Chapter 2

Literature Review

Chapter Two offers a presentation of literature relevant to the study of short-term international volunteers in TESOL. First, the literature review discusses a conceptual framework of volunteerism, including a characterization of the volunteer population within TESOL. Second, the review presents a critical perspective of volunteer services in TESOL through an elaboration of various arguments posed in related literature. Third, the review engages in a discussion about measures taken to prepare volunteers for their duration of teaching service. Fourth, the review summarizes two research studies which serve as precedents to the current study. Fifth, the literature review presents compelling evidence that the inclusion of a narrative account can be a valuable contribution to the research process, particularly for the present research.

2.1 A Discussion of the Volunteer

Wu and Carter (2000) have noted that the term *volunteer* has historical roots planted in the Latin *voluntari(us)*, which elicits a sense of willingness or inclination. However, the original conceptualization of *volunteer* and *volunteerism* have, according to Stebbins (2009), "through loose popular usage, seen their somewhat more precise, professional definitions seriously eroded" (p. 155). A discussion of what it means to be a volunteer, particularly a volunteer in TESOL, is thus warranted, and shall be presented in the following three segments of this section.

2.1.1 Volunteers, Paraprofessionals, and Professionals

Currently, the dominant notion of volunteering, as suggested by Stebbins (2009), steers towards an economic definition that focuses on the absence of payment, whether in money or in kind, for the performance of labor. Since a purely economic perspective is limited in its explanation why individuals would choose to engage in unpaid labor, Stebbins has placed renewed emphasis on the volitional aspect of *volunteer*, which focuses more on the absence of coercive measures to undertake a particular activity. That is, volunteers engage in an activity "which they have had the opportunity to accept or reject on their own terms" (p. 155). Yet even a dual economic-volitional definition of *volunteer* cannot account for the ubiquitous usage the term has taken on in identifying work-related activities. For instance, some "volunteers" enter contractual labor agreements similar to their "non-volunteer" counterparts and, moreover, are financially compensated for their labor. It may be, however, that the payment or "stipend" these individuals receive is recognized by both parties to be minimal enough that the term *volunteer* is deemed as appropriate to describe the labor situation.

While the dual economic-volitional definition of *volunteer* does not cover the breadth of actual usage of the term, it can be useful in distinguishing from a separate group of individuals, the paraprofessionals. The Greek etymological roots of *para-* convey varied shades of meaning, including "beside," "adjacent to," but also "amiss" (Para-, *Oxford Dictionaries*). Paraprofessionals are "beside" or "adjacent to" professionals in the sense that they have taken on many of the roles traditionally conferred to individuals with professional licensing or qualifications. That is, "in common usage, a 'professional' is a trained and qualified specialist who displays a high standard of competent conduct in their practice" (Leung, 2009, p. 49). Paraprofessionals are "amiss" in that they lack qualifications common to professional practice. Nonetheless, the title is embedded with professional expectations of performance (Keller, Bucholz, & Brady, 2007), something that cannot be assumed from the title of "volunteer." Moreover, the economic-volitional construct of the volunteer position is not applicable to paraprofessionals, given that they are regarded as employees. It is possible, then, that individuals labeled as "volunteers" in the example from the preceding paragraph might be more fittingly identified as "paraprofessionals," if their workplace has professional expectations for their performance.

Consequently, a distinction has been made among three sectors of working individuals: volunteers, paraprofessionals, and professionals. (That is not to say, however, that these three sectors form an exhaustive list of working individuals. Student interns, who may or may not be financially compensated and may or not may not be subject to professional expectations, are an example of working individuals who are not easily classified within this framework). Each of these three sectors has had a long-standing role in the domain of language education. While the professional educator may be the standard in some teaching capacities, there are areas in which paraprofessionals and volunteers have played key roles. For instance, policymakers have turned to paraprofessionals in many classrooms that include learners with low English proficiency (Pickett, Safarik, & Echevarria, 1998), while volunteer-based instruction has been the mainstay of adult literacy education in the United States of America for the past four decades (Ziegler, McCallum, & Bell, 2009). Moreover, the responsibilities of each sector and the interplay among the sectors remain somewhat flexible as "there is some search to see who can do what piece of the job best" (Schindler-Rainman & Lippitt, 1971, p. 38). That is to say, each sector may have different strengths and weaknesses in relation to specific work environments and populations they serve.

2.1.2 Sub-classifications of Volunteers

Within the classification of *volunteer*, numerous sub-classifications can also be designated. Particularly relevant for discussion here are the categorizations that constitute the focus of the present study: the *short-term* volunteer, and the *international* volunteer.

With limited scholarly discussion on the topic, there is not a clear consensus on the nature of a "short-term" volunteer engagement. In reference to the volunteer work of faith-based volunteer groups, Corbett and Fikkert (2009) have suggested that *short-term* may constitute a time period ranging from one week to two years of service; additionally, they have noted that 50 percent of these short-term engagements span a duration of less than two weeks (p. 162). However, the notion of *short-term*

may also lend itself to contexts which do not necessitate a specific duration of time. For instance, Slimbach (2000) has referred to the "transitory nature of the relationship" between the host participants and the volunteers (p. 7); Stebbins (2009) has used the term *project-based* to mark voluntary undertakings which are "one-shot or occasional" in nature (p. 156). Though not quantifying the time duration of the volunteer engagement, both Slimbach's and Stebbins' input may be useful in guiding future conceptualization of *short-term*, including its application to contexts in TESOL.

Likewise, there has been little discussion regarding who should be considered an "international volunteer." Wearing (2001) has linked international volunteerism to three main criteria: first, it involves some sort of travel; second, the travel falls outside the context of mass tourism; third, the travel is altruistically motivated. However, numerous scenarios could be presented to make the presence of these conditions seem both unnecessary and insufficient. For instance, what should be made of long-term expatriates who volunteer in their community of international residence in order to gain experiences that look good on their résumé? Moreover, Yeung (2004) has cautioned that "it is a mistake to see volunteers as essentially altruistic – volunteerism being an instrumental activity, though not necessarily selfish" (p. 23). Further discussion is thus warranted on the conceptualization of the "international volunteer," particularly in relation to volunteerism in TESOL.

2.1.3 Characteristics of Volunteers

In some TESOL literature, the typical volunteer – particularly, "the average literacy volunteer" – has been characterized as a "retired, middle-class white female" (Gilbertson, 2000, p. 35). It would be prudent, however, to consider that such a claim may lack relevancy outside the contextual scope of its study. So, to what extent can generalizations be made about the demographics of the volunteer community within TESOL?

The literature regarding volunteers makes at least four claims that might merit consideration as generalizable among the community of TESOL volunteers. First, volunteers serve in various capacities, including but not limited to teaching in one-to-one, small group, or large class settings (Wu & Carter, 2000). Second, instructors begin their volunteer service with different levels of relevant knowledge depending on their formal and informal educational background, as well as their professional background (Gilbertson, 2000; Ziegler, McCallum, & Bell, 2009). Third, volunteers in TESOL largely do not have professional qualifications as language teachers, nor do they necessarily intend to make a career of language teaching (Snow, 1996; Wilson, 2009). Fourth, motivation is a principal stimulus leading individuals to initiate and sustain their volunteer engagements (Stebbins, 2009).

It is common that a desire to teach English does not necessarily serve as the primary factor motivating individuals to engage in English teaching as volunteer work. For example, in a website offering advice about establishing volunteer-run ESL programs through the church, the administrators of one program expressed that they "felt a burden to reach the unchurched, non-English speaking population living near our church" (Miller & Miller, n.d.). Snow (1996) has noted that "many people who go abroad to teach English do so less out of a burning desire to teach English than because they want to experience life in another country" (p. 285). Furthermore, as a result of their activities, volunteers often perceive benefits which are likewise

tangential to English teaching. Wearing (2001) has identified personal and interpersonal awareness, confidence, self-contentment, and empowerment as common benefits of the volunteer experience. Those returning to their home country from a volunteer stint abroad have recognized such an experience fosters the growth of valuable skills such as creativity and communication with people of diverse backgrounds (Cook & Jackson, 2006; M2 Presswire, 2008). The expectation or reception of such benefits may influence one's motivation to initiate, prolong, or return to volunteer activities.

2.2 A Critical Look at Volunteer Resources

While the last section ended with the boons which volunteers may personally receive as a result of their activities, it should certainly not be ignored that volunteers have the potential to produce outstanding contributions among their recipient communities. This is in part because of the noble personal qualities which have commonly been attributed to volunteers: good hearts, diligence, patience, and common sense, among other things (Henrichsen 2010a; Snow, 1996). Local communities may reap tangible benefits from the work of volunteer projects, even those which are short-term in nature (Green, Green, Scandlyn, & Kestler, 2009). Moreover, the promotion of English knowledge by volunteers can make a significant contribution to the modernization efforts of a nation (Snow, 1996). For these and numerous other reasons, it is widely believed that the participation of volunteers, particularly within the school setting, is positive and beneficial (Wasik, 1998).

However, English language programs making use of a largely volunteer workforce face significant challenges. Potential limitations of volunteer-based programs include the following dilemmas: limited financial resources, high instructor turnover, lack of a unified research base, lack of training standards, and minimal professional program management (Gilbertson, 2000; Kutner, 1992; Schlusberg & Miller, 1995). Many of these challenges are not unique to volunteer English programs, though; rather, they are concerns shared by educational institutions in many non-volunteer spheres as well.

Wasik (1998) has also pointed out that in actuality, "little is known about school-based volunteerism" (p. 563). Schindler-Rainman and Lippitt (1971) have rebuffed any blanket claim that "all volunteerism is good"; they have further noted the tendency of the professional work force to regard volunteers with "cautiousness, resistance, and rejection" (p. 41). In light of this tension, it is worthwhile to examine particular limitations and criticisms that have surfaced with regard to the volunteer workforce.

2.2.1 Volunteerism: A Disservice to Learners?

Gilbertson (2000) asserted that "volunteers want to do well but are providing a disservice rather than a service" for their learners (p. 153). Later, Wilson (2009) posited that the disservice referred to in Gilbertson's study is caused primarily by two factors. The first of these factors is the "reliance on uninformed instincts" (p. 8). Such instincts may be a tacit reflection of whatever experience the volunteer once had as a classroom language learner: the untrained are likely to teach the way in which they remember having been taught (Gilbertson, 2000). In the case of the prototypical untrained "retired, middle-class white female" volunteer, this implies a several-decades-old teaching style that has missed out on numerous years of pedagogical

development from within the language teaching field. It may be that instincts become increasingly better informed as a result of experience gained throughout the duration of volunteer teaching. Nonetheless, Snow (1996) has pointed out that "learning the craft of language teaching by trial and error is a process that can take a long time and involve considerable emotional wear and tear on both volunteer teachers and students" (p. 2).

The second factor considered by Wilson is "a lack of priority caused by a hierarchy of needs for instructors" (p. 8). The principles of this "Hierarchy of Needs," stemming from Abraham Maslow's contributions in the field of psychology, were borrowed by Snow (1996) to describe the needs of beginning language teachers in the EFL context. Snow has described the hierarchy as follows:

> Level 1: Need to make it through the classroom hour without running out of material.
>
> Level 2: Need for positive student response to one's lessons (or at least no overt expression of boredom and displeasure).
>
> Level 3: Need to feel that one's lessons actually help students develop English skills. (p. 7)

The duration of time needed for novice teachers to progress through the stages of the Hierarchy of Needs may be different for each individual, but Snow additionally commented that:

> The overwhelming priority for the first few *months* of teaching is getting through as many class periods as possible without disasters such as exercises that take twice as long as planned, instructions that students completely misunderstand, and activities that students respond to with overwhelming apathy... until you have confidence you can get through a lesson with your dignity intact, it is difficult to focus on higher level issues such as how to use the class hour as effectively as possible. (p. 76, emphasis added)

For this reason, novice teachers may possibly be lulled into a mistaken sense of successful practice if they find fulfillment in Level 1 or Level 2 needs without having yet come to a realization of Level 3 needs. This can be demonstrated by remarks made by novice teachers-in-training, such as the following commentary in an advertisement for a TESOL certificate program:

> I'd read the glowing reports from past volunteers who said they'd ended up staying for months, and I wondered if it could really be that good. But now, having been here for 3 weeks, I can really understand why people come back again and again. The teaching has been so rewarding – even after having one lesson, the students shake your hand or give you a high five, or even a hug. There are also classes for adults who work in the area, and it's great to walk through Khao Lak and wave hello to all the students. Above all, with the volunteer community and all the friendly Thais you meet whilst volunteering, you are never lonely in Khao Lak. ("The Volunteer Experience," n.d.)

In addition to substantiating Snow's teacher application of the Hierarchy of Needs, this novice teacher also indicated that, "above all," individuals who have transplanted

themselves into a foreign environment have significant needs outside the classroom that must be fulfilled. The extent to which these outside-the-classroom needs are, or are not, satisfied may affect the priorities that volunteer teachers seek to address within the language classroom.

2.2.2 In the Short Term, Who Needs More?

Considering the volunteer's progression of priorities based on Snow's Hierarchy of Needs in the language classroom, one might question the benefits received by the language learner as a result of contact with an inexperienced, short-term volunteer. That is not to presume that language learners are incapable of, or not responsible in part for, gaining language knowledge and skill from the instruction of such a teacher. Still, Slimbach (2000) has offered stern words of warning about the nature of the volunteer activities of short-term groups: such projects "run the risk of doing more harm than good" (p. 4).

One reason that short-term international volunteer teaching projects run the risk of doing harm is that volunteers may come with unrealistic and one-sided expectations of what should be achieved during the volunteer engagement. Corbett and Fikkert (2009) have remarked that short-term volunteer groups have very limited time in which to "show a profit to achieve pre-defined goals," and thus feel pressure in reporting back to vested parties at home; for this reason, "projects become more important than people" (p. 168). In such cases, the volunteers may prioritize their own needs ahead of the needs of those they intended to serve.

At times, short-term volunteer projects may also misunderstand the needs of the local community. Corbett and Fikkert have offered a distinction among three different forms of assistance based on existing needs. Some crisis situations call for provisions of "relief," in which aid is necessary and urgent to reduce immediate suffering. A second and less urgent form of assistance is "rehabilitation," which seeks to restore people and communities to living standards they encountered prior to a crisis situation. The third type of assistance is an approach of "development," which does not do *to* or *for* people, but rather *with* people (p. 104). Corbett and Fikkert have noted that short-term volunteers often take an approach that wrongly assumes the recipient community is in need of "relief." In the case of English language teaching, volunteers would be much more prudent to seek an approach of "development," which implies careful planning alongside the recipient community as part of the preparation for, and lasting the duration of, the volunteer service.

Working in a true collaborative spirit with the local community can prove difficult for STIVETs who lack knowledge of the local context. Snow (1996) has cautioned against volunteers arriving to a new country with a detailed teaching plan fully laid out for the entirety of the engagement: "many false starts can be avoided if you take the time before the first day of class to find out as much as possible about your students, school, and new teaching environment" (p. 30). Though sound advice, this strategy may be especially challenging for international volunteers who cannot speak the local language and have not learned protocols culturally appropriate for the local context. Often unknowingly, short-term international volunteers put a strain on the time and energy of local personnel to meet the volunteers' need for assistance in the local living and learning environment (Green, Green, Scandlyn, & Kestler, 2009).

2.2.3 Is Being a Native Speaker Enough?

Snow (1996) has stated that "it is often in classes with native speaker volunteers that students first really experience English as a tool for communication, not just an obstacle to examination success" (p. 4). Indeed, the presence of international volunteer English teachers can provide the opportunity for learners to gain exposure to more than just a native-sounding accent – they also gain exposure to background experiences thoroughly distinct from their own. These differences between volunteers and learners can arouse a curiosity that fosters genuine communicative purposes, rather than purely pedagogical ones, within the language classroom.

However, the only qualification that many volunteers can claim is that they speak English natively (Gilbertson, 2000; Henrichsen, 2010a). While in some contexts this sole qualification may be sufficient for learner needs (Barduhn & Johnson, 2009), many would argue that being a native speaker is not enough in the context of most language classrooms (Cook, 1999; Moussu, 2010). Govardhan, Nayar, and Sheorey (1999) have asserted the following: "It is socioculturally and perhaps even politically irresponsible to think that native speakers can go abroad and teach their own language without special training" (p. 124). Further, Wong (2009) has contended that individuals who feel qualified to teach English by virtue of being a "native speaker" constitute a "worst-case scenario" (p. 102).

Part of this critique involves the potential lack of linguistic awareness that native speakers possess within their own language. Snow (1996), for one, has noted that "the average native speaker of English has little explicit knowledge of English grammar rules, so grammar is not a particularly easy subject to teach" (p. 218). Although explicit grammar instruction could be minimized with more communicative language teaching approaches, many students have an inclination towards teaching approaches that highlight the grammatical aspects of the language (ibid.). Moreover, Cook (1999) has noted that language learners "may feel overwhelmed by native-speaker teachers who have achieved a perfection that is out of the students' reach" (p. 200). Consequently, learners may prefer a nonnative-speaker teacher who, having language abilities that appear more attainable, can serve as a role model for the language learners.

In addition, there is a growing skepticism that the term *native speaker* retains much current relevance. For one, it has been noted that only a statistical minority of children presently grows up in a monolingual environment (Leather & van Dam, 2003). With monolingualism as more the exception than the rule, the casual labeling of the native or nonnative speaker based on "inner circle" status (i.e., raised in a monolingual English-speaking environment) is becoming increasingly outdated and, furthermore, called into question (Graddol, 2006; Liu, 1999). Additionally, Graddol has remarked that "research is also beginning to show how bad some native speakers are at using English for international communication" (p. 87). This supports the consideration that some "native-English-speaker" volunteers may be ill-equipped to provide sound language instruction, especially in a context outside their home environment.

2.2.4 Transparency of Practice

Another major criticism expressed in the literature involves individuals who, through English language teaching, present themselves as – or are presented as –

something they do not actually represent. This concern may have particular relevance to untrained volunteers engaging in English language teaching. Wong (2009) has remarked that "in some cases, the 'teachers' may not be who they portray themselves to be – they may not be trained, qualified, or experienced as foreign language teachers"; they may instead be "untrained monolingual speakers attempting to teach students a skill that they have not acquired" (p. 92). Edge has put it more strongly: "taking on educational responsibilities under false pretenses is utterly repellent" (as cited in Pennycook & Coutland-Marin, 2003, p. 337).

The intersection of English language teaching and Christian missionary activity among volunteers may be an especially contentious issue. Varghese and Johnston (2007) have contended the following: "the use of ELT as a platform for missionary work is a matter that should be of interest to the whole profession, raising as it does profound moral questions about the professional activities and purposes of teachers and organizations in our occupation" (p. 6). Having recognized that "English teaching as a platform for evangelism has been labeled as deceptive and manipulative," Robison (2009) has declared that "Christians should do well to listen and reflect on questions posed by professional colleagues, with an aim of conducting their activities in a manner that is above reproach and consistent with their faith" (p. 255). In similar fashion, Purgason (2009) has described transparency and openness as essential elements of practice for English language teachers. Further, she has asserted that it is "incumbent on Christians in the profession to encourage more professionalism on the part of Christian volunteers who may not be aware of TESOL or the issues in [Wong and Canagarajah's] volume" (p. 189).

2.3 A Discussion on Meeting the Needs of Volunteer English Teachers

The preparation of instructors has been considered one of the greatest needs in TESOL programs (Kutner, 1992). The next three segments of the literature review discuss the preparation of volunteer English teachers in the following topics: preparatory provisions for volunteer English teachers, resources to meet the classroom needs of volunteers, and the delegation of responsibility towards meeting the volunteers' needs.

2.3.1 An Overview of Preparatory Provisions

Henrichsen (2010a) has stated that "to be effective, novice, volunteer ESL teachers and tutors need training" (p. 14). Schlusberg and Miller (1995) have reported that volunteer ESL instructor training is typically carried out in pre-service workshops lasting 10-18 hours. Other common training techniques include lecture, video discussion, small group discussion, case study, on-the-job coaching, modeling, and mentoring (Riggs, 2001). Belzer (2006) has suggested a "less-is-more" approach: an expert can serve as an ongoing coach for the novice teacher in specific skills, based on the interactions occurring in the classroom. This, however, assumes the ongoing presence of an expert as part of the overall program operation.

Wu and Carter (2000) have referenced statistics which indicate that as many as 96 percent of the programs which use ESL volunteers provide training for them. However, Henrichsen (2010a) has remarked that novice volunteer teachers typically recognize a need for training but lack the means for receiving it. At the intersection of these two claims, one might interpret that though some preparatory training is provided for volunteers, the resources and strategies used have yet to sufficiently

address their needs in the classroom. For instance, Belzer (2006) concluded in her study that the training which volunteers received was not a significant influence on their actual practice. as it did not address the "moment-to-moment challenges" faced by the volunteers (p. 570).

Various other reasons have also been identified that may explain the gap between the preparatory assistance available to volunteers and their perceptions of its value. Gilbertson (2000) suggested that the administration of some programs may consider the expenditures of training volunteers as an unwarranted cost. She also described the problematic nature of forms of training in which novice volunteers observe other untrained volunteers: "observing someone bake a cake that turns out burned and flat and heavy only helps if the observer can tell why it flopped" (p. 153). Additionally, Snow (1996), reflecting on the numerous preparations undertaken prior to international travel, noted the difficulty volunteers face in retaining information relevant to classroom practice "while concurrently worrying about problems like travel arrangements, packing, and finding out what shots to get" (p. 39).

2.3.2 Resources To Meet the Needs of Volunteer English Teachers

It is not for the lack of existing preparatory resources that novice volunteer teachers may enter the classroom feeling unprepared. In fact, there is a profusion of resources to prepare novice English teachers for the complexities of classroom practice. An extensive list of resources, the majority of which were designed for specific volunteer-run English language programs, has been compiled in Henrichsen's (2010a) article. Additionally, listed below is a sampling of five resources produced specifically with volunteer TESOL teachers in mind:

- *Tutoring ESL: A Handbook for Volunteers* (Reck et al., 1991):

  This handbook was designed as a supplementary resource to basic training for volunteers in Washington State, U.S.A. The first section focuses on gaining comfortability with working in cross-cultural situations, before moving to strategies for lesson planning and activity ideas in subsequent chapters. The target audience of this resource are volunteers working primarily with adult, job-seeking refugee immigrants.

- *New Beginnings... An Introductory Manual for Non-Professional ESL Volunteers and Tutors* (Friedman & Collier, 1993):

  This guide is similar in many ways to Reck et al.'s (1991) handbook. It is designed to assist new volunteers providing ESL classes to students in the U.S.A. Its sequencing of content is also similar to Reck et al.'s handbook.

- *More Than a Native Speaker: An Introduction for Volunteers Teaching Abroad* (Snow, 1996):

  As the title suggests, this book was written for novice teachers planning to engage in English language teaching outside their home country. Thorough yet written in a very digestible format, it remains a good selection for all beginning teachers preparing for service abroad. The sub-title for the revised 2006 edition is "An introduction to teaching English abroad."

- *A Curriculum Framework for Beginning English Learners in Northern Thailand* (Hughes, 2009):

  This project provides an outline for language instruction to beginning adult language learners in northern Thailand. Its curricular framework emphasizes the development of the speaking skill, along with content that fits the socio-cultural context of the intended learners. The layout of the 14 units, together with additional resource links and further demographic and linguistic background information, may serve as a "particularly valuable introduction to teachers who are newcomers to Thailand or who are on short, volunteer teaching visits to the country." (p. 73)

- *BTR-TESOL: Basic Training and Resources for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages* (Henrichsen, 2010b):

  This resource is a website intended for individuals who are preparing for a short-term role in TESOL but lacking relevant academic background or professional experience. Its underlying purpose is to provide individuals with basic training ("the least you should know") and resource connections ("and where to go to learn more"). Users can select from among the 50 units, each of which includes a variety of instructional approaches. The website may become an especially helpful tool for self or group study; however, the website is not yet fully operational at the time of this research study.

2.3.3 Delegation of Responsibility in Meeting Volunteer Needs

Although numerous resources exist for the purpose of preparing volunteer English teachers, the mere presence of resources is insufficient. Put another way, some combination of people, resources, and action is vital towards preparing volunteers for responsibilities in the language classroom. This leads to an important question: which people should do what things with what resources to address the needs of the volunteers?

Inside the language classroom, one might observe two kinds of people: the teacher and the students. In reality, the decisions and interactions which occur within the classroom typically reflect the presence of more than just these two groups. There are numerous other stakeholders in the overall picture of language learning. It is the total group of stakeholders – those individuals who have a particular interest, involvement and input in the instructional process (Richards, 2001) – which might share the burden of responsibility in addressing the needs of the volunteers.

Some, for example Gilbertson (2000), have highlighted the responsibilities of program administration in meeting the needs of the volunteer teaching force. For one, it is often at the administrative level that budgetary concessions are made to include incidental volunteer expenses (Schindler-Rainman & Lippitt, 1971). Kutner (1992) has stated that program administration is responsible for creating an environment in which volunteers feel they are key players in their own professional development.

Volunteers, too, share the burden of developing their skills and knowledge in ways relevant to the language classroom. Snow (1996) has listed a number of suggestions international volunteers should do to prepare for their language teaching, even before departure from their country of residence: seek counsel from people who have experience in the host country; look for books about the culture and history of the host country; gain English teaching experience; and collect teaching resources.

In many contexts where volunteers are serving internationally, there may initially be one or more degrees of separation between the volunteers and the students whom they will serve. For instance, these "middlemen" may be in charge of the recruitment and screening of volunteers; they may also serve as the primary link between the volunteers and personnel at the site of the language teaching. Corbett and Fikkert (2009) have advised that those in charge of recruitment and screening must show responsibility in the type of message they send to volunteers: recruiters should avoid a "go-help-and-save-them" message, promoting instead a "go-as-a-learner" message (p. 176).

Missing from the discussion is a more comprehensive delegation of programming responsibilities among all of the various stakeholders. These stakeholders include not just program administration, recruiters, and volunteers – in reality there are numerous other stakeholders, including the students themselves. Future discussion should address the possibilities of different configurations of stakeholders and their responsibility in evaluating the needs of the volunteers, especially in international volunteer settings.

2.4 A Survey of Related Research Studies

Much of the literature related to volunteers in TESOL consists of bite-sized "how-to" suggestions for creating and maintaining a volunteer program. Some scholarly articles present critical perspectives of the use of volunteer instructors within TESOL. But very few provide a comprehensive, methodologically detailed presentation of research. Below are summaries of two detailed research studies particularly relevant to the present study.

2.4.1 "Just Enough: A Description of Instruction at a Volunteer-based Adult English as a Second Language Program"

Gilbertson (2000) sought to describe and interpret the types of teaching and activities provided by untrained volunteer ESL instructors. Her desire was based on a curiosity about the quality of instruction delivered by volunteers in adult ESL programs, as well as her observation that few scholarly studies focused on this issue. Consequently, her case study research examined the following three questions:

1. What constitutes training for volunteer ESL instructors at the agency?
2. What knowledge of procedures and what skills does the training provide?
3. What kinds of ESL teaching activities do volunteers engage in? (p. 71)

Her participants were various stakeholders at a social service agency providing adult ESL classes, located in a city in the Midwest of the United States of America. The participants included the volunteer teachers at the agency, both "seasoned veterans" having more than five years of ESL teaching experience, as well as "novices" having less than six months of teaching experience. Gilbertson utilized non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, document analysis, and journal entries as main data sources over the course of approximately 1.5 years.

Through a largely qualitative analysis, Gilbertson found that the training at that agency consisted of a new volunteer sitting in to observe just one or two class periods of another volunteer. That led Gilbertson to conclude that there was "no

viable training available for volunteer ESL instructors at the agency" (p. 113). Another finding was that the concerns of the volunteers tended more generally towards the procedures of the agency (e.g., knowing how to take attendance) than the improvement of their own instructional effectiveness. Gilbertson's findings led her to contend that observing other teachers is not sufficient for novice teachers to have the skills requisite to providing sound classroom instruction. She furthermore concluded that professionals in the field need to take a more active role in providing ongoing training resources for volunteer instructors.

Gilbertson's study serves as a major precedent, both in content and in methodology, for research focusing on instruction provided by volunteers in TESOL. Yet there are a number of differences between the scope of Gilbertson's study and that of the present study. Notably, Gilbertson focused on volunteers with an indefinite period of commitment in adult ESL settings; the present research investigates the needs of volunteers with a short-term international commitment to English teaching.

2.4.2 "An Evaluation of a Curriculum for Basic Training in TESOL"

Using Gilbertson's research as a key reference, Wilson (2009) based his research on a desire to evaluate a Brigham Young University (BYU) course entitled "Basic Training in TESOL." Students who enrolled in this course were individuals lacking professional qualifications in TESOL yet planning for an internship abroad where they would take on English teaching obligations. The central question to Wilson's research was this: "To what extent is the course effective, overall?" (p. 33).

Wilson collected data for his study primarily through interviews and questionnaires. First, he conducted interviews (pre-course and post-course) while the BYU student participants were still on campus for their 14-contact-hour training course, which was divided into two-hour segments over the span of seven weeks. Additionally, questionnaires (mid-internship and post-internship) were administered via email while the participants were situated at their respective internship sites. A total of 17 complete interview-questionnaire sets were collected in the study. Both the interviews and questionnaires were analyzed through qualitative and quantitative methods.

The main findings of the study were that, despite the brevity of the course, the interns felt that they learned a lot from the training course, but learned even more from their own English teaching experiences. Consequently, the training course was considered successful, as it helped the students feel more prepared for their internships. Wilson recommended course adaptations, including the increase of the credit hours and amount of instruction, along with increased communication between the internship site administrators and the BYU faculty.

Furthermore, recognizing that these recommendations were of limited scope outside of the BYU context, Wilson offered an additional set of eight recommendations, listed in order of priority, for administrators of programs that benefit from the use of novice instructors:

- Instructors must be sensitive to the needs of the learners.
- Instructors must understand the differences between English language learners and native speakers of English. Then, they need to understand the differences between teaching ESL and EFL.
- Instructors need to know how to structure or plan lessons.

- Identify resources that instructors can use.
- Instructors need to be able to use nearly anything to teach language.
- Help instructors identify the purpose of their teaching. They need to fill the time with effective communicative activities, not just time-fillers.
- Break bad traditions. Instructors need to know that the way they learned may be outdated and no longer the most effective method for learning a language.
- Provide opportunities for novices to observe others teaching. It is best that the situation being observed (especially if on video) be as similar to the situation where they will be teaching. (p. 66)

These suggestions are useful checkpoints for the classroom needs of novice volunteer English teachers. However, it may be the case that administrators of volunteer programs, some of whom are also untrained and inexperienced in TESOL, do not have specialized awareness and skills to address the nature of these concerns. Such administrators also need assistance, then, in carrying out measures that address the needs of volunteers in the English classroom.

To summarize, both Gilbertson (2000) and Wilson (2009) have contributed useful research studies regarding the needs of novice volunteer English teachers, setting valuable methodological precedents in the process. However, neither of these studies, nor any other studies found, has focused on roles of responsibility in addressing the needs of short-term international volunteer English teachers, making it fertile terrain to explore in the present research study.

2.5 Situating Methodology in Research

In regard to the studies highlighted above, Gilbertson (2000) labeled her research as a case study, while Wilson (2009) emphasized the utilization of quantitative and qualitative data in his research findings. Having characterized these two studies as important research precedents, by which labels might the present study be classified?

Like Gilbertson's study, the present research could be classified as a case study, as the volunteer project from this study arguably constitutes a single entity with clearly defined boundaries (Dornyei, 2007). Like Wilson's study, the present research incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods, and thereby could be labeled as mixed-methods research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). But the methodology which will be described in Chapter Three also largely exhibits ethnographic characteristics, namely through its aims to study aspects of people's lives and social worlds in nuanced and non-reductive ways as a participant observer (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008; Taylor, 2002). (However, the short-term nature of the study excludes the research from a characteristic fundamental to most ethnographic studies, namely prolonged engagement in the field.) The study further meets criteria which allude to an ecological research approach: it is highly contextualized, has spatial and temporal dimensions, and is largely driven by change-oriented and critical purposes (van Lier, 2004).

In short, multiple research labels could be attached to the present study. That is, at least in part, because the methodology has been situated within the research, rather than having situated the research in a particular methodology. This strategy may be what Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) have articulated as *pragmatism*, meaning that "researchers should use whatever works" (p. 559). While this study, drawing

from numerous methodological frameworks, de-emphasizes the assignment of one particular methodological research label, it should be noted that the *presentation* of the research aims to accentuate the inclusion of narrative, as described in the next section.

2.5.1 Making the Case for Narrative

Traditional protocol for the presentation of a thesis calls for a chapter dedicated to "results of the study" following immediately after a chapter of "research methodology." This is a framework which, according to Canagarajah (1996), stems from the scientific-empirical tradition, a "genre that enjoys almost paradigmatic status in scholarly circles" (p. 322). To be sure, this leap from methodology to results may be suitable for some types of research accounts. However, in the case of the present research study, such a leap would bypass too much captivating terrain and would further jeopardize the realization of the study objectives.

One of the chief purposes of this research study is to illuminate the unique challenges of STIVELFs in TESOL. To accomplish this, it would be insufficient to present merely a list and ensuing discussion of relevant themes which emerged from the processes of data collection and analysis. These are processes which tend to strip away from a phenomenon the storyline which makes it fertile for study in the first place. Rather, the investigation from the present study must first keep its story intact in order to be understood. Further, as storytelling is a device beneficial in communicating and understanding the phenomena of this world, it is valid for incorporation within the research process (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Conle, 2000b). Bell (2011) has described the need for the research story as follows:

> Before we can proceed to sharing our analysis or conclusions, we have to share the story of the research, and it is both ethically and epistemologically critical that we do justice to the rich and complex experiences of our participants. Similarly, the temporality that is so important in our research methodology requires us to outline the shifting attitudes and understandings, not merely to report the final position. (p.580)

The use of story, or narrative, has a long-standing tradition in diverse fields of research, and narrative forms of data representation and analysis are appearing in research literature and at conferences with increasing frequency (Conle, 2000a; Conle, 2001; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Riley & Hawe, 2005). Within the field of TESOL, the use of narrative has seen a rapid rise over the past decade (Barkhuizen, 2011), enough to warrant a special-topic issue of *TESOL Quarterly* (September 2011) dedicated to the discussion of narrative research in TESOL. It may be, however, as Vasquez (2011) has claimed: "narrative research in TESOL still remains very much in its infancy" (p. 546). Consequently, until the acceptance of the narrative transcends the infant stage, it appears that a precursory explanation and justification of narrative use within TESOL remains requisite to "storied" reports.

The extent to which narrative plays a role in the overall research process is dependent, in part, upon how the term is used. Though there is disagreement in use of the term (Barkhuizen, 2011), a helpful distinction of the varied use of *narrative* has been elucidated by Conle (2000a). Conle has observed the term *narrative* utilized by researchers as "a medium of data representation... if they did not want to lose the temporal quality and contextual detail of what they were studying" (p. 50). This is

distinct from use of *narrative* as "an entire mode of inquiry [that is, *narrative inquiry*] where data analysis and final documents did not have to relinquish their narrative quality" (p. 51). To the extent that *narrative inquiry* is marked by its "open-ended, experiential, and quest-like qualities" (p. 50), the present research study can be characterized under the term. However, the present research is not *narrative inquiry* in its strong form which may incorporate a story-like mode of writing throughout the length of the research document.

To "tell the story," that is, to make use of narrative, is a complex and challenging undertaking. The use of narrative can convey an aura of truth unintended by the storyteller yet nonetheless interpreted by the audience; for that reason, it is prudent for both the storyteller and the audience to stifle any assumption regarding "the truth" of the recounted events (Conle, 2001). In particular, the truth within a narrative is limited in at least two significant ways. First, the truth is constrained by the storyteller's ability to interpret and consequently "re-story" one's own observations along with the accounts shared by others. This re-storying moreover gives significant power to the storyteller over the voices of the characters of the narrative, as the storyteller chooses how to organize the account and what to leave out (Barkhuizen, 2011; Cadman & Brown, 2011). Second, the truth is also constrained by the time period in which the narrative is bookended. While the narrative may shine the spotlight on a phenomenon for a specific duration of time, it lacks the capacity to provide the entire back story that prompts the narrative to "begin" as it does. It further silences the new discoveries unfolded after the narrative "ends." For this reason, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) have lamented that "the task of conveying a sense that the narrative is unfinished... is likely to be completed in unsatisfactory ways" in relation to the desires of the storyteller (p. 9).

Despite these inherent limitations, the value of narrative in research is significant, with numerous reasons for its inclusion within the research process and document. For one, a storied approach can provide a means for understanding in the more holistic ways that knowledge is often tacitly held by individuals (Bell, 2002). Moreover, the product resulting from a narrative approach often provides an alternative to elitist scholarly discourse, thereby widening the access to participation in knowledge construction (Canagarajah, 1996; Nelson, 2001). Still further, the use of narrative invites from the research audience an experiential response of "resonance." That is, a story shared by one individual elicits memories of a related story from another individual, furthering the process of sharing and co-constructing knowledge (Conle 2000a). As Johnson and Golombek (2011) have stated, there is a "transformative power of narrative... to ignite cognitive processes" (p. 504). For these reasons, the present study incorporates the use of narrative as an integral component in the research of the short-term international volunteer English teaching experience.

2.6 Summary of Present State of Knowledge and Research

Volunteers can typically be considered as individuals who have willingly accepted the opportunity to engage in unpaid labor. Volunteers are often identified as having many positive character traits. However, criticisms abound for volunteers in TESOL, particularly because many lack teaching qualifications, have limited knowledge of the local context, and may have conflicts of interest in their motivation for teaching. Some sort of training and preparatory work to address the needs of volunteers is essential, but it has proven difficult to deliver quality support which

results in quality instruction for the language learners. The present study picks up on the precedents of Gilbertson (2000) and Wilson (2009) by examining the needs of novice English teachers serving in a volunteer capacity. However, this study is unique as it focuses attention on short-term international volunteers. Not only does the present study seek to identify what the needs of this particular group may be, but it also looks more closely at who takes responsibility for identifying and addressing those needs. Finally, this study takes a pragmatic approach to achieving its research objectives, while also making use of the narrative – shown to be a powerful tool for knowledge construction – as an integral element of its overall research design.