Chapter 6

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

Chapter Six provides a summary of the research and its implications. The first section of the chapter summarizes the research objectives and methodology. Following that, the results of the study are restated and further considered in light of prior literature in the field. Then a set of recommendations, including a planning tool for stakeholders of short-term international volunteer English teaching programs, is presented. Research reflections, including limitations and contributions of the present research, are addressed prior to the closing remarks on this study.

6.1 Summary of Research Objectives and Methodology

At a time in which the demand for English language learning continues to rise, there is a growing use of volunteers as providers of language instruction. This study has gained insight into, and provided a contextualization of, the phenomenon of short-term international volunteerism within TESOL, a topic largely unexplored in prior research. In addition to providing a narrative account of the short-term international volunteer English language facilitator (STIVELF) experience, the research objectives included generating answers to these two questions:

1. What are the needs of the short-term international volunteers relevant to facilitating English language learning in the local context?

2. What roles of responsibility do the various participants take on to address the needs of the short-term international volunteers?

The knowledge gained from the findings of this research has contributed to the creation of a tool drafted for stakeholders of English programming that incorporates STIVs (presented in Section 6.6.1 of this chapter).

This study took a pragmatic (i.e., "use whatever works") approach to meeting the research objectives and eliciting a multitude of participant perspectives on the volunteer experience. The primary group of participants was the 11-person short-term international volunteer team which traveled from the United States of America to northern Thailand for 11 days. Among the international participants, four members were assigned responsibilities as lead English teachers in a village school, while other volunteers took assisting classroom roles. The volunteers spent approximately 2.5 hours in the classroom each day for one school week, totaling approximately 12.5 hours in each classroom, or 50 hours altogether in four classrooms at the local school. The research also sought the perspectives from regional and local participants. The regional participants consisted primarily of individuals residing in Chiang Rai Province of Thailand who partnered with the international volunteer activities.

Among this group was an American expatriate who serves as a coordinator for church ministry work in Thailand. Also in the group were the staff and students of a seminary who traveled to the village where the volunteer group engaged in their activities. The local participants for this study included the staff and students of the village school where volunteer teaching took place. Members of the village church, where other volunteer activities occurred (including a free health advising station and children's Bible program), were further participants.

Also taking on a participatory role, the researcher journeyed with the volunteer group from the time of their arrival to Chiang Rai until their return from "Red Dirt Village," where they engaged in volunteer activities. The researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data through a variety of means prior to the arrival of the volunteer group, throughout their stay, and at the end of their volunteer engagement. The following is a recapitulation of these varied means:

- Questionnaires, both pre-arrival (Appendix B) and post-experience (Appendix C), were distributed to international volunteer participants. The pre-arrival questionnaire collected information about the volunteers' background experiences, preparations for volunteer service, and *concerns* about their role as providers of English language instruction in the local classroom. The post-experience questionnaire largely mirrored the pre-arrival questionnaire but focused on the reporting of *problems* in the English language classroom, and the extent to which the needs of the volunteers were met throughout their experience.

- Interviews were conducted with international, regional, and local participants to gain insights into the research questions from various perspectives. Both semi-structured interviews (Appendix H) and informal interviews were conducted.

- Daily field notes based on the researcher's observations were collected in both audio and written format. Two research instruments, the "Needs/provisions observations" sheet (Appendix E) and the "Ethnographic observations" sheet (Appendix F), were constructed and implemented to focus the field notes towards answering the two central research questions, while audio field notes provided an additional means of data collection to augment the contextualization of the overall research setting.

- Classroom observations at the local school were made daily by the researcher, using an observation sheet constructed for this study (Appendix G). Each of the four English classrooms was observed on at least two different days during the week. The observations generated data about the volunteer lead teachers, classroom assistants, and students, as well as the classroom resources used.

- A questionnaire (Appendix D) was administered to students of the village school in the fifth (ป.5), sixth (ป.6), and seventh (ม.1) grades on the final day of the volunteer teaching project. The 15-item questionnaire elicited

student perceptions about their need for English, motivation for learning English, and evaluation of the volunteers' English teaching.

- Daily reflection journals were written by the volunteers. These entries were primarily reflections on the volunteers' experiences in the language classroom. The researcher collected the journals each day, replying to the volunteers' entries with comments, suggestions, personal reflections, and further questions.

- A journal was also kept by the researcher as an account of the events of each day, along with personal reflections and emerging insights. The contents of the researcher's journal were adapted to form the basis of the narrative account in Chapter Four.

- Relevant documents (e.g., correspondence regarding program scheduling or trip policies) were collected both prior to the volunteers' arrival and throughout the duration of their stay.

The processes for data analysis began based on the types of data collected. The qualitative data underwent numerous stages of analysis, including the coding and comparing of data within each instrument. The quantitative data in various portions of the questionnaires were analyzed and interpreted primarily through use of descriptive statistics. The compilation of analyzed data was further filtered by returning to the two central research questions, followed by a comparison of coded data among the various data collection instruments. This process led to the identification and grouping of the themes and sub-categories by which the results have been presented in Chapter Five and will be summarized below.

6.2 Summary of Findings to Research Question One

The first research question inquired: What are the needs of the short-term international volunteers relevant to facilitating English language learning in the local context? This section provides a summary of the findings as reported in Chapter Five.

The results of the study in relation to the first research question were organized under three broad themes. The first theme was the fulfillment of the volunteers' general living needs. Among these general living needs were basic physical needs, including adequate rest and accessible food. The volunteers also needed clear, updated communication regarding the scheduled plans and procedures for their activities, and the ability to remain flexible under changing conditions was further identified by the volunteers as essential. Moreover, the volunteers held various personal motivations for their decision for participation in the volunteer project. Consequently, the volunteers perceived a need to actualize these individual motivations, while also serving as instruments to achieve the goals of the organization through which they came.

The second theme was organized as the need for the pursuit of sound classroom practice. Within this theme, the volunteers first needed a basic schematic understanding of the local language classroom. The volunteer teachers in this study largely lacked prior experience teaching English; further, they lacked the opportunity to observe a class or practice teaching prior to their first day in the classroom at the

local school. Moreover, the volunteers needed the ability to provide comprehensible English teaching based on the students' level of comprehension. Lacking sufficient strategies for simplifying their language and building the students' English listening skills, the volunteers from this study compensated with heavy dependence on classroom interpreters. Another need for the volunteers was the development of techniques for classroom management. In particular, it proved difficult for the volunteer teachers to offer simultaneous attention to individual students and the collective needs of the class. Next, the volunteers needed the ability to make effective use of the teaching resources. A major obstacle for the volunteer teachers in this study was lack of time to know the characteristics of and rehearse with the provided educational materials. While the resources were intended to develop generalized English among the students, some of the resources appeared inadequately matched for the context of this local school, both in terms of content and level of difficulty. Finally, there existed a need for a clearer framework to strengthen the focus of the English programming. More than just a general program theme for the week and ready-made activities to fill the time with English, the volunteers needed explicit teaching and learning goals to give them a greater sense of direction in the classroom. The length of time in the classroom and support of classroom assistants also should have received greater consideration based on the fact that the volunteers were untrained as TESOL practitioners.

The third theme emerged as the need for respect of the local context. This need could be satisfied in part by an awareness of the local facilities and classroom protocol. The volunteers needed orientation to the particulars of the local school and living culture that would be relevant to their volunteer teaching responsibilities. Respect for the local context also necessitated a growing awareness of the constraints and desires of the local school in promoting English language learning for their students. A growing awareness of the characteristics of the local students was a further component in fostering respect for the local context. Such characteristics included an understanding about the students' daily and familial lives, strengths and weaknesses in learning, and motivations for present and future use of English. Finally, the need for respect of the local context included the need for valuing the joint development, understanding, and participation among project stakeholders. There was an opportunity throughout the project for the international volunteers to work in partnership with regional and local participants to develop more than just English language programming, but also mutual investment in shared goals. Achieving this implied the need for viewing the project as one of shared ownership among the international, regional, and local participants. It further meant that preparing to address the needs of the volunteers also necessitated meeting the need to support and orient all the other participants for their various roles in the project.

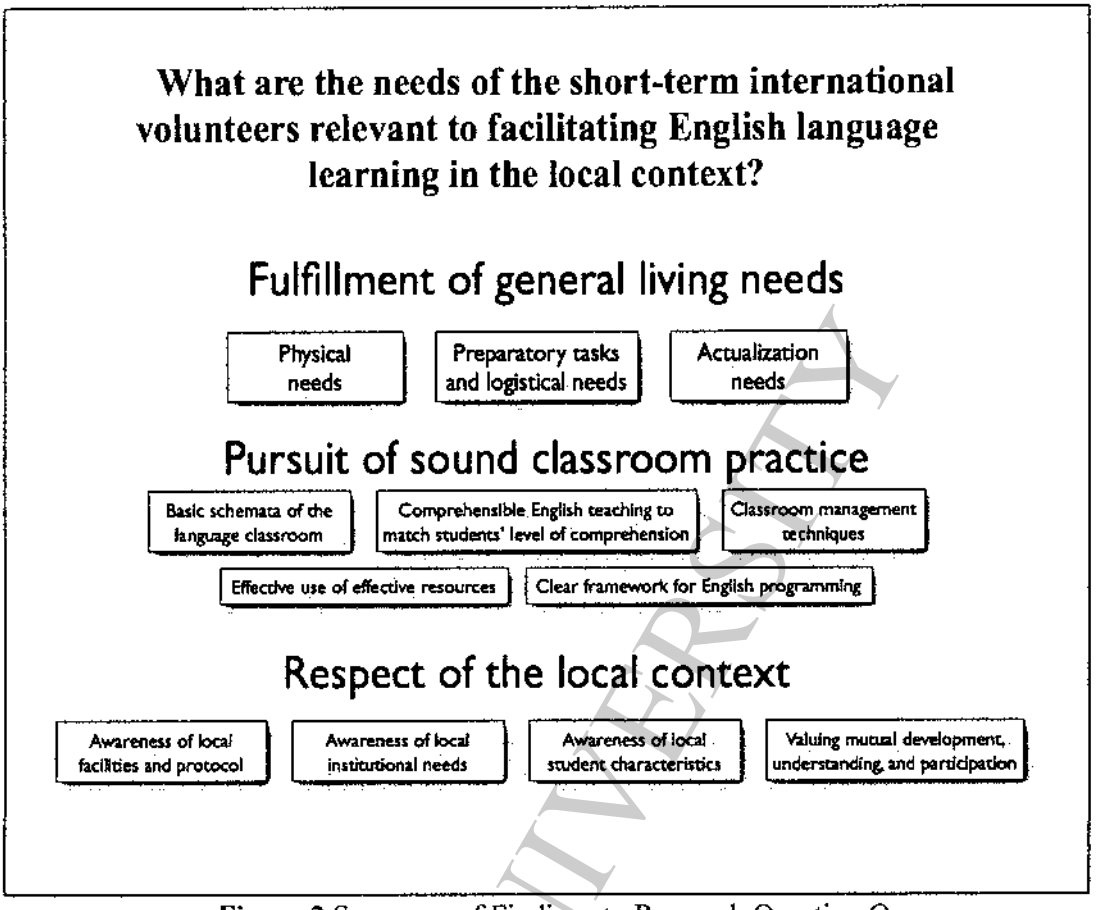

Figure 2 Summary of Findings to Research Question One

6.3. Summary of Findings to Research Question Two

The second research question inquired: What roles of responsibility do the various participants take on to address the needs of the short-term international volunteers? This section will summarize the findings reported in the previous chapter.

The volunteers who served as lead teachers began to develop an increasingly specialized sense of responsibility in meeting the needs of the English classroom. Initially, their approaches led them to meet their generalized needs that would allow them to partake in the volunteer trip to Thailand. The volunteers who reported having prepared themselves for their upcoming English teaching largely turned to the advice of others, though not those with an informed knowledge of the local teaching context. In particular, they relied on the support of the volunteer group leader, to the extent that some volunteers may have assumed that their responsibility lay merely in the execution of pre-planned scheduling and resources. However, after the first day of English classes, the volunteer lead teachers typically sought out increasing levels of responsibility for meeting the needs of the classroom. This included increasing levels of autonomy in managing their classroom schedule. They also made strides in learning from one another by sharing accounts and reflections of what they experienced in their respective classrooms. Overall, these STIVELFs grew in their capacity to take on responsibilities in their respective language classrooms throughout the duration of the project.

Another principal bearer of responsibility for meeting the needs of the volunteers was the group leader. Besides being the primary recruiter and fundraiser for the volunteer organization, the group leader took on a multitude of pre-arrival and on-site responsibilities to address the volunteers' needs. Prior to arrival, the group leader worked with the ministry coordinator in Thailand to lay the groundwork for the trip, including the timeframe, location, accommodations, and opportunities for volunteerism. She developed the five-day English teaching plan with assistance from an individual with experience teaching English in the Czech Republic, and she confirmed the English program plan with the ministry coordinator. The group leader further informed volunteers of the trip and project details, while concurrently gauging their readiness to engage in the volunteer activities. During the volunteer group's stay in Thailand, the group leader took a role in directing and communicating many of the logistical plans for the volunteers. She managed the preparatory on-site work for the various volunteer projects, including the provision of a brief orientation for volunteer lead teachers to the resources they would use in their English classrooms. Throughout the week at the school, she sought to meet various needs of the volunteer lead teachers, including the distribution of classroom resources, while also visiting each classroom to teach a daily music lesson. The limits of time and finances constrained the types of orientation and training opportunities that the group leader hoped to provide the volunteers, and it proved difficult to predict the quality of each volunteer's teaching in advance of the project. Lastly, the group leader also acknowledged that "teaching the non-teacher how to teach" was an area of responsibility that should have merited further attention in addressing the needs of the volunteers.

Other individuals also took on roles to support the STIVELFs. For one, the other international volunteers who did not have lead teacher roles made varied contributions in the classroom. These volunteers, assistants in the English classroom, did not have any particular mandate or guidance on how to carry out their assisting role. Consequently, the assistants adopted different styles in each classroom based on the direction of the lead teachers and their own desire to contribute.

Regional participants (that is, those living in northern Thailand but not from the village where the volunteer project was held) also took on numerous roles of responsibility. Among the participants in this group was the ministry coordinator, who was a primary bearer of responsibility to address the needs of the volunteer group. He worked closely with the volunteer group leader to organize logistical plans both prior to the group's arrival and while the group was on-site in Thailand. He served as a provider of insider information for the volunteer group during the general orientation sessions and throughout the week. While the volunteers were engaged in their various service projects, the ministry coordinator took on the role of "observer" to have the ability to take notes that would be of benefit for the development of future volunteer projects.

Other regional participants who took on responsibilities to meet the volunteers' needs were the staff and students of a seminary in Chiang Rai. These individuals served as a relational link between the volunteers and the regional culture. Besides being cultural ambassadors, the seminary staff and students worked alongside the volunteers in the various work projects. Those seminarians with a relatively higher English proficiency served as classroom interpreters at the local school; individuals with very limited English proficiency had minimal interaction with the international volunteer group members.

Finally, the local participants from the village church and school took on various roles to provide for the volunteers' needs. Each weekday, members from the church prepared a midday meal, and the school staff prepared additional provisions of water and coffee for the volunteers in the afternoons. In terms of English programming, the local school administration did not direct the volunteer group what to teach in the English project. Instead, they gave the volunteer group the freedom to make their own decisions about the arrangement and execution of the English classes. Some local staff members sat in on the English classes conducted by the volunteers and offered as-needed classroom assistance, particularly in the first half of the week. By the second half of the week, the local staff members generally were not present in the classrooms. At the end of the teaching project, the local school staff presented the volunteer group with a framed, locally-made piece of stitched artwork, as a way to recognize the group's contributions to the school.

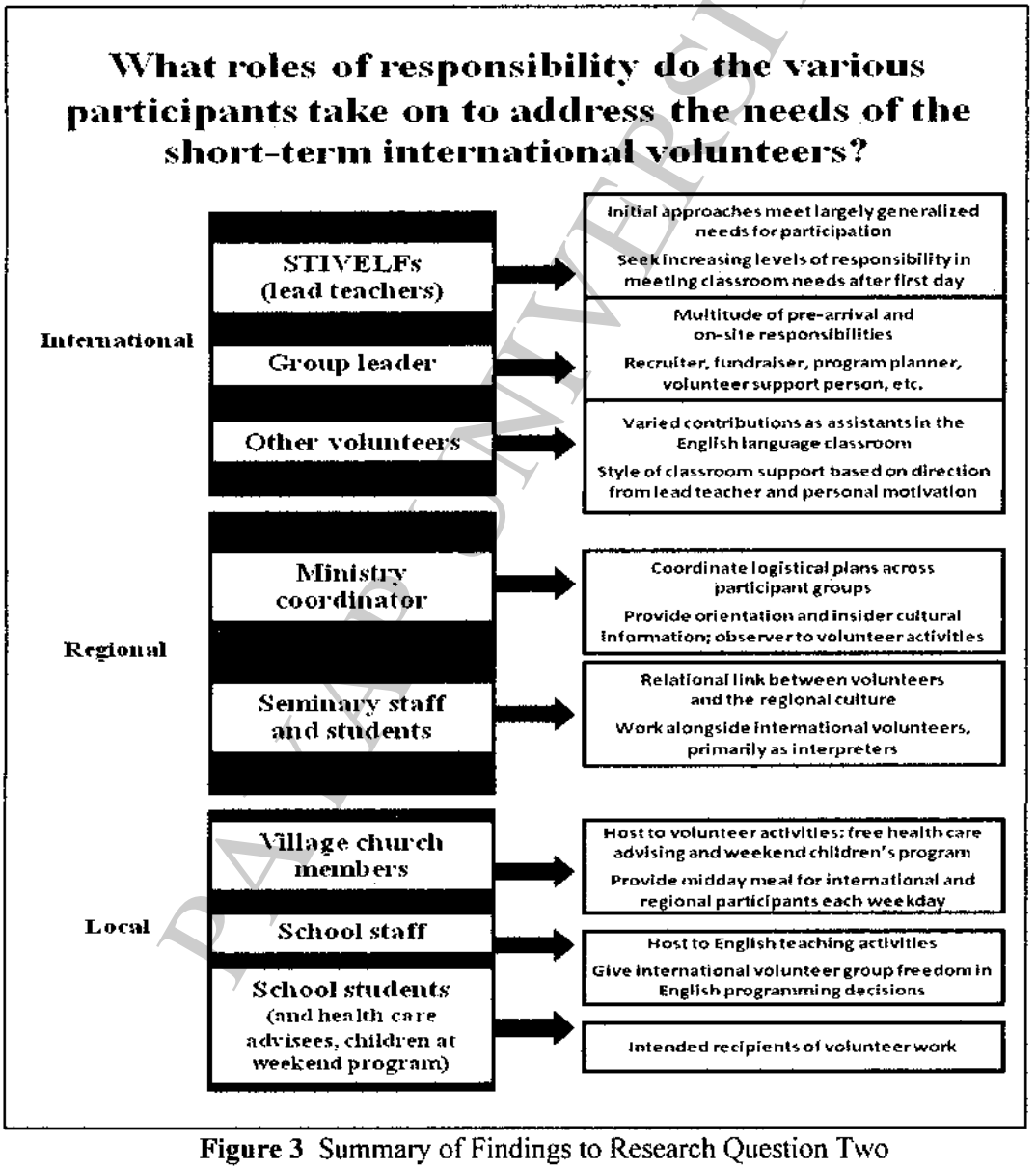

Figure 3 Summary of Findings to Research Question Two

6.4 Summary of Additional Findings

The volunteer lead teachers' responses to the Likert-scale portion of the post-experience questionnaire were highlighted in the research findings as salient for additional discussion. Among the 32 statements, only Statement 23 (*"I didn't know the expectations of the local school administration"*) was identified as a "minor problem" ($\bar{x} = 1.25$) in the interpretation of the data. The other 31 statements were interpreted as "not a problem." The volunteer lead teachers' responses thus differed notably from the concerns they identified in the pre-arrival questionnaire prior to teaching. Further, these post-experience Likert-scale responses were inconsistent with data collected from other research instruments, such as classroom observations, field notes, interviews, and reflection journals. The results of the Likert-scale portion of the post-experience questionnaire were even inconsistent with the volunteer lead teachers' comments on other portions of the questionnaire. It has been postulated that this inconsistency may stem from the use of the word *problem* on the Likert scale as the mark by which the volunteers' were to identify the challenges faced in teaching English. While the volunteers did display attempts to "problematize" the challenges they faced throughout the week, they may have no longer perceived those particular aspects as problematic upon finishing their weeklong engagement in the language classroom.

6.5 Comparing the Present Findings with Prior Literature

In this section, the findings of the present study are considered in light of the findings of other research studies. The findings are first examined for their correspondence with Gilbertson's (2000) and Wilson's (2009) studies, which were noted in Chapter Two as precedents for the current study. The findings are then considered in relation to other relevant literature.

6.5.1 Comparison with Gilbertson's Research

As described in Chapter Two, Gilbertson's (2000) study served as a research precedent for the present study, since, despite clear differences in scope, her study also investigated the provisions to address the needs of volunteer instructors. In her findings, Gilbertson characterized the volunteers in her study as individuals with "dedication" (p. 125) and "good intentions" (p. 130), even as they knowingly lacked the skills for providing English instruction. Similarly, the STIVELFs in the present study appeared sincere in their desire to offer the highest quality classroom experience they could, even though they were limited in their abilities as untrained and inexperienced English teachers.

Whereas Gilbertson's research concentrated its attention primarily within the walls of the volunteer agency, the findings from the present study additionally included the general living needs of the volunteers. This difference is likely due to the fact that while the volunteers in Gilbertson's study were engaging in volunteerism in their home community, the volunteers in this study were volunteering in a foreign country. Thus, the fulfillment of needs which might be taken for granted in one's home setting, such as physical needs of sleep and food, became more relevant in a project of international volunteerism. This also led to differences in orientation needs, with the international volunteers needing guidance on issues ranging from making polite greetings to using a squat toilet.

Additional differences in findings arose. Gilbertson issued the following conclusions in her study:

> There is no viable training available for volunteer ESL instructors at the agency. New volunteers were frustrated with the lack of concern for professionalism in the way they were oriented to the agency and to their new position. The data shows they are more concerned with procedures than with improving their instructional effectiveness, or ESL methodology or adult learning theory. (p. 113)

The results with the international volunteers from the present study were rather different. During the orientation, the international volunteers expressed their gratitude for the orientation they received, and the notion of professionalism did not surface as a pressing concern. While the international volunteer group received detailed protocol for some items, including peripheral issues relating to the distribution of prizes and snacks, this procedural information appeared more generated from the concern of the group leader than the volunteer teachers. Moreover, throughout the week the STIVELFs reported more on issues relating to instructional effectiveness than on knowledge of procedures, though both were reported as needs to some degree.

Still, similar to Gilbertson's study, in-service training, which might have addressed procedural and pedagogical concerns, was not instituted as a provision of general support for the volunteers. This led Gilbertson to assert in her study that "the quality of instruction provided by social service agencies can and should be improved with consistent, ongoing training provided by ESL professionals" (p. 158). Implied here is the presence of TESOL professionals wherever instruction is provided. However, this does not appear to be the case in many volunteer contexts, thus calling into question the adequacy of non-professional volunteer English teaching services in situations where no ongoing professional support can be provided.

6.5.2 Comparison with Wilson's Research

Wilson's (2009) study evaluated the effectiveness of a basic TESOL training course for individuals preparing for a short-term international internship. Consequently, one major similarity between Wilson's study and the present research is that the teachers were novices to teaching English and had only a short-term commitment to their international site and to English teaching. A major difference between the studies is that the participants in Wilson's research attended a 14-hour (two hours per week for seven weeks) training course prior to their English teaching abroad; the volunteers in the present study received no formal training prior to beginning their English teaching.

Wilson noted that, based on participant responses at the completion of their service abroad, "the interns seemed to learn the most from actual teaching experience... still, not being TESOL professionals, the interns' concerns for their students seemed to be very narrow and shallow, focused on the interns themselves rather than their students" (p. 61). The findings from the present research support the first part of that statement. It was the experiential learning from being in the classroom, more than the brief orientation the volunteers received, that fueled greater teacher development among the volunteers. It may also be the case that with more substantial orientation, the volunteers would have been able to make further developmental strides during their week as English teachers. For instance, further

orientation could have introduced the volunteers to more classroom management strategies and tips for improving comprehensibility in the classroom. The volunteers thus would have had a larger "toolkit" from which to attend to the classroom and refine their teaching practice. Similarly, Wilson concluded that individuals in his study would have benefited from further hours of course instruction prior to teaching.

Wilson reported that the concerns of the teachers in his study were narrow and shallow, with teachers focused on themselves more than on their students. The findings from the present study are mixed on that issue. Indeed, the volunteers' concerns were sometimes narrow, such as when Carl lamented in his reflection journal that "John 3:16 was difficult for the students to say, and I feel I did not reach the goal of everyone being able to say it well." In this case, his goal was overly narrow, in part because an actual learning goal for the prepared content had not been developed. At other times, the volunteers' concerns were more profound, like Pat's stated desire to know whether the teaching goal was to facilitate deeper learning, or rapid exposure with incidental learning. Sometimes their concerns were focused more on themselves, for instance, wanting the students to draw pictures that the volunteers could take home as mementos. In other instances, the volunteers displayed a high level of focus on providing for their students' needs, such as Rachel's reflection that "it's really challenging to evaluate which activities are the most beneficial to [the students] and which are not." Thus, it should not be assumed that non-professionals in TESOL are limited to shallow, self-focused concerns (or that TESOL professionals never exhibit shallow, self-focused concerns), as might otherwise be interpreted by Wilson's conclusions.

6.5.3 Comparison with Other Literature

Though Wilson's (2009) study promoted an increase in the hours of preparatory coursework and training prior to teaching, Belzer (2006) had earlier concluded that the up-front training volunteers received in her study was not a significant influence, as it did not address the volunteers' "moment-to-moment challenges" (p. 570). She instead recommended that the primary provisions of support should be focused "just in time" once the teacher and students already have met each other, that is, when the teacher has more concrete ideas and specific questions to address. Though these two research conclusions may seem incongruous, both are likely relevant to addressing the needs of the volunteers in the present study. The STIVELFs should have received more training, both prior to entering the classroom as well as through daily in-service support. Each day, after finishing teaching, the volunteers naturally used the van ride back to the resort as a time to share teaching experiences and ideas with one another. By doing so, the volunteers' actions strengthened Veenman's (1984) claim that "experience, in the form of learning while doing, is seen as the most important source of the acquisition of knowledge and skills" (p. 167). Their classroom experiences gave the STIVELFs fuel for greater understanding and also opened a door of communication in which the volunteers desired to discuss the shortcomings they experienced and brainstorm ways to improve for the following day. Such reflective approaches could be expanded and fine-tuned as the basis for providing continued and relevant training in other programs which incorporate STIVs.

It appears from this research study that there is no clear and rigid evolution of volunteer progression through Snow's (1996) "EFL Hierarchy of Needs" (described in Chapter Two). The volunteers demonstrated attributes of all three levels of needs

throughout the week. That is, they displayed the following needs: to make it through the sessions without running out of material (Level 1); to receive a positive student response to one's lessons (Level 2); and to feel that one's lessons actually help in the development of English skills (Level 3). It should not be a surprise that the STIVELFs had a desire to meet Level 3 needs, since they took on teaching responsibilities likely with the assumption that the students' skills in English would improve during the week. However, the volunteer group as a whole had very limited experience of what this Level 3 need demanded in their role as teachers, particularly in the local context. Their limited experience in TESOL pedagogy and practice meant that the Level 1 needs often boiled to the top, while the actualization of Level 3 needs was consequently relegated to back-burner status.

Finally, the present research supports the assertion by Veenman (1984) that "future research should define *problem* more carefully" (p. 167). Veenman commented on "the possibility that the reported problems had only a remote relationship with the real problems of the beginning teachers" (p 166). While Veenman reasoned that beginning teachers might voice complaints that do not actually affect their own instructional process, the reverse was true for the volunteer teachers in this study: they reported as "not a problem" items which did hinder their classroom instruction. Whether this was because of their short-term commitment to teaching, a preference for identifying *challenges* over *problems*, or other reasons, remains uncertain and would be interesting to consider for future research.

6.6 Recommendations

Within the range of individuals engaging in English teaching tasks, STIVELFs and professionals in TESOL are situated on two sides of a profound chasm. It is important that both groups make strides to bridge that gap. Already there are numerous calls emanating from professionals in TESOL which urge individuals to refrain from activities that may harm the English language learning community or the livelihoods of those in the English teaching profession. These appeals must be increasingly received and responded to by volunteers who engage in English teaching activities.

Those involved in STIV programming which incorporates English language teaching have an obligation to strive for the highest quality service possible for their recipient communities. The following guidelines can assist stakeholders of STIV projects along those lines. First, seek to become increasingly aware of the criticisms of using short-term international volunteers. Second, problematize the use of short-term international volunteer services in English language teaching. In particular, consider the potential negative effects the volunteers' activities could have upon the recipient community. Third, collaborate closely with those in the recipient community. Allow them to articulate their needs rather than determining needs for them. See the local community as a primary asset in achieving their own goals, and certainly not as a constraint in achieving the volunteers' goals. Fourth, seek recruitment practices that uphold a commitment to quality service by bringing on individuals well-suited for the task, not just those who can afford to come.

Further, stakeholders of English programming involving STIVs should familiarize themselves with the resources within TESOL designed to guide them. The materials from Snow (1996) and Henrichsen (2010b) are two such TESOL resources that should be in the hands – as well as the heads and hearts – of program stakeholders. (At the time of this writing, there are still some units of Henrichsen's

website which have not been uploaded). The "Short-term International Volunteer English Teaching: Planning Tool," drafted in light of the objectives of the present study, should also be counted among these beneficial resources.

6.6.1 "Short-term International Volunteer English Teaching: Planning Tool"

The "Short-term International Volunteer English Teaching: Planning Tool" makes provisions for stakeholders of STIV programming to ask the right questions to the right people, and have them provide evidence for the answers they give. The tool has been drafted based on findings from the present study together with an understanding drawn from relevant literature and life experiences. For a more detailed inspection of how the drafted tool reflects the findings from the present study, see Appendix L.

Various assumptions are made in recommending use of this tool as a resource in STIV program development. First, it is assumed that those who make use of the resource will do so in accordance with its design and purpose, and that must naturally lead to a close collaboration among participants. It is also expected that stakeholder participants will apply the questions posed in the tool to their particular STIV context, as the tool does not assume that the configuration of other STIV projects will be identical to that of the group from this study. For example, the number of volunteers, their overall programming aspirations, the use of classroom assistants and interpreters, the characteristics of the local setting, and the roles of leadership among stakeholders may differ from the setup in the present study.

It is advised that this tool for development of STIV-based English programming be brought to the table early on in the planning stages and referred to throughout the duration of the project. The strategies implemented to pursue answers to the questions posed in the tool may vary with the context. However, these are questions for which all groups that utilize STIVs should seek answers. The failure to address these questions may consequently lead to significant gaps in addressing the needs of the STIVs, which in turn may have negative consequences in their role as facilitators of English language learning in the local context. It is not without reason that there are many questions to answer. These are, after all, volunteers engaging in classroom tasks in an environment largely foreign to them, for students they likely do not know well. There should indeed be many questions about such a setup! The "Short-term International Volunteer English Teaching: Planning Tool" is presented on the pages that follow.

Short-term International Volunteer English Teaching: Planning Tool

designed by Eric S. Duwe

Figure 4 Short-term International Volunteer English Teaching: Planning Tool

This resource is intended for stakeholders of English teaching projects which make use of short-term international volunteers (STIVs). Groups can use this resource to plan, monitor, and evaluate their STIV project. Programming that incorporates STIVs comes in many shapes and sizes, and in varied locations. Accordingly, this resource is not prescriptive in how to answer the questions it raises – that depends on the participants. However, these are general questions that should be considered to meet the many programming needs within STIV projects in English language teaching.

Notes for use

The "Short-term International Volunteer English Teaching: Planning Tool" has been designed in light of research investigating the needs of STIVs. See "Investigating the Needs of Short-term International Volunteer English Language Facilitators" (Duwe, 2013) for a more comprehensive report on the topic.

The planning tool is organized as a table with five columns. More information about each of these five columns is listed below.

Consideration

This column lists questions that stakeholders of English programs involving STIVs should inquire. The questions have been organized in six categories:

A. Working together with all participants
B. Generating English language programming
C. Preparing the STIVs for their program participation
D. Meeting general needs of STIVs
E. Orienting the STIVs for the English language classroom
F. Guiding in-service STIVs with effective classroom planning and decision-making processes

Particular questions may become most pertinent at different moments throughout the English teaching project. However, all these questions should be considered prior to the start of the STIVs' classroom teaching, and also reviewed and monitored throughout the duration of the project.

Which participants are best suited to answer this question?

While the teacher and students may be at the core of interactions in the language classroom, what happens in the classroom is often a reflection of decisions made by other program stakeholders as well. Various project participants have valuable insights into the questions in this developmental tool. A well-formed project avoids a biased, one-sided perspective by seeking the input of various participants. When possible, try to find at least two different participant perspectives on each question. Consider the following groups as examples of potential participants: students, volunteers, local school staff and administration, volunteer program coordinators and leaders, along with others.

Indicators of answer (What has been done?)

This column is intended for reporting progress for each of the questions. Those participants identified as well-suited to answer the respective question can identify what has already been done to satisfy the concerns within each consideration.

Indicators of answer (What remains to be done?)

This column is intended for reporting progress for each of the questions. Those participants identified as well-suited to answer the respective question can identify what remains to be done in order to satisfy the concerns within each consideration.

Reported as Satisfactory?

Recognizing that each teaching project is unique, the "Short-term International Volunteer English Teaching: Planning Tool" does not mandate particular standards of performance. Stakeholders of each project can and should determine whether they have satisfactorily considered and managed the questions listed in the tool. Those items checked as not satisfactory should be prioritized by project stakeholders as concerns to address. Of course, these questions are not "once satisfactory, always satisfactory." Regular monitoring throughout the course of the project is essential.

Note: In addition to this tool, it is recommended that stakeholders of STIV projects familiarize themselves with two other resources that are of great benefit for meeting the needs of STIVs and the needs of the English language learners:

Basic Training and Resource Connections for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
(http://www.btrtesol.com/index.php) - Designed by Lynn Henrichsen

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. The underlying purpose of its design is that those interested can receive 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.

More Than a Native Speaker: An Introduction for Volunteers Teaching Abroad
(Published by TESOL) - Written by Donald Snow

This book is written for novice teachers planning to engage in English language teaching outside their home country. Thorough yet written in a very digestible format, it is a good selection for beginning teachers, as well as for individuals who are managing programs involving STIVs.

Table 12 Short-term International Volunteer English Teaching: Planning Table

A. Working together with all participants				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer 1 (What has been done?)	Indicators of answer 2 (What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
1. Have all the anticipated project participants been identified? (*Consider those who will have roles directly related to the English teaching program as well those more tangentially related: for example, volunteers, students, project organizers, local staff and administration, etc.*)				
2. Have minimum qualifications for project participation been set? (*Consider what skills and attributes are essential for participation, as well as characteristics which would bar someone from participation).*				
3. Have overall programming goals been established based on advising from multiple participants? (*Has our program listened to the aspirations of various participants, particularly the intended recipients of the volunteer service?)*				
4. Have the participants' strengths been determined, and have we focused on ways to maximize use of those strengths? (*Consider, for example, strengths of knowledge, ability, and resources).*				

A. Working together with all participants				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer: ((What has been done?)	Indicators of answer: ((What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
5. Have we considered how all the participants (not just the STIVs) may need assistance or orientation in their participant role? Are there processes in place to meet the needs of the various participants?				
6. Have the roles for program leadership been clarified? (*Have we confirmed these areas of leadership with these participants? Have we communicated these leadership roles to other participants so they know whom to turn to for various program aspects?*)				
7. Have the anticipated roles and responsibilities for the various participants been clarified? (*Do the participants know what is expected of them?*)				
8. Are we providing opportunities that foster interaction (not just transaction) among the various participants? (*Consider: to what extent are we valuing people in this project rather than promoting the notion that the people are simply the instruments to carry out the project?)*				

A. Working together with all participants				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer (What has been done?)	Indicators of answer (What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
9. Have we considered how each participant group can benefit from the project? (*Consider how the program can create a "win" scenario for all the anticipated participants.*)				
10. Have strategies been incorporated that will maximize the likelihood that all anticipated participant groups will receive the above benefits? (*For example, are there ways in which the programming will develop long-term and sustainable skills among the participants?*)				
11. Have we considered potential ways the anticipated participant groups may suffer loss from the project? (*For example, financial loss, loss of face, etc.*)				
12. Have strategies been incorporated that will minimize the likelihood that the participants will suffer the above loss? (*Consider means by which participants can be compensated for the loss they face, if applicable.)*				

A. Working together with all participants				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer (What has been done?)	Indicators of answer (What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
13. Are the costs for the project within the budget constraints of all anticipated participants? (*Have financial obligations been communicated clearly to all participants?*)				
14. Are debriefing measures in place for the various participants to prepare them for the implications of their participation in the project? (*For example, how might the local school do follow-up after the STIVs have left?)*				
15. Are we prepared to administer a summative (final) evaluation to find out the extent to which participants have attained the program goals?				
16. Are measures in place to report the findings of the summative evaluation to the project stakeholders?				

B. Generating English language programming				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer (What has been done?)	Indicators of answer (What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
1. Have local participants provided information about the students and their learning needs? (*Consider information about students' backgrounds, English proficiency, interests, and learning preferences.*)				
2. Have local participants provided information about the present English curriculum (if any) and articulated how they expect the STIVs' contributions should reflect it? (*To what extent should the STIVs' teaching match regular classroom provisions?*)				
3. Have local participants advised what priorities the language program should address? (*Has information provided by local participants contributed to the development of the language program?*)				
4. Are reasonable, explicit learning goals devised for the language program? (*Consider what is hoped the learners can achieve, both in terms of content and skills development.*)				

B: Generating English language programming				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer (What has been done?)	Indicators of answer (What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
5. Are the learning goals compatible with the teaching capabilities of the STIVs? If not, is reconciliation of the goals and capabilities possible?				
6. Are the STIVs able to use the local facilities to execute the plans for programming? (*Consider what alterations or additional resources may be necessary.*)				
7. Do local participants know how they can support the STIVs' on-site needs? (*Consider providing a checklist of needs, including the introduction of local personnel, tour of facilities, general classroom protocol, etc.*)				
8. Are processes in place for formative (in progress) and summative (final) English programming evaluation?				

C. Preparing the STIVs for their program participation				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer (What has been done?)	Indicators of answer (What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
1. Does each STIV meet the minimum qualifications for participation as agreed upon by participant stakeholders?				
2. Are the STIVs aware of the possibility that some anticipated needs cannot be fulfilled in the local context? (*For example, no access to wifi, limited food selection, etc.*)				
3. Have the STIVs been fit into an appropriate role based on an assessment of their readiness and willingness in providing English assistance in the local context?				
4. Have alternative ways to make use of volunteer services been considered if a STIV is not adequately suited to be a lead teacher in the English classroom? (*For example, offer English conversation practice for local staff, serve as classroom assistant, etc.*)				

C. Preparing the STIVs for their program participation				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer 1 (What has been done?)	Indicators of answer 2 (What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
5. Are clear expectations made of what preparatory activities are required for STIVs in advance of their arrival?				
6. Do the STIVs know where to find resources that will aid their preparation for their role in facilitating English language learning? (*Consider using the resources from Snow and Henrichsen listed in the introductory notes*).				
7. Have the STIVs received preparatory assistance based on an analysis of their individual needs?				

D. Meeting general needs of STIVs				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer (What has been done?)	Indicators of answer (What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
1. Do the STIVs have access to resources that will contribute to the fulfillment of their general needs? (*For example, access to food that will agree with their digestive system; place to get adequate rest; personal security; transportation*)				
2. Has the access to such resources been communicated to the STIVs, and where needed, are means for interpretation across language barriers in place?				
3. Are these resources within the budget constraints of the STIVs? (*Have financial obligations been communicated clearly to the STIVs?*)				
4. Are the STIVs' undertakings following practices in accordance with local and national law?				

D: Meeting general needs of STIVs				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer (What has been done?)	Indicators of answer (What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
5. Are the STIVs receiving clear and updated information about daily scheduling and other obligations (e.g., meeting times and places)?				
6. Are the articulated motivations of the STIVs compatible with the goals of participants of other sectors? If not, is reconciliation of these interests possible?				
7. Have the STIVs received insider cultural information and advice, including protocol for behaving within the norms of their new living context?				
8. Are there processes in place by which the STIVs can articulate any unfulfilled general living needs? (*For example, designating regular meeting times where STIVs can voice their concerns)*				
9. At the end of the project, are debriefing measures in place to prepare the STIVs for the implications of their participation in the project? (*Consider challenges STIVs might face upon their return home.*)				

E. Orienting the STIVs for the English language classroom				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer (What has been done?)	Indicators of answer (What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
1. Do the STIVs have a clear understanding of the English program goals and benchmarks for reaching those goals?				
2. Have the STIVs had opportunities to visualize the local classroom context prior to teaching in it? (*For example, through video or direct observation*)				
3. Have the STIVs internalized how aspects in the process of language learning shape the teacher's role in the classroom? (*Consider, for example, providing a local language learning opportunity for the STIVs, followed by reflection on the processes of language teaching and learning.*)				
4. Have the STIVs internalized approaches for making their English instruction comprehensible for their students (e.g., building and adapting a lesson plan; selection of materials and activities)? (*Have they heard, seen, and practiced these approaches?)*				

E. Orienting the STIVs for the English language classroom				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer: (What has been done?)	Indicators of answer: (What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
5. Have the STIVs internalized strategies for English classroom management (e.g., balancing individual and classroom needs; using repetition; providing simple instructions; encouraging student participation; and focusing students' attention)? (*Have they heard, seen, and practiced these strategies?)*				
6. Have the STIVs internalized guidelines for proper protocol and etiquette in the context of the local classroom? (*Have they heard, seen, and practiced these guidelines?)*				
7. Are the STIVs familiar with how classroom assistants or interpreters (if any) can be skillfully used to aid the English class?				
8. Are classroom assistants or interpreters (if any) familiar with how they can skillfully provide aid in the English class?				
9. Have the STIVs had an opportunity to rehearse a lesson prior to entering the classroom? Was this rehearsal monitored and followed with feedback?				

F. Guiding in-service STIVs with effective classroom planning and decision-making processes				
Consideration	Which participants are best suited to answer this question?	Indicators of answer: (What has been done?)	Indicators of answer: (What remains to be done?)	Reported as satisfactory?
1. Do the STIVs have ample time for daily lesson preparation and rehearsal prior to entering the classroom? (*Do the STIVs have access to human and material resources that can assist their preparation?*)				
2. Are the classroom materials and activities used relevant to the needs of students in the local classroom?				
3. Are the STIVs familiar with the resources they will use in the classroom, including various ways they can adapt the resources based on the students' needs?				
4. Is feedback given to the STIVs regarding their teaching practices? (*Consider how local feedback can be sought and shared with the STIVs.*)				
5. Have provisions been made to include regular personal and collective reflective processes as ongoing in-service teacher development for the STIVs? (*Consider, for example, keeping teacher reflection journals, daily feedback sessions, mentoring, etc.*)				

6.7 Limitations of the Study

Regardless of the quantity or severity of bumps, roadblocks, and surprises along the way, all research studies have limitations and shortcomings. This study is no exception. However, the limitations described in this section are not considered threats to the validity of the research so much as they are opportunities for further learning for both the researcher and the research audience.

First, it should be clear that this research study has limited generalizability, as it is just one case studied within the overall phenomenon of short-term international volunteer English teaching in TESOL. The research findings cannot be stripped from the highly contextualized situation in which they occurred. The same methodology undertaken among a different group of volunteers or in a different location would have likely produced notably different research findings. Moreover, simple and generalizable causal relations cannot be assumed from highly complex beings and environments. That is, there is not one "recipe for success" that will lead all short-term international volunteers to highly effective classroom practice, given that STIVs have highly diverse backgrounds and characteristics, and each teaching context is distinctive in nature.

Another limitation was the scoping of who was considered an English teacher in this study. While the international volunteer group consisted of 11 individuals, only four were assigned the responsibility of being lead teachers in the classroom. The presented research has focused more attention on their needs as lead teachers, even though the roles other international volunteers had as classroom assistants also merit attention. Furthermore, only the responses from the four volunteer lead teachers were included in the quantitatively analyzed portions of the pre-arrival and post-experience questionnaires. While the inclusion of responses from only four individuals constrains the reliability of these findings, it is simultaneously an opportunity for insight. The responses of the non-lead teachers to Likert-scale portions of the questionnaires (see Appendix K) may indicate that they did not take on the same degree of personal responsibility as the lead teachers for the English programming.

Time was a further limitation. The researcher had approximately nine days in the role of participant-observer to collect relevant information about participants and environments years in the making. Additionally, the researcher departed from the international volunteer group two days prior to the group's return to the United States of America. In that time, it may have been possible to elicit more data about the needs of the volunteers. However, the group had completed their primary volunteer responsibilities and had returned from the Hmong village to the city of Chiang Rai for tourist activities and preparation to return home. Therefore, it is assumed that the researcher was able to collect information most relevant to the research objectives in the time he had with the volunteer group.

The task of crossing languages and cultures also served as a limitation for the researcher. The researcher had enough communicative proficiency in Thai to establish bonds with the Thai-speaking regional participants (i.e., most of the seminary students and staff) and some local Thai-speaking participants, such as staff members of the school. Preparation prior to arrival on the field (e.g., prior translation into Thai of the interview questions for local staff) was helpful in bridging some potential shortfalls in communication, and the use of an audio recorder during semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to later verify notes taken. However, the

researcher was largely an outsider to interactions of participants speaking Hmong, the preferred language of some of the local and regional participants.

There were further limitations in the construction and implementation of the research instruments. For one, the pre-arrival and post-experience questionnaires had some limitations, including the effect that varied interpretations of some Likert-scale statements may have had on the volunteers' responses. For example, Statement 13 (*"My students [will speak / spoke] a language other than English in the classroom"*) was clearly interpreted differently by Pat. She marked it as "not applicable" in the pre-arrival questionnaire, commenting that "it's a basic understanding that the students speak one or more languages other than English"; in the post-experience questionnaire she left the statement unmarked but commented that "this was understood by the team before we came." It appears that in interpreting this statement, Pat was acknowledging the presence of students' abilities to speak a language other than English but not considering the impact that student use of another language in the classroom might have on the learning environment. Another statement that may have had multiple interpretations was Statement 8: (*"I [am unsure how / was unable] to make effective use of the resources in the classroom"*). From this statement, *resources in the classroom* is ambiguous: does it refer to resources that were present in the classroom prior to the volunteers' arrival, or does it include the use of resources that volunteers brought with them into the classroom? The four volunteer lead teachers interpreted the statement in the pre-arrival questionnaire as "not a concern" ($\bar{x}$ = 0.25), and in the post-experience questionnaire as "not a problem" ($\bar{x}$ = 0.00). It seemed clear, though, both from the researcher's observations and the volunteers' reflection journals, there was a great need for more effective use of the classroom resources, particularly those that the volunteers brought into the classroom with them.

The use of live classroom observations as a tool for data collection was limited because there were four English classes occurring simultaneously. This was understood during the development of research methodology, and the goal of observing each teacher in his or her respective classroom on at least two separate occasions was achieved. The unobserved classes were further "covered" by volunteers through their daily journal accounts. Still, the ability to observe or record all of the classrooms could have given further insight, both towards answering the two central research questions as well as enriching the narrative account of events.

Another limitation was that there was some inconsistency among a few volunteer participants in writing journal entries. The completion of the daily reflection journals was not a mandate by the researcher or the group leader. Further, the entries were not meant to be a burden for the volunteers, some of whom were already keeping their own personal journal for the trip. Seven members of the volunteer group (Pat, Dianne, Carl, Rachel, Donna, Claire, and Riley) submitted their journals to the researcher throughout the week and at the end of the teaching experience. Two members (Jeannie and Judy) had infrequently shared their journal entries with the researcher but did not submit their journal on the final day of collection. Martha and Pieter did not submit any journal entries.

While some of the research instruments (primarily the student questionnaire, classroom observations, and local staff interviews) collected information about the local students, the data consisted generally of broad-stroke information regarding the students. The local students at the village school are crucial participants in the research, though. Without the classrooms of learners, the international participants

would not have engaged in volunteer English teaching; this research account would not exist without these local students. Moreover, the needs of the students as language learners have great relevance in shaping the needs of the teachers in the classroom. However, for the purpose of answering the central research questions of this study, the decision was made to focus more on the characteristics and needs of the volunteers than of the students.

The issue of needs was a significant frame on the lens through which the researcher peered at the environment. It is also likely that unfulfilled needs were more easily observed and diagnosed than the volunteer needs which were accounted for. For example, the need for personal security was not a salient finding in this study, though it is reasonable to believe that it is indeed a vital need for the volunteers. The effects of these realities are reflected in the Chapter Four narrative account and the findings presented in Chapter Five. Perhaps the objective of illuminating the phenomenon of STIVELFs, coupled with the frame of detailed research into their needs, produced a spotlight in which the needs of the volunteers overshadowed the contributions of all the participants. This indeed has been a limitation of the present study, though such limitations exist in the process of undertaking and reporting research of any kind. Canagarajah (1996) has remarked perspicaciously on this struggle in critical research reporting: "Although this process involves breaking the limits of language and textuality, the challenge is to strike the right balance between acknowledging the multiple values and conditions that impinge on the research process while explicating the significant thematic strands for readers" (p. 329).

6.8 Contributions of This Study

The present study has offered several contributions to the field of TESOL. First, the introduction of the acronyms *STIV*, *STIVET*, and *STIVELF* does more than simply add jargon to an already dense field of specialized TESOL terminology. These acronyms help conceptualize and make a distinction among individuals who whose activities should be of interest to all in TESOL. By identifying and contextualizing the phenomenon of STIVELF programming, this research has illumined a dark corner of the field. This is a significant step towards further "problematizing" the use of STIVELFs, a process which can lead to processes of change benefiting STIVELFs, the learners and local communities they aim to serve, and professionalization within the field of TESOL.

Second, this study has contributed to the TESOL field the "Short-term International Volunteer English Teaching: Planning Tool." Stakeholders of such programming can use the tool as a guide for establishing programming that will address the needs of STIVs while also placing value in the needs of the other program participants. Others, including those critical of STIVs, can use the tool as a measure by which they evaluate and articulate their concerns of such programming. In order to actualize these contributions, this research study will have to be circulated in ways that reach wider audiences, including some which are not currently being reached through traditional methods of dissemination in TESOL.

Third, and closely connected with the stipulation above, this study has furthered the case for using narrative as a relevant and contributing aspect in the presentation of research. Both the narrative account of Chapter Four and the findings reported in Chapter Five have their respective strengths and weaknesses. When they are put together, they serve as complements to one another and can provide a more

holistic view of the research. Moreover, linking research results to their emergence from a developing storyline makes the construction of knowledge more practicable for individuals who find traditional methods of research presentation as a barrier to knowledge construction. This may include stakeholders of STIV programming who are altogether unfamiliar with TESOL as an academic or professional pursuit. However, the continuing use of narrative is also of benefit to those well familiar with TESOL research. Nelson (2011) has lamented the irony that "while narrative research is still at a stage of needing to take pains to justify its existence and to theorize its rationale, the narrativity of research texts in general tends to go unnoticed" (p. 477). The conscious inclusion of narrative in this research report will ideally bring the TESOL field one step closer to the stage where narrativity no longer seems pioneering, but is rather an assumed component of a sound presentation of research.

Fourth, this study has contributed the laying of a foundation for further research into the phenomenon of English teaching conducted by short-term international volunteers. Suggestions for future study are identified below:

1. Future studies could incorporate a similar methodology as this study. A different set of volunteers and a different teaching location would bring about results that would be worthwhile for comparison with the findings from this study.

2. Future studies could further develop and implement the "Short-term International Volunteer English Teaching: Planning Tool." Such studies could evaluate the use of the tool and propose how to improve upon it for future projects involving STIVs.

3. Future studies could explore the consequences of projects involving STIVETs and STIVELFs. For example, to what extent does the project have an impact on the attitudes of the language learners or the local teaching staff? To what extent does the experience transform the attitude of STIVETs / STIVELFs in regard to English teaching or their consideration of future endeavors within TESOL?

6.9 Concluding Thoughts

Chapter Six has provided a recapitulation of the research process. The chapter has restated the objectives of the study, summarized the methodology and findings, and compared the results with prior relevant literature in the field. This chapter has further included recommendations for the practical application of this study, particularly through the drafting of the "Short-term International Volunteer English Teaching: Planning Tool." In addition, the chapter has offered reflections on the limitations and contributions of the research, with suggestions for future studies.

Language scholar Leo van Lier (2004) has declared that "teaching does not cause learning" (p. 196). Indeed, the processes of learning are too complex to assign a simple causal relationship between the teacher's classroom instruction and the students' English language learning. It may be reasonable to posit, however, that the presence of quality teaching is more likely to foster the emergence of learning. Similarly, seeking to address the needs of short-term international volunteers is no guarantee that quality teaching will result, but it may give rise to the emergence of higher quality teaching practices.

The week of English teaching by volunteers in a small village of northern Thailand was like a series of sparks – lit among the students in the English

classrooms, lit among the volunteers as individuals now with more English teaching experiences, and lit among the many other participants in the project. Sometimes a proliferation of sparks and the presence of abundant smoke do not produce the desired result but rather expend resources that could have been better utilized by a more expert fire builder. It could be, though, that even one spark under the right conditions may someday ignite into an impressive flame that can become a source of light and fuel for others. All TESOL practitioners, as well as the stakeholders of all programs involving STIVETs and STIVELFs, must strive to become increasingly skilled and responsible fans to the flame of English language learning -- a flame burning brightly around the world in the present, and one which appears to be growing even stronger for the foreseeable future.