

**An exploration of factors which enabled student learning in the SHAWCO  
service-learning program at UCT for International students.**

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the  
degree Master of Education (Adult Education).

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March 2021

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**COMPULSORY DECLARATION**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree.  
It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the  
work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

Date: 08 March 2021

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisor Associate Professor Salma Ismail for her guidance, support, and patience throughout this journey. While I was writing up my thesis, in 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted social life and face to face supervision therefore, I am grateful for all the online platforms that acted as a form of solidarity in a journey that was sometimes very lonely.

Special gratitude to all SHAWCO Directors who supported me in pursuing this project. They gave me all their support and continuous encouragement while I was employed in the organisation.

I would also like to thank the Professors from the various universities in the US who allowed me access to their students through sharing information about this project, thank you for supporting me and also for your kindness. I would also like to thank participants for sharing their experiences freely and finding ways to connect in tough times and within their busy lives.

I would like to thank my siblings for always being supportive throughout, and for their prayers, knowing that I have their support kept me going on lonely nights. A special thanks to my parents for their prayers throughout this journey.

It's been such a challenging journey, I lost friends, lovers and missed out on opportunities but in the end, I am grateful to have been able to remain committed until completion.

Lastly, thanks to my friends for their support in various ways through tough times, the belief they were constantly showing in me, particularly Jacky Thomas for always being there and for her encouragement.

## List of Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
HE	Higher Education
IAPO	International Academic Program Office
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SA	Study Abroad
SHAWCO	Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organisation
SSA	Short-term Study Abroad
SSL	SHAWCO Service-learning
US	United States
UCT	University of Cape Town
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol

## Abstract

My study is situated within the context of the increasing internationalisation of Higher Education (HE) which has become significant in a globalised society. Academic Institutions are required to produce graduates that can fit into different environments across the globe, with cross-cultural awareness and an understanding of the complexity of a globalised world. Global education has become important in promoting and facilitating the acquisition of these graduate attributes. Therefore, understanding student learning experiences in global education programs is vital for university academics, adult educators and organisations involved in the field.

This study explores student's learning experiences in a SHAWCO service-learning (SSL) program at the University of Cape Town (UCT) for five international students. The SSL program hosts international students and integrates formal and informal learning. Learning takes place in many different sites such as learning in lectures, educational site visits and in community-based organisations. The program design allows international students to explore South African history, contemporary issues, and the complexities of transitioning into a democratic state.

The aim of the study is to understand factors that enhanced learning for five international students who were part of the SSL program at UCT between 2016 and 2018. The study explores mixed pedagogical practices and their influence in the learning process.

John Dewey's experiential theory (1938) and David Kolb (1984) who deepened experiential theory by developing a conceptual framework of cycles of learning and reflection are used in the discussion and analysis of the findings. Paulo Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy is drawn on as his dialogical methods influenced the design of the SSL program and feminist theory which provides a critique to experiential learning.

The study makes links with similar research such as Coryell (2011, 2013) and Pipitone (2017, 2018). In addition, South African studies including McMillan's (2011) study on service learning as a boundary between the university and communities, and Gredley's (2013) study on making sense of student's learning through service learning.

A qualitative case study design was used to gather data through interviews from five US students who formed part of the SSL program and document analysis. The students were interviewed in their home country. The interviews took place using Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). This technology is used to send voice and video in real time. An interpretive approach was used to analyse experiences to give a deeper and an extensive representation of student learning experiences in the program.

The findings indicate that students' learning was enhanced by the dialogical and reflective learning methods used which democratised learning and allowed for critical engagements. The study illustrated the value of pedagogical practices which integrate formal and informal learning, in the lecture, education site visits and in incidental experiences. The conclusion is that these pedagogical tools allowed students to learn intensely about South Africa's history and challenges in a new complex democracy.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

In this dissertation, the focus is on the learning experiences of five international students who were part of the SHAWCO Service-Learning (SSL) program between 2016-2018 as part of a short-term study abroad (SSA) program. This study examines what enhanced learning for students during their participation in this program, and how learning occurred in the formal and informal learning settings within the program.

The research question that this study address: *What are the main factors that enhance students' learning in the SHAWCO Service-Learning Program at UCT for five international students?*

This introduction sets out the scope of the study and provides the background for the research within the debate on Internationalisation of HE and the effect of pedagogical practices in study abroad programs.

## Background

In the last 20 years, the mobility of students globally has been increasing, this is both for incoming and outgoing students moving between the North and South of the globe and vice versa. One of the reasons for the increase in the cross-continental movement of students is due to the Internationalisation of HE that has been occurring at a rapid pace enabled through multilateral agreements. Globalisation has also been an influence in this rise of cross-continental movement of students.

In defining internationalisation McCabe (2001) argues that this is a form of cooperation that seeks to foster cross-cultural understanding of norms, rules, and languages between countries. It is further argued that internationalisation manifests in various forms that “range from traditional study-abroad programs, allowing students to learn about other cultures, to providing access to HE in countries where local institutions cannot meet the demand” (Altbach and Knight 2007:01). Through internationalisation, universities are continuously exploring ways of shaping students and broadening their view of the world through study abroad experiences.

In the period influenced by globalisation, universities have been consolidating cooperation with different institutions through internationalisation, this has led to an increase of movement across the globe. The concept of globalisation as understood by Margison and Van Der Wende (2007:07) “entails the formation of world-wide markets operating in real-time in

common financial systems, and unprecedented levels of foreign direct investment and cross-border mobility of production”, this form of organising the world economy has been defined as a neoliberal concept which seeks to commodify and commercialise public services including HE. The influence of globalisation on international education can be seen in this neoliberal perspective, that it is more about selling these exotic destinations and educational experiences to students rather than learning as a continuum in a global context (Lai and Hwee Kan, 2020).

In an increasingly globalised society interlinked and interconnected the challenge for HE institutions is to produce graduates that can fit into different environments across the world, fully aware of the cultural complexities, and with necessary comprehension of the multiplicity in global perspectives, global education has become an instrument used to facilitate this necessary graduate attribute (McCabe, 2001).

In 2017, approximately 5.3 million students worldwide studied outside of their home countries, a number which has increased from 2 million in 2000 (UNESCO, 2019). This shows the value that is ascribed to study abroad in a globalising society. Universities are exploring different forms of international education that can offer students learning experiences of quality.

My study will contribute to understanding the learning experiences of students in these programs and the influence of pedagogy in the learning process.

## **Study Context**

Learning in study abroad programs is mainly through experiential learning in different environments within host countries, and these can be formal and informal learning contexts. To understand experiential learning, adult education provides learning theories that explain how experiences develop into learning through reflection as argued by Fenwick (2001). The discipline of adult education remains invaluable as a resource in making meaning of learning through experiences.

In this study students’ learning experiences in the SHAWCO Service Learning (SSL) program, are analysed using experiential learning theories. Their experiences are linked through an understanding of service-learning as a pedagogical practice in short-term study abroad (SSA).

Service-learning as explained by Weldon and Trautman (2003:574) “allows teachers to employ a variety of teaching strategies that emphasise student-centred, interactive, experiential education”. Student-centred approaches allow for learning to be a contribution of the student and the teacher in the creation of knowledge while challenging the dominant forms of learning which are more teacher-centred (Dewey 1938).

Instructional designers for these academic programs are implored by educators to be innovative and to take advantage of new settings in host countries.

## **Motivation and significance of the study**

The study was inspired by my personal experiences with different groups of American students who formed part of the SSL program. I joined SHAWCO (Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organisation) in 2013 and I always had questions about how different groups of students interpreted their experiences in these programs as well as the effect of the different learning spaces and pedagogy on their learning.

I was employed for six years during the period 2013-2019 by a volunteer organisation, Student Health and Welfare Centres Organisation (SHAWCO) at the University of Cape Town (UCT) as a Service-learning coordinator. Later in 2016 as an International Programs Coordinator for the International programs in the organisation. The International programs allowed SHAWCO to host students from universities in the United States for a short period during their summer breaks within the US HE systems' calendar.

In that period, SHAWCO continuously developed programs that could provide learning opportunities for students through a structured academic program coordinated by the Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) at the University of Cape Town. SHAWCO provided service-learning activities that integrated international students into local communities.

My experience while coordinating these programs inspired the interest to explore student learning experiences in service-learning programs in the period 2016 to 2018 using experiential learning theories.

In many instances, there were unsettling moments about the exotic nature of the programs, the narrow understanding of the South African society by students which I would normally observe at the beginning of the program, and the celebration with an appreciation of these experiences at the end of the programs, something which would always be expressed by students in the review sessions. These different moments generated an interest within me to understand how students interpret their experiences, what enhances learning in the course of the program for students, and what could be done to improve these learning experiences.

The start of my journey in adult education opened an opportunity to understand the value of experiential learning theories in interpreting experiences in both formal and informal settings. The SSL program as an experientially engaged program that allows students to be situated in different learning spaces makes for a good case study in exploring these experiences.

Therefore, this study helps us understand the value of pedagogical practices in SSA programs and how these practices help students learn within a short period.

SSA programs are always criticized for being touristy rather than having any academic rigor. Understanding what students' value in these experiences is important in helping universities and host organisations design programs of quality that can be delivered in a short period.

The criticism of these programs as exotic, perpetuating colonial hierarchies while also promoting cultural tourism as argued by Zemach-Bersin (2007), Donnelly-Smith (2009) and Doer (2015) requires pedagogies that deconstruct these embedded characteristics in SSA programs.

### **Aims and objectives of the study.**

The focus of the research is on the learning experiences of the students who were part of the SSL program, and the influence of the pedagogical practices on their learning. Drawing on experiential learning theories from John Dewey (1938) and David Kolb (1984) the aim is to explain how learning occurred and what enhanced learning in their experiences.

McMillan (2012) who argues service-learning as a boundary between universities and communities will be used as a connecting point in understanding learning experiences of students, and the study will contribute to Gredley's (2013) work on student experiences in service-learning programs as it will be explained in the literature review in Chapter 2.

Kolb (1984:31) states that "Experiential learning is not a molecular educational concept but rather is a molar concept describing the central process of human adaptation to the social and physical environment". This captures the centrality of the study, the understanding of learning through interactions and adaptation in different social and physical environments through service-learning in SSA programs.

The objectives for the study are:

1. To explore and understand the experiences of students who participated in the SSL program and how their experiences were shaped by the different formal and informal pedagogies.
2. To describe how students experienced different social learning environments, as they were engaged with communities through service-learning placements, educational site visits, and in classroom sessions. Looking at how these different elements of the program contributed to their learning.
3. To explain what shaped students' learning in the SSL program.

## Research Questions

### Main Research Question

What are the main factors that enhance students learning in the SHAWCO Service-Learning Program at UCT for five International Students?

### Sub-Questions

During the interviews, the research question will be explored through various sub-questions which are:

- What were the most significant learning experiences in their short-term study abroad program in South Africa? Also, what did they think contributed more to their learning experiences?
- What students thought about the design of the SSL program they participated in (classroom sessions, educational site visits, excursions, and placements), and how these different learning spaces contributed to their student experience?
- In terms of the general interactions with residents throughout the SSL program, how did these interactions contribute to their learning experiences?

The study explores the learning experiences of five students who were in the SSL program between 2016-2018, these are American students from three different universities.

The outline below provides an overview of all the Chapters in the study.

### Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is presented over five Chapters.

**Chapter One:** This is the Introductory chapter that outlines the background to the study highlighting the importance of the study and giving an introduction on how I came to the research question, aims, and objectives of the study.

**Chapter Two:** This chapter is a literature review on Internationalisation of HE, short-term study abroad programs as an increasingly popular form of study abroad, and service-learning as a pedagogical tool in short-term study abroad. It discusses experiential learning theories which form the theoretical framework to explore learning in the service-learning context. The theories of John Dewey (1938) and David Kolb (1984) are used to explore how learning occurs through experience and some critiques of these theories.

**Chapter Three:** The chapter presents the research design and methodology used in the study. The data collection methods used, and how the findings were analysed. It explains how the students were selected and how the interviews were conducted, the ethical considerations in the study, and methodological challenges.

**Chapter Four:** This chapter presents the findings of the research. It starts by describing Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organisation (SHAWCO), the organisation within the University of Cape Town, which hosted a Service-learning program and further describes the different learning sites in the program. Then, I present a brief profile of the students and their motivations to register in the SSL program. In the last section, I present findings from the interviews under the three themes that emerged from the data analysis.

**Chapter Five:** This is the final chapter which interprets and analyses the findings as set out in Chapter Four, it provides conclusions from the findings and questions for further research.

# Chapter Two:

## Literature Review

### Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on internationalisation of HE and explains the evolution of study abroad programs in South Africa. It explores the theory of service-learning in short-term study abroad (SSA) programs using experiential learning theories. Learning in SSA has both been acclaimed and critiqued, these different perspectives will be discussed in this chapter.

The 2017 report by the Institute of International Education confirmed that short-term study abroad programs are now replacing longer-term programs as the most common form of study abroad (Pipitone, 2017). However, more still needs to be explored on pedagogical practices that contribute to the learning experiences of students in SSA programs particularly through service-learning (Institute of International Report, 2017). This study contributes to filling the knowledge gap on pedagogical practices in service-learning which enable the development of students. I hope the findings will assist academics, host organisations, and lecturers in their design of the programs and facilitation of learning for students within formal and informal settings in SSA programs.

The study draws on experiential learning theories in adult education to analyse the findings. I draw on John Dewey's (1938) and Kolb's (1984) theories of experiential learning. The literature review discusses critiques of short-term study abroad as discussed by Doerr (2015, and 2016) who focuses on the discourse of immersion in SSA and the "othering" of cultures through study abroad. Critical pedagogy is drawn on to a limited extent as articulated through Paulo Freire's (1970) problem-posing education theories that influenced the design of the SSL program.

In addition, the study contributes to knowledge by adding to the work of McMillan (2012) on sociology of learning and teaching in service-learning and Gredley's (2013) thesis on student experiences in service-learning programs, particularly on the value of peer learning, and critical reflection as enablers of learning. The study explores pedagogical practices in SSA and discusses Coryell (2011 and 2013) and Pipitone (2017 and 2018) as they relates to my study.

### Key Concepts

**Pedagogy** Over time the definition of pedagogy has evolved to not only refer to learning from childhood but broadly as a form of instructional techniques/ teaching to include adults. It refers to the interactive process between teacher/practitioner and learner and it is also applied to

include the provision of some aspects of the learning environment (Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden & Bell 2002).

In this study, pedagogy is used as a broad term that refers to the techniques and strategies that were used for teaching and learning in the programs.

**Service-Learning** is defined as a meaningful community service that is linked to students' academic experience through related course materials and reflective activities (Zlotkowsky 1998). In this study this is the definition of service-learning that is used, and the program for analysis is in this form, as it includes course materials and reflection, while having a component of service.

**Experiential Learning** is defined as the process whereby knowledge is shaped through the transformation of experience. It is the combination of grasping and transforming experience (Kolb, 1984), The transformation of this experience is through a cycle of observation, reflection, thinking and planning. It is in this context that experiential learning is used in the study.

## **Overview of Study Abroad**

*"There is something powerful about being in a foreign place and having novel experiences."*

(Roholt and Fisher 2013:50).

Study abroad has a long history, which has developed from what started as tours and unstructured visits by international students into different countries with no intentional deep learning beyond just an experience of a foreign culture. In the nineteenth century, it moved beyond a grand tour that romanticised the meeting of two cultures and a form of leisure for privileged classes as Falk and Kanach (2000) describe it, to an area for the development of a global citizen for a globalised society.

Study abroad programs assume different names depending on the institution and the intention of the program in the institution. The name ranges from education exchange, education abroad to study abroad, the latter term will be used in the study. Although the names have changed, all the programs still possess the same essence, which is about extending the experience of students beyond their own immediate country into a foreign country for further learning and to enhance their world view.

In the United States, the start of the study abroad programs can be traced back to the 1920s as Marion (1974) explains, when these were just about educational experiences in foreign countries for undergraduate students. A major increase in funding of these programs began

in the post-World War 2 period (Marion, 1974), an expansion of education into the different parts of Europe in search of different cultural experiences for American graduates.

In this period the US study-abroad programs started to take different forms from semester-abroad, to full-year study abroad, to recently short-term study abroad programs. Intercultural sensitivity for students in an increasingly globalised community has been a critical consideration for various institutions as they pursue internationalisation of HE.

## **Globalisation, Internationalisation and Global Education**

Globalisation and Internationalisation have increasingly been popular phrases used even interchangeably (Chingore, 2014) by people who are referring to study abroad programs. The distinction between Internationalisation and Globalisation has become increasingly important, particularly in informing the design and curriculum content for study abroad programs (McCabe, 2001). Globalisation being more about economic integration and standardization of cultures with the use of technology in connecting the world, while Internationalisation is about “bilateral/multilateral processes involving knowledge of specific countries, which leads the development of business, educational, social and cultural relationships” McCabe (2001:141).

In the advent of globalisation, national boundaries have slowly been dissipating and losing traditional significance with more people traveling across the world. Interconnectedness through telecommunications, international trade, and investment, has now made it important for students in universities to have first-hand experience of other cultures (Chieffo and Griffiths, 2004).

As Coryell (2016:04) argues that “To live and work in today's global community, adults need to develop intercultural responsiveness and flexibility to interact sensitively in situations involving international cultural contexts, practices, beliefs, understandings, and communications.”, and for these reasons internationalisation of HE has become important in the formation of a global society in the form envisaged by globalisation.

The concept of globalisation has received a lot of criticism as a new form of the reformation of global capitalism with the US asserting itself and its institutions over the developing world, so has the criticism on internationalisation through study abroad, study abroad has been seen as a form of “legitimising American imperialists desires” Zemach-Bersin (2007;17) while allowing for articulation of the US interests as universal interests in the developing societies.

Global citizenship has now been corporatized, being a global citizen is viewed as a commodity that should be marketed to students, seeing students as consumers in a commodified HE system (Barbour, 2012). The notion of cultural awareness and global citizenship as a form of

increasing likelihood of employment in the private sector has been viewed within this problematic form of internationalisation which advances a neoliberal corporate university system (Barbour, 2012).

However, the design of study abroad programs could have another purpose and allow students to problematize these notions of global citizenship. The pedagogical intentions could include different forms of learning which take advantage of the socio- economic environment in a different country.

Professionals in international education have lamented the lack of a concrete, quantitative data base upon which to decide on recruitment and program design strategies to maximize student learning outcomes (Cheiffo and Griffiths, 2004). My study will point to the value of study abroad for students, and that research should focus on the experiences of students in different programs across institutions.

### **Short-term study abroad (SSA)**

Short-term study abroad (SSA) has become the most popular form of study abroad particularly in institutions within the US as mentioned earlier in the chapter, these programs have slowly been taking over the space of long-term study abroad in popularity within international education.

The programs have been seen to be effective and offering greater experiences while providing more value to students particularly when they have been planned properly (Long et al, 2007). The shift has brought many opportunities and challenges but also attracted criticisms towards SSA.

The programs have been questioned on whether they can offer an integrating experience and immersion in different cultures within a short period (Alghamdi and Otte 2016), as this is said to be an insufficient time for students to ever claim to understand the host country.

Significant criticism has been on the fact that SSA programs have been trapped in the consumerism discourse within Internationalisation of HE. Universities are presenting the experience abroad as a form of a commodity to students. It has also been criticised for the immersion discourse that dominates narratives which compartmentalises the experiences abroad instead of viewing them in an integrated form of learning. This form of understanding perpetuates the othering of cultures with students looking at “the difference between home and host cultures as internally homogeneous” Doerr (2013). They perpetuate the parochial nature of study abroad programs.

Many also see SSA as vacation programs, with a perception that these are just trips with no in-depth learning for students, they continue to carry an image as just a sub-program for long term study abroad (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). Often seen as giving an isolating experience to a group of students while offering superficial cultural experiences to students. In some cases, students from a visiting university are always together without any integration into social networks of the host country (Allen, 2010). Instructors in both host countries and the universities sending students have had to respond to these challenges in the design of service-learning activities in short-term study abroad.

Despite the criticism, SSA's popularity has increased enormously in the past decade. SSA is seen to be affordable and also allows students to continue with their academic calendar in their home countries without any interruptions. Financial constraints are identified as limiting access to the traditional long-term programs, and the duration of the stay is too much to bear for many students (Donnelly-Smith 2009, Walters; Charles and Bingham 2010) hence students prefer SSA.

According to (Mills, Deviney and Ball 2010:01) students are looking for different options that can increase their opportunities and develop their skills to be able to find appropriate jobs and become attractive graduates to the labour market with a diversified skill set, therefore universities feel that they have a responsibility to respond to these needs.

SSA also gives opportunities to those students who cannot move outside their countries for longer periods as some are part-time working students, and SSA provides an opportunity to leave their countries for two to three weeks without a loss of work, this arrangement is preferable for these types of international students. SSA helps students increase their networks while offering a flexible learning experience enhancing intercultural sensitivity (Campbell 2016; 190).

With all the opportunities that SSA programs offer there is a realisation that being in a foreign country on its own is just not enough to increase cultural sensitivity, personal development, and global competency. A course must be structured to allow students to reflect upon their learning and evaluate their assumptions to shape their learning experiences in these contexts (Bai, Larimer, and Riner 2016).

More research on pedagogical practices in study abroad programs has emerged from the work of Younes and Assay (2003) looking at supportive pedagogies and Roholt & Fisher (2013) exploring educational practices necessary for good experiences in short-term study abroad. This study contributes to this literature on educational practices and pedagogical strategies that support learning in short-term study abroad.

## **Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

### **Teaching and Learning in Short-term Study Abroad**

Dewey's (1938) contribution to experiential learning has been immense from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It has been about how learning occurs through experiences. Short-term study abroad has the potential to facilitate this kind of learning when planned and structured intentionally to take advantage of the experiences of students in host countries. The value of teaching methods and learning strategies is very important in increasing the effectiveness of these programs.

According to Donnelly-Smith (2009), students learn more in these short-term programs when they have reflection sessions, highly structured programs, and also integrated with local people or offer in-depth experience through service in communities. This means that they need a kind of learning that is embedded in transforming the experience into learning throughout, from design to execution of programs.

Roholt and Fisher (2013:51) argue that "In these, study abroad courses, content includes the experience, and thus the focus includes how instructors can facilitate discussions that allow the experiential content to emerge". It is about the preparations before the start of the courses to ensure that the short stay and interactions become valuable.

The challenges that engulf study abroad programs include the reproduction of colonial hierarchies of power and parochial narratives about host countries. These require pedagogies that begin by democratising learning in SSA programs while also allowing students to problematise the embedded forms of being which reproduce hierarchies of power. Roholt and Fisher (2013) argue for decolonizing pedagogies in short-term study abroad programs, through teaching that questions power relations and problematizes the narrow views of students.

Pipitone (2018) argues that the "effective short-term programs create culturally and focused learning environments through intentional program structure and pedagogy" and these are the pedagogies that lift the problematic character of SSA. Learning in these programs should take advantage of students being in a foreign city and offer flexible forms of learning that value experience.

Cultural immersion is a stressful experience for those who have not been to other countries, and the space to share experiences and make meaning of the experiences is important as a form of fostering learning (Boyle, Nackerud, Kilpatrick 1999). These considerations are critical in the design of the programs and the thinking about shaping learning experiences during the

short-term. The key thinking is that the ability to design an integrated experience that takes advantage of the setting outside the home country is optimal to enhance learning.

### **Service-learning as a pedagogical practice**

Service-learning is derived from theories of experiential learning as articulated in John Dewey's work (Giles and Eyler 1994); service-learning exists as a particular form of learning from experience. Furco (1996: 02) states that "The term 'service-learning' has been used to characterize a wide array of experiential education endeavours, from volunteer and community service projects to field studies and internship programs". This means that as an emerging phenomenon in higher education service-learning has been associated with various forms of services and engagement with communities by universities through students.

Service-learning practice has offered learning and education as a special feature, which departs from the norms of learning in the context of HE, defined by the instructional methods. As Butin (2003:1675) argues that "Service-learning pedagogy rejects the banking model of education, where the downward transference of information from knowledgeable teachers to passive students is conducted in 45-min increments. It subverts the notion of the classroom as a graveyard – with rows and rows of silent bodies for an active pedagogy committed to connecting theory and practice, schools and community, the cognitive and the ethical".

The practice challenges the dominant form of traditional education and introduces new form of learning in formal and informal spaces. It is both a form of teaching and learning that allows students to learn through working on projects with communities (McMillan 2008). In her study McMillan (2008) introduces sociological lenses to look at teaching and learning within service learning. That service-learning allows us to rethink how we view students, to depart from viewing them as passive receivers of facts, but as "active agents in constructing new kinds of knowledge and relationships through their service experience" (McMillan 2008:240).

Therefore, service learning should be viewed as a pedagogical practice in itself. The SSL program which allows students to work on projects with placement organisations in the form of non-profits and social enterprises present a form of service-learning. In the program and through these projects' students learn while they serve communities as argued by McMillan (2008).

While the study references the work of McMillan (2008) for the broad conceptualisation of the service-learning practice, the work of Gredley (2013, 2015) which focuses on learning as experiences of students in service learning is important to reflect on for this study.

Gredley (2015) argues that service learning offers opportunities for transformative learning in which students learn to see the world in new ways and participate in that world in more critically

engaged ways. It allows students to examine themselves, to locate themselves in contexts of inequalities and develop their own being in the world. In the SSL program students are located in poor communities which allow them to question their own privilege as students coming from a developed world.

Hartman and Kiely (2014) introduce global service learning as a disruptive form of learning that unsettles understandings and expectations of students. A form of practice that is focused on structural analysis and allows students to discuss political, economic, and historical structures and how these shapes their experiences and assumptions. Kiely (2004) argues that service learning allows students to experience changes in their world view, and this could be in political, intellectual, moral, personal, or spiritual dimensions. The argument is that service learning allows for transformative learning in students.

Mitchell (2014) also argues that service-learning has a potential to enact social justice sense making for students. In this theory, students develop understanding of themselves as Gredley (2015) articulates in the results of her thesis, students develop a sense of being, it allows students to retrospect and renegotiate their understanding of different concepts. The practice allows for social interactions which enables them to further expand their understanding of the world in more complex ways.

In their critique of service-learning (Mitchell T.D, Donahue, and Young-Law, 2016) employ the conceptual framework of whiteness to illuminate the ways in which service-learning programs are developed in the form that normalise privileges of whiteness, these programs seek for ways to disrupt these patterns which are normalised.

The SSL program which this study investigated is a form of service-learning, it allows for students to interact with communities through the placement organisations in which they work with through service-learning projects.

The focus of the study was not on transformative experiences in service learning; however, the findings did illuminate the effects of SSL program on students, how their perspectives changed and the life changing experiences in the program. The SSL program for this study used the lens of critical pedagogy which allowed international students to question their privilege, class, and power in communities.

## **Experiential Learning Theories**

The theory that underpins learning within service-learning programs in short-term study abroad is an experiential learning theory, it is about recognising learning from experiences and through experiences in interactions with the environment. It is about reflecting on these experiences and constructing new knowledge as argued by Fenwick (2001). Fenwick (2001)

argues that as students reflect on their lived experiences, learning in practise they create new forms of knowing and extend their knowledge therefore constructing new knowledge.

This section outlines the theory of John Dewey (1938), David Kolb (1984), and Paulo Freire (1970) on experiential learning within service-learning programs. It introduces the concept of learning through experience, and the value of experience in learning.

On the question of whether an experience can generate knowledge in the university, Moore (2010) argues that when learning through experience is structured effectively and rigorously, we realise that there is value in students' learning through experiences and this strengthens knowledge in the university. Kolb's (1984) explains, that learning through experiences requires appropriate strategies which allow for reflection on experiences to foster learning.

The three sub-sections below will discuss the theories of John Dewey (1938), Kolb (1984), and Paulo Freire (1970) as these are the theories that form the backbone of the conceptual framework in understanding student experiences in the SSL program.

### **John Dewey's theory on experience and education**

Experiential learning allows students an opportunity to be immersed in an experience, through collaboration and reflection learning occurs thereby creating new knowledge and learning. This learning is regarded as the continuity of experience, the individual who experiences or in interactions with the environment is shaped by the environment and this influences his/her subsequent experiences. To the extent that according to Dewey (1938:35) "every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which came after".

Dewey's theory refers to thinking and observation with an emphasises on reflective thinking in observation which is an activity of converting experiences while in action (Giles and Eyler, 1994). The process of "observation alone is not enough, we have to understand the significance of what we see, hear and touch" (Dewey, 1938:68), meaning that we should interrogate our observation to make sense of the environment that we interact with and the experience accumulated in the process.

Dewey's theory (1938) is about linking continuity and interaction, it is about questioning and problematising the process of inquiry and the reflection process in observation to make sense of the experiences. It is about understanding that teaching and learning are pedagogical processes, and therefore the process of planning the learning process is critical and should be planned in effective ways to be able to allow interaction with experiences (Sikandar, 2015).

There is the interaction between the teacher and the learner in the process, as they are both engaged in a social process and the learner becomes central to the learning process (Dewey, 1910). The process of learning should “be planned considering the aptitude, learners experiences, and their present experiences” (Sikandar, 2015). It is therefore, an integrating process of past experiences and the present experiences. Education in this form is freedom and it democratizes learning (Dewey, 1938).

In his theory on experience and education, John Dewey (1938:25) cautions us not to uncritically accept experience, that “the belief that genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated with each other. For some experiences are mis-educative. Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience”.

This means that experience should be reflected upon and be interrogated to be able to aid the process of learning through experiences. It should allow for growth and appreciation of new experiences. Learning through experiences is about giving freedom to the students, from the power to execute decisions, freedom of thinking, and making a judgment on the learning within the environment (Sikandar, 2015:194).

It is about the teacher creating positive learning experiences, which is the case with the service-learning programs in SSA. It is the responsibility of those who design the study period in the host country to create positive learning experiences that will allow students to build on their existing knowledge and experiences to understand and learn from the foreign context during the program.

McMillan (1998) argues that although Dewey’s work did not directly focus on service learning, his theory and philosophy on experience and education are central in the service-learning theory. The emphasis on the principles of experience, inquiry, and reflection are critical in thinking about how learning occurs in action.

According to Giles and Eyler (1994), there should be continuity and experience, learning should be understood along the experiential continuum, which requires an understanding that knowledge is built from the previous experience to which it is about transforming experience into knowledge, and that experience is derived from interaction with the environment.

The environment that the students interact with is a learning environment that gives new experiences and allows them to observe and question these and previous experiences, and this process should be planned effectively to take advantage of learning in the foreign city through experience. Experiential learning theories offer a sound theory to interpret the learning

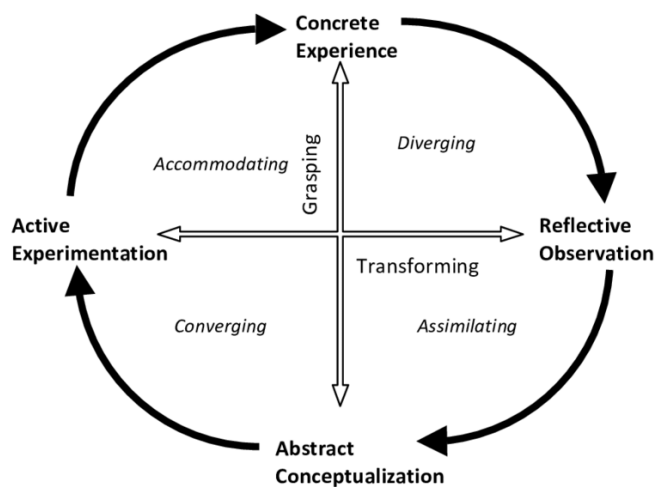
experiences of students in study abroad programs, as these programs are based on learning through experiential learning.

### **Kolb's Theory on Experiential Learning**

Defining experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) defines it as the process of creating knowledge through the transformation of experience, it presents a departure from traditional forms of learning which view learning from behavioural theories. Moore (2010) explains that it deviates from learning which privileges decontextualized learning of concepts and theories.

Kolb (1984) contributed to the development of knowledge or learning through experiences through conceptualisation of the learning cycle. His theory influenced Paulo Freire (1985) and Jack Mezirow (1981) who are all theorists of the 1980s (Kelly, 1997) and forms the backbone of adult education theory. In Kolb's (1984) theory, learning is about grasping and transforming experience, learning is understood in the form of a learning cycle as shown in the diagram below.

**Diagram 1: Experiential Learning Circle.**



Learning is centred on experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting in a repeated form in the context of what is being learned (Joy and Kolb, 2009). As a form of constructing knowledge experiential learning is about creative tensions between the two dialectical modes of grasping experience which are Concrete Experience (AC) and Abstract Conceptualisation (AC) and the modes of transforming experience Reflective Observation (RO) and Active Experimentation (AE), (A. Kolb and D. Kolb, 2011).

Kolb's (1984) theory is about adaptation and learning rather than a focus on the outcomes, it is understood as a process and not an end product, it is about understanding that ideas are formed and re-formed through experience rather than being unchallengeable elements of thought (Kolb, 1984).

Through his theory, Kolb introduces the theory of learning spaces and this is about the complex and dynamic nature of learning which occurs between an individual and the environment that they are interacting with. Learning spaces within experiential learning are about the different ways in which learning can be understood in a holistic framework (Alice and David Kolb, 2011).

Experiential learning is not a psychological attribute but a dynamic process that comes out of the well-designed process which facilitates the interaction and the transaction between the person and the environment. It is about understanding that knowledge is continuously derived from and tested in the experiences of the learner, it is a continuous process that is grounded in experiences. Learning is relearning, it is about ensuring that the design of the learning process understands that the learner is not a blank space but brings experiences in the learning process (Kolb, 1993).

Experiential learning itself has received criticism and is challenged for being superficial in interrogating experiences and having less interest in understanding structures of knowledge frameworks that shape experiences. Experiential learning "denies the connectedness of knowledge to the body and lose sight of knowledge as a product of corporeally and emotionally grounded in human life" (Michelson 1998; 2018).

With all its principles Kolb's theory (1984) has been central in understanding learning in study abroad programs, from understanding learning as a holistic adaptation into the world, learning as interactions with the environment, learning as the creation of knowledge, learning as a continual process grounded in experiences and learning as the resolution of conflicts between modes of adaptation to the world (Strange and Gibson, 2017).

The learning which occurs for students in service-learning programs within study abroad is informed by these principles, and interaction with the environment, and an adaptation in the new settings which allows for a new understanding of the context. Learning is about adaptation, it is about the transformation of experience both objective and subjective and it is about understanding that by understanding learning we must understand the nature of knowledge, and vice versa (Kolb, 1993).

## **Critical Pedagogy and Paulo Freire's theory on learning**

In his book on the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Freire (1970) introduces a dialogical method of teaching and learning, the method centres on dialogue in the quest to transform society. This dialogue is a form of recreating knowledge and also a way in which students can learn with teachers.

In short-term study abroad where students are in a different setting outside their comfort zone, instructors can through the design of learning activities and forms of teaching, take advantage of the experiential setting and explore alternative forms of learning by integrating new forms into the traditional learning models which students are used to in their home countries.

Freire's (1970) critical theory reformed education and teaching in education by questioning the existing traditional forms of education which he referred to as a "banking concept of education" Freire (1970:72), his theory rejects education which silences and alienates students through an act of depositing where the students are viewed as the depositories, and the teacher is the depositor with the teacher issuing instruction and students having to memorise (Freire, 1970:72).

Freire's (1970) theory asserts that education must begin with the solution of this teacher-student contradiction which the banking concept of education creates, it should reconcile these poles so that both are simultaneously teachers and students. The power in class is shared between the teacher and the students, there is equal recognition of knowledge being shared with the teacher learning from students and student learning from the teacher.

In the SSL program where education is about shaping and interrogating the experience of students, both the facilitators and students are learning. In the group discussions and dialogue the facilitators get to understand perspectives of the students while also sharing their own perspectives. It is not a situation of the teacher depositing information into the students as receptacles.

Freire's (1970) theory shifts learning from an individualised activity into a collective process that leads into action. It is a critical theory that questions problematises social conditions of the oppressed and argues for reflection that leads into collective action.

Freire's (1970) theory is important in informing the design of learning activities and to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning through experience in a short period. In the study, the theory is used as a framework that illuminates how learning occurs in the SSL program.

## **Critiques of Experiential Learning and Service-Learning**

Experiential learning has received criticism and is challenged for being superficial in interrogating experiences and having less interest in understanding structures of knowledge frameworks that shape experiences (Fenwick 2001). In Fenwick's (2001) monograph, she outlines an overview of experiential learning theories in which she offers a broad critique of this theory for exploration by adult educators.

According to Michelson (1998) experiential learning "denies the connectedness of knowledge to the body and loses sight of knowledge as a product of being corporeally and emotionally grounded in human life" (Michelson 1998;218).

Feminists scholars such as Weiler (1991) and Fenwick (2001) are critical of experiential learning theory that individualises learning and focuses only on cognitive activity, as these bring Eurocentric and masculine views of knowledge creation.

Their critiques hone on experience being detached from the subjective, social, and contextual cultural and co-emergent richness of human experience. They do not reject the theory of experiential learning but wish to include embodied experiences.

Brookfield (1992) cautions educators that experience should not be romanticized and thought of as a neutral phenomenon, but rather should be understood in the context of the function of structures that inform our understanding. Experience should be critically examined without being idealized and romanticised, it should be viewed within its cultural contradictions.

Pipitome (2017) critiques Kolb's (1984) theory for giving little consideration to the influence of context in the process of reflection on experience, Pipitome (2017) argues that Kolb (1984) has distorted Dewey's (1938) theory on experience and education.

Short-term study abroad practitioners could learn from these critiques and integrate learning strategies that bring the interaction with context and the physical body to the fore and also avoid over romanticising the benefits of experience for students' learning.

## **Conclusion**

Experiential learning theory is critical in understanding learning in the formal and informal context, particularly in understanding how students learn in service-learning programs. The chapter has attempted to explain the value of this theory of learning and explain some of the critiques of experiential learning theory.

The chapter has introduced the concept of globalization and internationalisation of HE, it has also introduced short term study abroad programs as an important education intervention in

providing graduate attributes for international students. These innovations are expressed as, service-learning as a pedagogical practice with a spotlight on experiential learning. I outlined all the theories that inform my research with the focus on John Dewey (1938), David Kolb (1984), and Paulo Freire's (1970) theory on experiential learning.

The next chapter explores the methodology used in the design of this study, it introduces data collection methods, data analysis, and ethical considerations for the study.

# **Chapter Three:**

## **Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology used in this study, exploring the question: What are the main factors that enhanced students' learning in the SSL Program at UCT for five International students?

In my description of the research design and methods, I will give an account of the sampling method used and the methods for gathering data for the study. The chapter gives a detailed explanation of how the results are presented and how data analysis was conducted. In the last part, I give an account of the limitations of the study, the validity, and reliability with ethical considerations made during the research.

### **Design and Methodological Framework**

The design used a qualitative approach that was focused on understanding the experiences of students that were part of the SSL program, to understand what enhanced their learning during the program. The experiences of these students are explored in an interpretive approach. Case studies allow the researcher to give a detailed explanation of experiences, and also a holistic examination of a phenomenon being studied at a micro-level (Zainal, 2007) which allows for an understanding of the experiences of the students in multidimensional forms.

### **Qualitative Research**

Bryman (1988: 46), argues that qualitative research is “an approach to the study of the social world which seeks to describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans”, it became an appropriate strategy for this research because it allows the researcher an insight into the experiences of the students.

Some qualitative researchers have affirmed the importance of researching the perspective of the students of a study as a method to see how people view their world Ismail (2006), Cooper (2005). In this study, I explored five students' perspectives on their learning experiences during the program as individuals to see similarities and differences in these experiences. This may seem like a small sample but as Maxwell (2008: 221) reassures us that “qualitative researchers typically study a relatively small number of individuals or situations and preserve the individuality of each of these in their analyses, rather than collecting data from large samples and aggregating the data across individuals or situations”.

More importantly, in qualitative research, the idea is to collect empirical data systematically and to find different ways to examine the emerging patterns within data to further understand and explain social life experiences, which was the purpose of this study and the methodology that I followed.

### **Interpretive Approaches**

In this research, I have used an interpretive approach as I am trying to understand what enhances students' learning in the program. I sought to make meaning from students' experiences as they articulated these. The interpretive approach is located within qualitative research on the understanding that "human interactions are not governed by inviolable laws so much as by agreed rules which are consensually validated by people" Candy (1989:04). Therefore, it is the interpretation and understanding of various individual's views that assist in making meaning of different events.

The understanding of particular events and processes are mutually interdependent and were important in this study because it was about understanding how different events and learning processes enhanced student learning in the program.

In his work (Candy 1989:09) emphasizes that "interpretive accounts in research do not seek to reinterpret the actions and experiences of the actors, but rather to give a deeper, more extensive and more systematic representation of events from the actors involved" which was also the essence of the study.

### **Case Study**

This research used a case study approach within the interpretive paradigm, the case study "allows the exploration and understanding of complex issues" (Zainal, 2007:01) and it offers the researcher a chance to explore, describe and explain a phenomenon within a particular event or through an experience, it also enables the researcher to have a closer look at the phenomenon being studied within the three perspectives.

Using case study research one can "explore a single entity or phenomenon (the case) by time and activity (a program event, process, institution, or social group) and collects detailed information using a variety of data collecting procedures during a sustained period" (Creswell 1994:12). In this study data was collected from the students who were part of the program between the 2016-2018 academic year, this was done through interviews with these students. The themes that emerged are a reflection of a sample of student's learning experiences who participated in the programs during that period.

Case study as a form of research lacks the basis for scientific generalization as Yin (1984) argues, in the analysis of a phenomenon from a single case one can't make conclusions about that phenomenon. The intention is to expand the understanding of the theory of service-learning within study abroad using the SHAWCO case study.

I also undertook document analysis, including curriculum and the history of the organisation.

## **Scope of the Study**

The study seeks to understand deeper pedagogical practices in the SSL study abroad program and how different elements of the program (educational site visits, lectures, and organisational placements) enhanced learning for students who were students in this research. There is a growing consensus on the value of and the importance of quality interventions in short-term study abroad, but it remains unclear according to Spenader and Retka (2015:01) what features of study abroad are important for students in their development and learning. This study, therefore, seeks to contribute to the emerging and growing research which explores elements of short-term study abroad that enhance learning within service-learning programs.

## **The researcher's role in the study**

I was employed by SHAWCO for more than five years and left at the start of this research study. I initially held the position as the placement coordinator and later as an international programs coordinator. I acknowledge that my various roles in the program may bring some of my biases into the inquiry. I was therefore aware of possible assumptions and therefore I was careful to reflect on all the stages of the research process and to acknowledge my biases. However, I also have important insights from my work that I bring into the study.

Therefore, I view my experience in this context as critical and hopefully will enrich the discussion of the analysis. I agree with Reason 1998 (cited in Maxwell 2008:225) that it should not be assume this and therefore allow for critical subjectivity in my research. He describes it as "a quality of awareness in which we do not suppress our primary experience, nor do we allow ourselves to be swept away and overwhelmed by it; rather we raise it to consciousness and use it as part of the inquiry process" Reason (1998:12) this awareness was important in the inquiry.

## Sampling and Data Collection

### Sampling

In this study, the sampling method used was purposeful sampling through identifying students in universities that were part of the SHAWCO programs. As Cresswell (2006:112) alludes that using a purposeful sampling strategy “means that the researchers intentionally select students who have experience with the central phenomenon not the key concepts being explored”, these are the decisions that as a researcher in the study I had to make in terms of who should be sampled.

The population for sampling included students from the US, Hong Kong, Australia, and Norway. This constituted the group of students that would normally be part of the SHAWCO programs in the years being explored in the study. I decided to limit my study to students from the US as I felt they had the experience I was exploring, I also had good relationships with the US academics and needed their help to trace the students.

Usually, on average 15 students come into the program per year through an organised study abroad program convened by an academic from an overseas university. Therefore, I contacted them as they had the contact details of the students and asked them to send out a request to students to participate in the study. These university staff contacted approximately 15 students this is half of population of 30 over the period 2016-2018 and shared the information of the study and explained the purpose of the study to the students. Of these six students responded to take part in the study.

The number of students who responded for participation was lower than expected, as many students are no longer at the universities, some have joined corporate organisations and others are continuing with their studies in different countries, so were hard to contact.

The low response rate is not unusual for study abroad student research as Pipitone (2017), Hartman (2014) and Kiely (2004) had similar numbers in their studies and balanced interviews with the analysis of the documentation and reflective journals. I included document analysis in this study.

I then contacted the six students by email to set up the interviews as they were in other countries that I could not physically visit. I explained the aims and purpose of the study and the questions which will be asked and assured them that these will be confidential, and pseudonyms will be used in the transcription of interviews and in the thesis. I also explained that interviews will be held on skype, recorded, and transcribed. Of the six who responded I

could only hold interviews with five of them. The sixth student had Internet problems and therefore we had to cancel the interview.

## **Data Collection**

In this section I describe the process of data collection as was applied in this study, Creswell (2006) makes the point that data collection should be understood as part of interrelated activities that assist the researcher in finding the valuable information. The information should assist in answering the questions as set out. In this study, data was collected through interviews and document analysis. I interviewed five students who were in the program over the period 2017-2018, I analysed documents which provided the background, history of the organisation and the curriculum of the program and the educational sites were analysed.

## **Semi-structured Interviews**

Interviews were conducted with students from institutions in the US who participated in the program during the period between 2016-2018. The study was conducted using semi-structured interviews which “consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but also allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge to pursue an idea or response in more detail” (Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick 2008: 291). The interview allowed for valuable information to be explored by getting details on particular responses from the students.

I developed an interview guide that helped in exploring these questions with the different students. The overall guide in the questions focused on the following.

- A basic introduction to and background of each participant, which helped in understanding who the students were and their motives to be part of the program.
- Questions about their experiences in each learning site of the program starting with formal lectures.
- Their experiences in the various education site visits which included non-profit organizations, social enterprises, and museums.
- And lastly, the reflection process which they engaged in during and after the program, as well as current reflections.

These were the broad questions that gave an opportunity to ask more incisive questions to understand experiences in the different elements of the program. The guide was important as a tool to guide the conversation during the interview and also to be able to gather the information that is important for the study.

Individual Interviews were conducted through VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) which is the use of technology “to send voice and video across the internet via a synchronous (real-time) connection” (Lacono, Symonds and Brown 2015: 02), and through this, I could connect with students in the US using Skype for four of the interviews and WhatsApp Video Call for one of the interviews. This format was in real-time and I had face-face interaction with the students. Before the interview, permission was sought for the interview and permission was requested for the interviews to be recorded using the recording application on the laptop, all students agreed to this process. I transcribed the interviews for analysis.

## **Documentation**

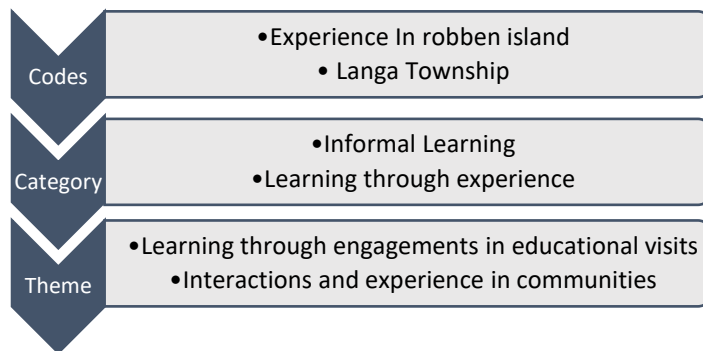
The process of data collection also involved document analysis. Here, I did an assessment of the course which outlined the objective of the program's aims and described the structure /design of the programs as well as the content of the courses. I read and studied documents on the background and history of the organisation, and its relationship, place, and function within the university. Background documents for all the educational sites that students visited were analysed looking at the text and aligning the texts with the themes from the interviews.

## **Data Analysis**

In the analysis of the data, I began a process of reading and understanding the interview data to get into the details of the experiences of students in the SSL program. Using Creswell's (2007:148) perspective on data analysis in qualitative research which he defines as consisting “of preparing and organizing the data (i.e., text data as in transcription, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data”. In this data analysis, each interview was transcribed separately into text within a word document, then I read each transcript over and over to understand it.

After I transcribed the interviews, I started colour coding the responses for each interview transcript and making notes for codes, See sample in the APPENDIX. In the text, I identified codes that mirrored a particular meaning, and these were formed into different codes. This could later help me in organising these into categories and themes. With each interview transcript the similar themes started to emerge. I organised all the responses into themes.

See the example of coding below.



The data were organised into codes manually and also into categories which allowed for the development of themes, Braun, and Clarke (2004:57) see thematic analysis as “a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insights into patterns of meanings (themes) across data set” and this allowed me to be able to see meanings and experiences in collective forms through themes.

The themes started to emerge from the different codes, and these were aligned to the experiences that students had in the different educational sites, the different forms of learning that were valuable to each interviewee, and how learning occurred while they were on these sites.

Within the concept of Braun and Clarke (2004) themes emerged in the data as I got to understand data through codes and categories which were formed, they also started to align with the research questions that the study was focused on as outlined in the introduction.

The three themes that emerged from the analysis of the data reflect how learning occurred and what students valued in the learning process within the program.

1. Theme 1: Learning through dialogue, collaboration, and reflection.
2. Theme 2: Learning through engagements in different educational sites.
3. Theme 3: Interactions and experiences in communities during placements and site visits

These themes were analysed using adult education theories on experiential learning, as explained in Chapter Two. The themes focused on how the students were making meaning from experiences in the different sites and how these were designed in fostering the required learning for the students.

## **Validity and Reliability**

The validity of results is critical for qualitative research as the results can always have an impact on policies and programs, Maxwell (1992) says that a researcher's duty is to ensure that results are reliable and also valid through being trustworthy in the process of collection, organizing, transcribing and formulation of themes. Creswell (2004:26) further says that "validity is the outcome goal of research and is based on trustworthiness and external reviewers" therefore as the researcher conducting the research, I had to remain trustworthy and true to the data that is being analysed. This was done in the following ways.

A process of ethical approval from the institution was followed, submitting documents to the ethics committee for approval before starting interviews with students. I requested permission for the interviews from students who had to give their consent for the interview and to be recorded. Information on the study was shared and a confidential letter was sent to each student. The process of coding and forming themes through the codes allowed for an understanding in detail of the learning which occurred and repetition of how this learning occurred added to the trustworthiness of the data.

The concept of validity in qualitative research is part of larger debates about research paradigms, but Maxwell (1992) accounts that "validity, in a broad sense, pertains to this relationship between an account and something outside of that account, whether this is something construed as objective reality, the construction of actors, or a variety of other possible interpretations", which acknowledges the multiplicity of interpretations in qualitative research.

As someone who was involved in the implementation and design of programs that I also acknowledged and a reflection on the experience that I do bring into the analysis and accounting of experiences is acknowledged in the contribution in understanding the value of the various elements of the programs.

## **Limitations of the study/reflections**

The study was conducted with students that were in another country which is the United States of America, therefore access to the students was a challenge from the recruitment of a sample to the interview process. My financial constraints did not allow for interviews to be conducted face to face.

The interviews were all conducted through VoIP which means that there was no physical presence and the normal personal interactions in the interviews which allows for a more intimate process during the interview. In VoIP as Symonds, Lacono, and Brown (2016:11)

alludes there is a lack of non-verbal cues like the tones and gestures, and easily interviews can be too mechanical without body language. However, I feel that I established a good rapport with the students as they knew me from the programs and were eager to participate in the study. The number of responses to the call as indicated above was a limitation in exploring these questions with as many students as possible for the study.

Throughout the study I have in many ways ensured that there is a level of objectivity in analysing the data, but I am aware that “It is a delusion-and historically identifiable one – to think that human thought could completely erase the fingerprints that reveal its production process” Harding and Norberg, (2005:57), meaning that there is a full recognition that the lenses I use also are influenced by my location in the study. I have as said earlier collected data with awareness and continuously reflected on how my opinions could influence the data collection process and analysis to ensure that my bias does not cloud my judgment in the research process.

## **Research Ethics**

In the study, the ethical guidelines which the university has to guide research were followed. Guillemin and Gillam (2004:263) argue that research has two dimensions in qualitative research which include “(a) procedural ethics, which usually involves seeking approval from a relevant ethics committee to undertake research involving humans and (b) “ethics in practice” or the everyday ethical issues that arise in the doing of research” and this research had in practice both these dimensions. I mention the organisations where the students were working, since I did not mention individuals no disadvantages will be incurred.

At the beginning of the research, a proposal was developed, all ethical considerations were made and outlined to be considered by the ethics committee for ethical clearance certificate and the proposal received the certificate for clearance in the University.

In practice, all the students were given an information form and the consent form which outlines the study and seeks consent from the students to use their interviews as data for the study and students agreed.

At the start of each interview, I explained that the interviews remain confidential, participants’ names will remain anonymous throughout the study. In the study both the students interviewed and referred to through pseudonyms and also the names of their universities and program convenors have not been mentioned.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the research design and methods that were used in conducting the study. I presented the rationale used for selecting the particular methods of collection of data, and how the analysis of the data was conducted. The validity and reliability of the methods used in the study were also discussed, the ethical consideration for the study have also been discussed and explained. The next chapter will present the findings of the study.

# **Chapter Four:**

## **Presentation of Findings**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to understand factors that enhanced learning for students in the SSL program, a short-term study abroad program at UCT for students who came to South Africa from the US for a period of 2-4 weeks.

These students participated in the SSL program which included academic lectures, visits to educational sites in local townships (for example Langa and Khayelitsha), day visits to the District Six Museum and Robben Island. As part of the program, students were placed in non-profit organisations these were Embrace Dignity, Street Smart, and the SHAWCO centre.

The study reports on their experiences in the SSL program and how these experiences contributed to their learning. The findings represent reflections of different perspectives from five students selected for the study.

This Chapter will be presented in two sections, In Section A I give a description of the study context which includes the Student Health and Welfare Centres Organisation (SHAWCO), explaining the location of SHAWCO within the university, aims, and objectives of the organisation, and debates around its functioning. I will then go onto describe the structure, curriculum, and pedagogy of the SSL program. In the last part I provide the overview of the educational site (Robben Island, District Six, Khayelitsha and Langa Township) as part of the study context.

In Section B I will describe the background of individual students who were interviewed and present findings from interviews under three themes that emerged from the findings.

These themes are (a) The value of an engaging, collaborative, and reflective learning environment, (b) Learning through engagements in different educational sites (c) Interactions and experiences in communities during placements and site visits.

## Section A

### Description of the study context (SHAWCO)

#### Background

SHAWCO is a student-run organisation that is based on campus at the University of Cape Town. The organisation is one of the largest student-driven and volunteer-based organisations within South Africa. It was formed in 1943 by a medical student Andre Kinnear “who spent his vacation driving an ambulance to earn money to pay for his medical training” (Favara and Mendelsohn (2012:01). Since then, it has existed within the campus and in the local communities for more than 77 years. In that period, it has undergone different changes in how it functions due to the shifting institutional context and the evolving nature of challenges in communities and political changes in the country.

At the time of its formation, the organisation was a “welfare agency helping thousands of the Cape Peninsula’s most underprivileged people” Selzer and Gordon (1963:01). This was within the community of Kensington-Windermere in Cape Town.

Under apartheid, black communities were not provided with basic services such as sanitation or health as they were considered illegal by the government. While white communities were privileged and received all basic services. There were high levels of poverty among black people, and many were exposed to health risks in unhygienic environments.

SHAWCO took on the challenge of working within poor communities and became important as an NGO for poor communities as it could provide the necessary healthcare services within these communities. In the period between 1943-2019 SHAWCO created a huge imprint in underprivileged communities through its services which students delivered in different political conditions first under apartheid then within the democratic state.

The Health Department allowed more than 1000 students from the Faculty of Health Sciences to operate mobile health clinics in underprivileged communities and to treat patients in the evenings on Mondays and Wednesdays. These mobile clinics went into the following townships, Khayelitsha, Hout Bay, Phillipi, and Manenberg to provide primary healthcare services, treating respiratory tract infections, sexually transmitted infections, and other non-speciality diseases.

The students going into communities were supervised by qualified medical doctors and professors from UCT. This community orientated clinical practice became integrated into the curriculum for medical students in the early years of their degrees.

Initially, as described above SHAWCO was formed as an organisation for medical students in the Health Science Faculty at UCT. Then slowly its popularity spread to attract students with an education focus from many Faculties.

The education programmes were formed in the early 2000s and provided educational assistance like tutoring learners in high schools and providing educational improvement opportunities to learners in underprivileged communities in Cape Town. The program grew to help learners access universities like UCT after completing their grade 12. It also provided a safe space for learners who were in communities with high levels of crime, which was not a conducive environment for learning.

The program allows UCT students and international students who would usually never visit such areas to be immersed in poor communities. An impressive illustration of SHAWCO's service is when more than 1000 student volunteers with 89 student leaders who serve on various committees ensured that six communities were served every week reaching 900 children in a week (SHAWCO Report 2018).

The organisation is strategic to the institution as a whole as it contributed to UCT's social responsibility goals as an institution engaged and involved within communities in Cape Town. It also built relationships with community organisations, corporate institutions that support its work in communities, and International Partnering Universities which are part of their International programs Kaunda and George (2009:01). It is through SHAWCO's work in communities improving the lives of learners through education and provision of basic health services that the institution gained more recognition within communities. The international service-learning program contributes to the global footprint of the institution.

In these outreach programmes SHAWCO provided a space for experiential learning for students at the University of Cape Town. In this way, the organisation followed its mission by creating an enabling space for experiential learning and teaching while addressing inequalities through innovative and sustainable approaches to community engagement. Health students had an annual rural health program on primary health care where they would go and provide health services in the Eastern Cape within rural areas where access to health is a challenge. Education students also had similar program within the Western Cape partnering with schools in the rural areas and providing career guidance while also focusing on educational support.

In the period between 2018 and 2019, the organisation was restructured due to financial challenges and some of the programs particularly those which were staff-driven have been discontinued. It has now reorientated itself to mainly work with students in Health and Education. It has a decreased staff component but able to continue with the necessary

services in communities which includes providing primary healthcare services and educational support through tutoring in high schools.

## **International Programs**

This section provides the background to the formation of the International programs in SHAWCO. As part of the evolution of SHAWCO, in 2009 the organisation started International Partnerships with Universities in the US and Europe. Kaunda and George (2009) report that “The International Academic Program Office suggested that SHAWCO approach international partner universities, many of whom were often interested in sending their students here for service learning or electives” Kaunda and George (2009:38) and this marked the start of SHAWCO relations with international universities. The initiative came from the international office at UCT. International Academic Program Office (IAPO) is the international office at UCT which promotes international partnerships across the globe for the institution.

Another factor which influenced the start of the International program was due to the severe global financial crisis, from 2008-2009. During this time education institutions and corporate donors were cutting social spending, which led to less financial contributions towards the work of SHAWCO thus affecting its ability to offer its services. UCT management responded by supporting the formation of international programs as a way to save SHAWCO’s financial stability and ensure that it becomes self-reliant by generating its income.

Since then, the organisation started hosting students from Norway, France, New South Wales, the UK and from the United States. As partnerships developed SHAWCO needed to respond to the broad needs of different country faculty members who developed programs for their different institutions to ensure that students get the best experience from their visit in South Africa.

These partnerships started as a platform for international students to fill a gap normally taken up by local SHAWCO student volunteers in communities during vacation. It was an unstructured program with no academic support but just a volunteer service for international students. As the international programme expanded with an emphasis on obtaining graduate attributes as discussed in Chapter 2, SHAWCO had to redesign the program into a formal academic program with a curriculum that covered both formal and non-formal learning contexts.

The section below will give an in-depth description of the academic program, the SSL program, which became the international offering. I will outline the structure, the different programs that participating international universities were able to choose based on the interests of their students.

In the last section, I will describe the various educational sites that students engaged with during the program, the lectures, the museums which were important in providing the historical context to South Africa, and the organisations in which the students would work in, for the duration of the program.

## **SHAWCO Service-Learning (SSL)**

### **The Academic Program**

#### **Overview / Background**

SSL programs offered a flexible context for international universities to explore service-learning programs through their various faculties. These programs provided opportunities for students with theoretical engagement in classes on campus, cultural immersion in communities, and reflection sessions in lectures and seminars, and educational site visits.

The programs were centred on the mission of the organisation which seeks to create a supportive space for experiential learning and teaching, addressing inequalities through innovative and sustainable approaches to community engagement. The SSL program offered space for experiential learning wherein international students worked in community organisations while also engaged in theoretical engagements in lectures.

The SSL program had its philosophical roots in the writings of John Dewey and Paulo Freire. The approach to teaching was to view the relationship between teacher and the learner as a reciprocal relationship (SHAWCO Service-Learning overview 2014).

Over the years the programs have developed structurally through a partnership with academic departments such as the Centre for Higher Education Development which would provide guest lectures for the programs and the Extra-Mural Studies Unit (EMS) which was responsible for the academic program from the design of course outline, identifying lectures for the programs and assessments. Working with different Faculties enabled SHAWCO to receive intellectual input to improve the quality of its program to the different partnering universities.

#### **SHAWCO Service-learning programs offered to International partnering universities.**

SSL programs consisted of two program offerings: The Social Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship program, and the second was the Community Development and Social Justice program. These two program offerings allowed different universities to choose an appropriate program that aligns to their students' interests:

The two programs were guided by learning outcomes which assisted students to:

- Develop a critical understanding of the history of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa.
- Gain insight into the complexities of a democratic South Africa by exploring some of the contemporary issues facing the country.
- Develop an understanding of how these historic and current issues continue to reproduce poverty in communities in the micro-context.
- Develop an ability to engage with and learn from diverse, often marginalised communities who are engaged in development and social change in South Africa.

Program coordinators and lecturers ensured that these learning outcomes were achieved in the program by providing multiple learning spaces in the formal and non-formal educational events. The programme was jointly offered by EMS and SHAWCO.

The Extra-Mural Studies unit at UCT designed and organised the academic program which provided the formal and theoretical engagement sessions for students. The staff at SHAWCO organised the non-formal engagements in the educational sites, and placements in the non-profit organisations.

## **Placement organisations**

SHAWCO developed relationships with non-profit organisations, social enterprises, and SHAWCO community centres for the placements of students. In these organisations' students would have particular tasks that they would be given to complete in the duration of the program, and organisations would be called placement organisations. The placements in non-profit organisations, social enterprises, and SHAWCO centres form part of the service-learning component of the program.

Placements in social enterprises were for students who were in the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship stream, these students were placed with organisations under Street smart an umbrella organisation for social enterprises. These placements allowed students to have practical experiences on how social businesses function in communities, and to link their theoretical engagements in lectures with the actual practice.

In these social enterprises' students focused on mapping these organisations, understanding gaps between the market they serve in communities, and also the services that they offer. The work in the enterprises was research-based and allowed students to interact with the leaders and community members in the organisations. The social enterprises were in the form of non-

profit organisations with a commercial arm that is meant to ensure that the non-profit does not only rely on donors and grants but can also sustain itself.

Students were required to work on marketing projects, assist in the branding of the organisation, and to establish a social media webpage. This allowed students to have interactions with leaders and workers in the organisation, thus improving their understanding of the mission and vision of these organisations.

Students in the Community Development and Social Justice program were placed in non-profit organisations. They were placed with the NGO- Embraced Dignity. This organisation has a focus on women's rights and offers psychological support and transitional assistance for women affected by sex trafficking and prostitution. The organisation provides a support system for women and girls who want to leave prostitution, thereby addressing one of the root causes of prostitution.

Lastly, students placed in the SHAWCO centres were involved in the volunteer programs which was usually in the education sector. These volunteer programs are organised by students and held as extra- mural programmes held after school for learners between the ages 12 to 16. The students have an opportunity to work with learners in their own communities. While they assist learners with their schoolwork, the conversations usually move beyond just schoolwork and new friendships are made. Student placements within these communities allowed them to understand the post-apartheid social conditions of learners in local schools and how these conditions influence unequal access to tertiary education.

In the end, placements in these learning spaces allowed students to learn with the communities, to be involved in community work which integrates theoretical knowledge with practice.

The next section will describe educational sites in detail, which students visited in the SSL program.

## **Educational Sites**

### **Langa Township**

In 1923 British government authorities introduced the Urban Areas Act, this act was meant for the management and control of migrant labour and the location of black people within urban areas (Coetzer, 2009) but was often used to move people to the outskirts of the city. As a result of this act, Langa township was formed. This is the oldest black African township in Cape Town, formed in 1927 out of the forced removal of black people from Ndabeni which is

near Maitland.

The name Langa means the Sun, but in the context of this township, the name is derived from the name of the Xhosa Chief Langalibalele the Chief of AmaHlubi tribe, who was imprisoned in Robben Island in 1873 for leading a rebellion against the Natal Government- a province in South Africa. His name was chosen as it was seen by the authorities as significant to African people and their identity as he was amongst labourers who had worked and planted trees in Uitvlugt where Ndabeni is located Coetzer (2009).



Photograph 1: Old government Flats Langa (Tayla Gentle)

The township itself holds a historical significance for the African people, it is located within a particular narrative of history in South Africa which highlights the effects of segregation on the African people. Its population size is more than 52, 401 as per the census 2011, census report and has mainly Xhosa speaking residents (As quoted by Andani, 2017). This is a small township that has historical sites like the Dompas Museum or Langa Heritage which was a gateway for black migrant workers into the city during apartheid as many needed to get Passes through its office (Coetzer, 2009). A Pass is a document giving the bearer the right to be in a place where he/she was not residing– only black African people had to have such a document.

In Langa more than 60% of its population are unemployed, and this contributes to the level of poverty within the community. Most of its residents rely on social grants that the government provides for survival and to provide food for their families.

In this township, SHAWCO partnered with the local tourist company, Ubizo-Tours founded in 2008 and with a professional tour guide who was highly rated by tourists through reviews in applications like Trip Advisor. The company is owned by young people from the community

who have seen an opportunity through tourism for self-sustenance through creating some income for their families (Ubizo Tours: [ubizo-sa.co.za](http://ubizo-sa.co.za)).

The youth have tried to be innovative in creating their own employment by providing tours to international tourists. The company provides full-day services and takes students to see historical sites and offered an experience called “Walk in our shoes” which allows students and tourists to walk through some of the important sites in Langa and to sample traditional African food and enjoy the music provided by a marimba band.

Learning sites on the tour

- *Harlem Avenue* - Introduction to the township at Mzansi Restaurant with welcome refreshments and entertainment.
- Catholic Church Complex / Initiation school – Offers a visit to see an important part of the history of people in Langa and explains how we balance Xhosa tradition and the Catholic religion. It illustrates the merging of an outside religion with isiXhosa traditions and the complexity of holding an initiation/ coming of age school for young boys in a Church complex.
- Langa Sports Grounds - A place where local soccer legends come to play friendly games with Langa residents. These matches allow for local boys and their talent in the game to be spotted. They are then trained for international competitions, the well-known soccer player Thabo Mngomeni was spotted here, he went onto to play for the South African soccer national team.
- Visit to a Traditional Healer – In this visit students interact with a traditional medical practitioner (healer) whose work involves healing physical, emotional, and spiritual illnesses.
- Heritage sites - Amy Biehl Memorial and Gugulethu Seven Memorial
  - Amy Biehl was a young American student who worked at the University of the Western Cape’s Law Centre and was brutally murdered in 1993 by Pan African Congress (PAC) supporters in Gugulethu.
  - Gugulethu Seven Memorial – This is a site where Mandla Mxinwa, Jabulani Miya, Thema Molefi, Christopher Piet, Zola Swelani, Zabonkwe Konile, and Zandisile Mjobo, referred to as the Gugulethu Seven were brutally murdered by the apartheid security forces in 1986. They played a revolutionary role in the struggle against the apartheid regime.

The students walk through these areas while having conversations with the tour guide, they also get to see different forms of urban housing, such as the established old houses, new

developments of formal housing, and informal settlements which are a large part of the township.



Photograph 2: Gugulethu Seven Memorial (Marry-Anne Gontsana, 2013)

After this visit to Langa, students would have an opportunity in lectures to reflect on their township experiences. In this way students integrated the lived experience with theoretical engagements to enhance their understanding and knowledge of both the history and the current SA situation.

### **Khayelitsha Township**

Khayelitsha was formed in 1983 by the apartheid government, it is 35 km away from the city centre, in Cape Town. The first residents of the township were people from other black townships within Cape Town particularly Old Crossroads which was deemed to be overly populated by the apartheid government. The name Khayelitsha means “new home” as this was the new home for many families who were forcible moved from old townships (Ngxiza, 2011).



Photograph 3: Khayelitsha Site B (Schalk Van Zuydam, 2010)

Khayelitsha is currently the second biggest township in South Africa after SOWETO, with the census 2011 estimating a population of more than 391 749, considering the developments and patterns of migration this population size should now be over half a million people. (Seekings, 2013)

It is mainly a black African township with many of its population are isiXhosa speaking, the rate of unemployment within the township is more than 35.7% way above the unemployment rate in the Province and the country. Most households live in poverty, it is a community with a high rate of crime. Criminal activities extend to house break-ins, murders, gender-based violence crimes, and petty crime such as theft. It could be argued that the rate of unemployment and poverty within the community contributes to the rate of crime (Manaliyo, 2014).



Photograph 4: Khayelitsha, Site C informal settlement (David Harriossn/M&G, 2018)

As Yu and Nieftagodien (2008:01) argue “Under apartheid, enforced migration control, job reservation for whites and inadequate education and public services have all left their mark on the social and economic structure of the population. Migration and the pattern thereof play a significant role in explaining poverty in South Africa”. This is still the case for Khayelitsha, old migration patterns that persist with the movement of people from other provinces looking for better opportunities in Cape Town play a significant role in heightening poverty and social ills that are found in a community like Khayelitsha.

Despite the gloomy picture and statistics that define the reality in Khayelitsha, some residents in the community have found various ways to create income for their households and also to reskill the youth for integration into the mainstream economy. Tourism and local entertainment are growth sectors in the area.

SHAWCO established relations with local organisations and social enterprises focusing on tourism in this community. This tour company would take students on a tour for a day in the community. The tour is intended to give students an understanding of the history of the area and to allow them to interact with residents to better understand the living conditions of the people of Khayelitsha. During the day, the students would visit a few significant sites as described below.

Learning sites in the tour:

- Lookout Hill: this area of Khayelitsha gives a full view of the different aspects of community living. Students learn about the history of the township and the different areas of importance are identified within the township. In this area many of the local businesses and social enterprises are operative, these are owned by people who are

striving to make a living and to change the area.

- Gangster Museum: This innovative living museum aims to help youth to better understand the treacherous path that too many in their communities take into gangsterism and, ultimately, prison. More importantly, the 18 Gangster Museum offers a positive alternative to many of the youth of Khayelitsha, this is through integrating youth in the area into its programs. Their programs include the tours which they organise within the communities which are designed and curated by ex-offenders.
- Macassar Pottery is the flagship pottery workshop of an extensive community transformation process in Macassar, Cape Town. This pottery business aims to provide skills, employment and to attract youth who might have dropped out of school into a new venture. Macassar Pottery offers learnerships and on-the-job training to help young people become employable, productive citizens. Its visitors discover beauty in unexpected and even unlikely places by viewing the ceramics, participating in creative tourist activities, and team-building experiences. This enterprise holds concepts such as national reconciliation and restitution as important ideas in its social enterprise. (Uthando South Africa: [www.uthandosa.org](http://www.uthandosa.org))
- Sikis Coffee: This is a Coffee shop owned by a young person from Khayelitsha with the intent to bring the culture of coffee into the community. Siki who is the owner runs the shop from the back of his mother's house. He started his shop out of his love for coffee. He developed his taste for coffee after working with Vida one of the big coffee shops in Cape Town.

The students walk through the township and also have an opportunity to take the local taxi services to travel from one area to the other as Khayelitsha is quite huge. This allows them to see and have conversations with people living in the informal settlements and formal low-cost government-built homes.

During these visits, students interact with residents and begin to understand the context of life for many black people in South Africa. During the lecture sessions, students reflect on their privileged education and living conditions in their countries, these sessions are sensitively facilitated by guest lectures from EMS and academics from their home universities.

### **Robben Island**

This is one of the historic sites in South African history which students visit as one of the education sites in the program. Robben Island has existed for more than 500 years and has evolved from being a British controlled leprosy settlement to housing prisoners during apartheid. Since 1997, it was redesigned into a museum in the new democratic South Africa.

It is one of the most famous attraction sites in the country. Primarily because Nelson Mandela from the African National Congress party (ANC), the first democratically elected leader was imprisoned there for 18 years and many other famous political leaders such as the Pan African Congress leader, Robert Sobukwe. These political figures critical to the struggle for freedom in South Africa were isolated and the apartheid government tried in this way to crush the liberation movements against apartheid.



Photograph 5: Entrance Robben Island (Micheal Runkel)

The tour has been designed educationally to allow visitors to have a conversation with a former political prisoner from the island. The prisoners have a deep understanding and connection with the island and the meaning of political imprisonment. Vusumzi Mncongo a freedom fighter in the anti-apartheid movement arrested in 1978 and a prisoner until 1990 was one of the tour guides who took students into the prison cells.

Learning sites through the tour:

- Nelson Mandela Gateway: This is the spot in the Victoria & Albert Waterfront where the departure for the tour begins. Visitors begin to be orientated to the history of the island and taken through different historical events. In this building, there is a photographic history of the political prisoners who were imprisoned on the island.
- Murray's Bay Harbour: On the Island, there is a harbour in which all the boats arrived. The Harbour is named after a British merchant who had a whaling station in Robben Island until 1820 and this reflects the history of the harbour under British rule.
- Pass Buildings and High Wall: In the entry to the island there is a high wall that was built by political prisoners in the 1960s. This is the visiting area where political prisoners

would meet their families and lawyers.

- Quarries: Limestone quarry is known as a place where political prisoners from the 1960s including Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu, Andrew Mlangeni, and Ahmed Kathrada were deployed to work while they were incarcerated. The dust from the quarry damaged their lungs and eyes for their entire lives.
- *Robert Sobukwe's House*: Robert Sobukwe who was a leader of the Pan Africanist Congress, a more militant part of the liberation movement. He was arrested and isolated in this house from 1962-1969. He was not held in the main prison cells for fear that he might unduly assert negative political influence on other prisoners. His family obtained visiting rights only in 1967. At this significant site, the guides spend a fair amount of time narrating the legacy of Sobukwe and his stay in this house.
- *Maximum Security Prison*: This is the main prison within the island which was built by political and common-law prisoners in the 1960s using stones from the quarries. It had isolation cells which were mainly for political leaders from different organizations. The prison was designed in such a way that the prisoners could not communicate with fellow prisoners while inside and restricted while outside and forbid any interactions between them. In this site, a former political prisoner who is a tour guide spend some time explaining who lived in the various cells and told stories about the lives of prisoners in particular how they managed their time in prison.



Photograph 6: Limestone Quarry at the Robben Island

These are the various elements of the tour within Robben Island which offers students an opportunity to have conversations about the political history of South Africa, particularly the struggle against apartheid. They learn about the complexities of the liberation struggle and the various key liberation leaders who were important in this collective fight for freedom for the people of South Africa.

## District Six Museum

District six is a significant part of Cape Town in its history of racial segregation and forced removals. This area was first occupied by the indigenous Khoi people in the 1600s, and later the slaves who came to South Africa from the East, East Indies, India, Malaysia, and Madagascar who mostly practised Islam (Layne 2008). Many of the Jews who fled from Nazi Germany for refuge in the country, settled here (Kruger, 2001).



Photograph 7: The destruction of District Six under the group Areas Act. (David Goldblatt, 5 May 1982)

The District 6 museum is a site of historical memory that resuscitates and keep alive memories of the people who were displaced from this area. Thus, this historic knowledge is made visible to future generations in the country and outside visitors. The visit to the museum is intended to help students learn from this history depicting the torture of displacement. The guides on the tour grew up here and were forcible removed from the area, thus they are part of this tragic history of dispossession in District Six.

The group areas act in 1957 allowed the government to forcibly remove people near cities across South Africa, particularly in areas that were multiracial like Sophiatown in Johannesburg and District Six in Cape Town. This visit allows students to explore the impact of segregation in South African society through racial spatial planning.

The people of District Six launched the museum in 1994 to advocate for social justice and land restitution for the communities that were displaced and to have a museum that educates generations about the forced removal of this community. In the SSL program, students spend a day visit to areas in District Six where communities were displaced. They interact with locals

who are still living in the area and also have a conversation with a former resident who works at the museum.



Photograph 8: District Six Museum (Tracey Adams/ANA 2019)

Like the other site visits, students reflect on their experience and their debriefing sessions are provided as some students may be traumatised by the experience. As reported above the lecturers and students reflect and make meaning of their experience and deepen their knowledge of how the history of District Six is connected with the broader South African history.

## **Conclusion**

This section has described SHAWCO in which this case study is located, the evolution of the organisation, and its location at the University of Cape Town. It also gave a background of the SHAWCO International programs, the service-learning streams which students in this study were involved in, both the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and the program on Community Development and Social Justice in South Africa.

As explained these programs involved students engaged in learning within formal and informal settings, provided through the lectures in class and also educational site visits in the townships, museums, and service-learning work in non-profit organisations.

These elements of learning within the SSL program have been explained in detail, to show the intention of the overall curriculum in the program and their link with the overall objectives of the service-learning program.

In the next section, I will present the background of the students interviewed and the findings under the three themes which are (1) Learning in dialogue, collaboration, and reflection in a

flexible environment, (2) Learning in educational sites and placement organisations, (3) Interactions and experiences in communities during placements and site visits. These are the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

## **Section B**

### **Profile of students**

#### **Learning Interests for students**

In this section, I give the background for each participant, and also the motivations to be part of this study abroad program. Learning through experiences is a popular narrative in service-learning programs. Most students look forward to learning about local cultures in host countries through interactions with the local people (now on referred to as locals) and visits to historic sites.

In this section, I will start by presenting the profiles of the five students who participated in this study. The findings are from the interviews with Jay, Katty, Micho, Andy, and Nick. I have used pseudonyms for all the interviewees.

#### **Jay**

Jay was in the Community Development and Social Justice program stream in the SSL programs. Jay is a white female student who was 21 when the interview was conducted. She attends university at a predominantly white institution in the United States (US). She was on a full scholarship with the Gilman Foundation, studying Women and Gender studies.

She was recruited by her mentor who is a faculty leader of the program in her university. Her mentor helped her through the application process and preparations for this SSL program.

Jay expressed that she always wanted to study abroad to be exposed to a new learning space that study abroad programs provides, she said “when you are at home studying you are in a classroom, but when you are abroad it's not ideal to be in a class, the city itself becomes your classroom” (Jay 2019, 25/04/2019), She was eager to learn in a different city and to learn outside the confines of a classroom.

Jay wanted a short-term study abroad in Africa, as a graduate in Gender Studies she said she wanted something that will set her apart from her peers when she graduates. She thought that studying in Africa was important for her as it would give her a very different experience compared to a program in Europe or in South America.

As a student in Gender Studies, she was interested in understanding women's struggles on the African continent. She preferred to be placed in an organisation that was fighting for women's rights by providing psychological support and transitional assistance to woman affected by sex trafficking and prostitution in South Africa. Therefore, she was placed in the NGO- Embrace Dignity.

### **Katty**

Katty was in the Community Development and Social Justice program, coming through the Women and Gender Studies program from her university. She was majoring in Gender Studies. She was interested in understanding women's struggles in South Africa. Interested in the notions of post-colonial societies and what that means, how societies that have been colonised are reforming themselves in a post-colonial time. These are debates she wanted to engage in about gender-based violence while in the SSL program. She read about systemic violence in South Africa she wanted to understand how this was part of the history of the country.

Katty is an African American female student who was 23 when the interview was conducted. She grew up in an African household and has always wanted to reconnect with her African heritage. Her family ancestry formed part of her identity as an African American. The SSL program presented an opportunity for her to rediscover her African identity. She said:

“I grew up with my parents who are from Somalia, so I grew up in a Somalian and very African household, I also had in the back of my mind that maybe Somali is not going to be the first African country I visit, so I wanted to be where other Africans are because that's not the experience I've been exposed to” (Katty, 12/07/2019).

She said her experience as an African American living in America was always an isolating one. In America, she would feel American but also made to feel like she does not belong in America therefore she needed the experience of being in Africa with Africans. She continues to visit people with whom she formed relationships with while she was in the SSL program.

She loved the opportunity to be in this program, tutoring learners in a SHAWCO centre in Manenberg. She said that she felt like she had an “authentic African experience” through this program.

### **Micho**

Micho was in the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship program, he worked with a social enterprise analysing its marketing strategies.

Micho is an African American male student who grew up in Washington DC in an African household. In his family, he was “the first generation African American, where he is a direct descendant from African parents and born in America”. Interviewee’s mother is from Ethiopia and his father is from Eritrea, and this ancestry has always made him want to reconnect with Africa through its culture of art and music.

The SSL program was part of that journey of reconnecting with Africa. He was looking forward to interacting with Africans and to make lifetime friends. The informal interactions and the experience of being in Africa is what he was looking forward to as he applied for the program. At the time of the interview, he was a university graduate having completed his degree in Finance and Marketing.

Being part of the program for Micho was also about making a comparison between the US and South Africa, looking at similarities and differences in the two countries through analysing the socio-economic conditions of black people. Listening to stories of South Africans and learning about Cape Town and the effects of apartheid on the lives of black people was important for him. He wanted to understand more of the history of the liberation struggle and oppression in South Africa. He always felt the history he got in his home University was incomplete, and this opportunity to come to South Africa would enrich this knowledge of SA history.

As a Finance student, he wanted to understand more how a social business or social enterprises operate in the country.

## **Nick**

Nick was in the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship program and worked in a social enterprise that raises funds for street children through donations in restaurants around Cape Town. In his remarks, he was critical of the structure of the business as he felt that it is not located within the market that it seeks to serve.

Nick is a white male student from New Jersey in the US. At the time of the interview, he was doing his final year majoring in Business and Economics. He has always been interested in international politics and economic development, wished to have a deeper understanding of Africa. He said he wanted to be as much of a global citizen as possible and therefore going to Africa and later to Asia were his priorities before graduating with a degree.

He says, “One day I would like to establish myself, and explore entrepreneurial opportunities in Africa”. Nick viewed Africa as a place with business opportunities where later in his life he could bring his business venture into Africa. The opportunity to come to South Africa through the SSL program was the start of his journey.

He was the first person in his family to come to Africa. He was excited about this as he wanted to have experiences that he could share with his family. He was also interested in the history of the country and keen to learn how the political leaders were able to unite the people after apartheid.

## **Andy**

Andy participated in the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship program and was working with a social enterprise that is involved in fundraising for street children.

Andy is a white male student who was born in Germany and grew up in the US. At the time of the interview, he was a rising junior (an undergraduate in the post-school system of the US), studying Marketing and Business Analytics. Andy is a business student with a passion for music.

He has always been interested in coming to Africa to explore the region and learn about the art and music in the local culture. He had learned about Nelson Mandela at school as part of South African history. Since then, he has always wanted to further explore South Africa's history and culture.

An in-depth understanding of racial segregation during apartheid was of interest to him. When he applied for the program and started reading about the history of the country. He had an open mind coming into the country. He was looking forward to also enjoy the country through experiencing the touristy excursions.

In the program, he was looking forward to getting an understanding of how local businesses particularly small businesses in communities operate in comparison to the US. He wished to understand how the concept of social businesses in developing countries was used.

## **Reflection on profiles**

In my experience, most students from America who participate in short-term study abroad programs are white and from privileged backgrounds. The white students from the US universities can afford these expensive programs, and mostly black students rely on funding from universities. African American students are mostly in minority in the study abroad programs. In Chapter 5, I will discuss this phenomenon in my critiques of short-term study abroad.

In summary, the profiles of the students give a sense of the kinds of students that were interviewed, their motivations to take part in the program. The students are racially diverse and also come from different backgrounds. The students were mostly interested in the history

of the liberation struggle in South Africa; hence they found the educational sites valuable in their learning.

## **Thematic Presentation of Interview Findings**

Learning in the SSL program takes place in formal and informal settings through lectures in the classroom, educational site visits and placement in organisations. These educational settings in this program offer students diverse learning opportunities.

It provides an opportunity to visit educational sites for interactions with a diversity of experts who are working within these education sites. Lastly, it also offers an opportunity to work in different organisations aligned to the interests of students.

In this study, I looked at the different education settings of this program to identify which of these settings enhanced learning for students during their study abroad experience. I present the findings under these three themes.

### **Themes**

1. Learning in dialogue, collaboration, reflection, and in a flexible environment
2. Learning through engagements in the educational site visits.
3. Interactions and experiences in communities during placements and site visits

### **Theme 1: Learning in dialogue, collaboration, and reflection in a flexible environment.**

The results in this theme relate to questions asked on the experiences that students had in the lectures and in particular whether the way classes were structured both in teaching and discussions in the classes contributed to their learning.

The responses from students were as follows.

- “It was the most collaborative environment that I have ever been in, different to the competitive US environment, you felt like you were there for other people and not just for you, and it was a different and dynamic learning environment”, (Nick, 24/06/2019).
- “Most classes in the US were kind of the traditional form, where you are 40 and it is usually that you are sitting in the lecture room, never in the small circles, and you just sit there and the professor is talking going through the presentation, but it was different in the SHAWCO program, there you have group discussions, conversations, and small circles.” Andy (26/06/2019).
- “It was a lot more different than what we are used to, in the US you go to your class

and sit down, you are usually not involved in the sessions you listen to your speaker or lecture going through the presentation and maybe break you in the group but still it will not feel collaborative as it was in the SHAWCO program” Nick, (24/06/2019).

- “In the US we are used to structured learning whether you go and read the textbook and you come back to class write an exam or essay. In the SHAWCO program learning was more intimate through discussions and there was more learning in that experience” Micho (24/06/2019).

The responses from these students who were in the program emphasize the value of group discussions, collaboration in learning, and all these contributed to a different learning environment that enhanced their learning in the SSL program. The discussions in classes allow them to learn from each other and also to share their views on the different topics that were covered. Collaboration makes them understand that their learning is connected.

To further understand more about how students learn in the different spaces and the diverse ways of teaching in the informal and formal learning settings, I posed questions to interviewees on how this diversity contributed to their learning and the responses were as follows.

- “The combination of informal and formal settings allowed us to embrace the culture and forces you to get out of your comfort zone” (Katty, (12/07/2019).
- “I think it’s both better and also scary to be in a context where you are not only learning in a classroom, it’s not about syllabus but you can be learning through observing informal labour and how women are making a living in difficult conditions, and this allows you to challenge your stereotypical view of South Africa” (Jay, 25/04/2019).
- “The classroom was a structured approach of reflecting on what we learned in the informal events. In the classroom, we learned important information to prepare us to engage with the city. But if it were either in classroom or just the informal experiential part, we would not have had the kind of deep learning that we had” (Nick, 24/06/2019).
- “These informal learning sessions where you are physically somewhere and experiencing a different place, like when we visited Macassar Pottery and had conversations with the owners or when we were in the Langa or Khayelitsha all these experiences allow us to feel and learn at the same time” (Micho, 24/06/2019).
- “It just made every day like fun and it never felt like the lectures in our university, it was a really good experience and I think the fact that we learned in the field informally and also in the classroom was really helpful” (Andy, 26/06/2019).

The students interviewed thought the balance of informal and formal settings for learning was valuable and allowed them to link theory with the existing reality within the country. This structure and diversity allowed them to explore their learning and made it lively and fun.

In the interview questions. I asked about the reflection process during and after the program and student responses were as follows.

- "I was constantly reflecting on everything that I had to do because you are living fully after class in the country that you are studying, being able to have those moments in the bus where after passing Khayelitsha you ask yourself, what did I just see, so I was constantly trying to connect the dots" (Nick, 24/06/2019).
- Jay refers to challenges with reflections in the group "like when we go into townships and a lot of children would come up to us and hold our hands as white students but not with the African American students. I would see this as influenced by their exposure to Eurocentric beauty, and someone in the group disagreed" (Jay, 25/04/2019).
- "We had debriefing sessions at the end, this was important because sometimes I might have missed something during the day and someone else would lift that out during the session and that would enrich your own experience" (Andy, 26/06/2019).

The way in which sessions were structured in the program was valuable. Students appreciated the discussions, and forms of collaborative work which encouraged each interviewee to learn from one another. It was in the informal reflexive moments of individual students, and the directed reflection sessions in class through debriefings that these students found meaning in their experiences.

## **Theme 2: Learning in educational sites and placement organisations.**

The program allows students to spend a day in the townships (Langa and Khayelitsha) visiting different learning sites, participate in guided tours in different museums and work in placement organisations. I have described the different educational visits above see pages (39 -46). The visits are guided by tour guides in the communities and museums. Students were asked to reflect on their experiences in education sites and what they learned while they were visiting these sites and working in placement organisations. Their responses were as follows.

- "One big experience in the program was when we went to Langa township and we got an opportunity to understand the history of the community, also understood it within the history of the city, the visits to Macassar Pottery in Khayelitsha were very significant in my experience" (Andy, 26/06/2019).

- “I mean, we went to Langa first and that was an immediate wave that hits you. I learned so much from visiting the two townships than I could ever learn in any book or any classroom, it just that when you physically go to a place and learn from people that live there, it becomes a life-changing experience” (Nick, 24/06/2019).
- “Being in Cape Town and seeing that people in Khayelitsha and Langa in townships have no access to opportunities, live in poor infrastructure, and have few educational opportunities, this is different to the US. Seeing all of this makes you learn and look at things differently” (Micho, 24/06/2019).
- “The excursions to non-profit organisations were very important to me. We went to one of the NGOs where a group of women work together to take back their plantations (land). Listening to them was most important to me because they were telling us how they organise to take back the land and I felt that the women were doing real work and are passionate about their work” (Jay, 25/04/2019).
- “Being in Manenberg (SHAWCO Centre) made me understand the different experiences that people living in the same city had and experienced differently because of their location” Katty, (12/07/2019).
- “The experience in the organisation (Embrace Dignity) showed me, the potential of Non-profits and lobbying and the potential of marginalized women to come together.... it was amazing to meet all the women and talk to them about their experiences within the organization and enrich my knowledge on gender struggles in SA.” (Jay, 25/04/2019).
- “It was good working with the organisation (Street-smart) because everyone comes with their perspective on how business should be run based on what they learnt in the US. A lot of times, even like when we went to the townships and saw some micro-enterprises and how the township economy works independently from other parts of Cape Town, to have an understanding of that, forces us to unlearn. Some of the things we learn here on how to run a business, or a non-profit it does not apply to the US because it does not fit the landscape and the economy and the structure of that society” (Micho, 24/06/2019).

The educational site visits have various elements which include historical sites in the townships, social enterprises, and community organisations that are linked to students’ interests, and these are the spaces that the students felt were important in the educational sites. The experiences of being in the township allowed students to have a deeper understanding of inequalities within South Africa and between the two countries.

Students also visited different museums, and questions on their experiences in these museums were asked and responses were as follows.

- “Being in Robben Island made me realise that within the schooling system in the US the history you get about apartheid is very minimal and only a focus on Mandela without providing any contexts to it, and also no mention of other leaders like Robert Sobukwe who were important in the liberation struggle’ (Micho 24/06/2019).
- “Being in the museum gives you the full history of apartheid and the systemic structure of it, the locations, zoning and so it becomes incredible because it is this type of knowledge that no one ever teaches you, you see it, you learn it and I think that was very important because it puts everything into context” (Micho, 24/06/2019).
- “Being in Robben island and having a former prisoner talking to us at that moment, having that time where people who are telling history are the ones who were on that side of history was valuable, I think these moments are the ones that shape study abroad where you are having these conversations that you can never get in a textbook” (Katty, 12/07/2019).
- “I think the biggest take away was having time to talk to local people on one on one, for instance in District six we had time to talk to former residents having them talk to us was valuable” (Katty 12/07/2019).
- “The visit to Robben Island was so eye-opening, showing you that it was not long ago when that system (apartheid system) was in place” (Andy, 26/06/2019).

### **Theme 3: Interactions and experiences in communities during placements and site visits**

Questions on how the conversations with local people contributed to their learning (mediated and unmediated) were posed to students, and the responses were as follows.

- “One of the things that local lecturers did very well was that they were very knowledgeable on different issues like student activism, the #Fees must fall and #Rhodes must fall student movements. We had lectures on traditional marriages. The people giving the lectures were involved in the different actions and have personal experiences of these subjects, this made the sessions valuable” (Katty, 12/07/2019.).
- “I think having the local students with us and having them integrated with the class gave us local student perspectives which went beyond class discussions, this was very valuable and shaped our experiences in the program” (Micho, 12/07/2019).
- “The one thing I could never grasp was interacting with people like Bongani\* and Mary (lecturer) and the local students that were part of our class, the interpersonal

experiences I had with South Africans were more valuable than everything I have read”  
(Nick, 24/06/2019).

## **Conclusion**

The section presented the case study in detail, the SSL program, profiles of students, and the themes emerging from data analysis. The next chapter will focus on the discussion and analysis of findings using the theoretical lens of the literature reviewed.

# **Chapter Five:**

## **Discussion and Analysis of the Findings**

### **Introduction**

This chapter interprets and analyses the findings presented in Chapter Four. These findings are interpreted and analysed using the literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two. The section discusses the findings which provide answers to the research question.

The findings will be discussed and analysed using the themes that emerged in the analysis of data. I will be exploring how learning occurred in formal and informal settings in the SSL program and discuss factors that enhanced learning for students during the course of the program.

The literature review focused on internationalisation and SSA as an emerging practice that has been growing in the US. It explained motivations for students who participated in study abroad programs. The literature explored the problematic nature of SSA programs which present experiences of other cultures in a narrow form that perpetuate stereotypes, while exoticizing experiences in host countries.

Experiential learning theories were reviewed articulating learning in service-learning contexts from the theory of John Dewey (1938), David Kolb (1984), and Paulo Freire (1970). The SSL program is presented as a pedagogical tool that allows students to be engaged in communities while also learning in an organised curriculum, in formal and informal learning settings.

The structure of the discussion will start with the discussion of the SSL program as a pedagogical tool, discuss students' profiles and backgrounds within the problematic frames in SSA programs, and then the three themes that emerged from the data.

### **SSL program as a pedagogical tool**

The findings in this study illustrate that the SSL program is a pedagogical tool that presents different learning settings to enhance learning for students. The lectures in the classroom, the visits to the educational site, and the placements in the non-profit organisations and social enterprises offer spaces for learning.

The program allowed students to be involved in projects which gave them a deeper understanding of the context in which these organisations are located within South Africa, and how social realities in communities post-apartheid affect the work of these organisations. The experience of being in placements in organisations allowed students to better apply their

theoretical knowledge in real situations through the projects they were working on while in these organisations. The program allowed for learning through interactions and dialogue in the educational sites and the classroom.

The pedagogical potential of the SSL program is in the design of these interactions and learning spaces created for students. The ability to allow students to learn through working in projects in organisations, engage with peers, and locals, these experiences enhanced learning as suggested by students in the study. This further illustrates the value of the informal, formal, and incidental experiences in their learning, as argued by Coryell (2013) and Pipitome (2017). The value of critical reflection with peers is consistent with the Gredley's (2013) findings.

As a pedagogical tool, the SSL program allowed students to learn more about South African history and contemporary challenges of a democratic South Africa through interactions in the educational sites, discussions in class, and social engagements, and being in the actual country. It further allowed students to understand how non-profit organisations and social enterprises function to meet their social goals in communities.

Students started to explore the differences and similarities between non-profits in Cape Town and in the US and the result was to reimagine how non-profits are organised in their home countries. Jay (26/06/2019) who worked at Embrace Dignity said "The experience in the organisation showed me the potential of non-profits in lobbying and advocacy, and also the potential of marginalized women coming together. Because the challenge in the US is that mainly white women are involved and they are stealing the microphone from the women of colour and disabled women", while Micho (24/06/2019) said, "To work in these organisations forces us to unlearn some of the things we learnt in the US on how to run a business, or a non-profit because the knowledge we had does not fit into the landscape here since the economic structure of the South African society is different". The experience in these organisations allows these students to learn and apply their knowledge in real situations, and to rethink or develop their knowledge on non-profits and social enterprises for their own contexts.

These findings support and are consistent with McMillan (2008), she argues that service-learning in multiple contexts allow for teaching and learning that crosses border between the academy and the community and this is enriching for students. The forms of learning in the educational sites, placement organisations, and classroom was dialogical, interactional, and reflective and allowed for deeper engagements which enhanced learning for students. The SSL program is a pedagogical tool because of the way it is designed, to allow students to learn in multiple educational sites and to create new knowledge. The way learning occurs in

these spaces will further be discussed through the themes below. The SSL program is presented as a pedagogical tool because of its design and learning spaces offered to students.

## **What enhanced Learning in the SSL program?**

### **Background and Motivations of Students**

The findings presented showed the influence of the background and motivations on how students interpreted their experiences in the program. Motivation is considered a strong actor in adult education as an indication of a students' interest and persistence in learning. Their experience in the program in terms of what they were mostly interested in was also influenced by their academic, social and class backgrounds.

The African American students in the study seemed to have a different interpretation of their experiences in some instances compared to the white students. Though there is nothing conclusive which could be drawn from this, it is an interesting finding to note for further investigation. The students wanted to reconnect with their African roots as they grew up in African household and were the first generation of African Americans in their families.

As presented in the findings all students in the study always had an interest to come to Africa for varying reasons. The program provided them with a lived history of the country by upfront engagement with liberation activists, people who were forcible removed as well as current stories from community activists and non-profits. They also made attempts on their own to know more about the history of South Africa. Three of the students were interested in forming networks locally, and this did happen, and they continued to connect with South Africans after the program.

The influence of their personal background in learning journeys became the finding of the study, though it was not interrogated much, this is illustrative and similar to the findings by Gredley (2015) on the influence of students' personal context in their learning journey. Gredley's (2015) findings indicate that students' personal context "play an important role in shaping their experiences and learning" Gredley (2015:257). Students' interactions with the South African society and how they immediately observe and interpreted their experiences were influenced by their personal backgrounds and the motivations in being part of the SSL.

The idea of being a global citizen which Nick, Katty, and Alex all shared in the study as a motivation to be part of this program is located within the narrative that promotes consumerism in study abroad and perpetuates the problematic nature of study abroad as illustrated by Barbour (2012), Zemach-Bersin (2007), and Doerr (2013). The nature of study abroad involves the commodification of experiences (Doerr, 2015), selling these experiences to students as

life changing. The motive for students is sometimes influenced by this form of marketing for study abroad.

Pipitone (2018) argues that pedagogy in SSA programs should allow students to shift from understanding Africa as a “monolithic culture” but understand it within the global context of a complex world. In the study Katty 12/07/2019 explains that lectures within the program helped them in “contextualizing their experiences and not to get caught up in narrow ideas of “a sexist Africa” or “racist South Africa” but to look at these in connection with global issues”. The lecturers in the classroom could deconstruct the single-story narrative and linked isolated experiences of students while in South Africa to global perspectives. To understand poverty, racism, sexism in a continuum not as an African problem but that these are interconnected global issues.

The students were constantly comparing South Africa with the US for example in terms of the education provided and how social enterprises operated. The findings in the study have shown that learning occurred in this comparison which happened in classrooms, in the experiences in communities, and in the educational visits.

Students would understand the impact of inequalities in the lives of residents in communities like Langa and Khayelitsha, comparing their realities with the experiences they have in their countries. Like Micho would say that “those in Khayelitsha and Langa within townships have no access to opportunities and are in poor infrastructure, education and everything that is more accessible in the US”, he understood that though inequalities exist in the US the impact is different because of systematic challenges in South Africa.

Background and motivations influenced how students interpreted their experiences in SSL, though this was not the focus of the study it continuously came up in the findings. An area that still requires more research to understand how these influence learning in the program.

I now continue to discuss and analyse the findings under the three themes.

### **Theme 1: Learning in dialogue, collaboration, and reflection.**

Learning the history of colonialism and apartheid, the complexities of a democratic South Africa through dialogue, discussions, and continuous reflections was valuable for students in the SSL program. To have conversations with former prisoners at Robben Island and the residents of the District Six area made history come alive for students in the study. The combination of informal and formal sessions in the educational site visits and the theoretical sessions in class allowed students to learn and understand South African history in more detail and depth.

The debriefing sessions and reflections about the experiences in the townships allowed students to have an even deeper understanding of the impact of apartheid as shown by the unequal socioeconomic conditions between white and black people, and challenges of access to education, employment, and markets for black people. These seem insurmountable for poor communities. The student's views as expressed in chapter four on collaboration and dialogue during classes and while working on projects in organisations indicate the value of learning in collaborative and dialogical forms.

This theme is presented through the three sub-themes (1) Dialogue and Collaborative form, (2) Informal and Formal learning settings, and (3) Learning through reflection.

### *Dialogue and Collaboration*

The study illustrated that learning was enhanced by the different learning spaces in the SSL program. The SSL program was framed by Dewey's (1938) experiential learning theory and Paulo Freire's 1970 theory on the pedagogy of the oppressed. Its lecture sessions were facilitated in dialogical forms, and the visits into educational sites allowed for discussions, learning in circles, and dialogues. The students in the study said this form of learning was valuable and made it easier to explore the history of the country and the subject content on contemporary challenges in South Africa.

Kolb (1984) in defining characteristics of experiential learning makes the argument that "learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes" (Kolb1984:26). The process of learning is important in experiential learning. The way the sessions are facilitated contributes to the way students learn in the program. This was confirmed by students in their responses in which they appreciated the way sessions in class were facilitated, the group discussions, engagements, and dialogues and formal modes of assessment such as exams were not privileged as learning was seen as a social process.

The students in the study contrasted their learning in the program with their experiences in their home universities. In their comparisons, it was clear that the experience in the SSL program was more engaging, allowed for discussions and dialogue, while in the US they learn in the traditional form that centres the lecturer in the learning process. This illustrates the findings by Corley (2011), that educators should take advantage of the foreign environment in the innovative design of learning programs.

The comparisons were also similar to how John Dewey (1938) compares traditional and progressive education in his theory on experience and education as explained in Chapter 3.

Pedagogy in the SSL program is located in the progressive education theory as articulated by Dewey (1938). This process of learning was important in their construction of new knowledge.

This form of progressive learning in the study is also illustrated by the finding of Roholt and Fisher (2013) that within study abroad programs the value of learning is on how instructors in the programs facilitate discussions to ensure that experiential learning content emerges through conversations and dialogue.

Freire's (1970) pedagogy emphasizes dialogical forms of learning, which does not see students as blank slates where knowledge should be deposited by the teacher but rather seeing the students as bringing knowledge into the classroom. This is consistent with the form of learning that students in the SSL experienced, in a form that departs from the traditional form of teaching and learning. The SSL program democratised learning allowing for a relationship that is democratic and intimate between the students and the lecturers.

The findings on the value of dialogue and collaborations also agree with the findings by Corley (2011) that collaborative group exercises allow students in study abroad to co-construct new knowledge and perspectives in sociocultural appropriate ways. The learning process is not an individualised experience that detaches students from context and peers, but it allows students to understand learning as a collective and social practice.

The process of learning becomes a process of interrogating experiences, understanding that ideas are formed and reformed through experiences (Kolb 1984). Consistent with Lutterman-Aguilar and Gingerich's (2015) argument which emphasises the need to foreground the collective, cooperative, and collaborative collective nature of education as a dialogical process.

### *Informal and Formal learning settings*

The SSL program allows learning to occur through formal and informal settings. This is in the classroom, and also the self-directed and incidental experiences which students encounter outside the classroom and during educational site visits. The students in this study appreciated and found learning within the formal and informal settings valuable, and they say the learning spaces complete the learning process. If the program had one element without the other the experience would not have been as valuable as it was in their experience, Nick, Micho and Andy emphasised this view.

The informal settings allowed them to be relatively free to explore the country, and also to observe different aspects of the South African culture and its history. The formal sessions allowed them to reflect on these experiences which they encountered in the townships or in

the educational sites during visits. This design made learning experiences to be fun and enriching.

The finding is supported by the study of Coryell (2013) in which informal and formal settings were found to be valuable in the learning of students in study abroad programs. There is value in formal, informal, and incidental learning experiences that students are exposed to while in these different settings. The design of learning activities from the classroom, educational sites, museums, and community engagements offered the informal and formal learning spaces important in the learning process for students.

### *Learning through reflection*

In Kolb's (1984) theory, learning is understood within four dimensions, experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting. Learning is in the reflection process on the experiences that the students encounter in learning spaces. In the SSL program, students were constantly reflecting from the time they arrived in the country, throughout their stay, and in the formally organised reflection and debriefing sessions.

In agreement with what Kolb (1984) students exposed to an experiential learning pedagogy should be able to reflect and observe their experiences from different perspectives to enable their learning process. Acknowledging Fenwick's (2000) critique of Kolb's (1984) theory on experiential learning, the reflection process was not only in the formal sessions of reflections, but embodied in the experience in which students were constantly involved in.

The study revealed that reflection was important during the program because it allowed students to explore their experiences and reform their ideas on the different knowledge aspects of the history of South Africa. Andy (26/06/2019) said that the reflection process could help him lift some of the learning encounters he might have had during the experience, and Nick (24/06/2019) understood the reflection process in the experience as a continuous process throughout the journey and visits to different sites. The students continued to reflect on the experience after the program when they were in their country with family, friends, and other students.

The finding in the study is consistent with findings on pedagogical techniques by Piage and Vande Berg (2012) who explains the value of reflection for students in understanding the content, and Lutterman and Gingerich (2015) who encourages educators to help students to engage in continuous reflections through assignments, debriefing sessions, and conversations among themselves. In his theory Kolb (1984) emphasise the reflection process as a mode to resolve the dialectically opposed modes of adaptation in the world.

The reflection process is important in the recreation of knowledge, the reformation of ideas. Students in SSA programs come into host countries with ideas and information about these countries and ready to learn more about a host country. The reflection process is important in this re-examination of ideas.

In summary, this finding on how a reflexive, dialogical, collaborative, and engaging learning environment enhances learning for students agrees with the various studies (Corley 2011, 2013), Lutterman and Gingerich 2015, and Piage and Vande Berg (2012) who explored experiential learning and pedagogy in study abroad programs. The dialogical and reflexive nature of learning in the SSL is consistent with the Paulo Freire's (1987) articulation of dialogue as a form reflecting and learning in reality.

## **Theme 2: Learning in the educational sites and placement organisations.**

The experience of being in the townships helped students understand inequalities in South Africa. Conversations and discussions about apartheid spatial planning in the educational sites allowed students to be engrossed in South African historical realities. The integration of this with the experience of working in placement organisations (non-profits) allowed them to further understand the realities of organisations.

These experiences of students in social enterprises and non-profit organisations allowed for constant interaction with the realities for an enriching experience. They deepen their knowledge on apartheid South Africa, the contemporary issues in the country, and the complexities of a democratic nation. The students thought the experiences in the townships were life changing. The historical sites within townships allowed them to understand better the history of people in these townships.

The findings illustrate the findings by Pipitome (2018) that locates engagements with a place as critical for learning in study abroad programs. The theory of Kolb (1984) emphasises learning as involving the transaction of the person with the environment. The experience of being in educational sites and placement organisations allowed students to interact with the history and learn through that interaction in the reflection process.

As students are located with the different organisations, this allowed them to have an understanding of the context in which these organisations are allocated, as Katty, Jay, Nick alluded to their experiences in the placement organisations. As Dewey (1938) argues that educational experience involves continuity and interaction between the learner and what is learned, the interactions within these educational sites allow students to learn from their experiences.

The finding is supported by the findings of Coryell (2011) on the value of learning cultures in the host country through visiting historical sites. These learning experiences through interactions and the “union of the physical and communicative experiences” Coryell (2011) adds much value to the learning process. This brings the theoretical knowledge into life. Intercultural knowledge is facilitated through the reflection in experiences in these learning spaces.

### **Theme 3: Interactions and experiences in communities during placements and site visits**

The value of lecturers, facilitators and having students from the host countries is important for students’ learning experiences as these bring local voices into the program. Katty, Micho, and Alex highlighted in the study, that the interactions with the local lecturers were valuable in their learning during the program offering different perspectives. This is consistent with the findings in the study by Donnelly-Smith and Donnelly-Smith (2009), which affirmed the importance of Professors and academic experts from the host country’s or institutions in providing local perspectives to students.

The design of the learning activities included some immersion into community life, this allowed more interpersonal experiences and an understanding of history in context. It is easy to see the poor infrastructure, the impact of poverty on communities, and lack of access to educational opportunities when you learn that by having conversations with people in communities. This also helps in building on local perspectives to decentre Western perspectives in the curriculum of study abroad, consistent with Pipitone’s (2018) findings.

Locating students’ perspectives in broader perspectives using knowledge by locals is critical in the learning of students. Peer learning in the program from SA students was valuable for students as alluded in the interviews, this allowed for students to continuously have discussions even beyond the classroom.

This is further illustrated by Gonsalvez’s (2013) findings, arguing that in this short-term study abroad program there is nothing as valuable as bringing together peers of students who are within the same discipline together, this helps students to comprehend and assimilate knowledge easily. The experiences of peers and lecturers from the host country shape students’ perspectives outside the knowledge of their faculty members, this brings local perspectives into the discussions and foregrounds their knowledge. The finding is consistent with Gredley’s (2013) on peer learning as an enabler of learning in service-learning programs.

## Conclusion

The study explored student experiences in the SSL program using experiential learning theories within adult education, particularly Dewey's (1938) theory on experience and education and Kolb's (1984) theory on experiential learning. The research question for this study was titled, what are the main factors that enhance students' learning in the SSL Program for International students?

The study explored sub-questions concerning the main research question to understand students' experiences in the program. In the sub-question, (a) Students were asked, what were the most significant learning experiences that they got through this SSA in South Africa, and how did these contribute to their experience?

The study found that the visits to educational sites including museums and local townships where students had interactions with residents, learnt different perspectives from South Africans were the most significant learning experiences in the program.

To be able to understand South Africa's history from the narration of residents who were part of it gave students experiences they could not have had through the books. To be able to share knowledge with peers, lecturers, and residents through conversations in communities and the classroom were very valuable in the learning process.

The second sub-question focused on the teaching methods in the program, (b) students were asked what they think about the structuring (teaching forms, informal and formal settings) of the program, and how did that contribute to your learning experience.

The study found that students valued the dialogical, collaborative, and reflective form of teaching by lectures which democratised the classroom and allowed more voices from students and a space for sharing different perspectives, a collaborative and reflective space for learning. The study found that students said this was a critical factor in the learning during the program, this different form of learning contributed immensely to their education. The formal and informal settings in the program were much valued, allowing students to be in dialogue, and to have group discussions while reflecting on their experiences in communities.

The study also found that there is value in having local students from the host country as peers in the program. The study found this element of the program valuable to students' learning. This finding was also consistent with other studies that have found that peer learning is important in study abroad, an element that has not been explored much through SSA.

Another factor which was highlighted was the effect of a racially diverse group of students, though this study did not explore this question some students indicated that black students

seem to have nuanced experiences like feeling their voices are not as valued or dominant in discussions as white students.

In the reflection sessions white students' voices were dominant, and black students felt their experiences might not be as valuable in the discussions. This needs further research on African American experiences in study abroad, and how their experiences are invalidated in the reflection processes. Also noting their experiences of discrimination that is sometimes salient from the young kids who mostly prefer working with white students, a product of socialisation and a legacy of apartheid that still permeate our society.

In conclusion, I have demonstrated that this study has answered the question -what factors enhanced learning in SSA programmes; as discussed that learning for students in SSA is formal, informal, and teaching strategies and allowed for reflection on students' experiences to create valuable learning. Dialogue, discussions, reflection, and interactions with the peers, local people and immersion in the environment were critical pedagogical methods in the program.

#### **Summary of the factors which enhanced students' learning in SSL programs.**

1. The students in the study indicated that teaching that promotes dialogue, collaboration, and discussions in class enhances learning, and allows for sharing of knowledge and experience between students and the teachers. Therefore, the facilitation of lectures within the formal settings in classrooms allowed for more group discussions, collaboration, dialogue, and reflection. The project's designed with placement organisations encouraged learning in collaboration amongst students while creating an environment that allowed for dialogue for a better understanding of the content being explored.
2. The study illustrated that the combination of formal and informal settings for learning was important and valuable to students during SSL programs. Therefore, the design of learning interventions for students allowed for the use of these settings to balance learning for students, formal settings enhanced the sharing of the theory and reflections, while the informal settings encouraging practice and experiences through the application of theory and also interactional engagements.
3. The study found that learning in context within educational sites visits was critical for students, these experiences bring knowledge into life. To be in these educational sites learning about the history of South Africa and challenges in a democratic state narrated by individuals who have been part of it and continue to live through these challenges has been valuable for students' learning.
4. The study also found value in peer learning within these programs, it is important

that where possible students from a visiting university have students from the host country who are peers to participate in their sessions, this enhances learning and allows for the sharing of knowledge.

5. The study also found some barriers in the reflection process, where some students felt that their views might be dominant within the groups. It is important that the facilitator of the reflection sessions is aware of the power relations within the groups and allows for different forms of reflections that will give every student a space to share their perspectives and to hear multiple voices.

The factors which enable learning as summarised above were made possible by structuring the Short-Term Study Abroad program as a pedagogical tool using experience as a starting point for reflections from which new knowledge was generated.

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# Appendices

## Appendix One: Consent Form

You are asked to participate in a study which explores learning experiences of students in the SHAWCO service-learning program which you had participated in at the University of Cape Town. The study will look at the different forms of learning which students are exposed to while on the program and also look at the elements of the program that enhanced your learning.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. My name is Lungisa Mzizana However, currently I am a MEd (Masters in Education) student at the University of Cape Town (UCT). My supervisor is Associate Professor. Salma Ismail a lecturer at the University of Cape Town in the department of School of Education. This research study is being undertaken as part of fulfilment of my Master of Education Degree study with UCT. She can be contacted at the following email address for any clarity when needed: salma.ismail@uct.ac.za

### ***What will happen in this study?***

In this study we will use in-depth interviews to collect data on the experiences of students in the SHAWCO service-learning program; the interview will be conducted through a Skype session and it will take between an hour and an hour and an hour half of your time. Also, we will look at some documentation and reflections from students as a form of collecting data. The research will focus on the learning experiences of students during the programme in lectures, excursions, site visits and placement sites.

### ***What will happen with the information?***

All the information I collect will be confidential. I will not use your name in the transcripts or in the final report or in the e-book publication. The final report will have a pseudo name such that it will not be possible to identify an individual in the report.

### ***Voluntary***

Your participation is entirely voluntary. There will be no adverse consequences if you decide you do not want to participate or wish to discontinue your participation.

***Benefits and harms***

The interview as a form of data collection will be looking at your views, experiences, and opinions. It should not cause you any distress or harm. If at any time you wish to stop your participation because of discomfort, you are free to do so. The benefits to SHAWCO and its service-learning will assist the organisation to improve learning experiences for students and also the quality of the program.

If you are willing to participate, can you please indicate below that you have understood what the study is about and that you are willing to participate in the study?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

Signature

Date

## Appendix Two: Information form

You are asked to participate in a study which explores learning experiences of students in the SHAWCO service-learning program which you had participated in at the University of Cape Town.

The study will look at the different forms of learning which students are exposed to while on the program and also look at the elements of the program that enhanced your learning. My name is Lungisa Mzizana. My contact details are: email: [lungisa.mzizana@uct.ac.za](mailto:lungisa.mzizana@uct.ac.za) and Telephone number is: .....

I am a Masters student specialising Adult Education. My supervisor is Associate Professor. Salma Ismail a lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. This research study is being taken as part fulfilment of my Master of Education Degree study..... She can be contacted at the following email address for any clarity when needed: [salma.ismail@uct.ac.za](mailto:salma.ismail@uct.ac.za)

### ***What will happen in this study?***

In this study we will use in-depth interviews to collect data on the experiences of students in the SHAWCO service-learning program; the interview will be conducted through a Skype session and it will take between an hour and an hour and an hour half of your time. Also we will look at some documentation and reflections from students as a form of collecting data. The research will focus on the learning experiences of students during the programme in lectures, excursions, site visits and placement sites.

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All the information I collect will be confidential. I will not use your name in the transcripts or in the final report or in the e-book publication. The final report you will have a pseudo name such that it will not be possible to identify an individual in the report.

### ***Voluntary***

Your participation is entirely voluntary. There will be no adverse consequences if you decide you do not want to participate or wish to discontinue your participation.

***Benefits and harms***

The interview as a form of data collection will be looking at your views, experiences and opinions. It should not cause you any distress or harm. If at any time you wish to stop your participation because of discomfort, you are free to do so. The benefits to SHAWCO and its service-learning will assist the organisation to improve learning experiences for students and also the quality of the program.



# Programme Overview

*“Service-learning is a form of [experiential education](#) where learning occurs through a cycle of action and reflection as students work with others through a process of applying what they are learning to community problems, and at the same time, reflecting upon their experience as they seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding for themselves” Eyler and Giles, (1999).*

## Appendix Three: Programme Overview

One of the biggest limitations of SHAWCO’s student-run programme is that local student volunteers are only active during the time they are on campus, leaving large gaps in the service to SHAWCO communities during vacation time.

In 2006 SHAWCO launched its International Service-Learning Programme, the idea being that international students would be able to continue SHAWCO’s service to communities during UCT students “off time”, while simultaneously learning more about development, Africa and South Africa in particular.

SHAWCO International has received an overwhelming response over the last eight years and has entered into partnerships with universities across the globe, offering packages with varying mixes of academic, service-learning work, internships in township organisations and social enterprises along with site-seeing components.

**Our Service learning programme involves various elements and this includes:**

- **Academics**  
Over the years we have been able to develop a relationship with the Department of Extra-Mural Studies within the University of Cape Town, and they are mainly responsible for the coordination of the academic content in our programmes
- **Service Learning Placements**  
We provide an opportunity for students to engage with communities where our organisation has a footprint in, and in this we ensure an alignment between the academics and the actual service learning work through critical reflection processes
- **Excursions**  
The service learning programme also offers an opportunity for students to explore Cape Town, and this is through visiting some of the historic sites that constitute what shapes the Cape, and these help in shaping the learning of the students
- **Accommodation**  
SHAWCO also provides accommodation for students during the programme; this is either through our SHAWCO house which form part of our Social Enterprises or through various partners which provide secure and affordable accommodation.

## - Transport

Our organisation has developed a strong brand within different communities and for safe and reliable transport SHAWCO uses its internal transport for the entire programme

## Community Engaged Service Learning

SHAWCO's service learning programmes are informed by a *community engaged learning* approach. *Community engaged learning* is a growing area of academic interest within development studies, and offers both community partners and students a useful and meaningful service experience. It has its philosophical roots in the writings of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and American educator John Dewey. In-line with this approach SHAWCO views the teacher-learner relationship as a reciprocal relationship. Ideally, service-learning is a process of empowerment for students, faculty and community members alike as together they are co-learners and co-teachers in creating better communities.

*Community engaged learning* is an approach to learning, service and engagement that links classroom based learning and critical reflection with community engagement through community university partnerships. Engagement can take many forms, all ideally identified as important/useful by the community partner. Importantly, there should be mutual benefit, learning and reciprocity in all the engagements. Students should also be required to engage with the meaning of key concepts which are inherent in such engagements and crucial for ethical practice e.g. community engagement, service, and power relations.

Experiential learning is a key element of a *community engaged learning* approach which aims to engage students in cycles of service and reflection. Through a robust and intentional process of critical reflection, the outcomes of community-engaged learning for students include the development of a set of attributes, knowledge, skills and values:

- acquiring knowledge of contexts and issues beyond the immediate content areas of curriculum;
- understanding the views of others, active listening and critical thinking skills;
- Values linked to critical global citizenship, and a commitment to social justice issues.

Understanding community engaged learning within this framework, the benefits for communities are engagements with students who are committed, empathetic, open to new knowledge, and willing to accompany communities on their own process of development.

## Academic Programmes

*Community engaged learning* is a flexible pedagogy which enables SHAWCO to incorporate pedagogy into any classroom setting. This makes it possible for SHAWCO to provide students with a wide variety of choices in terms of both the service experience and learning outcomes as outlined below:

***The Service, Development & Social Justice Programme*** offers students an opportunity to explore the complexities of social change and service learning in the context of an emergent democracy. The programme encourages students to explore social justice by experiencing everyday life in local communities, to engage with social change in a developmental context and to gain insight into the many socio-political factors that shape this. The programme helps students enhance their commitment to working for social justice while gaining the knowledge and skills needed to do this successfully. At the same time, organisations involved with the programme gain the expertise and

experience needed to implement service-learning with students. The programme is ideally offered over 13 contact sessions.

*The Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship Programme* offers students, as emergent social entrepreneurs a theoretical and practical immersion in the field of social innovation in a South African context. The programme emphasizes practical application of course concepts and frameworks in real-world contexts. During this course, we will ask students to see themselves as social entrepreneurs. We will take an interactive approach to familiarizing students with social innovation as both a discipline and practice. The programme encourages students to form their own approach to social entrepreneurship and innovation, and begin to develop the concepts, mind-sets, skills, and relationships that will enable them to continue to be effective social innovators throughout their lives. The course also includes a critical reflective component similar to that offered by the *Service, Development and Social Justice Programme*. The programme is ideally offered over 13 contact sessions.

### **Service Experience**

SHAWCO uses a variety of classroom settings: seminars, lecture-based classes, classes with labs or tutorials; our classes are 20 or fewer students.

The service experience typically takes place at a single site over the duration of the academic programme.

Student learning can be demonstrated in a wide variety of learning outcomes which include: exams; reflective essays, journals, or research papers; oral presentations to interested community members; outcomes of community based research.

### **Enhancing Learning & Personal Development**

Student benefits of community engaged learning include enhanced opportunities for learning, personal and social skill development. Students gain increased knowledge of academic materials, their communities, and themselves.

Community engaged learning is a form of experiential education that supports deep learning. Through their service activities, students apply classroom knowledge in practical settings to enhance understanding of class materials.

Community engaged learning provides students with opportunities to develop civic engagement skills. By working with community members, students can enhance group, organizational and interpersonal skills. They also can gain important experience working with diverse members of their communities.

Students can gain a better understanding of themselves as they explore and develop ways to contribute to communities. They can develop self-confidence and an enhanced commitment to public service.

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## Appendix Four: Curriculum Social Innovation

### Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the Contemporary South African Context

**What?** The SHAWCO-Centre for Entrepreneurship partnership offers students at foreign universities, as emergent social entrepreneurs a theoretical and practical immersion in the field of social innovation in a South African Context. The course will provide opportunities for theoretical engagement, experiential learning and reflection through a combination of seminars (both theoretical and experiential), seminar linked site visits and symposia with organisations and leaders located in the surrounding communities of Cape Town, South Africa.

While there are many emerging perspectives on social entrepreneurship and innovation, most generally a social innovation can be understood as a positive, creative shift in systemic social, economic, and/or environmental patterns. Many social innovations have global ambitions, but even when pursued primarily at the local level, social innovations go beyond simply providing a needed service or remediation. They challenge and experiment with a given system's underlying building blocks: its rules, policies, technologies, structures, beliefs, habits, values, etc.

This course emphasizes practical application of course concepts and frameworks in real-world contexts. During this course, we will ask you to see yourself as a social entrepreneur. We will take an interactive approach to familiarizing you with social innovation as both a discipline and practice. The course provides a dynamic academic, practical, and personal experience. Students will be immersed in the world of designing creative, sustainable processes towards social change using multiple learning strategies.

By the end of the course, students will have formed their own approach to social entrepreneurship and innovation, and will have begun to develop the concepts, mind-sets, skills, and relationships that will enable them to continue to be an effective social innovator throughout their lives.

**Where?** University of Cape Town and surrounds

**When?** 3 January – 16 January 2017

**Group size?** 20 students (max)

**Intended Outcomes?** Upon completing the course, students will be able to:

- Understand current trends in social entrepreneurship, innovation theory and practice
- Apply paradigms such as complexity, action learning, and systems thinking in order to better understand societal and environmental contexts, challenge current systemic problems, and develop creative, practical approaches to those problems
- Identify the social domain in which you would like to explore innovative approaches as you move forward in your career and in your life

- Identify and develop your personal strengths and challenges in learning to act as a social innovator

## **THE PROGRAMME STRUCTURE & SYLLABUS**

The programme consists of the following interlinked components:

1. Introduction and orientation by SHAWCO;
2. Social Innovation course;
3. Business and social innovation organisations visits; Excursions/tourism experiences; and
4. Working on a group task to develop a product reflecting learning and experiences on the programme.

### **WEEK 1**

Jan- Tuesday: Arrival in Cape Town

Jan-Wednesday, Day 1: Introduction and Orientation

09h00 – 10h00 Introductory Session and Safety Talk 10h00 – 11h00 Collect Student Cards

11h00 – 12h00 Banking 12h00 – 13h00 Lunch

14h00 –19h00 Excursion: Langa Township Visit and Dinner at Mzantsi Restaurant (Ubizo Tours)

Jan-Thursday, Day 2: The Context Lens: Framing the Social Innovation Landscape

09h30-11h30 Lecture 1 12h00-13h00 Lunch

14h00-17h00 Excursion (Macassar Pottery )

Jan-Friday, Day 3: The Systems Lens: Complexity Thinking for Social Change

09h30-11h30 Lecture 2 12h00-13h00 Lunch

14h00-16h00 Cafe Conversations with Social Entrepreneurs

### **WEEKEND**

Jan-Saturday, Day 4: Robben Island and the V&A Waterfront

Jan-Sunday, Day 5: Table Mountain/ Cape Point and drinks and networking in St James on the way back to Cape Town

### **WEEK 2**

Jan-Monday, Day 6: The Practice Lens: Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the Contemporary SA Context

09h30-11h30 Lecture 3 12h00-13h00 Lunch

14h00-17h00 Excursion: District Six Museum & Area Tour

Jan-Tuesday, Day 7: The Catalytic Lens: Agency, Leverage, and Institutional Work

09h30-11h30 Lecture 4 12h00-13h00 Lunch

14h00-17h00 Excursion (Cape Innovation & Technology Initiative - TBC)

Jan-Wednesday, Day 8: The Practice Lens: SynNovation Toolkit for ideas

09h30-12h30 Lecture 5 and SynNovation Facilitated workshop

12h30-13h30 Lunch

13h30-15h30 SynNovation Facilitated workshop continued

Jan-Thursday, Day 9: The Reflective Lens: Understanding Yourself as a Social Entrepreneur

09h30-11h30 Lecture 6 12h00-13h00 Lunch

14h00-15h30 Excursion: Shawco-Centre Kensington

15h30-16h30 Return to accommodation to change clothing 17h30-19h00 Mount Nelson High Tea

Jan-Friday, Day 10: Presentations of Social Innovation Plans

09h30-11h30 Participants present their respective Social Innovation Plans

12h30-13h30 Programme Review

13h30-18h00 Excursion: Winelands, Solms-Delta, Spice Route

## WEEKEND

Jan-Saturday, Day 11: Aquila Game Drive

16 Jan-Saturday, Day 12: Table Mountain Hike/Cable Car and Farewell Dinner

16 Jan-Monday, Day 13: Depart Cape Town

## ASSESSMENTS

Assessment will be based on four factors:

Assessment Component	Group or Individ. (G or I)	Points
Social Media Blog Posts/ Reflections	I	30
Class Participation	I	20
Peer review	I	10
Presentation of Social Innovation Plan	G	40

## 1. Group Task: Social Innovation Plan (40%):

Using a flexible process we will form teams of students interested in the same social innovation domain, issue, approach, industry or sector. Over the course of the programme, teams will develop an innovation plan and lay the groundwork for implementing that plan. Note that we are open to a variety of platforms for your social innovation including:

Developing a social enterprise (market-based business with a primary social/environmental purpose)

Developing a social sector organization, initiative, or movement (but must be systemically innovative and financially sustainable)

Working to enhance the social innovation capacity of an existing organization, initiative, or movement (through organizational development, social marketing, networking, advocacy, project management, etc. – again, must be systemically innovative and financially sustainable)

### We will evaluate innovation plans using the following criteria:

**Depth of engagement with course material.** How thoughtfully and fully do you synthesize and personalize the frameworks we have explored in class? The best plans will go beyond just the broad ideas in the course and explore specific details of concepts and examples that you find meaningful.

**Practicality.** Is your plan plausible? Does it adequately take into account existing contexts and forces? Do you have a feasible approach to generating resources?

**Action.** To what degree have you seeded your plan? How proactive have you been? (Note: this is not an evaluation of how far along you are in implementing your plan. Some of the best plans may operate on very long time scales. Some of them may be quite emergent in terms of how they will really to come to life in the world. However, for even the most emergent, long-term plans there are many steps you can take right now to seed the plan – conversations you can have, relationships you can build, pilot and prototype work you can experiment with, etc. The degree to which you do this will be a critical part of your evaluation. Even the most skillfully designed plans will not receive high marks if they do not involve sufficient action during the period of the immersion.)

**Integration.** How well do different aspects of your thinking connect to each other? For example, how appropriately does your action plan build off of your action lens?

**Creativity.** To what degree does your plan represent a new way of thinking and acting?

**Clarity.** Is your plan well-structured and coherently expressed? Is it compelling to read?

## 2. Individual Social Media Blog Posts/Reflections (30%):

Upon completion of the initial, classroom-based portion of the course, you will turn in a learning commitment that explores the following questions:

What aspects of the course material and discussion have you found most meaningful?

How do you plan to integrate your work across the programme with your social innovation goals?

The remainder of the individual component of the course will consist of a regular reflections on the following guiding questions.

As a potential agent of social change, what are you discovering about your personal passions, curiosities, strengths, and challenges? What kinds of organizational and social spaces do you think you will be most effective in? What kinds of relationships do you need to foster in order to thrive as a social innovator?

What are your short-term and long-term goals for learning and growth?

Learning commitments will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Ability to synthesize course material and discussions.

Depth and specificity of personal reflection.

Depth and specificity of plans for integrating content across the programme so that they support your social innovation goals.

Clarity of expression.

### **3. Class Participation (20%)**

You are expected to familiarize yourself with the readings before class and to be an engaged participant in class dialogues. You are also expected to attend all team tutorials/reflective sessions on a weekly basis (or as determined by your supervisor) during the tutorials/reflective sessions. You are also expected to relate to and collaborate with your colleagues (lecturers, students, placement organisations and external stakeholders) appreciatively, kindly, energetically, and accountably.

### **4. Peer Review (10%)**

You are expected to observe your peer participation in your social innovation plan task groups and will be required to offer written feedback on peers. You can expect the same for you from members of your group.

## ***PRE-READING REQUIREMENTS***

Details of the content of each session as well as required reading. You are encouraged to read the recommended material *before* the session.

### **Lecture 1: The Context Lens: Framing the Social Innovation Landscape**

In the first session, we will take a broad overview of the very diverse social innovation landscape. What is social innovation? Who “does” it? What organizational forms does it take? And how are those forms evolving? We will look at some basic theoretical frameworks for understanding social innovation. We will consider the relationships between public, private, and plural initiatives

– from government agencies to social enterprises to social movements. And we will look at some of the most provocative and inspiring examples of current social innovation efforts in South Africa and around the world.

Mulgan, G. 2006. The Process of Social Innovation.

*Innovations*, (Spring): 145-162.

Phills, J.A., Deiglmeir, K. & Miller, D.T. 2008. Rediscovering Social Innovation. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, (Fall): 34-43

Elkington, J. & Hartigan, P. 2008. *The Power of Unreasonable People: How Social Entrepreneurs Create Markets That Change the World*. Boston: Harvard Business Press (OPTIONAL)

### **Lecture 2: The Systems Lens: Complexity Thinking for Social Change**

We can't understand how to intervene in social-ecological systems without first understanding the nonlinear dynamics that govern those systems. We will briefly explore systems paradigms rooted in complexity science and consider the implications of those paradigms for the social entrepreneur/innovator. People are theorists of change, whether consciously or not. We develop our own ideas, predictions and assumptions to explain why certain events and consequences should occur and the best ways to achieve results. These assumptions can be explored within the system of relationships and power to understand how our actions might lead to impact.

Westley F, Zimmerman B, Patton M. *Getting to Maybe: How the World Is Changed*. New York: Random House, 2006. [Excerpt pp. 3-26]

Westley, F., Carpenter, S. R., Brack, W. A., Holling, C. S., & Gunderson, L. H.. (2002). Why Systems of People and Nature Are Not Just Social Ecological Systems in *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems*. L. Gunderson & C.S. Holling. Washington: Island Press. (OPTIONAL)

McMaster, M. 1996. *The Intelligence Advantage, Organizing for Complexity*, [Excerpts]. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann. (OPTIONAL)

Weiss, C. H. 1995. Nothing as practical as good theory: Exploring theory-based evaluation for comprehensive community initiatives for children and families. In J. P. Connell, A. C. Kubisch, L. B. Schorr, & C. H. Weiss (Eds.),

*New Approaches to Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts (Vol. 1)*, Washington, DC: Aspen Institute. [Excerpt pp. 65-92]

McKnight N. 1996. *The Careless Society*, [Excerpts pp. 3-52; 161-172]. Basic Books

### **Lecture 3: The Practice Lens: Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the Contemporary SA Context**

In these sessions we have scheduled the visits for the duration of the course to explore social innovation in South Africa in a grounded, practical way in various sectors (e.g., energy, health care, education, political engagement, environmental sustainability, information technology, etc)

### **Lecture 4: The Catalytic Lens: Agency, Leverage, and Institutional Work**

In this session we will consider how individuals and groups, whatever their positions or levels of formal power, can create meaningful change within complex social-ecological systems. What are the leverage points for intentional change and how can we access and work with those leverage points? What practices lead to the disruption of unhealthy institutional patterns and to the creation and maintenance, of new, healthier patterns? What are the most appropriate and effective principles for working across institutional and cultural boundaries?

Westley F, Zimmerman B, Patton M. 2006. *Getting to Maybe: How the World Is Changed*. New York: Random House [Excerpt pp. 93-125]

Scearce, D. 2011. *Connected Citizens: The Power, Peril and Potential of Networks*. Monitor Institute [Excerpt pp 5- 25]

Moore, M., and F. Westley. 2011. Surmountable chasms: networks and social innovation for resilient systems.

Emmerson, J. 2003. The Blended Value Map

### **Lecture 5: The Practice Lens: SynNovation Toolkit for Ideas**

We give an overview of the SynNovation process, used to facilitate the workshop and offer short innovation skills and behaviours that enable social innovation

Papers - Sowing Seeds of Innovation at Universities; Synectics – Changing Lives; 3R's Respect Recognition and Relatedness

**Lecture 6** : The Reflective Lens: Understanding Yourself as a Social Entrepreneur

In this session we ask you to consider your own personal relationship to social innovation and to the themes we have explored in previous sessions. What are your strengths and challenges as a potential social change agent? What are your curiosities, passions, and anxieties? What kinds of organizational and institutional spaces do you picture yourself operating in? What are the specific opportunities or issues that you find most compelling

## Appendix Five: Interview Guide

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Interview Guide</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">– Lungisa Mzizana’s Research for Masters</p>	
<p><b>Research Question:</b> What are the <b>main factors</b> that <b>enhance students’ learning</b> in the <b>SHAWCO Service-Learning Program</b> at UCT for <b>inbound students</b>?</p>	
<p><b>Introduction</b></p>	
<p>In these questions I tried to build the rapport with the interviewee by trying to get <b>background information</b> on the interviewee and <b>understanding the various contexts that have influenced their learning over the period of time</b>. The focus should be on earlier schooling and also different ways that have shaped the learning of the interviewee.</p>	
<p><b>Just as an introduction to the interview</b> – could you tell me about your background where you from (In the US, Aus or HK), what schooling have you done and how your earlier upbringing in your community and family has shaped you?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ With this question I am hoping to get an understanding of the interviewee in a more detail and also trying to get an understanding of his early childhood and the sort of area they come from.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It will also allow me to pick up on more information through follow-up interviews.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In 2017/18 you were part of the study-abroad program to South Africa, Cape Town through your University in partnership with SHAWCO at the University of Cape Town – Tell me about this program (How did you get to know about it, and what motivated you being part of it and how has it shaped you or contributed in your learning journey?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Introduction into the program, and to the motivations for being part of the program.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tell me more about the reasons for being part of the program was it part of your degree or you</li> </ul>	

just wanted something more or learn in different contexts?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program normally has different elements (excursions, lectures, working in organizations), would you mind telling me more about these and how they contributed to your learning?</li> </ul>	
<p>Move into detail with each Interviewee – Excursions – Lectures – Site Visit – Placement organizations (<b><i>You need to get information about each one that they attended, and worked in to be able to probe about the experience they might have had in that organization, community or with the group of people they worked in</i></b>)</p>	
<b>Questions about the Lectures</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How did you find the lectures that you attended in the program and did they contribute into your learning journey while in South Africa?</li> </ul>	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you have anything in particular was different about the teaching style here in South Africa that your learnt?</li> </ul>	-
<b>Placement Organization questions (Know the projects the interviewee worked and the final products, know more about the kind of organization to be able to probe more)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which organization/community did you work in? What were the challenges that you encountered in this organization?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What did you learn out of your experience in this organization?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What helped your learning in this organization?</li> </ul>	
<b>Excursion Questions (Know the excursions that the interviewee attended and read up about them before the interview)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the excursions you attended in the program, which one did you learn from?</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about this excursion and the value it added in your learning journey?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have any excursions that you organized for yourself that were really valuable to you?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Site visits – (Check if the interviewee had any site visits and get the background of these sites)</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (The question can be direct) Do you have particular sites you visited which were linked to your program and what did you learn out of these sites?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>General reflections comparing and contrasting different contexts</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having been to South Africa through this program, what is it that you learnt about the country? Are there particular differences between your country and South Africa?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you learn about South Africa during this program?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has the program shaped as a student and a global citizen?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there areas of your own knowledge development that your exposure into South Africa gave you?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a global citizen and also in the University, how has the program shaped your thinking about world challenges?</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So much inequalities and unemployment in South Africa, through the exposure you had how what is your thinking around development in developing countries now?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	
<p>Thank you for agreeing to this interview – <i>As the last point and wrapping up anything you want to share about the structure of the program and how this structure enable learning for students who participate in the</i></p>	

<p><b>program?</b> The value of the informal, formal, and non-formal settings for learning in the program</p>	
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## Appendix Six: Coded Transcript

<p><b>Micho Transcript</b></p>	<p><b>Transcript Notes</b></p>
<p><b>Lungisa:</b> Thank you for making time, I know you are busy – that you for contributing to my studies, it will be a series of questions: Note that all is confidential in the interview.</p>	
<p><b>Lungisa:</b> Tell me about your background (Where you from, you schooling and how you got involved in the program)</p>	<p><b>Background Question</b></p>
<p><b>Micho:</b> I grew up in Washington DC, DC Maryland area but my family were Africans, my mom is Ethiopian and my Dad is Euretian, growing up I was always in an African household, the culture, the family, food, and the language we speak, so I was always that first generation African-American experience where you are an African but you are also an American , I went to University of Maryland and when I studied in University of Maryland I started studying business I studied finance but I always knew that the longer term vision for was like was doing work in the space of Arts and primarily now in Music and Entertainment with the focus on Diaspora, so I am really trying to tie things back home, whether it’s like the Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa etc, having like a more of a global presence and focus in the work that I am doing, and so I met Jeanette when I was at UMD we became really close, she really saw my interests and she said like you have to come to this program that I am doing with Cape Town and a lot of my friends had done it before so I started talking to the 2016 and 2015, they started telling me about SHAWCO, Melanie and I decided I heard to do it,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- African-American</li> <li>- Ethiopian and Euretian descendent</li> <li>- Grew up in African culture</li> <li>- Business student</li> <li>- Interested in Arts and Music connecting diaspora</li> <li>- His background influenced interest</li> </ul>

<p>after I heard that from them and Jeanette with Dean Mullins I made sure that I apply and went to all the events we had and information sessions about the program and then, that's how I got to be part of the program through that recruitment, when I went the first year in 2017 I fell in love and I heard to come again in 2018.</p>	
<p><b>Lungisa:</b> You talk about being a global citizen, also being a global student – how do you think that this program contributed in that vision?</p>	<p>Global Citizen</p>
<p><b>Micho:</b> I think really what contributed, at least for me I had that duality growing up where I knew that growing up where I knew that my experience here whether it is in DC or LA it is different and I could draw parallels sometimes with Ethiopia on music, dancing, I saw the connections what I found was that a lot of people who grew up in the US who do not have that exposure how certain family live like these things are not that clear it seems like completely different world when you look at Cape Town vs Maryland but when I get to the program with SHAWCO in Cape Town, you start drawing parallels to the experiences and histories, studying and learning about Cape Town and Apartheid from people who lived there you start to see the experiences and the culture here they are a lot of like similarities, a lot of people always look at in the internet but where you are there it feels like it their people; after the experience that I had with Cape Town it thought me really how to research and study to tell stories that are able to like draw connections with a lot of people that can relate to it because the experiences of black people in South Africa is unique to other countries and United States but people here who grew up in the states , you ask maybe like your ancestors, slavery you can see that maybe they will say there wasn't slavery here, but you can go and study and learn about South Africa and draw like connect make connections to the history of like struggle and oppression ,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Duality being African-American</li> <li>- Drawing Parallels, on history and stories</li> <li>- Learning in context</li> <li>- Uniqueness of South Africa</li> <li>- Learning about oppression</li> <li>- Finding myself through stories</li> </ul>

<p>and figure out where is everyone connected. So I think that's how I got it like , just how to tell these stories and connect with people who might be coming from different backgrounds but we all kind of look alike , the concept of education letting people learn and find themselves in these different stories.</p>	
<p><b>Lungisa:</b> In the first time when you can did you visit the museums, and history of Cape Town.</p>	
<p><b>Micho:</b> That was incredible, because for a lot of us and especially coming from here you know, in the school system in the US the history you get about Apartheid is very minimal with only Mandela without much context, when we were in Cape Town it put everything like into proper context, you have been there physically and being in the museum it gives you the full history of Apartheid and like the systematic structure of it and the locations and zoning, it was incredible because it is the type of knowledge that no one ever teaches you , you see it, you learn it and I think that was very important. It puts everything into context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning in context</li> <li>- Contextualising History</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lungisa:</b> The program gives you a sort of formal and informal learning, how did you find that and its value in your learning?</p>	
<p><b>Micho:</b> I loved it because now I am learning more about everything and global learning; I think experience is everything in learning. We had traditional schooling in the US where you are in a classroom and you reading textbook, learning from PowerPoint presentation is not the same with like having these informal learning sessions where you physically somewhere and you are experiences, like we visited Macassar a pottery place, we went to Langa and Khayelitsha, and all these experience allow us to feel and learn at the same time and I think like the combination of informal and formal allow people to embrace the culture and forces you to get out of your comfort zone you know like in class we are teaching you about this concept (formal classes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning through experience</li> <li>- Informal and formal</li> <li>- Learning in contexts</li> </ul>

<p>and now you learning it in the place where it happens with the people (informal visits into townships), the combination is best of the experience because it brings all these things into life and allows people to for an hour or two to be in the world that they are learning about which is the most important thing.</p>	
<p><b>Lungisa:</b> Did you also work with an organisation through a project? How did that help you to understand our context?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organisational experiences</li> </ul>
<p><b>Micho:</b> It was good because everyone comes with their perspective on how business should be run based on what they learnt in the US and a lot of times, even like when we went to the townships and saw some micro economy and how the township economy works independently from other parts of Cape Town, to have an understanding of that, forces us to unlearn some of the things we learn here on how to run a business, or a non-profit it does not apply because it does not fit the landscape and the economy the structure of the society, so I think having us learn about the businesses we learnt about and think about the way they are structured was very different and valuable to our learning, we had to realise that some of the things we learnt in the textbook in Maryland to not apply, and we had to think creatively about the context with a local perspective. Challenges our own knowledge and what we believed to be true.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Questioning our knowledge on business</li> <li>- Structure of the economy</li> <li>- Differences in business</li> <li>- Questioning textbook knowledge</li> </ul>
<p>Lungisa: Have you had a moment to reflect on the experience to think about incidents you encountered?</p>	
<p><b>Micho:</b> I always think about the relationships we had with people in Cape town during our stay there, these different experiences it's easier, a lot of people here they say things or think about global issues in a very rudimentary western way where it is like black and white, I have always been more of a thinker but after experiencing Cape Town I know think of anything from different angles, and I try to have a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relationships with locals</li> <li>- Questioning stereotypes</li> <li>- Being more conscious from experience of Cape Town</li> <li>- Deepening consciousness through experiences</li> </ul>

<p>conversation about it. The time in Cape Town made me to be more conscious about everything.</p>	
<p>Lungisa: The context of Cape Town gives you two cities in one, with the difference between the City Centre and Khayelitsha where inequalities are vast. What did you think about that?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inequalities</li> </ul>
<p>Micho: I think like , that gave me an opportunity to look at the similarities with the US where you have LA, Hollywood, and Central LA, this gave me some parallels in terms of where white and black people live. At the same time you see that the structure of inequalities in South Africa is very different to the US, in the US you can grow up in a poor area but you still have access to opportunities. In Cape Town those in Khayelitsha and Langa within townships have no access to opportunities and are in poor infrastructure, education and everything that is more accessible in the US.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning through similarities</li> <li>- And differences in access to opportunities</li> </ul>
<p>Lungisa: Was you group diverse? And did you find value in the diversity for sharing of knowledge?</p>	
<p>Micho: Our group was very diverse; I think Jeanette and Dean Mullins did a good job creating a group that's not necessary the same. We were always continuing the conversations, when we go out we would continue to share ideas, with a diverse group of people we are always challenging perspectives and opening up.</p>	
<p>Lungisa: Do you have any other particular event that stands out?</p>	
<p>Micho: I think what was really good was having the local students with us, having them integrated in the learning within the class, the informal conversations we had with them outside the classroom were very valuable. That was incredible, because we were all students and learning from each other and it shaped our experience in the program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peer learning</li> <li>- Learning through conversations with locals</li> </ul>
<p>Lungisa: Any comment of the teaching style?</p>	

**Micho:** Yes it was different, a lot of kids in the US are used to structured learning where you go read and textbook and you come back to this class write an essay, and the learning is not as intimate, and there was more learning in the experiences and a lot of us missed that component of learning since it was absent in the US.

- Learning through experiences