

5-1-2014

Applying Public Relations Theory to Assess Service-Learning Relationships

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Applying Public Relations Theory to Assess Service-Learning Relationships

by

Karen Strand

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
Masters of Arts
School of Mass Communications
with a concentration in Strategic Communications Management
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

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Date of Approval:
March 18, 2014

Keywords: Community Engagement, Relationship Management, Cultivation Strategies, Principles of Partnerships

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ABSTRACT

In Service-Learning (S-L) partnerships, universities and community organizations exchange resources and influence. Community engagement scholars Cruz and Giles proposed that relationships within S-L partnerships serve as units of analysis for the study of community outcomes of engagement. Yet, the scholarship of engagement lacks a suitable instrument to assess such relationships. This study brings together two lines of scholarship—relationship studies within community engagement and cocreational studies within public relations—to address the problem of assessing the community outcomes of S-L relationships, and it applies Cruz and Giles’ ideas about using relationship analysis to assess community outcomes when it considers the perspectives of representatives of nonprofit organizations relative to their relationships with S-L students. Specifically, this qualitative study applies public relations theory to the problem of assessing project-based S-L relationships.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Public relations and community engagement scholars use relationships as units of analysis to assess relationship outcomes. This study argues that community engagement scholarship will benefit from applying public relations theory to the problem of assessing relationships within S-L partnerships. In the following discussion, public relations scholarship precedes community engagement scholarship because of its earlier interest in relationships studies.

Public Relations Scholarship

Within her overview of public relations theory, Ferguson (1984) argued that the organizational-public relationship must serve as “the unit of analysis and focus of theorizing” (p. 648) for public relations research (Botan & Taylor, 2004). The author’s work generated lines of research that have become distinctive of the cocreational perspective within public relations scholarship. This perspective focuses “on relationships” and stakeholders as active “cocreators of meaning” who “make it possible to share meanings, interpretations, and goals” with organizations (p. 652). In addition, the cocreational or symmetrical approach values relationships beyond the attainment of organizational goals. Brown, (2012) noted that public relations scholars often include correcting imbalances of power among their axiological concerns. J. E. Grunig (2002) presented the symmetrical approach as communicating “in a way that helps to balance the interests of both organizations and publics” (p. 6).

From 1984 to 2009, public relations scholars worked to refine relationship definitions and to develop relationship measures and management theories. The focus on relationship management not only elevated the practice of public relations to a management function but also produced instrumentation to assess relationships. Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999) defined relationship maintenance strategies and

relationship outcomes for the public relations context. They developed measures to demonstrate the value, the return on investment (ROI), of the public relations function to the organization. Ki and Hon (2009b) extended this line of inquiry when they began to link relationship cultivation strategies to successful relationship outcomes. Additionally, scholars developed relationships measures to assess how publics or stakeholders perceive the function of organizations as community members (J. E. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1996, 2001; Ledingham, 2001 in Yang, 2005, p. 3). Ledingham and Brunig (2000) deemed relationship management a new paradigm in public relations.

In sum, the field of public relations has demonstrated multi-faceted interest in relationship studies. Public relations scholarship, an area of applied communication research (Botan & Taylor, 2004), has explored relationships in ways that community engagement scholars may find useful for their assessments of S-L partnerships.

The Scholarship of Engagement

Community engagement scholars Cruz and Giles (2000) posited that the community stakeholder's perspective replace that of the community at large as the unit of analysis in S-L scholarship. The authors' work generated a line of inquiry that uses relationships within S-L partnerships as units of analysis to assess community outcomes.

Similar to public relations scholarship, the scholarship of engagement demonstrates a cocreational perspective, and The Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) Principles of Partnership demonstrates the depth of the field's commitment to this perspective (Seifer & Connors, 2007, p. 12).

Although the structures and characteristics of partnerships may vary across departments and universities (Butin, 2010), they generally consist of networks of stakeholders. Bringle, Clayton, and Price (2009) described such networks in terms of relational dyads between students, organizations, faculty, administration, and residents (SOFAR).

Community engagement scholars have applied theories from a variety of fields to the problem of assessing relationships within S-L partnerships, and they remain uncommitted to one theoretical

perspective for relationship studies (Jacoby, 2003). However, such scholars have neither applied relationship management theory from public relations scholarship to the problem of assessing S-L relationships nor considered the results of public relations studies that examine the characteristics of relationships. In addition, few studies consider project-based S-L relationships.

Enos and Morton (2003) offered the first theoretical assessment of S-L relationships within the scholarship of engagement. The authors drew on personal experience and leadership theory to develop a relationship assessment instrument for program-based S-L relationships. The instrument, which scholars have begun to test, considers depth of relationship quality relative to its duration. Although the authors' work may apply to program-based S-L relationships with the potential for long-term engagement, which is the relationship of interest in the majority of S-L scholarship, it may not suit the context of project-based S-L relationships, which are inherently short-term. Scholars recognize that instrumentation based on Enos and Morton's theory is not appropriate for the assessment of all S-L relationships (Bushouse, 2005; Enos & Morton, 2003; Clayton, Bringle, Senior, Huq & Morrison, 2010). However, scholarship that applies Enos and Morton's theory offers valuable insight into the community partner's perspective (Bushouse, 2005).

The two streams of literature ventured into relationship research for different reasons. Public relations scholars investigated relationships for the purpose of demonstrating the return on investment (ROI) to the organization from the public relations function. Community engagement scholars became interested in relationships as units of analysis to assess the outcomes of community engagement. Any discussion that compares these streams of literature requires common language. Thus, this study applies terms that vary from the traditional nomenclature of each stream. Whenever possible, this study relies on terms from the social sciences that contributed to the development of each literature stream.

The stakeholder groups of interest to this study are representatives of nonprofit organizations and university S-L students. Adjustments to the language of public relations scholarship are limited to replacing the term "publics" with "stakeholders" or "stakeholder groups." The community engagement language shifts accordingly from "partners" to "stakeholders" or stakeholder groups." Additionally, the

scholarship of engagement traditionally applied the term “partnership” two ways: First, it described a network of stakeholders. Second, it described relationships between or among stakeholders (or stakeholder groups) that aspire to realize the principles of partnerships. Such relationships were deemed “partnerships” to create a special category of organizational relationships apart from other types of organizational relationships.

However, this study reserves the term “partnership” for descriptions of a network of stakeholders alone because using the term “partnership” to describe both a network of stakeholders, as well as the relationships within a network creates confusion. The term “relationship” is reserved to describe interactions between or among stakeholders (as long as they make up a sub-group of the network). With this definition, the term “relationship” can continue to describe S-L interactions between or among stakeholders who aspire to realize the principles of partnerships.

Statement of the Problem

The scholarship of engagement lacks a theoretical framework and instrumentation for qualitative assessments of relationships in project-based S-L partnerships with nonprofit organizations. Thus, a need exists for a theoretical frame and instrumentation to assess such relationships. This study posits that the perspectives of S-L stakeholders (students, faculty, administrators, residents and others) are not of equal value when addressing the problem of connecting relationship outcomes to community outcomes, and it privileges the community stakeholder’s perspective over those of other stakeholders. Additionally, it recognizes distinctions between relationships with representatives of for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Thus, this study limits the relationships of interest to those involving S-L students and representatives of nonprofit community organizations.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to apply public relations theory to the assessment of project-based S-L relationships. Specifically, it will assess such relationships between or among university students and representatives of nonprofit organizations from the community stakeholder's perspective. Scholars have largely overlooked these relationships, and few studies have succeeded in gaining the community organization stakeholder's participation.

One primary objective of this study is the development and testing of an assessment instrument that extends the relationship management index (Hon & J. E. Grunig, 1999) to the context of S-L relationships. Such an instrument may assess community stakeholders' perspectives of project-based S-L relationships with university students. This application of the relationship management index draws on the scholarship of engagement in two ways: First, the Relationship Management Index is adjusted to the study context. Second, cultivation strategies that S-L students demonstrate are explored for behaviors that representatives of nonprofit organizations prefer. Relationship management within the cocreational perspective in public relations scholarship serves as this study's theoretical framework. To apply public relations theory to participants' descriptions of their project-based S-L relationships with students, RMI relationship dimensions are treated as themes.

RQ1: How may themes of RMI dimensions describe participants' experiences of their relationships with students?

To highlight the contribution of students' behavior to relationship outcomes, participants' descriptions of students' behaviors are framed as cultivation strategies.

RQ2: How may cultivation strategies frame participants' descriptions of students' behavior?

To assess a project-based S-L relationship, themes of relationship dimensions and cultivation strategies are applied to a participant's descriptions to build a profile that privileges his or her perspective.

RQ3: How may themes of RMI dimensions and cultivation strategies frame a profile of a project-based S-L relationship from the community stakeholder's perspective to be used for assessment purposes?

Significance of the Study

This study may interest community engagement scholars, as well as public relations scholars for five reasons. First, it extends relationship management theory by applying it to a new context. Second, it suggests a program of interdisciplinary research between the fields of public relations and community engagement. Third, it suggests a research program with a convenience sample that will interest scholars from both fields. Fourth, public relations scholars will value this research program for further extending public relations theory to the nonprofit context. Last, it will suggest ways of incorporating public relations theory into S-L pedagogy.

The introduction of the study described two streams of literature that use the relationship as the unit of analysis—relationship studies in the scholarship of engagement and relationship management in public relations scholarship. The following literature review explores the qualities of successful relationships from the points of view of the two streams of literature. It explores the suitability of public relations theory to assess S-L relationships.

Organized in three parts, the literature review offers definitions and discussions of relevant topics from the points of view of the two streams of literature. The first part defines terms of the purpose statement. The second part introduces terms from relationship management (Ki & Hon 2009a, 2009b; Hon & J. E. Grunig, 1999). The last part compares the Principles of Partnerships to the terms of relationship management.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Part One

Operational definitions for the terms found in the purpose statement serve as the focus of this part of the literature review. Its organization follows the appearance of terms within the statement. First, the purpose is restated. Second, project-based partnerships are distinguished from program-based partnerships, and project-based S-L partnerships are defined. Third, S-L is defined. Fourth, relationship discussions from both streams of literature are summarized, and S-L relationships are defined. Fifth, the terms “community” and “community members” are defined from a public relations perspective. Last, community stakeholders are defined from a community engagement perspective and the conflation of the community stakeholder’s voice with the voice of the community is discussed.

Restatement of purpose. The purpose of this study is to apply public relations theory to the assessment of project-based S-L relationships. Specifically, it will assess relationships between or among university students and representatives of community nonprofit organizations from the community stakeholder’s perspective.

Project-based relationships. In project-based S-L relationships, students work to complete time-limited projects for community organizations. This study focuses on project-based S-L relationships, and it reserves the term *project-based S-L partnership* to describe the network of stakeholders that form to realize the goals of a S-L project. Partnership networks include representatives of stakeholder groups beyond the community stakeholders that are the focus of this study. The network includes stakeholders such as: professors, instructors, administrators, community members, government officials, etc.

Many university departments interact with community organizations on a per-project basis. Here, the course calendar often determines a project’s deadline and limits students’ interaction with a

community organization. An example of a project-based S-L relationship occurs in the public relations campaigns course where students receive credit for creating a strategic communication campaign for a community organization (Werder & Strand, 2011). A project establishes a relationship with the potential for reengagement but without the expectation of ongoing engagement. Thus, this study defines a *project-based S-L relationship* as a short-term, inter-organizational relationship between S-L student representatives of a university and one or more representatives of a nonprofit community organization.

Service-Learning. Scholars have noted the existence of multiple definitions of S-L. Kendall (1990) located at least 147 different S-L definitions, and the scholarship of engagement has yet to privilege one definition. This stance created a problem that Sandmann (2008) deemed “definitional anarchy” (p. 91).

This study relies on the definition of S-L provided by the course instructor to students in public relations campaigns courses and to the representatives of non-profit organizations with whom they would interact to realize the goals of S-L projects. Located in the course syllabus, the following introduced S-L to individuals from both sides of the relationship:

Service-Learning is a philosophy of education that asserts that students can achieve course learning goals and retain course content in more profound and lasting ways through experiential learning in a real world context. Service-learning typically takes place in the context of community development work or a social change project. Service-learning benefits the community and is directly linked to course curriculum, content, and goals, and it entails ongoing self-reflection exercises through which students reflect on the social context of the learning process, analyze their own relationships to other people and the world, challenge their own assumptions about social problems and issues, and cultivate a more committed sense of civic responsibility and social awareness.

(Werder, 2013, p. 1)

It is beyond the scope of this study to offer a general definition of S-L. Instead, it relies on the student-centered definition from the course syllabus.

Relationships within partnerships. Multiple stakeholders participate in S-L processes. Jones (2003) described a community organization stakeholder as an individual who serves “as an executive director or volunteer coordinator.” She identified other community organization stakeholders as “staff, members of the board of directors, volunteers, and recipients” of services (p. 156).

Bringle, Clayton and Price (2009) identified five stakeholder groups that represent primary S-L partners. The first two stakeholder groups, faculty and administrators, form the domain of the academy. The second two stakeholder groups, community organizations and community residents form the domain of the community. The last stakeholder group, students, forms its own domain. The three domains are referred to as primary partners. The authors discussed S-L relationships between primary partners in terms of relational dyads, and their SOFAR graphic (students, organizations, faculty, administrators, and residents) demonstrates the potential for representatives of one S-L stakeholder group to form relationships with representatives of the four other S-L stakeholder groups.

This study departs from Bringle, Clayton and Price’s (2009) designations by enfolding students into the domain of the academy. In terms of the authors’ relational dyads, this study focuses on the dyad of community organizations and students. Specifically, it focuses on relationships between and among representatives of nonprofit community organizations and S-L students.

In sum, Cruz and Giles (2000) posited that relationships “are the central defining dimension of community-campus engagement” (p. 31), and the scholarship of engagement has taken an interest in such relationships (Bringle, Clayton & Price, 2009; Clayton, et al., 2010; Dorado & Giles, 2004; Enos & Morton, 2003; Jacoby, 2003; Jones, 2003; Miron & Moely, 2006; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Worrall, 2005, 2007). The following explores relationship definitions from public relations scholarship.

This study applies two definitions of relationships from the field of public relations to S-L relationships. The following explores the first definition, which is from Broom, Casey and Richey (1997). The authors posited that “relationships consist of the transactions that involve the exchange of resources between organizations... and lead to mutual benefit, as well as mutual achievement” (p. 91).

Exchange relationship. In S-L partnerships, an exchange of resources occurs between community organizations and universities. Community engagement scholars Gazley, Littlepage and Bennet (2009, 2012) discussed such transactional exchanges in terms of reciprocal supply and demand. Here, universities supply labor and expertise to community organizations that need volunteers and expertise. Reciprocally, universities demand real-world opportunities for students and find willing community organizations to provide such opportunities.

The benefits of such exchanges include opportunities for students to “apply and test classroom knowledge in ‘real-world’ settings” (Gazley, Littlepage, & Bennet, 2009, p. 3). Academics “bring realistic experiences into their classrooms,” and they “give their students connections to community leaders” (p. 3). In addition, representatives of community organizations gain “an infusion of volunteer labor and organizational capacity, innovative ideas and additional expertise” (p. 3). The benefits to universities include opportunities to demonstrate social justice in their community engagement efforts (Worrall, 2005), and the exchange provides scholars with opportunities for community-based research. The second relationship definition, summarizes influences recognized by the cocreational perspective.

Communal relationship. Ledingham and Brunig (1998) defined the organization-public relationship as “the state which exists between an organization and its key publics, in which the actions of either can impact the economic, social, cultural or political wellbeing of the other” (p. 62). Here, behaviors of stakeholders influence the organizational outcomes of others, and relationships between or among stakeholders extend beyond the realization (or attainment) of organizational goals. Ledingham and Brunig’s (1998) definition compliments the normative expectations for positive S-L relationships within the scholarship of engagement. For example, Jacoby (2003) claims that a S-L partnership is not only “a simple exchange of resources among participants,” but also “something new and valuable, a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts” (pp. 7-8).

In sum, this study draws on the relationship definitions offered by Broom, Casey and Richey (1997) and Ledingham and Brunig (1998) to define a S-L relationship between or among stakeholders who participate in a S-L partnerships in two ways. First, S-L relationships indicate an exchange of

resources. Second, they indicate the power of S-L stakeholders to impact or influence the organizational outcomes of other S-L stakeholders beyond the realization of organizational goals. Thus, *S-L relationships* are defined in this study as exchanges of resources and influence between or among S-L stakeholders.

Community and community members in public relations scholarship. The field of public relations recognizes institutions as community members. For example, Kruckeberg and Starck (1988) defined community as:

The term applied to society and social groups when they are considered from the point of view of the geographical distribution of the individuals and institutions of which they are composed. (p. 52)

This study identifies community as a term (however abstract), and it recognizes individuals and institutions as community members. Thus, *community* is defined as the term applied to society and to social groups (professional, interpersonal, interest, intra-organizational or, inter-organizational) when they are considered from the point of view of the distribution of individuals and institutions of which they are composed.

This study extends its definition of community to recognize both individuals and institutions as community members. It defines *community members* as both individuals and the institutions they represent. In addition, this definition of community members allows for a discussion of S-L students as a group that represents the university.

Community and community stakeholders in the scholarship of engagement. Cruz and Giles (2000) recognized the obstacles inherent in defining the term, community, as a problem of geographic location versus social group. They proposed that the relationship between a university and a community organization replace community as the unit of analysis for S-L research. (Reader's note: This study uses the term, relationships, where the following quote uses the term, partnerships.) The authors wrote:

This is based on the assumption that the partnership is the infrastructure that facilitates the service and learning and is both an intervening variable in studying certain learning and service 'impacts'

as well as an outcome or ‘impact’ in itself. The partnership as unit of analysis not only solves the problem of “community” but also provides a framework for generalizations across communities.
(p. 31)

In addition, the authors found it more practical to assess relationship outcomes than to assess community-wide outcomes. From this perspective, S-L relationships function as microcosms of community, and the quality of S-L relationships speak to the quality of community engagement.

Thus, community engagement scholars have allowed the voices of a university’s community organization stakeholders to speak for the community, a move which allows representatives of community organizations who participate in S-L processes to attest to the quality of a university’s community engagement. This study defines *community stakeholders* as representatives of community organizations. However, the scholarship of engagement appears vague in its definitions of community and community partners. This ambiguity occurs relative to the question of whether or not it considers both individuals and institutions to be community members. The following summarizes the first part of the literature review.

Part one of the literature review defined the terms of the purpose statement. The term, S-L partnership, is reserved to reference a network of stakeholders who engage in an S-L project. This study uses the term, S-L relationship, to describe an interpersonal relationship that occurs within the network. Relationships are defined as exchanges of resources and influence, and S-L relationships are defined as exchanges of resources and influence between or among S-L stakeholders.

The course syllabus provides the definition of S-L. This study distinguishes project-based S-L relationships from program-based S-L relationships. The relationship of interest to this study occurs between or among S-L students and representatives of nonprofit organizations. It is defined as a short-term, inter-organizational relationship between S-L student representatives of a university and one or more representatives of a nonprofit community organization.

This study defines community as the term applied to society and to social groups (professional, interpersonal, interest, intra-organizational or, inter-organizational) when they are considered from the point of view of the distribution of individuals and institutions of which they are composed. It recognizes

individuals and institutions as community members, and it defines community stakeholders as representatives of community organizations. The next part of the literature review defines successful relationships.

Part Two

This part of the literature review focuses on the relationship management index (Hon & J. E. Grunig, 1999). First, the history of the index is discussed. Second, the terms of the index are defined. Last, the terms are discussed relative to the context of project-based S-L relationships between representatives of nonprofit organizations and S-L students.

The terms that define positive relationship strategies and quality relationships outcomes are discussed. Hon and J. E. Grunig's (1999) definitions of relationship outcomes and Ki and Hon's (2009a) definitions of relationship cultivation strategies are presented. First, the development of the definitions of relationship outcomes is discussed. Second, the definitions of terms are presented. Third, the development of the definitions of relationship cultivation strategies is discussed. Last, the definitions of terms are presented.

Historically, public relations scholarship's interest in relationship studies was motivated by a need to demonstrate the return on investment of the public relations function to the organization. Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999) noted that public relations professionals know something about "how to communicate with publics, in order to maintain a relationship with those publics" (p. 13).

Scholars and public relations professionals assess the outcomes of relationships between organizations and their key stakeholders. The results of public relations assessments of relationship outcomes can influence an organization's efforts to extend, to repair or to dissolve a relationship.

A line of research within public relations scholarship applied quantitative methods to assess relationship outcomes (Ferguson, 1984; J. E. Grunig & Huang, 2000; Hon & J. E. Grunig, 1999; Jo, 2003, 2006; Huang, 1997, 2001; Bruning & Ledingham, 1999; Kim, 2001; L. A. Grunig, J. E. Grunig, &

Ehling, 1992). J. E. Grunig (2002) proposed assessing relationship outcomes using qualitative research methods.

Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999) offered parsimonious definitions that characterize positive relationship outcomes and describe relationship types. The authors defined the terms for a public relations audience, and they describe professional relationships. (Readers note: The use of the terms, public or publics, within the following definitions differs from the terms used in the body of this study.)

Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999) redefined the dimensions of successful relationships from interpersonal communication scholarship for the public relations context. The four dimensions of successful relationship outcomes are: control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, and commitment.

Control mutuality. The authors explained that “Although some imbalance is natural, stable relationships require that organizations and publics each have some control over the other” (p.3). They defined *control mutuality* as “The degree to which the parties in a relationship are satisfied with the amount of control they have over a relationship” (p. 3). J. E. Grunig (2002) explained how control mutuality contributes to positive relationship outcomes:

Although some degree of power imbalance is natural in organization-public relationships, the most stable, positive relationships exist when organizations and publics have some degree of control over the other. One party may be willing to cede more control to the other, however, when it trusts the other—the next characteristic. (p. 3)

Trust. The authors defined *trust* as, “One party’s level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party” (p. 3). They identified three dimensions of trust: *Integrity* is “the belief that an organization is fair and just” (p. 3). *Dependability* is “the belief that an organization will do what it says it will do” (p. 3). *Competence* is “the belief that an organization has the ability to do what it says it will do” (p. 3).

Satisfaction. The authors explained that “A satisfying relationship is one in which the benefits outweigh the costs” (p. 3). They defined *satisfaction* as “The extent to which each party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced” (p. 3).

Commitment. The authors defined *commitment* as “The extent to which each party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote” (Hon and J. E. Grunig, 1999, p. 3). Additionally, they identified two dimensions of commitment: *Continuance commitment* is “a certain line of action” (p. 3), and *affective commitment* is “an emotional orientation” (p. 3).

The four dimensions of relationships summarize the outcomes of positive organization-stakeholder relationships. Additionally, two relationship types were identified: exchange and communal (Hon & J. E. Grunig, 1999).

Exchange relationship. The following explanation also serves as the definition of the *exchange relationship*. The authors wrote, “In an exchange relationship, one party gives benefits to the other only because the other has provided benefits in the past or is expected to do so in the future” (p. 3).

Communal relationship. The authors defined a *communal relationship* as one in which “both parties provide benefits to the other because they are concerned for the welfare of the other -- even when they get nothing in return” (p. 3). They explained that, “For most public relations activities, developing communal relationships with key constituencies is much more important to achieve than would be developing exchange relationships” (p. 3).

Although the authors included the idea of benefits in both relationship definitions, exchange and communal, the exchange relationship limits its focus to the exchange of resources. The communal relationship extends its focus beyond a simple exchange of resources to include mutual interests or concerns “for the welfare of the other” (p. 3). The following explores behaviors associated with successful relationships.

Cultivation strategies are behaviors that lead to relationship outcomes. Ki and Hon (2009a) defined *relationship strategies* as “any organizational behavior efforts that attempt to establish, cultivate, and sustain relationships with strategic publics” (p. 5). Assessments of cultivation strategies often focus on behaviors that lead to positive relationship outcomes. Scholars have posited that effective cultivation strategies lead to quality relationship outcomes (Ki & Hon, 2009a; J. E. Grunig & Huang, 2000; Hon & J.

E. Grunig, 1999). Ki and Hon (2009b) applied quantitative research methods to examine links between cultivation strategies and relationship outcomes.

Six cultivation strategies that lead to positive relationship outcomes are explored: assurances, positivity, access, sharing of tasks, openness/disclosure, and networking. This study relies on Ki and Hon's (2009a) definitions of cultivation strategies and their explanations of how such strategies link to relationship outcomes (Ki & Hon, 2009b). Such links are presented in this study as suggestions to allow the reader to envision how the cultivation strategies may contribute to relationship outcomes.

Assurances. Ki and Hon (2009a) defined *assurances* as “any efforts by an organization to assure its strategic publics that they and their concerns are attended to” (p. 9). The authors demonstrated that assurances can be a “primary predictor of all relationship outcome indicators” (2009b, p. 256). Assurance strategies allow stakeholders opportunities to demonstrate “commitment,” and “to raise issues and propose solutions” (p. 259).

Positivity. The authors defined *positivity* as “The degree to which members of publics benefit from the organization's efforts to make the relationship more enjoyable for key publics” (2009a, p. 7). Positivity is unconditionally a noncritical stance (2009b). The authors found that positivity can function as a strong predictor of “control mutuality, satisfaction and trust” (p. 256). Positivity strategies include “Providing a public with benefits and participating in enjoyable and courteous communication with them” (p. 260).

Access. The authors defined *access* as “The degree of effort that an organization puts into providing communication channels or media outlets that assist its strategic publics in reaching it” (2009a, p. 6). They found that access can have “a positive impact on control mutuality” (2009b, p. 256), and they explained that “having accessibility to express one's opinion is crucial” (p. 256). Access allows stakeholders “to join in the decision making process” (p. 256).

Sharing of tasks. The authors defined *sharing of tasks* as “An organization's efforts to share in working on projects or solving problems of mutual interest between the organization and its publics” (Ki & Hon, 2009a, p. 8). They demonstrated that sharing of tasks had an impact on control mutuality and

satisfaction. Sharing of tasks involves “accomplishing the interdependent goals and objectives an organization has with its publics” (2009b, p. 258).

Openness/disclosure. The authors defined *openness/disclosure* as “an organization’s efforts to provide information about the nature of the organization and what it is doing” (2009a, p. 8). The authors did not find a specific link between openness/disclosure and a particular relationship outcome, which led them to consider if openness/disclosure “is not a mutually exclusive strategy but rather a dimension of all cultivation strategies” (2009b, p. 259). However, the scholarship of engagement considers openness/disclosure an important S-L value (Jacoby, 2003).

Networking. Ki and Hon (2009a) defined *networking* as “the degree of an organization’s effort to build networks or coalitions with the same groups that their publics do, such as environmentalists, unions, or community groups” (p. 9). They found no link between networking and relationship outcomes. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to demonstrate the role of networking in S-L relationships, the scholarship of engagement that has examined the perspectives of representatives of community organizations has consistently noted that the opportunity to network with university stakeholders is an important motivation for their participation in S-L projects and programs (Cruz & Giles, 2000, Gazley et al., 2009). Participation in S-L processes may provide community organizations with a degree of visibility on campus. The following summarizes part two of the literature review.

This part of the literature introduced definitions of relationship outcomes and cultivation strategies from public relations scholarship. The following discussion focuses on connecting S-L relationships, as they are envisioned in community engagement scholarship, to public relations’ relationship outcomes and cultivations strategies.

Part Three

The following discussion focuses on connecting S-L relationships as envisioned in community engagement scholarship to public relations’ relationship outcomes and cultivations strategies. Hon and J. E. Grunig’s (1999) relationship dimensions and Ki and Hon’s (2009a) cultivation strategies are compared

to the Principles of Partnerships (Seifer and Connors, 2007). First, the Principles of Partnerships are presented. Second, the principles are compared to Ki and Hon’s (2009) definitions of relationship cultivation strategies. Third, the Principles of Partnerships are compared to Hon and J. E. Grunig’s (1999) definitions of relationship outcomes.

Table 1

Principles of Partnerships

Principle
1. Partnerships form to serve a specific purpose and may take on new goals over time.
2. Partners have agreed upon mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes and accountability for the partnership.
3. The relationship between partners is characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness, and commitment.
4. The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets, but also works to address needs and increase capacity of all partners.
5. The partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared.
6. Partners make clear and open communication an ongoing priority by striving to understand each other's needs and self-interests, and developing a common language.
7. Principles and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution.
8. There is feedback among all stakeholders in the partnership with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes.
9. Partners share the benefits of the partnership's accomplishments.
10. Partnerships can dissolve and need to plan a process for closure.

Note: Adapted from “Toolkit for Service-Learning in Higher Education,” by Seifer, S. D., Connors, K., 2007.

Service-Learning context. Developed by the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) in 1998 as “Principles for a Good Community-Campus Partnership” and revised in 2006 as “The Principles of Partnerships” the Principles of Partnerships document serves a normative function. It describes ideal S-L relationships. Editors Seifer and Connors (2007) wrote, “These principles, or values promoted by these principles, have often been cited as the underlying force for success among many

partnerships” (p. 12). Additionally, the Principles of Partnerships appears in many CCPH and National Service-Learning Clearinghouse publications to introduce the various facets of S-L relationships to potential S-L stakeholders.

The reader will again note that the body of this study discusses relationships that occur between or among the stakeholders or stakeholder groups who make up S-L partnerships. However, the Principles of Partnerships uses the terms, partners and partnerships, two ways: first, to describe the stakeholders or stakeholder groups who make up an S-L network; second, to describe the network itself.

The following applies Ki and Hon’s (2009) definitions of cultivation strategies to the Principles of Partnerships. The cultivation strategy, access, is first explored.

Access. This cultivation strategy emphasizes communication channels over communication content. Ki and Hon (2009a) defined access as “The degree of effort that an organization puts into providing communication channels or media outlets that assist its strategic publics in reaching it” (p. 6). In the context of the relationship of interest to this study, representatives of nonprofit organizations and S-L students must decide how, how often, and with whom they will communicate. Principle six states, “Partners make clear and open communication an ongoing priority by striving to understand each other’s needs and self-interests, and developing a common language” (p. 12). Additionally, principles seven and eight emphasize creating opportunities for input and feedback, respectively. To realize these principles, stakeholders must create opportunities to give input and to provide feedback. They must work on common language and agree on word usage. Ki and Hon (2009b) suggested that access can have “a positive impact on control mutuality” (p. 256). The cultivation strategy, assurances, is next explored.

Assurances. This principle emphasizes attending to the other. Ki and Hon (2009) defined assurances as “any efforts by an organization to assure its strategic publics that they and their concerns are attended to” (p. 9). In the context of the relationship of interest to this study, representatives of nonprofit organizations and S-L students must attend to each other’s concerns. For example, students must pay particularly close attention to representatives of nonprofit organizations who serve as their public relations clients in the early stages of projects, and they must attend to their concerns throughout the

projects. They must agree on a host of issues that center around the realization of project goals. In short, a representative of nonprofit organization introduces a team of S-L students to his or her organization's mission and communication goals, and he or she provides students with access to research materials. The team of students plans to conduct research and to produce the communication products they will return as recommendations for a public relations campaign. These processes require each to address the other's needs, to give input, and to provide feedback. The Principles of Partnerships emphasizes assurances in principles four, six, seven, and eight. Principle four states in part, "The partnership works to address needs...of all partners." Principle seven states, "Principles and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution." Principle eight states, "There is feedback among all stakeholders in the partnership with the goal of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes" (p. 12). The principles emphasize assurances when they promote: addressing needs, considering input, and providing for feedback. Ki and Hon (2009b) found that assurances can lead to four relationship outcomes: control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, and commitment. The cultivation strategy, positivity, is next explored.

Positivity. This cultivation strategy emphasizes making relationships enjoyable to stakeholders. Ki and Hon (2009a) defined positivity as "The degree to which members of publics benefit from the organization's efforts to make the relationship more enjoyable for key publics" (p. 7). In the context of the relationship of interest to this study, positivity is demonstrated in behaviors that make the relationship enjoyable to the other. Principles four and nine emphasize positivity. Principle four states in part, "The partnership builds upon identified strengths and assets," which suggests the principles promote taking an unconditionally noncritical stance (Ki & Hon, 2009b) toward other stakeholders rather than offering potentially offensive fixes. Principle nine states, "Partners share the benefits of the partnership's accomplishments" (p. 12). Ki and Hon (2009b) found that positivity can lead to the relationship outcomes of "control mutuality, satisfaction and trust" (p. 256). The following explores the Principles of Partnerships for the next cultivation strategy.

Sharing of Tasks. This cultivation strategy emphasizes collaboration. Ki and Hon (2009a) defined sharing of tasks as, “An organization’s efforts to share in working on projects or solving problems of mutual interest between the organization and its publics” (p. 8). In the context of the relationship of interest to this study, any collaborative efforts and shared problem solving efforts are considered shared tasks. Principle seven promotes sharing of tasks. It states, “Principles and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution” (p. 12). Ki and Hon (2009b) demonstrated that sharing of tasks can have an impact on control mutuality and satisfaction.

Openness/disclosure. This cultivation strategy emphasizes transparency. Ki and Hon (2009a) defined openness/disclosure as “an organization’s efforts to provide information about the nature of the organization and what it is doing” (p. 8). In the context of the relationships of interest to this study, organizations must provide research materials to students and students must provide organizations with project updates. Stakeholders must feel comfortable with sharing processes. Principle two promotes openness/disclosure. It states, “Partners have agreed upon mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes and accountability for the partnership” (p. 12). To the extent that stakeholders share information about “mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes and accountability,” they demonstrate openness/disclosure. Ki and Hon (2009b) considered openness/disclosure “a dimension of all cultivation strategies” (p. 259).

Networking. Ki and Hon (2009a) defined networking as “the degree of an organization’s effort to build networks or coalitions with the same groups that their publics do, such as environmentalists, unions, or community groups” (p. 9). None of the Principles of Partnerships promote networking. The following summarizes the discussion of the Principles of Partnership relative to relationship cultivation strategies.

The Principles of Partnerships describes successful S-L relationships. The comparison of Ki and Hon’s (2009a) definitions of relationship cultivation strategies to the Principles of Partnerships shows that descriptions of successful S-L relationships can be framed in terms of relationship cultivation strategies.

The following compares Hon and Grunig's (1999) definitions of relationship outcomes to the Principles of Partnerships. Control mutuality is first explored.

Control Mutuality. Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999) defined control mutuality as "The degree to which the parties in a relationship are satisfied with the amount of control they have over a relationship" (p. 3). Principles two, five, and seven emphasize control mutuality. Principle two states, "Partners have agreed upon mission, values, goals, measurable outcomes and accountability for the partnerships." Principle five states, "The partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared." Principle seven states, "Principles and processes for the partnership are established with the input and agreement of all partners, especially for decision-making and conflict resolution" (p. 12). When the Principles of Partnerships demands that stakeholders "balance power," it empowers each with a measure of control over relationships and relationship processes. Trust is next explored.

Trust and its dimensions. Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999) defined trust as "One party's level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party" (p. 3). The third principle of the Principles of Partnerships includes "mutual trust" (p. 12) in its description of a positive S-L relationship. Satisfaction is next explored.

Satisfaction. Although the word "satisfaction" is not found in the Principles of Partnerships, some principles reflect Hon and J. E. Grunig's (1999) definition of satisfaction. Here, stakeholders behave "favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced," and in positive relationships stakeholders feel satisfaction because "the benefits outweigh the costs" (p. 3). Principles five and nine emphasize satisfaction. Principle five states, "The partnership balances power among partners and enables resources among partners to be shared." Principle nine states, "Partners share the benefits of the partnership's accomplishments." The Principles of Partnerships emphasizes that stakeholders must share resources and benefits. Commitment is next explored.

Commitment and its dimensions. Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999) defined commitment as "The extent to which each party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote" (p. 3), and they described continuance commitment as "a certain line of action" (p. 3). The

third principle mentions “commitment” (p. 12) as a characteristic of an S-L relationship. However, it does not distinguish continuance commitment, which is a certain line of action, from affect commitment, which is an emotional orientation.

The discussion found similarities between the articulation of positive relationships in the Principles of Partnerships and in Hon and J. E. Grunig’s definitions of positive relationships. The comparison of Hon and Grunig’s (1999) definitions of relationship outcomes to the Principles of Partnerships shows that descriptions of quality S-L relationships can be framed in terms of relationship outcomes. The following summarizes part three of the literature review.

This part of the literature review introduced Hon and Grunig’s (1999) definitions of relationship outcomes. It introduced Ki and Hon’s (2009a, 2009b) definitions of relationship cultivation strategies, and it summarized their discussion of how cultivation strategies link to relationship outcomes. It compared cultivation strategies and relationship outcomes to the Principles of Partnership, and it proposed that public relations scholarship (Ki & Hon, 2009a, 2009b; Hon & Grunig, 1999) can frame discussions of quality S-L relationships.

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

This study takes a phenomenological approach to the qualitative application of the RMI. It first follows the approach suggested by J. E. Grunig (2002) who wrote, “Principles of rigorous qualitative interviewing can be used to plan and analyze” (p. 3) relationship dimensions and cultivation strategies to assess relationship outcomes. Second, it follows the process of themetizing the interview that Kvale and Brinkmann (2007) proposed for phenomenological interview research. The following restates the study’s purpose.

The purpose of this study is to apply public relations theory to the assessment of project-based S-L relationships. Specifically, it assesses relationships between or among university students and representatives of community nonprofit organizations from the community stakeholder’s perspective.

Description of Methodology Selected

This study’s methodology is the semi-structured in-depth interview for phenomenological interpretation. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) defined phenomenology as “a term that points to an interest in understanding social phenomenon from the actor’s own perspective and describing the world experienced by the subjects, with the assumption that the important reality is what people perceive it to be” (p. 26). Phenomenological qualitative methods allow the perspectives of representatives of community nonprofit organizations to emerge. The four dimensions of relationship outcomes serve as interview themes, and the language of interview questions allow for descriptions of participants’ experiences rather than opinions.

Design of Study

The terms of the Relationship Management Index (RMI), which were introduced and discussed in the literature review, presented two types of relationships and four relationship dimensions. The dimensions represent the outcomes of successful relationships. The index is appropriate for the assessment of organization–stakeholder relationships, and this study applies the RMI in the organization–stakeholder context. The relationship dimensions explored are trust, control mutuality, commitment, and satisfaction. The two types of relationships, exchange and communal are not explored because this study defines a relationship as an exchange of influence and resources. Additionally, a dimension of trust, integrity, is not explored.

Sample and Population

This study's convenience sample consists of ten representatives of nonprofit organizations who interacted with S-L students to realize the goals of a project-based S-L projects from spring 2009 to fall 2013. The students with whom participants interacted were undergraduates from the public relations track within a school of mass communications. All projects were arranged through the school, which is part of a large Southeastern public university.

The public relations faculty had invited organizations to submit applications, which served as requests to participate in the S-L project. The participants were located from a data set of applications, which represented over 70 S-L projects. The dates of projects described in the data set ran from the summer semester of 2002 to the fall semester of 2013. The projects from the years 2002 to 2009 were organized on an Excel Spreadsheet. Some projects that occurred during the 2010 to 2013 timeframe were listed by organization alone, and the public relations faculty helped locate the names of the contact persons for these organizations.

First round of contacts. Twenty-one of the 29 organizations that participated in projects from 2009 to 2013 were considered. Three projects were excluded because the organizations appeared to be for-profit. Four projects were excluded because of a perceived conflict of interest. The first project

occurred within the school, and the author of this study had participated in the second project as a graduate service-learner. The third and fourth projects occurred within the university. In sum, seven of the 28 projects were excluded before contacting participants.

Of the 21 remaining potential participants, 10 were contacted from information provided on applications. The remaining 11 were contacted online via their organizational websites. Working from the most recent to least recent projects, community organizations were contacted with an introductory e-mail.

The first contact e-mails were sent out the third week of September, 2013. These communications were intended to introduce community organizations to nature of the study and to the idea that they would be contacted again (within three days) with an interview request. The e-mails included the researcher's phone and e-mail contact information.

Most organizations acknowledged the introductory e-mail, and they replied that their staff members were willing to forward the introductory information to representatives of their organizations who had interacted most closely with students during the S-L project. However, more exclusion occurred at this stage. Two organizations appeared unreachable, and the researcher failed to locate contact information for a women's services center. Additionally, two organizations replied that no one currently on staff remembered working with students. One organization never replied either to e-mail or to phone communication from the researcher. Two organizations (or their staff members) replied that the person who had worked most closely with students had moved away and was unreachable. Two organizations declined due to their busy schedules. These exclusions reduced the number of potential participants from 21 to 11.

After the introductory e-mail was sent, five representatives of organizations immediately sent e-mails in which they tentatively agreed to participate. Three days after sending the introductory e-mail, the researcher contacted the remaining potential participants to further discuss the project and request an interview.

Three of the remaining 11 potential participants had either retired or changed positions. The researcher was able to contact all three and to gain their participation. Two potential participants still

worked for the school district in which the S-L projects occurred, and they were located using the e-mail addresses on their S-L applications. The retired potential participant had worked for a city organization, and she was contacted through the city's personnel office.

Eventually, 11 potential participants agreed to participate, and they scheduled interviews in late November and December of 2013. One canceled her interview. In sum, the convenience sample for this study consists of 10 representatives of community nonprofit organizations who worked closely with public relations students on S-L projects. The projects ranged in date from spring 2009 to fall 2013.

Other exclusions. Projects that occurred previous to spring 2009 were excluded from consideration. During the contact process, it became clear that the staff of these community organizations experienced difficulty either remembering the S-L students or locating a representative of their organization who interacted closely with students. Attempts to contact potential participants were then limited to the five-year 2009 to 2013 time frame.

Instrumentation

The interviews began with a general, open-ended question. Participants were asked to describe what they knew about the S-L students. The question was designed to help the interviewer "understand why people assess the relationship the way they do" (J. E. Grunig, 2002, p. 3). The questions that followed the grand-tour question explored the four relationship dimensions. Additionally, participants were asked about students' communication behaviors, and they were asked to describe behaviors they would have preferred from students.

Interview Guide

Question: "What do you know about the students with whom you interacted on the S-L project?"
And, "Describe your experience with students."

Probe to bring up the topic of first meetings: "Describe your experience of interactions in student meetings particularly in the earlier meetings."

Probe: If the participant discusses the first meetings with students, then inquire about the participant's experience of students' interest in their organization's mission and students' respect for the participant's area of expertise.

Question: "Describe how students communicated with you."

Question: "Describe how often students communicated with you."

Question: "Describe any communication behaviors you would have preferred from students."

Question: "Describe your experience of the ways how students responded to your input."

Question: "Describe behaviors you would have liked to have seen from students relative to responding to your input."

Question: "Describe how you and your organization benefited from interacting with students to realize the goals of the project."

Question: "What was your experience of students' research findings and recommendations?"

Question: "Why did your organization use the research?"

Question: "How would you describe students' skill in gaining your confidence in their abilities to benefit your organization?"

Question: "Describe any need you felt to oversee student work."

Question: "Describe how students delivered on their promises."

Question: "Describe any experiences where students caused you to feel that the relationships they built with you and with your organization would last beyond the end of the project?"

Question: "Now that the project has ended, do you envision the students interacting with your organization in any future capacity (volunteer, donor, colleague, etc.)."

Data Collection and Other Procedures

Although the interview appointments were for one hour (as promised to participants in the introductory e-mail), the interviews were completed in as little as 20 minutes and as much as 45 minutes. All interviews were recorded for transcription.

The interviews were conducted at locations of the participants' choosing, which included offices and restaurants. When the interview occurred in a restaurant or coffee shop, the researcher paid for the participant's purchases. Forms of consent were provided to participants before the interview and collected after the interview.

Data Analysis Plan

The dimensions of relationship outcomes and cultivation strategies framed discussions of this study's participants' interviews, and participants' responses are described using phenomenological qualitative methods (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Kreswell, 2007, Saldana, 2013). The interviews were first recorded as audio recordings, and then they were transferred to a digital voice recorder to upload to a transcription program. Eclectic coding (Saldana, 2009) was applied to each interview. The codes were review three ways: listening to audio tapes, hand coding on hard copies of transcripts, and applying computer assisted methods. The author of this study was its only coder.

The RMI and cultivation strategy codes extended the process of thematizing the interview into the process of data analysis. After assigning codes, a Word document was created for each code, and ten interesting statements were chosen to represent each code. During initial coding, names of organizations and individuals were removed, and the words of some transcripts were changed to protect the privacy of organizations and participants. This study does not include full transcripts to protect privacy. However, transcripts blinded for personal and organizational identifiers are available from the author.

To answer RQ1 and RQ2, the second round coding method, elaborative coding, was applied. The codes were assigned to RMI themes, and the themes were used to answer RQ1. Cultivation strategy codes were used to answer RQ2, and both codes of RMI themes and cultivation strategies were used to answer RQ3.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to apply public relations theory to the assessment of project-based S-L relationships. Specifically, it will assess such relationships between or among university students and representatives of nonprofit organizations from the community stakeholder's perspective. Scholars have largely overlooked these relationships, and few studies have succeeded in gaining the community organization stakeholder's participation. To apply public relations theory to participants' descriptions of their project-based S-L relationships with students, RMI relationship dimensions are treated as themes.

RQ1: How may themes of RMI dimensions describe participants' experiences of their relationships with students?

To highlight the contribution of students' behavior to relationship outcomes, participants' descriptions of students' behaviors are framed as cultivation strategies.

RQ2: How may cultivation strategies frame participants' descriptions of students' behavior?

To assess a project-based S-L relationship, themes of relationship dimensions and cultivation strategies are applied to a participant's descriptions to build a profile that privileges his or her perspective.

RQ3: How may themes of RMI dimensions and cultivation strategies frame a profile of a project-based S-L relationship from the community stakeholder's perspective to be used for assessment purposes?

To answer RQ1: How may themes of RMI dimensions describe participants' experiences of their relationships with students? participants' interviews were explored for descriptions of their relationships with students relative to four dimensions: trust, satisfaction, control mutuality, and commitment.

Participants' descriptions of the dimensions are treated as themes.

Trust

Participants described their trust in students during the early and later stages of projects. They described trusting in students' competence relative to respect for their areas of expertise and students' interest in their organizations' missions. They described trust in the later stages of projects in terms of their confidence in student's ability to realize the goals of projects and no need to oversee student work. Participants' trust in students' dependability was explored in their descriptions of the ways students delivered on their promises. Additionally, an interview question that was intended to verify trust elicited descriptions of control mutuality.

Trust is first explored as two time-sensitive themes, trust in the early stages of the project and trust in the later stages of the project. The following explores students' respect for participants' areas of expertise in the early stages of projects.

Respect for areas of expertise. Participants connected students' interest in their areas of expertise to getting to know their professional backgrounds. Such respect for expertise is explored as an aspect of trust in students' competence. In the context of the public relations campaigns course, students needed to understand participants and their organizations before beginning their endeavors.

Participants described students who respected their expertise and attended to what they said. They trusted students who planned for good results, listened to participants, and asked good questions. Negative descriptions included asking the wrong questions and failing to respect expertise.

One participant who had worked as an editor said, "Students seemed to think that I was an expert." Others described feeling a respect for their areas of expertise from students who planned for good project results. A participant said that during an initial interview students said: "We know this is what you're already doing, fundraising. We don't want to copy what you're doing, and we also want to compliment what you're doing so that it makes it effective." Another said that students: "asked what each of our roles was and the kinds of things that we were looking for," she said. And: "We explained to them the problems we were having and what we were looking for. They were very inquisitive in that regard so they could get us what it was we were looking for," she said.

Generally, participants described students' respect for their areas of expertise in terms of listening, attentiveness, and the quality of their questions. One said: "In that initial meeting, they listened very intently and had their questions prepared. I think they were very set on sticking to those questions and getting them answered. I understand where that comes from." Students paid attention to one participant's "ground rules" for word usage. And, she said: "They were very open to ideas. I felt that in the initial meetings they really paid attention. From the very beginning, I just felt like there was interest and there was buy in."

Another participant said: "In the first meeting, the students didn't necessarily do anything that would gain my confidence. I was just going in blind. They started to ask questions that gave me confidence, they showed interest, they were serious, and they were going to do something." He described his reaction when students failed to ask good questions. "I was really taken aback in the first meetings," he said. And: "They were almost arrogant. They were asking me questions about how to design this marketing campaign, but they weren't asking me the right questions. So I said: 'you know what? I'm going to let them go with it.' So, that's kind of how it worked out," he said. He described students' respect for his area of expertise as "lacking a little bit," he said. And: "They didn't get it to the point of saying, 'This guy just works for the organization.' There was an air of, 'We go to school. We've read some books, so were the experts,'" he said. The following summarizes participant's descriptions of students' respect for their areas of expertise.

In sum, participants described experiencing respect when: students directly acknowledged their expertise, students prepared and asked good questions, and when students listened and attended to what participants said in initial meetings. Arrogance and asking the wrong questions were perceived as a lack of respect.

The following presents participant's descriptions of students' interest in their organizations' missions. This theme further explored participants' trust in students' competence in the early stages of projects.

Students' interest in an organization's mission. Participants described how students worked to address their organizations' missions in project goals. They described trusting students who asked good questions, listened, and bought-in to project goals. Additionally, participants said that students gained their trust by learning about their organizations. Participants whose target demographics included high school or college age individuals trusted in students' ability to address their communication problems. A lack of trust was described in terms of students' lack of understanding: of the non-profit context, of the organization, and of its mission.

Students' ability to ask questions inspired trust. One participant said: "When we had our initial interview, just the types of questions they asked. I didn't feel like they were completely confused by what we were trying to accomplish. They asked good questions that led me to believe they were following me and what my goals were." Another said: "Initially, it was the questions. Who? What? Where? And, how we did what we did, and very good questions."

Another said students' listening skills indicated an interest in mission. "They really listened to what we wanted to target, how we wanted to target it, and how we wanted to change the marketing information that we had," she said.

Students inspired trust when they actively sought out information about organizations. One participant said: "I got the impression that they did a lot of research to figure out exactly what it was we did. And, sort of get an understanding of the kind of problems we were facing." Another said, "Students had to get to know the culture of the organization" before they started work on a fundraising problem.

Some participants trusted students' ability to understand their organizations' missions because their age group fit their target demographics. One said their similar ages caused her to believe that the communication problem "wasn't something totally foreign or that they really didn't know that much about. It was something that they could really see the relevance of," she said.

Some participants described difficulty trusting students. One said: "I just wasn't confident that they really understood everything in that short meeting we had." Yet, she said she never requested extra meetings with students. Another participant described how students' inexperience made it difficult for

them to gain an understanding of her organization or its mission. Although “one student was aware of nonprofits,” she said, “I think I would have liked the others to have researched and had more of an awareness of how nonprofits operate because it’s a different atmosphere,” she said. And: “They had to understand that this was a different type of cultural organization. We are centralized, and we are talking about one particular area. So once they understood” our living museum concept “we were great to go,” she said. Another participant said he was, “not sure” students showed a genuine interest. “The mission is pretty simple, in my opinion, which was to get the word out about our program. And they thought like they knew,” he said. The following summarizes participants’ descriptions of students’ interest in their organizations’ missions.

In sum, participants described trusting students who were: prepared, listened, asked good questions, and showed respect. Specifically, when participants were able to leave a meeting feeling that students had attended to them and understood their goals, students had earned participant’s trust in their competence. Additionally, students who showed interest in learning about the participants’ expertise and the organizations’ missions inspired trust. Arrogance, poor questions, and lack of interest failed to inspire trust.

The following explores a theme of trust in the later stages of projects, confidence in students’ abilities. Participants described their confidence in students’ abilities to realize the goals of projects.

Confidence in students’ abilities. Participants described the ways students inspired confidence in their abilities to realize the goals of projects. Students’ “enthusiasm about developing a way to get feedback from the community” inspired one participants’ confidence “because we hadn’t had that as a tool,” she said. And: “What I found very interesting in the team dynamics of the group was they went to their personal skills. So, you could see they thought about ‘how do I fit into this.’ There was never: ‘I don’t want to go to that neighborhood and meet people. I don’t want to cold call somebody,’” she said.

Another participant described how students’ perseverance inspired confidence. She said: “The students tried to do this focus group. They had it all planned out, and nobody showed up. So, the students

went out on campus and grabbed people, and the ones that agreed happened to be that age group that we wanted. I just thought the focus group and the way the students were able to think on their feet was great.”

Some participants connected professional behavior and educational achievement to their confidence in student competence. One said: “Well, I thought they were very well organized, and they took it very seriously. They all seemed to be very earnest in their attempt to get a good grade in the class and do what they’re supposed to do.”

A participant trusted students because, she said, “We collaborated very well.” Students inspired trust when they “seemed really confident here on campus, and when they were meeting with me either by phone or e-mail,” another participant said. And, “They also kept the communication short realizing time constraints and everything,” she said. One participant said: “In terms of gaining my confidence, I know the caliber of academics here. I knew these students were in their capstone class, and I was pretty confident about their ability to work with us.”

One participant who had invested energy in getting to know students and building a common language described a problem with trust. She had “no problem,” she said with students until after the final presentation when she learned they had neglected to depict her organization’s target demographic on a brochure cover.

She explained her process of getting to know students. She said: “Mainly, in talking to them I learned about some of their backgrounds, where they came from, and I think that’s important,” she said. And: “You have different ideas depending on the area you come from. So, that was one of the things that we found out: ‘Where did you come from? How did you grow up?’ because then we knew, well OK. If this person came from the Midwest and has never seen the demographic we serve, then their concept of getting to know this community is a totally new experience. They may come with preconceived ideas, and you’re not sure of where they are yet.” For example, she said: “If you come from a metropolitan area, New York or Philadelphia or wherever, then you’ve seen and you are familiar with a whole lot of things, which might not be present in smaller cities and towns, and it’s a lot easier for us to communicate.”

After students made their final presentation she said: “Then you find out, when we found out about some of the things they wanted to do.” Through the product they created students demonstrated that they “were unsuccessful in understanding,” the organization and its needs, she said. And, this caused her to adjust her “expectation in their competence,” she said.

Some students failed to inspire confidence. One participant said, “We have to emphasize that they need to use their natural curiosity. You didn’t feel that interaction. They were following the script.” Another said students’ “style of communication” undermined her confidence in their abilities. She said, “Some people were too casual, and the communication may have been closer to texting.” And, she said, “Maybe I felt like, ‘I hope they know what they’re doing!’” Initial problems with students prevented one participant from fully trusting them. He said, “I wasn’t very confident in general, but I understood that this was a learning experience.” The following summarizes participants’ descriptions of their confidence in students in the later stages of projects.

In sum, participants described the ways students either gained or lost their trust. They described how students’ enthusiasm for project goals, demonstration of positive team dynamics, and perseverance in their efforts inspired confidence. Additionally, participants extended trust to students who demonstrated academic achievement, collaborated with the participant, communicated in a professional manner, and attempted to understand the organization. They described a lack of trust in students who failed to realize project goals, lacked natural curiosity, or communicated in an unprofessional manner. The following explores participants’ descriptions of the ways students delivered on their promises.

Students’ dependability. Participants described students who over delivered on their promises, delivered on their promises, or did not overpromise. Students who over delivered on their promises did more than they said they would do for organizations. One participant said: “If anything, I did receive more than they promised because they actually did put together all the research and everything placed together in a very organized binder that I did not expect and was not promised. But, when I received it, I was very impressed with the work and time they put into it.” Another said that students’

recommendations were “more than I thought they would have done.” And, “I’m really impressed with what they were able to deliver in that short time period with what they had,” she said.

Some participants described students who delivered on their promises. A participant said, “I thought students did all they said they were going to do,” and another said students’ work “was very useful.”

Those who said students did not overpromise had also described lesser satisfaction with project results. One said: “I don’t think students overpromised. I think they did the best work they could possibly do. I think they were really committed to our project.” Another said: “It was basically, ‘We are going to put things together as recommendations,’ so, they kept to their promise,” he said. The following summarizes participants’ descriptions of the ways students delivered on their promises.

In sum, participants described their experiences of students’ dependability relative to the ways they delivered on their promises. They described students who over delivered on their promises, delivered on their promises, or did not overpromise. The following explores a theme of trust, a need to oversee students’ work. The theme arose from an interview question intended to elicit descriptions of trust (competence reversed).

Need to oversee student work. Participants described a need to oversee students’ work two ways. They verified their trust in students’ competence when they indicated that they felt no need to oversee student work, or they said they needed to oversee student work and raised an issue of control mutuality. The following briefly explores this topic, which is further explored as a theme of control mutuality. Some participants who verified their confidence in students described them as self sufficient and independent.

One participant described a need to manage student interactions with her organization’s stakeholders. She worked to manage a sensitivity issue that arose when students communicated with donors. Descriptions of a need to oversee students’ work are further explored in discussions of the themes of control mutuality. The following summarizes the themes of trust.

In sum, in the early stages of projects students needed to gain an understanding of participants. Students inspired trust when they acknowledged participants areas of expertise and showed an interest in organizations' missions. Participants described competent students as those who listened and asked good questions. Specifically, when participants were able to leave meetings feeling that students had listened to them and understood their goals, students had earned participants' trust in their competence. Arrogance, poor questions, and lack of interest failed to inspire trust.

Students' competence in the later stages of projects was explored in terms of participants' confidence in their abilities. They trusted students who showed enthusiasm for project goals, demonstrated positive team dynamics, and persevered in their efforts. Additionally, they trusted students who demonstrated academic achievement, collaborated with participants, communicated in a professional manner, and attempted to understand organizations. Participants verified their trust in students' competence when they indicated that they felt no need to oversee student work. They described a lack of trust in students who lacked natural curiosity and whose communication styles were too casual.

Students' dependability was explored in participants' descriptions of and the ways students delivered on promises. Participants said students never overpromised, and they generally delivered more than they promised. The themes of trust explored competence and dependability, which are two of the three dimensions of trust. The third dimension, integrity, was not explored.

The following explores the themes of satisfaction. Participants described satisfaction in terms of give and take, the value of students' volunteer hours, and long-term satisfaction.

Satisfaction

Participants discussed the benefits of interacting with students to realize the goals of projects. They described benefitting from project outcomes, and they acknowledged reciprocity in their descriptions of a helping commitment. Additionally, they appreciated the value of volunteer hours to their organizations, and they acknowledged the long-term benefits of the respective projects to their organizations.

Four themes are presented. First, the theme of give and take is explored. Second, the value of volunteer hours is explored. Third, long-term satisfaction is explored. Last, satisfaction with project design is explored.

Give and take. Participants described satisfaction in their S-L relationships in terms of a helping commitment and satisfaction with project outcomes. Three examples are offered. The first may describe overall satisfaction.

A participant described project outcomes. She said: “We felt like we received far more than they students probably did. We’re so grateful for that.” She then described her organization’s helping commitment. She said: “We enjoyed the process because we felt like we’re helping spark things in their future and opening their minds and to what’s possible, and we are always finding ways to reach out to the community. So, we felt like we were helping them along.” And, she said, “We thought it was a neat way” for students to have “something hands-on, something real, to work with.” She described her overall satisfaction with both the project outcomes and the opportunity to help students.

Another participant described a problem that occurred after the final presentations, which prevented her organization from benefitting from the results of the project. She said: “This is the complaint I have. Love, love, love them. Love the students. When they graduated they did us an amazing book and I never got the book. I never got any of it. I never got the results.” (Note to reader: After the interview, the author of this study was able to locate a copy of the book and present it to the participant). The contrast between her “love” of the students and their failure to provide her with recommendations may describe satisfaction that is lesser than the overall satisfaction previously described.

In the third example, a participant described problems in his interactions with students. He said: “I’m not saying that we didn’t get any benefit out of the work or the relationship, but overall what I expected we didn’t get. I think the main thing we got out of it was shock and awe of seniors and their inability to do business,” he said. Satisfaction was threatened by unexpected project results and unprofessional student behavior. However, the participant described a strong helping commitment. He said: “If I had an opportunity to help people take responsibility for their own learning, [then] that to me is

teaching. Plus, I wanted to help.” And, “One of the reasons I wanted to interact with students was that I understand the value of the real world context” he said. This second example of mixed satisfaction may be lesser than the overall satisfaction first described.

In sum, the interplay of give and take was most strongly displayed in descriptions of satisfaction that included helping students and receiving the benefits of project results. This suggests that the highest satisfaction in a project-based S-L relationship of this type may be experienced by participants whose descriptions of enjoying the activity of helping service-learners and of receiving the outcomes of a successful project are both positive. Descriptions of lesser (or mixed) satisfaction emerge in S-L relationships in which a participant fails to describe a helping commitment or describes project outcomes that fall short of his or her expectations, or both.

The following explores a theme of satisfaction, the value of volunteer hours. Participants described of the value of student’s contributions.

Value of volunteer hours. Participants described how students provided what their organizations otherwise could not afford. They described how their organizations benefitted from: students’ volunteer hours, university resources, and expert guidance.

One participant said: “Especially being a nonprofit, we really can’t afford to pay a marketing company. It helps us during the year-end report because volunteer hours equate to x-number of dollars. As a nonprofit it shows, OK, you only had five-thousand dollars but you used it on very essential things. Then you received twenty-thousand dollars worth in volunteer hours to help your program go.” Another said that interacting with students was “definitely, a cost saving measure” because “staffing was not there. So, we tacked into the university system to get resources.” And, one participant said that, “To get a website built from scratch can cost a lot.”

Additionally, participants acknowledged students’ contribution in non-monetary terms. “In this case as a nonprofit, I’m not looking to see how much money I can get out of you. I’m looking to see if you can essentially provide some guidance and some time to my organization,” one participant said.

In sum, participants described their awareness of the dollar value of students' time, and they recognized students' contribution to their organizations in terms of time and expertise. The following explores a theme of satisfaction, long-term satisfaction. Participants described ongoing satisfaction with students' work.

Long-term satisfaction. Many participants described how their organizations benefitted from students' recommendations in the long-term. In general, they credited students with introducing their organizations to social media. Some organizations uploaded student work to their websites, and others used student research to build new campaigns.

The projects of interest to this thesis occurred from 2009 to 2013. At that time, many organizations had yet to embrace social media. Students updated organizations' communication channels when they introduced them to social media.

One participant said: "At that time I had absolutely no use for Facebook or Twitter, no use. And, students introduced me to it." Another said: "Students had mentioned social media, and that was when Facebook was really new. The only problem was the organization at that time did frown on social media to where the suggestion was out of the realm for us to go," he said.

One participant said, "I'm sure the organization used pieces" of students' work "because the online information was part of their outcome, and pieces of it are on the organization's website," She said. Another participant described how her organization benefitted from the results of student-run focus group. She said, "We have to use this information because this is what is happening." And, she said, "The way it worked out," the results of the focus group "gave us some great information that we used in a campaign" that, she said, was developed by another group of students.

In sum, participants credited students with introducing their organizations to social media. Some organizations still used student work on websites, and others used student research in subsequent campaigns. The following explores the theme, satisfaction with project design. Participants described an issue of satisfaction.

Satisfaction with project design. Participants who seemed most satisfied with S-L projects described a good fit between their goals and project design. They described overall satisfaction with projects that addressed a communication problem, recommended a public relations campaign, or complimented an existing campaign. They described mixed satisfaction with projects that sought to improve on existing marketing campaigns.

One participant described the usefulness of a student-run internal audit to her organization. She said, “I was able to take everything that the students said and pair that up with everything we had been saying. And, we presented our communications plan along with the desire to apply methods to it,” she said. And: “I was able to get our board to agree to allow me to go through this process of initiating a stakeholder survey,” she said.

Another participant said her organization did not have “a way to get the message out to the broad community,” she said. And: “The students took that on, and they developed ways of getting information to the community and getting it out to the community,” she said.

However, participants who presented students with problems of reworking existing marketing campaigns put them in awkward positions. In more than one situation, the organizational representative was the author of the existing marketing campaign that students were asked to update. Thus, student work was compared to participant’s work. For example, one participant criticized the quality of students’ research. He said: “Their research wasn’t in error. It was just very seminal.” He explained that he’d been working on the marketing problem “for four years” and “we’ve built something from scratch, so we have a pretty good understanding” of what we’re doing, he said. Another said: “What students did was fine. I was pleased with that they put together for us, which was pretty close to what we’ve already had. As the marketing person at the school, what they produced was a good packet for me to have, but it wasn’t necessarily anything we we’re able to use or to duplicate,” he said.

Participants raised an issue of satisfaction with project design. Projects that addressed a communication problem, recommended a public relations campaign, or complimented an existing campaign had a better chance of eliciting descriptions of satisfaction than projects that rehashed existing

marketing campaigns, particularly in situations in which the participant was also the campaign's creator. The following summarizes the themes of satisfaction.

In sum, participants described satisfaction four ways: first, in terms of project outcomes and an opportunity to help students; second, in terms of the value of students' volunteer contributions to the organization; third, in terms of long-term satisfaction with student work; last, in issues of project design. Satisfaction in S-L relationships may be multi-faceted. Generally, satisfaction in S-L relationships may have something to do with the experiences that occur relative to a willingness to help and be helped. Additionally, complications of satisfaction may occur when students' work is compared to existing marketing campaigns. The following introduces themes of control mutuality.

Control Mutuality

Participants described their satisfaction with the amount of control they had in their relationships with students in terms of the ways students responded to their input and the behaviors they would like to have seen from students relative to responding to their input. Additionally, an interview question intended to elicit descriptions of trust elicited descriptions of control mutuality. Descriptions of control mutuality are explored as themes.

Seven themes of control mutuality are presented. First, three themes are explored: satisfactory control mutuality, issues with managing students' communication, and tensions with course design. Second, four time-sensitive themes are explored. First, insufficient communication in the early stages of projects is explored. Second, the mid-semester communication drop is explored. Third, insufficient communication in the later stages of projects is explored. Last, insufficient communication after the final presentation is explored. The following explores the theme, satisfactory control mutuality. Participants either verified their trust in students or they verified their trust in students and raised an issue of control mutuality.

Satisfactory control mutuality. Participants' descriptions ranged from students doing "a wonderful job" to "responding appropriately" to input. They described students who were generally

positive, considered input, and accepted feedback. Those who described mixed satisfaction with control mutuality had no complaints about students responding to their input, but said they lacked opportunities at key points in the semester to offer input.

One participant said students' response was "always positive. I don't remember anything where there was a problem or anything negative," she said. Another participant said, "I think students were very open to the input, to the ideas, and feedback." For example, she said: "When they were coming up with ideas they would call me or e-mail me to check. And they'd say: 'Hey! Is this possible? Or, what do you think about this?' So, they were getting feedback."

Some participants described mixed satisfaction with control mutuality. First, they confirmed that students responded positively to their input. Second, they described an issue of control mutuality. One said, "It was genuine a response, and they were definitely interested" in my input. And, "I just didn't have enough opportunities to give my input," he said. Another said that students' response to her input "was great." However, she said she needed more opportunities for "input in between the meetings and the final project." And, "There was a time period in between when there wasn't enough communication," she said. For example: "The students didn't say, 'please look this over and let me know.' I used to be an editor. So I'm used to getting something and giving my input, and I like to do that. I don't want to say, 'Here's all the information,' and they give you a final product and that's it," she said. The following summarizes the theme, satisfactory control mutuality.

In sum, participants generally described positive student behaviors relative to responding to their input. They offered three-part descriptions of control mutuality. First, they described students' behavior. Second, they raised an issue of control mutuality (if needed). Last, if they described an issue of control mutuality, then they usually described a preference for how to address it. The following explores the theme, managing students' communication. Some participants described a need to manage the ways students communicated with their organization's stakeholders.

Managing students' communication. Some participants described a need to manage the content and style of students' communication. One participant said a "sensitivity issue" arose when students

wanted to question her organization's sponsors. She said, "I did have to have some interaction with students on their expectations versus what we were allowed to present as an organization." And, she said, "We had to fine tune the polling system to find some common ground." For example, she said: "Students wanted to have contact with all of our past sponsors to ask them specific questions, and I didn't feel comfortable with that." And: "It was a list of twelve different questions like, 'Why do you give to the organization? Do you feel that you're getting your money's worth?' and, I don't want the sponsors to start thinking, 'Well, maybe I'm not getting my money's worth,'" she said. To assume control over students' communication with sponsors, she first asked the course instructor to intervene. Then, she said, "Rather than letting the students call the stakeholders directly, I figured they could go ahead and come up with a poll or questions. Then, I could go ahead and send it, and if the sponsors choose to respond then they can" she said.

Another participant said he empathized with students' inexperience, but "the way they communicated, specifically how they communicated, it would not be appropriate in the business world," he said. For example, he said: "I had to recommend one of the students because of the way he communicated with some folks that I thought would help with the project. The way he wrote an e-mail, it was not appropriate. I sort of had to call him up and say, 'Hey! You know you need professional relationships here. You can't be talking to people this way because you're essentially representing me because I brought you in,'" he said.

In sum, participants described a need to manage students' communication with other organizational stakeholders. This issue occurred in situations where inexperienced students interacted with key stakeholders, particularly with donors. The following explores the theme, tension with course design. Participants described tension between their goals and course design.

Tension with course design. Participants described their uncertainty about whether or not their needs for more influence over project outcomes or for more communication with students conflicted with course design. Participants were unsure if the course required students: to test communication products, to put one executive in charge of communication, and to establish regular communication.

One participant said: “We try to test products out on people of that age group, and I’m not sure that students had time to really do that. I think some of it is just a time limitation. I’m not really sure.”

Another said: “The team’s executive was the only one communicating with me, and that had to do with the course structure. So, I didn’t communicate with the rest of the team at all.” And, he said, “I wanted more communication, and it didn’t seem like I was invited to ask.”

A participant wondered if his preference for more communication was justified. He said: “The communication might have been a more regular. We did have communication. It was effective but at the same time not regular. We might have had it once or twice a month at most.” And: “Then you had to look at on their side. If they’re communicating with me, then is that too much? I don’t think I indicated it was too much, but at the same time I could see them working with a person who could indicate, ‘I don’t need to speak to you every week,’” he said. The following summarizes the theme, tension with course design.

In sum, participants described a tension between their needs and course design. They described their uncertainty about whether or not their needs for more influence over project outcomes or for more communication with students conflicted with course design. Participants were unsure if the course required students: to test communication products, to put one executive in charge of communication, or to establish regular communication. The following presents time-sensitive themes of control mutuality.

Participants described four time sensitive themes of control mutuality. First, they described a need for more opportunities to communicate with students in the early stages of projects. Second, they described a mid-semester communication drop. Third, they described a need for more opportunities to communicate with students in the later stages of projects. Last, they described a need to meet with students after the final presentation. The following explores the first time-sensitive theme.

Insufficient communication in the early stages of the project. Participants described a need for more time with students after the initial meetings to make sure their work accurately addressed communication problems.

One participant said the project “went really well throughout. The research was particularly interesting, and it helped,” she said: “The one thing that I would have liked to have done differently is I

would like to have been involved during the development earlier on. I think students just got to a deadline maybe, and they left out the information I gave them. I met with them several times and gave them statistics,” she said. Another participant said, “Before students launched into their endeavors, it would have been better to have had small group meetings where we could really talk further.” And, “I wasn’t sure of how much I was saying was getting through because they were focused on their own questions,” she said. For example, she said: “They’re like: ‘OK, well thank you very much,’ and off they went to do their project. I was a little surprised because lots of people have ideas about fundraising, and the world of fundraising is a lot more complicated than what I can talk about in twenty-minutes. And, just for me,” she said, “I felt I needed more in-depth conversations” with students. “If I look back on that process, what I would have changed was for us to have much longer time together. Then for them to come up with some ideas over a week’s time, and get back with me so that I could have said, ‘OK, here’s why that’s probably not the best direction to go, and maybe we can think about this or that,’” she said. The following summarizes the theme.

In sum, participants described insufficient communication with students early on in the semester. They described student behavior, and they proposed more meetings with students. The following explores the theme, a mid-semester communication drop. Participants described a need for more communication with students between the initial meetings and the final presentations.

Mid-semester communication drop. Participants described a drop in communication that began shortly after the initial meeting and ended before the final presentations. Some said they were left wondering what students were doing. Others said they wanted more regular communication with students and weekly updates between initial meetings and final presentations.

Communication “was a couple of times a week, and then there was a lapse,” one participant said. For example, he said: “It was kind of like, ‘OK! We’re doing our thing. Talk to you later!’” And: “It would have been nice for me to have had an update. I guess they were building their recommendations, and then they came with the end product,” he said. Another participant said: “I would have preferred a little more regular communication because at one point I thought, ‘well maybe they’re not working on

this.” And: “There were two or three weeks there where I didn’t hear” from any students, she said. “I kept thinking ‘I hope they’re doing all right. I want to help them, but I don’t want to reach out to them.’ So, I think a weekly summary or update would be good,” she said. The following summarizes the theme.

In sum, participants described a mid-semester communication drop. They proposed solutions to the problem, which included more regular communication and weekly updates. The following explores a theme of control mutuality, insufficient communication in the later stages of project. Participants described a need for more interaction with students to improve the usefulness of their recommendations.

Insufficient communication in the later stages of the project. One participant described a need for opportunities to influence project outcomes. He described a change in his understanding of the project that occurred in the weeks before the final presentations.

He said, “Originally, I saw it as a project that would be useful for my organization” that “would allow us to be able to move forward.” And: “Half way through the project, I realized it was more of a class assignment that they were doing, and I was there as a resource to help with that. So, I adjusted a little bit, but it was not a problem,” he said. And, “If there was an opportunity for me to be able to give feedback about the project, it could have been better,” he said. He suggested creating opportunities to give students feedback on their recommendations before the final presentation. The following summarizes the theme.

In sum, he described a need for opportunities to provide feedback in the later stages of the project. He said he would have liked more interaction with students in the weeks preceding the final presentation to help shape project outcomes. The following explores the theme of control mutuality, insufficient communication after the final presentations. Participants described a need to meet with students after reviewing their recommendations.

Insufficient communication after the final presentations. Participants described a lack of opportunities to discuss with students any problems with recommendations and to provide feedback after the final presentations. They said they would have liked to discuss: the implications of a failed recommendation, missing recommendations, and problems with uploading recommendations to a website.

Students had created a brochure for a participant's organization that neglected to depict its target demographic. The participant said, "What I would have liked when the students finished the project and after it was presented was that there would have been an opportunity at the final class for a follow up with everybody in the class." And: "When it was presented you saw it looked great. Then after you have returned to the office and reviewed it you saw how this and this should be tweaked. I would have liked a follow up to let the students know, to say: 'Well, we graded you on what we saw that was great. Then after reviewing it, it's still great, however, it could be tweaked in this area or we missed this' or something to that effect. Because once the presentation is over students are gone," she said.

For example: "The last class should be to come back if someone wanted to come back to say, 'Hey, you have the opportunity to do something.' There should be an opportunity either in person or in writing to evaluate the product after you've had time to really review it. Because if there wasn't a follow-up communication between the student and the organization, [then] you've in a sense almost wasted the students' time because they haven't heard from the client," she said. And: "If we're training students, then somewhere there has to be a meeting of the minds to say 'OK! You're doing this, however, let me introduce you to this because if that's all you're doing that's not productive.' for the students. They can't take advantage of the challenge if they don't realize there was one and they missed the mark," she said. And: "The organization is sort of locked into something without thinking: 'Hey! Well maybe there's a possibility of a change,'" she said.

Another participant said, "I never got the book." She had "the website, but beyond that we had no access to the recommendations," she said. And: "We would have used the recommendations, absolutely, I still will. The students did videos, print ads, and all of this stuff," she said. Within days of the presentations "the e-mails stopped working," she said. "Students had graduated, and they moved on. I didn't even know who I was supposed to get in touch with at the university," she said. And, "The only way we got into the website was because" one of the students stayed on as a volunteer, and she had access to the website, she said. "I didn't get anything else. I was writing to her saying, 'you found the password, can you find the brochures? Can you find the other things? Because I still want to use them,'" she said. "It

was so sad because we put all this work into it. To have one night unveiled, and we never got it,” she said. (Note to reader: After the interview, the recommendations were delivered to the participant.)

One participant said, “Students were designing, and they said, ‘here’s the final product, and it was in a pdf. file. So we weren’t able to use it,” she said. “We could have used it if we had the right equipment,” she said. When she found out about the problem, she said: “It was actually so close to the time that the project was to end. It was almost the day of the final presentation” so she didn’t mention it. The following summarizes the theme.

Participants described a need to meet with students after the final presentation. They suggested moving the date of the final presentation to earlier in the semester to accommodate a follow-up meeting. The following summarizes the themes of control mutuality.

In sum, participants generally offered three-part descriptions of control mutuality. First they described students’ behavior. Second, they raised an issue of control mutuality (if needed). Last, if they described an issue of control mutuality, then they usually described a preference for how to address it. They described students who were generally positive, considered input, and accepted feedback. They described a need to manage students’ communication with organizations’ stakeholders. This issue was magnified in situations where inexperienced students interacted with key stakeholders, particularly with donors. Participants’ wondered if their issues of control mutuality conflicted with the course goals, and they were uncertain about whether or not their needs for more influence over project outcomes conflicted with course design. Additionally, participants were unsure if the course required students: to test communication products, to put one executive in charge of communication, or to establish regular communication. They described a need for more time with students to make sure their work accurately addressed their organizations’ communication goals. They said they wanted more regular communication with students and weekly updates between initial meetings and final presentations. Some participants said they would have liked more interaction with students in the weeks preceding the final presentation to shape project outcomes. Participants described a lack of opportunities to discuss with students any

problems with recommendations after the final presentations. The following explores the themes of commitment.

Commitment

Although the relationships of interest to this thesis were bounded by the beginnings and ends of S-L projects, participants described continuance commitment to some students, to the course instructor, and to other university stakeholders. Generally, participants said they relied on students to reach out to their organizations after the ends of projects. Additionally, participants described affect commitment in terms of enjoying the company of students and valuing their relationships with the course instructor. Six themes of continuance commitment are presented. First, long-term continuance is explored. Second, short-term continuance is explored. Third, complications of continuance are explored. Fourth, missed opportunity for continuance is explored. Fifth, no continuance is explored. Sixth, continuance with other stakeholders is explored. Two themes of affect commitment are explored: enjoying students' company and valuing the course instructor. The following explores the continuance commitment theme, long-term commitment. Participants described long-term or ongoing relationships with some students.

Long-term continuance. Participants described inviting students to join their organizations or to seek employment. They described relationships with students who continued with organizations after the ends of projects as volunteers or paid employees. Additionally, they described a continuance commitment to exceptional students who stood-out during projects.

One participant said: "We always invite students to join the organization." Another said "there's always the opportunity" to work in her organization. And, she said, "If we were to have an opening, the service-learning students would all be potential candidates."

One participant whose organization has an ongoing relationship with a student recalled that after graduation the student said, "I really enjoyed working on this so much I really would like to volunteer," the participant said. And, the student had been "volunteering for us for months now, and a part time position just came up in my department. Now she's going to be on our payroll soon," she said.

One exceptional student had volunteered with a participant's organization for four years after the end of the project. The participant said: "I stayed in communication with her, and she actually stayed on with me, did my website, and has all the time. We are just now transitioning that website because she's a brand new momma. She got married and everything. We just transitioned the website probably a year ago from her, but when I have problems she still gets in there. It was wonderful."

Another participant said: "I remember one student just had really enlightened insights on the topic. She just had a little more background knowledge, and that was good. She also stood out because she seemed to put a lot into it, and because I thought she was so good." And: "We wanted to see if we could keep her on as an intern, but she moved to the other coast. She had the things that I look for: she had enthusiasm, and she was outgoing, and a hard worker. You can just tell," she said. The following summarizes the theme.

In sum, some participants described continuing relationships with some students. They brought students into their organizations as volunteers or as paid employees. They made sure students had opportunities to join their organizations, to become volunteers, or to seek employment. The following explores a theme of continuance commitment, short-term continuance. Participants described short-term relationships with some students after the ends of projects.

Short-term continuance. Participants described staying in contact with some students in a coming and going fashion for a few months after the ends of projects. A student invited a participant to a community event to promote her organizations, and another delivered project results in person. Other students stayed in contact with organizations via electronic communication (e-mail and social media).

One participant said: "Some of the students seemed to go above and beyond what you'd expect. One student invited us to a fundraiser in her community." And, she said: "One of the students still got back with me afterwards with deliverables. So, I did meet with her one more time." Another participant described how students "wanted to volunteer for our big community event," she said. And, the students told her that "we want to be a part of it," she said, "Because they really felt passionate about our mission and what we do."

Another said: “One student came back and kept in touch with us [via e-mail] for like three months. So, I haven’t heard from her. I have been in touch, but it’s back and forth. So, I’m not sure what she’s doing.” And, she said: “Two of the students got in touch with me the next semester to find out how what they had done worked, and to find out what we were doing.”

A participant whose organization’s mission prevents students from staying on as volunteers said: “Those students actually liked us on our Facebook page. So, it was neat that they kept in touch,” he said. The following summarizes the theme.

In sum, participants described students who communicated with them after the ends of projects in ways that extended relationships in the short-term. The following explores the theme of continuance commitment, complications of continuance. Participants’ discussed the reasons students might avoid continuing their relationships with some organizations. The following explores complications of continuance.

Complications of continuance. Participants discussed the difficulties some students face when considering continuing relationships with their organizations. Some participants described belief systems or educational requirements that prevented students from either volunteering or seeking employment with their organizations. Others described off-putting, touchy subjects that are inseparable from the social services their organizations provide.

Some students failed to reach out, which surprised one participant because he said, “They are about to graduate, and I represent the largest employer in our geographic area.” However, continuing a relationship with his organization required a degree in education or social work. Another participant said the opportunity for students to extend their relationships with his organization “never played into it,” he said, “because the organizations was very specialized in what we do,” and everyone who works there has a degree in education. Additionally, he said that none of the students said, “Oh! That’s something I want to go out and help with,” he said. So, extending the relationship “wasn’t an invitation, and it wasn’t a non-invitation,” he said.

One participant said that students were generally excluded from interacting with his organization because of its faith-based mission. He said: “I guess if their beliefs kind of align with our mission” they could volunteer. And, he said: “We’re particular about who volunteers with our organization because we are trying to create a culture. So we don’t want people engaging in drinking, partying and all of those things. I’m not saying all college students do,” he said.

Some participants said the types of social services their organizations provide aren’t suitable topics for dinner table conversations or cocktail party chit-chat because they interact with violence, chronic illness and death. One participant said, “We have subjects here that people don’t want to talk about.” The following summarizes the theme.

In sum, participants described issues that may cause students to consider whether or not to continue relationships with organizations. Participants’ descriptions of complications of continuance include: belief systems, education requirements and sensitive topics. The following explores the theme of continuance commitment, missed opportunities for continuance. Participants reflected on missed opportunities to continue relationships with some students.

Missed opportunities for continuance. Although participants generally said it was up to students to reach out to organizations after the ends of projects, some described missed opportunities to continue relationships. One participant said she would have liked to collect contact information for all student team members. She said: “I would love to be able to reach out and say, ‘Hey! If anybody needs internships in the fall, I would love to be able to mentor or whatever.’”

Participants whose organizations hold annual community events said they were interested in extending invitations to students. One participant (who said this was her first S-L project) said, “I think we could have done a better job about engaging them further by inviting them to our community awareness event,” she said. And, “The students’ participation in that would have been very welcome,” she said. The following summarizes the theme.

In sum, participants said that they would have liked to continue relationships with some students. They proposed offering mentoring or internship opportunities, and they wished to invite students to

special events. The following explores the theme of continuance commitment, no continuance.

Participants described why they did not expect to continue relationships with students.

No continuance. Some participants described either how they didn't wish to continue their relationships with students or they assumed students had graduated and moved on to other pursuits. (Note to reader: continuance is not expected in a project-based relationship.) One said: "I think in the relationship, it wasn't really announced that this is something we'd really like to lock into. I think it was probably an exchange relationship." She said, "I didn't anticipate" continuing relationships with students, but "there were a couple of them that sort of reached out," she said.

Although one participant said she welcomed continuing relationships with some students who passed through her organization, she had no plans to continue relationships with students from the S-L project. "Not this group," she said, "They're gone on to different things, so not this group." Another said: "That's the context of your relationship. There was a beginning, there was an end, and that was it. But nothing negative, it was understood that they were seniors."

In sum, participants described relationships with students that were bounded by the limits of projects. However, these relationships were project-based, and neither the course syllabus nor the course design proposed extending relationships beyond the ends of projects. The following explores the theme of continuance commitment, continuance with other university stakeholders. Participants' described the importance of their relationships with university stakeholders rather than their relationships with students.

Continuance with other university stakeholders. Participants described relationships with: the course instructor, the university, other professors, student organizations, and university departments. One said: "It was really wonderful to have that relationship with the instructor, which furthers our relationship with USF. We love to keep those doors open because there's endless ways that we can partner." And, she said, "We have a really solid relationship with the university." Another said the project offered "a chance to meet other people at the university and to build that relationship," he said.

A participant who graduated from the university said: "The university is obviously close to my heart. I know a lot of professors, and we use their resources in many of our programs. So, that's

important. It's who you know, right?" Another said, "We have great relationships with student organizations where we go and promote our organization." And, he said: "I really wanted to utilize the university. I'm very proud of my alma mater." Additionally, participants described interacting with many university departments including: anthropology, communications, criminology, and education. The following summarizes the theme.

In sum, participants described relationships with: the course instructor, the university, other professors, student organizations, and university departments. The following explores two themes of affect commitment: enjoying the company of students and valuing the course instructor.

Enjoying students' company. Participants described their affect commitment to students in terms of enjoying their company. One said: "Love, love, love them. Love the students." Another said, "I just enjoyed being with the S-L students" when they visited a radio station to produce a PSA.

One said, "Basically the students we've met and even the ones outside of the S-L projects, all of them have been enthusiastic." And: "Some were a lot of fun and others were OK, but there wasn't any that I would say, 'Oh, I don't want her around,'" She said.

Another said: "They were wonderful. And, I was really extremely happy to work with those young ladies." The following summarizes the theme.

In sum, participants described enjoying students' company. They described students who were: enjoyable, wonderful, and fun to be around. The following explores the second theme of affect commitment, valuing the course instructor.

Valuing the course instructor. Participants described enjoying their relationships with the course instructor in terms of her commitment to their organizations, and her ability to plan S-L projects. One said, "So, what we enjoyed was the relationship with the course instructor. She actually joined one of our taskforce, we met four times, and it was really wonderful to have that relationship with her."

Another said: "If I need some marketing stuff, I like to have the ability to call the course instructor and say, 'Hey! I'm working on this. Can you partner me in the right direction?'" And, he said,

“She would probably take the time because the relationship is established.” The following summarizes the theme.

Participants valued the course instructor for her commitment to their organizations and her ability to plan S-L projects. The following summarizes themes of continuance and affect commitment.

In sum, commitment was explored as themes of continuance and affect commitment. Participants described their long-term commitment to some students. They invited students: to join organizations, to volunteer, and to seek employment. Participants described how they stayed in contact with some students in the short-term through face-to-face communication and electronic communication. They described obstacles to continuing their relationships with students and missed opportunities to continue relationships with students. They proposed continuing relationships through mentoring, internships, and participation in special events. Some participants described no continuance commitment to students. They said students had graduated and moved on to other pursuits, or they described the relationships as inherently short-term. Additionally, participants described continuance commitment to university stakeholders and departments.

Participants described affect commitment to students in terms of enjoying interacting with them. They described affect commitment for the course instructor in terms of valuing her ability to set up S-L projects and for her commitment to their organizations. Participants’ descriptions of continuance and affect commitment suggest relationship processes that contribute to community building and that go beyond the attainment of organizational goals. The following explores participants’ descriptions of students’ behaviors.

Cultivation Strategies

To answer RQ2: How may cultivation strategies frame participants’ descriptions of students’ behavior? six cultivation strategies (access, assurances, openness/disclosure, positivity, networking, and sharing of tasks) are explored. Access is first explored.

Access. This cultivation strategy focuses on communication channels rather than communication content or frequency. Students were responsible for establishing communication.

Participants described face-to-face and electronic communication with students. Meetings occurred on campus or on site. They described communicating with students via phone, e-mail and texting. A problem with access interfered with continuance commitment and satisfaction. One said, “We met here on site a couple of times, so they could get a feel of the area.” Another said, “We did everything from phone calls to in person interviews, to texting, to e-mail.”

A problem of access occurred shortly after the final presentations when students graduated and their university e-mail addresses stopped working. One participant lost contact with the student who was responsible for delivering recommendations to her organization. She said, “I never got the book,” which included a video, social media accounts and other deliverables. Her loss of access interfered with satisfaction with project outcomes. Other participants found they lost the ability to contact students to invite them to annual events, which interfered with continuance commitment.

In sum, all participants described meetings with students, and communication was mostly electronic: phone, e-mail, or texting. Problems with access after the final presentations interfered with satisfaction and continuance commitment. Assurance is next explored.

Assurances. This cultivation strategy focuses on attending to the other. Assurance behaviors influence the content and frequency of communication. Participants described prepared and attentive students. After initial meetings, participants communicated with a team account executive. They felt their concerns were attended to when students listened to them and asked informed questions. They appreciated timely communication that facilitated input and feedback. In many projects, communication occurred on an as needed basis, but most participants said they would have preferred weekly updates. Assurances influenced positive outcomes of trust and control mutuality, and lack of assurances contributed to issues of control mutuality.

Students researched organizations and prepared questions before their initial meetings with participants. One participant said: “Our initial encounter with the students was an interview where I sort

of went over what it was we were looking for and the kind of information we would like for them to gather for us.” And, she said, “I got the impression that they did a lot of research to figure out exactly what it was we did. And, sort of get an understanding of the kind of problems we were facing.”

Another said: “Well, I think that they did some great preliminary work where they were reviewing our website, and they requested some of the literature.” And, “It wasn’t really too much for me to explain to them [because] they were really able to gather that information from reviewing our website and also coming on site to see the work that we do,” he said. One participant said, “From the very beginning I just felt like there was interest and there was buy-in.”

After initial meetings, participants communicated with team account executives, and they rarely communicated with other team members. Account executives helped teams prepare for meetings.

One participant said, “I had talked with the leader of the group prior to our meeting.” And, students asked “very good questions,” she said. Another said, “The executive did a good job with communicating. He asked probing questions to help out on their side.”

Additionally, the account executive facilitated input and feedback between the participant and student team. One participant said: “The executive would communicate with me and say: ‘Well, here are some of the draft things we need to do. What do you think?’ I would send back the draft things with ideas of how it could be different or improved. I also checked for accuracy because a lot of times things can be lost.” Another said, “There was a lead person that I mostly worked with, which was good.”

One said, “If I needed anything I would call, and the executive would get right back.” Another who worked with multiple teams said: “As they were all meeting they would send me questions either by phone or e-mail, and I would get right back with them. And, they would say: ‘Hey, is this possible? Or, what do you think about this?’ So, they were getting feedback.”

Participants described communicating with students on an as needed basis. Some participants were satisfied with irregular communication; however, most participants said they would have preferred regular communication.

Project design may influence the frequency of communication. For example, one participant said that communicating with students on an as needed basis served the goals of her project. She said she did not want to interfere with the independence of a student run audit of her organization's internal communication.

Other participants said they would have liked weekly updates from students. One participant said: "The communication might have been a more regular. It was effective, but at the same time it was not regular. We might have had it once or twice a month at most," he said. Another said, "I think a weekly summary or update would be good." And, "They didn't get back to me on Fridays with a summary, which I would have liked," she said.

Assurances influenced positive outcomes of trust and control mutuality, and lack of assurances contributed to issues of control mutuality. Many participants responded to questions intended to elicit descriptions of trust with descriptions of assurances. For example, questions about students' respect for their areas of expertise and students' interest in their organization's missions elicited descriptions of attentive and prepared students. One said, "I felt that in the initial meetings we had that they really paid attention." And, "They really listened to what we wanted to target, how we wanted to target it, how we wanted to change the marketing information that we had," she said.

Participants appreciated and trusted students who listened to feedback and responded to input. One said: "I knew what I wanted. And, it would open their eyes to different things that they needed to pay attention to." Another said, "They were just very attentive. They really listened, and you could see in the end result."

Lack of assurances contributed in part to issues of control mutuality because assurance behaviors address the time sensitive issues of control mutuality that involve insufficient communication.

In sum, participants described prepared and attentive students. After the initial meetings, participants communicated exclusively with a team account executive. They felt their concerns were attended to when students listened to them and asked informed questions. They appreciated timely communication that facilitated input and feedback. In many projects, communication occurred on an as

needed basis, but most participants said they would have preferred weekly updates. Assurances influenced positive outcomes of trust and control mutuality, and lack of assurances contributed to issues of control mutuality. Networking is next explored.

Networking. This cultivation strategy emphasizes building networks or coalitions. Participants described students' networking behaviors in terms of connections and contacts. One participant said: "The students do have connections. There was networking that I really hadn't thought about and hadn't expected, but that's how it worked out."

Another participant said: "Students were able to provide contacts that extended the network. It was really neat. They did great with that." One said, "There were a couple of students that sort of reached out." And, she said: "One woman was working for a company that produced videos, and one of the recommendations was for us to do an educational video. So, she was offering that her company could do that, but we have to go out and bid for that." In sum, participants described students' networking behaviors in terms of connections and contacts. Openness/disclosure is next explored.

Openness/disclosure. This cultivation strategy focuses on openness to provide full disclosure. It involves the activity of providing information. Students demonstrated openness/disclosure when they kept participants informed or up-to-date about the content and progress of projects. Participants described students who welcomed their communication and who kept them informed throughout projects. However, they described two problems with openness/disclosure that influenced trust in students' competence and control mutuality. First, some participants described student communication that welcomed input and feedback about parts of communication products. However, they said they were not invited to offer input and provide feedback about complete communication products. Second, a problem with openness/disclosure prevented a participant from managing a communication problem.

In response to a control mutuality question, one participant said, "I was pleased with the way that we were able to get information to them and they could get information back." Another participant said: "The customer service was very polite to the point where I felt comfortable to be an open sharer. Students were receptive for me to give information and to inquire," he said.

However, he said, “If there was an opportunity for me to be able to give feedback about the project, it could have been better.” He said his goal for the project was for students “to put tighter marketing materials together” and to offer “a different perspective,” he said. When he received recommendations from students, he found they were too similar to existing materials to be useful to his organization. He said: “What they did was fine. I was pleased that they put together materials for us, which was pretty close to what we’ve already had. What they produced wasn’t necessarily anything we’re able to use, to send out, or to duplicate for those reasons.” Many participants said that they appreciated opportunities to offer feedback on parts of communication products, but they needed opportunities to offer feedback on complete communication products. For example, one participant said: “I don’t want to say, ‘Here’s all the information. And, they give you a final product and that’s it.’”

Two participants needed to manage students’ communication, and their experiences offer an example of the second problem with openness/disclosure. The first participant said she was able to manage a sensitivity problem in messages students had planned to send to her organization’s sponsors. She identified the problem when students asked for her input and feedback, and she was able to raise her concerns before messages were sent out. The second participant said students did not request feedback on the content of e-mails they wished to send to his organization’s stakeholders. He said: “I had to recommend one of the students because of the way he communicated with some folks that I thought it would help with the project, some of my partners that were going to be impacted by the project. The way he wrote an e-mail was not appropriate. I had to call him up and say: ‘Hey, you know you need professional relationships here. You can’t be talking to people this way because you’re essentially representing me because I brought you in,’” he said. Students’ openness/disclosure allowed the first participant to control a problem, and students’ lack of openness/disclosure did not give the second participant control over a problem that influenced trust and control mutuality.

In sum, participants described students who welcomed their communication and who kept them informed throughout projects in ways that positively influenced control mutuality. However, they

described two problems with openness/disclosure that influenced trust and control mutuality. Positivity is next explored.

Positivity. This cultivation strategy emphasizes making relationships enjoyable. In S-L, positivity requires an unconditionally noncritical stance toward the other. Participants described students' positivity in terms of: their presentations of self, their enthusiasm and excitement about projects, and their politeness when communicating. One participant described a problem with positivity.

Participants described students' presentations of self. One said: "Students were professionally behaved. They were well groomed and well dressed."

They described students' enthusiasm and excitement. One participant said, "The students we've met and even the ones outside of the S-L projects, all of them have been enthusiastic." Another said, "They seemed very excited about the project." One said, students "were just as cordial as they could be and as enthusiastic as they could be."

Participants described students' polite communication. One said, "Students wanted to be respectful" when communicating. Another said "students were polite" in all communication, and he said the "customer service was very polite."

A problem with positivity occurred when a student criticized an organization's logo during a public presentation. The participant said: "At the end of the presentation, the students had designed a logo that was not satisfactory at all, and keep in mind the audience. So, the presenter, the executive guy, said 'we took their lame logo that they had and created our awesome logo.' And I was like, 'without knowing who made that logo, the one we're using, which is me, you just insulted me and you're working for me.' And, that was the summary of the communication." He described a student who chose to present an offensive fix to a communication problem, which then became a relationship problem.

He explained: "The point is that you don't know anything. That's what people don't understand. You could be at any meeting or any event and be talking to somebody about the weather. And, then a half hour later they're up there presenting as the president of some multi-million dollar organization. So, if you started talking to this person prior to that not knowing who they are, and you embarrass them or you

say something, [then] you've just removed yourself from any business with that person. That is something that the students had no understanding about what-so-ever," he said. When he criticized the participant's logo, the student executive failed to take an unconditionally noncritical stance toward the participant. In the terms of the Principles of Partnerships, the student failed to build on "identified strengths and assets."

In sum, participants described students' positivity in terms of: their presentations of self, their enthusiasm and excitement about projects, and their politeness when communicating. One participant described a problem with positivity. Sharing of tasks is next explored.

Sharing of tasks. This cultivation strategy emphasizes collaboration and problem solving. Participants said students collaborated with participants, they helped solve problems, and they introduced social media.

One participant said: "We collaborated very well on the video, I knew what I wanted and could say, 'That probably isn't the place you want to be because the sun's coming over my shoulder, and it's going to blow up your camera. So, why don't we turn it and go over here?' So, it would open their eyes to different things that they needed to pay attention to." And, she said, "When outcomes were starting to come out of the project, they really were dead on."

Another described sharing a concern with students, she said, about "the safety of the community," which helped them collaborate on a PSA. She said, "We went to a radio station to do a PSA. And, I just enjoyed that experience. I just enjoyed being with them, just to get to know them better. To see that they really had the concern I do." And, she said, "They provided me with a copy of the PSA, which we used on our website."

Students helped a participant solve a communication problem. She said: "Initially, we wanted the students to do a survey, but the project ended up being this sort of audit. The interaction with the students and the results of the audit helped me convince our board that we needed to do a stakeholder survey, a communication survey." She said she "was able to take everything that the students said and pair it up with everything we had been saying." And: "We presented our communications plan [to our board] and the desire to apply methods to it. I was able to get the board to agree to allow me to go through this

process of initiating a stakeholder survey.” As a result, “I really believe that the students helped us get to” the place we are now, she said. And, “I think the audit helped us move forward,” she said.

Participants said that students introduced social media. One participant said: “The students had some skills that we didn’t have. The social media skills were something that we needed badly because every organization now has got to be into social media especially with the group we were actually trying to reach.” And: “It wasn’t like we were trying to reach the general public. We tried to reach an 18 to 27 year-old age group. The students were the ones who had those kinds of skills,” she said. The following summarizes sharing of tasks.

Participants described students who collaborated with them and helped them solve communication problems. Students collaborated on video and PSA productions, they helped solve organizations’ communication problems, and they introduced organizations to social media. The following summarizes the cultivation strategies.

In sum, students established communication. All participants described meetings with students, and communication was mostly electronic: phone, e-mail, or texting. Problems with access after the final presentations interfered with satisfaction and continuance commitment. Students’ assurances behaviors influenced communication. Participants described prepared and attentive students. After the initial meetings, participants communicated exclusively with a team account executive. They felt their concerns were attended to when students listened to them and asked informed questions. They appreciated timely communication that facilitated input and feedback. In many projects, communication occurred on an as needed basis, but most participants said they would have preferred weekly updates from account executives. Assurances influenced positive outcomes of trust and control mutuality, and lack of assurances contributed to issues of control mutuality. Participants described students’ networking behaviors in terms of connections and contacts. Students’ communicated with participants to provide them with information about the content and progress of projects. Participants described students who welcomed their communication and who kept them informed throughout projects in ways that positively influenced control mutuality. However, they described two problems with openness/disclosure that

influenced trust and control mutuality. Students' positivity made relationships more enjoyable.

Participants described students' positivity in terms of: their presentations of self, their enthusiasm and excitement about projects, and their politeness when communicating. One participant described a problem with positivity. Students collaborated and solved problems. Participants described students who collaborated with them and helped them solve communication problems. Students collaborated on video and PSA productions, they helped solve organizations' communication problems, and they introduced organizations to social media.

The following offers a profile of a S-L relationship. To answer RQ3: How may themes of RMI dimensions and cultivation strategies frame a profile of a project-based S-L relationship from the community stakeholder's perspective to be used for assessment purposes? themes of the four relationship dimensions and descriptions of cultivation strategies are applied to one participant's descriptions to create a profile of a S-L relationship to be used for assessment purposes.

Profile of a Service-Learning Relationship

At the time of the S-L project, this participant was a board member of a city nonprofit organization. She and another board member interacted with S-L students. She said the project was her first interaction with service-learning, and her experience "was very positive."

Before the S-L project, she said the organization had "brochures and things like that," but "there wasn't a way to get our message out to the broad community." During the project, she said: "We did community interviews, instrumentation development, and media development. The students had a number of meetings with our board. So, the board was very comfortable with dealing with them," she said. The project, she said, "went very well." And, "The goals of the project were met, the instrumentation was provided," she said.

The following explores the participant's interview for themes of relationship dimensions. Themes of trust are explored first.

Respect for areas of expertise. In the early stages of the project, students earned her trust in their competence. She said she “had talked with the leader of the group prior to our [first] meeting,” and in the “initial meeting students asked very good questions” about the boards’ makeup and why each member chose to serve, she said.

Student’s interest in mission. She said that students’ showed an interest in the organization’s mission when they asked good questions. “Initially, it was the questions. Who? What? Where? And, how we did what we did and very good questions,” she said.

Confidence in students’ abilities. She said, “Then going forward, their enthusiasm about developing what we were looking for,” gave her confidence in students’ abilities to realize the goals of the project. She said her organization was looking for “a way to get feedback from the community because we hadn’t had that as a tool” and a way to get “our message out to the community because up to that point,” she said, “people knowing about us was basically word of mouth.”

Students inspired confidence in their abilities when they appeared to be “refining in their minds what they could do to pull out the information they needed,” she said. And, she said: “What I found very interesting in the dynamics of the group that came to us was they went to their personal skills. The person who liked to do the background research took on that piece, another one who liked to get out and talk to people took on that piece. So, you could see they thought about ‘how do I fit into this?’ There was never ‘I don’t want to go to that neighborhood and meet people. I don’t want to cold call somebody.’”

Students’ dependability. She said: “Students actually over delivered and under promised. They did everything we were anticipating they could do in this time frame.” Thus, students earned her trust in their dependability by over-delivering on their promises.

Need to oversee students’ work. She confirmed her confidence in students’ competence. She said: “It just really worked. I was pleased with the way we were able to get information to them, and they could get information back.”

In sum, trust in this relationship was very good. Students asked questions that inspired trust in their competence in the early stages of the project, and they inspired confidence in their abilities to realize

the goals of the projects in the later stages of the project. Students inspired trust in their dependability when they delivered more to the organization than they promised. This participant confirmed her confidence in students when she denied any need to oversee their work. Themes of satisfaction are next explored.

Give and take. She described her satisfaction with the project relative to good outcomes. She said, “The goals of the project were met, the instrumentation was provided.” While she did not mention a helping commitment, she discussed how the board members wanted the project to introduce students to “doing community work,” she said. “Particularly,” she said, “the students who had an interest in this.”

The value of volunteer hours. She appreciated the value of students’ time and expertise. She said the project was “a cost saving measure.” And: “Staffing was not there. So, we tacked in to the university system to get resources,” she said.

Long-term satisfaction. Although she transferred from the organization to another city position just after the end of the project, she said that the organization still uses pieces of students’ work. She said, “The online information that was part of their outcome is on the [organization’s] website.”

Satisfaction with project design. While preparing for the S-L project, the organization’s board members “had to do the initial write-up, and it was very helpful to us,” she said. The course instructor “was trying initially to see how we would fit” into a campaigns course S-L project, she said. Although the board acknowledged that it “wanted the world,” the course instructor’s direction challenged it to decide what was possible to “get in a semester’s time,” she said. It worked to define its needs so that students could realize the goals of the project in one semester. Thus, the board invested energy to set up a project that would benefit both students and the organization.

In sum, although this participant did not describe a helping commitment she said the organization wanted to introduce students to community work. Additionally, she: seemed satisfied with the project’s outcomes, appreciated the contribution of students’ time and expertise to the organization, reported on long-term benefits of the project, and seemed satisfied with course design. Themes of control mutuality are next explored.

Satisfactory control mutuality. She described her satisfaction with students' communication. "It was open and honest. I think that all the information that went from our side to theirs was taken into consideration and welcome," she said. And, "We did have very good communication," she said.

She confirmed her satisfaction with the ways students responded to her input. She said: "It was fine, more than fine. It was everything I could have expected."

She said, "We had very good communication." She mentioned no issues of control mutuality relative to the themes of: managing students' communication, insufficient communication in the early stages of the project, a mid-semester communication drop, insufficient communication in the later stages of the project, or insufficient communication after the final presentation.

Tension with course design. The participant was left wondering whether the course instructor approved of the project results. She said: "The only thing I would have liked was to learn how the instructor felt the outcome was for them. We never knew. Were they satisfied?"

In sum, the participant was satisfied with control mutuality in her relationship with students. Her only concern was whether the course instructor approved of students' work. Themes of continuance commitment are next explored.

Short-term continuance. She said, "I've had personal contact with one member [of the student team] out of Clearwater in that first year after [the end of the project]."

Missed opportunities for continuance. This participant moved from the organization shortly after the end of the project. So, she had no opportunities to continue relationships with students who showed an interest in doing community work with the organization. She said: "I think where my frustration came in was that this all came in where the cutbacks started. The city was looking at ways to meet their responsibilities to the organization, but not take as much internal time and effort." She said, "If I had been in the organization, [then] there would have been more" opportunities to continue relationships with students who were interested in community work.

In sum, she continued a relationship with one student via electronic communication for one year, and her change of position interfered with opportunities to bring students into the organization. Themes of affect commitment are next explored.

Enjoying the company of students. Throughout the interview, she described her appreciation for students' enthusiasm for the project.

Valuing the course instructor. She said she appreciated the way the course instructor offered direction to the organization's board in the preparation stage of the project.

She enjoyed students' enthusiasm, and she valued the course instructor for helping the organization prepare for its first S-L project. The following summarizes this relationship in terms of dimension themes.

In sum, a profile of a successful relationship emerged. All of the themes captured descriptions of successful or positive relationship outcomes. She described no complaints about her relationships with students, and she valued the course instructor.

The following explores the participant's descriptions of students' behavior. Six cultivation strategies are explored: access, assurances, openness/disclosure, positivity, networking, and sharing of tasks. Access is first explored.

Access. She said access was "basically telephone, e-mail, documentation and face-to-face meetings."

Assurances. Communication was "as needed, and if we had any questions or needed an update for a meeting coming up then I would interact with them," she said. And, "I think that all the information that went from our side to theirs was taken into consideration and welcome." She said.

Networking. She did not describe networking.

Openness/disclosure. She said, "Students' communication was open and honest."

Positivity. She described students' enthusiasm.

Sharing of tasks. Students "made suggestions about how they could fit what we needed into what they needed to complete their course," she said. Additionally, she described how students took the

information she gave them and refined it “in their minds” for what they “could pull out” to realize the goals of the project, she said.

In sum, the participant described students’ behavior in terms of five cultivation strategies: access, assurances, openness/disclosure, positivity, and sharing of tasks. She said her overall experience was “very positive,” and communication with students was very good. After comparing the descriptions of relationship dimensions to descriptions of cultivation strategies, it appears that in this S-L relationship students’ positivity and assurances positively influenced control mutuality, and sharing of tasks influenced trust in students’ competence.

This profile answered RQ3: How may themes of RMI dimensions and cultivation strategies frame a profile of a project-based S-L relationship from the community stakeholder’s perspective for assessment purposes? It suggests that the RMI offers a frame for discussing a S-L project that brings a relationship between one or more representatives of a nonprofit organization and S-L students to the foreground, and it places S-L project outcomes in the background. It captures the community stakeholder’s perspective on a S-L relationship, the course design, and project outcomes, and it suggests that a project-based S-L relationship can influence community-building processes beyond the realization of project goals.

The profile can be used many ways: first, to explore the outcomes of community engagement; second, to prepare future S-L stakeholders for S-L projects; third, to give students’ ideas about how to cultivate positive S-L relationships; fourth, to help educators explore S-L outcomes in the projects they supervise. Beyond the S-L context, the profile can function as a post-project follow-up with a representative of a community organization.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION

Ten representatives of community nonprofit organizations who interacted with S-L students from the public relations campaigns course made up the study's convenience sample. Participants described their relationships with S-L students in interviews. Qualitative methods were applied to interview transcripts.

Although not generalizable to S-L relationships or public relations campaigns course projects (because of the sample size and methods applied), the results of this study present a range of descriptions of S-L relationships, which are organized as themes of relationship dimensions. Participants described positive relationships outcomes, as well as problems with trust, satisfaction, control mutuality, and commitment. They generally described positive student behaviors that influenced positive relationship outcomes.

RQ1

To answer RQ1, participants' descriptions of their experiences with students were organized into discussions of four relationship dimensions: trust, satisfaction, control mutuality, and commitment. The themes of trust explored competence and dependability, which are two of the three dimensions of trust. The third dimension of trust, integrity, was not explored. Students' competence in the early stages of projects was explored. Students inspired trust when they acknowledged participants areas of expertise and showed an interest in organizations' missions. Participants described competent students as those who listened and asked good questions. Specifically, when participants were able to leave meetings feeling that students had listened to them and had understood their goals, students had earned participants' trust in their competence. Arrogance, poor questions, and lack of interest failed to inspire trust. Students'

competence in the later stages of projects was explored in terms of participants' confidence in their abilities. They trusted students who showed enthusiasm for project goals, demonstrated positive team dynamics, and persevered in their efforts. Additionally, they trusted students who demonstrated academic achievement, collaborated with participants, communicated in a professional manner, and attempted to understand organizations. Participants verified their trust in students' competence when they indicated that they felt no need to oversee student work. They described a lack of trust in students who lacked natural curiosity and whose communication styles were too casual. Students' dependability was explored in participants' descriptions of and the ways students delivered on promises. Participants said students never overpromised, and they delivered more than they promised.

Generally, satisfaction in S-L relationships may have something to do with the experiences that occur relative to a willingness to help and be helped. Satisfaction was multi-faceted. Participants described satisfaction in terms of project outcomes and an opportunity to help students. They appreciated the value of students' time, and they recognized students' contributions to their organizations in terms of time and expertise. They credited students with introducing their organizations to social media. Some organizations still used student work on websites, and others used student research in subsequent campaigns. However, participants raised an issue of satisfaction with project design. Projects that addressed a communication problem, recommended a public relations campaign, or complimented an existing campaign had a better chance of eliciting descriptions of satisfaction than projects that rehashed existing marketing campaigns.

Control mutuality was explored. Participants' described students who were generally positive, considered input, and accepted feedback. They described six issues of control mutuality. They described a need to manage students' communication with organizations' stakeholders. This issue was magnified in situations where inexperienced students interacted with key stakeholders, particularly with donors. Participants' wondered if their issues of control mutuality conflicted with the course goals, and they were uncertain about whether or not their needs for more influence over project outcomes conflicted with course design. Additionally, participants were unsure if the course required students: to test

communication products, to put one executive in charge of communication, or to establish regular communication. They described a need for more time with students to make sure their work accurately addressed their organizations' communication goals. They said they wanted more regular communication with students and weekly updates between initial meetings and final presentations. Some participants said they would have liked more interaction with students in the weeks preceding the final presentation to shape project outcomes. Participants described a lack of opportunities to discuss with students any problems with recommendations after the final presentations.

Commitment was explored as themes of continuance and affect commitment. Participants described their long-term commitment to some students. They invited students: to join organizations, to volunteer, and to seek employment. Participants described how they stayed in contact with some students after the end of the semester in the short-term through face-to-face and electronic communication. They described obstacles to continuing their relationships with students, and missed opportunities to continue relationships with students. They proposed continuing relationships through mentoring, internships, and special events. Some participants described no continuance commitment to students. They said students had graduated and moved on to other pursuits, or they described the relationships as inherently short-term. Additionally, participants described continuance commitment to university stakeholders and departments. Participants described affect commitment to students in terms of enjoying interacting with them. They valued the course instructor for her ability to set up S-L projects and for her commitment to their organizations. Participants' descriptions of continuance and affect commitment suggest relationship processes occur in project-based relationships that contribute to community building and that go beyond the attainment of organizational goals.

RQ2

To answer RQ2, cultivation strategies were explored in participants' descriptions of student behavior. Students established access. All participants described meetings with students, and communication was mostly electronic: phone, e-mail, or texting. Problems with access after the final

presentations interfered with satisfaction and continuance commitment. Students' assurances influenced communication content and frequency. Participants described prepared and attentive students. After the initial meetings, participants communicated exclusively with a team account executive. They felt their concerns were attended to when students listened to them and asked informed questions. They appreciated timely communication that facilitated input and feedback.

In many projects, communication occurred on an as needed basis, but most participants said they would have preferred weekly updates. Assurances influenced positive outcomes of trust and control mutuality, and lack of assurances contributed to issues of control mutuality. Participants described students' networking behaviors in terms of connections and contacts. They described openness/disclosure in terms of students' openness to provide them with information about the content and progress of projects. Participants described students who welcomed their communication and who kept them informed throughout projects in ways that positively influenced control mutuality. However, they described two problems with openness/disclosure that influenced trust and control mutuality. Students' positivity made relationships more enjoyable. Participants described students' positivity in terms of: their presentations of self, their enthusiasm and excitement about projects, and their politeness when communicating. However, one participant described a problem with positivity. Participants described sharing of tasks in terms of students' ability to collaborate and to solve problems. Students collaborated on video and PSA productions, they helped solve organizations' communication problems, and they introduced organizations to social media.

RQ3

To answer RQ3, one participant's interview was explored to create a profile of an S-L relationship. A profile of a successful relationship emerged in which all of the themes of relationship dimensions captured descriptions of successful or positive relationship outcomes. The participant had no complaints about her relationships with students, and she valued the course instructor. She described students' behavior in terms of five cultivation strategies: access, assurances, openness/disclosure,

positivity, and sharing of tasks. She said her overall experience was positive and that communication with students was good. After comparing the descriptions of relationship dimensions to descriptions of cultivation strategies, it appears that—in this S-L relationship—students’ positivity and assurances positively influenced control mutuality, and sharing of tasks influenced trust in students’ competence.

The profile suggests that the RMI offers a frame for discussing a S-L project that brings a relationship between one or more representatives of a nonprofit organization and S-L students to the foreground, and it places S-L project outcomes in the background. It captures the community stakeholder’s perspective on a S-L relationship, the course design, and project outcomes. This profile can be used many ways: first, to explore the outcomes of community engagement; second, to prepare future S-L stakeholders for S-L projects; third, to give students’ ideas about how to cultivate positive S-L relationships; last, to help educators explore S-L outcomes in the projects they supervise.

CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSION

This study applied public relations theory to a qualitative assessment of project-based S-L relationships. It brought together two lines of scholarship—relationship studies within community engagement and cocreational studies within public relations—to address the problem of assessing the community outcomes of S-L relationships. It adjusted the scholarly language of each field. To address the S-L context, this study compared definitions from public relations scholarship to the Principles of Partnerships, which allowed for interpretive adjustments of relationship dimensions and cultivation strategies that consider the values and goals of S-L. In terms of organizational-public relationships, students were envisioned as representing the organization (as university stakeholders or brand ambassadors) and representatives of community organizations were envisioned as a public. This move allowed for an assessment that privileged the community stakeholder's perspective.

This study proposed a theoretical frame and qualitative instrumentation from public relations scholarship to be used in assessments of S-L relationship outcomes. It extended the application of the RMI to interdisciplinary research with the scholarship of engagement and to another aspect of public relations pedagogy.

This study may interest community engagement scholars, as well as public relations scholars for five reasons. First, it extends relationship management theory by applying it to a new context. Second, it suggests a program of interdisciplinary research between the fields of public relations and community engagement. Third, it suggests a research program with a convenience sample that may interest scholars from both fields. Fourth, public relations scholars may value this research program for further extending public relations theory to the nonprofit context. Last, it suggests ways of incorporating public relations theory into S-L pedagogy.

There are several limitations of this study. Although simultaneous and computer assisted coding was successfully applied to participants' descriptions to develop discussions of the influence of students' behavior on relationship outcomes, further application of computer assisted methods to all transcripts rather than excerpts of transcripts would enhance the validity of the results. Simultaneous coding led to descriptions that coded for multiple themes of relationship outcomes. A second coder and more feedback from participants would have improved the results. Although the course requires students to reflect on their S-L experiences, it is unclear if client organizations have a responsibility to reflect on their S-L experiences. This study's frame did not allow for certain types of self-reporting. For example, participants described ways they made projects work for themselves and for their organizations, which were not included in study results.

Suggestions for future research include further refinement of the in-depth interview guide to ensure it accurately represents the relationship dimensions and cultivation strategies for the S-L context and to ensure it does not tax participants' patience. Themes of relationship dimensions from this study may be applied to follow-up assessments with community stakeholders about relationships and outcomes of public relations campaigns course projects. Instrumentation is needed to assess the responsibilities of representatives of nonprofit organizations to the S-L students with whom they interact to realize the goals of projects. Adjustments and pretests to this study's instrumentation will allow for instrumentation to assess S-L projects from university departments (beyond mass communications) in which pre-professional S-L students and representatives of nonprofit organizations interact. A coordinated study to examine compatibility between students' and clients' expectations is needed. Aspects of successful relationships can be used to develop a survey instrument to uncover trends in relationship cultivation and maintenance in public relations campaigns courses that utilize Service-Learning models to achieve effective students learning outcomes.

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