

**Facilitating transformative learning
through university-led international projects**

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This Master's project is dedicated to my mom and uncle Wayne.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Universities have an opportunity to play role in (international) community development through university-led international projects. In doing so they can engage students in experiential and service learning projects. When students are engaged in these types of initiatives they gain a unique opportunity for transformative learning.

The Faculty of Global and Community Studies at Capilano University, the client for this report, has been engaging students and faculty in community tourism training projects and service learning opportunities in Vietnam for over a decade. Tourism Management and Outdoor Recreation Management students volunteer to play an active role in project activities that include the development and delivery of tourism training and capacity building programs in ethnic minority villages in Northern Vietnam. Faculty work along side students in the planning and implementation of the actual trip to Vietnam as well as project activities in the field. Project trips are usually approximately two weeks in length, however some students have gone for up to six months. Students have described their experience on the project as life changing.

Understanding how life changing, especially in regards to transformative learning, these trips have been for students, as well as how faculty have fostered those transformative learning experiences, are the general themes of this report. Specifically, this project aimed to answer the following questions:

- How can educators facilitate student learning transformations within the context of a university-led international project?
- To what extent was the students' transformative learning experience an outcome of the educator?
- In what ways did the educator affect the transformative learning experience?

To answer these questions, findings from eleven participant interviews were contrasted and compared with a range of academic literature on transformative learning and the transformative learning process, as well as experiential and service learning pedagogies. The findings suggested that students who were engaged in the Capilano University's community tourism training project(s) in Vietnam did, in fact, have transformative learning experiences and that faculty did play a role in those experiences. Participants shared experiences that mimicked the phases of transformative learning found within the literature. For example, participants storied moments where they felt disoriented and challenged. Students also shared narratives about how they engaged in critical reflection as part of the project experience. Faculty were seen to play an active role within the narratives, specifically in facilitating a safe and supportive environment, acting as guides, mentors and experts, and fostering reflection.

Based on the results of the findings, and supported by the discourse found in the literature on transformative learning, five recommendations were developed for Capilano University faculty, specifically within the university's Faculty of Global and Community Studies, leading (international) community-university partnership projects and/or (international) service learning curriculum. These recommendations include:

- Broadening the role of the educator to one that is participatory, and more collaborative and cooperative, in the learning process.
- Integration of the transformative learning process into international programs, service learning opportunities and appropriate course pedagogy.

- Encouraging educator-led critical reflection within the learning outcomes of projects, programs and courses.
- Fostering a transformative learning environment that is supportive and empathetic to transformative learning.
- Conducting further research on:
 - What the role of the educator is on transformative learning, from the perspective of the educator.
 - To what extent participation in (international) projects is transformative for educators.

It is hoped that the results of this research project contribute to the academic enrichment of Capilano Univeirsty's (international) experiential and service learning projects and programs.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In a globalized world with unresolved social, political, economic and environmental challenges, education that helps build peaceful and sustainable societies is essential. Education systems seldom fully integrate such transformative approaches, however. It is vital therefore to give a central place in SDG4-Education 2030 to strengthening education's contribution to the fulfillment of human rights, peace and responsible citizenship from local to global levels, gender equality, sustainable development and health. (UNESCO, 2016, p. 49)

University-community partnerships are an opportunity for post secondary institutions to, not only, engage adult learners in social justice and citizenship, but also, enrich students' learning. Engaging students in community projects, both locally and internationally, through service learning curriculum and projects, positions students in learning environments that are potentially transformative in nature. Transformative learning occurs when a learner experiences a shift in worldview and meaning perspective (Mezirow, 1978). These experiences challenge the way students see the world around them and how they fit into a world within a global context. Transformative learning experiences provide learners the opportunity to reflect on their values, and offers space to reintegrate new perspectives into their lives.

At Capilano University, the Faculty of Global and Community Studies has made efforts to engage their students in international projects. Specifically, the Tourism Management and Outdoor Recreation Management Programs have led ongoing community tourism training projects in Northern Vietnam since 2002. The international projects engage students in an international volunteer service learning experience facilitated by Capilano University faculty. The experience sees students travelling to Vietnam to work alongside faculty in the delivery of tourism-related training and capacity building programs in the region of Sapa. It is assumed that the experiential learning gained while engaged in the project is transformative for the students, as many have expressed that the trip was *life changing*, however assessing the impacts of the project on students' learning has never been a measure of the projects' success. From the perspective of the Faculty of Global and Community Studies, engaging students in these types of projects is a strategic decision as the transformative learning experienced by students aligns well with the academic directions of the institution, and adds value beyond the outcomes of the project.

What then, is the best way forward to ensure the community-university projects that combat local and global issues, also enrich the academic experience for participants? The Faculty of Global and Community Studies at Capilano University are making efforts towards "enhancing knowledge of transformative education approaches within the Faculty" (p. 4). Through the following investigation a greater understanding of students' transformative learning experiences and how these experiences can be best facilitated by educators will be gained. Additionally, a set of recommendations related to the role of educators in facilitating transformative learning experiences for students have been formed. These recommendations will inform Capilano University Global and Community Studies faculty who lead future (international) service learning programs and community projects.

The primary point of contact for this master's project is Capilano University's Dean of Global and Community Studies. Dr. Bottrill has been involved in the projects in varying capacities including and most recently, as the Project Director. The author and researcher of this report has also been involved in the projects in varying a capacities including: student volunteer (2006-2007), and

Project Manger (2010 – 2017). From 2012 to 2017, the author was also a faculty member in Capilano University's Faculty of Global and Community Studies.

1.1 Objective and research question

The objective of this master's project is to analyze the experiences of Capilano University's Faculty of Global and Community Studies' students who have participated in Capilano University's Vietnam community tourism training projects to better understand if and how the experience has been transformative for the student(s). Thus, this study seeks to answer the following question: **How can educators facilitate student learning transformations within the context of a university-led international project?** To answer this question the following research objectives will be addressed:

1. To what extent was the students' transformative learning experience an outcome of the educator?
2. In what ways did the educator affect the transformative learning experience?

For the purpose of this research project, past student participants from the community tourism training projects were asked to share their stories through a semi-structured interview. It was decided the scope of this project would focus only on the accounts of students.

1.2 Deliverables

Generally, this research will greater inform to what extent Capilano University's community tourism training project has engaged students in transformative learning experiences. Further, it will offer additional understanding as to the role faculty played in those learning experiences.

The answers to these questions have also informed a set of recommendations for Capilano University educators within the Faculty of Global and Community Studies facilitating international projects as well as experiential and (international) service learning-based programs and courses. Integration of these recommendations will be achieved through professional development workshops with relevant and interested faculty. Furthermore, the concluding set of recommendations will be available and shared in professional development sessions with those from Capilano University's faculty responsible for leading and facilitating international field study courses.

1.4 Organization of the report

This report is organized into eight chapters. It will begin by setting the context of which the research project is grounded in: Capilano University and the Vietnam community tourism training projects it has administered and engaged students in since 2002. The following two chapters will include a description of the methods and methodology, as well as a literature review focused on the transformative learning, the process and facilitation of within the context of university-community partnerships. A chapter will follow this on the interview findings. A discussion on the findings as they relate to relevant literature will then be included, followed by a final section that will present a set of recommendations and concluding remarks.

The inception of these projects was initiated by the Faculty of Global and Community Studies, in coordination with the Dean and faculty members, and is mandated only by their relativeness to, in this context, the Tourism Management and Outdoor Recreation Management Programs. In other words, faculty are not required to administer these projects however, the projects lend themselves well to Capilano University's mission and institutional goals (Capilano University, n.d.).

2.2 Academic direction towards transformative learning

Over the last few years, the Capilano University community as a whole and as individual faculties has collaborated to define an academic direction for the institution. Although the planning documents suggest a range of themes and strategies, one element of the direction is academic enrichment through transformative learning and transformation.

2.2.1 Capilano University's Academic Plan 2014-2018

In 2013, Capilano University completed a participatory process to create its *Academic Plan 2013-2018*. The plan serves as a harbinger of the future direction of the university. Inherent in the plan, are themes related to a global-community and change making, as well as ideas that learning at Capilano University is experiential, applied and transformative (Capilano University, 2014). The university has put forward the desire to engage its students in experiential learning experiences and transformative learning processes. This project is thus timely, as the university moves forward with new direction.

To begin, the *Academic Plan* highlights experiential education as the *cornerstone* of its pedagogy as it is integrated in almost all offered programs (Capilano University, 2014). Directly linked to this study, Capilano University has cited transformative learning as a product of *practice* (Capilano University, 2014). The institution alludes that the notion of *transformative* "refers to the changes that occur in students with regard to their beliefs, behaviours, and sense of self" (Capilano University, 2014, p. 17). The plan continues by describing the institution as a "place where students can actively participate in the creation of their personal and professional selves while engaging in a transformative learning process that places them in a larger context" (Capilano University, 2014, p. 17) The academic plan positions students and faculty, among others, in a collaborative academic partnership; one that sees both parties "work[ing] together to understand and achieve a transformative learning experience" (Capilano University, 2014, p. 21).

2.2.2 Faculty Global and Community Studies Academic Planning Framework (2013)

Stemming from the processes involved in the development of the Capilano University's Academic Plan, the Faculty of Community and Global Studies collaborated to create an *Academic Planning Framework*. The Faculty includes a range of programs including: Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Management, Human Kinetics, Global Stewardship and Public Administration.

Further supporting the institutions notions of facilitating transformative learning, the Faculty of Global and Community Studies' *Academic Planning Framework* also includes support for transformative learning (Faculty of Global and Community Studies, 2013). Defining and setting goals around *academic enrichment* were the objectives highlighted within the framework. The notion of transformation among other themes was included as an element of academic enrichment (Faculty of Global and Community Studies, 2013).

With this in mind, the Faculty of Global and Community Studies is engaging in the opportunity to enhance academic enrichment through a number of goals. One of the goals listed in the framework includes, “Be a leader in transformative education to maximize learner potential for positive contribution and success” through “Enhancing knowledge of transformative education approaches within the Faculty” (p. 4).

Since 2002, the Faculty of Global and Community Studies’ School of Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Management faculty have led community tourism training projects in Vietnam. As will be discussed in greater detail below, these projects engage students in international experiential and service learning opportunities. They also provide, as stated in *Faculty of Community and Global and Community Studies Academic Planning Framework*, “meaningful, rewarding, and engaging projects relative to each field of study at global, regional and community levels” (Faculty of Global and Community Studies, 2013, p. 2).

2.2.3 How Transformative Education can Enrich Lives – Cross Cultural Learning in Northern Vietnam (2016)

Dr. Chris Bottrill’s discussion paper, *How Transformative Education can Enrich Lives – Cross Cultural Learning in Northern Vietnam*, details qualities of the community tourism training projects as they relate to the experiential and transformative learning students encountered while volunteering in Vietnam (Bottrill, 2016). Bottrill (2016) explores discussions with students and relates their experiences and learning to their tourism studies, career objectives, cross cultural interpretations and worldview. In many respects, the paper is a demonstration of the keen interest Dr. Bottrill has in the topic of transformative learning and was a starting point for this report.

2.3 Capilano University’s tourism-training projects in Vietnam

Capilano University’s Faculty of Global of Community Studies’ Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Management Program has led tourism training and capacity building projects in Vietnam for over a decade. Working with a partner university, Hanoi Open University (HOU), in Vietnam, the project has engaged students and faculty in the implementation of project activities. An initial five-year project, from 2002 to 2006, funded by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges through the Canadian International Development Agency focused on two ethnic minority villages in the Sapa region of northern Vietnam. Volunteer students and faculty from Capilano University partnered with tourism students and faculty from HOU in the development and delivery of training. North Island College faculty and students also participated as training partners in the five-year project (CBT Vietnam, n.d.-a). Four additional rounds of funding from the Pacific Asia Tourism Association (PATA) Foundation allowed for the continuation of community tourism development work in the Sapa region, including one other ethnic minority community, from 2010 to 2017 (Capilano University, 2010; Capilano University, 2012; Capilano University 2013b; Capilano University 2014b; Capilano University 2017).

The ultimate goals of the projects have been to “reduce poverty, create employment opportunities, and improve quality of life” (Capilano University, 2013, p. 1) in the communities. Similarly, the objectives of the project(s) have been centered on tourism-related developments in the village(s) (Capilano University, 2012). Nevertheless, a recent paper written by Dean, Dr. Bottrill, stated that one of the goals of the Vietnam Community Based Tourism was to “... provide quality experiential and potentially transformational leaning experiences” (Bottrill, 2016, p.4) for students. The vast majority of the students who have taken part in the project have been Tourism Management and/or Outdoor Recreation Management students (CBT Vietnam, n.d.-b).

Capilano University students who have participated in the project are selected through a three-part application process. Training and preparation for the trips varies from trip to trip and from student group to student group. Nevertheless, students are involved in a variety of tasks and projects related to the overall training program, as well as the specific trip they attend. Students participate in a range of pre-trip activities that include: knowledge and information gathering sessions, trip planning and the development of training materials. Following the trip, students are asked to complete a report and, as well, are engaged in debriefing activities in the form of meet-ups, blogging and journaling.

Capilano University students play an integral part, as active volunteers, in the community tourism training projects administered by Capilano University's Tourism Management and Outdoor Recreation Management Programs. These programs are not part of the Tourism Management or Outdoor Recreation Management curriculum. In other words, students do not receive credits for being part of the project. Instead, these service learning opportunities have been implemented to offer students a vehicle to practice skills and theories learned in the classroom in a real-world situation. The projects also give students an opportunity to be agents of change as global citizens. Approximately 60 Capilano University students have traveled abroad and volunteered as community development practitioners and trainers in tourism from 2002 to present. The international experiences last between approximately ten days to six months. In 2016 and 2017, students involved in the project were required to enroll in an accredited course, either the *TOUR 206 – Directed Study in Tourism* or the *TOUR 306 – Directed Study in Tourism* course. The course was led by a faculty member who was attending the trip. The Directed Study course that the students enrolled in include assignments that would require student to engage in reporting as it related to their project-related, student-led activities, journaling and personal reflection. It is important to note that while the students were required to enroll in the course, there was a separation between course work and project work.

Capilano University faculty also play an integral role in the community tourism training projects. They are active in the development and delivery of training. They are critical in ensuring that the project's objectives are fulfilled. Faculty manage most of the logistics of the trip and are responsible for the safety of the students while abroad. Further, as educators, they play a significant role in facilitating the student experience.

In some respects, the Capilano University community tourism training project(s) could be split into two different projects in terms of the primary funding source. At a glance, the programs inherent in the projects were similar in terms of objectives and activities; however, there were some critical differences in terms of the length of time students remained in the field. For example, the lengths of trips differed significantly, in some instances from days to months. Finally, the scale of the project(s) differed in respect to the number of student volunteers and educators who go on the trips.

The scope of the projects' reporting has had minimal focus on student learning. Specifically, the project has based its success on tourism-related, socio-economic developments observed and/or measured in the Sapa communities. For example, reports articulate project success through the delivery of training and the assessment of program learning outcomes, built tourism capacity of village individuals and anecdotal evidence relating to positive or negative changes of tourism development (Capilano University, 2010; Capilano University, 2012; Capilano University 2013b; Capilano University 2014b; Capilano University 2017). In some respects, the university-community partnership being employed by Capilano University has not been adequately evaluated because it

has not fully assessed the impacts it has had on the students (or faculty) who have participated in it. Thus, this report is a means of indirectly examining an alternative set of outcomes of the project, that being student-learning transformations.

4.0 METHODS & METHODOLOGY

This study inherently reconnects Capilano University students with their service learning experiences working on the Capilano University Vietnam community tourism training project(s) as student volunteers. Through a reflective process, an analysis of student-volunteers' transformative learning experiences will take place. Further understanding of the transformative learning experience(s), if any, will offer clues that will lead this report towards ultimately formulating a set of key recommendations for facilitators and educators involved in Capilano University (international) community-university projects involving students and (international) service learning course curriculum, thus adding value and academically enriching the programs and/or curriculum. The recommendations will be delivered at professional development sessions to interested Capilano University Global and Community Studies faculty in presentation form. An executive summary of the research and outcomes will also be made available to faculty. Due to the scope of the paper, however, a primary focus will be placed on future university-led international community development projects, as opposed to curriculum.

Thus, this qualitative study will seek to answer the question: how can educators facilitate student learning transformations within the context of a university-led international project? To answer this, students who have participated in Capilano University's Vietnam community tourism training project(s) will be interviewed about their experiences while engaged in the project and project activities.

This section will include a discussion on this study's general research strategy as it relates to the literature on transformative learning and transformative learning process. Following, this section will include discussions on this study's research methods, the data collection and analysis process, and the limitations and delimitations of the research. Finally, a discussion on the ethics approval process will conclude this section.

4.1 Research strategy

The qualitative research strategy that informed the research for this project was grounded in the analysis of the experiences and stories of Capilano University alumni who were student volunteers on the university's community tourism training project(s) in Vietnam. Stories are the purposeful account of an event or experience (Hoonard, 2015; Merriam & Kim, 2012). They are used to help people make sense of those experiences (Merriam & Kim, 2012) and by nature, complement this research as they relate to transformative learning experiences. They also "reveal something about what makes us tick, about turning points in our path, about our fundamental beliefs, convictions, and habits" (Hoonard, 2015, p. 163). Narrative analysis, in other words, the analysis of stories as a methodology falls within the realm of *interpretive research* (Hoonard, 2015) and has been supported as a methodology in the transformative learning literature (Merriam & Kim, 2012).

The synthesization of the data collected from the methods below have informed the following analysis and discourse on transformative learning because stories allow researchers to "understand how our participants understand their place in the world and how they interpret their own status in relation to others" (Hoonard, 2015, p. 163). Supporting this concept, Merriam and Kim (2012) state that "because people make meaning of their lives through stories [the] narrative analysis is a particularly rich approach to understating more about transformative learning" (p. 64).

4.2.1 Literature review

This report has been rooted in Mezirow's foundational works (1978a; 1978b; 1997; 1998; 2000) on transformative learning and transformative learning process (Stone & Duffy, 2015). However, discourse around critical reflection as it relates to transformative learning, as well as community-university partnerships, and (international) service learning have helped frame the discussions and data analysis in this study. The literature review in this report reflects on almost 40 years of scholarly works; however some attention has been given on papers published in the last decade to add relevance to outcomes of the research.

4.2.2 Interviews

For the purpose of this qualitative study, primary research was attained though focused, in-depth, key informant interviews. The semi-structured interviews followed an interview guide with approximately 15 questions (see *Appendix 11.3*). Participants were asked to reflect on their participation and share personal experiences while engaged as student volunteers on the Capilano University Vietnam community tourism training project(s). All questions and subsequent and/or clarifying questions were asked "to allow [participants] to explain their experiences, attitudes, feelings, and definitions of the situation in their own terms and in ways that [were] meaningful to them" (Hoonard, 2015, p. 102). In effect, the questions were structured to encourage participants to share their experiences in the form of mini-stories, followed by some further structured questioning for clarification. The sequence of questions followed a framework related to the literature's discourse on the process of transformative learning (Christopher et al., 2014; Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Nohl, 2015; Stone & Duffy, 2015; Mezirow, 2000) and a reflection of Mezirow's (2000) original ten phases of transformative learning.

The interview questions were designed to have participants describe their experience as student volunteers while playing an active role before, during and after their term on the project completed. More specifically, questions asked participants to reflect, consider and highlight significant moments where they may have experienced changes in their ideas and perspectives. Finally, questions were asked about the role of faculty leads in regards to project preparation, project activities, as well as related to any learning transformations of the participants.

4.2.2.1 Setting

Approximately 60 Capilano University student volunteers and educators have participated in Capilano University's community tourism training projects in Vietnam from 2002 to the present. Most of the students have graduated, however there are some that are still studying at Capilano University. All of the participants in this study have graduated with either a Tourism Management Degree or Diploma, or an Outdoor Recreation Management Diploma, and thus are considered alumni of Capilano University and the community tourism training project(s) this study relates to.

The preliminary goal of connecting with 10 past student volunteers representative of different years of the project was achieved through email invitations. In fact, a total of 11 participants took part in the interview process. Related to the nature of student transformations, this goal presented an added opportunity in terms of delineating the nature of learning transformations experienced during or (long) after the project experience.

4.2.2.2 Participants

All of the participants in the study will have participated in the international experience in Vietnam and the community-university partnership led by Capilano University. All of the participants were also Capilano University graduates, and thus would also be referred in the literature as adult learners (Mezirow, 2000; Strain, 2006; Brock, 2009). Their participation in this study was completely voluntary.

In total, 11 participants completed the interview. The participants represented the two primary projects, as motioned above, from 2002 – 2006 and from 2010 – 2017. In terms of years, participants were on project trips in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017. The majority of the participants' were in Vietnam for approximately ten to 14 days, however one participant completed a six-month term in Vietnam in 2003. Three of the participants participated on more than one trip.

4.2.2.3 Procedures

Upon approval from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board, 20 of potential participants from a pool of past Capilano University Vietnam community tourism training project student volunteers were emailed an invitation (see *Appendix 11.1*) to participate. A total of 11 offered their participation. An interview time and location that was convenient for the participant was the agreed upon. A signed *Participant Consent Form* (see *Appendix 11.2*) was garnered from each participant before the interview took place.

Each participant engaged in an in-depth interview lasting approximately one hour. A primary challenge of the study was found in the development of an interview framework and interview questions (see *Appendix 11.3*) that would allow for needed information on the transformative learning experiences of the students to present themselves.

All interviews were audio recorded and digitally transcribed for analysis.

4.2.3 Document review

A document review of documents related to the project and the experiences and activities that involved and engaged student volunteers was conducted. Data collected from informants related to the dates they served on the project helped to inform the background section of this report, as well as the participants' narratives gained from the in the interviews. Specifically the following documents were reviewed:

- Project reporting from 2010, 2012, 2013 2014 and 2017;
- Course Outline: TOUR 206 – Directed Study in Tourism – CBT Vietnam Project;
- Course Outline: TOUR 306 – Directed Study in Tourism – CBT Vietnam Project.

4.3 Data analysis

Upon completion and transcribing of the interviews all data was categorized by question and then coded for analysis. Coding was established to reflect themes, patterns and issues related and relevant to the research question and sub questions, and literature review. Using the software application NVivo, the research was coded to illustrate occurrences of transformation based on participant narratives around changes in perspectives, feelings and attitudes as well as occurrences that resembled disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection and/or integration of new frames of

reference. Coding was also used to highlight incidents where faculty were engaged in the student participants' experience(s).

4.4 Limitations & delimitations

The critical limitation to this report was securing the needed interviews. The Capilano University Vietnam community tourism training projects had involved students since 2002, and thus connecting with past student volunteers did present challenges in terms of attaining a suitable sample representing different year/reiterations of the project.

This study was purposely student-centric in the gathering of the data. In other words, all of the interview participants were project alumni and graduates of Capilano University's Tourism and/or Outdoor Recreation Management programs. It was determined that engaging faculty in the collection of data was better within the scope of a secondary research project.

Also, in regards to the literature review, the scope of the literature pertaining to transformative learning and service learning is wide reaching. There is a myriad of literature on the topics. Although some critical, fundamental papers will be included in the discussion, the primary scope of the literature review will be focused on papers written within the last decade. This will ensure that the report is relevant considering the current direction of the client.

Finally, it should be noted that throughout the interview process, it was observed that because of my personal connection to the project(s) that I had an enhanced connection with the interviewees. In fact, in some cases some of the narratives that were shared by the participants included me as part of the experience. Because of this connection, the context and details of the experience were mutually understood. Interpretation of what was shared and being said was also sometimes mutually understood. In order to manage my engagement, clarification was sometimes needed in order to eliminate any assumptions. In regards to the findings, I have maintained my anonymity throughout.

4.5 Ethics

This study has earned approval and meets the ethical standards required by the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (HREB). To achieve this, a *Human Research Ethics Board Application for Research Ethics Approval for Human Participant Research* was completed and approved. As well, all participants received an *Invitation to Participate* as well as a *Participant Consent Form* prior to the interview outlining the purpose and objectives of the study, level of involvement, considerations of confidentiality, dissemination of results, and disposal of the data. All participants were informed that their involvement was strictly voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time.

5.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is not an exhaustive analysis of the scholarly literature in transformative learning. However, it does seek to shed light on the concepts and theories related to this study. This literature review will be grounded in Mezirow's (1978a; 1978b; 1997; 1998; 2000) foundational works (Stone & Duffy, 2015) on transformative learning and critical reflection in the context of adult learning.

Specifically, this chapter will define transformative learning and detail the transformative learning experience, including a discussion on the phases of transformative learning, as it has been articulated throughout nearly four decades of scholarly writing and debate (Dirkx, 1998; Lundgren & Poell, 2016; Stone & Duffy, 2015). Following, drawing from more contemporary works on transformative learning, a discussion on the role of the educator and facilitating transformative learning will conclude this section. Finally, this literature review will include a comprehensive scan of the literature in relation to the taxonomy and approaches of transformative learning, including experiential and service learning pedagogies as well as tourism education, in the context of community-university partnerships.

5.1 Transformative learning

An early definition of transformative learning simply suggested that it is a "process of effecting change in a frame of reference" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). In other words, according to Mezirow (1978), a change in frame of reference or as the author also refers to, as a *new meaning perspective*, is an existential shift in one's affecting convictions. A learner's frame of reference or meaning perspectives are developed "through an accumulation of experiences" (Snyder, 2008, p. 165). They are "sets of fixed assumptions and expectations" (Mezirow, 2003, p. 58), for example:

...fixed interpersonal relationships, political orientations, cultural biases, ideologies, schemata, stereotyped attitudes and practices, occupational habits of mind, religious doctrine, moral-ethical norms, psychological preferences and schema, paradigms in science and mathematics, frames in linguistics and social sciences, and aesthetic values and standards. (Mezirow, 2003, p. 59)

Other reiterations of the definition of transformative learning highlight a change in perspective (Bamber & Hankin, 2011; Brock, 2009; Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Kitchenham, 2008; Illeris, 2014; Nohl et al., 2000), as well as changes in points of view, habits of mind (Mezirow, 1997), and cultural ethnocentrism (Lange, 2004; Mezirow, 1997; Mezirow, 2000). The transformational experience, however, has been described as a change in one's beliefs, in one's meaning of life, or one's values in the context of social justice (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Scholars cite an examination or change in worldview (Brock, 2009; Kitchenham, 2008; Lange 2004; Meyers, 2009), articulated by Sterling (2010) as "the experience of seeing our worldview rather than seeing *with* our worldview" (p. 23). In summary, transformative learners engage in a process of how they interpret the world around them. The resulting transformation sees a shift in "thought, feelings, and actions" (O'Sullivan, Morrell, & O'Connor, 2002, as cited in O'Sullivan, 2012, p. 164).

Much of the literature refers to phases and a process of transformative learning. Although, the ten phases have seen some debate (Brock, 2009; Nohl, 2015) the literature more often does reference Mezirow's original list (Snyder, 2008) shown below, and thus there appears to be a general acceptance. There is also little in the way of any analysis or examination of the individual phases in

the literature surrounding transformative learning. Nevertheless, the ten phases as articulated by Mezirow (2000) are as follows:

- (1) A disorienting dilemma (2) Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame (3) A critical assessment of assumptions (4) Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared (5) Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions (6) Planning a course of action (7) Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans (8) Provisional trying of new roles (9) Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships (10) A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective. (Mezirow, 2000, p. 20)

Referencing the above, transformative learning does not require a sequential completion of the phases. The only requirements are that the process must occur in an appropriate setting that includes the learner and the learner's worldview as part of the context, and that the learner engages in critical (self-)reflection (Snyder, 2008).

Within the literature, there is little to no discussion about each specific phase. Some contemporary works have described a *three step process of transformative learning* (Christopher et al., 2014), *core elements of transformative learning* (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011), a *practice-based model* for transformative learning (Nohl, 2015), and *aspects of successful transformative learning environments* (Stone & Duffy, 2015); all of which show complementing elements and appear to be rooted in Mezirow's original phases.

The table below (see *Table 1*) lists each of the above synthesizations of Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning. The comparisons are illustrative of how the authors' reiterations reflect Mezirow's (2000) original phases. For example, Christopher et al.'s (2014) three phases are particularly reflective of Mezirow's "(2) Self examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame, (3) A critical assessment of assumptions (8) Provisional trying of new roles [and,] (10) A reintegration into ones life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective" (p .20). As well, Coghlan and Gooch's (2001) *five core elements of transformative learning* are comparable to Mezirow's (2000) first, second, third, ninth and tenth phases.

Christopher et al.'s (2014) three step process of transformative learning	Coghlan & Gooch's (2011) five core elements of transformative learning	Nohl's (2015) practice-based model of transformative learning	Stone & Duffy's (2015) five aspects of successful transformative learning environments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners become critically aware of how and why their assumptions have come to constrain the way they perceive, understand, and feel about their world. • A revision of belief systems occurs as learners change structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective. • Learners adopt behaviors more consistent with their renewed perspective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pre-requisites and context for transformative learning to occur • Disorienting dilemmas, and the emergence of confusing emotions • The importance of dialogue and reflection • Self-actualisation as an outcome of volunteer tourism • Reintegration into society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nondetermining start • A phase of experimental and undirected inquiry • Phase of social testing and mirroring • Shifting of relevance • Social consolidation and the reinterpretation of biography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for transformative learning • Disorientation and dissonance • Critical reflection and discourse • In situ or experiential activity • Integrating perspective change

Table 1: Synthesizations of the transformative learning process

There is some indication that scholars have grouped the phases into three distinct discourses on disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection and the integration of new frames of reference. Additionally, Nohl (2015) suggests that there is a precursor to the transformative learning phases, referred to as the *nondetermining start* (Nohl, 2015). Moreover, there is a strong indication within the transformative learning literature that there is a need for preparatory phase within phases or stages of transformative learning (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Stone & Duffy, 2015) as shown in *Table 1* (above).

For the purpose of this study, the phases of transformative learning have been divided and grouped into four discussions, as related to the above. In addition, drawing from Coghlan and Gooch (2011), Nohl (2015), as well as Stone and Duffy (2015), the following will begin with a discussion on a pre-phase phase. Following discussions on disorienting dilemmas, critical reflection and integration of new frames of reference will provide further discussion on the phases of transformative learning process.

5.1.1 Pre-phase

“The process of transformative learning begins when novelty, neither anticipated nor planned, breaks into life” (Nohl, 2015, p. 39). The requirement thus of something new, for example, a chance encounter, is needed for the transformative experience to begin. Further, the literature on transformative learning is consistently written in the context of adult learning. This implies that some base level of knowledge, awareness or understanding of the world around us (Mezirow, 2000) or certain level of maturity necessitates the process of transformative learning. In other words, the literal and cognitive contexts (Snyder, 2008) hold certain significance in that it appropriates a baseline at which transformative change occurs between a learner’s past and present experience(s).

Coghlan and Gooch (2011) allude to a necessary level of involvement and connection for learners within a context of a potential transformational context (i.e. volunteer tourism). There is also an indication that intervention from educators is required to facilitate and prepare a transformative experience (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Stone & Duffy, 2015). Nevertheless, it appears then that there is a certain set of conditions, perhaps not yet fully articulated within the literature, that determine the *epochal* or *incremental* (as described by Mezirow, 2000) beginnings of a transformative learning experience.

5.1.2 On disorienting dilemmas

Disorienting dilemmas could be seen as a personal challenge, problem, critical incident, or an experienced change in one’s environment. This transformative learning phase challenges learners’, emotions and feelings, both positive and negative (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011). They can be instances where learners are engaged in a change in habit or a new idea. It could be argued that this phase tests learners as it positions them as actors in new social roles (Brock, 2009; Nohl, 2015). Conversely, disorienting dilemmas have also been described as a vacuum in which a learner experiences *a space of freedom* where new frames of reference and/or new actions can develop (Nohl, 2015).

There is an indication in the literature that disorienting dilemmas are a significant component to the transformative learning process (Stone & Duffy, 2015). It has been articulated and demonstrated that high proportions of learners experience this transformative learning phase. In a

quantitative analysis of instances of transformative learning by Brock (2009), 256 surveys were given to undergraduate business students. In this study a disorienting dilemma was found to be the second highest occurrence, followed by critical reflection. The study, which sought to “create an operational definition of transformational learning” (Brock, 2009, p. 126), used a questionnaire and *instrument wording* to allow respondents to indicate occurrences of the transformative learning process based on Mezirow’s ten steps (Brock, 2009).

Finally, disorienting dilemmas are dynamic as they are seen to require more than just information and knowledge to overcome (Mezirow, 1978). In other words, in the context of the phases of transformative learning, disorienting dilemmas necessitate critical reflection (Meyers, 2009; Stone & Duffy, 2015).

5.1.3 On critical reflection

Critical to the discussions on the transformative learning process are the theories and discourse on critical reflection (Brock, 2009). Mezirow’s works on perspective transformation and transformative learning (1978a; 1978b; 1997) as well as critical reflection (1998) have been foundational and fundamental within the literature. Critical reflection is also highlighted by Snyder (2009) as being a condition to transformative learning. Scholarly contributions on critical reflection also include complementing discussions on critical discourse.

The process of critical reflection is illustrated quite uniquely in MacKeracher’s (2012) chapter describing her transformative experience. In it, the author comments on a period of self-reflection, in which she articulates her internal monologue. Her description of critical reflection is contemplative and descriptive, as the author attempts to recount and describe a past experience. Overall, the activity feels less messy and less chaotic than the disorienting pre-cursor phase (MacKeracher, 2012).

Interestingly, contributions in the literature about critical discourse is supportive of a transformative learning community, usually between students and facilitated by educators (Gum et al., 2011; Hollis, 2014; Kitchenham, 2008). Critical discourse, unlike critical reflection, is not an individual, internal experience. Instead, critical discourse engages learners in an exchange amongst other learners. Debriefing and *reflective circles* are cited as methods used to achieve critical discourse (Stone & Duffy, 2015).

It is generally implied that adult learners have acquired the ability for introspection. However, as cited by Ludgren and Poell (2016), it is introspection with interpretation that is critical reflection. “It is not simply a response to information or facts; it is a deeper understanding of perspective and meaning” (Adamson & Bailie, 2015, p. 145). In particular, Mezirow (1998) pinpoints learner’s critical reflection on one’s assumptions, or in other words, the ability to “offer a perspective about their own perspective” (Mezirow, 2003, p. 61). Still, learners who rationalize, contemplate, question and challenge their assumptions are arguably engaged in critical reflection.

5.1.4 On Integration of new frames of reference

The remaining phases of transformative learning could be described as the action phases. It is the moment that learner’s feedback is turned into a meaningful response. It is a period of reconstruction and reiteration that is active and dynamic.

Gum et al. (2011) have summarized the latter phase of learner transformation as *transforming practice*. Within this final phase, learners need to re-reflect on the new perspectives and to engage in ongoing practice, as well as further critical reflection, as it relates to the learner's context and past experience (Gum et al., 2011). Ongoing practice may take the form of redoing something, enabling an adaption of a frame of reference, (Gum et al., 2011) or the development of agency in the context of the learner (Snyder, 2008). Gum et al. (2011) also point out that the process is neither linear nor static in nature, nor is it straightforward.

At this stage learners differentiate and reinvent themselves (Erichsen, 2011) within new frames of reference or new meaning perspectives. The learner's development has been described as a validation or reconciliation of new roles (Snyder, 2008). Mezirow (1978) articulates the learner's development as a movement...

...toward perspectives that are more universal and better able to deal with abstract relationships, that more clearly identify psychocultural assumptions shaping our actions and causing our needs, that provide criteria for more principled value judgments, enhance our sense of agency or control and give us a clearer meaning and sense of direction in our lives. (p. 106)

Thus, learners change their *way of knowing* guiding future action (Snyder, 2008).

5.2 Role of the educator / Facilitating transformations

There is a vital importance that educators become apt in not only the facilitation of good service learning and community-based education models, but also within the context of community-university partnerships and transformative learning. It has been stated that students centered approaches to service learning contribute to transformative learning. This, then, calls into question: what is the role of the educator in the facilitation of the transformative learning experiences of learners?

Fostering learner transformation "has been at the forefront among scholars particularly over the last ten years" (Cranton & Taylor, 2014, p. 14); however, it is suggested that there are gaps in terms of *practices* and application (Cranton & Taylor, 2014). For example, Cranton and Taylor (2014) point out that there is a lack in clarity between *good teaching* (as cited in Cranton & Taylor, 2014, p. 14) and fostering transformative learning. For example, challenging learners through experiential approaches and fostering critical thinking and discussion could be described as good teaching practices, as well has connections in the transformative learning discussion. Further, the authors highlight a need for defined practices and applied methods for fostering transformative learning (Cranton & Taylor, 2014). As will be described in greater detail below, transformative learning is fostered through conducive and participatory learning environments, and positive conditions contributing to the phases of transformative learning. Although much of the literature is theoretical, for purposes related to this report efforts will be made to highlight practical applications.

To begin, some of the academic literature illustrates positive, transformative learning environments of which the educator is central. Christopher et al. (2001) include the need for educators to facilitate learning conditions that are safe and supportive. As cited in Christopher et al. (2001) this can be achieved with a learning environment that includes:

(a) teachers who are empathetic, caring, authentic, and sincere and who demonstrate a high degree of integrity; (b) learning conditions that promote a sense of safety, openness, and trust; and (c) instructional methods that support a learner-centered approach that promotes student autonomy, participation, reflection, and collaboration. (p. 135)

Further, a positive and open learning environment that encourages participatory approaches stimulates transformative learning (Christopher et al., 2001; Laiken, 1997). This is further supported by Snyder (2008), as well as Moore (2005) who cites the educator as a co-learner. Adamson and Bailie (2012) describe the *restorative classroom* being one that is engaging, participatory and cooperative, disregarding the current academic institutional model exhibiting a top-down approach. In these open and empowering learning environments, educators actually facilitate learners' responsibility on their learning, thus activating transformative learning experiences (Adamson & Bailie, 2012). Finally, Moore (2005) presents cooperative, collaborative and transformative learning models contending traditional university pedagogy. Moore (2005) grounds all three in the transformative learning literature and goes on to endorse learning styles that are supportive, empowering, laissez faire in nature.

Connected more closely to the phases of transformative learning, Stone and Duffy (2015) highlight ingredients for successful environments that prepare for transformative learning. Specifically, Stone and Duffy (2015) point to the challenges associated with disorienting dilemmas, and attest that multiple disorienting dilemmas coupled with continual moments of critical reflection contribute to the transformative learning environments. The authors suggest that an understanding and acceptance of the scope and scale of learning benefit learners (Stone & Duffy, 2015). However, because of the nature of disorientating dilemmas, it is important for educators to become less structured and perhaps equally empathetic and supportive in their approach to teaching (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Stone & Duffy, 2015). As Laiken (1997) describes, the learning environment should be at *optimal anxiety* challenging the learner to a point where learning still feels accessible.

On facilitating critical reflection and critical discourse, the literature cites several approaches for critical reflection including but not limited to: journaling, art and dialogue (Stone & Duffy, 2015). This can be achieved through formalized approaches, for example through curriculum development. Hollis (2002) accounts of transformative learning through service learning, supports critical reflection through journaling. In fact, he addresses the idea of journaling as assignments for learners. Hollis (2002) also alludes that critical reflection as well as critical discourse, in the form of dialogue between other learners, are equally important. Finally, Stone and Duffy (2015) offers ideas on added-value reflective activities and prolonged critical reflection to ensure ultimate transformation. An assessment of learner's pre and post expectations or values, for example, allows for future analysis (Stone & Duffy, 2015). Visioning, goal setting, professional planning are some examples that would enhance the likelihood of transformative learning. In all, educators must be stimulating and provoking in this transformative learning phase. Educators can also be seen as guides (both passive and active) in the context of critical reflection and critical discourse, helping learners to navigate, through, for example, learner's cultural biases and certain power differences (Mejiuni, 2012).

There is little research related to the role of the educator in the integration of new frames of reference phase. Snyder (2008), however, does cite the period of learner vulnerability at the point where learners are experiencing perspective changes. Nevertheless, throughout Snyder's (2008) work there is a suggestion that educators be attentive and supportive.

Substantiating these actions, the literature maintains ongoing support for learners through the process of critical reflection, critical discourse and transformative learning in general (Laiken, 1997). The type of support however, challenges educators to incorporate multiple pedagogical approaches. The literature on fostering transformative learning suggests a whole person, multi-disciplinary, integral, holistic approach (Bamber & Hankin, 2011; Ferrer, 2005; Sterling, 2010; Taylor & Snyder, 2012) to education.

5.3 Approaches to transformative education in higher education

The literature on transformative learning is often framed within experiential pedagogies. Service learning and tourism education are academic approaches that engage learners in real world settings and position them for discovery, reflection and transformation.

5.3.1 Experiential learning

Experiential learning, engages learners in opportunities to create new narratives within the context of what the learner is learning (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011). Deeley (2010) lists “internships, work placements [and], field education or vocational training,” (p. 43) as examples of service experiential learning. Experiential learning situates learners in a particular learning situation relevant to what is being learned (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Yardley et al., 2012). More closely linked to the discussions on transformative learning, experiential learning environments provide a context for introspection (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011). Snyder (2008) also highlights the *role of context* as being critical to experiential education, in terms of a learner’s specific experience(s). In particular, Snyder (2008) cites taking students outside of the classroom, followed by critical reflection, thus making linkages to the transformative learning process.

5.3.2 Service learning

Perhaps more closely linked to the context of this research project are the discussions associated with service learning. Millican and Bourner (2011) reference service learning as *student-community engagement*, where students are involved in local, community projects. Works by Eckerle et al. (2011) define *community service learning* as community-university partnerships mutually benefitting the student, university and community. In the context of secondary education, service learning programs require some level of collaboration between partners. Community service learning is defined as “an educational approach that integrates service in the community with intentional learning activities” (as cited in Eckerle et al., 2011, p. 15).

Nevertheless, because of its experiential aspect, service learning is a form or extension of experiential learning (Blouin & Perry, 2014; Deeley, 2010). Broadly speaking, the objective of service learning is to “address the needs of both students and the wider community” (Blouin & Perry, 2014, p. 4). Notably then, the difference between experiential learning and service learning is that experiential learning is student/learner-focused. Some examples of service learning models found within the literature include: community based research (Eckerle et al., 2011), volunteerism combined with academic course work (Deeley, 2010) and voluntourism (Sin, 2009; Stone & Duffy, 2015).

There is, however, some criticism of service learning. As stated by Blouin and Perry (2014), more often than not, the benefits have been university and student-centred. Discourse on community-university partnerships present caveats related to service learning that follow a *charity model* rather of one that is rooted in social justice, partnership and mutual benefit (Bringle & Hatcher,

2002; Eckerle et al., 2011; Marullo & Edwards, 2000; Strain, 2006). Generally speaking, in the context of service learning, the charity model has been described as a “condescending, patronizing, one-way relationship that reinforces social hierarchies, and encourages dependency” (Strain, 2006, p. 4). The importance of this discussion is related to the management of expectations of program stakeholders, namely the university, community and student(s).

Nevertheless, in service learning models that serve the needs of the community and the student, projects are designed where the community is seen as the beneficiary while the students are seen as the learners (Millican & Bourner, 2011). In a review by Chupp and Joseph (2010), the university-community partnership is referred to as *service learning* with impacts to students, community and the university, but more often the students. Elements and outcomes of service learning programs are comprehensively listed in Chupp and Joseph’s (2010) conclusions on maximizing the impacts of service learning on students, university and community (see *Table 2*). Within themes of social justice and academic enrichment, Chupp and Joseph (2010) illustrate several benefits to three service-learning stakeholders including students, university and community. For the student, positive impacts on their learning, as well as personal and professional development are listed. For the university, the development of partnerships and relationships, often times are shown to be mutually beneficial to both the institution and the community. And finally, for the community, beyond an enhanced relationship with the institution, a service is provided that potentially impacts the community in measurable ways. For example, increased *capacity*, access to resources, and *quality of life* (Chupp & Joseph, 2010). Similarly, Eckerle et al. (2011) suggest that community service learning and community-based research are based in social justice and positive change (Chupp & Joseph, 2010; Meyers, 2009). Bringle and Hatcher (2002) state that “high quality service-learning demonstrate reciprocity between the campus and community” (p. 505).

Focus on impact	Key elements of service-learning	Priority outcomes
<i>Student</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of community service with course readings and assignments • Opportunities for skill building, experimentation, and application of learning • Theory and practice integrated with service through dialogue and critical thinking exercises • Structures personal and group reflection on out-of-classroom experience • Discussion on the history and context of societal disparities • Intergroup dialog with community members as students understand other cultures and worldviews • Examination of personal assumptions, biases, values, and goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater retention of curriculum content • Ability to apply academic learning to real world situations • Increases skills (e.g., problem solving, cultural competence) • Deepen student moral and civic values • Increased student commitment to promoting social justice
<i>University</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional commitment to mutually-beneficial partnerships with community stakeholders • Institutional efforts to cultivate “authentic relationships” (Mitchell, 2008) [as cited by Chupp & Joseph, 2010] with community partners bases on respect • Institutionwide activities that promotes better awareness and understanding of neighboring communities and their contexts • Examination of, and willingness to change, institutional culture, structures, and practices • Comprehensive, long-term focus on one or more target communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionwide reorientation toward more equitable and mutually beneficial relationships between the university and community • Specific changes in institutional priorities and operations related to community engagement, faculty and student incentives for community service, and investments with direct community benefit • Resource development that can serve interests of both the university and the community

<i>Community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service that engages community members as partners in design, implementation, and assessment • Explicit focus on goals and benefits for community • Acknowledgement of historic and systemic context of inequality • Capacity building of community partners • Sharing of information, resources and power • Service activity with measurable benefits to community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity, knowledge, and networks among community stakeholders and residents • Increased access and input to university decision-making processes • Increased community capacity to manage and sustain investments in revitalization • Improved quality of life for community residents
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Table 2: Maximizing service learning impact (Chupp & Joseph, 2010, pp. 207-208)

Pivotal to this study, are the connections with the above discussions to transformative learning. It is argued that service learning adds value to university education and curriculum (Meyers, 2009). Moreover, it is accepted in the literature that engaging adult learners in service learning models that transformative learning opportunities are enhanced (Strain, 2006). Strain (2006) stresses that transformative learning should be the primary goal of service learning experiences. This could be achieved by engaging the learner in a more *constructivist* learning model, where the learner plays an active role in all, for example, service learning activities, from community-university partnership to the educational programming to the critical discourse that ensues (Gum et al., 2011). Scholars cite a student's responsibility and empowerment in the context of service learning experiences complementing the nature of transformational learning (Bamber & Hankin, 2011). In some respects, disrupting the status quo or the cultural norms of the 'university' forces learners into the *unfamiliar* (Bamber & Hankin, 2011), or perhaps more relevant, a process of transformative learning.

5.3.3 Tourism scholarship and transformative learning

Of particular interest to this research paper is transformative learning, not only in the context of the experiential and service learning, but also in the context of tourism scholarship. Within the literature on transformative learning, there is ample discussion on the transformative learning as it relates both directly and indirectly to *tourism education* (Stone & Duffy, 2015). Drawing from Stone and Duffy's (2015) review of the transformative learning and tourism scholarship literature, it was shown that the major research themes included: study abroad/international education, work placement/field studies/experiential learning pedagogies, international service learning, leisure travel/international travel, and volunteer tourism/voluntourism. Many of these themes are directly related to the themes in this report. As well, Stone and Duffy's (2015) list offers somewhat of a taxonomy of experiential, tourism-related, university programming. Analysis of the research as it related to transformative learning was best represented through international programming and actual touristic activities as opposed in-class programming (Stone & Duffy, 2015). Stone and Duffy (2015) do not point to any sort of reason why this may be the case, however they do suggest that this illustrates a potential gap in the literature. Stone and Duffy (2015) do, however, suggest that the experiential nature of tourism studies enhances the transformative learning capacity. The authors recommend integrating travel experiences and transformative learning theory, for example engaging learners in critical reflection, into curriculum (Stone & Duffy, 2015). Nevertheless, the importance of this discussion as it relates engaging students in transformative learning, is cited by Jamal et al. (2011) who propose that tourism scholarship is, in fact, transformative.

As noted above in the discussion about service learning, the literature draws attention to criticisms of international service learning, and in this case, international volunteer projects. Poor student commitment and program inefficiencies are some of the challenges present in service learning models (Blouin & Perry, 2014). Moreover, volunteer tourism in the context of service learning, for example, is viewed as an activity enjoyed by those from the global north at the expense of the host

communities (Bamber & Hankin, 2011). Nevertheless, it may be these challenging circumstances, experiences, and perhaps *disorienting dilemmas* that position learners for transformative learning. As stated by Jamal et al. (2011), “The critical reflective practitioner of sustainable tourism is situated pedagogically in a critical, collaborative and *praxis*-oriented relationship with people, places, spaces and time” (p. 137).

5.4 Community-university partnerships

There is a suggestion within literature published within the new millennium that the role of the University as a partner in community development is anew. From the perspective of the institution, university-community partnerships offer new opportunity for engaging learners, positive change and innovative, academic programming and curriculum (Bamber & Hankin, 2011; Blouin & Perry, 2014; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; D’Amato & Krasny, 2011; Eckerle et al., 2011; Marullo & Edwards, 2000, Meyers, 2009; Millican & Bourner, 2011; Sterling, 2010; Toncar et al., 2014) in *real-world* conditions (Ostrander, 2004). As articulated above, service learning and tourism scholarship are two examples where learners can become engaged in enriched, experiential learning. Moreover, the nature of community-university partnerships which involve students facilitate service learning experiences that are conducive to transformative learning. Thus, within the realm of transformative learning, university-community partnerships offer a positive environment for learners and communities alike (Campbell & Long, 2012).

Within the literature, community-university partnerships are also referred to as the *scholarship of engagement* (Marullo & Edwards, 2000) as well as *university civic engagement* (Ostrander, 2004). Perhaps most broadly, Marullo and Edwards (2000) define the scholarship of engagement “as the means through which universities will be reshaped as they enter into collaborative arrangements with community partners to address pressing social, political, economic, and moral ills” (p. 896). Eckerle et al. (2011) categorize the community-university partnerships into two models: community service learning and community-based research. It is within this andragogy of transformative learning that sets the stage for opportunities for change within the realms of social justice and community development (Cranton & Taylor, 2012).

For the purpose of this research however, the focus is on the learner and the circumstances of transformative learning, specifically in regards to the role of the educator as facilitator. Therein, lies the question, how can educators facilitate student learning transformations within the context of a university-community partnership? Nonetheless, the trend of university and university student involvement in community development will require new leadership from faculty if students stand to benefit from the expansion of service learning opportunities (Millican & Bourner, 2011, p. 91).

5.5 Summary

Transformative learning occurs when learners experience shifts in perspective and meaning. The transformative learning process includes phases of challenging circumstance, reflection and personal development. Post secondary institutions, through academic practices that are experiential and rooted in social justice, engage adult learners in education that is potentially transformational in nature.

The following section presents this study’s interview findings. This will be followed by discussions that connect, compare and contrast the literature on transformative learning with the results and insights gained from the findings.

6.0 INTERVIEW FINDINGS

This chapter is based on the findings collected from eleven key informant interviews. Participants included past student participants in Capilano University's community tourism training project. Findings have been presented in the form of quotes and narratives taken from the data generated from the answers of the interview questions (see *Appendix 10.3*). The discussions below include findings that support learner transformations in the context of the transformative learning process while engaged in project activities, as well as discourse supportive of faculty intervention related to transformative learning.

Valuable insight into learner transformations and the process of transformative learning has been gained through the nuances and subtleties of the participants' narratives and reflections. Thus, the discussions below include summaries of the findings supported by long quotations extracted from the interviews.

6.1 Participants

The eleven interview participants who contributed to the data set represented nine¹ of the thirteen years that the Capilano University community tourism training projects have been active in Vietnam. Participants were also project alumnus of the Capilano University Tourism Management Degree or Outdoor Recreation Management Diploma graduates. While on the project, all participants were enrolled at Capilano University and completing their diploma or degree. Two of the students were completing a Directed Studies in Tourism course that would contribute to their diploma and/or degree. Students' commitment to the project, as measured in time, ranged from ten days to six months (only one student took part in a six month placement) in Vietnam with differing levels of responsibility, commitment and engagement in regards to pre- and post project activities. However, all participants were engaged in pre-trip activities that included, but are not limited to, trip planning, cross cultural training, training development, social media related activities, event planning and contacting partners and other project participants (often in Vietnam) through email, phone and Facebook. Three of the participants involved in the interviews participated in the project for more than one year. In other words, the three participants had made at least two trips to Vietnam, ranging from ten days to six months.

While in Vietnam on the project, participants expressed that they engaged in a range of activities; however, all were centered on facilitating community tourism development and training in at least one of three villages, as well as promoting the project and sharing the activities that were being accomplished on social media. Almost all of the participants were a part of a team or a group while in Vietnam, except for one participant who was part of a six-month experience in Vietnam. This participant, although there was support from partner university Hanoi Open University, worked alone for significant amounts of time. All of the groups included at least one other student and at least one faculty member from Capilano University's Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Management Program.

Finally, there was no conclusive evidence presented that would suggest that the different years, differing lengths of time spent in Vietnam, nor the number of trips participants engaged in made any impact on the transformative learning that was experienced. In other words, the experiences

¹ Years: 2003, 2004, 2005, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017.

and narratives that were offered were generally similar in nature, and time was typically not stated as an impacting factor in the participants' learning.

6.2 General outcomes of the experience

Throughout the interview participants were asked to reflect on and share impactful and significant memories and experiences of the project. In addition, participants were asked about what they had learned on the project and what impacts faculty had on their learning experience.

Generally, it was apparent that there were several similarities in the outcomes generated from engaging in the project activities and the international experience. Although the students were on what could be described as an international volunteer experience or voluntourism trip, none of the participants referred to their experience as such. Instead, it was widely interpreted that the students were on a university-led project trip that had a set of goals and objectives related to a project. Participants were given the opportunity to describe how the experience was different than being in a classroom. Even though the experience was connected to the university, it was not associated with university programs or curriculum. In fact, participants described and referred to their experience(s) as *real life*. For example:

"I go to the museum of anthropology here at UBC and I go see these Haida cultures and these totem poles and I've never experienced that in real life. I've been on reservations and I've been to powwows and I've been to all kinds of gatherings, but I've never seen that type of living like in that museum. But, in Vietnam, that culture is still alive and thriving. I don't know. I think it just really reminded me how vast the world is and I don't know. It made me feel like we were doing something really important. It wasn't just about a sustainability food safety class and it wasn't just about making a homestay. It was so much deeper than that." (Participant 6)

"It's just completely different doing something like this, because it's like real life. It's not a class. In some classes, other classes that have ... It's just something completely different. You're not actually going somewhere and changing people's lives and working with other people, so I think just the knowledge and feedback that you receive from the faculty in that type of class is completely different than when you just go to a lecture and they talk at you, and then ... In some classes, they talk at you and then you hand in your stuff and you barely have any interaction with them." (Participant 8)

"Once we got into delivering some of the modules ... We worked a lot on developing some modules and then putting those into practice. So I think that's where ... it's just a real rubber meets the road sort of thing. I think for most people, if you do a bunch of work, it's great to see it put into practice. Ticking something off a list. Sort of like, "I built this" or "I did this." I'm applying it and people are getting it and seeing them apply it." (Participant 10)

"The physical environment was so different. You went from an air-conditioned classroom in North Vancouver to the tropics. So such a different ... Not the tropics, I don't know what you'd call it but humid and hot ... Jungle and muddy and bugs and all

of it. And we were there with a real life situation to deal with and wildly experiential is how I would say it differed.” (Participant 11)

As mentioned, at the time of being part of the project, all of the participants were enrolled in either Capilano University’s Tourism Management or Outdoor Recreation Program and this experience enhanced their learning about tourism. Some went on to describe how the tourism-related learning directly impacted the development of job-related skills that specifically influenced a career orientated decision and/or helped enabled them to acquire and/or perform better at the current job they were working at. Some of the participants also alluded to how the project impacted their academic lives. One student had confirmed that she had gone on to begin a Masters in a similar field. Other students had said that being on the project might have influenced their decision to continue on to complete postgraduate work, potentially in a field related to project activities.

Other general findings, in terms of what was gained from the experience participating in Capilano University’s community tourism training project, included but were not limited to the creation of noteworthy friendships, deeper cross-cultural understanding, knowledge about Vietnam and Vietnamese culture, and the development of new marketing and communication skills (i.e. social media, blogging, website development).

Finally, all of the participants alluded to their perceived impact of their contributions to project activities. For example, one student highlighted that they had made several connections with tour operators in Vietnam. Other students describes accounts of training they had conducted in the communities. In all cases, it was apparent that the participants could describe tangible or measureable impacts that they were directly associated with. Some discussed, in detail, their different responsibilities and the tangible outcomes of those tasks. Examples of these impacts include the installment of new community tourism-related signage in the village, the delivery of training or facilitation of a workshop, the development of a contact list with local and international tour operators, and the creation of a photo catalogue and/or video, to name a few. Furthermore, three students made clear statements on the realization that they had made or could now *make a difference* as described by the following:

“I’m constantly reminded that I might be making a small difference now, but if I look at that big picture and I think about the big picture and the point is that I’m making a difference...”

“...I think just the impact that I can have with protecting culture, and how I can educate and come back to Canada and help people understand how important culture is and the differences that we can make if we decide that this culture needs to be protected, we can actually do it. You don’t need hundreds and thousands of dollars. It helps, but you can go and you can make these small, small changes and small impacts.” (Participant 6)

“I just think being able to see results that quickly and knowing that you’re actually ... Maybe in the time you’re not feeling like you’re making a difference, but all of a sudden you’re like, ‘Oh, it all came together. How did this happen?’ Yeah, if that makes sense?” (Participant 8)

"[I] feel like I've actually made a difference around there, so it makes me feel more connected." (Participant 9)

These last three quotes are significant as the discussion on transformative learning continues below. As nuanced in the above quotes, there are indications that students have an understanding of their own perspectives, and how they fit into what is happening around them and their view of the world.

6.3 Transformational experiences

At least two of the questions in the interview encouraged participants to reflect on experiences that may or may not have altered or changed their thoughts about anything in particular. The goal of the question was to have participants reflect and share about any potential changes in their perspective(s) or worldview.

The following narratives articulate a changing of perspective and worldview among three participants:

"In personal level, it just broadened my perspective. I was able to see a different side of the world. A country that I've never visited, it was not in my bucket list or anything. For me to go there and find those strong connections where I did not even expect to go, it just made me think that, 'What else is out there?' 'What else am I missing in terms of human connection, work that I can do?' 'How else I can contribute?'" (Participant 1)

"I think we have a dominant worldview of things based on our upbringing, based on our experiences, highly influenced by where we live and what we have access to. I think Vietnam was pivotal in actually taking us out of that worldview completely, because not all the things operated the same, and really changed your thinking, expanded your thinking around how do you do these things slightly different and take in all these different elements in play, where you don't speak the language, there are different cultural norms, and then slowly adapt a very like, in a very big way."

"Perspective, always, is that I can look at anything and I can view anything at any given moment from one perspective. I know that's only one perspective. That's only one truth. There can be two, if not three, 10 people truths about that same thing. Someone could drop a glass over there and I could see it and make it mean something, and someone else could see the exact same thing happen and interpret it in a completely different way. They're both equally true." (Participant 3)

"... I think it just gave me another really rich life experience and a lot of ... and just some empathy and it drove home the whole point of how unique living in Vancouver is. There's a lot of people that live in a lot of different ways throughout the world and it was just another one of those, 'My life's unique too, to those people.' Everybody gets by in the world however they get by." (Participant 10)

A final participant explained:

"I have a background in geography and so I think I was exposed to different postmodern analysis of how the world operates and feminist analysis. I think I have this notion of the West and the global south. I still agree with a lot of those things, I think there are things ... the way the world operates and the economic system and the history of colonial occupation, those things matter. I think I had too naïve or too simple ... I think in my attempt to not be patronizing, I did have some patronizing views. I think just actually going there and seeing that ... I guess I realized that the people ... I met in the village don't necessarily see their own lives in that frame. It's like applying it sort of on to them. The western tourists come and they ruin everything, whereas they, I think, see it as an economic opportunity."

"I think sometimes the way people think about these issues is like navel gazing, focusing on these little things that maybe other people don't really care about. I think I focused more on talking to people with other perspectives. Sorry, I'm trying to find a way to phrase this that it makes sense. I think I was maybe over applying some of the ... I think I do believe cultural appropriation is a thing, but I think I was over applying it perhaps. As much as I thought I didn't have a simple view of the world, I think I did to some degree. It's easiest to get into our little bubbles. The publications I followed and the things I read typically had that analysis." (Participant 5)

Generally, the above narratives are reflective in nature and illustrate the participants' enhanced understanding of their existential perspective within the world they see themselves a part of. The below narratives however, highlight shifts in what the participants felt was important and in attitudes, specifically happiness.

"I think that it was really enlightening to see how the villagers lived, and how incredibly happy they were. It was like, a complete eye-opener. The happiness in these villages in 2004, and I obviously don't know, I haven't been back since, but the children, the wives, the matriarchs, even the men coming back from the rice paddies."

"I just remember these huge smiles, always smiling, always ... Maybe it's their culture. I don't know. But I remember thinking to myself like, 'Why are we not happy like these people are happy?' It was a big question for me. It was a big question coming back. Like, 'Why are these people so happy and they have nothing? They have one light bulb. They literally have like one electrical connection, and probably not enough food to go around, and yet they're the happiest people I've ever run into probably, collectively, in my life.' To that point." (Participant 4)

"It just gave me such an appreciation to what we have here, but also, made me realize that it ... It was maybe my first experience of realizing what we have here in Canada and what we're accustomed to here in Canada actually isn't necessary."

"So things we think are needed or required, or basics, essentials, are actually not. So I remember thinking it doesn't take much to live."

"This is probably where I learned, happiness doesn't equal the things that you have because something that stands out very clearly to me, especially with these kids I was talking about before, the young girls; they were happy and they were smiling and

happy and they had everything they needed and they didn't have refrigerators or electricity or the clothes and the material things we think are so basic, I had come to believe were so basic in community living.” (Participant 11)

Although, the above two examples show a similar change in perspective, there were no consistent reoccurring themes that emerged from the data that suggests that all participants experienced similar changes in meaning perspective. The one consistency however, was that all participants did in fact experience dimensions of the transformative learning process and thus, in some way, transformative learning.

6.4 Transformational learning process

Interview findings suggest that participants were engaged in a process of learning and personal development while engaged in the project. The trip its self offered a point in time to which the experience’s narratives were related. In other words, participants’ described experiences before, during and after the trip. However, transformative learning experiences did not occur at a higher frequency at any particular time.

Significant to each participant’s overall experience was their perceived baseline of knowledge and understanding, of tourism for example, and/or view of themselves. As articulated in the responses, it was shown that participants’ reflected on their past experience(s) as was as their existential context as it related to certain situations.

6.4.1 Pre-phase

The actual trip(s) to Vietnam that each of the participants went on tended to give each experience a linear timeline with the trip itself following and preceding a set of pre-trip and post trip experiences respectively. Thus, the interviews included several, diverse discussions about the levels of preparation the students had before venturing to Vietnam. These discussions offered glimpses into participants’ expectations, understanding of self and level of knowledge, as it related to the context of the project and the participant.

The following quotes help illustrate what some of the respondents were thinking and doing as they gained some initial knowledge about the project and about what they were going to do in the field. It is important to note here that these statements illustrate that the students were completing activities on their own, with other students, as well as with faculty:

“I prepared in a different way. I read things about the Hmong people. I read some academic papers and news articles. I found this really neat blog. It was an American woman who, I think was born in America, but her background is Hmong. Seeing it from that perspective. I did read a lot, I tried to go through all the documents from past years, but there was just so much, it was so dense, sometimes it was overwhelming. I think, for me, the most helpful was just talking to the past volunteers. I had a number of conversations with different people and took notes and got their advice. I also tried to learn about the village and the people, who we were going to see, their culture.” (Participant 5)

Two other participants related:

"I think that set me up quite well for something of a base of understanding for the project, and I think that just doing research and working with [Student A] and [Student B] and [Student C] as a team, and just researching and figuring out what we wanted to achieve and how we were going to achieve it all together, if that makes sense." (Participant 8)

"Actually, I can't remember if it was [Faculty A] or [Faculty B], but I think it might have been [Faculty B] who was like, 'Prepare yourself. You're going to spend so much time perfecting these tools, and you're going to get there and you're going to throw them away. These are all a warm-up for that.'" (Participant 9)

6.4.2 Disorienting dilemma

Findings from the interviews produced several occurrences where students experienced some sort of disorienting dilemma. For the most part, these occurred while in Vietnam. Findings included descriptions of experiences where respondents felt unprepared, uncomfortable, anxious, discouraged, and/or overwhelmed. For example, four different participants detail their experiences:

"Because you don't do that, regardless of what someone knows, you just don't challenge authority [in Vietnam]. I was being seen in a way that wasn't appropriate. Just being frustrated because you're like, why isn't anyone talking? Not having the power to talk, because obviously I didn't speak Vietnamese. I think that created a little bit of tension, frustration. I'd say frustration, not tension, frustration" (Participant 3)

"I think little bits happened throughout the trip; little, tiny bits like that moments when [HOU Student A] and I were totally screwed in Lao Chai. We couldn't get a hold of anybody. We did not know what to do, and we were like you know what? Let's make the best of it. I remember feeling like I could see the cultural difference there, too, because he didn't seem to have that, like let's just wing it thing. He wanted to know. I was like let's just walk. Let's just go. We have some time. Let's just walk through the village and say hi." (Participant 6)

"They're all talking in their language, and you're like, 'Okay. I got to get this back on track here,' but I was completely not prepared to do that. I've never had to reel in a group of adults before and make them listen to me, so it's just making sure everybody was engaged the whole time was something that I had to figure out along the way, I guess." (Participant 8)

"I had felt really overwhelmed when I got there, because so many people apply, there's a lot of pressure to make sure that you perform and to make sure that you're going to actually ... Because you're there instead of someone else, it's like there's a lot of pressure I feel to make sure that you're making the most of it and you're going to make the biggest impact on the village..." (Participant 9)

In the many of the disorienting dilemma examples presented in the responses students were not alone. In fact, much of the time a faculty member was present. In all cases, a faculty member was available via telephone or email for support in terms of advice. There are however, some few instances where students did express that they were physically by themselves. As will be articulated in greater detail below, having access to faculty created an environment that was safe, supportive and underpinned by faculty expertise.

6.4.3 Critical reflection

Similar to experiences of disorienting dilemmas, all participants did in some way indicate that they completed a process of critical reflection during their experience on the project(s). Findings allude that critical reflection was referenced the most out of the four discussed phases of the transformative learning process. Reflection included personal self-reflection as well as formal and informal critical discourse amongst peers, other participants, and educators on and off the project. Educators were also highlighted as facilitating some critical reflection.

Most often respondents storied experiences of critical reflection while on the trip. One student shared her internal monologue:

“Wow. They're taking me seriously.’ When we finally got there and the second day that we were there we went and we met some of them with [Faculty A] ... For them to sit across the table, talk to me, take me seriously and come to their offices on a holiday just to meet with us, it gave me a lot of confidence.” (Participant 1)

Another relays the following:

“I just remember these huge smiles, always smiling, always ... Maybe it's their culture. I don't know. But I remember thinking to myself like, ‘Why are we not happy like these people are happy?’ It was a big question for me. It was a big question coming back. Like, ‘Why are these people so happy and they have nothing? They have one light bulb. They literally have like one electrical connection, and probably not enough food to go around, and yet they're the happiest people I've ever run into probably, collectively, in my life.’ To that point.” (Participant 4)

The following student quotes, describe how the phase of critical reflection was completed over time:

“I think I unconsciously learned that while I was there, because I just happened to operate in a different way. I think once again, those reflections that took place through the course of, through the entire experience of having gone over there three times, you see it more and more often. Then professionally, I can now put words to it because I've done my education and studying and research around coaching emotional intelligence, all these things.” (Participant 3)

“I already had those thoughts, because I visited Sapa previously, and you start to ... Until you actually get into those little, tiny villages and see how people are living, you obviously ... Until you're there, you don't actually feel anything, it's something that's far away from you. Once you're there and you actually ... Then of course, I'm talking to the ladies on the trip, and becoming friends with them, and then it starts to feel a lot more

real, and you're ... In my mind, I'm thinking a lot about what route should I be going down ... career-wise." (Participant 8)

Participants' also described their post-trip reflections. For example:

"I think for me, I should've spent more time understanding the sensitivities within that and knowing that there's cultural differences between the two, which is obvious now and in hindsight, but at the time, I didn't even know to think that they would have some past that might create barriers to work together." (Participant 6)

Another finding produced by the interview was the recommendation by participants that there was need for further reflection in the form of debriefs, post-trip facilitations and check-ins. This further supported by the positive outcomes described in the stories of personal and group reflection. One of the interview participants specifically suggested a post trip debrief that would seek to *re-optimize* students "into North American culture" (Participant 3).

Throughout the findings related to critical reflection there were a variety of methods adopted and articulated by participants. These included, as shown above, introspection and internal monologues, as well as one-on-one discussions with faculty, group discussions, formal debriefs, and journaling. The debriefing and journaling were described to be a more formalized means of reflection often facilitated by faculty, as will be shown below.

Interestingly, some participants emphasized that moments of critical reflection occurred during courses they were taking post trip. For example, one student discussed how the trip had informed him about future career choices in the context of making a future decision for the *TOUR 140 – Tourism Co-op Work Experience* course:

"I remember I showed [Faculty A] for the first what I wanted to do for my co-op, which was, basically franchise an event company from Alberta to Vancouver. I remember him seeing it, and it was, like, a college travel company. It was all about sort of having a good time and partying. And he's like, 'No. You should really ... 'Like, he didn't say no, but he was like, 'You should really think hard about this. Is this really what you want to do?' And I was like, 'Yeah. This is it.' Because I knew that's where my personal interests and passions were gravitating towards. I think [Faculty A] was trying to encourage other things. But I've always been pretty clear on my identity, and I've had a pretty good grasp on it. I knew. I just knew." (Participant 4)

One student referenced the *TOUR 233 – Cross Cultural Tourism* course as being a vehicle for reflection.

"Then I'd say on a bigger note, where you, I guess I experienced something similar but at a higher level was through [Faculty A's] course [TOUR 233 - Cross Cultural Tourism] because it had, it caused a lot of reflection. It had me articulate what was going on in my mind, but I couldn't necessarily articulate to my friends. No one understood what I was doing or what I had done. I could talk, but then it was like, yeah, yeah, whatever. It just, people either hadn't been there or it wasn't relatable. I think either through F4's experience or the content curriculum of his program, I had a platform to articulate those things." (Participant 3)

Added, another student referenced the required general education courses, coupled with the experience of being engaged in the project in the as inspirations for reflection:

"Being there was a nexus for a whole bunch of areas that I might have had interest in. It might not have been studying, but it brought what I was studying into ... It just brought everything together. Social equality, women's rights, all these other things that maybe I was studying in the arts classes, in sociology and things like that and it brings all that together, right? It makes those links and kind of showed ... it informed why all that other stuff is important. It's not just a money grab for credits and blah blah blah. You think it is when you're just studying, when you're trying to get your degree and you're like, 'Why do I have to take this goddamn sociology 100 course in my fourth year? Are you kidding me?'"

"But that stuff that I've been studying, all of a sudden it was a light bulb just went on and it was like, 'It all makes sense now.'" (Participant 10)

Finally, participants highlighted how getting to or being in *the village* and *the people* in the village contributed to moments of reflection. Emphasized in the following quotes, participants share their observations and feelings connected to what they had seen and experienced:

"Until you actually get into those little, tiny villages and see how people are living, you obviously ... Until you're there, you don't actually feel anything, it's something that's far away from you. Once you're there and you actually ... Then of course, I'm talking to the ladies on the trip, and becoming friends with them, and then it starts to feel a lot more real, and you're ... In my mind, I'm thinking a lot about what route should I be going down ... career-wise." (Participant 8)

"I had felt really overwhelmed when I got there, because so many people apply, there's a lot of pressure to make sure that you perform and to make sure that you're going to actually ... Because you're there instead of someone else, it's like there's a lot of pressure I feel to make sure that you're making the most of it and you're going to make the biggest impact on the village, and so actually I remember I worked on that lesson with you and I remember it was just a really ... It was that moment that I finally realized, it was like, "This is why I came on the trip and this is why I was chosen to come on the trip." And it really just made me feel like I deserved to be there." (Participant 9)

"No, seriously though, I think that it was really enlightening to see how the villagers lived, and how incredibly happy they were. It was like, a complete eye-opener. The happiness in these villages in 2004, and I obviously don't know, I haven't been back since, but the children, the wives, the matriarchs, even the men coming back from the rice paddies."

"I just remember these huge smiles, always smiling, always ... Maybe it's their culture. I don't know. But I remember thinking to myself like, 'Why are we not happy like these people are happy?' It was a big question for me. It was a big question coming back. Like, 'Why are these people so happy and they have nothing? They have one light bulb. They literally have like one electrical connection, and probably not enough food to go

around, and yet they're the happiest people I've ever run into probably, collectively, in my life.' To that point." (Participant 4)

Throughout the above examples, students question themselves and their reality. They are seen to evaluate their values and worldview as they engage in a process of critical reflection.

6.4.4 Integration of new frames of reference

Findings also included instances of participants integrating newly formed frames of reference. Frames of reference relating to cultural ethnocentrism and cultural understanding, personal and professional development, and worldview were storied by different participants. For example:

"I felt after the trip that I needed to work more on my people skills ... working in a group, on myself. To be able to connect with people who are in a group with me. I thought maybe it was my cultural background, because what happened after the trip, it was first time in my life that I spend that much time with a group of people and there was no deep friendship formed, which it was first time. When we came back I was a little bit concerned. I thought a lot to myself, 'Was it my people skills? Am I not comfortable in a group?' I decided to work a little bit more on my skills." (Participant 1)

A second example:

"I think one of the most important things I learned was that it matters in the sense that you have to be responsible and prudent and all of that. It doesn't matter in the sense that like, I have this tendency to over evaluate and over think and stall and try to make everything perfect and try to get all the information. Often, that's not helpful. The irony is that often it doesn't even necessarily end up in a better result. Just learning that you just have to try things and then be ready to adjust rather than ... more on that end of things. It's good to prepare, but instead of over preparing, you learn through doing. I was put in situations where I just got to do things or learn things." (Participant 5)

These discussions were authenticated by statements such as:

"I was working on a paper about community involvement in tourism. There are a lot of those papers in my program. I had my own opinion about what should be done and I read six different research papers. Every time I finished one, I felt that it was a different piece of the puzzle. I was able to see the whole situation better and my perspective was completely different. I think my experience in Korea, in Vietnam, in Iran, here, as a whole they have turned me to a person who has the ability to do that. To not stick into, this is my opinion, I'm going to go out and prove it. As an experience in my life, I can't say that it was just Vietnam trip, but that was a big part of my life." (Participant 1)

Although the above quotes illustrate the process of the transformative learning that the participants experienced, it is important to note that the above findings did not suggest that the process followed a prescribed order. There was no sequential order or prescribed time when a participant may have experienced a disorienting dilemma, nor were scheduled

moments of critical reflection. In fact, as mentioned critical reflection took place throughout the students' experience on the project as well as post trip/project.

6.5 Role of faculty

It is important to preface the following discussion and note that the following data was obtained through questions that prompted participants to share what role faculty played in their experiences, transformative or not, and while on the Capilano University community tourism project. Nevertheless, it is clear that faculty did, in fact, play a role in facilitating positive student experiences, for example, logistically and supportively, as well as student learning, generally and transformative. Participants described the role of faculty as guides, experts and mentors, as well as in terms of hierarchy and leadership.

6.5.1 Safe and supportive environment

Logistically, faculty members were on the project to ensure the safe passage to and from Vancouver and within Vietnam. They were also present as administrators of the project. Findings from the interviews supported these roles. Although, some respondents did discuss how they were also engaged in the planning of the trip or in the participation of formal meetings, the overall responsibility was that of the faculty member. It was articulated that from the students' perspective, as administrators and project-leads, students felt that faculty had knowledge of the dealings, formalities and nuances of the project as it related to the Vietnam authority, the project objectives, trip itinerary and Vietnamese culture, and thus, created a safe environment for project activities to ensue; as described by one student, "Just knowing that they knew what was going on" (Participant 1).

It could be argued that positive student experiences were a product of the creation of a safe and supportive environment facilitated by faculty. All of the participants in some way mentioned that faculty made them feel safe and/or were supported, for example emotionally, culturally, or intellectually. Some of the participants described the role of faculty as a *soundboard* or as a *go-to* for questions, ideas and *touch-ins*. For example:

"There was a lot of leadership on that trip. The leadership essentially erased any real safety concerns or crazy uncertainty. It was a really safe environment... Yeah. I mean, there was an environment that was like ... You know, to get the best out of students, I think you need to build an environment of trust. It's like in any group dynamic. It's like, 'Do you feel safe? Do you feel welcomed? Do you feel like you belong? Do you feel like you can speak up without being criticized? Do you feel like you can be open?' Like, all these things around group dynamics that are super important. I think to get the best out of a group, if you can create that dynamic; that safe environment, that everyone feels like they're just ... There's no negative energy around their contribution, or there's no fear or danger around their contribution, that's where groups perform at the highest level." (Participant 4)

6.5.2 Faculty as guides

Findings show that faculty members were seen as guides. Importantly, they were rarely seen as teachers or professors. In these situations, participants describe faculty as leading, directing and guiding. As briefly described by the following two students:

“... with the project there was never a hierarchical feel to it, I found. I think it was ... I felt very much like a team member, and I felt [Faculty A] [was] more of a team leader than a ... I guess it would be more like a team leader than a professor on the trip.”
(Participant 9)

“Kind of just giving a, not a shove in the right direction, but kind of guiding leadership.”
(Participant 2)

Faculty are seen as playing an active role in the activities and planning of the activity or the day. From the findings, faculty intervention was positive and necessary. As the following example suggests, if a student needed further information or guidance then faculty was seen as the person who would step into the primary leadership role:

“[Faculty A] was a teacher that came with me on my trip, so she was instrumental in everything from the beginning to the end. Pre, post, whatever. You get it. I talked to her a lot. She had been before as well, so she was able to take any things that I wasn't clear on and help smooth it over and point me in the right direction.” (Participant 6)

In a second example, a student describes:

“I think, obviously having faculty on the team was really great for just guidance and direction, and if we were going on the wrong path of doing something, then just having some direction and getting us on the right path. Even like you always just asked me, why are you doing this? Why are you doing ... I don't know. I found that helpful, because it's like, ‘Oh, I don't know why we're doing this, or why we didn't think of this.’ Then, obviously we had a little bit of support from [Faculty A], and obviously [Faculty B] was on the trip as well, so I think, obviously, just having some leadership from the faculty and just a little bit of extra knowledge that you all have from being involved in the projects in the past is really great.” (Participant 8)

In this final example, the faculty member is seen to passively lead and empower students through engaging the students in reflection as means of guidance:

“[Faculty A] almost would just ask me questions. I don't know if that's his form of leadership maybe, but he just maybe help guide through just asking questions and really let us feel like we were doing the driving. So that was a really nice supportive role I found, because you know he was there if you needed him, but he by no means ever ... He always made me feel like I was leading him almost, is how he empowered me I found.” (Participant 9)

These types of descriptions and narratives are seen throughout the data set, where students and faculty are working in tandem with some level of faculty-support, in the form of guidance, is present for the student.

6.5.3 Faculty as experts and mentors

Faculty educators on the trip were also often seen as mentors. They were seen as experts or having expertise in certain areas. There was a sense that the participants felt that they were to lead their specific task or mini-project and that if they needed assistance they could go to one of the faculty

and ask questions or get some advice. For example, participants articulated that faculty were seen as experts by saying:

"Well I think faculty, from what I recall, were brought in for various expertise based on certain training modules that were going to be taking place. I use [Faculty A] as an example. There was an HIV/AIDS component. He had specialty background with regards to that, so it was like bringing in these faculty that had knowledge background relating to various components of the project." (Participant 3)

"[Faculty A] being like, the point person politically. He was really the spirit of the relationships, the politics. He handled all the conversations with various levels of government, HOU, and he was very politically savvy from that standpoint. Most of the time no one else really stepped into that role, because it was I think [Faculty A's] strengths and he understood the nuances and did it quite well." (Participant 3)

In regards to faculty as mentors, participants described instances such as:

"I think we would have conversations before we would do the workshops each day, and then obviously before the trip, there was a lot of buildup and discussions there, and I think after just learning about each ... after we do the workshops, we discuss what went well, what didn't go well, what can we do better the next day, so I think, obviously, having you guys there, experienced faculty to assist us along the way is probably, definitely necessary and just helped, I think, helped our learning process, obviously, bring some ideas that we might've not have ... to the table that we might've not have thought of." (Participant 8)

"[Faculty A] didn't do my job for me. He saw me in a moment, what I'd even say, is he saw a team member in a moment where he was like, 'I can either ... I can jump in the water and I can do the work for them. I can let them drown or leave them be and see what happens. Or I can throw him this life ring and see what he does with it.' He just threw me that life ring and was like, 'What do you do with this? What are you going to do, [Participant 9]?' He's like, 'Here's an option, he's a life ring, here's an option you can take.' I took it and it worked out great." (Participant 9)

There is very little indication that faculty were telling the student participants strictly what to do and how to do it. Moreover, students described the situation as having a lot of unknowns where everyone, students and faculty included, were all trying to find the best way forward together. However, it was widely accepted that faculty educators did have, or were trusted to have, a plan. It was thus, apparent that students felt as though there was a mutual responsibility and understanding in regards to general and specific challenges as they related to the project and activities being completed on the ground. To illustrate this notion, one student describes:

"I have a lot of really interesting memories of how it was super entrepreneurial. Nobody really know what was going on and what we were to expect..." (Participant 4)

The same student continues by reiterating:

"...No, they didn't know what they were walking into. You don't know until you know. You know what I mean? It's like the known unknown. You know you're walking into a situation. You have no clue what's going to happen. You can prepare as best as you possibly can. You have a lot of things that you want to accomplish: goals, objectives, understanding for culture." (Participant 4)

In a second description, a student mentions:

"There was no lines of authority, per se. People weren't directing each other. We're all just kind of going through it together." (Participant 3)

However, it was apparent that, as mentioned above, faculty did have a base set of knowledge and experience that made for a safe environment and facilitated the fulfillment of project goals and objectives. In fact, faculty, were active in ensuring that students' progress, as the following narrative suggests:

"[Faculty A] didn't do my job for me. He saw me in a moment, what I'd even say, is he saw a team member in a moment where he was like, "I can either ... I can jump in the water and I can do the work for them. I can let them drown or leave them be and see what happens. Or I can throw him this life ring and see what he does with it." He just threw me that life ring and was like, 'What do you do with this? What are you going to do, [Participant 9]?' He's like, 'Here's an option, he's a life ring, here's an option you can take.' I took it and it worked out great. So I think that's how [Faculty A] or our faculty was able to facilitate learning for me." (Participant 9)

6.5.4 Hierarchy

The narratives within the findings allude that the hierarchy between the educators and students were different than what would be seen in a classroom setting. Students and faculty were seen to be working together in a *real life* situation as the following quotes suggest:

"...it's kind of like instead of in a project where a teacher in a class might lead you and say, 'Okay, you have this assignment, you have this due date, and this criteria, and you need this outcome.' It's kind of like, 'Okay, you have this in the project, we have this project, this is the outcome, we have no idea what criteria you need, but figure out how to get that outcome.'" (Participant 9)

And,

"It's just completely different doing something like this, because it's like real life. It's not a class. In some classes, other classes that have ... It's just something completely different. You're not actually going somewhere and changing people's lives and working with other people, so I think just the knowledge and feedback that you receive from the faculty in that type of class is completely different than when you just go to a lecture and they talk at you, and then ... In some classes, they talk at you and then you hand in your stuff and you barely have any interaction with them." (Participant 8)

In many cases faculty were past instructors of the student participants; however at the time of the project, and for the most part on-trip in Vietnam, the relationship between student and faculty describe as *casual and informal*.

"I think there's not a, there wasn't a formal structure in place around who did what, but you know, you do research into any mentorship program and the more formal it gets, the less successful it is. I think there's just something with regards to what that environment, what that project, is kind of like an incubator of things that just happened that you could plan for, but organically they just unfolded because you have these environmental factors and influences that will inevitably create a powerful learning experience. It's not just a knowledge exchange. There's a visceral, like five senses are activated." (Participant 3)

Overall, as stated above, educators were active in the development of project activities, in some cases findings suggest that there were benefits to an approach that was less structured and perhaps more passive.

6.5.5 Facilitating and fostering critical reflection

As mentioned in earlier discussions, critical reflection was substantially presented in the findings as something that student participants were involved in while engaged in Capilano University's community tourism project in Vietnam. Moments of critical reflection were recorded pre-, during and post trip. And, supplementary activities contributing to further critical reflection, especially post trip, were recommended by participants. Nonetheless, the findings support that faculty was engaged in meaningful facilitation of critical reflection pre-, during and post trip. Before departure, in one of the planning sessions, one student accounts:

"I remember [Faculty A] and [Faculty B] both warning us, and being like, 'You guys are gonna come back thinking things differently.' That was kind of our pre-trip build up and the conversations that we were having." (Participant 2)

During the trip, another student stories a moment where the student and instructor clash on a certain activity but later reflect and debrief on the situation:

"I remember, I think this is more based on values. My personal values were compromised because I was like, you know what? I know we need to do this and this is really important, and there was some way of acknowledging that, like this is a day of rest, blah blah blah. We went ahead and did it anyways. I went against my personal judgment. We got the sign done, but it created some conflict between myself and an instructor, because it was the one time where someone was, it was the one and only time where someone was using a little bit of authority to get something done. We got it done, and we resolved the conflict later on, but it was still done. We debriefed it, but it wasn't necessarily something I guess I was prepared for..."

"...Even in the first example with the sign and [Faculty A], it wasn't like I walked away and held onto this thing and you know, kind of wrote in my journal and never spoke about it again. We had that conversation, either because the relationship was in place for us to have the conversation, and I remember him apologizing, being like, 'Hey, I felt like I came on too strong.' I was like, 'Well, you kind of did.' We had that. I don't know if that's common or familiar with like, faculty/student conversations. They might be." (Participant 3)

Findings also stated that post trip activities included facilitated reflection either by email or through formal in-person discussions, as described below:

“I think what the instructors did that was very mindful and very powerful was each trip ended with a level of reflection where you go through exercises, questions, conversations, we got to revisit everything: things that worked well, things that didn't work well, what do we do for next time? What do we take away and actually guided that reflection piece. That was on every single project.” (Participant 3)

Finally, as highlighted above, a few participants mentioned how the Tourism Management Program and some of the courses within it offered moments for further reflection either during/part of the course, or post completion.

6.6 Summary of findings

The above chapter is a collection of participant vignettes that have offered insight into the experiences of students while engaged in Capilano University's tourism training project in Vietnam. In summary, the findings storied the project experience in general as well as transformative learning experiences as they relate to the transformative learning process. As well, participants relayed narratives describing the role of faculty relative to their involvement in the project and their transformative learning experiences.

7.0 DISCUSSION

The following chapter considers the interview findings as they relate to the themes and discussions found within the literature review. Guided by the research objectives of this paper, the discourse will seek to highlight any parallels found between the findings and the empirical evidence. The research objectives include the following questions:

1. To what extent was the students' transformative learning experience an outcome of the educator?
2. In what ways did the educator affect the transformative learning experience?

Ultimately, based on the evidence this research has established, the following discussion will seek to provide the basis for a set of recommendations that addressing: **How can educators facilitate student learning transformations within the context of a university-led international project?**

The organization of this chapter will include discussions on the facilitating transformation and faculty intervention in the context of the participants' experience(s). A relevant note to preface the following discussion however, is that before attempting to respond to the above questions it is important to demonstrate that was some sort of indication of transformative learning experience by the learners.

7.1 Transformational learning

A comparison of the academic literature's definitions of transformative learning, as has been presented by Mizerow (2003), as well as Bamber and Hankin (2011), Brook (2009), Cranton and Taylor (2012), Illeris (2014), Kitchenham (2008), and Noh et al. (2000), with the data collected in the interviews is demonstrative that participants of Capilano University's community tourism projects in Vietnam have experienced a transformative learning experience.

As it relates to a change in an adult learner's frame of reference or meaning perspective, findings suggest that the participants experienced changes in worldview, notions of self, and cultural understanding. As well, participants expressed that they had gone through a process of reflection and reorientation of one's values due to the experiences gained while engaged in the project. These observations are reflected in the Mezirow (1978) foundational work and Gum et al. (2011) who point to the development of a learner's sense of agency as well as, in some ways, in Cranton and Taylor's (2002) work which describes learner transformation in the context of a newfound direction in social justice. Furthermore, there was an indication that learners went beyond just learning, and in fact, as suggested by Gum et al. (2011) integrated these new frames of reference into their active lives. Although, findings did cite specific, measurable actions by participants related to transformative learning, the literature itself does not substantially discuss practice as a transformative learning outcome. Gum et al. (2011) do suggest the idea of redoing something, however in the context of critical reflection, which was again, accomplished and expressed in the findings of this research. As illustrated in the narratives, participants would question and reconsider what they were doing and how what they were doing related to their roles in the context of the project and their position generally in the world. Based on what they had come to learn about themselves and the world around them, participants considered adopting changes in themselves and their professional lives.

Importantly, the empirical discourse on the transformational learning process suggests that transformative learning is dependent on involvement of the learner (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011), the inclusion of the learner's worldview as part of the context (Mezirow, 2000; Snyder, 2008), and the engagement of the learner in critical reflection. The findings demonstrated that the learner's worldview was illuminated throughout all stages of the transformative learning process. Significantly however, learners seemed to acknowledge their existential context and worldview the most in the pre-phase and critical reflection phases, as will be further discussed below. Thus, the discussions presented in the findings do, in some ways, lend themselves well to the pre-phase of the transformative learning process as they offered glimpse's into participants' expectations, understanding of self and level of knowledge, as it related to the context of the project and the participant.

It was found that all participants did engage in reflection, some more critically than others. Nevertheless, as suggested in the literature, critical reflection in the form of critical self-reflection and/or critical discourse is a key component of the transformative learning process (Snyder, 2009). Overwhelmingly, findings related to critical reflection suggest that participants engaged in some type of critical reflection (i.e. journaling, course work, debriefing) facilitated in some way by faculty leads. The transformative learning community, for example learner, peers and educator, as a vehicle for critical reflection is supported in the literature, specifically by Gum et al. (2011), Hollis (2014) and Kitchenham, (2008). As well, interview participants described their internal monologues where they were contemplating, debating and questioning themselves, while engaged in project activities. These comments are reflected in the MacKeracher's (2012) work that recounts and analyses her experiences of critical reflection. Moreover, within the findings there is an indication, however nuanced, that participants experienced a process of critical self-reflection. In these cases, the respondents' narratives described either seeing their worldview, or seeing themselves as they related to the world around them. Similarly, the literature on transformative learning suggest experiences where learners gain the ability to see their world view (Sterling, 2010), and perhaps change their *way of knowing* (Snyder, 2008). As Brock (2009) articulates, "...transformative learning is when a learner is struck by a new concept or way of thinking and then follows through to make a life change" (p. 123).

Findings related to the transformative learning process illustrated that participants experienced, in some capacity, all four phases of transformative learning process as suggested and discussed in the literature review: pre-phase, disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, integration of new frames of reference. As illustrated in the findings, participants experienced disorienting dilemmas vividly illustrated while they were in the village engaged in project activities. Works by Meyers (2009) and Stone and Duffy (2015) allude that this disorienting dilemmas are a condition for critical reflection. Quantifiably, by comparing the frequency of coded interview data, it could be determined that the highest occurring phase experienced by participants was critical reflection. This was followed by examples of disorienting dilemmas, pre-phase elements and finally integration of new frames of reference. There was no evidence supporting any type of neither linear nor sequential process to transformative learning. For example, participants shared moments of critical reflection pre-, during and post project trip.

Overall, it could be assumed that all of the participants did experience some sort of transformation. The extent to which that transformation was in fact transformational is challenging to measure and determine; however, several comments did suggest some sort of change related to transformative learning. Added, there is a strong indication that students experienced transformative learning because of the high frequency of students articulating in some way that their transformative learning experiences included key elements of the transformational learning process.

7.2 Facilitating transformation

Within the literature on transformative learning, it is suggested that there are three nodes worth further exploration in the context of facilitating transformative learning. As articulated by Snyder (2009), “Three requirements exist for this process of transformative learning to occur: first, the context must be appropriate for transformative learning; second, the learner must engage in self-reflection; and third, the learner must engage in critical discourse” (p. 165). Thus, the learner, the educator and the environment all appear to have enabling elements impacting transformative learning and the transformative learning process. This is also illustrated within the findings of this research, as well be compared and contrasted below.

7.2.1 The environment

Interview findings illustrate there were a range of potential elements to the project experience that helped facilitate transformative learning. Comparably, there is a presumption within the literature that validates the need for a learning environment that is conducive for transformative learning.

In Chapter 5 of this report, Christopher et al. (2001), Laiken (1997) as well as Stone and Duffy (2015) all highlight the need for positive learning environments in the context of transformative learning. In the words by Christopher et al. (2001) and Laiken (1997) it is suggested that environments engage both learner and educator. In particular, Christopher et al. (2001) propose a safe and supportive learning environment fostered through educators exhibiting emotional intelligence, openness and teamwork. Moreover, there is significant empirical research that support the notion of an environment that sees that teacher-student relationship shift to one that is more participatory in nature (Adamson & Bailie, 2012; Christopher et al., 2001; Laiken, 1997). This was clearly the case within the research associated with this research project. Findings provided several narratives and examples where participants suggested that they were safe and supported because of the presence of faculty. Participants suggested positive conditions, such as open lines of communication and ample formal and informal opportunity, encouraging critical reflection and critical discourse. Moreover, participants stated that they felt empowered to complete their responsibilities. Finally, it is suggested that the participants perceived a flattened hierarchy between student and educator, thus contributing to a collaborative environment conducive to facilitating transformative learning.

Finally, the university-community partnership that was the Capilano University tourism training projects in Vietnam, although interpreted as the context within this report was based, was also the experience that participants engaged in, and through which transformative learning was achieved. Within the literature review, a discussion on the positive attributes of community-university partnerships as they facilitate service learning supports the notion that they also contribute to curriculum create experiences conducive for transformative learning (Bamber & Hankin, 2011; Meyers, 2009; Strain, 2006). For example, Meyers (2009) suggest that these types of partnerships can engage learners in projects rooted in social justice and positive change. Additionally, the literature has suggested that real world learning in the form of experiential and service learning pedagogies are conducive to transformative learning. Connecting back to the findings, participants specifically described the project experience as being *real*. It could be argued that the *realness* of the experience added enhanced levels of anxiety and actualization to the activities and responsibilities of the student volunteers. Thus, the discussed community-university partnership led by Capilano University has been a vehicle that engaged the student in an enriched academic setting outside of the classroom.

Finally, all of the participants in this study were, in some capacity, studying tourism and tourism management. Moreover, the very foundation of the project was built around community tourism development. Further still, participants all engaged in a trip abroad, and in some respects a volunteerism experience. The importance of this discussion, as it relates to the literature, is that tourism scholarship positions learners to be active in challenging and transformative learning contexts. Proponents of this concept include Stone and Duffy (2015) and Jamel et al. (2011).

7.2.2 The learner

It is concluded in the literature and the findings of this report, that the adult learner is vital to the process of transformative learning. This is articulated in the discourse relating to a learner's baseline capacities in terms of knowledge, maturity and worldview (Mezirow, 2000). As well, Snyder (2008) supports this notion by highlighting a learner's baseline capacities as the accumulation of a learner's past experiences.

Within the literature review, this discussion was related to the notion of a *pre-phase*. Supported by Coghlan and Gooch (2011), within this phase, there is a condition of learner involvement in the transformative learning process. Findings reported in this research paper validate this discussion. Within the findings it can be concluded that the learner in terms of the learner's past experience(s), and the learner within the context of the project were the focus of the experiences expressed in the interviews. Although the project, and the experiences gained on the project, were the primary subject of the discussions, participants relayed experiences related to transformative learning and the transformative learning process were seen to be based on past experience(s), challenging circumstances due to levels of unpreparedness, and shifts in the learner's understood worldview.

As stated in the literature review, Snyder (2008) contends that at the disorienting dilemma phase "of the learning process, there is typically an immediate need or desire to learn something new, and an unsettled sensation on the part of the learner" (p. 164). Because of the context of the project, learners alluded that they felt encouraged, empowered and even excited at the ability to test their knowledge and skills as they embarked in project activities. Participants also seemed to point to an inherent desire to do well and to learn, even though the situation may have been challenging and/or they were continually being challenged.

According to the literature on critical reflection, it is assumed and accepted that the learner is present and that they has the adult competence for meaningful self-examination. In fact, if transformative learning is, as suggested in the literature, a shift or change in a learner's frame of reference or meaning perspective or worldview (Mezirow, 1997), it would be a condition then for a learner to have some comprehension or understanding of how they view the world prior to a learning experience. Within the findings, critical reflection was an activity that was continually highlighted. Deeper analysis of the evidence provided by the participants would arguably conclude that the critical reflection undertaken by the participants was at an adult learner level as they challenged learners' own values, beliefs and view of themselves. Critical reflection, in accordance with the literature and the findings of this research, is a significant component to the transformative learning process. And, as stated above, it is critical that the learner plays a role in the process.

7.2.3 The educator

Both the literature and the research findings suggest that the educator is a key component to facilitating transformative learning and the transformative learning process. In particular, the

educators are seen as facilitators in the pre-phase, disorienting dilemmas and critical reflection phases.

In the findings it was demonstrated that faculty was involved in some way with all activities in the project as well within learners' experiences related to transformative learning. Research by Coghlan and Gooch (2011), as well as Stone and Duffy (2015), indicate that transformative learning requires educator preparation and facilitation. Repeatedly, the findings ascertain that the project itself as well as the successful completion of participants' responsibilities were, at least in part, due to the involvement of faculty. Faculty, as project leads, were engaged in project activities and the learners' positive learning experience pre-, during and post trip, as well as through phases of the transformative learning process.

As mentioned above, the educator was described in the context of this research as being supportive, empowering and collaborative. This is also supported in the above literature review. The educator facilitated a positive environment throughout all phases of the transformative learning process through a variety of actions. For example, in the findings, it was suggested that there were open lines of communication between students and faculty. Furthermore, it was suggested that there was a level of trust that was mutually accepted between the student and educator. Significantly, the level of trust was reinforced the open lines of communication as well as was foundational to the feelings of empowerment as suggested in the findings. These characteristics of the experiences of students on the project, facilitated by the educator are also discussed in the findings. Stone and Duffy (2015) allude to educators preparing learners for transformative learning; for example, by preparing students for challenges endured with disorienting dilemmas. It is also proposed that educators facilitate experiences of disorienting dilemmas by taking a hands-off approach. In other words, the literature suggests, that educators are more open and less structured to allow for challenging circumstances that are seen to be less structured (Coghlan & Gooch, 2011; Laiken, 1997; Stone & Duffy, 2015) than a traditional classroom experience.

It could be assumed from the literature that trust and support is a vital ingredient in the facilitation of critical reflection and/or critical discourse by the educator. It is stated quite clearly that the educator is in fact a necessary part, and plays a role in the active facilitation of learners' critical reflection (Hollis, 2002; Mejiuni, 2012; Stone & Duffy, 2015). In fact, in the findings, faculty are seen as the person or persons in charge of ensuring the fulfillment of critical reflection through formalized activities pre-, during and post trip. However, the literature does not specifically fully endorse the need for a supportive environment in the context of critical reflection. Nevertheless, the literature on transformative learning does suggest several means of which critical reflection can be achieved. Commonalities between the findings and this paper's literature review include educator facilitated journaling (Hollis, 2015; Stone & Duffy, 2015), peer-to-peer dialogue (Hollis, 2015), professional planning (Stone & Duffy, 2015), and reflection related to cultural biases (Mejiuni, 2012).

On integration of new frames reference, there was little to no mention of educator facilitation neither within the findings nor within the literature review of this research paper. Although, there was also little academic discourse on educator intervention in this phase of the transformative process, there was, however, some indication that Capilano University faculty were engaged in reflective integration and the facilitation of integrating new frames of reference. It is arguable that there may not be enough evidence within the findings to support this claim, however there were a couple of instances where students were challenged to take a lead role on a second project trip, integrating what they had learned either from past experience or knowledge. As well, findings also

suggested that students perhaps integrated what transformative learning outcomes in post academics.

The role of the educator within the findings seems to shift and change from leader, to mentor, to guide. In many cases participants the role of faculty was dependent on their expertise. Participants describe specific instances of teamwork when working with faculty. Participants also suggested that problem solving was done collaboratively. There is a common acceptance that the role of faculty was related to the responsibilities associated with keeping students safe as well as those responsibility directed related to formal project administration. Overall however, the findings did not conclusively suggest that faculty were seen to play the role of teacher, instructor or professor. These findings are in concert with the discussions presented with this paper's literature review. As discussed, educators can facilitate transformative learning through approaches that are participatory (Adamson & Bailie, 2012; Christopher et al., 2001; Laiken, 1997; Moore, 2005; Snyder, 2008) and empowering (Moore, 2005, Adamson & Bailie, 2012). Additionally, educators who take on a role that reflects notions of co-learning (Moore, 2005; Snyder, 2008) are contributive to transformative learning.

7.3 Summary of findings

In summary, the literature and findings generally validate that participant's were engaged the various phases of the transformative learning process, as well as had transformative learning experiences while engaged in the project activities. The learner, the learning environment, in this case the community tourism training project, and educator were all key elements to learner's positive experience and transformations. Educators were seen to play a key role in facilitating those experiences throughout the transformative learning process.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The outcome of this study was the development of a set of recommendations for Capilano University's Faculty of Global and Community Studies related to fostering transformative learning in the context of international projects.

It is important to note that the following recommendations are firstly a product of the data collected and analyzed from student interviews. Next, the context of which these recommendations have been developed is the Capilano University Vietnam Tourism Training Project. The university-community project is unique as it sits outside the regular set of curriculum students are required to complete in order to attain their academic credential. In addition, as Capilano University embarks on new international projects and/or curriculum that positions students in an international or service learning context, it will be important to make a decision if the following recommendations suit the objectives – learning or otherwise – of that particular project and/or international curriculum.

Thus, based on the discourse found in the literature on transformative learning, the findings provided within the interviews, bolstered by the discussions delineated from the research, the following recommendations have been provided. Broadly, the recommendations include:

- Broadening the role of the educator
- Course and program development
- Encouraging critical reflection
- Fostering a transformative learning environment
- Areas for further considering and research

8.1.1 Recommendation I – Broadening the role of the educator

Enhanced understanding of what role educators are playing within the context of international projects is needed. This will be an important first step to establishing a baseline of what educators may perceive themselves as and of what students perceive educators as. The objective of this reflective exercise will provide a stepping off point to broadening the role of the educator to include being participatory, guiding and/or mentoring on international projects as opposed to playing the role of administrator, leader and/or instructor; although, it is understood that the latter roles should not be disregarded.

The goal of this recommendation is to evolve the relationship between student and educator into one that is more cooperative and collaborative while engaged in international projects. The nature of these relationships should foster a flattened hierarchy between the educator and student. In effect, students and educators should be co-learners. Nevertheless, the educator's knowledge and expertise should be well understood and accessible to students while completing project work. This should be communicated during early project introductory and planning sessions and reiterated throughout the course of the students' term with the project.

Finally, whenever appropriate, problems related to project activities and relevant tasks should be approached in collaboration. Mutual acceptance that certain challenges are shared will empower students to engage as partners with educators. Furthermore, educators are encouraged to be open and vulnerable to sharing experiences of discovery with students.

8.1.2 Recommendation II – Project programming and course and program development

Integrating the transformative learning process into project programming, courses and generally within relative programs (i.e. Capilano University's Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Management programs), wherever appropriate, is needed. Using the general framework of an initial pre-phase, followed by disorienting dilemma, critical reflection and integration of new frames reference, project leads, educators, conveners and curriculum developers are encouraged to attempt to foster transformative learning in the classroom. This will enhance transformative learning opportunities for those students involved in international projects and service learning opportunities, as well as those who are not. It should be noted that this might not be feasible, nor align with priorities related to curriculum development.

Nevertheless, if this recommendation were considered, beyond integration into international project programming, a systematic approach to individual course work, course curriculum and program learning objectives would need to be taken to achieve desired results.

General steps to engage students in the transformative learning process within the context of international projects and otherwise could be achieved by:

- Engaging students in self-reflection, visioning and goal setting exercises in the early stages of their program-related studies;
- Ensuring students are aware of the resources accessible to them throughout the completion of the project and/or program (i.e. educators as mentors);
- Preparing students for disorienting dilemmas by creating a safe and supportive environment;
- Being open to and perhaps initiating experiences of disorienting dilemmas;
- Providing continual opportunities for critical reflection and forums for critical discourse as they relate to the students' personal academic and professional goals, as well as the project objectives, as well as course and program learning outcomes;
- Encouraging students to develop action plans to integrate learning into their personal and professional lives.

8.1.3 Recommendation III – Encouraging critical reflection

Although briefly mentioned above, it is recommended that educators involved in (international) community-university partnership projects and/or service learning service learning programming take extra consideration to foster critical reflection and critical discourse with student participants. It is recommended that educators integrate individual, peer-to-peer and group reflection into project activities pre-, during and post trip. This will be especially important if educators adopt transformative learning strategies that engage students in activities that cause them to challenge their emotions, values and/or worldview. It will also recommended the educators facilitate the reflection activities that produce tangible records of student reflections.

Practical ways that could be taken by educators/project-leads could include:

- Visioning and on-going goal setting exercises for students;
- Daily debriefs between participating members (students and faculty alike);
- Facilitating formal and in-formal group discussions between students peers, faculty, and project partners;
- Assign students to author blogs about the project or project-trip from differing perspectives (i.e. their own perspective or the perspective of someone they are working with);

- Facilitating photo and video journaling.

Implementing the above can be achieved through intentional programming that emphasizes the importance of reflection by ensuring that there is appropriate time(s) and space to fulfill desired levels of reflection. It may be beneficial to consider the importance of reflection prior to fully engaging in project activities. The rationale behind this idea is that learners would have an opportunity to compare their recorded reflections at different times during the project experience.

8.1.4 Recommendation IV – Fostering a transformative learning environment

It is recommended that educators administering and/or leading (international) service learning projects prioritize creating conducive environments for transformative learning. Beyond the health and safety of all project participants, educators will also need to create an environment that is supportive and empathetic to transformative learning.

Transformative learning environments are authentic and dynamic. From the perspective of the adult learner, the ingredients to successful transformative learning environments include accessibility, support and experiential. To explain, the educator plays a key role in facilitating and fostering transformative learning, thus it would be advantageous to:

- Ensure channels of communication are open and accessible between students and faculty;
- Create formal and informal spaces for peer-to-peer and student-to-educator collaboration;
- Promote a flattened hierarchy between students and faculty through participatory and collaborative decision making;
- Encourage active participation from students and faculty in a range of project activities;
- Foster trust and empathy through teamwork and communication;
- Encourage appropriate levels of risk taking by providing accessible, communicated, faculty-supported safety nets;
- Facilitate authentic experiences by implementing project activities onsite and outside of a classroom setting.

8.1.5 Recommendation V - Areas for further consideration and research

There is an opportunity for this report to become a stepping off point for further research. The research within this study focused on the student participants' experiences. It has been determined that faculty were a critical part of fostering those experiences, transformative and otherwise. Thus, further research on the experiences of the faculty as they relate to transformative learning in general and the fostering of transformative learning experiences while engaged in Capilano University's community tourism training project would contribute to and enrich the findings and discussions presented in this report.

It may also be also beneficial to explore and determine if the project experience was transformative for faculty. If transformative learning extended to faculty while active and engaged in (international) service learning projects, such as the one discussed in this report, then there may be added incentive for the institution to further support and administer these types of initiatives. Potentially more enlightening though, would be the impact the discovery of educator transformative learning would have on teaching.

8.2 Delivery and implementation

It has been generally envisioned that the above recommendations will be shared with interested Capilano University faculty through professional development sessions. As part of the university's collective agreement, faculty are required to engage in activities that contribute to their professional development. Beyond the professional development sessions the results of this report will be briefly shared with Global and Community Studies faculty specifically engaged in (international) service learning and community projects potentially through informal and formal engagements on campus.

9.0 CONCLUSION

This report has included several discussions about transformative learning and the transformative learning process. It has also offered a glimpse into adult learners' transformative learning experiences. It can be concluded that role of the educator in facilitating transformative learning is essential.

Capilano University's community tourism training projects in Vietnam have engaged student volunteers in experiential, service learning programs. Facilitated by faculty, students who have participated in the project(s) have had transformative learning experiences. This report has shared some of the details of those transformative experiences and has compared them with the literature on transformative learning. From this, a set of the recommendations for facilitating transformative learning in the context of (international) service learning and university-community partnerships has been created. These recommendations include ideas around broadening the role of the educator, program development, critical reflection, fostering a transformative learning environment, as well as areas for further research.

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11.0 APPENDECIES

11.1 Invitation to participate [email]

[Date]

Dear [Name],

You are invited to participate in a study entitled **Facilitating transformative learning through university-led international projects** that I am conducting. As a graduate student in the Department of Public Administration, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Masters Degree in Community Development.

The purpose of this research project is analyze the international experiences of volunteer students who have participated in Capilano University's Vietnam community tourism training projects to better understand if and how the experience has been transformative for the student. The study will seek to identify how educators can facilitate student-learning transformations within the context of university-led international projects (such as the ones in Vietnam from 2002 - 2016). I will be working with Dr. Chris Bottrill, Dean of the Faculty of Global and Community Studies at Capilano University as my client and client organization as required for my MACD at the University of Victoria.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a student who has participated in one or more of the Capilano University Vietnam community tourism training projects and you are a graduate from Capilano University Tourism and/or Outdoor Recreation Programs.

If you agree to participate in this research, your participation will include a face-to-face interview that will take approximately one hour, with the possibility of follow-up conversations. Interview times and location will be based on your preferences and availability. The research will be conducted between March and June 2017.

Once I receive your confirmation, I will contact you to find a suitable time and place for our conversation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Thank you,

Chris Carnovale
MACD Candidate, University of Victoria

11.2 Participant consent form

Facilitating transformative learning through university-led international projects

You are invited to participate in a study entitled **Facilitating transformative learning through university-led international projects** that is being conducted by **Chris Carnovale**.

Chris Carnovale is a student in the Department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact him if you have further questions by email or telephone at chriscarnovale@capilano.ca or (604) 351-7907.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Masters Degree in Community Development. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Lynne Siemens. You may contact my supervisor by email or phone number at siemensl@uvic.ca or (250) 721-8069.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is analyze the international experiences of volunteer students who have participated in Capilano University's Vietnam community tourism training projects to better understand if and how the experience has been transformative for the student. The study will seek to identify how educators can facilitate student-learning transformations within the context of university-led international projects (such as the ones in Vietnam from 2002 - 2016). Therein, I will be working with Dr. Chris Bottrill, Dean of the Faculty of Global and Community Studies at Capilano University as my client and client organization as required for my MACD at the University of Victoria.

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because it help improve learning experiences for future students involved in international opportunities. The research will ultimately form a set of recommendations for Capilano University educators within the Faculty of Global and Community Studies facilitating international projects as well as international service learning-based courses.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been a student who has participated in one or more of the Capilano University Vietnam community tourism training projects and you are a graduate from Capilano University Tourism and/or Outdoor Recreation Programs.

What is Involved

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include a semi-structured, informal, face-to-face interview with the researcher in which you will share your experience(s) and provide feedback about how the project may gave facilitated any learning.

During the interview the research will take notes. The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including loss of your time (approximately one hour), potentially during your work hours.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include supporting positive learning experiences for future students participating in Capilano University's international projects.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will not be used in the analysis. If you decide to withdraw from the study following the completion of the interview, you can have any previously submitted data deleted by sending an email to chriscarnovale@capilanou.ca.

Anonymity

In terms of protecting your anonymity, all participants will remain anonymous with the use of synonyms. All participants will be referred to as *Student 1*, *Student 2* and so on. Only the researcher will keep personally identifiable information stored in the electronic data that will be held in the researcher's possession until three years after the conclusion of the study, after which all data will be deleted and or destroyed.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected during at all times during this study.

There are limitations to ensuring complete anonymity and confidentiality, these include: the pool of participants are limited to the approximately 50 past students who have participated on the Capilano University Vietnam tourism training projects from 2002 - 2016. And, because of the nature of the questions being asked in the interview it is possible that the identities of the participants could potentially be compromised.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others by the dissemination to the University of Victoria's Masters' project assessment committee, as well as Capilano University faculty in presentation and executive summary form. The study will be published on the University of Victoria's website as a Master's Project. The data collected in the study may also be used for academic publication in the same general area of research by the researcher. Results may also be published in scholarly journals.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be kept exclusively on the researcher's password-protected computer and on a hard drive contain only data used for this project. All data will be disposed of three years after the project has been accepted by the University of Victoria's Master's project assessment committee for three years after which it will be deleted or destroyed.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the researcher, Chris Carnovale by email at chriscarnovale@capilanou.ca and phone at (604) 351-7907, or research supervisor, Dr. Lynne Siemens, by email at siemensl@uvic.ca or by phone at (250) 721-8069. In addition, you may

11.3 Interview questions

The following interview questions are open-ended and may be modified somewhat during the interview and data gathering process.

1. When did you participate in the Capilano University's Vietnam Project?
2. Please describe some of the most significant or most impactful memories you have when you reflect on your time with project? What made that impactful?
3. Can you describe your role(s) and responsibilities when you participated in the Vietnam community tourism project in Vietnam (pre-, during and post trip)?
4. How did you prepare for these activities?
5. Can you describe what role faculty played in your responsibilities on the project?
6. Can you describe a time where you were in a situation you did not feel prepared for? How was that situation managed? What role did the faculty play in this?
7. What are some of the significant things that you learned on the project? Can you describe any particular experience/moment that this learning took place?
8. What type(s) of activities/experience(s) did you find most impactful to you and/or the project?
9. Can you recall if the experiences on the project alter your thoughts about anything in particular? Can you describe those changes/experiences?
10. How, if at all, was faculty involved in facilitating these experiences?
11. How did being on this project change your perspective about how you view the world?
12. How did being on the project impact your life: professionally / personally / perhaps academically?
13. Upon reflection, what, if anything, would you do differently if you were to do this all over again? How could faculty have played a role in this?
14. Have you shared many of the comments you have made today with others? How have those conversations been significant to you?

Thank you very much for your answers and your time.