

**INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION PLACEMENTS:
EXPERIENCES OF CANADIAN COLLEGE STUDENTS**

By

E. Anne Hardacre

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Program in the Faculty of Education
in conformity with the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Education

Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada

January, 2012

Copyright © E. Anne Hardacre, 2012

Abstract

A number of international research studies have explored the benefits and challenges for post-secondary students who have experienced an international co-operative education assignment (e.g., Bentley & Broons, 1998; Coll & Chapman, 2000; Coll, Pinyonattagarn & Pramoolsook, 2003; Ward & Laslett, 2004; Wong & Coll, 2001). A small number of studies in this field have suggested that a well organized program includes pre-departure planning, focused orientation programs, and opportunities for reflection (Bentley & Broons, 1998; Ward & Laslett, 2004). Mentoring relationships have also been shown to support the success of workplace opportunities (Collins, 1993; Thuynsma, 1997; Van Gyn & Ricks, 1998). However, the results of the research that highlight the development of various traits during the international experience do not distinguish between pre-placement and post-placement student characteristics that contributed to the students' success in the international experiences. Therefore more research is required.

The purpose of this study was to understand and report on specific factors that contribute to successful international co-operative education experiences from the perspective of college students and the program co-ordinator. The students and co-ordinator were all associated with a work integrated learning opportunity in an international business college program that requires students to complete an international co-operative experience. Three fundamental questions I set out to answer were: (a) What role does the pre-placement program play in students' success in the international co-operative experience? (b) What characteristics of students and workplace supervisors as perceived by the students contribute to successful international co-operative education

experiences? (c) What role, if any, does mentoring by a workplace supervisor play in students' successful international co-operative education experience?

The study findings emphasized the importance of understanding the characteristics that support a successful experience and discuss the implementation of goals for program design and delivery. The findings within the first theme focused on *What Helped Students Succeed in the International Placement*, the second theme highlighted *What Impeded Students' Success in the International Placement* and the final theme outlined *Goals Achieved*. Most of the categories within the themes were anticipated in the research questions but what was surprising was there was little data on mentoring.

Acknowledgements

Most importantly I want to thank my supervisor, Dr. Nancy Hutchinson, for her great feedback, insights and patience during this process. She dedicated many hours to supporting me and through her feedback helped me to understand the importance of good research practice for all areas of society. I would also like to thank my committee members who put forth valuable knowledge and thoughtful questions and most specifically to Dr. Ben Kutsyuruba who provided such important input during all stages of the development and writing of this document. I appreciated the commitment to my work and was particularly privileged to work with both Nancy and Ben.

To my family for their support and specifically to my mother who has always believed in me throughout the various paths of my life. Her belief in me has been a fortifying strength during all times and certainly during my time at Queen's University.

To my dear friends whose loving encouragement, listening powers, support and motivational tactics was a key factor for me moving forward! I cannot imagine my time during Queen's without them! In Toronto there are many of you! In Kingston, thank you to Libby, Carolyn, Wendy and Julia. You are great women who deserve the best that life has to offer.

I also want to extend thanks to course professors and staff at the Faculty of Education who were generous with their time and expertise. I enjoyed the courses I took a great deal and learned so much about education and its impact on society. And finally to others I have met in Kingston. I certainly have learned a lot from you and will never be the same again.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
Rationale	3
Purpose.....	4
Organization of Thesis	5
Chapter 2 Literature Review	6
Definition of Terms.....	6
Pre-placement Planning	10
Students Characteristics Contributing to ICE Placements.....	14
Workplace Supervisor Characteristics Contributing to ICE Placements.....	18
Mentoring.....	26
Introduction to Mentoring	26
Mentoring in the Literature on Workplace Learning	27
Mentoring to Fulfill Two Needs	29
Mentoring: A Series of Developmental Phases	34
Comparing Models of Mentoring	36
Summary of Literature Review.....	37
Chapter 3 Method.....	39
Rationale for Qualitative Methods.....	39
Participant Selection	41
Data Collection	44
Document Analysis.....	44
Interviews	45
Data Analysis.....	47

Chapter 4 Results	49
Program Description.....	50
Participants.....	54
Themes Related to the Purpose and Research Questions.....	55
What Helped Students Succeed in the International Placement.....	56
Importance of pre-placement planning.....	57
Importance of key student characteristics for success.....	60
On-site supervision.....	62
Summary.....	63
What Impeded Students' Success in the International Placement.....	64
Elements of pre-placement programming.....	64
On-site supervision.....	65
Isolation.....	66
Summary.....	67
Goals Achieved.....	68
Student Goals.....	68
Goals of the College.....	70
Summary.....	71
Summary of Results.....	72
Chapter 5 Discussion	73
The Role of the Pre-placement Program.....	74
Characteristics of Students and Workplace Supervisors that Contribute to Successful Placement.....	81
The Contribution of Mentoring to Students' Success.....	87
Limitations of Research Study.....	91
Implications for Further Research.....	92
Implications for Practice.....	94
Summary.....	97
References	99

Appendices	105
Appendix A	Ethics Clearance Letter
Appendix B	Letters of Information
Appendix C	Consent Forms
Appendix D	Interview Questions for Coordinator
Appendix E	Interview Questions for Student Participants

Chapter 1

Introduction

This study developed from my desire as an educational researcher and educator to critically analyze and enhance my understanding of international co-operative education placements. My reflections and observations, based on traveling internationally and on observing community college students experiencing international placements, as well as my reading of the literature on international co-operative education, laid the foundation for this study. I chose this topic to advance researchers' and practitioners' understanding about what is required to ensure successful international placements for community college students, especially students enrolled in international development programs. The way these international learning experiences are designed and implemented grows in importance as they become a focal point of these programs and as more resources are invested in international education in post-secondary institutions.

The increasing globalization of the economy (Ashton & Green, 1996) is spurring employers to recruit candidates with international experience (Marini & Tillman, 1999). As a consequence, post-secondary students must be better prepared to work in international environments. International co-operative education (ICE) placements provide an opportunity for post-secondary students to recognize and to begin to develop the technical and personal skills that employers seek in a globalized economy. Co-operative education involves post-secondary students engaging in discipline-related

employment or practicum placements, which may be paid or unpaid, as part of their program of study for which they receive credits toward a diploma or degree. Marini and Tillman (1999) argued that co-operative education students who had work experience overseas were better prepared to work abroad after graduation.

Researchers have reported that, because many post-secondary students recognize the importance of international experience, there is a student-driven increase in demand for international placements which are often called international co-operative education (ICE) (Coll & Chapman, 2000; Ward, Frost & Yonge, 2004; Wong & Coll, 2001).

Although there are diverse challenges associated with managing this type of student experience, many post-secondary institutions acknowledge the benefits for students who undertake an ICE placement and offer this kind of opportunity (Coll & Chapman, 2000; Ward, Frost & Yonge, 2004; Wong & Coll, 2001). Therefore the identification of factors that contribute to students' experiencing successful placements and to programs overcoming these challenges will support program improvement in the school-based and work-based components of ICE programs. By specifically studying a program in a Canadian community college, recommendations can be made that may help program developers and administrators to enhance ICE programs in Canada.

By international co-operative education (ICE), I mean co-operative education that is international in orientation as a work integrated experience that takes place outside of the country in which the students' school is located. In Ontario, community colleges are the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs) which were established by

provincial legislation in 1967 in response to the need for a skilled workforce. The original, and continuing, mandate of CAATs was to provide accessible, quality career education and training to enhance the social and economic development of Ontario and to meet local, regional, and global marketplace demand (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1967). These institutions offer diploma, post-diploma, and applied degree programs.

In this study, participants refers to students who volunteered to participate in the study, were interviewed prior to their international experience, and subsequently completed their co-operative education experience successfully and participated in another interview. Four of the five students who volunteered and participated in the first interview successfully completed their co-operative education experience. These four completed the second interview and their data were analyzed and reported. The program co-ordinator was also interviewed. The fifth participant did not complete the co-operative education experience in the timeframe of the study; therefore the pre-internship data were not used.

Rationale

The rationale for this research focuses on the importance of providing effective international co-operative education programs in order to prepare students with the experiences and competencies required to work in a global economy. Well-structured programs that understand what students require to be successful may provide a better student experience. Therefore, understanding the strengths of such programs, as well as the areas that could be improved, is critical for post-secondary educators. Such programs

are usually described in materials available on the college website and in paper form. While program coordinators hold an administrative view of ICE programs, it is students who experience ICE first-hand.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to understand and describe specific factors that contributed to a successful international co-operative education experience of college students from the perspective of college students who had been successful in ICE and of the program co-ordinator of an ICE program. The students and the coordinator were associated with one work integrated learning opportunity in an international business program, in a community college, that required all students to complete an ICE experience. Document analysis was also conducted on a sample of the documents describing the program. Thus this research contributes a multiple-perspective study of one community college program with a required ICE component. Three fundamental research questions I set out to answer were: (a) What role does the pre-placement program play in students' success in the ICE experience? (b) What characteristics of students and workplace supervisors contribute to ICE experiences as perceived by the students? (c) What role, if any, does mentoring by workplace supervisor's play in students' successful ICE experiences? This qualitative study used purposeful and convenience sampling to select participants and semi-structured interviews as the primary data gathering method supplemented by document analysis.

Organization of Thesis

This chapter has provided the rationale and purpose for this research and the next chapter continues with a definition of terms and literature review that focuses on the three research questions. Specifically, the literature review makes the argument for this type of work experience as well as providing a discussion of program characteristics while exploring the characteristics of students and workplace supervisors. A review of the research on mentoring is also presented. The third chapter describes the research methodology that was used. Finally, chapter 4 reports on the key findings and chapter 5 discusses the implications of this study for how international co-operative education programs are developed and implemented and discusses the implications for further research in this important aspect of post-secondary education.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

One of the purposes of post-secondary education is to prepare youth for the world of work. Increasingly, college students expect their post-secondary programs to help them prepare to work in international contexts following graduation, and post-secondary programs in many countries are responding to this expectation by providing opportunities for international co-operative education (ICE) experiences (Coll & Chapman, 2000). This chapter reviews research and position papers from different parts of the world that allow the reader to understand the literature relevant to the three research questions in this thesis. The three research questions focus on planning for ICE experiences during the pre-placement phase of the program, on characteristics of students and workplace supervisors that contribute to successful ICE placements, and on the role of mentoring in learning in workplaces, including ICE workplaces.

Definition of Terms

According to Boud, Solomon, and Symes (2001), work integrated learning and work-based learning are terms that describe post-secondary programs in which organizations and schools create new learning opportunities in workplaces for students to apply their school-based knowledge. The programs link theory and practice, and are supported by a foundation of professional knowledge and reflective thought. This type of workplace learning is intended to extend the knowledge and skills of the individual and to make a difference to the organization (Boud et al., 2001). In this type of learning,

students undertake a variety of activities and commonly these projects are undertaken in the workplace. Examples of work integrated learning include work-based projects, unpaid work placements, apprenticeships, and co-operative education programs. Co-operative education involves post-secondary students undertaking full-time paid or unpaid discipline-related employment as a structured part of their program of study. Co-operative education has been defined as integration of classroom study with specific planned periods of supervised learning in a work environment (Coll & Chapman, 2000). Weisz, Atchison, Eakins, Gowland, Reeders, Rizzetti and Smith (2001) argued that co-operative education programs provide learning opportunities for students which enable them to integrate their work experiences and their academic experiences.

ICE is a co-operative education experience that is international in orientation so, consequently, takes place outside of the country in which the students' school is located. International co-operative education programs include a number of components. They are usually organized to provide much of the academic experience in the college within the students' home country. Because many college students are unfamiliar both with full-time participation in work environments and with living in a foreign country, the pre-placement components are intended to prepare them for these experiences. Following academic learning experiences, usually in structured courses, students often work with a program counsellor or administrator to select appropriate international settings for their workplace experiences. Following the workplace experience, students may, but do not necessarily, return to further academic learning experiences in the college.

A number of aspects of an ICE program may contribute to students' success. These include the preparation the students receive during the pre-placement program, mentoring they receive during the placement, and characteristics of the student and the workplace supervisor. Pre-placement programming has been defined as instruction, feedback, and documentation required for the successful start-up of placement activities (Wong & Coll, 2001). Examples include interviewing skills, résumé writing, networking techniques, and cross-cultural training. This part of the program usually also involves matching students to placement opportunities. Many students find their own placements using job search techniques learned in pre-placement activities. Other students are matched with employers who are seeking specific skills that individual students have developed. This matching process is usually done through the centralized co-operative education office and finalized by the program co-ordinator.

Although some existing research studies—including Coll and Chapman (2000), Beard, Coll and Harris (2001), and Bentley and Broons (1998)—have sought to discover student characteristics that contributed to successful international experiences, the results have tended to highlight the development of skills during the experience and to report what students liked and disliked about the programs. Often existing research has not distinguished between pre-placement and post-placement student characteristics including language ability, interpersonal skills, and experience in a foreign country. The present study is designed to extend previous research by attempting to distinguish

between pre-placement and post-placement student characteristics associated with successful student experiences in international placements.

A mentoring relationship could contribute to the success of the ICE. Mentoring is defined as a close, supportive, interpersonal relationship between two individuals who are at different stages in their professional development (Collins, 1993). Van Gyn and Ricks (1997) argued that providing opportunities to meet a variety of people at the onset of a co-operative experience and providing social opportunities that allow for discussion in an informal environment support conditions under which mentorship can occur spontaneously. Mentoring is a nurturing process which contributes to growth and development but requires specific action from both parties. Mentors are experienced individuals who take on a variety of roles including guide, coach, role model, and confidante while providing insightful feedback to students. The students listen, observe, and provide feedback on their learning related to the mentoring that is taking place. Billett (2003) described a range of approaches to mentoring. Mentoring can take the form of career guidance, skill transfer, and role evolution where insightful feedback is provided. Students and supervisors must have effective interpersonal skills and other related social skills in order to achieve a mentoring relationship that supports successful student outcomes. Both parties must be willing to engage in this activity (Billett, 2003).

This review is organized in four sections. The sections review what is known in the literature about the pre-placement planning process, followed by a review of literature

on student characteristics contributing to ICE placements, characteristics of workplace supervisors, and a review of workplace mentoring, in general, and during ICE.

Pre-placement Planning

Pre-placement planning refers to the in-class and out of class work students do to prepare for the international placement. It is reasonable to expect that this part of the program, designed to enhance students' international experiences, would influence their ICE and would arise in their interviews about these experiences. Munby, Chin, Hutchinson, and Young (1999) described how the authentic character of workplace learning is most readily apparent to students when the goals and standards for their workplace experience have been discussed beforehand and, consequently, made explicit to them. Students need opportunities for self-evaluation as well as for reflection (Munby et al., 1999). This paper suggests that having clear goals and standards, while reflecting on work assignments that use technical skills and other abilities learned in school, could be a key contributor to quality learning in any co-operative education workplace experience, including ICE.

Pre-placement processes have been the focus of a small number of studies on ICE. Wong and Coll (2001) conducted a qualitative research study that described one New Zealand student's reflections after completing a work placement at a British-based food-industry organization as part of an international work placement. These reflections were presented in the form of a narrative in which the student, who was the first author, described the context of the work placement and the nature of the student and employer

expectations. Clarifying program and student expectations was a focus of the pre-placement experiences in the program. Wong and Coll (2001) argued that setting clear placement objectives during the pre-placement phase of the program supported the successful placement which resulted in enhanced personal skills. In this reflection, Wong and Coll (2001) described Wong's student experience on a UK 12-month placement as part of a long-standing exchange arrangement between the University of Waikato in New Zealand and the University of Surrey in England. Because this was the first time Wong had lived overseas, she experienced significant challenges both professionally and personally. To maximize her growth on this overseas assignment, Wong and Coll (2001) reported that Wong set a series of placement objectives that comprised a mixture of student and employer expectations that were negotiated at the beginning of the placement and were re-examined throughout the placement. These objectives included both technical tasks and personal objectives that Wong and Coll (2001) believed would enhance Wong's personal growth. This included enjoying a different culture and lifestyle while developing life skills that she was unfamiliar with before going on the placement. These data were collected after Wong had completed the ICE.

The main contribution of Wong and Coll's (2001) study was to demonstrate the importance of setting clear placement objectives during pre-placement to ensure successful ICE. Research from the University of Surrey in the UK highlighted similar perspectives on student experiences in ICE placements and on the development of personal resilience, growth, and increased levels of maturity (Ward, Frost & Yonge,

2004). Placement educators can play a crucial role in helping students understand these issues while post-secondary programs prepare students for the work environment (Maidment, 2003).

Ward, Frost and Yonge's (2004) study reported the candid opinions of two chemistry students after they had experienced 12-month work placements in Germany and Belgium. These students were studying in a college program in England. This study sought to learn about the students' experiences related to the development of problem solving, especially overcoming language barriers and cultural attitudes. This research used a qualitative case study approach by interviewing the two chemistry students. Questions were asked about pre-placement activities, language and cultural problems, and financial issues. After analyzing the students' interview responses, the researchers reported that a well organized program, where thorough planning took place prior to ICE, provided a unique opportunity for students to acquire personal and professional skills in an unfamiliar environment (Ward et al., 2004). In this instance, a well organized program included a focus on pre-departure planning, focused information upon arrival in the foreign country, and an organizational orientation and buddy partnering for social integration purposes. The data suggested that features of the placement administration as well as pre-placement contributed to effective ICE. Again, this study relied exclusively on interviews collected after the end of ICE for the data.

An interview study conducted by Coll and Chapman (2000) contributed additional information about international co-operative education placements and found that

students believed the experience was a great opportunity. Despite logistical issues involving visas and financial barriers, participants reported that they developed various traits. These included interpersonal skills as well as technical skills (Coll & Chapman, 2000). However, there was little attention paid in this study to what role pre-placement preparation played in the development of these traits. Bentley and Broons (1998) reported similar results. This study consisted of intensive interviews that inquired about students' perceptions of their future employability status as a result of participating in an international co-operative education experience. Although the researchers did not provide a link between the foreign experience and employability, students' perceptions of benefits resulting from the overseas placement were reported in the study. This research found that students thought they had developed independent living skills, a greater sense of patience, effective conflict management skills, the ability to deal with problems independently, and the ability to be more broadminded about different people and cultures. All the students had participated in the school's preparation process for the co-operative experience and had experienced placements sourced by the school staff (Bentley & Broons, 1998). The focus of the interviews was not primarily on the pre-placement process although the researchers clearly assumed the pre-placement process had contributed to the students' perceived outcomes.

In summary, the studies reviewed in this section suggest the need for effective pre-placement programs to provide students with clear learning objectives, which include both professional and personal objectives. Although pre-placement planning was not the

main or only focus of any of these studies, the findings suggest that a well organized program appears to include pre-departure planning, clear information on arrival, with organizational orientation and buddy partnering for social integration purposes. The studies also demonstrate that it is frequently assumed the pre-placement process contributes to student outcomes. Webber (2005) found that orientation generally focused on practical issues like first-aid, self-defence, sexual harassment, globalization, ethical standards, and professional boundaries. Ensuring health and safety was the top concern. Learning to engage in focused reflection for learning and for potential remedial action was considered by some to be an important part of this preparatory process (e.g., Munby et al., 1999; Ward et al., 2004). Given the lack of research that describes the pre-placement process and the assumptions about the importance of this process in extant research, this was included as a focus in the interviews conducted in the current study.

Student Characteristics Contributing to ICE Placements

Although many of the existing research studies sought to discover student characteristics that contributed to successful international experiences, the results tend to highlight the development of skills during the experience and to report what students' liked and disliked about the programs. These studies have conducted interviews following ICE. A weakness of the reviewed research is that it does not distinguish between pre-placement and post-placement student characteristics.

Coll and Chapman have done extensive research in this area and in one study (2000) utilized a naturalistic case approach within the qualitative tradition. The purpose

of this research inquiry was to gain an understanding of college students' perceptions of their ICE (Coll & Chapman, 2000). The program was situated in New Zealand at the University of Waikato and is a degree program in the School of Science & Technology that has been in existence for 20 years. The experiences took place in Australia, United Kingdom (UK), Netherlands, and the United States in science and engineering opportunities. The researchers asked two key questions related to the main advantages and difficulties associated with international placements. Data triangulation was achieved by examination of relevant documents, such as literature published by the institutions and student placement reports, in combination with data from interviews with students. The critical findings of this research study revealed that students perceived ICE to have been beneficial in a number of areas. The students reported that the greatest advantages were the development of personal maturity, growth, and resilience. However, the authors did not consider how characteristics like maturity and resilience might have contributed to the students' success in ICE, rather than been a product of the students' experiences in ICE. Another limitation of the study might be that it focused on one group of students in a specific part of the world, although this could be said of most of the studies reviewed and of the current study. All students were directed in a similar fashion throughout their educational career and that might have contributed to their having similar expectations of ICE outcomes. The researchers indicated that further research was required in the Asian context as well as in other parts of the world given the increasing importance of the ICE experience to students preparing to work in a global economy (Coll & Chapman, 2000).

In a study with a student originating in another part of the world, Beard, Coll and Harris (2001) described one British student's experience at a work placement at a New Zealand chemistry laboratory. This research focuses on a program which is an exchange arrangement between the University of Surrey in the UK and the University of Waikato in New Zealand. This was a year placement in the middle of the degree program. The data were collected using a qualitative case study approach using semi-structured interviews after the student had completed the ICE experience. This study reported narratives in which the authors examined the student and employer perceptions of the key factors that they believed led to a successful international placement. This included what were referred to as hard, technical skills and soft, interpersonal skills. The purpose of this research was to establish what contributed to the successful placement and to describe the environment that provided the student with personal and professional growth.

Personal characteristics which included initiative, tenacity, determination, and independence helped the student achieve success in the placement, in his view. He indicated in the study that an international placement was different from staying at home, where the home environment would have been familiar and non-threatening. Entering the unknown was a formidable challenge for the student in the study, but he reported that undertaking this international placement had increased his self-confidence dramatically (Beard, et al., 2001). The student expressed that these skills had supported him in describing his work in a formal setting to a critical audience and had enabled him to monitor a self-assessment of his progress in developing his communication skills (Beard

et al., 2001) which consequently helped him in attaining work objectives. Further the student believed that the development of these skills supported him in making new friends in a culturally diverse environment and he saw himself as more confident in his risk taking ability both in a professional and a personal way (Beard et al., 2001).

Other studies using the same interview methodology have reported similar results to the studies discussed above. Another research paper (Ward & Laslett, 2004) focused on chemistry student exchanges involving chemical companies in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Japan. Using a case study approach, researchers interviewed two students from the University of Surrey in the UK, and similar results were reported to the above described studies, with students valuing the experience and reporting they had developed skills like confidence and communication. Another research study, using a case study approach, involving research into five Thailand students' experiences, found similar benefits (such as maturity) and concerns (such as cross-cultural issues) expressed by students who had international work experiences in Western and non-Western countries (Coll, Pinyonathagarn & Pramoolsook, 2003).

These studies suggest that personal maturity, growth, and resilience were characteristics reported by students after they had experienced successful placements in international contexts. Enhanced self-confidence and improved communication skills were other key benefits highlighted by students interviewed following their international placements. By making new friends while working and living in a different environment and culture, researchers argued that students developed significant personal growth and

maturity while feeling confident about risk taking. Knowing that they had overcome a variety of challenges in a new environment was a key benefit related to personal resilience. All of these studies assumed that these student characteristics were achieved as a result of ICE placements, without exploring the possibility that these student characteristics were present prior to the ICE and also contributed to student success. No data were collected on student characteristics prior to ICE, so it is impossible to resolve this question using existing studies.

All the existing studies of student characteristics and ICE employed a research design in which students were only interviewed following their international experience. These studies are only able to make claims about the characteristics of students following their international experiences and cannot be used with confidence to make claims about how these student characteristics contributed to student success in ICE. Thus the current study used a design with student interviews both before and after ICE experiences so students could describe themselves at both times and also reflect directly on what they perceived at both times that might contribute to their success in ICE.

Workplace Supervisor Characteristics Contributing to ICE Placements

Another key factor in college students' experiences in ICE maybe the workplace supervisor. Previous studies show that supervision is a significant part of co-operative education and has great impact on the students (e.g., Shardlow, & Doel, 1996). Webber (2005) conducted a qualitative study when she investigated workplace learning in the UK, USA, and Canada in 16 post secondary programs to understand how students, academic staff, and site supervisors were being prepared to work in international and

cross-cultural work-based programs. Interviews were conducted with 21 field supervisors to better understand the role they played in the international placement. The project employed qualitative interviews and manuals and course outlines were analyzed. The contents of the documents were compared with the results of participant interviews. Questions to participants were specifically designed to elicit narratives of their personal experiences in addition to providing details of placement organization. Three themes were found one of which was related to supervision (Webber, 2005). She found in her study that site supervision in international cross-cultural work-based programs was critical to ongoing success of students. This study suggested that fundamentally the on-site supervisor was a key player in narrowing the gap between theory and practice which co-operative education seeks to accomplish. Studies have also found that on-site supervisors play other key roles to support student success.

Coll, Pinyonattagarn, and Pramoolsook, (2003) conducted a study to evaluate a work-based learning program in Thailand with particular focus on the work placement experience. The views of students from technology and engineering programs were investigated based on a qualitative approach but also utilizing a mixed-methodology that included a survey and interviews. Overall students were satisfied with the program but specific improvements were highlighted by the interviewees. The study found that workplace supervisors, who were familiar with requirements, provided good instructions, and provided effective support for writing placement reports, were critical to students' success. An effective introduction to the workplace and overall environment was

important to many students in the interview study previously described that was conducted by Ward et al. (2004). Further, in the study by Ward et al., the on-site supervisor required strong technical skills in order that the student achieved maximum success. Finally, on-site supervisors who understood the role of assessment and their role within this process were most successful in working with ICE students.

In Webber's study (2005) post-secondary supervisors had telephone conversations between themselves, students, and work-based supervisors to debrief the learning experience on-site. Work-based problems and cross-cultural issues were discussed by the three parties. Although this research did not indicate the number of calls, the data were collected by analyzing the interviews in which people gave descriptions and their views of the calls. As described above, this study had 37 students participate within programs in the UK, USA, and Canada. Care should be taken in considering these results because, although the specific data were not reported in the study, the conclusion was drawn by the author that the opportunity to discuss and clarify expectations of the placement with the on-site supervisor was important to student success. At times language and cultural differences led to misunderstandings so it was reported that some site supervisors wanted more input into the placement objectives and more information about their role in the placement (Webber, 2005).

It appears, based on Webber's (2005) study, that when on-site supervisors are not briefed effectively on the learning goals for the program, they may be less able to supervise students well, and students may not achieve their personal learning objectives.

Ward and Laslett (2004) studied an international co-operative education exchange program for science students at the University of Surrey, in the UK. This research focused on an exchange program with New Zealand and Australia using a qualitative, case study approach in which two students were interviewed. One New Zealand student was placed in the UK and the other student from the UK was placed in an opportunity in Australia. Data included feedback from the students on the overall process which included the work placement opportunity as a central component. Ward and Laslett (2004) found that students in their study concluded that supervisors could have been better briefed about the work the students were expected to do. Students were unclear at the beginning of the placement about how the site operated and reported that, at times, supervisors did not understand the type of work the student was capable of doing (Ward & Laslett, 2004). These data suggested that workplace supervisors providing clear workplace instructions and clear objectives were critical for student success in ICE.

Studies have found that the first introduction to the environment played an important part in establishing rapport between the supervisor and the ICE student and contributed to the overall success of the workplace experience. Ward, Frost and Yonge (2004), as already described, conducted a study with chemistry degree students at the University of Surrey in the UK with specific focus on the requirements for the European placement. The program involved placements in various countries, including France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Greece, and Sweden. As reported previously, this research used a qualitative case study approach by interviewing two chemistry students

who experienced a 12 month placement in Germany and Belgium. The results showed a well organized program can provide an opportunity for students to acquire language, social skills, and work-related chemistry skills. Most importantly, problem solving related to overcoming language barriers and cultural attitudes was addressed by students. The study suggested that students who had on-site supervisors who met them at the airport in a timely fashion and accompanied the students to their accommodation helped the students respond better to the unfamiliar environment. One student highlighted that his supervisor guided him through the signing of confidentiality agreements and helped open bank accounts. As well the supervisor took care of all the paperwork including visa requirements and introduced the student to safety rules in the workplace (Ward, Frost & Yonge, 2004). This study pointed clearly to a supportive environment, where workplace supervisors provided guidance and counsel about professional and personal issues, contributing to students' personal and professional growth.

Toncar and Cudmore (2000) found that supervisors who made efforts to introduce students to a variety of people, places, and unique experiences supported important social learning which equipped students in the international work environment. These actions characterized the supervisor as a caring individual and supported the student in the early days of transition to the new cultural landscape. This study focused on undergraduate business students and tried to understand the effectiveness of the administration and the advantages of the program as well as the areas for development. Toncar and Cudmore (2000) analyzed journals, essays, and interviews to identify common themes and

experiences that were emphasized by the program participants and augmented these with the observations of the researchers and the experiences of those operating the program.

Technical expertise of the workplace supervisor was also found to be important in their work with ICE students during practicum (Coll, Pinyonattagarn & Pramoolsook, 2003). This study was described above as using mixed methodology based on survey instruments and interviews. Students reported that the most important things learned on these placements were new knowledge and skills relevant to the program of study while students reported interpersonal skills and language development were critical to helping them succeed. Supervisors who used a variety of tools helped the students learn within a short timeframe. These tools included on-the-job training, touring the facility and area of the organization as well as partnering the student with a buddy to help with day-to-day issues. Also, group projects where students could work in a team environment were an effective learning tool reported in this study and a number of other studies (e.g., Ward, Frost & Yonge, 2004; Ward & Laslett, 2004). This study found those supervisors' providing books and other support materials to help students with on-site learning was also important to student success (Coll et al., 2003). Finally, and most importantly, this study by Coll and colleagues suggested that supervisors' providing effective feedback at the worksite was critical to student learning.

Studies described different ways of evaluating students on ICE work terms. Typically these means of evaluation involved students' writing reports or essays which documented the international experience both on and off the job (e.g., Ward & Laslett,

2004; Webber, 2005). An evaluation of performance while on placement was also usually a critical aspect of the assessment process. Typically students were required to demonstrate certain competencies and skills which included showing initiative, effective interaction with staff, and using good supportive literature, as well as having proficient report writing ability, effective time management skills, and practical skills in managing in the foreign environment (Ward & Laslett, 2004). Students also had to demonstrate an understanding of the cultural aspect of the workplace, including its functions and processes, its values and its relationships with cultural issues (Webber, 2005). Webber (2005) found that there was great variation in how staff rated cultural aspects of student achievement. These data came from studies that were described above.

Webber (2005) found that although the on-site supervisor was expected to make recommendations and to write a report on the student's final performance, the evaluation of the placement was the responsibility of the post-secondary institution representative. Consequently, the work-based supervisor concentrated on assisting students to acquire and practice skills. This was a formative assessment approach which was preferred by the supervisors (Webber, 2005). At times the on-site supervisor was unclear about how critical to be when reporting on a student. Consequently, it appears that guidance about expectations is important for the workplace supervisors just as it was found in a previous part of this review to be a critical part of the pre-placement preparation for students. Webber's (2005) study was described earlier.

Also, having students provide feedback about the supervisor was reported to be important information for future programming in some of the studies already described. In the study by Ward and Laslett (2004), feedback forms requested information from students about the time the supervisor spent with the student, the supervisor's involvement in all aspects of the work, and the student's language or computing skills (Ward & Laslett, 2004). This feedback provided the on-site supervisor and the post-secondary coordinator with relevant information about the strengths and related areas for improvement regarding the placement characteristics. One key concern expressed was that the placements were too short and consequently the on-site supervisor could not provide the student with enough high-quality support that was relevant to the program (Toncar & Cudmore, 2000).

These studies suggest the on-site supervision is critical to student success in international co-operative education placements. The workplace supervisor's role appears to be important in providing effective learning objectives, day-to-day instruction, critical introductions, and effective feedback processes for the ongoing success of the student at the workplace. This is important because the placement co-ordinator rarely visits the workplace. Research suggests that, because ICE takes place in a foreign environment, this makes it critical that the on-site supervisor provide supportive mechanisms off-site as well as in the work environment to better equip students for success in an unfamiliar culture as well as in an unfamiliar workplace. This supervision could contain a mentoring

component or someone other than the workplace supervisor could take on the mentoring role, such as a co-worker.

Mentoring

Introduction to Mentoring

One way in which workplace supervisors can contribute to ICE experiences of college students may be by mentoring them. Much of the mentoring literature describes theories and models, rather than reporting empirical studies. Some models focus more on adult workers than on youth in work integrated learning experiences like ICE. Generally, mentoring is defined as a close supportive interpersonal relationship between two individuals who are at different stages in their professional development (e.g., Collins, 1993). Van Gyn and Ricks (1997) stated that providing conditions such as an opportunity to meet a variety of people at the onset of a co-operative experience and enabling social opportunities that allow for discussion in an informal environment support conditions where mentorship can spontaneously occur.

Mentoring is understood in all the models as a nurturing process which allows for growth and development but requires specific action from both parties. Mentors are usually experienced individuals who take on a number of roles including guide, coach, role model, and confidante while providing insightful feedback to the student. The student listens, observes, and provides feedback on learning related to the mentoring that is taking place. Billett (2003), for example, has argued that there is a range of approaches

to mentoring, that is, mentoring can take the form of career guidance, skill transfer, and role evolution where insightful feedback is provided.

Descriptions, in the previous section of this literature review, of the important characteristics and roles of workplace supervisors show similarities to the concept of mentoring. One could argue that mentoring has already been shown to be relevant for understanding the support students in international co-operative placements received when supervisors demonstrated these specific characteristics and competencies. This case may be strengthened with a description of work, conceptual and empirical, explicitly focused on mentoring in the workplace. There are a number of approaches to understanding mentoring, including a model and data provided by Billett (2003) in the workplace learning literature, a model by Thuynsma (1997) in her conceptual writings based on a literature review, and hypothesized stages in the mentoring relationship by Collins (1993).

Mentoring in the Literature on Workplace Learning

I begin by elaborating on the concept of mentoring as it is understood in the workplace learning literature. Billett (2003) has argued that mentoring is facilitated by supports including organizational support, training programs, manager/co-worker support, and mentor empowerment. As well, he argued, mentoring can be inhibited by time and work demands, organizational structure, competitive environments, and unclear expectations of the organization (Billett, 2003).

In his 2003 paper, Billett reported studying workplace mentors, focusing on the demands and benefits of mentoring. His research described mentoring from the perspective of eight workplace mentors who participated in a year-long pilot on guided workplace learning. According to Billett (2003), mentors must have previous work experience, must have depth of knowledge and confidence in their knowledge of the work, and must have the ability to develop mentoring skills in a supportive environment. Many mentors are more experienced workers who assume some responsibilities for the well-being of less experienced co-workers. The more experienced peer can advise the learner and provide career guidance by assisting, modeling, coaching, and providing indirect guidance by observing and listening. Active engagement in learning the task is critical for an effective workplace environment (Billett, 1995).

Billett (2003) studied mentoring in a large manufacturing plant and, during the year of the study, data were gathered in three of the plant's work areas. The research focused on how mentoring proceeded in these workplaces and on its perceived effectiveness (Billett, 2003). Eight individuals were selected, based on criteria consistent with the description above, and acted as mentors in these work areas of the plant. The criteria used to select these mentors were their technical knowledge and their predicted ability to assist others' learning (Billett, 2003). After short training sessions, the mentors started using strategies as part of their work practice and, during the project; some additional strategies were introduced to support the mentors (e.g., group discussion). And in each work area, a number of learners were identified to act as informants throughout

the investigation to provide data about the effectiveness of mentoring and to give feedback on the guided learning strategies used by the mentors. Five rounds of critical incident interviews were conducted with the workers. The objective of the interviews was to gather data about the efficacy of the guided learning strategies, and the data comprised quantitative measures and qualitative data on the effectiveness of the learning strategies.

At the conclusion of the year-long study, all mentors assessed the efficacy of the mentoring approach positively. The capacity to understand and to meet individuals' needs in the workplace and the supportive mentoring approach were endorsed. Billett (2003) claimed that these views were helpful in building understanding of mentoring as an effective workplace learning strategy. The research also identified some benefits that might accrue to the mentors. But, as Billett (2003) acknowledged, this research was not helpful in understanding the other expectations and requirements placed upon workplace mentors. For example, production demands, lack of time, and attitude of learners all affected the use of the learning strategies (Billett, 2003). Although it is quite well developed, conceptually and operationally, Billett's (2003) construct of mentoring has not been used directly by the researchers already cited who have interviewed college and university students about the workplace supervisors in their ICE experiences.

Mentoring to Fulfill Two Needs

Thuynsma (1997), in her conceptual writing, divided mentoring functions into collegial task functions (i.e., a career development function) and a psycho-social function

in a mentoring model. The collegial-task functions included sponsorships, coaching, support, exposure, and challenge while the psycho-social functions included role modeling, counselling, acceptance, and friendship. Thuynsma (1997) identified these mentoring functions by reviewing the literature and argued that the two main types of mentoring functions would serve different purposes. In her view, the collegial-task function involved providing guidance in the acquisition of knowledge and skills while the psycho-social function required interpersonal bonding that contributed to a sense of self-worth. While the studies already reviewed have referred to some actions of workplace supervisors that are consistent with the two functions in Thuynsma's (1997) model, no research on ICE, to date, has deliberately focused in a rigorous way on how these mentoring functions, particularly the career development function, contributed to successful ICE.

Thuynsma (1997) developed her ideas by reviewing the literature and went on to identify primary and secondary mentors (Hall and Associates, 1986). Secondary mentors are more readily recognizable. They fulfill the collegial-task functions such as guiding the acquisition of skills. Primary mentoring is thought to be more difficult to identify in terms of organizational outcomes. Primary mentors support interpersonal relational needs (Hall et al., 1986).

Secondary mentors would fulfill the role of sponsor. Sponsorships open doors which allow access to a variety of opportunities and influential people. Mentors "teach the ropes" of an organization and of a discipline; they do this, it has been suggested, by

providing feedback about performance and by making recommendations. Developing learning objectives would likely be a part of this process. As an example, professional learning objectives were a critical component of the student experience, as well as personal objectives, for one New Zealand student on placement in the food industry in England in a study already reviewed (Wong & Coll, 2001). These objectives were dynamic in nature and changed throughout the placement experience of the ICE student in this case.

Supporting the mentee is thought to be a key feature of the collegial-task function. Accepting responsibility for the student's growth and development, while holding the student accountable for mistakes, is seen as a key role of the mentor (Thuynsma, 1997). According to Thuynsma (1997), providing the student with growth opportunities to demonstrate skills and abilities, while enhancing the visibility of the student, is an important function. Another function is using creativity in delegating tasks that challenge the student's achievement level.

As illustrated above, Thuynsma (1997) argued that the psycho-social function requires focused attention as part of the mentoring relationship. The mentor would demonstrate behaviour which supports the student's professional image and provide a sounding board for exploring professional and personal uncertainties. In this framework, mentoring is thought to help develop workers' skills, and to help employers secure a greater sense of attachment to the workplace through skill development of their workers. With an experienced co-worker as a guide, the less experienced practitioner is thought to

be able to seek relevant knowledge and to apply that knowledge effectively in the workplace. In several of the studies already reviewed, setting professional and personal learning objectives was a mechanism to help develop these skills (Beard, et al., 2001; Wong & Coll, 2001). The supervisor coached the ICE students and provided support so that effective placement objectives were developed. This type of action could sustain enterprises over time and develop student skills resulting in benefits for both the employer and the student.

Building rapport and a trusting relationship, while providing ongoing support and encouragement, is described as a part of this psycho-social function. As a result, self-confidence and a positive self-image may develop which were reported as important features of the relationship for international co-operative education students in studies (Collins, 1993; Thuynsma, 1997) already reviewed. The final development of the relationship, according to this model, is friendship which provides caring that goes beyond the required mentor responsibilities and allows for a bonding relationship that contributes to professional and personal growth of the mentee (Thuynsma, 1997). This element of the mentoring relationship is believed to be key to supporting students in foreign environments, in the workplace and beyond and is elaborated on in the next section in Collins' (1993) model of stages in mentoring.

Ellinger and Cseh (2007) sought to describe how employees facilitated other employees' learning in the workplace, what contextual factors influenced employees' facilitation of others' learning, and how these contextual factors influenced employees'

facilitation of others' learning in the workplace. Specifically, they reported that management personnel often initiated the learning process. This research was a qualitative case study approach using semi-structured in-depth interviews and used an adaptation of the critical incident technique conducted with 13 employees representing various functional areas within a consumer-focused manufacturer (Ellinger & Cseh, 2007). The importance of mentoring leadership in the process of facilitating learning and the extent to which managers created organizational environments conducive to learning appear to be critical to understanding effective mentoring experiences. Ellinger and Cseh (2007) argued that, based on their findings, managers who role model learning and develop workers by example and managers who encourage, support, and reinforce the importance of developing others are leaders in creating effective mentoring relationships.

The importance of mentoring relationships has been clearly illustrated in this literature review. Mentors support rich learning in an environment that is conducive to workplace learning. As illustrated by Billett (2003) mentoring can take various forms and he has shown that learners benefit from workplace mentoring. But Billett (2003) also highlighted that this research found many demands on mentors which challenge the effectiveness of this learning strategy. Recognizing these barriers, mentoring does take many roles, fulfills various needs, and supports organizational relationships (Thuynsama, 1997). Managers must create organizational environments conducive to the facilitation of learning (Ellinger & Cseh, 2007). Understanding how mentoring can be applied to the

international work context will only facilitate workplace learning in a foreign, isolated environment.

Mentoring: A Series of Developmental Phases

Collins (1993) described mentoring in a theoretical model with a series of four developmental phases with increasing emphasis on relationship: interaction, investment, facilitation, and separation. The psycho-social functions related to personal motivation and achievement were emphasized by respondents in Van Gyn and Ricks (1998) mentoring study about learning opportunities. This kind of mentorship could be effective within international co-operative education programs because students not only encounter work-related challenges but they also encounter personal challenges while living in a foreign environment.

Collins (1993) argued in his model that, before the mentorship relationship developed into this type of relationship, it had to move through a critical stage termed investment because mentoring is best understood as a developmental process. The investment phase was hypothesized to require identification between mentor and mentee, the beginning of a potentially mutually rewarding relationship characterized by a bilateral investment with caring about reciprocal ideas and values (Collins, 1993). In this phase, the supervisor comes to represent a role model who is respected for his or her competence as well as guidance. Collins (1993) argued that the investment stage described supervisors as enjoying practical benefits of serving as an experienced professional (Collins, 1993). The model described in this 1993 paper identified the

mentor as a coach and described the supportive nature of mentorship as characteristics necessary in the relationship.

The coach provided confirmation of the student's abilities, provided feedback, and made suggestions about performance and relevant work skills. The mentor set high performance standards to stimulate the student to achieve professionally. As Collins (1993) explained in the model, a mutual investment with reciprocity of initiative on both sides developed. The student sought and received more support and guidance as the mentor began to be perceived as someone who could be trusted. The mentor invested time and energy in taking an individualized interest in the aspirations of the mentee and provided challenging learning opportunities to support the mentee professionally (Collins, 1993). The mentor also shared knowledge about the environment. Mentors, according to Collins, provide coaching, challenging work, and visibility while the student provides technical assistance and the desire to be coached.

With identification and mutuality of investment, the commitment to the relationship would grow. Shared trust, mutual respect and genuine affection would begin to develop at this phase. Being open, while sharing information about the environment, would also begin at this stage. Sharing personal experiences which provide alternative perspectives is an important role while the student must ask straightforward questions about the environment and the mentor must be open with straightforward answers (Collins, 1993). This investment could be an important feature of mentoring

relationships, for international co-operative education students, because the environment in a foreign country is new for the student, both professionally and personally.

According to Collins (1993), if the relationship moved to the facilitation phase, each individual would discover the genuine interpersonal value of relating to the other. A positive outcome of this phase was predicted to be enhanced individuation (Collins, 1993). The student develops an enhanced sense of autonomy strengthened by the fact that the mentor provides an atmosphere of trust/rapport and support in exploring both professional and personal uncertainties. The mentee begins to feel increasingly self-assured, competent, and no longer needs to seek out the mentor for as much guidance as in the past (Collins, 1993). The separation stage is when the student becomes more autonomous as illustrated in the discussion of the facilitation phase developed by Collins (1993). It can be seen that Collins' four theoretical stages increase gradually the demands on the mentor and the mentee for a close working relationship.

Comparing Models of Mentoring

Collins (1993) focused on the relational or psycho-social aspects of mentoring and described the mentoring relationship as having four interpersonal phases with developmental requirements that were successively more complex. In contrast, Billett (2003) focused on the mentor's knowledge and role in helping the mentee to become more proficient, knowledgeable, and skilled, which could be described as emphasizing the career development of the mentee. Thuynsma (1997) differentiated between these two main types of mentoring functions related to co-operative education. Mentoring

could support career development and mentoring could also serve a psycho-social function. The psycho-social function, which was defined as the interpersonal bonding between mentor and mentee gave support to a rich, rewarding work experience, in this framework. The learner experienced reciprocal acceptance which can contribute to a sense of self-worth (Thuynsma, 1997). Thuynsma claimed that the resulting effect could be a greater motivation towards the career opportunities offered by the workplace experience (1997).

Mentoring relationships could serve as a critical mechanism to contribute to success in an international co-operative education experience. This literature review has discussed the various roles within the mentoring relationship and how the mentor can support the student in an unfamiliar environment.

Summary of Literature Review

This chapter has reviewed studies conducted in corporations or large businesses in established professions such as engineering and business. These studies included data related to the contribution of the pre-planning process, of the characteristics of students, and of the characteristics of workplace supervisors to college students' success in international co-operative education placements. The role that mentoring may play in successful ICE placements of college students was explored through descriptions of three approaches to understanding mentoring—the work of Billett, Thuynsma, and Collins—and these three approaches were compared briefly. In order to better understand the importance of these areas in the Canadian post-secondary system, the

current study used a case study approach at one Canadian post-secondary institution to report the perspectives of successful ICE students, their program coordinator, and the key documents about the program that were available to the researcher. The program that was the focus of this study was in the field of international development. It was a 12 month post-degree program.

Chapter 3

Method

This chapter describes the qualitative methodology of this study and delineates the specific methods used to collect and analyze data. The four sections include: (a) the rationale for the qualitative methods used, (b) participant selection, (c) data collection, and (d) data analysis strategies. This qualitative study used purposeful and convenience sampling approaches with a group of college students in Ontario, Canada who had experienced international co-operative education placements. This study used document analysis and semi-structured interviews to collect data to answer the research questions. A qualitative approach was the most appropriate way to conduct this study because I was exploring perspectives of key players about this workplace learning opportunity. Using document analysis and interviewing the program coordinator provided me with the program perspective on ICE. On the other hand, interviewing a small number of students both prior to and following their ICE experiences enabled me to report on their anticipatory perspectives and on what they thought after having experienced ICE. By exploring relationships and obtaining detailed information about specific situations, this research contributed to the area's growing body of knowledge on ICE.

Rationale for Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods were appropriate for this study because the interview and document analysis approaches contributed to understanding, from the perspectives of the students and of the program coordinator, the complex relationship among student

characteristics, students' working relationships with workplace supervisors, and elements of the program that contributed to student success in ICE placements. Qualitative methods can produce a wealth of data on a small number of cases (Patton, 2002) and can study selected issues in depth because the data are not constrained by predetermined categories of analysis.

Data triangulation which included document analysis and interviews was utilized in order to overcome possible challenges to validity and reliability. Merriam (1998) stated that using multiple sources of data or multiple methods enhances validity. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) stated that triangulation is used to cross-validate among various data sources, data collection strategies, and time periods. Further, triangulation allows the researcher to find inconsistencies in the data. To find regularities in the data, I used the method of constant comparison. Recognizing that the size of the sample is small, it is important to describe the context in detail. Describing where the study took place is important to enhance external validity (Patton, 2002). This entire process allowed me to report the students' perspectives about the characteristics that made for successful overseas opportunities.

My research role was one of outsider. Therefore developing credibility as the researcher was critical. This was done by developing rapport with participants through face-to-face relationships. Building trust, being non-judgmental, and respecting the norms of the situation were important for the process of data gathering. An interview with the placement coordinator was arranged first to develop an understanding of program

mandates, structure, objectives, and outcomes of student experience as set out by the educational institution. I obtained documents about the program at this time. This built trust and helped develop an on-going relationship with the program co-ordinator as I continued collecting data by interviewing students. This research can be trusted to represent a real world situation because the participants were well acquainted with the subject and objective of the study. Merriam (1998) stated that reliability can be troublesome when applied to qualitative research. By focusing on whether the results are consistent with data collected, reliability can be achieved (Merriam, 1998). Data triangulation strengthens reliability as well as internal validity. Transferability is enhanced by providing a thorough description of the context and assumptions that are critical to the research.

Participant Selection

I approached a community college, in a large city in Ontario, which had a required ICE component in its one-year, post-degree international business program. The focus of the program was international development. I met with the placement co-ordinator and we discussed the purpose of my study. After some discussion we decided that she would present the mandate of the research to the students and ask volunteer participants to put their names on a list. They were informed that one interview would take place before the international placement and one upon their return. I was provided with this list of names and contacted the student volunteers through email. During this period I received ethics clearance from Queen's University (see Appendix A) and the

educational institution where I conducted the research agreed to this research when the ethics clearance was finalized at Queen's University. The Letter of Information and Consent Form used appear in Appendices B and C, respectively.

Out of 60 students enrolled in the program when I met the coordinator, 8 volunteered who then received information about the study and, consequently, I received 5 responses from students willing to participate after reading the information I had provided. This study proceeded with 5 students taking part in the pre-placement interview and 4 students participating in the post-placement interview (one of the original 5 participants did not complete the placement). The criteria for the selection of the students were developed with the placement coordinator. All 5 students who responded met the criteria. The students who were interviewed were viewed by the program coordinator as having background that would enable them to be successful in ICE and to be articulate about their experiences because they had a variety of life experiences to utilize in order to effectively evaluate characteristics and mentoring experiences as well as the pre-placement planning processes. Specific criteria used for selection were age, previous international experience, and interest in the study. The time of involvement for each student was approximately 60 minutes at the time of the first interview. The pre-placement interviews took place in the winter term 2010 and the post-placement interviews took place in the fall term 2010. Four of the students who volunteered and completed pre-placement interviews also completed their ICE work experience successfully. The fifth student who had participated in a first interview did not complete

her ICE placement successfully, so she did not participate in a second interview and the data from her first interview were not reported in the findings of the thesis. The second interview required approximately 60 minutes for each student participant.

The study also included one interview of 60 minutes with the placement coordinator to collect data on the institution's perspective on the objectives of the pre-planning process, the characteristics perceived as important for successful completion of the program, and the co-ordinator's views of mentoring. The co-ordinator interview and the document analysis process took place in Winter 2010 prior to the first set of student interviews with a brief (10 minute) follow-up interview with the coordinator in the spring of 2010 by email. Time commitment by the coordinator was approximately 70 minutes in total.

The interviews allowed me to understand the pre-placement program features as well as the characteristics of the students and the workplace supervisors that were reported to support successful ICE experiences. The interview with the coordinator helped develop an understanding of program mandates, structure, objectives, and outcomes of student experience as set out by institutional parameters. Supervisory mentoring of students in order to support successful experiences was also a focus of the interviews. Seidman (2006) argued that it is important that researchers understand why they are choosing interviewing rather than other approaches and this criterion was met in the current study.

Data Collection

Document Analysis

Documents analyzed were the on-line program calendar that described the rationale and objectives of the program and a paper copy of the placement package which discussed expectations of the placement, and duration and evaluation of the experience. I also received copies of logistical forms which kept the school informed about student location. I used the method of constant comparison in document analysis. The description of the program was one page long in the calendar. At the placement coordinator's interview, I was given the program's placement package. It was 13 pages in length and authored by the placement coordinator. Students took this document to the workplace supervisor at the placement. It consisted of the information available on the website about the program and of forms that were required to be completed during the placement. There were no other documents for this program. One of the placement coordinator's responsibilities was to develop other program documents in her new role. As described by Hodder (2002), unlike the spoken word, documents endure physically and therefore can be separated across space and time from the producers and users. He argued that writing down words often allows language and meanings to be controlled more effectively. At times there is no possibility of verbal interaction and even when such interaction is possible, the speaker may not be clear. Consequently, documents can provide critical information. Analyzing this material provided an understanding of stated program objectives and helped in understanding the type of students chosen for the

program and what student characteristics were seen as necessary to complete the program.

Interviews

After consent had been obtained, the first interview took place with the program coordinator. It took place at the post-secondary institution and took 60 minutes. The first program coordinator interview and the pre-placement interviews with three students took place in a quiet conference room free from distractions in the college. The other two students chose to be interviewed in a coffee shop close to the college. All interviews were conducted at a time convenient for each interviewee.

I used a standardized open-ended interview guide as it was the most structured approach. For the co-ordinator interview, 12 questions were asked (See Appendix D). The pre-placement interview guide for students had 6 questions and the post-interview guide had 8 questions (see Appendix E). There was little flexibility in the questions, although probes were used to follow up; therefore, data analysis was more straightforward than if different questions had been used for different participants. Because the interview was focused, interview time was minimized which was important because, by agreement with the coordinator, the scheduled meeting time for any interview with her or the students was not to be over 60 minutes. The advantage of a standardized open-ended interview is its structure with opportunities for flexibility (Patton, 2002); for example, participants have the opportunity to clarify ambiguity in their responses to questions. Such clarifications were requested in this study when the

researcher was not certain of the meaning intended by the respondent. Utilizing interviews, as a key data-gathering tool, allowed the researcher to probe participants' views in depth. My personal international work experiences supported the ongoing discussion as sometimes I probed for more information than I received in the interviewees' initial responses. Sometimes referring to examples of situations I had experienced in international contexts helped bring interviewee data to the forefront.

The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed to produce verbatim accounts, therefore helping to ensure the reliability of the data obtained. The field notes were transcribed in literal format. I listened to the recorded transcriptions many times to fill in missing words in order to enhance the validity of the results. The purpose of the interview was to obtain information on the pre-placement experience as well as understanding the personal characteristics students thought would contribute to their having a successful experience. Questions also focused on the characteristics of an effective workplace supervisor and of a potential mentoring relationship from the student's perspective. As outlined by Seidman (2006) real questions must be asked. A real question is a question to which the interviewer does not already know the response.

After the students had completed the placement they contacted me by email and I arranged the post-placement interview. The post-placement interview utilized the same qualitative processes as the pre- interview format and took 60 minutes at the post-secondary institution. Again, a quiet conference room or a classroom that was free from

distractions was used. Total time each student spent being interviewed was approximately 120 minutes.

Data Analysis

I read the transcripts to conduct a preliminary assessment and to “get a feel” for the data. Data were analyzed using an open coding approach and a spreadsheet mechanism. This allowed unrestricted coding of the data. As part of the inductive process open coding was to used discover any prominent concepts that emerged from the initial reading of the transcripts. By writing memos as I created the codes my thoughts and ideas were recorded as they occurred. My comments were recorded to stimulate critical thinking (Merriam, 1998).

Looking for similarities, differences, and anomalies within the data set was the priority. Each line was read to decide the codes that fit the data and the data codes used participant numbers as well as item codes. These codes were tentative. Questions and some plausible answers began to emerge. The questions and answers led to other issues and further questions. Making comments in the document triggered ideas. This was helpful in the analysis later in this study. By using coding frames to organize the data and to identify findings, data were identified in subdivision categories, that is, coded data were grouped into categories. Patterns were interpreted from the material in response to the interview questions. This allowed me to link concepts that were found in the data set and allowed me to create coherent explanations of the relationships and interactions that were explored in this research. Initially 12 codes were identified for the set of the two

coordinator interviews and 12 codes for the set of eight student interview transcripts, although the codes were not identical for the two sets of interviews. Upon further analysis, using the method of constant comparison, there were 6 codes for each set of data for the student pre-placement interviews and 8 codes for each set of data for the post placement interviews. There were 5 codes for the placement coordinator data from her pre-placement interview. All the codes were then grouped into categories.

I collected and analyzed the pre-placement data during the same period of time so that the second stage of data collection, when post-placement interviews were conducted, was influenced by the analysis of the data already collected. Although the fifth participant's pre-placement data were analyzed, they did not include any unique findings and were pulled out of the data set when the post-placement interview data were not available for analysis. Therefore, my understanding of the previous data interacted with the analysis of subsequent data, so that the data gathered at different stages could be brought together to describe factors that contributed to success in international cooperative education placements.

Next, I looked for broad themes that applied to the data, and brought the categories together in clusters (Patton, 2002), and these emerging themes represented a view of what was occurring in the workplace opportunity being studied. I also looked for etic themes in my data by looking at findings of previous studies. Having an open attitude and seeking what emerged as important were critical in the research approach (Seidman, 2006).

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to understand and describe specific factors that contributed to a successful international co-operative education experience from the perspective of college students who have been successful in ICE and of the program coordinator of an ICE program. Three fundamental research questions I set out to answer were: (a) What role does the pre-placement program play in students' success in the ICE experience? (b) What characteristics of students and workplace supervisors contribute to ICE experiences? (c) What role, if any, does mentoring by workplace supervisor's play in students' successful ICE experiences? The methods used included document analysis and two interviews with the program coordinator, one prior to the students' first interview and a brief follow-up discussion by email after all other data had been collected. Each student in the International Development Program of a community college in Ontario who volunteered and completed a successful international co-operative education placement overseas, four in all, was interviewed on two occasions. The first interview was in the term prior to the start of the ICE experience and the second interview was following their return to Canada after successfully completing the international placement.

This chapter opens with a description of the program, that is, the context from which the interviewees were drawn. This description is based on document analysis and analysis of the first interview with the program coordinator. This is followed by a brief

description of the participants, program coordinator and the four college students who were interviewed before and after their successful ICE experiences.

Program Description

This post-secondary program was designed to prepare graduates for jobs in international development work. The program coordinator reported in her interview that it was the only program of its kind in North America, at the time, and its entry requirements were very competitive. While that made this program unique and not representative of other programs that included ICE experiences, it also made this program an ideal candidate for an intrinsic case study, reported on for its own sake.

As described in the literature review, previous studies of ICE involved students who were participating in longer professional programs such as business and engineering. The program in this study provided a completely different context--the less well defined field of international development. As well, studying a unique program brought challenges of honoring the coordinator's and students' concerns that they and the program might be identifiable by readers of the thesis. Both the coordinator, in her interview, and the printed material emphasized that all applicants required a bachelor's degree and had to submit responses to a detailed questionnaire related to ongoing career objectives (Course Calendar, 2010). Entrance was competitive and, in the year this study was conducted, there were 60 students in the program. The program's stated objective was to provide practical skills and knowledge so that, after graduation, learners would be prepared to manage international development projects in any part of the world.

Graduates had to be prepared by the program to work in isolating environments far from familiar services and, at times, far from technology. This program expectation fit well with the requirement that all students complete a one-semester practicum outside Canada, an ICE experience. The program co-ordinator outlined that the “goal of this program, is to teach skills as opposed to knowledge.” She suggested that students would go “back to the theory [because] now we’ve given you a lot of the practical skills, how do these actually relate to the industry...”

The program was 12 months, that is, three semesters in length. According to the coordinator’s description, which was consistent with the documents, in semester one, students learned the fundamental knowledge and technical skills required for the field of international development while semester two provided students with more advanced knowledge in specific sectors within the international development arena. The program co-ordinator described that “first semester gives students an understanding of basic management skills..., the second term we focus on how projects are actually funded, and the third term is the practical application.” Documentation for the program concurs with this description. The first two semesters included group project work, professional discussions, and guest presentations. In semester three, students completed their ICE and were expected to apply their learning and then reflect on what they had learned during the co-operative education placement.

The placement ensured that graduates had completed at least 8 weeks in the field (Placement Package, 2009). Longer-term placements were recommended because more

time on the job could better serve student learning needs and employer project timelines. However, 8 week international development placements were required for graduation purposes. Remuneration was not mandatory but was hoped for if the placement was longer than 8 weeks. Students sought their placements, with the program co-ordinator's support, utilizing networking leads acquired in their own experience and within the program. The program co-ordinator highlighted "students are required to find their own internship, we bring in guest speakers...I have tons of connections, from years in the industry, which send me job postings..." The coordinator also mentioned that an on-line website communicated placement opportunities to all students.

The students were required to complete a pre-placement report providing a detailed description of the organization and including logistical details. Specific duties and responsibilities associated with the placement had to be spelled out clearly. The location of work and any travel required within the placement were required to be outlined. Students indicated where they would live during the placement and included learning contracts and learning outcomes for the international placement (Placement Package, 2009).

Students were also required to discuss the development challenges facing the region in which the placement would occur, and to develop a summary of the cultural factors to be considered when working in that region. They had to submit a budget which included travel, accommodation, and other living expenses. If the placement would be paid, would come with an honorarium, or would include a subsidy this was to be

outlined. Finally, security details were required in the report including an evacuation plan, specifically outlining exit points from the country to “safe” destinations.

Documents pointed out that students must communicate to the program co-ordinator as well as the deans of the school upon arrival, once during the field placement to update on progress, and at the conclusion of the placement (Placement Package, 2009).

Evaluation of the work placement was based on the field placement performance as evaluated by the employer in a 12-page written assessment of the placement experience (Placement Package, 2009). Detailed evaluations were requested based on the evaluation approach which was decided before the placement began. Generally this was a report from the workplace supervisor, describing the student’s performance in relation to work objectives. Ongoing feedback on performance was requested from the supervisor and any student issues were to be reported to the placement coordinator as soon as possible (Placement Package, 2009). The placement package stated that evaluation only at the end of the placement did not provide an opportunity for students to change direction and learn while on placement. The documentation about placement suggested that specific references to achievements with a qualitative and/or quantitative assessment of those achievements, and recommendations for future approaches, particularly in terms of skill development, areas for change, and suggestions for employment were very meaningful (Placement Package, 2009).

Students also submitted a required report at the end of the placement. It was due not later than three weeks after the placement concluded. The report was expected to be a

detailed assessment of field placement referencing the planned learning outcomes, including an assessment of where the college program provided appropriate preparation and support for the placement, and where the program had fallen short. If the placement was modified, such as changes made in assigned tasks or location, the reasons and impact had to be detailed. Students were encouraged to include suggestions for future students in this report (Placement Package, 2009).

The description of the program provided by the coordinator in her interview was consistent with the information made available to the students and to the international practicum advisors in the placement package they received prior to practicum.

Participants

Five participants took part in this study—one program coordinator and four college students. The coordinator was a woman who had worked in the program as both the coordinator for 2 years and a part-time instructor prior to her appointment as coordinator. She had worked in the field of international development for 15 years in a variety of roles. In the last few years she had worked as a director in the field for a variety of international development agencies that implemented projects in isolated locations.

Four students participated in the two interviews. The first student, A, was a woman in her early twenties. She completed the ICE placement in Haiti in an organization that provides support and care to children. Prior to enrolling in this college program she had experience traveling and working in international destinations. She was fluent in French and English. Student B was a woman in her thirties who had previously

worked internationally and told me that she had undergone some very challenging, difficult experiences in isolated environments. She said “I’ve travelled out of my environment for a year at [a time]... I’ve been doing it for over ten years....I’ve been in really uncomfortable situations...where I felt unsafe...” This student completed the ICE placement in Ecuador in a children’s agency for developmentally disabled children.

Student C, a man in his mid twenties, completed the ICE placement in Africa at a development agency. Previously he had worked at an urban university at a centre for disability and rehabilitation. He started his placement in Canada and moved into the overseas location at about the midpoint of the placement. Students A, B, and C all experienced isolation in the locations where they completed their international cooperative education placements. Student D planned to work in South East Asia for her placement but ended up in Tanzania. She was in her late twenties. Student D had a different experience compared to her colleagues in this research. This student completed her work placement in a development agency as a project evaluation officer so she did not experience the isolated environments that other students encountered. Also, her mother had been a community development worker in Kenya so she was able to provide useful information about the region to Student D.

Themes Related to the Purpose and Research Questions

I report the findings in three major sections, one for each theme arising from participant data that expresses how these students conceptualized their experience in the international placement opportunity. I included relevant data from the coordinator’s

interviews in these themes as well. Only 2 themes arising in the coordinator's interview were distinct from the student themes. These themes were course applicability to field placement and just-in-time practical experiences to be job ready after the placement has been completed. During the document analysis, only basic themes were developed, beyond the information already reported in the program description. The themes that focused on course applicability to field placement and just-in-time practical experiences to be job ready after the placement focused on the reporting requirements during the pre-placement period and during the post-placement period. These were not a major focus of this research.

Within the first theme based on analyses of student and co-ordinator data, *What Helped Students Succeed in the International Placement* there were three categories: *importance of pre-placement planning, importance of key student characteristics for success, and on-site supervision*. The second theme *What Impeded Students' Success in the International Placement* included three categories as well: *elements of pre-placement, on-site supervision, and isolation from others*. In the final theme *Goals Achieved*, there were two categories: *students' goals and college goals*. Most of the categories within the themes were anticipated in the research questions. What was surprising was that so little data emerged on mentoring.

What Helped Students Succeed in the International Placement

The first theme to emerge from the data was *What Helped Students Succeed in the International Placement*. The categories highlight areas that support the student to

succeed in foreign and, typically, isolated environments. Each student participant expressed having received support in pre-placement overall, and each student made comments related to on-site supervision. Personal characteristics were also reported by the students as critical to a successful experience in ICE. In reporting when data were collected, I used the convention that I1 referred to the first or pre-placement interview and I2 meant the quotation was drawn from the second, that is, post-placement interview.

Importance of pre-placement planning. The four student participants spoke about the importance of various facets of the pre-placement program to their success in ICE. One participant (B) reported that students could “draw on the experience of all the instructors. I mean....they provide [their experience] to us through instruction on specific topics, telling us stories” (I1). Participant A valued “learning from each other ... I actually learn a lot from my classmates...and I think it’ll give me better ideas of what to expect once I jump into an internship...”(I1). Another participant (B) talked about “lots of networking opportunities within class; we had a careers class as well, and guest speakers” (I1). She continued by saying:

I got all of my hard skills, everything, proposal writing, just kind of gaining an understanding of the business....but I was lost in the darkso that’s what I’ve now gained and I feel confident that I have those skills.

“The training I received and the faculty I met through the program. As well the support I received prior to engaging in my internship; leadership, direction and encouragement I received before, during, and after the internship” (Student C, I2). Discussions in class

were held related to pre-placement objectives and placement evaluation which were very helpful to the students. Student D agreed in the pre-placement interview, “Not just [telling me] look at this or that but pushing me to pursue [these things].”

The role of the placement coordinator was prominent throughout the comments of student participant C. “She gave us an information packet about what we were looking for.” This student added, “I’ve gone to her a few times to just ask questions ...she is constantly sending out job postings [I] pick her brain and ask her questions.... [She’s] telling me the options that are out there” (I1). In a similar vein, student participant D exclaimed that the coordinator “...customized the internship...related to student interests” (I2). The praise continued, “She was very helpful in guiding me but not pushing me towards anything.”

The students appreciated the advice that bringing some items that remind you of home is important to relieve homesickness. The co-ordinator suggested some favourite “comfort” foods as many of these foods common in North America are not found in many countries where students do these placements. The workshop also focused on the requirement to take many personal hygiene products for the duration of the placement (Coordinator). A participant in the study outlined that this was important because in the small rural village he was situated in there was no pharmacy (C, I2).

In their descriptions of the valuable elements in the pre-placement planning, the students attributed much credit to the way the program coordinator provided a large

amount of valuable information and to how she related what she taught to her own experiences in the field. Participant B described it as:

A never ending stream of information...no questions went unanswered. So much personal experience made our kind of dreams and thoughts very relatable, made them very real through her own experience...definitely the big success of the program. (I1)

Students described and praised the placement coordinator's role in the formal classroom setting and what she did when she met with students informally in her office. Almost all these student comments came from the pre-placement interview.

In her initial interview, the placement coordinator also described the pre-placement programming as critical for student success, and spoke of her hope that "the entire semester talking about careers and what to do...expectations...knowing what it is that you're actually going to be getting into" was helpful for students. According to the coordinator, the program also provided students with printed material on "what they should bring with them, what to prepare that way, what kinds of things [to bring]...that will remind them of home to...feel better." She reported that there was a "focus on a lot of the basic logistical requirements including what you need to do before you leave and what you need to take." For example, the pre-placement program informed students that many personal hygiene items would not be available to them in isolated areas, so they were advised to bring "things that [will] make you comfortable in the country that you're going to." Also, the coordinator talked in her opening interview about one of her goals

for the pre-placement program, which was for students to recognize the importance of “[letting] their friends and family know what they’re doing and why.....so that their network at home understands” and supports them. Appropriate financial planning is critical. The placement co-ordinator said “your banking, make sure you’ve set your banking up in Canada, setting up your automatic savings, having an emergency fund of money, figuring out what your tax status is.” She also highlighted that “making sure you know how to drive a stick shift because they don’t have automatic cars in most developing countries.”

The four student participants and the coordinator who prepared students for the practicum reported in their interviews that the pre-placement program was vital to students’ succeeding in their ICE experience in a foreign country. The students attributed much of the success of the pre-placement program to the coordinator who not only provided valuable, factual information, but also related stories from her experience. These stories helped students to feel that they too could reach their goals and that this process would begin with a successful ICE placement. Most of these data were collected prior to the ICE experience.

Importance of key student characteristics for success. A number of student characteristics were reported to be critical to success in the ICE placements. The student participants talked about a wide variety of interpersonal and language abilities that they used throughout the placement. “Being assertive and self-motivated, good communication skills while keeping an open mind” were highlighted by one participant

(A, I1). “I learnt how to speak, read, and write the Spanish language...and I was also provided with the opportunity to [use my skills to] lead a group of community members in a project that I designed” (Participant B, I2). Participant C reported that she was required to demonstrate “cultural sensitivity while being adaptable and patient. I learned to be more flexible; creativity in coming up with solutions to challenges; Increased communication skills; Patience and respect for cultural formalities” (I2). Participant B described herself as being a “self-starter who can work independently as well as with a team” and said that these characteristics “proved to be very useful” in her placement. She also spoke of relying on being “confident...voicing my opinion...looking at things from different perspectives.” All of the four student participants spoke in their interviews following their ICE placements about taking initiative and being an independent thinker while questioning during their practicum experiences. The students had difficulty in their first interview anticipating which characteristics would be important for their upcoming placement.

The co-ordinator expressed in her pre-placement interview her views about the student characteristics that she thought were most important for student success in international placements. She focused on how essential it was for students to have “determination, an independent nature, and initiative.” In her words, these were “three key characteristics for student success.” The course documents highlighted that “Students must be committed to a career internationally and have cross cultural skills.”

The co-ordinator and the program materials tended to emphasize independence and cultural sensitivity. Students agreed that these two characteristics were important, but used a wide range of expressions to provide personal meaning for these characteristics, to elaborate to include other characteristics, and to give personal examples of how these characteristics played out in their ICE placements.

On-site supervision. In addition to pre-placement planning and personal characteristics of students, the student participants and the coordinator of program and placement also reported that on-site supervision was an important component for student success in ICE placements. Some student participants described positive on-site supervision experiences, these arising in the post-placement interviews. The on-site supervisor was “Aware of context and practices; [had] extensive knowledge of culture and the project itself, as well as the people” (Student D; I2). According to participant C, good supervision was characterized by “good listening skills, kindness and understanding.” This participant also reported that one individual “took it upon himself to show me the ropes, answer my questions, teach me about the different projects, and look for opportunities that would interest me.” He appreciated these efforts and saw this supervisor as contributing directly to his success. According to participant B, one supervisor “had a hands-off approach with me, therefore leading me to work independently where I was able to fully flex my intellectual muscles.” For this student, this opportunity was appreciated and the non-interventionist approach was seen as contributing to her success in the ICE placement. Student C reported valuing a different

kind of experience afforded by opportunities to “job shadow other staff” which he viewed as important for skill development. Both students believed on-site supervision was critical to successful performance. But students also had concerns about their supervisor on-site and this was a bigger focus at the post-placement interview than the strengths of the on-site supervisors.

The co-ordinator highlighted that on-site supervision is critical to successful placements but recognized many variations of supervisory style depending on individuals and challenges in the location. She said “It’s incredibly agency specific....some agencies [have] been doing this for 20 years, they assign somebody specific to look after them in the field and they’re organized....others, not really sure what they can do.” So she concluded, as students reported, that students have different experiences of on-site supervision.

Summary. In this section, *What Helped Students Succeed in Placement*, the themes and categories within the themes have highlighted the student participants’ perspectives, which emphasize the importance of effective pre-placement support and programming to their success during international placements. The students also described specific student characteristics like taking initiative and being culturally sensitive that effectively supported success in foreign placements, and reported that on-site supervision during the ICE placement was critical to success. All of these categories within the theme of what helped students to succeed also appeared in the data provided by the program and placement coordinator in her first interview.

What Impeded Students' Success in the International Placement

The second theme to emerge from the data was *What Impeded Students' Success in the International Placement*. The categories within this theme represent the things that hindered the students' succeeding in a foreign and, typically, an isolated environment. Participants expressed concern about elements of pre-placement programming, on-site supervision, and isolation in their environment. Student A expressed many of the student concerns in her experience, described as "Lack of direction.....isolation...slow to communicate...and misunderstanding of what my skills were and why I was there."

Elements of pre-placement programming. One comment by Participant C described some teachers as having "teaching skills that were not there" (I2). He also expressed concern about student understanding of cultural diversity and its implications in a foreign, isolated situation: "Some teachers were not up to par...and I was not prepared for cultural differences in an isolated environment." Another participant highlighted "there needs to be better communication between all people involved" (A; I2) suggesting that the educational institution needed to improve how it facilitated this communication.

Many participants were concerned about the length of the placement. "The short eight week placement period prevented me from fully achieving all the goals that I would have liked to accomplish while interning overseas" (B). The belief held by some of the student participants was that the educational institution, through the pre-placement process, should facilitate and support longer placements. According to Student C, not

only goals could be better achieved in a longer placement, but “different ways of looking at the world” would be better understood, resulting in a better placement experience.

One participant described how it was important to learn to “adapt expectations.....and find other ways to contribute if things didn’t work as planned” (C).

The belief was the educational institution could have better facilitated this process of learning so that the student would be better prepared for this kind of circumstance.

Another participant suggested that it would help if a “contact person is set up, with the partner organization, so that when an intern arrives they do not feel they have no one specific person to go to” (D; I2). This process could be facilitated through the pre-placement planning. Further, “Realistic goals should be presented to the students in terms of post graduation expectations” (B; I2) during the pre-placement process. For example, “the industry is challenging as well as competitive and there is often a misconception of immediate hiring and long term job opportunities presented in class; the reality is quite different and can prove to be very frustrating” (B; I2). All of these comments were made following the ICE experience.

On-site supervision. Participants had some concerns about their supervisors. Lack of communication was a concern: “not answering emails, not being able to set a meeting with me..., misunderstanding of what my skills were and why I was there”(A; I2). “Lack of proper management and staff structure at the organization” were reported by Student A. The “concept of time, and the importance/weight or the lack thereof placed on the work at hand” was of concern to Participant D in her post-placement interview.

She stated that the supervisor did not establish the importance of the work to be completed. One participant had a supervisor who welcomed him and “showed him around “the organization but then disappeared and “did not provide clear expectations....was trial and error....what occurred....figuring out things when I got there” (C). The student participants reported learning from experience that one might not have the role that was anticipated so it was necessary to adapt and learn to contribute without support from the supervisor. Participant B had a supervisor with a “hands-off” approach therefore allowing the student to work independently. This student enjoyed this approach and, therefore, did not experience issues that the other participants experienced during the international placement.

Isolation. Some isolation was felt because of the lack of devices to communicate with the home network. Where participants were able to communicate with family and friends, this was an element of critical support that participants believed contributed to a successful international placement. “Moral support fromfamily/friends back home” was clearly highlighted by Participant A in the post-placement interview. One participant lived in a polygamist family while on placement. The participant’s on-site supervisor was the male head of the family and the participant worked from the supervisor’s home. The participant, who did not want to be identified with this issue, reported experiencing isolation in this culturally unfamiliar domestic situation, especially when left with one wife and family. This participant had little contact with the support system at home because of utilities that were deficient and no internet connection. Learning domestic

chores, including how to milk cows, supported a friendship with one wife who helped the participant overcome feelings of isolation. Student C described how important it was to “look from different perspectives where there was no electricity.” And continued, “Home support was critical but was on [my] own a lot....loss of electricity...no access to electronic devices to communicate to home” (Student C).

Some of the participants confronted barriers to their success during the international placement. “Lack of communication with key people and lack of proper management and staff structure at the organization” was described by one participant (A). Another participant was welcomed by his on-site supervisor but was not supported by the supervisor in understanding how to manage cultural situations that were unique in the environment. Consequently the student became uncomfortable and relied on personal support from his home network (C). Participant (B) claimed that the eight week placement period prevented her from fully achieving all her goals. The concept of time and the lack of importance put on the work at the time was a concern of participant D.

Summary. In this section, *What Impeded Students’ Success in the International Placement*, the categories contributing to the theme have highlighted participants’ need for educators to understand the role of effective pre-placement support and programming, the role of the on-site supervisor, as well as to understand how isolation can affect success in international placements.

Goals Achieved

The third theme to emerge from the data was *Goals Achieved*. The categories within this theme highlight the goals aimed for by the college (including the goals of the program/placement coordinator) and the students' goals in the international placement. The placement coordinator had specific goals that were to be achieved by all students in addition to achieving metrics that confirmed graduating students were employed full time in a role related to the program. The students had various goals that were professional and personal in nature. Student D said, "Yes, I achieved goals by completing several tasks that put into practice the knowledge and skills gained from my studies."

Student goals. The students voiced many professional and personal goals that they held while in this program. Some were making a career transition and others wanted practical experiences after their university studies. "This is my second career so I'm looking to get that information quickly and effectively" and I want to "get into the field as soon as possible, that was, my goal is to get a job" (Participant B; I1). "This program offered more of the concrete practical skills like proposal writing," and "I don't necessarily have tools to get myself into working in a type of global community." These comments reflected goals held by Participant C (I1).

The participants wanted to have exposure to different projects during their placement and to help the country they were working in. Participant D (I1) knew individuals in the country she wanted to work in. She said, "South East Asia region....I know people in Vietnam and Cambodia....and my main interest is human rights and

justice issues and how they have played out in those countries.” Participant A wanted to use her language skills in the country she worked in as well as to support a country where family and friends resided: “I speak French and so I’ve always thought...put that language into useit would be really neat experience [to work in Haiti].” She continued, “And I also have some family and friends who’ve gone down there so I’ve heard about their experience...always seemed like a place where I could be of use”(I1).

Some participants expressed the goal of having a mentor in their international placement. For example, Participant A (I1) said:

[A mentor would] play a big role just because, I’ll be in a new place, in a new culture, in a new work environment, and since I’m someone who learns best when I do have some sort of mentor type person who is there to guide me, especially when it comes to a new job, so I think....a combo of helping me fit into my role within the internship as well as adapting to a new culture and job answering any questions I have.

Participant B (I1) talked about desiring a mentor who was also a friend when she said, “think of a friend, comfort when you’re feeling uncomfortable, kind of reassurance for when you doubt yourself and your internship or your new job or whatever it’d be in this country...for just reassurance, a security blanket I guess.”Finally, thinking about the role that a mentor could play in ensuring a “practical experience,” Student A (I1) described a goal for the placement that was shared by others, “practice what I learned in a real life setting, hands-on.” In the post placement interview data mentoring was not discussed.

Goals of the college. The predominant stated goal of all community colleges in Ontario was to have job ready students at the end of every program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). Overall, all goals of the college supported this predominant goal, according to the coordinator of this program. “The goal is to teach skills as opposed to knowledge....students come in with lots of knowledge already” (Coordinator, first interview). Another goal of the college was to have “our program to line up with the traditional hiring cycles, which [is when] most hiring takes place” (Coordinator). The college sought specific characteristics in potential students,

We look for the potential for success in the industry...it’s not the highest scoring student and I tend to not look at grades at all and we look very much on their motivation, on their experience, on their potential for employability and success...and...having the right attitude going into the program. We want people who actually want to work with people in the industry. (Coordinator)

Ultimately, “to achieve employment, get people into the workforce... [we] want them to have practical skills, we want them to have skills that they can, they can use on day one in the job” (Coordinator).

The program coordinator also talked about students who had specific personal characteristics: “Certain degree of maturity is important, they have to, they have to know what they want to an extentvery few of them come in straight fresh from undergrad.” She continued, “[We] prefer students who’ve actually done something so they have an idea of what they’re getting into. And students who have maturity and, honestly, some

sort of language skills because those are the ones who are going to get hired and succeed” (Coordinator). Volunteer experiences during undergraduate work can support the development of these characteristics.

Goals of the program also included educating students about “cross cultural understanding... and critical, and reasonable expectations I think are the biggest thing, and we do teach an entire class on careers, so what to expect when you get overseas” (Coordinator). Students required “hard business skills, they need to know how to negotiate, they need to know how to write business reports and business plans...figure out how to get a loan from a bank...very hard and fast business skills” (Coordinator).

The program goals included the hope that mentoring relationships would develop during the international placement. However, how students dealt with managing relationships as well as being flexible in different cultural worlds was student driven according to the placement coordinator: “Your opportunities may be huge as long as they, if you jump out and say I’ll do this, I’ll do this, you could have the opportunity to do all kinds of things” and the opportunity to develop important relationships (Coordinator). Mentoring seemed to be student-driven. It was not a goal of the program to have mentoring relationships.

Summary. In this section, *Goals Achieved*, the themes have highlighted the student goals and college goals in order to have successful placements and programming. In order to develop successful programming these goals have to be identified at the beginning of the design and development of the program.

Summary of Results

From the review of these emergent themes, a broadly defined yet coherent message to educators was identified by the participants that highlighted the importance that educators (a) understand the components and characteristics that support a successful experience, (b) recognize the barriers to successful placement and program completion, and (c) define and implement goals that support successful student experiences.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study was to understand and describe specific factors that contributed to a successful international co-operative education experience from the perspective of college students who have been successful in ICE and of the program coordinator of an ICE program. The students and the coordinator were associated with one work integrated learning opportunity in an international development program, in a community college, that required all students to complete an ICE experience. Document analysis was also conducted on a sample of the documents describing the program. Thus this research contributes a multiple-perspective study of one community college program with a required ICE component. Three fundamental research questions I set out to answer were: (a) What role does the pre-placement program play in students' success in the ICE experience? (b) What characteristics of students and workplace supervisors contribute to ICE experiences? (c) What role, if any, does mentoring by workplace supervisor's play in students' successful ICE experiences? This qualitative study used purposeful and convenience sampling to select participants and semi-structured interviews as the primary data gathering method supplemented by document analysis, Analysis of the data suggests some wide ranging implications for future research and for international co-operative education programs.

This chapter is organized in six major sections. Following a brief introduction there are sections that answer each of the three research questions, and within each of these sections the current study and its findings are compared and contrasted with the existing literature that addresses the question. A brief section recognizes the limitations of the present study. This is followed by a section on the implications for research and a section on implications for practice.

The Role of the Pre-placement Program

The first aim of this study was to explore the role of pre-placement in student success in the international co-operative education placement. It was found that pre-placement programming contributes in a fundamental way to student success in a foreign workplace environment in the view of students and of the program coordinator. The pre-placement program was so critical to the students' perceptions of their experience in the international placement, that it appeared as a category within the two themes of what helped students succeed and what impeded students' success. Of interest is the fact that the positive views of pre-placement were expressed by students mainly in the first interview while the negative views were expressed by students after they had completed their ICE experiences. Not only was the issue of pre-placement addressed by all four student participants but the program coordinator, who prepared the students for placement, also addressed its importance in her interview and it received attention in the limited documentation about the program.

Understanding the ways in which the pre-placement component of the program contributed to student success is more complicated than recognizing how important all interviewees considered it to be. Pre-placement work is critical as it emerged as a category in both themes. The technical information required to work effectively in the placement was seen as critical but as important was the logistical, personal preparation to live in an unfamiliar environment. Clarification during the pre-placement of placement objectives, held by the program and its instructors, was also viewed by all student interviewees as critical to effectively achieving the goals of the placement or internship.

These findings indicate many strengths of the pre-placement programming include the real world experiences of the faculty members in this program. The coordinator of the program provided leadership, direction, and encouragement for the student participants interviewed in this study. Learning “hands-on” about an array of projects, specifically in a country that has recently experienced a natural disaster was one comment from a participant in my study. The learning related to technical information was paramount within these experiences.

Maidment (2003) found that pre-placement that focused on learning approaches to manage stress, to multi-task effectively while staying safe was critical for students to work in the international environment. The students I interviewed were told by the placement coordinator that a large variety of work must be expected on placement. Projects rich with learning experiences are critical but routine office work could be a part of the daily work routine. Overall, students in the current study found that the school did

an effective job of setting expectations although there were a few exceptions.

Specifically, understanding the opportunities for full time employment should be better communicated to students.

The current research highlights that goals provided to students early in the placement were supportive of successful completion. These goals were central to meeting workplace objectives, and the students understood their role in achieving these goals. Being involved in determining project completion dates, as well as in the day to day running of the team, were important features for the students. Consequently, having clear goals and understanding how to get to them utilizing work assignments that use abilities and technical skills learned in the school environment helped motivate students to be successful in the work placement. To maximize her growth on her overseas assignment, Wong and Coll (2001) reported that Wong set a series of placement objectives that comprised a mixture of student and employer expectations that were negotiated at the beginning of the placement, and re-examined throughout the placement. These objectives sought to enhance Wong's personal and professional growth (Wong & Coll, 2001). Developing critical competencies can help students establish their own learning objectives and goals can be made explicit to them by the workplace supervisor. In an environment where student learning is not the priority, the tasks and routines that are learned are directed at achieving a goal that is significant to the workplace. Munby et al. (1999) suggested that workplace learning is most apparent when goals for students are made explicit to them.

Co-operative education learning objectives are unique and specific in orientation. Co-operative education environments must find ways to integrate the contributions to students' learning within educational institutions and workplace settings (Billett, 2008). Recognizing and understanding how this integration will occur is critical in designing and delivering effective workplace curriculum for co-operative education students at the post-secondary level. Billett (2006) highlights that educational institutions must understand a key element of workplace curriculum is the relationship between the goals of the workplace and those of the students who participate. This occurred, to some extent, in the current study.

Further, language training was important in some circumstances and two participants in the current study reported that basic knowledge of the local language supported their introduction to the country and developed credibility with the employer. Students did not receive language training during the pre-placement program but did, in some cases, have capability in the language which they had required from past experiences and training. Students in this study also received concrete information regarding student financing. The use of credit cards, how much money to take, and where and how students should keep money was discussed. Most specifically, the coordinator outlined that students should not have large amounts of cash, because of dangers of loss or theft. Setting up automatic savings and having an emergency fund of money, as well as leaving personal financial information with a family member or friend in case of emergency, were important. Money might be needed for unpredictable reasons.

Ward, Frost and Yonge (2004) found that workplace supervisors supported financial decisions and guided the student through complicated documents. There was no evidence of such activity among the participants of this research study although it would have been supportive to the students. Knowing how to drive a shift stick car was also a useful skill in countries where automatic cars are rare. This was highlighted in the pre-placement activities at the school and was understood by most of the participants in the study. One student who was unfamiliar with stick shift cars became a concern for the employer. Safety was the utmost concern of the employer.

The pre-placement workshop alerted students in this study to issues of safety and managing stress in the field. This workshop also helped students to recognize the physical environment of the international development work where common personal products readily available at home are not available in these environments, including hygiene products and “comfort” foods. Webber (2005) also made recommendations that pre-placement sessions that prepare students for the reality of foreign assignments are critical for transition and success.

Recognizing the uniqueness of the learning at the workplace, in contrast with the educational institution curriculum, the co-ordinator should understand the workplace characteristics in order to most effectively provide critical learning experiences for the students. A thorough explanation of the program and workplace characteristics would include the coordinator outlining that this is not simply a trip to a foreign country, but it is a commitment to work and will be evaluated by the employer and educational institution.

As Webber (2005) reported, it is critical that work-based placements are well planned and that controls are put in place that require pre-placement sessions, established learning outcomes, cross-cultural training, and safety provisions. These were all apparent in the program I studied.

A further interesting outcome of the research was the placement coordinator's unique perspective on the workplace characteristics because of her extensive work experience in foreign environments. Her understanding and counsel to students, both during pre-placement and during placement, were practical because of her own work experiences and challenges she had faced in isolating situations. Billett (2004) outlines that understanding workplaces as sites for learning is critical in order to effectively equip post secondary co-operative education students with the skills they require for future employment. Understanding the opportunities to engage in work, the kinds of tasks in which individuals are permitted to participate, and the guidance provided become key to identify and to evaluate how and what workers learn through their work. The coordinator was able to support students effectively because of her own experiences in similar environments.

Expectations of the coordinator and of each student were explored and clarified in the program by having the students ask questions and outline expectations in detail during pre-placement. This helped students obtain a better understanding of the group and formed the basis for future discussion. The coordinator believed the pre-placement session built confidence in students after receiving this information. One-to-one meetings

also contributed to this outcome. Such meetings also helped students feel more comfortable with the coordinator and, consequently, they felt able to approach this individual with questions both before and after their arrival in the foreign destination. This research found that this initial meeting was a main tool to inform students about the program.

Like in the current study, Ward, Frost and Yonge's (2004) study reported students' experiences related to pre-placement activities, language and cultural issues as well as financial concerns. The results of their study clearly showed that a well organized pre-placement program, where thorough planning takes place prior to ICE, provided a unique opportunity for students to acquire personal and professional skills in an unfamiliar environment (Ward et al., 2004). The data suggested that features of the placement administration as well as pre-placement programming contributed to effective ICE.

While most of the research emphasizes students' positive views of the pre-placement preparation phase of ICE programs, the current study provides more balanced views. All four student participants described, especially in the first interview, how pre-placement was a positive experience. And all four described, in their interviews following ICE, how pre-placement programming could be improved for it had in some ways impeded their success.

Characteristics of Students and Workplace Supervisors that Contribute to Successful Placement

The second aim of this study was to find out what student characteristics and workplace supervisor characteristics facilitated and supported successful completion of the international placement. In this section, characteristics of students are discussed first, followed by a discussion of characteristics of workplace supervisors. Soft skills were reported to be very important and are supported by previous research. Further, past experiences of students supported their successful completion of the ICE. Personal support from family was clearly helpful also.

Students need to understand that they must be flexible and show initiative in placements that are typically in isolated conditions. Characteristics of tenacity, interpersonal skills, determination, and problem solving were key characteristics that students reported in this research supported their ICE placements. One student indicated that taking initiative in a foreign environment where very little is similar to the home country was critical. Also, remaining persistent and flexible in the non-electronic environment with little computer technology was important to these students. Proactive interpersonal skills that supported forming needed professional and personal relationships were critical factors to success for these students. Language skills were also important. This is consistent with the literature in this field (Beard, Coll, & Harris, 2001; Bentley &

Broons, 1998; Coll & Chapman, 2000; Coll, Pinyonathgarn, & Pramoolsook, 2003; Ward, Frost & Yonge, 2004; Ward & Lasslett, 2004; Wong & Coll, 2001).

In the current study, creativity was highlighted as supporting solutions to challenges as well as patience and respect for cultural differences. One participant lived with his placement supervisor in a polygamist home. Cultural sensitivity was critical in this circumstance as well as being adaptable and non-judgmental. Being an independent thinker was highlighted by this participant as well as others in this study. Many of these personal characteristics of students are described in major studies conducted by Coll and Chapman (2000) in which participants in those studies experienced similar foreign conditions. And, ultimately, the research demonstrates the critical competencies developed while in the ICE placement. This was supported by a personal network in order to manage isolation and boredom. Research in this field highlights this and directly discusses the students' characteristics to facilitate an effective placement (Beard, Coll & Harris, 2001; Bentley & Broons, 1998; Coll & Chapman, 2000; Ward & Laslett, 2004).

But unlike the various findings of the studies reviewed earlier, the results of this study demonstrated that students believed that their past international experiences helped them develop characteristics that were brought to this program's placement. During this program these characteristics were developed further. This study demonstrated that it is challenging but possible to study characteristics students report bringing to their ICE experience, as well as characteristics they developed. The outcomes of developing confidence in a foreign situation included being able to persist in adversity and being able

to cope with change. This research demonstrated that prior experiences of participants helped them cope with change. The students recognized their own development through learning and an enhanced ability to evaluate their own performance accurately. As well personal support facilitated self-confidence and determination.

Personal support provided by family, friends, and professional colleagues outside the workplace gave opportunities to share emotionally demanding experiences that facilitated learning, self confidence, and determination in isolating situations. Students gave recognition to the support provided by families including financial support, creating time, and psycho-social support. Technology supported students communicating to their home social network which alleviated isolation and loneliness. One participant looked forward everyday to going on email to find communication from family and friends.

The role of workplace or on-site supervision was viewed as so important by the interviewees that it emerged as a category within two of the themes, both what helped and what hindered students' succeeding in their international placements. This research demonstrated that the personal challenge of living in a foreign country was alleviated when students had supervisors who offered support, comfort, and active listening skills. Work goals and personal goals were achieved in most cases because of supervisor support during the placement.

Many of the supervisors provided a good overview of the projects at the beginning of the ICE experience and looked for opportunities that would interest the participant. An effective introduction to the workplace and overall environment was

important to many students in the study conducted by Ward, Frost and Yonge (2004).

Toncar and Cudmore (2000) found that supervisors who made special efforts to introduce students to a variety of people, places, and unique experiences supported important social learning which better equipped students in the international work environment. These actions characterized the supervisor as a caring individual and supported the student in the early days of transition to the new cultural landscape.

The introduction to the placement supported students in achieving various activities. During the ICE placement, two of the participants in this study were able to travel to different parts of the country to observe projects; another participant presented a training session to various local groups with a consultant which, consequently, helped the participant understand the cultural environment. Participants completed proposals that were accepted by various Canadian agencies for further relief funding and the opportunity to lead community members in a project designed by one student was very beneficial to the student's experience. And some participants found that workplace peers were a factor in achieving goals. Projects were completed using peer feedback when the workplace supervisor was unavailable.

The workplace supervisor and workplace peers provided the student with opportunities to learn from their experience. Munby et al. (1999) found that gradation of tasks and responsibilities, questioning approaches, showing, and demonstrating are all methods used in the authentic workplace learning environment. Students learned in graduated sequences in the current study and felt comfortable in doing so. Ultimately, a

rich source of knowledge was developed in order to complete workplace tasks as an outcome of participating in the workplace (Munby, et al. 1999). This was evident in a number of projects students in this study completed in the short timeframe of the ICE placement.

Results of this research showed that concerns about supervisory communication were paramount. The absence of clear expectations at the beginning of the placement added to the ambiguous nature of one participant's role. Lack of communication created a frustrating, inefficient work environment. The lack of staff structure and communication related to not answering emails, having no arranged meeting times to set objectives for the student, and misunderstanding of the student skills and even why the individual was present were concerns for one participant. The participant believed that a job description would have facilitated the expectations required of the intern. Perhaps effective learning objectives could have also supported this endeavour. Understanding the student role and responsibilities is critical to successful outcomes in an ICE placement. Similar to the present study, Ward and Laslett (2004) found that students in their study concluded that supervisors could have been better briefed about the work the students were expected to do. Students were unclear at the beginning of the placement how the site operated and at times supervisors did not understand the type of work the student was capable of doing (Ward & Laslett, 2004).

The current research demonstrated that positive and constructive feedback and recognizing information overload are critical attributes of the supervisor. Students who

received support and encouragement with clear communication reported they were better able to progress. As well, supervisors providing knowledge of local people and customs, with their extensive knowledge of the culture and the projects, was important for successful experiences for these students.

An informative finding in the current study was that the final paper that students had to complete addressed learning experiences and helped students better understand their work placement experience. Employer evaluations were seen as useful tools but the reflective paper was considered most beneficial by the students. The most important issue here is ensuring these methods support the student's learning in the workplace to effectively link the curriculum to the real world situations. Studies describe different ways of evaluating students on ICE work terms. Typically these means of evaluation involve writing reports or essays which document the international experience both on and off the job (Ward & Laslett, 2004; Webber, 2005). An evaluation of performance while on placement is also a critical aspect of the assessment process. Typically students are required to demonstrate certain competencies and skills which include showing initiative, effective interaction with staff, and using good supportive literature, as well as having proficient report writing ability, effective time management skills, and practical skills in managing the foreign environment (Ward & Laslett, 2004). Students also have to demonstrate an understanding of the cultural aspect of the workplace including its functions and processes, its values and its relationships with cultural issues (Webber, 2005). The on-site supervisor can make recommendations and write a report on the

student's final performance, but in Webber's study the evaluation of the placement was the responsibility of the post- secondary institution representative (Webber, 2005).

Practice in a real world context can support what is learned during the classes and the opportunity to assess methods used in the workplace can be conducted on the return to the academic environment (Branton, Van Gyn, Cutt, Loken, New & Ricks, 1996). As Kysilka (1998) explained the curriculum would be more meaningful to students, if they could use a body of related information in real life situations. Some participants of the study could not find the linkage between their studies and work experiences and unfortunately feedback was not readily available from the placement co-ordinator or supervisor in some cases. Team work was not possible as some participants of the study were isolated individual contributors with no colleagues that were accessible.

In summary, the findings of the current study were consistent with previous research, but also made a contribution. The students were frank in describing both the positive and negative actions and approaches taken by their workplace supervisors. They highlighted the importance of clear communication, clear goals, worthwhile tasks, and help with adjusting to the cultural context. The importance of communication technology also emerged, which was not such a prevalent feature of daily life when previous studies were conducted.

The Contribution of Mentoring to Students' Success

It is clear that supervisor characteristics are critical to success and where good supervision is not present students will not progress, as expected. Billett (2006) claimed

that the learning that occurs through everyday interaction and decision-making at work is shaped by activities individuals engage in, direct guidance they receive, and the indirect contributions provided by the environment of the workplace. If supervisory relationships developed with the students, mentoring relationships could be present. Understanding whether mentoring relationships were present and whether they contributed to student success was the third aim of this study. The interviewees in the current study spoke about their goals for mentoring before the work experience but found that mentoring was not focused on during the actual placement. And given the high expectations for psychosocial support and relationships in most of the models of mentoring, it may not be surprising that only a few actions that might be considered secondary mentoring (Thuynsma, 1997) were described by participants. However, I believe that there is opportunity for this type of relationship to develop under proper conditions in an ICE placement; perhaps, as the student participants suggested, a longer placement is required.

It is clear that the term mentor is reserved for a relationship that is regarded as unique and has a significant impact. Mentors must have knowledge of the environment including the organization and the people in it, have respect from their peers, have organizational power in the organization, and be seen as someone who is upward mobile (Van Gyn & Ricks, 1998). Most importantly the mentor must have excellent interpersonal, counselling, and problem solving skills (Burke & McKeen, 1990). Van Gyn and Ricks (1998) outlined that the most influential mentor experience is one that is experienced by the mentee as transformational. This relationship is two-way, deeply

personal, and focuses on and affects the mentee in a significant way. The personal motivational and achievement component of the relationship is more significant than job support functions. This type of mentoring relationship was not present in these research findings; consequently, it must be identified why mentoring was absent at various levels. Not only could the short duration of the work placements have contributed, but the organizational constraints surrounding the work environment could hinder the development of the mentoring relationship. Van Gyn and Ricks (1998) argued that the workplace can be a difficult setting to institute changes that foster such relationships. Workplaces have reward systems that emphasize bottom line results; therefore, mentoring relationships may not be a priority. The structure of work could minimize interaction between individuals and the culture of the organization can make mentoring difficult to develop, as well as assumptions and attitudes that get in the way of developing these relationships (Kram, 1985). Many of these reasons could have contributed to the absence of mentoring relationships in the current research data.

Participants believed a longer placement would have facilitated a better work experience and given potential for mentoring to evolve. Participants believed that the 8 week placement did not even provide enough time to become productive in the work environment and therefore there would be no opportunity to move into a role that would provide the best work experiences. Job shadowing was present in one student's experience but that was limited, again, because of the duration of the placement.

Billett (1995) outlined that reluctance by experts to provide coaching and mentoring may inhibit the outcomes of workplace learning. Experts who are not rewarded or who fear displacement may be unwilling to provide guidance and access to more increasingly complex tasks which are essential for learners. Ultimately, required expertise must be available and, therefore, a lack of it can have a negative effect upon workplace learning. In one study (Billett, 1995), novice staff worked alongside experts during the commissioning of a processing plant. These novices gained important knowledge which allowed them to take responsibility for the operation and to effectively solve problems during production. Also, close guidance and instructional intervention are likely required to develop understanding about knowledge that is hidden from novices. Knowledge is often inaccessible to the novice without guidance of an expert (Billett, 1995).

Cullingford (2006) outlined that mentoring is developmental in nature while listening and advising are critical skills of mentors. A mentor is a discussion partner who does not judge and thus creates an independent relationship. Therefore perhaps a mentor should have no appraisal or reporting obligation, unlike a supervisor.

A mentor can be someone who is not in a supervisory role but this research could not identify anyone outside the supervisor who even demonstrated secondary mentoring (Thuynsma, 1997). This is concerning because this role could positively influence a successful outcome but, again, the length of the work placement could be a factor in none of the research participants identifying this role in non-supervisors. It would appear that

ICE placements are not designed and executed to ensure mentoring relationships develop between workplace supervisors and college students.

Limitations of Research Study

Limitations of this research study are related to the method. Utilizing the interview as the main data gathering tool has limitations, mainly that interviews are prone to misunderstandings. While recognizing the importance of context as well as the possible influence of subjectivity, the issues of reliability and validity can be a concern (Coll et al., 2003). My background working in a community college, engaging in international travel, and working with a research group on co-operative education helped me to understand the perspectives expressed in the interviews although it could be said that it might have influenced how I interpreted the findings. These issues were identified in the design of the study, and data triangulation was used with various sources of data to find regularities in the data in order to see whether the same patterns keep recurring. Not surprisingly, there was considerable consistency between the coordinator's perspective and the information available in documents about the program. There was also data from both the coordinator and the students in many of the categories making up the three themes. An additional observation that supports the trustworthiness of the data is the finding that a number of the categories within the three emergent themes were not anticipated in the research questions, and represent the participants' perspectives. While the three categories in the theme of *what contributed to student success* were all anticipated in the research questions, and two categories in the theme of *what hindered*

student success were anticipated, the category of *isolation from others* was not anticipated. Similarly, the theme of *goals achieved*, with its two categories, *students' goals* and *college goals* were not anticipated.

Another limitation of this study is the utilization of one small group of students at one point in time, all attending one small program, as the sample for the research. Opportunity for diversity in background may be lacking and the researcher's perception was limited to that time frame. Therefore, students with similar background may perceive their experience in a similar fashion with limited time to explore the issues. But other studies in this field (e.g., Coll & Chapman, 2000) have also used one sample group of students with limited timeframes. And, further, because this research was intended to focus on the case of one program, the only one of its kind in Canada, this limitation could be seen as strength. The intent is not to generalize the findings but, as Merriam (1998) concludes, when the researcher provides details of the context, methodology, and interpretation, the reader can decide if the findings are relevant to their own situation.

Implications for Further Research

The results of the present inquiry contribute to the research literature on international co-operative education in that this study provides data on the perceptions of students and of the placement co-ordinator on pre-placement, mentoring relationships, as well as student and supervisor characteristics for success. This research has helped to identify issues of importance for international co-operative education programs.

Multiple perspective case studies with the student as focal participant might better support understanding ICE. If the student, program coordinator, and workplace supervisor of the student were all interviewed perhaps a fuller account of ICE could be developed. Determining what the student brings to the ICE placement has received little attention in the literature. It proved difficult in this study to discern what characteristics students brought to the experience and what characteristics developed through the ICE experience, even though the study was designed with this in mind. A qualitative research study that informs the research in this area, as well as better understands on-site supervisor qualities for contributing to successful ICE would help researchers and practitioners conclude what recommendations are required to better inform research and practice.

Further studies in this area could include case study analysis focusing on post ICE experiences. Collecting data on student success rate in securing full time employment in a foreign destination, or having clear evidence that ICE experience was a key element in securing a desired full time opportunity, would provide data currently unavailable. Understanding what type of opportunities students have found and if they were considered better prepared because of the ICE experience could be explored. Perhaps a mixed method approach could best identify student feedback and statistical data related to participation rate in full time employment. Coll, Pinyonattagarn and Pramoolsook (2005) discovered a mixed method approach helped identify key qualitative and quantitative data when evaluating a Thai program and its perceived benefits. Little

qualitative or quantitative research has focused on the specific accomplishments of students after an international workplace experience although it has been commonly claimed in the literature that students believe they will have a competitive edge when they look for employment after graduation with international co-operative education experience as well as be able to apply their knowledge to the work environment more easily because of workplace experience (Laycock, Hermon & Laetz, 1992). The research suggests that international co-operative education brings extended benefits to students compared to a domestic placement in securing full time professional employment. Further research is required to identify if this is the case.

Implications for Practice

The overall research purpose was to understand and describe specific factors that contributed to a successful co-operative education experience from the perspectives of college students who have been successful in ICE and of the program coordinator of an ICE program. It seems that these students found that many benefits were realized. This research also identified issues that need to be addressed related to pre-placement, supervisory support, and mentoring relationships during placement. For example, looking at how pre-placement objectives are consistent for all students can be reviewed as these objectives could bring consistency across the student experiences. This research found that previous research in this field does not distinguish between pre-placement and post-placement student characteristics that contributed to the students' success in the

international work experiences. Research in the field has focused on the characteristics developed within the placement (Coll & Chapman, 2000).

The students were clear in expressing themselves, in interviews before their ICE experience, that they valued the pre-placement component of the program and all the planning that it provided to enable them to set up and prepare for the international placement. They valued both the preparation for their work and the preparation for the challenges of living in a different culture in a developing country. Following the placement, they could see that the pre-placement planning had contributed to their success but that some aspects of the pre-placement program could be improved. Research studies have found similar results (Coll, Pinyonattagarn & Pramoolsook, 2005). They especially wanted better communication among all the key actors in the college and in the placement. While they had difficulty anticipating which of their characteristics might contribute most to their placement success, they had clear ideas about the value of their initiative, communication, and cross-cultural skills among others. They also focused on skills and experiences that they brought to the program (not developed in the program) like languages. While they valued on-site supervision, after having completed the practicum, they could also see how the supervision could be improved and recommended better communication and more effective mentoring during the placement. Better understanding of on-site supervisors' approaches and of their supervisory methods would better help understand what is being done well in the field and what could be improved. Coll, Pinyonattagarn and Pramoolsook (2005) discovered that lack of supervisor methods

including effective interpersonal skills was a concern of students. The literature cited in their study was conducted before advanced types of technology were present for professional and certainly for personal use. The students in the current study had access to advanced forms of technology that supported communication with home. Perhaps supervisors could better use technology to communicate with students when isolated geographically. Further research could involve collecting data on supervisory approaches in the field and the tools supervisors use to support their everyday activities with students.

The participants in the current study did not consider their on-site supervisors to have developed mentoring relationships with them as such relationships are described in Thuynsma, 1997. However, they suggested that deep, psycho-social relationships might take more than eight weeks to develop, and one of their clear recommendations was for longer ICE placements. It was unclear if the students understood the role of the mentee but did believe consistently that longer placements would facilitate such relationship. Billett (2003) argued that a mentoring approach assists learning in the workplace and constitutes an enriching experience. But there are many factors that inhibit this learning role (Billett, 2003). Mentors must recognize benefits from the relationship (Billett, 2003). In exchange for new ideas and approaches the mentor can find the relationship that is beneficial to both parties. Identifying these factors and applying a consistent guideline for mentors might help to develop this needed relationship in a foreign environment.

The student data suggest that one of the most important actions that programs like theirs could take would be to focus, in every component of the program, on helping the students to understand the college's goals and expectations for the placement. This needs to be accompanied by the college working with the students and with the on-site supervisors to ensure shared understanding of clear goals for the students to aim for and clear means of assessing how well those goals are met. Mentoring goals could be identified to ensure supervisors to understand the expectations of a mentoring role. Mentoring is different than supervision in various ways. As identified by Cullingford (2006) mentoring is an advising, non-judgmental discussion partner who is an effective listener. Supervisors must provide direction, influence and judge work. Ultimately supervisors can decide if rewards or punishments should be implemented because the appraisal role is critical. Mentors do not have this role. Therefore, according to the students, unique goals that make sense in the context of the individual placement are important and enable the student to make a valuable contribution to their host organization.

Summary

This research demonstrates that pre-placement programming, student and supervisor characteristics, and on-going mentoring support are critical in effective international co-operative education programs. However, the students more desired, than experienced, fully developed mentoring in their short, eight-week placements. ICE placements have a unique dimension in contrast to domestic work placements

recognizing that the living environment plays a central role in successful experiences in the workplace. Transition to a foreign environment is supported by being prepared as well as by student and supervisory personal characteristics that support such transitions. As Billett (2006) claimed, post secondary co-operative education students will have a unique perspective as novice workers. Ultimately, finding ways of securing workers' interests is likely to be central to the task of engaging them in the kinds of learning that are important to themselves and to the workplace (Billett, 2006). Certainly the placement co-ordinator from the educational institution and the evaluation processes required by the school supported completion and reflection on the experience.

Increased career options are a major reason for participation in co-operative education as well as the perceived value of improved social and communication skills and the development of confidence and self-esteem in the workplace (Velde & Cooper, 2000). As well as facilitating career choice and the development of new skills and knowledge, the practical experience and reference building was important. Further research is needed to better understand the perceived benefits of the domestic placement compared to the international placement in securing full-time professional employment.

References

- Ashton, D., & Green, F. (1996). *Education, training and the global economy*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
- Beard, S., Coll, R., & Harris, J. (2001). Student and employer reflections of an international science and technology work placement. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Co-operative Education*, 2(1), 6-10.
- Bentley, J., & Broons, B. (1998). *Benefits of the international co-op experience relating to employability and future studies*. Melbourne, AU: World Association for Cooperative Education.
- Billett, S. (1995). Workplace learning: Its potential and limitations. *Education & Training*, 37(5), 20-27.
- Billett, S. (1996). Towards a model of workplace learning: The learning curriculum. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 18(1), 43-58.
- Billett, S. (2002). Critiquing workplace learning discourses: Participation and continuity at work. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 34(1), 56-67.
- Billett, S. (2003). Workplace mentors: Demands and benefits. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 15(3), 105-113.
- Billett, S. (2004). Co-participation at work: Learning through work and throughout working lives. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 36(2), 190-205.

- Billett, S. (2006). Constituting the workplace curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 38(1), 31-48.
- Billett, S. (2008). Cooperative education: Supporting and guiding ongoing development. *Journal of Cooperative Education and Internships*, 41(2), 37-44.
- Boud, D., Solomon, N., & Symes, C. (2001). New practices for new times. In D. Boud & N. Solomon (Eds.), *Work-based learning: A new higher education?* (pp. 3-17). Buckingham, UK: The Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.
- Branton, G., Van Gyn, G., Cutt, J., Loken, M., Ney, T., & Ricks, F. (1996). A model for assessing the learning benefits in cooperative education. *Journal of Cooperative Education*, 16(3),30-40.
- Burke, R.J., & McKeen, C.A. (1990). Mentoring in organizations: Implications for women. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 9(3), 317-332.
- Coll, R., & Chapman, R. (2000). Advantages and disadvantages of international co-op placements: The students' perspective. *Journal of Cooperative Education*, 35(2), 95-105.
- Coll, R., Pinyonattagarn, D., & Pramoolsook, I. (2003). The internationalization of cooperative education: A Thailand perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 4(2), 1-6.
- Collins, P. (1993). The interpersonal vicissitudes of mentorship: An exploratory study of the field supervisor-student relationship. *The Supervisor*,11(1), 121-135.

- Course Calendar. (2010). Ontario Community College.
- Cullingford, C. (2006). *Mentoring in education: An international perspective*. Gower, UK: Ashgate Publishing.
- Ellinger, A., & Cseh, M. (2007). Contextual factors influencing the facilitation of others' learning through everyday work experiences. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 19(7), 435-452.
- Hall, D., & Associates, (1986). *Career development in organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Hodder, I. (2002). The interpretation of documents and material culture. In N.K. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp.703-716). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kram, K. (1985). *Mentors in organizations*. Chicago, IL: Scott, Foresman.
- Kysilka, M. (1998). Understanding integrated curriculum. *The Curriculum Journal*, 9(2), 197-209.
- Laycock, A., Hermon, M.V., & Laetz, V. (1992). Cooperative education factors that predict success. *Journal of Cooperative Education*, 27(3), 36-46.
- Maidment, J. (2003). Problems experienced by students on field placement: Using research findings to inform curriculum design and content. *Australian Social Work*, 56(1), 50-60.

- Marini, R., & Tillman, R. (1999). Giving graduates worldwide the business skills they need through cooperative education. *Journal of Cooperative Education*, 33(2), 50-59.
- McMillan, J., & Schumacher, S. (2006). *Research in education. Evidence-based inquiry* (6th ed.). Boston, MS: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Munby, H., Chin, P., Hutchinson, N., & Young, J. (1999). *Co-operative education: Studies of learning from workplace experience*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (1967). *Community college mandate*. Toronto, ON: Ministry of Education, Ontario.
- Ontario Ministry of Education. (2005). *Post secondary education*. Toronto, ON: Ministry of Education, Ontario.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Placement Package. (2009). *International Development Post-Graduate Program Placement Package*. Ontario Community College.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Shardlow, S., & Doel, M. (1996). *Practice learning and teaching*. London, UK: Macmillan.
- Thuynsma, B. (1997). *Mentoring: Its mysteries and treasures*. Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Co-operative Education, China, 1998.
- Toncar, M., & Cudmore, B. (2000). The overseas internship experience. *Journal of Marketing Education*, 22(1), 54-63.
- Van Gyn, G., & Ricks, F. (1997). *An investigation of mentoring in post secondary education: A comparison of type and incidence in co-operative education and regular programs*. Proceedings of the Asia Pacific Conference on Co-operative Education, China, 1998.
- Van Gyn, G., & Ricks, F. (1998). Mentoring relationships as learning opportunities. *Journal of Cooperative Education*, 32(3), 41-55.
- Velde, C., & Cooper, T. (2000). Students' perspectives of workplace learning and training in vocational education. *Education & Training*, 42(2), 83-92.
- Ward, N., Frost, R., & Yonge, L. (2004). International cooperative education: The European experience for students in chemistry. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Co-operative Education*, 5(1), 27-34.
- Ward, N., & Laslett, R. (2004). International cooperative education student exchange program: Lessons from the chemistry experience. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Co-operative Education*, 5(1), 19-26.

- Webber, R. (2005). Integrating work-based and academic learning in international and cross-cultural settings. *Journal of Education and Work, 18*(4), 473-487.
- Weisz, M., Atchison, A., Eakins, P., Gowland, D., Reeders, E., Rizzetti, J., & Smith, S. (2001). Student staff partnerships in approaches to teaching and learning, *Journal of Higher Education Research and Development, 24*, 195-205.
- Wong, N., & Coll, R. (2001). Student experience of international cooperative education: Reflections on personal and professional growth. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Co-operative Education, 2*(1), 11-18.

APPENDIX A

January 26, 2010

Ms. Anne Hardacre
Faculty of Education
Duncan McArthur Hall
Queen's University

GREB Ref #: GEDUC-490-10
Title: "International Co-operative Education: The Canadian Experience"



OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES

Fleming Hall, Jemmett Wing, Room 301
Queens University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada
Tel 613 533-6081
Fax 613 533-6806
ors@queensu.ca
www.queensu.ca/vpr/

Dear Ms. Hardacre:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "**International Co-operative Education: The Canadian Experience**" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS) and Queen's ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been cleared for one year. At the end of each year, the GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB; of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (details available on webpage <http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchethics/GeneralREB/forms.html> – Adverse Event Report Form). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes in study procedures or implementations of new aspects into the study procedures on the Ethics Change Form that can be found at <http://www.queensu.ca/ors/researchethics/GeneralREB/forms.html> - Research Ethics Change Form. These changes must be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services or irvingg@queensu.ca prior to implementation. Mrs. Irving will forward your request for protocol changes to the appropriate GREB reviewers and / or the GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, PhD
Professor and Chair
General Research Ethics Board

c.c.: Dr. Nancy Hutchinson, Supervisor
Dr. Malcolm Welch, Chair, Unit REB
E-REB: c/o Graduate Studies & Bureau of Research, Attn.: Celina Freitas

JS/kr

SHIPPED FEB 04 2010

APPENDIX B

Letter of Information International Co-operative Education: The Canadian Experience

This research is being conducted by Anne Hardacre under the supervision of Dr. Nancy Hutchinson, in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

What is this study about? The purpose of this research is to understand and report on specific factors that contribute to successful international co-operative education experiences from the perspective of college students and the program co-ordinator. This research will hope to answer what role pre-placement plays in student success, what characteristics of students contribute to successful international co-operative placements and what role, if any, does mentoring by a workplace supervisor play in the student's experience. The study will require 2 interviews per student and one interview with the co-ordinator of the program. Each interview will take approximately one and one half hours with potential for follow-up discussions. The interviews will be recorded with a transcription device. There are no known physical, psychological, economic, or social risks associated with this study.

Is my participation voluntary? Yes. Although it would be greatly appreciated if you would answer all material as frankly as possible, you should not feel obliged to answer any material that you find objectionable or that makes you feel uncomfortable. You may also withdraw at any time with no effect on your standing in school and you may request removal of all or part of your data.

What will happen to my responses? Confidentiality can be guaranteed to the extent possible. Only experimenters will have access to this information. To help us ensure confidentiality, please do not put your name on any of the research study answer sheets. The data may also be published in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences, but any such presentations will never breach individual confidentiality. Data used for secondary analysis will contain no identifying information. Should you be interested, you are entitled to a copy of the findings. The data will be kept for a period of 5 years and then destroyed.

What if I have concerns? In the event that you have any complaints, concerns, or questions about this research, please feel free to contact Anne Hardacre; 7eah@queensu.ca; thesis supervisor, Dr. Nancy Hutchinson (533-3025); hutchinn@queensu.ca; or the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board (533-6081) at Queen's University, or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

This study was granted clearance by the General Research Ethics Board for compliance with the TCPS: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans, and Queen's policies.

Again, thank you. Your interest in participating in this research study is greatly appreciated.

**Letter of Information for Placement Co-ordinator
International Co-operative Education: The Canadian Experience**

This research is being conducted by Anne Hardacre under the supervision of Dr. Nancy Hutchinson, in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

What is this study about? The purpose of this research is to understand and report on specific factors that contribute to successful international co-operative education experiences from the perspective of college students and the program co-ordinator. This research will hope to answer what role pre-placement plays in student success, what characteristics of students contribute to successful international co-operative placements and what role, if any, does mentoring by a workplace supervisor play in the student's experience. The study will require two interviews per student and one interview with the co-ordinator of the program. Each interview will take approximately one and one half hours with potential for follow-up discussions. The 15-30 minute follow-up discussions will take place over the telephone, if required. The interviews will take place at the post secondary institution and will be recorded with a transcription device. There are no known physical, psychological, economic, or social risks associated with this study. This study was granted clearance by the General Research Ethics Board for compliance with the TCPS: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans, and Queen's policies.

Is my participation voluntary? Yes. Although it be would be greatly appreciated if you would answer all material as frankly as possible, you should not feel obliged to answer any material that you find objectionable or that makes you feel uncomfortable. You may also withdraw at any time with no effect on your standing in school and you may request removal of all or part of your data.

What will happen to my responses? Confidentiality can be guaranteed to the extent possible. Although efforts will be made to provide confidentiality, it is possible that some people might be able to identify comments. Only researchers will have access to this information. To help us protect confidentiality, please do not put your name on any of the research study answer sheets. The data may also be published in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences, but any such presentations will never breach individual confidentiality. Data used for secondary analysis in the form of reports and/or presentations will contain no identifying information. Should you be interested, you are entitled to a copy of the findings. The data will be kept for a period of 5 years and then destroyed.

What if I have concerns? Any questions about study participation may be directed to Anne Hardacre; 7eah@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at (613-533-6081) or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

Again, thank you. Your interest in participating in this research study is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Anne Hardacre

APPENDIX C

Consent Form for placement co-ordinator International Co-operative Education: The Canadian Experience

1. I have read and retained the Letter of Information and one copy of this Consent Form and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I will be participating in the study called International Co-operative Education: The Canadian Experience. The purpose of the research is to understand and report on specific factors that contribute to successful international co-operative education experiences. I understand that this means that I will be asked to participate in two interviews that will be recorded for approximately one and one half hours with potential for a follow-up conversation of 15-30 minutes in duration by telephone.
3. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time with no effect on my standing in school as a student. If I withdraw, I may request removal of all or part of my data contributed to the research. I understand that every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the data now and in the future. Although efforts will be made to provide confidentiality, it is possible that some people might be able to identify comments. Only researchers will have access to this data. The data may also be published in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences, but any such presentations will never breach individual confidentiality. Data used for secondary analysis will contain no identifying information. Should you be interested, you are entitled to a copy of the findings. Please provide me with your e-mail or postal address if you wish to receive a copy of the results of this study.
4. Any questions about study participation may be directed to Anne Hardacre at 7eah@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or Chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

I have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this research.

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return to Anne Hardacre. Retain the second copy for your records.

Participant's Name: (please print clearly) _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Consent Form for student participants

International Co-operative Education: The Canadian Experience

1. I have read and retained the Letter of Information and one copy of this Consent Form and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.

2. I understand that I will be participating in the study called International Co-operative Education: The Canadian Experience. The purpose of the research is to understand and report on specific factors that contribute to successful international co-operative education experiences. I understand that this means that I will be asked to participate in two interviews that will be recorded for approximately one and one half hours with potential for a follow-up conversation of 15-30 minutes in duration by telephone.

3. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time with no effect on my standing in school as a student. If I withdraw, I may request removal of all or part of my data contributed to the research. I understand that every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of the data now and in the future. Only researchers will have access to this data. The data may also be published in professional journals or presented at scientific conferences, but any such presentations will never breach individual confidentiality. Data used for secondary analysis will contain no identifying information. Should you be interested, you are entitled to a copy of the findings. Please provide me with your e-mail or postal address (on the consent form you sign) if you wish to receive a copy of the results of this study.

4. Any questions about study participation may be directed to Anne Hardacre at 7eah@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 613-533-6081 or Chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

I have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this research.

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return to Anne Hardacre. Retain the second copy for your records.

Participant's Name: (please print clearly) _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D

Sample Interview Questions

Co-ordinator

1. What are the outcomes that the College hopes students achieve by the end of the program?
2. What information do you want potential students to get from your brochures and calendars?
3. Describe the structure of the program.
4. What characteristics do you look for in potential students?
5. What student characteristics do you think are critical for the overseas assignment?
6. Describe the pre-planning process and its objectives.
7. In your view, what are the most important pre-planning activities the students must engage in to be successful in the overseas experience?
8. How do you match overseas employer with student?
9. What type of mentoring program is available to students overseas?
10. What kind of follow-up do you use to maintain contact with graduates of the Program to see if the overseas experience helped them in the full time employment market?
11. How would you describe the experiences of your graduates in the workplace after they have completed the program with its overseas placement?

APPENDIX E

Sample Interview Questions

Students

Student before the placement:

1. What are your goals coming into this Program?
2. Where will you complete your overseas assignment? Why did you decide to complete your practicum in this country?
3. What are the specific characteristics you believe you will need to be successful in this overseas assignment?
4. What did you get out of the pre-planning process?
 - a. Probe: What were the most useful outcomes you believed you received to help you on the overseas placement?
5. Describe the role of the placement co-ordinator in helping you to get what you needed from the Program prior to your placement.
6. What role do you think your mentor will play in your placement overseas?

Student after the placement:

1. What do you think are the overall strengths of the program?
2. What are the areas that need to be improved?
3. Specifically, what would you suggest should be changed about the overseas experience?
4. How would you describe your accomplishments during the placement?
5. What personal characteristics were developed during your placement overseas?
6. What characteristics of your overseas supervisor were helpful to your overall experience?
7. Describe any mentoring relationships that you experienced during your placement.