional practice), within the larger context of educational theory, research, and best practice. Additionally, the GRIP sets the stage for independent and ongoing professional development, and models education as a profession that demands commitment to research inquiry and to life-long learning. *(Note: Students must successfully complete all modules, courses and practicum before commencing the GRIP).*

#### COURSE OVERVIEW

The GRIP is structured as a self-directed individual inquiry project. During the GRIP period, under the guidance of their GRIP supervisor, students will:

- Develop and clarify an inquiry question
- Research and gather resources to support an examination of this question
- Synthesize and consolidate their findings
- Prepare a presentation in a format appropriate to the subject matter and audience
- Present the findings of their project at the faculty GRIP research conference

Specifically related to GRIP Ghana work, inquiry questions include, but are not limited to:

- How can regionally developed, contextually relevant content support reading, literacy, skill development and community?
- How can digital tools support the development of regional content?
- How best can teachers be supported to create their own content?
- What does it mean to collaborate international colleagues in an ethical and professional manner?

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By completing the GRIP assignment students will:

- Synthesize and construct knowledge from their coursework and practicum
- Reflect upon their personal practice as teachers
- Engage in independent inquiry
- Develop expertise as they learn more about a topic or issue
- Further develop their research skills
- Design and develop presentation materials
- Gain experience in peer presentation
- Enhance their professional portfolio with a record of independent project work.

Specifically related to GRIP Ghana, students will:

- Understand the notion of intellectual imperialism
- Understand the position and power of tradition publishing
- Understanding the potential and promise of digital publishing
- Understanding the importance of context for literacy
- Develop a high level of media competency (e.g. text, visual, audio, or multimedia)
- Develop skills required for project management
- Develop skills required for digital photography
- Develop skills required for digital layout
- Develop skills required for prepublication
- Develop skills required for print ready design and development

## **TEXTS AND READINGS**

The GRIP is structured as an directed studies project completed by an individual student on a topic of their choice. Readings will be posted on the course blog, and students are expected to read carefully and post considered, reflective responses to the readings.

## **COURSE DETAILS**

Students are expected to participate actively in three components: pre-departure activities, in country work, and a back in Canada debrief.

#### Pre-departure

- Introduction to constructing and providing professional development
- Introduction to cultural issues
- Introduction to health and safety issues
- Discussions concerning what it means to collaborate international colleagues in an ethical and professional manner
- Introduction to basic project management
- Introduction to digital photography for illustrative purposes
- Introduction to storyboarding and page design
- Tips and tricks for digital compilation and book design
- Introduction to pre-publication skills

#### In country

- Work with Ghanaian colleagues and students to develop and publish books
- Assemble books and get the content print ready
- Conduct professional development on book development for interested teachers
- Maintain a personal journal
- Participate in any extra-curricular events

#### Back in Canada

- Participate in an open house to share experiences and books
- De-brief the activity with the Director of Education and be prepared to make recommendations for further GRIP opportunities such as this

### **EVALUATION**

EDUC 430 GRIP is a PASS/FAIL course. A PASS grade is equivalent to or better than a B+ (76%).

The GRIP project should fulfill the following criteria:

- Clear articulation of the inquiry question;
- Clear definition of the background to the question and inquiry methods;
- A high level of media competency whether it be text, visual, audio, or multimedia;
- A high level of expertise attained in the topic;
- Appropriateness of presentation to the intended audience;

### **COURSE DETAILS**

#### *Attendance*

You are expected to attend every class/meeting scheduled by your supervisor unless you inform the supervisor beforehand, are ill, or have an emergency. Please remember that GRIP is based on group discussions. Not attending classes/meetings will affect your learning.

### ***Missed Class***

As this is a cohort based, immersive activity, active participation is required at all pre-departure activities. Also participation is required in all in-country and Canada based debrief activities

### ***Readings***

You must read the assigned readings and contribute to the course blog.

### ***Assignments***

All activities must be completed and in order to pass the course.

### ***GO Global***

**<http://students.ok.ubc.ca/global/outgoing/global-seminars/current-programs/ghana.html>**

### ***Equity, Discrimination and Harassment***

UBC Okanagan is a place where every student, staff and faculty member should be able to study and work in an environment that is free from human rights based discrimination and harassment. If you require assistance related to an issue of equity, discrimination or harassment, please contact the Equity Office or your student union for assistance. The Equity Office is accessed via: <http://web.ubc.ca/okanagan/equity/welcome.html>

### ***Disability Services:***

The Disability Resource Centre ensures educational equity for students with disabilities, injuries or illness. If you are disabled, have an injury or illness and require academic accommodations to meet the course objectives, please contact Earlene Roberts, the Diversity Advisor for the Disability Resource Centre located in Commons Corner in the University Centre building (UNC 227).

UBC Okanagan Disability Resource Centre:

UNC 227A 250.807.9263

Email: earllene.roberts@ubc.ca

Web: [www.ubc.ca/okanagan/students/drc](http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/students/drc)

### ***Ombuds Office:***

The Ombuds Office offers independent, impartial, and confidential support to students in navigating UBC policies, processes, and resources, as well as guidance in resolving concerns related to fairness.

UBC Okanagan Ombuds Office:

UNC 227B 250.807.9818

Email: [ombuds.office.ok@ubc.ca](mailto:ombuds.office.ok@ubc.ca)

Web: <http://ombudsoffice.ubc.ca/ubc-okanagan-2/>

### ***Equity and Inclusion:***

UBC Okanagan is a place where every student, staff and faculty member should be able to study and work in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. UBC prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of the following grounds: age, ancestry, colour, family status, marital status, physical or mental disability, place of origin, political belief, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or unrelated criminal conviction. If you require assistance related to an issue of equity, discrimination or harassment, please contact the Equity and Inclusion Office.

UBC Okanagan Equity and Inclusion Office:

UNC 227C 250.807.9291

Email: [equity.ubco@ubc.ca](mailto:equity.ubco@ubc.ca)

Web: [www.ubc.ca/okanagan/equity](http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/equity)

### ***Responsibilities of the Student***

Become informed. From the start of your program approach your studies, classroom visits, and school practicum with a critical mind. Be advised that not all GRIP topics will arise in the specific context of your school placement or your course texts or readings. Many educational issues are timely and will often garner much press in local or national media. Read!

Take initiative. Be mindful of questions or issues that capture your interest, then begin collecting and compiling articles, documents, web-sites or other information that serves to deepen your knowledge base about these questions or issues. It is advisable to select a range of topics, gathering information/data about several, as your program proceeds. It is

also advisable to remain open to other ideas or topics (often, practicum experiences will provide a rich resource for questions and issues). Although you may not know who your GRIP supervisor will be until November or later, you may want to discuss some of your ideas early on with a faculty member (it is best to schedule appointments during office hours). Faculty will assist you in narrowing the focus of your inquiry and in referring you to other available resources.

## Appendix B: Survey #1 Likert Survey

Directions: Below is a list of principles that guided the design of this GSL project. Please rate each principle by checking the appropriate box with

1 being the highest rating and 5 being the lowest

<b>Good GSL Projects should</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	Be of educative value to students					
2.	Be of contextual value to in-country host by addressing a need or benefit that is wanted by the host					
3.	Not replace work that is done by in-country workers					
4.	Include appropriate pre-departure program that reflects on current challenges and introduces historical, geographical, and contemporary factors that have led to, or continue to perpetuate, localized challenges.					
5.	Include appropriate pre-departure training that includes ethical considerations regarding the use and abuse of photography and social media, the potential for cultural imperialism, power and privilege, and responsible ways of working.					
6.	Include appropriate pre-departure program that introduces student participants to the required skills for planned, in-country activities.					
7.	Encourage in-country involvement in as much of the work as possible and to cede authority and control to partners wherever possible					
8.	Be informed by principles of sustainability					
9.	Be informed by principles of appropriate technology					
10.	Be affordable to all parties					
11.	Attend to the safety and well-being of all participants					
12.	Provide structured re-entry process that allows students the opportunity for discussion and reflection on their experience.					
13.	Provide a follow up process to asses both short and long-term impacts of project.					
14.	Be fun and situated with the well-being and general happiness of participants, both local and global.					

## Appendix C: Ranking Survey

14 Design Principle Cards to be ranked in order of most important to least important.

Cards will be randomly shuffled and handed out to participants

Participants will be asked to read through the cards and take 15 minutes to rank them in order of importance.

Sample Card

**DESIGN PRINCIPLE:**

A good global service-learning project should be of contextual value to in-country host by addressing a need or

All design principles will be printed on similar cards and handed out to participants. Once the participants have ranked the cards, I will take a photo of the order they are in. This will be important because during focus group discussions, exit interviews and other points during the research process, these rankings may change and it will be important to have the original ranking for comparison. This information will also be recorded in one of my nightly “memo” entries.

## Appendix D: Consent Form



3171 EME  
3333 University Way  
Kelowna BC Canada V1V 1V7

### Consent Form GRIP Global Project

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Susan Crichton, Faculty of Education, (250) 807-8638

**Co-Investigator:** Cynthia Bourne, Doctoral Student – University of British Columbia, Okanagan

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of your experiences as students from the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus who are participants in a GSL project in the Upper East Region of Ghana, West Africa. You are being invited to participate in this because study you chose the Global Guided Reflective Inquiry Project (GRIP). This project was created using a specific set of design principles that we felt might contribute to a good project for you as participating teacher-candidates from the UBC Okanagan Faculty of Education, for our in-country partners who worked with you, and for the institutions that have sponsored the project (Project GROW, the Nabdam School District, and the University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus). Your participation in this study will provide valuable feedback on the influence of these design principles on this specific GSL project and will inform the design of future projects.

#### **Study Procedures**

As part of your GRIP program requirements, you will participate in various pre-departure, in-country, and post-return activities designed to help prepare and debrief you for / from this international learning opportunity. As participants in this study, the activities you are assigned will become part of the research used to evaluate the design principles. These activities are described in detail below and reflect the activities explained in the GRIP course outline.

You will be assigned readings as part of your preparation and will be asked to comment on those readings on the class blog. By consenting to participate in this study, you agree that your blog posts will become part of the data used in this research.

While in-country, you will be asked to maintain a reflective journal of your experiences as a pre-service teacher working in an international project. We will ask to read this journal.

At the end of the project you will provide a short presentation that will be a considered response to your pre-departure preparation, the course readings, and your experience. By consenting to be a participant in this study, the short presentation will become part of this research project.

There will be a number of group discussions that will occur pre-departure, while in-country with and without in-country partners, and at the end of the project. The time required for pre-departure, in-country, and end of project discussions will be incorporated into the international experiential project and will not require any additional scheduling. While we cannot ensure confidentiality of your participation in the group conversations because others are present, we can assure you the conversations will be secured on Cynthia's password protected laptop and deleted once they have been analyzed and the project is completed.

At the end of the project, you will also be asked to take part in an individual, semi-structured interview to de-brief with the co-investigator at a mutually agreed time and location. If you agree to be a participant in this study, all of the above discussions will become part of the data for research into the influence of these design principles on the outcome of this global GRIP project.

We are interested in your feedback on the design principles used to create this project. The data collected from the above activities will be used to inform policy and practice in the development of future international GRIP projects that may be offered by the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus as well as other professional faculties and disciplines. The data collected will also fulfill the doctoral research objectives of the co-investigator, which is to evaluate these design principles so they that might inform the design of other GSL projects in challenging contexts. It is possible that this data may be included in future publications and presentations by both the principal investigator and the co-investigator. The data collected will also inform the co-investigator's doctoral thesis which will be publicly available on the web and internet.

### **Potential Risks**

We do not anticipate any risks in this study. All responses from group discussions will be presented as a group response so the potential for identification will be minimal. For the individual de-brief interviews, all responses will be kept strictly confidential, recordings will be saved on a password protected laptop and transcripts will be coded to ensure confidentiality. Any responses used in our research will be attributed to a pseudonym

(e.g. Participant 1, 2, etc.). All records will be saved on the co-researcher's password protected hard drive and will be locked in secure filing cabinet. Anonymity cannot be guaranteed as you are part of a cohort and will participate in group discussions and semi-structured interviews. At the conclusion of the study, all electronic data will be stored on a hard drive and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the UBC Faculty of Education for 5 years after which it will be deleted (UBC Policy). At the conclusion of the study, all hard copies of data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years after which it will be shredded (UBC Policy).

### **Potential Benefits**

The potential benefits of this project will be to provide opportunities for you, as participants, to reflect critically throughout an international service learning experience. You will know that you have contributed to the development of policy that will guide similar international service GRIP projects at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus. Your participation will also contribute to the existing literature concerning international service programs. You will be given a voice to describe your experiences directly to the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus.

### **Confidentiality**

All assignments for this course will be identified by a pseudonym (e.g. Participant #1 assignment #1) in order to ensure confidentiality. Individual confidentiality in the group conversations and discussions will not be assured because others will be participating. We will ask all participants to refrain from disclosing the content of those discussions outside the participating group; however, what the participants choose to discuss outside the group conversations is beyond our control. The individual discussions will be kept strictly confidential. All recordings, notes and transcripts will be kept secure on a hard disk which is password protected.

**Remuneration/Compensation:** There is no remuneration or compensation for your participation in this study. However, you will be reimbursed for any parking expenses incurred as a result of your participation in the post return interview.

### **Contact for information about the study:**

If you have any questions or desire for further information with respect to this study, you may contact me directly (Dr. Susan Crichton) at (250) 807-8638 or via email ([susan.crichton@ubc.ca](mailto:susan.crichton@ubc.ca)).

### **Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:**

*If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint*

*Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 1 - 877 - 822 - 8598 or the UBC Okanagan*

*Research Services Office at 250 - 807 - 8832. It is also possible to contact the Research Participant Complaint Line by email (RSIL@ors.ubc.ca).*

**Consent:**

Your signature is required to record focus groups and interviews. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time without consequence, or without jeopardy to your final assessment of the GRIP project. Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided including all procedures, personal risks and use of the information. Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in this study. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Susan Crichton, Faculty of Education, (250) 807-8638

**Co-Investigator:** Cynthia Bourne

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

---

Name Date

---

Printed Name of the Participant signing above

## Appendix E: Consent Form



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3333 University Way  
Kelowna BC Canada V1V 1V7

### Consent Form: In-country partners GRIP Global Project

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Susan Crichton, Faculty of Education, tel. (250) 807-8638; email [susan.crichton@ubc.ca](mailto:susan.crichton@ubc.ca).

**Co-Investigator:** Cynthia Bourne, Doctoral Student – University of British Columbia, Okanagan, tel. (250) 807-8065; email [cindy.bourne@ubc.ca](mailto:cindy.bourne@ubc.ca).

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to gather feedback from your experience in working in this GSL projects with teacher-candidates from the University of British Columbia, Okanagan - Faculty of Education. This project was created using a specific set of design principles that we felt might contribute to a good project for you, our in-country partners, the teacher-candidates who worked with you, and for the institutions that have sponsored this project (Project GROW, the Nabdham School District, and the University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus).

Specifically, we are interested in your perspective as to the influence these principles had on the outcome of this project. We are also interested in any suggestions you might have for improving the existing principles, adding new principles or perhaps eliminating others. The purpose of this study is to develop a draft set of principles that can inform the design of other GSL opportunities. Your recommendations will provide valuable information for the design of future projects.

#### **Study Procedures:**

If you agree to participate in this study, Cynthia Bourne will ask you to be part of 2 group discussions. The first group discussion will be conducted with your colleagues (Nabit Language committee members, Project GROW members, and Education District Personnel) who have been involved in this book project. The second group discussion will be combined with the teacher- candidates to share experiences and feedback between both groups. Your participation would require a total of approximately 2.5 hours of your time; 1 hour for the focus group discussion with your colleagues and 1.5 hours for the

combined focus group discussion with your colleagues and the teacher candidates. The above discussions and meetings will be scheduled at times convenient to all parties.

### **Potential Benefits and Risks:**

The information gathered during this research will be used to inform the design of future GSL projects and to inform Cynthia's doctoral research. As our partners, your guidance and collaboration in the creation culturally relevant materials that improve literacy in your community will have been central to the project, and your feedback, recommendations, and evaluation of the principles that guided this project are an important part in determining whether or not these principles can be used for future projects. A potential benefit in your participation in this study will be the knowledge that your participation in this can influence the design of future global partnerships, increasing the potential benefits for all parties. We do not believe the interview process and focus group discussions pose any risks to you personally.

### **Confidentiality and Storage of Information:**

All records of one-on-one interviews will be kept strictly confidential. Responses will be kept strictly confidential, recordings will be saved on a password protected laptop and transcripts will be coded to ensure confidentiality. Any responses used in the one-on-one interviews will be attributed to a pseudonym (e.g. Participant 1, 2, etc.). The records of these interviews will be digitally recorded, stored on a hard drive kept on the interviewer's (Cynthia Bourne's) password protected computer. At the conclusion of the study all data (electronic and hard copy) will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in the Faculty of Education for 5 years after which they will be destroyed (UBC Policy). Information gathered from the focus group discussion will be presented as a group response so the potential for being identified will be minimal. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, as you will be part of a focus group discussion and individual confidentiality in this discussion cannot be assured because others will be participating. We will ask all participants to refrain from disclosing the content of those discussions outside the participating group; however, what the participants choose to discuss outside the group conversations is beyond our control. Records from the focus group discussion will also be kept on the interviewer's password protected computer. At the conclusion of the study, these records will be stored for 5 years in a locked cabinet in the Faculty of Education, after which they will be destroyed (UBC Policy).

### **Intended Use of Research Materials:**

This information is being gathered for use in designing future GSL projects for students enrolled in programs at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus. Your participation in this research can provide valuable feedback from, and give voice to other international partners in future projects. The findings from this research project will inform the doctoral research of Cynthia Bourne. As well, the researchers may publish academic papers describing this GSL project and their intention is to fully acknowledge and include host partners in the project's evaluation. The information you provide may

also be used in future educational programs and partnerships for your community. No commercial use will be made of any information you provide without your full, written consent. This research may also inform part of the co-investigator's Doctoral thesis and as such, will be publicly available on the web and internet.

**Contact for Information about the study:**

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint

Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 1-877-822-8598 or the UBC Okanagan Research Services Office at 250-807-8832. It is also possible to contact the Research Participant Complaint Line by email (RSIL@ors.ubc.ca).

**Consent:**

Your signature is required to record focus groups and one-on-one interviews. Your signature on this form indicates that you understand the information provided including all procedures, personal risks and use of the information. Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in this study. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Your participation throughout this study is voluntary. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to withdraw at any time. If you do decide to withdraw from this study, data gathered from one on one interviews will be removed. However the data gathered from your participation in any focus groups will not be able to be removed as it is part of the discussion.

**Name of participant (please print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant's signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher's signature:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix F: Sample Focus Group Interview Questions

Focus Group 1) In-country partners:

The purpose of this study is to gather feedback from your experience in working with teacher-candidates from the University of British Columbia, Okanagan Faculty of Education to collaborate on developing culturally relevant reading material that supports literacy in your schools.

As our partners / in country participants in this project, you are being asked comment on whether or not this project met your objectives and to gather your comments and feedback for regarding the principles used to design the project. Your feedback will become part of Cynthia Bourne's doctoral research that investigates the extent to which these design principles influenced the outcome of the project. The findings from this study will be used to inform the design of future projects within the UBC Faculty of Education

In the preliminary survey, you were asked to rate the design principles and rank them in order of preference. Prior to this focus group, you were asked to once again rate and rank the principles.

1. Did your rating of the design principles change at all as a result of this project?  
Eliminated
2. Did your ranking of the design principles change at all as a result of this project?  
Eliminated

A number of these principles are specifically targeted to the needs of in-country partners and have been suggested by other partners who have worked the University of British Columbia on global projects. We are interested in your feedback on these specific principles in relation to this project:

3. Did you feel this project was of value to you, as host? If yes, in what way was it valuable? If no, what would you suggest could be done differently?
4. Did you feel this project may have replaced work that could be done by in-country workers? Eliminated
5. Did you feel this project encouraged involvement from teachers in the participating schools? If not, what would you suggest could be done differently?
6. Do you feel that the control and authority of this project can be passed off to you, our partners at this point?
7. What are your suggestions regarding authority and control for this project?
8. Would you be willing to participate in a follow up process to assess the short term and long-term impacts of the project? *Slightly reworded....to reflect ethics form, and just confirmed willingness to follow up .*

Focus Group 2) Students and in-country partners

The purpose of this focus group is to gather feedback from both student participants and in-country partners on their collaborative experience in developing culturally relevant reading material that supports literacy for schools in the Nabdam District.

1. Overall, what stands out as the most memorable aspect (positive or negative) of working together as colleagues on a literacy project?  
-Do you see the design principles having played a role in why \_\_\_\_\_ was memorable? ELIMINATED
2. What were positive aspects of this project?  
-Do you see the design principles having played a role in why \_\_\_\_\_ were positive? ELIMINATED
3. What were some of the negative aspects of this project?  
  
ELIMINATED -Could design principles have helped avoid \_\_\_\_\_ from occurring?
4. What training and preparation do you feel worked well and contributed in a positive way to this project?
5. What training and preparation could have been improved in this project?
6. If you were to do this project again, what would you do the same? What would you do differently?
7. Do you have any further comments or questions?

This focus group discussion will take place near the end of the project. Before we end this combined focus group, if it is appropriate, I am hoping to revisit the ranking process, this time asking the group to collaborate on ranking the design principles based on their experience. However, the emergent nature of this research may warrant this step either inappropriate given that there may be very different perspectives. However, I anticipate that between all participants (in-country partners and teacher-candidates) that there will be some agreement as to which principles should be considered most important.

**ELIMINATED**

**Focus Group 3 – In – country partners - Eliminated**

The purpose of this study is to gather feedback from your experience in working with teacher-candidates from the University of British Columbia, Okanagan Faculty of Education to collaborate on developing culturally relevant reading material that supports literacy in your schools.

As our partners and developers of this project, you are being asked comment on whether or not the project met your objectives and your recommendations for future projects. Your feedback will provide valuable information for future projects between student and global partners.

1. Overall, what were some of the objectives that you hoped to accomplish through this collaboration with the student team from Canada?
2. What did you expect from the student team in regards to their role in the book making project?
3. Do you feel that the team met those expectations?

As you know from participating in the initial survey at the beginning of this project I am specifically interested in gathering your feedback regarding the principles we used to for the project's design. Just prior to starting this interview, I asked you to once again to complete the survey and again rate the principles.

4. Did your rating of the principles change at all?
5. If yes, can you tell me why your rating changed?
6. Do your ratings differ from others in this focus group?

We also ranked the principles in order of importance. I will ask you to take a few minutes and revisit the cards a second time and to rank these design principles once again in order of importance to you. When you have finished ranking the principles I will share with you your original rankings.

7. Did your ranking of the principles change?
8. If yes, can you tell me why your ranking changed?
9. Do your rankings differ from others in this focus group?

We will be conducting a final focus group discussion with the teacher-candidates at the end of this project and you will have a final chance to comment on the principles and on your overall experience. Meanwhile, given that we still have some time to work together:

10. Do you have any principles that you would like to see added to the list?

11. Do you see any principles, given your ranking and rating responses, that you think are unnecessary?
12. Do you have any further comments on the design principles?
13. Do you have any further comments on the overall project?

## Appendix G: Exit Interview

Exit Interview Guide: **Teacher candidates** – Global Guided Reflective Inquiry Project (GRIP)

Preamble

As students who have participated in the Global GRIP we are interested in getting your feedback on this experience. You were informed at the beginning of this course, that the Global GRIP was designed using a draft set of principles, and you were presented these principles May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Now that we have completed the project, I am interested in gathering feedback from regarding these principles.

Opening questions:

I would like to begin with a few questions regarding your travel background:

1. Was this the first time you have travelled internationally? Eliminated
2. If not, where else have you travelled?
3. What were some of the more positive aspects of your time in Ghana?
4. What were some of less positive aspects of your time in Ghana?
5. How does this GSL project compare overall to your other travel experiences?

As we have discussed throughout our pre-departure programming, GSL is embedded in experiential learning and requires specific preparation if it is to connect to your program and coursework, particularly in challenging contexts such as this one. Part of the design of the project was to provide you with an extended pre-departure program that would introduce you to cultural, historical and ethical aspects of the project, as well as to introduce the practical skills you would need to make the books.

6. Did you feel the pre-departure readings were helpful in preparing you for this experience?
7. What readings were most useful? What readings least helpful? Eliminated.
8. Did you feel the pre-departure activities were helpful in preparing you for this experience? Which activities were most helpful? Which were least helpful?
9. What was missing from, or would you like to see added to the pre-departure?

One of the principles that guides the design of this project is that it is “of educative value” to student participants.

10. Did you feel that this project contributed to your role as a future teacher?
11. If yes, in what way? TC1, 3, 4
12. If no, why not? TC 2

I would like to ask you a bit about the other design principles. In the preliminary survey you were asked to rate and rank the design principles and to answer a few open ended questions. Prior to this interview, I asked you to revisit those principles and to rate, and rank them a second time, based on your experiences in-country.

13. Did your rating of the design principles change at all as the result of this project?  
Eliminated
14. Did your ranking of the design principles change at all as the result of this project? Eliminated

(If participant is not sure, then at this point share first survey). Eliminated

15. If these did change, can you tell me what might have contributed to these changes? Eliminated
16. What recommendations would you make for designing future projects?  
Eliminated
17. What kind of follow-up would you suggest we include for student participants?  
In-country participants? Eliminated
18. Did the project reflect the final principle “To be situated within the well-being and general happiness of participants – local and global”? If yes, please provide examples; if no, please share why not.
19. What overall recommendations would you make to improve the design of this project?
20. Please take a moment to offer any other comments and feedback that you feel is important.

## Appendix H: Outcomes Survey



3171 EME  
3333 University Way  
Kelowna BC Canada V1V 1V7

### Survey #3 - Outcomes Survey, Teacher Candidates

This survey provides an opportunity for you to reflect on your participation in the international GRIP opportunity in Ghana. While there were numerous discussions, interviews and observations shared during the service project, it is often only after returning home that participants have a chance to critically evaluate the experience. You may refuse to participate in the survey, or to respond to specific questions. All answers will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purposes of this study. All responses will be kept in a password secure folder on the researcher's personal computer.

The survey is in two parts. The first part of the survey is an outcomes exercise that provides an opportunity to reflect how your participation in this international GRIP project may have changed you in significant ways, including increasing your understanding of development and preparing you for future employment in a teaching role. It may provide you with ideas as to how you can summarize those positive changes and integrate that information into a resume (VIDEA, 2012).

The second part of the survey is an opportunity to provide detailed feedback on various aspects of the project, what worked and what might be done differently for future projects. Your feedback will provide valuable input for future projects.

Thank you for your continued participation in this international GRIP project.

## Outcomes Survey<sup>4</sup>

As you read the following statements, **check** each change that you believe has occurred in you. Be honest! There are no right or wrong answers, only statements that you agree do, or do not, apply to you.

\_\_\_ I have a greater capacity to accept differences in others and to tolerate other peoples' actions and ideas.

\_\_\_ I am more knowledgeable about another culture and lifestyle.

\_\_\_ I have improved my ability to communicate with people for whom English is not their first language.

\_\_\_ I have a greater ability to empathize.

\_\_\_ I am more flexible and open to change.

\_\_\_ I now understand and appreciate how much educational systems can differ across cultures.

\_\_\_ I have a greater willingness to take on roles and tasks to which I am not accustomed.

\_\_\_ I find myself regularly reflecting about the overseas experience and its meaning for me.

\_\_\_ I see the world as more interconnected than ever before.

\_\_\_ I have a greater sympathy for the struggles of international students and immigrants as a result of my experience.

\_\_\_ I can see myself more objectively (i.e. I see my own day to day problems in a broader context).

\_\_\_ I feel that this experience helped clarify my goals and values.

\_\_\_ I see my own cultural values more clearly and understand how and why they differ from others.

\_\_\_ I am sensitive to subtle features of my own culture that have not seen before.

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<sup>4</sup> Survey adapted with permission from Victoria International Development Education Association's (2014) *80 Outcomes Exercise*.

\_\_\_I have a both a greater appreciation for Canadian culture and a clearer critical sense of its limitations and problems.

\_\_\_I appreciate Canadian efficiency but miss the different pace of life abroad.

\_\_\_I have deepened my understanding of diverse development approaches.

\_\_\_I have a greater awareness of how I can contribute toward sustainable international development and appropriate ways that I can support the fight against global injustice.

### **Open-Ended Questions**

- 1) Why did you choose to participate in this International GRIP opportunity?
- 2) What preparation, readings or activities conducted prior to your departure to Ghana supported you while you were in the field?
- 3) Now that you have had some time to reflect, please describe what you felt to be the most positive experiences of this international opportunity.
- 4) Please describe some of the most challenging experiences of this international opportunity.
- 5) Could the pre-departure preparation have better addressed some of the challenges you faced in the field? If so, how?
- 6) How has your experience affected your view of international service projects?
- 7) As a student enrolled in a professional program (teaching) do you feel you were able to apply your professional training in a meaningful way? How might this project influence your future role as a teacher?
- 8) If you had the opportunity to participate in another service learning program would you do so?

9) What advice would you give future students participating in an international project?

10) Has this experience influenced your relationships here at home?

11) What have you learned about yourself from participating in this experience? Did it change you? If so, how?

### **Design Principles:**

As you are aware, this project was designed using a draft set of principles that intentionally sought to address issues raised in the literature. I would like to know more about your thoughts on the individual design principles. Please comment on the extent to which the project may or may not have achieved the following objectives:

A good GSL project should:

1. Be of educative value to students
2. Be of contextual value to in-country hosts by addressing a need or benefit that is identified by the host
3. Not replace work that is done by in-country workers
4. Include appropriate pre-departure program that reflects on current challenges and introduces historical, geographical, and contemporary factors that have led to, or continue to perpetuate localized challenges.
5. Include appropriate pre-departure training that includes ethical considerations regarding the use and abuse of photography and social media, the potential for cultural imperialism, power and privilege, and responsible ways of working.
6. Include appropriate pre-departure program that introduces student participants to the required skills for planned, in-country activities.
7. Encourage in-country involvement in as much of the work as possible and to cede authority and control to partners wherever possible

8. Be informed by principles of sustainability
9. Be informed by principles of appropriate technology
10. Be affordable to all parties
11. Attend to the safety and well-being of all participants
12. Provide structured re-entry process that allows students the opportunity for discussion and reflection on their experience.
13. Provide a follow up process to assess both short and long-term impacts of project.
14. Be fun and situated with the well-being and general happiness of participants, both local and global.

Please provide any additional comments:

In order for your responses to remain confidential, please return the surveys to \_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia.

Thank you for your participation in this GSL Project and in this final survey.

Sincerely

Dr. Susan Crichton, Principal Investigator  
Director Innovative Learning Centre  
Associate Professor  
University of British Columbia  
3163 EME Building  
3333 University Way  
Kelowna BC V1V 1V7  
(250) 807-8638

Cynthia Bourne  
Co-Investigator  
PhD (candidate)  
Faculty of Education  
Fipke 222, 3333 University Way  
Kelowna, B.C. V1V 1V7  
(250) 807-8065

## Appendix I: Follow-up Survey



3171 EME  
3333 University Way  
Kelowna BC Canada V1V 1V7

### Survey #4 – Follow-up Survey, In-Country Partners.

This survey is to follow-up on your experiences in working with teacher-candidates from the University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus who recently participated in a GSL project situated in your school district. As you were made aware throughout our conversations and interviews while in Ghana, the project was designed using a draft set of principles intended to help make it a good project. A number of those principles were directly related to the experience of in-country partners who collaborated on the project. Now that you have had time to reflect on the project, the books, the spirit of collaboration intended between teacher-candidates and Nabdam District staff and the learning experience for your students, we ask that you take a few moments to answer this follow up survey.

Questions:

Closed Questions. *Likert Scale*. On a scale of 5, with 5 being very included and 1 being not very included:

To what extent did you feel included in this project?

Very included (5)      (4)      (3)      (2)      (1) Not very included

*Comments:*

To what extent was this project effective addressing a need or benefit identified by your district?

Very effective (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not very effective

*Comments:*

To what extent do you rate the teacher-candidates reflected cultural sensitivity?

*Comments*

Very culturally sensitive (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not very culturally sensitive

*Comments*

To what extent do you rate the competency of the teacher-candidates in the practical skills need to complete the project?

Very competent (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not very competent

*Comments*

To what extent was this project effective in reflecting the available technology for your school district?

Very effective (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not very effective

*Comments*

To what extent was this project effective in reflecting the principles of sustainability for your school district?

Very effective (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not very effective

*Comments*

To what extent was this project effective in contributing to the well-being of your students?

*Comments*

Very effective (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not very effective

To what extent was this project effective in contributing to your own well-being?

*Comments*

Very effective (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not very effective

To what extent do you feel this project will contribute to literacy in your **school district**?

*Comments*

Very effective (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not very effective

To what extent do you feel this project will contribute to literacy in your community?

*Comments*

Very effective (5) (4) (3) (2) (1) Not very effective

## **Appendix J: Promotional Materials**

### **Literacy in Challenging contexts: Ghana**

#### **About the program**

How can post-secondary students position their learning in ways that can make a difference?

One way is to participate in projects that connect their learning to real world challenges. This Go Global Seminar offers an opportunity for students to make this connection by participating in a service-learning project to create culturally relevant material that supports literacy in rural Ghana. UBC student participants will collaborate with schools in the Nabdam District and a local language committee to create materials that can help address literacy issues.

The project is located in the Upper East Region, Ghana, West Africa, a region where the lack of culturally relevant reading material plays a major role in contributing to low literacy rates. The schools develop a number of story ideas and book projects throughout the year, and UBC participants bring the storyboarding, photography, and English language expertise to turn some of those projects into books that support that Ghanaian curriculum. The project will run from approximately June 10th to July 12th, 2017 and builds on a previous project conducted in the same region in June 2014 and 2015 (see <https://news.ok.ubc.ca/education/2014/07/11/ubc-students-help-commit-ghana-folktales-to-print-for-the-very-first-time/>.)

While this Go Global seminar is a service-learning project, participants will also have many opportunities to visit attractions that provide insight into the rich culture and heritage of the Ghanaian people. Students will be housed in the city of Bolgatanga, Upper East Ghana, and will be working with nearby schools within the Nabdam School District. The project will also include a professional development workshop with local teachers, as well as opportunities to contribute to adult education programs recently established in the region.

#### **General Timeline**

This project is situated in a region that faces numerous challenges. As such students will be required to attend pre-departure sessions to introduce them to cultural and ethical considerations of engaging in challenging contexts. The pre-departure program will also provide instruction in storyboarding and photography techniques that develop the skills required for creating print-on-demand books. Pre-departure activities will also acquaint participants with in-country host goals and objectives. The pre-departure sessions will be planned at a mutually beneficial time for all participants, but are considered mandatory.

Students will arrive in Accra, Ghana approximately June 11th then travel north to Bolgatanga arriving on June 12th, and begin working in the local schools by June 14th.

**Program Fee:**

*\*Final amount TBA. The program fee will depend on the number of students in the program*

**NOTE:** The program fee will be offset by \$1,000 for UBC students qualifying for the Go Global Award (i.e., those students with a 70% average over 24 credits during the 2015-2016 academic year).

**INCLUDED in Program Fee**

- Go Global Fee
- Accommodations
- On-site group transportation
- Most meals
- Entrance fees
- Guest Lectures

**NOT Included in Program Fee**

- Flight
- UBC Tuition (6 credits)
- Visas (if necessary)
- Remainder of meals
- Health or travel insurance
- Immunizations (if necessary)
- Personal spending money

**Coursework**

**EDUC 430: GRIP - guided reflective inquiry project**

**Eligibility and prerequisite**

This four-week Global Seminar is offered by UBC Okanagan's Faculty of Education and provides an opportunity for students to participate in a project-based, learner-centered exercise to extend their knowledge of education theory and practice. Because the project requires extensive pre-departure programming, participation in this seminar is limited to students enrolled at UBC's Okanagan Campus. Education students who will be completing Elementary Teacher Education Program, or the Secondary Teacher Education Program during the 2016/2017 academic year are eligible to apply and will receive credit for their EDU 430 Guided Reflective Inquiry Project (GRIP). Upper level students with

third or fourth year standing, but who are not enrolled in the Faculty of Education teaching programs, are eligible to apply.

**Program Dates:**

Summer Term 1: Start Date June 11<sup>th</sup> to July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Information Sessions:

TBC

Application deadline and Instructions:

Monday, November 16, 2015 (TBC)

*Eligible applicants will be invited for an interview before being accepted into this program.*

Please send any questions about applying to this program to Dana Lowton, Go Global Coordinator at [dana.lowton@ubc.ca](mailto:dana.lowton@ubc.ca)

## Appendix K: Original Research Questions to Final Research Questions

Original Research Questions:		Final Research Questions
How might we understand the extent to which a set of project design principles might have contributed to the outcomes of a GSL project situated in a challenging context?		How might we understand the extent to which a set of project design principles might have contributed to the outcomes of a GSL project situated in a challenging context?
1. How do student participants, In-country Partners and institutional stakeholders define a good project?	Became	1. To what extent did the participants consider the GSL project as worth doing?
2. What are the similarities and differences for various stakeholders in defining a good project? DELETED	Deleted	2. To what extent did the design principles appear to influence the project's outcomes?
3. To what extent did participants identify the principles as being important to the project's design?	Addressed	3. To what extent did the participants' intentions differ from the researcher/designer's intentions?
4. Which, if any of these principles did not contribute to a good project? DELETED	Deleted	4. What challenges did participants face in this GSL Project?
5. What design principles, if any, might In-country partners and institutional stakeholders want to see added to the list? DELETED	Deleted	5. How might the goodness of a GSL project be evaluated based on these design principles?
6. How might we evaluate the goodness of a project based on these principles?	Kept – (became Q.5)	6. How might the findings from this study inform higher education policy and practice when designing GSL projects in challenging contexts?