

2020

Receiving by giving: The impacts of immersive service-learning for primary school-age students

Kimberley Luinstra
Edith Cowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), and the [Elementary Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Luinstra, K. (2020). *Receiving by giving: The impacts of immersive service-learning for primary school-age students*. Edith Cowan University. Retrieved from <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/2319>

This Thesis is posted at Research Online.
<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/2319>

Edith Cowan University

Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study.

The University does not authorize you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following:

- Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.
- A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. Where the reproduction of such material is done without attribution of authorship, with false attribution of authorship or the authorship is treated in a derogatory manner, this may be a breach of the author's moral rights contained in Part IX of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).
- Courts have the power to impose a wide range of civil and criminal sanctions for infringement of copyright, infringement of moral rights and other offences under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

**Receiving by giving:
The impacts of immersive service-learning
for primary school-age students**

Submitted in fulfilment for the award of
Master of Education

Kimberley Luinstra

Edith Cowan University
School of Education
2020

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

Abstract

Immersive service-learning (ISL) tours provide opportunities for students to deepen their academic and social learning as they provide services to others in an environment different to their home. Research on the effects of ISL tours has been conducted with secondary, tertiary, and graduate school level students, but little research exists on the effects for primary school-age students. This may be in part because of the scarcity of ISL programs available for primary school-age students.

This case study research explores the impacts of an ISL service-learning experience on its primary school-age participants. The community of the metropolitan suburban school at the centre of the study had long-held beliefs in the value of such experiences for their students, but no empirical evidence existed to validate these claims. The research aimed to explore the impacts on the students from two perspectives: (i) the students themselves; and (ii) the parents of the students. These two groups formed the participant groups for the study.

Mixed methods were selected for the case study; quantitative data were collected first using a custom-designed questionnaire, on two occasions: one before, and one after the ISL experience. These explored the impacts in terms of five pre-determined themes: social-emotional development; intellectual learning; empathic understandings; the nature of service; and understanding Australian culture. Results from the survey data were then used to formulate semi-structured interview questions asked for focus groups with both groups, on only one occasion, after the tour was completed.

Through this methodology, a deeper understanding of the impacts has been realised, and especially through the voices of the participants. In total, nine key impacts were found: social-emotional, intellectual, and empathic development; a change in perspectives on service and Australian culture; interpersonal and personal skill development, and finally understandings of remote living, and Aboriginal culture. The case study has fulfilled the aims of justifying service-learning as appropriate pedagogy for the primary-school level in finding that many benefits for these students resulted from the immersive service-learning experience.

The evidence from the findings of this study has important implications, justifying the benefits service-learning experiences for primary-school teachers to deliver to, and with, their students; they can be confident that they will be making a difference in the hearts and minds of possible leaders of tomorrow.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

i. Incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

ii. Contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or,

iii. Contain any defamatory material.

I also grant permission for the library at Edith Cowan University to make duplicate copies of my thesis as required.

Signed _____

Date _____

Acknowledgements

This project has been a journey of self-exploration and growth on many levels. It has afforded me the opportunity to explore a field of education that I am deeply passionate about, alongside a mentor who has endlessly encouraged and inspired me to be the best educator and person that I can be. This research project could not have happened without the support of my School and my colleagues. I am very lucky to work in a school community with beliefs that align so beautifully with my own. While I am grateful to so many people, for their endless support, there are a few that I would like to personally address.

Firstly, to the participants. Thank you, both students and parents, for your time, openness and honesty. I have enjoyed exploring and documenting your story. Thank you for sharing it with me.

Secondly, to Dr Bill Allen. Your patience, care and library go unmatched. You have left an indelible mark in my life and I will be forever grateful for having walked this journey with you. I hope that we will continue to stay in contact.

Lastly, but most importantly, thank you to my family. To Annika and Kylen, thank you for giving me have the time to get my studies done and for continuing to encourage me. Thank you especially to Brian for inspiring and pushing me to complete post graduate studies. I am so lucky to have you all as my family.

My hope is that this dissertation will help to empower other educators to provide service-learning opportunities for their students. Our students have the power to change the world for the better.

Table of Contents

Use of thesis.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Declaration.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Style.....	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
The context of the service-learning tour	2
The case study immersive service-learning experience	3
Positionality	4
Research problem and questions	5
Aims of the research	6
Reasons for the research	6
The significance of the research	8
Expected outcomes.....	9
Structure of the thesis	9
Chapter 2: Literature review	10
Defining service-learning	10
Distinguishing between volunteerism, community service, and service-learning	12
Conceptual framework	14
Qualities of an effective service-learning program.....	15
Current known effects of service-learning	16
Service-learning in the Australian education context.....	19
Conclusion.....	23
Chapter 3: Methodologies and Methods.....	23

Research design	24
Study participants	26
Ethical considerations	28
Survey tool development.....	29
Pilot study	31
Focus group question development	32
Procedures for Data Collection i) Survey Administration	33
Procedures of Data Collection ii) Focus Groups.....	34
Data Analysis	36
i) Quantitative Data.....	36
i) Qualitative Data	37
Conclusion.....	42
Chapter 4: Findings	44
Student participant survey findings	45
Student responses to open-ended survey questions	56
i) Learning about and experiencing Aboriginal culture	56
ii) Experiencing rural/ remote living	57
iii) Interpersonal skill development	57
iv) Personal development	58
Findings from the student post-tour focus group	58
Findings from student responses related to personal development.....	59
Findings from student responses related to interpersonal development	60
Findings from student responses related to remote living.....	60
Findings from student responses related to learning about Aboriginal culture	60
Summary of findings from mixing student qualitative and quantitative responses	61
Parent responses: Quantitative survey results	61
Parent responses to open-ended survey questions	72
i) Learning about and experiencing Aboriginal culture	73
ii) Experiencing rural/ remote living	74
iii) Personal development	74
iv) Interpersonal skill development	74

iv) Experiencing rural/ remote living.....	75
Findings from the parent post-tour focus group coding	75
Summary of parent comments related to student’s personal development	76
Summary of parent comments related to student’s learning about Aboriginal culture	77
Summary of parent comments related to student’s experience of remote living	77
Summary of parent comments related to student’s interpersonal growth	78
Summary of findings from mixing parent qualitative and quantitative responses	78
Conclusion.....	79
Chapter 5: Discussion.....	81
The effects of service-learning.....	83
Addressing guiding research question 1: To what extent does immersive service learning (ISL) at Sanesteban School impact students socially and emotionally?.....	83
Addressing guiding research question 2: To what extent does ISL at Sanesteban School impact students’ development of empathy?	87
Addressing guiding research question 3: To what extent does ISL at Sanesteban School impact students intellectually?	89
Addressing guiding question 4: To what extent does this ISL experience impact students’ perspectives on Australian culture?.....	93
Addressing guiding question 5: To what extent does being outside of the students’ natural environment affect the overall impact of ISL?	96
Addressing the overarching research question, how does immersive service-learning impact primary school-aged students?	96
Vulnerability: The conduit for change	97
Immersive environment: the home of change	99
The impact of vulnerability and immersion on personal development	101
The impact of vulnerability and immersion on interpersonal skills.....	103
The impact of vulnerability and immersion on understanding another culture.....	105
The impacts of vulnerability and immersion on understanding a new home environment	106
Emerging theory of the effects of immersive service-learning on primary school-aged students	108
Conclusion.....	111
Chapter 6: Conclusion	113
Justifying the Study	113

Implications for Future Research.....	115
Limitations and Future Research Possibilities	117
Afterword.....	119

List of Figures

Figure 2.1	Initial conceptual model of service-learning	15
Figure 2.2	Overview of prevalence of service-learning programs	17
Figure 3.1	Explanatory sequential design	35
Figure 3.2	Excerpt of graphs and tables used in quantitative analysis	36
Figure 3.3	Excerpt of initial qualitative coding	37
Figure 3.4	Initial coding of focus group comments	40
Figure 3.5	Re-coding of focus group transcripts	41
Figure 3.6	Side-by-side coded analysis summary of focus groups	41
Figure 4.1	Impacts on social-emotional development; student results	46
Figure 4.2	Impacts on empathic development; student results	48
Figure 4.3	Impacts on intellectual development; student results	50
Figure 4.4	Impacts on attitudes towards service; student results	52
Figure 4.5	Impacts on attitudes towards Australian culture; student results	54
Figure 4.6	Impacts on social-emotional development; parent results	63
Figure 4.7	Impacts on empathic development; parent results	65
Figure 4.8	Impacts on intellectual development; parent results	67
Figure 4.9	Impacts on attitudes towards service; parent results	69
Figure 4.10	Impacts on attitudes towards Australian culture; parent results	71
Figure 5.1	Csikszentmihalyi's Flow experience diagram	92
Figure 5.2	Combined conceptualisation of Csikszentmihalyi's and Nagel's theories	93
Figure 5.3	Conceptualisation of effects of disrupting usual support networks	97

Figure 5.4	Conceptualisation of effect of discovery on sense of balance	98
Figure 5.5	Conceptualisation of interconnected learning experiences in ISL	108
Figure 5.6	Emerging conceptual model of impact of ISL	109
Figure 5.7	Comparison of conceptual models	111

List of Tables

Table 2.1	Comparison of service and learning related terminology	14
Table 3.1	Instruments used in survey development	30
Table 3.2	Coded summary of short-answer question student responses	38
Table 3.3	Coded summary of short-answer question parent responses	39
Table 4.1	Snapshot of most prevalent comments; student focus group	59
Table 4.2	Snapshot of most prevalent comments; parent focus group	76

Style

This thesis uses the style of the American Psychological Association (APA) and is based on the APA Publications Manual 6th Edition (American Psychological Association, 2010).

Chapter 1: Introduction

This is a story of experiential learning. The characters are students of a metropolitan, Australian school and the setting is the beautiful, remote regions of the East Kimberley in Western Australia. The characters set out to create relationships with a group of Aboriginal peers, in a setting far, far away from their parents and everything that they know to be 'home'. Through their adventure, they learn about themselves, learn more about Australian culture, and grow to be informed citizens of their world.

This story aims to explore and develop theory related to the impacts of such a service-learning experience on its primary school-aged, case study participants. The story will be presented through the collection and analysis of mixed methods data and explored through an interpretivist lens. While it is a generally held belief that service-learning is beneficial, there is little empirical evidence with regard to primary school-age students' experiences with service-learning, or in the context of Australia. The findings from the data collected in this case study will assist in building theories about the perspectives of service-learning tour applicants and their parents, and how these perspectives were impacted by the service-learning experience.

This study focuses on one educational practice that aims to inspire change in the world of these children. Service-learning is a pedagogical approach that provides students with the opportunity to learn through experiencing and contributing to an aspect of their community. The study was born from my longstanding belief that it is the role of educators to teach students about the world around them, and to inspire them to strive to make a positive difference within that world. I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to lead students on two service-learning tours to the East Kimberley Region of Western Australia; a similar to the one at the centre of this case study. The main goals of these tours were for students to be immersed in remote Aboriginal communities in order to gain a better understanding of Aboriginal culture through developing relationships with Aboriginal peers. The belief was that through these service-learning experiences, the students would be affected emotionally, socially, and intellectually, and in turn, the experience would contribute to their perspectives on service, Aboriginal culture, and the culture of Australia as a nation. While these impacts have been hoped for and unsystematically evaluated in the past, the time has come to conduct a systematic, methodical evaluation through research, to determine more precisely what the impacts of such a program are, as well as to develop some theory around service-learning in the primary years of schooling, in the Australian context.

This research project aimed to explore the impacts of a service-learning experience on primary school-age students, at one case study school, through survey data and focus group interviews before and after the service-learning experience. It explored both the perspectives of students and their parents. The researcher believed that it was important to explore the perspectives of the parents of these students in the study, in order to develop a clearer understanding of the context from which the students were coming from, an understanding of the parental perspectives on service-learning, and consequently why they chose to support their child's involvement in the tour. Through understandings gained in this case study, the current gap in knowledge of the effects of service-learning on primary school-age students in Australia has begun to close.

The story begins by introducing the reader to the problem and its significance. Next, the reader will understand the gaps in current literature on service-learning and its impacts, followed by an understanding of how the research was conducted to close this gap. Themes in the research will begin to emerge through the presentation of the qualitative and quantitative data. An in-depth discussion of such themes will follow and a comprehensive comparison of the pre-tour and post-tour responses will lead to an understanding of constructed perspectives. Through the understanding of the perspectives that were constructed through the experience, the final chapter will suggest contributions to theory development and program guidelines for future service-learning programs in primary schools. Throughout the story, the voices of the tour participants will tell us:

To what extent does immersive service-learning impact on primary school-age children?

This is their story.

The context of the service-learning tour

The outline of the case study school will be somewhat limited as Ethics permission demanded that the identity of the school, and thereby its students, remained confidential. Sanesteban School is an independent, co-educational, Kindergarten to Year 12 (K-12) school in Western Australia. Annual tuition fees of approximately AU\$ 6,000 mean that the clientele is in a medium to high socio-economic group (ICSEA of about 100 points above the Australian average index of 1000) (MySchool data). The school has two campuses, each offering K-12 classes. The School is founded on the values of a mainstream Christian Church, which includes a vision of shaping students into compassionate individuals with a desire to serve others. A defining feature of Sanesteban School is its focus on serving others. It offers many service-learning tours to its students, ranging from one-off visits to retirement homes, to multi-week international tours. Students from

both campuses have the opportunity to take part in these tours. Fees for the tours are above and beyond school fees. For the secondary tours, some fundraising is done, although no fundraising is done for the primary school tour.

The case study immersive service-learning experience

Service-learning is a pedagogical approach whereby students learn through participating in programs which provide a mutually beneficial service for another group within their community (Furco, 1996). The experience is carefully planned in consideration of curriculum expectations, student developmental level and community need. The service-learning experience at the heart of this case study is unique in that it entails students leaving their home environment and day-to-day routines, to experience life in a different community away from their family and friends. Herein lies the 'immersive' aspect of this tour, which gives the service-learning experience explored here its distinctive character: immersive service-learning (ISL).

The case study program invites all Year 6 students to apply to participate in a one-week tour to the East Kimberley Region of Western Australia. After arriving in the East Kimberley by plane, the tour group is met by a Western Australian owned and operated tour guide. The guide provides transportation, meals and general knowledge of the area. The exact itinerary for the tour has changed from year-to-year, but always includes a few days exploring the broader community and significant sites of the East Kimberley Region, Australia, and a minimum of three days at a remote Aboriginal community school. While travelling, students are expected to behave in a mature and independent manner, helping out with meal preparation and clean-up, setting up their own swags for sleeping, and acting in a respectful way throughout the broader community. While exploring the vast region of the East Kimberley, the tour group visits sites such as Windjana Gorge, Tunnel Creek, Geiki Gorge and Broome. These experiences are independent of the Aboriginal community. The group might also visit other Sacred Sites while accompanied by the Aboriginal community members.

While at the Aboriginal school, students and staff take part in all community and school activities. Due to their age and developmental level, the tour students do not undertake any specific building projects (as is often the case with service-learning tours). Instead, the goal of this tour is to promote relationships between the remote Kimberley community and the urban Perth community. The desired academic goal is an understanding of traditional Aboriginal culture and a meaningful experience of Australian culture. While at the Aboriginal school community, the tour participants are involved in cultural experiences such as a Welcome to Country smoking ceremony, visits to Sacred

Lands, and the sharing of Dreamtime stories, art, music, and food. Through these shared experiences, relationships are nurtured and new friendships are formed.

In preparation for the tour, students and staff take part in a series of training sessions. These sessions serve to familiarise students with experiences that they will likely encounter while away from home such as: meeting new people (and strategies to do so positively); safe preparation of food; setting up a swag; basic Aboriginal language vocabulary; and general discussion of etiquette in a new place. During these sessions, students are encouraged to ask questions and are given the opportunity to hear about previous tour participant experiences. An indirect goal of these sessions is also to allow students from the two campuses to bond with each other and the staff that will accompany them.

Once the students say their good-byes to their parents, the immersive nature of the tour begins. For most students, this is the first time that they would be travelling independent of their family. For students of this age, this is a significant change from the ordinary. Outside of forming relationships with the Aboriginal community, a focus of the tour is also on serving one's peers.

Positionality

In order to be completely transparent regarding the context of the case study, I must also place myself in context. I am a teacher at the case study school. I was the teacher of some students in the year group attending the case study service-learning tour and have had experience with the student participants and the tour. I did not attend the tour that is the focus of this research, but feel privileged to have attended the tour for two years previously (which were in fact the first two years that the tour ran). Due to my not having attended the tour at the centre of this research, direct observation was not a research method available to me. It is important for the reader to understand that while I did have some knowledge of the types of experiences that the ISL participants would take part in, I was not directly involved in any way. Having been involved with the tour from its inception, I have been involved with developing the application process, the program and the follow-up; however, I was not involved in the application process for the ISL tour involved in this study.

Through my years of teaching I have always valued service-learning experiences but have not always understood that what I was engaging my students in had an official name (i.e. immersive service learning); nor did I always proceed with a planned purpose in mind. I have first-hand experiences with what I believe to be positive outcomes from participation in such learning activities, and through this research, I have sought to explore service-learning as a pedagogical

model from an academic standpoint. I believe that the teaching profession is constantly changing and evolving and hope that my research will provide the backbone for schools to develop their own service-learning programs.

Research problem and questions

The rationale behind many service-learning experiences is that they provide students with opportunities to gain greater understanding of themselves, through authentic experiences in their community and the world around them. The case study school, Sanesteban School, provides the opportunity for Year 6 students to participate in an immersive service-learning program. The immersive nature of this program is distinctive as a similar primary school program could not be found elsewhere in the world.

Despite many reasons stated for the inception of the tour, and claims made for its impact, these have yet to be explored from the perspectives of the participant students and/or their parents. Claims for its benefits are often anecdotal and, while not discounting these, there is no substantive evidence of what the learning outcomes are and the impacts of the program. Furthermore, there is very little empirical literature on service-learning among children in the primary years of schooling, and to date, this appears to be almost non-existent in Australia.

Herein lies the problem that the research seeks to address. Through case study analysis of an immersive service learning (ISL) program, contributions have been made to the body of empirical literature and substantive evidence of the impacts of service-learning on primary school-age students.

To accomplish this, the overarching research question was:

To what extent does immersive service-learning impact on primary school-age children?

Furthermore, the following guiding questions help to bring focus to specific impacts that this experience might have for its participants:

- To what extent does immersive service learning (ISL) at Sanesteban School impact on students socially and emotionally?
- To what extent does ISL at Sanesteban School impact on students' development of empathy?
- To what extent does ISL at Sanesteban School impact on students intellectually?

- To what extent does this ISL experience impact on students' perspectives on Australian culture?
- To what extent does being outside of the students' natural environment affect the overall impact of ISL?

Aims of the research

The aims of this research are to bring clarity to, and understandings of, the impacts of an immersive service-learning program for primary school-age children. At the same time, the nature of the experience and its effects will be presented from the voice of primary school-age students. This will be best accomplished through an intrinsic case study (Punch, 2014) which will yield as much data as possible about this particular program. Mixed methods of data collection and analysis will help to ensure depth and rigour of data collection. Depth and rigour will also be ensured through examination of three domains of affect, socio-emotional, empathy, and intellectual, from the perspectives of both student participants and their parents.

Service-learning has traditionally been a learning tool most common at the secondary and tertiary education levels; this research seeks to explore its pedagogical value at the primary school level. By better understanding its impacts and effects, it is intended that the outcomes of this research will contribute to a greater knowledge and availability of immersive service-learning experiences for primary school-age students. Furthermore, through exploring and clarifying the perspectives of the participants, additions will be made to educational research in the field of service-learning theory, and future service-learning program development.

Reasons for the research

The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) states that education should equip young people with the skills and values necessary to be active and informed citizens of the global economy. It is through forward-thinking consideration of the position of Australia's youth, in the context of the future global economy, that the reasons for this research are based. The Melbourne Declaration states that the future of the nation's economic prosperity and social cohesion are shaped in part by the education that today's young Australians receive (MCEETYA, 2008). Paired with this notion, one must consider that, while learning in the classroom is largely dictated by State and National Curricula, there are other, broader learning outcomes and goals of education. One of these is empowering students to take initiative to create positive change in their world.

Students of today are expected to be the leaders of tomorrow. In Katy Swalwell's book, *Educating Activist Allies: Social Justice Pedagogy with the Suburban and Urban Elite*, the role of social justice pedagogy in the education of privileged secondary school students is explored (Swalwell, 2013). She defines privileged students as "those positioned by power relations within systems of supremacy that are continuously shaped by historical, social, political, and economic factors and that are made stronger when rendered invisible, consciously or not, to those who benefit from them most" (Swalwell, 2013, p. 5-6). In considering this population of students, Swalwell states that "if we care about social justice and we believe that schooling can help transform society, then we should care about how students of privilege are educated" (Swalwell, 2013, p. 14). According to these statements, the case study students of Sanesteban School would be defined as privileged.

By combining the ideals of MCEETYA (2008) and the theoretical arguments of Katy Swalwell, the basic reasoning for this research is born; through instilling a strong sense of service in our primary students today, it is predicted that we will have more engaged, motivated and conscientious leaders in the future. One tool that educators can use to nurture these qualities in primary students is experiential, service-learning opportunities. Unfortunately, service-learning may lack support as a teaching method until we better understand its effects. This is particularly the case when the constraints to conducting immersive service-learning (such as complex risk assessments and educator duty of care responsibilities for primary school-age students) can be so forbidding. This is why it is important to gain a deeper understanding of the impacts of service-learning through observing changes in perspectives and beliefs of case study Year 6 students, and their parents. Herein lies the value of this research. This will help to develop service-learning theory and program guidelines, and ultimately increase the availability of service-learning experiences for primary school-age students.

The research question seeks to explore the extent to which immersive service-learning impacts on primary school-age children. The case that is being studied involves behaviours that cannot be controlled, and that occur in the present time. According to Yin, these conditions affirm the case study as an appropriate methodology for my research project (Yin, 2009). Additionally, Yin suggests that the case study method is used in cases where the researcher seeks to explore and describe a real-life phenomenon in depth, but where the understanding is dependant on contextual conditions (Yin, 2009).

As perspectives are deeply personal, I acknowledge that I have my own perspectives on ISL and due to the research being gathered from this etic perspective, this could impact on data collection (Yin, 2010). To account for this, I have used mixed methods data collection. The

quantitative survey data will be used as an objective scaffold from which to generate more exploratory, qualitative focus group interviews. Chapter 3 of this thesis will outline the research methods in greater detail.

The literature review in Chapter 2 shows that research on service-learning is primarily in the American context, with very little research conducted either in Australia or with primary school-age students, and no research located regarding immersive service-learning programs for primary school-age students. Current theories on the effects of service-learning on primary school-age students are often implied based on research with secondary school-age participants (Celio, Durlak, & Dynmicki, 2011). Furthermore, Scott and Graham (2015) concluded that more research on the effects of service-learning in younger students was necessary. Through interviews and survey data, this research will clarify the perspectives of its participants and add to the general understanding of the effects of service learning on primary school-age students.

The significance of the research

Swalwell (2013) has argued strongly for the importance of social justice pedagogies in terms of their development as active citizens. She argues for three levels of citizenship: “personally responsible citizenship, participatory citizenship and justice-oriented citizenship” (Swalwell, 2013, p. 15). Developing these levels of citizenship empowers students to take initiative to create a positive change in their world. As the students of today will be the leaders of tomorrow, instilling a strong sense of service in primary students will likely lead to the leaders of tomorrow being more engaged, motivated and conscientious. A tool that educators can use to nurture these qualities in primary students is experiential, service-learning programs.

The majority of research conducted on the effects of service-learning has been on secondary and tertiary level students. There is a significant gap in the educational research field with regard to the effects of service-learning on primary school-age students. This study is significant because its outcomes will help to develop conceptualisations of immersive service-learning programs in primary school. Due to the uniqueness of the case study service-learning experience program, there are no other programs to which the research can be compared, therefore limiting the case study to a single case. Case study research is sometimes criticised for its lack of generalisability; however, in unique situations such as the program at the centre of this research study, case study research can make significant contributions to the body of knowledge by offering a starting point for future research (Punch, 2014). Although this research will present the findings of an Australian service-learning

program, due to little relevant research specifically on primary school-aged students, this case study could be of greater global significance.

Expected outcomes

This study aims to make significant contributions to educational researchers' understanding of the effects of service-learning. The outcomes of the research will be shared initially through this dissertation, and also submitted for publishing in the Journal of Experiential Education. Findings will be presented at conferences such as Transforming Service (transformingservice.com), and with relevant staff at the case study school. Having had previous e-mail contact, the outcomes of this project will be shared with American researcher, Dr Shelley Billig; resulting in the research being shared internationally.

In terms of theory, an outcome of this research has been a better conceptualisation of quality service-learning programs at the primary school-age level, and recommendations for future service-learning programs. Through the conceptualisation and recommendations found in Chapters 5 and 6, the ultimate goal is to persuade more educators to provide service-learning experiences for their primary school-age students, and ultimately, to help empower students to be change makers in their world. The previously stated constraints on teachers for conducting immersive service-learning may be countered by awareness of the rich learning outcomes that such experiences generate.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis will present the experiences of the case study participants, describe possible impacts of these experiences and furthermore, future implications for such understandings. Chapter 1 has placed the research question in context and described its relevance and aims. Chapter 2 examines current, relevant research, identifies gaps in understanding and justifies the significance of this research project. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology underpinning the research and the methods used to collect the data. Chapter 4 presents the data that was collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods, as well basic themes that emerged. Chapter 5 gives meaning to the data and develops basic theoretical contributions to understanding the effects of service-learning. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes with the implications of the research. It provides suggestions for future service-learning programs, describes implications for policy and practice, and most importantly, encourages more educators to effect change in the world by providing service-learning experiences for their students.

Chapter 2: Literature review

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the body of research literature related to the nature and effects of service-learning on primary school-age participants. Three main sources of research were used to locate relevant material. First, searches were conducted on ECU Worldsearch, Google Scholar and the ERIC Database, using the terms and phrases: “service learning”; “service-learning”; “service learning in primary school”; “service learning in elementary school”; and “service learning in Australia”. Second, ERIC has a comprehensive thesaurus which guided further searches within the parameters outlined above. Further, it became apparent early in the search process that a leader in the field of research on service-learning in primary schooling was Dr Shelley Billig. Searches were then conducted for further work by Dr Billig and her colleagues. Dr Billig was also contacted via email with regard to any suggestions; she agreed, and suggested a focus on the outcomes of emotional, social and intellectual impacts on the children (Billig, personal communication, October 2017).

In an effort to create a context for this research, the literature was categorised into five main themes: defining service-learning; distinguishing between service-learning, volunteerism and community service; the qualities of an effective service-learning program; current known effects of service-learning; and service-learning in the Australian context. The examination of these themes revealed that there was a considerable gap in both understanding of the effects of immersive service-learning and the effects of service-learning on primary school-age students in particular.

Defining service-learning

One of the recurrent critiques of service-learning is the ambiguity of its definition (Swalwell, 2013). Through analysing the literature, three categories into which service-learning terminology can be classified arose: service-learning as a philosophy; service-learning as a tool for learning; and service-learning as a design for programs. The three categories are closely related, but do differ inherently. It would seem that educators who believe in service-learning philosophy argue that serving others should underlie the choices around how students learn and the programs through which their learning takes place.

Philosophies are broadly developed by what we believe about a given topic or idea. In Heider’s (2016) book on service-learning and early childhood education, she states that when “viewed from a philosophical standpoint, service-learning is based on the premise that learning

experiences should be experiential, life-centred, and relevant to the learner” (p. 3). As a philosophy, service-learning also falls into Swalwell’s (2013) social justice pedagogy framework because it meets the three primary requirements: students are exposed to different perspectives in their world; students are encouraged to view themselves as equally valuable to marginalised members of society; and students have opportunities to engage in project-based learning activities that address needs within their community. Waldstein (2003) suggests that service-learning has the potential to “offer a means to encourage students to take ownership of their education and connect them to civic life in a manner that enhances values that define a democratic society” (p. 36).

Through taking ownership of their education, students become engaged with their learning and, through this engagement and connection, researchers such as Swalwell (2013) suggest their learning becomes deeper and more valued. As members of a democratic society, children are expected to grow into adults that care about their society and all of its members equally. Swalwell also argues that educators need to provide opportunities for students to grow and develop in their understanding of ways of thinking, acting and behaving. This supports the decision for this research to focus on exploring the social-emotional, empathetic and intellectual effects that service-learning has, or might have, on its participants.

Other educators who identify philosophies of service-learning believe that service-learning is a strategy that links community service experiences to classroom instruction. They argue that students’ understandings of academic standards are facilitated through authentic community need problem solving (Thomsen, 2006). These authentic community experiences are developed through service-learning as a pedagogical tool.

As a pedagogical tool, service-learning is closely linked to experiential learning. Experiential learning was developed in the educational philosophies of John Dewey and David Kolb (Heider, 2016). As cited in Heider (2016), Dewey believed that learning was a social process, best founded in experience. He further developed this thinking to include concrete experiences, reflection, and abstract conceptualisation (Heider, 2016). Through exploration of the literature on service-learning, it became evident that there is agreement that service-learning pedagogy is a model of education where community service is the fulcrum (Billig & Waterman, 2003) which supports experiential learning as a vehicle for gaining a deeper understanding of the world (Thomsen, 2006).

The final aspect in defining service-learning is its use as a program design. While pedagogy is an approach to teaching, program design is more concerned specifically with the elements that combine together to define the parameters of the teaching and learning. Thomsen (2006) suggests that service-learning program design falls along a continuum from direct service to indirect service.

Direct service involves students actively engaged in face-to-face interaction *with* others in their community (for example, reading books with aged-care residents; assisting in soup kitchens), while indirect service programs involve students actively engaged in activities *for* their community (for example, collecting food for a local food bank; raising money for a local charity). As educators prepare for service-learning programs, they use service-learning as a lens through which to teach and assist students to learn the curricular expectations. These programs help to develop a greater sense of civic or social responsibility (Thomsen, 2006), and the service-learning experiences in them is an intentional outcome, not a fluke opportunity (Billig, 2000a).

Distinguishing between volunteerism, community service, and service-learning

Several authors (Barber, 1992; Billig & Waterman, 2003; Honnet & Poulson, 1989) agree that service-learning programs should have three elements: a service is provided to the community; students' learning is strengthened; and students' commitment to social responsibility is advanced. By ensuring that service-learning has these elements, it is set apart from volunteerism and community service. While the three terms – service learning, volunteerism and community service – have several commonalities, and the terms are often used interchangeably, there are important differences. The majority of service-learning research papers distinguish between the three terms using distinctions made by Furco (1996). Furco formulated his categorisation of the three terms by further developing the ideas of Robert Sigmon (1979), who suggested that an understanding of the relationship between learning goals and service outcomes would distinguish between service programs (Furco, 1996).

After considering the various relationships between learning goals and service outcomes, Furco stated that “[t]he inherent altruistic nature of volunteer programs renders them as service focused, designed to benefit the service recipient” (1996, p. 4). He defined volunteerism as “the engagement of students in activities where the primary emphasis is on the service being provided and the primary intended beneficiary is clearly the service recipient” (Furco, 1996, p. 4).

Furco suggested that community service programs extend the structure and student commitment further than volunteerism, therefore taking on more influence of learning goals. He suggests that

community service is the engagement of students in activities that primarily focus on the service being provided as well as the benefits the service activities have on the recipients. The students receive some benefits by learning more about how their service makes a difference in the lives of service recipients. (Furco, 1996, p. 4)

Another important distinction is that community service is often associated with penalty or punishment (Thomsen, 2006), whereas service-learning is often seen to be rewarding in nature.

Further along the spectrum of service- and learning-related terminology are internships (service experiences for the enhancement of study) and field education (programs that offer students opportunities to integrate some academic learning into the services that they provide) (Furco, 1996). Finally, service-learning programs are differentiated by being designed to ensure that they “equally benefit the provider and the recipient of the service... equal focus is on the service being provided and the learning that is occurring” (Furco, 1996, p. 5). According to Furco, a non-negotiable in service-learning programs is the intention to benefit both the recipient and the provider equally. In contrast to the other programs, quality service-learning programs are always connected to curriculum and student reflection (Thomsen, 2006). Furco’s definition informs this study as it justifies, in part, the aim of determining the benefits of the service-learning for the school participants of the research.

As a critique of service-learning programs is often that they are no different from volunteerism or community service (Swalwell, 2013), it is imperative that the contrast between the different terms be understood. Due to misunderstanding the terminology, parents often assume that they could provide students with the same opportunities as a school community service-learning program; however, family-based service activities would likely lack the curriculum basis.

Service-learning experiences offer their participants a unique opportunity that is not afforded through the myriad of other programs. By definition, service-learning programs provide the opportunity “to develop mutually beneficial partnerships between those offering the service and those receiving the service” (Lavery, Cain & Hampton, 2018, para. 8). Through service-learning, a reciprocal relationship (Jacoby, 1996, as cited in Lavery et al., 2018) is developed between the service-providing community partners and the recipient community. The research reported in this dissertation will show that this reciprocity has had a profound effect on its Perth based participants; however we cannot be sure about the impact on the Aboriginal community. While the participants set-out to provide a service to the Aboriginal community, they themselves received many positive outcomes. Table 2.1 presents a comparison of the beneficiaries and foci of the various programs.

Table 2. 1

A comparison of service and learning related terminology: adapted from Furco's (1996) distinctions among service programs

	Volunteerism	Community Service	Service Learning	Field Education	Internship
Beneficiary	Recipient	Recipient	Recipient and provider	Provider	Provider
Focus	Service	Service	Service and learning	Learning	Learning

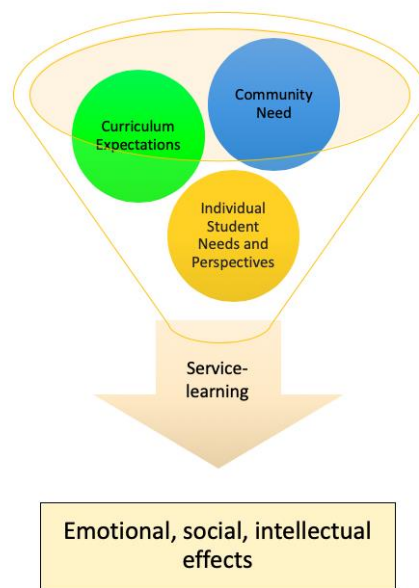
In summary, and as seen in Table 2.1, it is only through service-learning experiences that both the recipient community and the service-providing participants benefit. Through the deliberate and thoughtful development of service-learning programs, a mutually beneficial experience is created. The benefits of the service-learning experience at the heart of this study will be presented and explored in Chapter 5. As was stated in Chapter 1, the service-learning experience at the heart of this case study provided its participants with opportunities to serve others and to develop their understandings of Aboriginal people and their communities. It is only the travellers' group whose impacts are researched in this study; no claims can be made for the other participation group, the Kimberley Aboriginal community.

Conceptual framework

By synthesising views that emerged from the literature reviewed above, an initial conceptualisation of service-learning was posited. It combined elements of community needs, curriculum expectations and individual (student) needs and perspectives being funnelled through the service-learning experience with expected outcomes around emotional, social and intellectual effects.

In consultation with the community stakeholders, an understanding of needs is gathered. This knowledge is combined with the curriculum expectations and an understanding of student needs and perspectives, to create and participate in a service-learning experience. The experience results in emotional, social and intellectual effects. While the empirical research was based on this conceptualisation, the results of the study were to lead to a re-rendering of this framework into a much more sophisticated model (see Discussion Chapter 5).

Figure 2. 1 *An initial conceptual model of a service-learning experience*



Qualities of an effective service-learning program

The previous section attempted to present a clearer understanding of what service-learning is and what it is not. With this clarification, one is led to question whether all service-learning programs are of equal quality. Billig has done considerable research into addressing and answering this question, concluding that, although there is widespread debate about the definition of service-learning, there is a general consensus about the quality standards of such programs (Billig, 2000b): Billig argues that quality service-learning programs have academic content that students experience through doing something and that through this action, they acquire deeper and better understandings.

Much of the research on quality service-learning is related to secondary, tertiary, and teacher education programs. Very little research has been done in the primary school setting. Nevertheless, the standards for high quality service-learning remain the same across all participants. Thomsen (2006) states that there are four general strategies that must be present: the learning content must be linked to curriculum standards; students or participants need to have direct contact with the recipients of the service; the activities themselves must challenge the participants cognitively; and, lastly, the learning should have an element of student voice and choice. These strategies are outlined in more detail by the USA's National Service-Learning Cooperative (see Appendix A). The National Service-Learning Cooperative's essential elements can be summarised as relating to learning, service and necessities to support learning and service.

Celio, Durlak, & Dynmicki (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of the impacts of service-learning. Their research analysed the results of 62 programs and found that the effects of using between one and four of the practices recommended by National Service-Learning Cooperative (see Appendix A) were higher than those programs that used no recommended practices (the effects of using only two were not discussed). The most significant finding of this meta-analysis was that the essential element most present in effective programs was reflection, followed by curriculum links, youth voice and community involvement (Celio et al., 2011). In relation to this research case study, it is important to note that, in the meta-analysis cited here, only 5% of the research was on primary school-age students. This reveals the paucity of studies on service-learning with primary school-age participants globally.

Billig (2000b) found that a greater degree of contact with the community receiving the service resulted in students perceiving the value of the knowledge and skill gained through the experience to be greater, a finding supported by Swalwell (2013). These findings validate the need for students to have direct contact with the community that they are serving (Thomsen, 2006). In the realm of service-learning with primary students, a concern is often whether the students can handle the interaction with those less fortunate than themselves, and whether service belongs in schools or at home. As cited in Scott and Graham (2015), Barnett found in 1987 that school programs can have significant effects for developing empathetic behaviour.

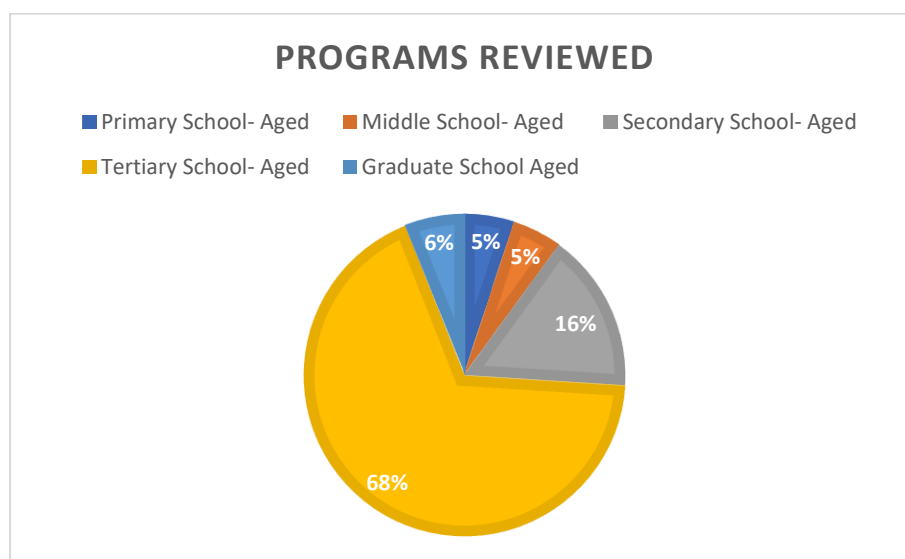
Although there is a general consensus around the elements of a high-quality service-learning program, there are differing opinions on some of the finer details; for example, Billig and Waterman found that programs differ in the ways that they are directed, the nature of the service experience provided, and the depth of reflection (Billig & Waterman, 2003). Likewise, Scott and Graham found that some researchers believe that service-learning programs are only effective if students are involved in at least 40 hours of service (Scott & Graham, 2015). Due to these differences, Billig and Waterman suggest that it could be difficult to generalise effects of service-learning on students. This is an argument in favour of an in-depth case study, which is the nature of the research reported in this dissertation, rather than a broader, cross-sectional study.

Current known effects of service-learning

Current literature on the effects of service-learning can be divided into categories based on the educational level in which the participants are enrolled. These categories are teacher education, tertiary education, secondary education, middle school and primary school. Before considering the research on each educational level, it is important to understand the scope of where service-

learning programs are actually happening, and therefore from where the research data is being collected. In their meta-analysis, Celio, et al. (2011) found that while the quality and nature of the programs varied, there still seemed to be distinguishable trends in the findings on their effects. In their research systematically reviewing 62 studies involving 11, 837 students; 68% of programs involved undergraduate (tertiary level) students; 16% involved high school (secondary) students; 5% involved primary school-age students; 5% involved middle school (years 6 – 8); and 6% involved graduate students (Celio et al., 2011) (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2. 2 *Overview of the prevalence of service-learning programs*



From Celio et al., (2011)

Due to a general lack of research in the primary school sector, participants from Kindergarten through to Year 12 are often grouped together and generalisations about the group as a whole are made. The research literature that currently exists is predominantly from the United States, although a few articles are available from the Australian context. Following from the distinction between volunteerism, community service and service-learning, this literature review has not focused on the effects of volunteerism and community service. Another important thing to note is that the current body of research, to date, shows that the effects of service-learning occur on three different levels: effects on the receiving community; effects on the educational institute providing the service; and effects on the individual participants themselves (Celio et al., 2011). As the aim of this case study research was to develop a clearer understanding of the effects of an immersive service-learning experience on its participants, the literature review in this dissertation has focused on the effects on the individual participants.

Generally, Celio et al. (2011) found that students participating in service-learning programs showed significant gains in five outcomes: attitudes toward themselves; attitudes towards school and learning; civic engagement; social skills; and academic performance. Researchers such as Melchior and Bailis (2002) and White (2001) studied the effects of service-learning on middle and secondary school-age students and found that students involved in service-learning showed higher levels of self-esteem, a greater sense of social welfare, and general involvement in acts of service. Researchers such as Astin and Vogelgesang (2006), and Eyler and Giles (2001) found similar effects on students in tertiary level education level; in particular, Celio, et al. (2011) noted the propensity of tertiary level students to take on civic leadership roles and to engage in political aspects of their community as a result of service-learning experiences.

In her book, *Service Learning in Grades K- 8: Experiential Learning that Builds Character and Motivation*, Thomsen (2006) states that Billig had found that service-learning had nine positive effects (see Appendix B), which could be summarised as being social, academic and interpersonal in nature. When considering the development of service-learning programs, the effects that Billig found can be generalised to describe *programs* at all educational levels. However, as educators are often well aware, the developmental level of *students* at each of these educational levels is very different. Therefore, taking into consideration the developmental differences of service-learning program participants across educational levels, it is problematic to assume that the effects of service-learning programs on tertiary level students would be the same as the effects on primary school-age students. While the focus of the research project reported in this dissertation is primary school-age students, the known effects on this education level need to be explored and discussed in more detail.

Scott and Graham (2015) specifically studied the elements of empathy and community engagement in their study on Years 1, 2 and 5 students. They found that from an academic standpoint, service-learning could significantly increase both elements, but that not much research was available regarding the social development perspective (Scott & Graham, 2015). They also concluded that these were both key pro-social behaviours to develop in adolescence (Eisenberg, as cited in Scott & Graham, 2015). Scott and Graham emphasised the need for a deeper understanding of the effects of service-learning due to its implications for future “citizenship, community engagement, altruism and empathy” (Scott & Graham, 2015, p. 369).

Richards, Sanderson, Celio, Grant, Choi, George, and Deane (2013) evaluated a pilot service-learning program for students in years 5 and 7. They found that when compared to their peers in the control group, participants showed higher scores on the measure of leadership (Richards, et al,

2013). In the same article, they stated that positive effects were found by Scales, Blyth, Berkas, and Kielsmeier (2000), and by Hecht and Fusco (1996). The benefits that these researchers found were academic and social benefits (Richards, et al., 2013) . As cited in Richards, et al. (2013), Soslau and Yost (2007) found that students involved in service -learning were more likely to attend class regularly and to spend longer time periods on task. Overall, a greater desire to learn and an increased level of personal responsibility were indicated.

Lastly, Billig and colleagues found that primary school-age students who participated in service-learning programs felt that they could make a difference in their communities, and generally showed greater interest in the world around them (Billig, Jesse, & Grimely, 2008). In so far as there is some research on the effects of service-learning programs in primary school-age students, Leeman, Rabin, and Román-Mendoza (2011) concluded that “although service-learning is a widely researched teaching methodology for high school and college students, few studies had previously looked at the effects of service-learning in the younger cohort” (as cited in Scott & Graham, 2015, p. 13). This statement in itself justifies the need for more research on the effects of service-learning on primary school-age students, as Richards et al. (2013) concurred.

There are two important outcomes from this section of the literature review. One is that service-learning can impact on the social-emotional, empathic, and intellectual aspects of participants’ learning. The second is that there is little understanding of the effects of service-learning programs on primary school-age children. Hence, the aim of the empirical study reported in this dissertation was to explore deeper understandings and clearer descriptions of the social-emotional, empathic and intellectual effects on primary-level students, using Billig’s findings as a guide for developing questions and informing the researcher’s context. Each of these three domains of affect were a focus in the questionnaire developed for this research.

Service-learning in the Australian education context

As evidenced above, there is a lengthier tradition of service-learning in the educational jurisdictions of the United States of America. Some researchers, who attribute its history and breadth to the beliefs and values of the USA’s Founding Fathers, question whether service-learning will ever be as prolific in Australia, due to its foundational roots (Langworthy, 2007). Langworthy questioned whether these fundamental socio-cultural differences are key to predicting the adaptation of service-learning programs in the Australian context; she asks: “(C)an the American service-learning be transplanted to the Australian context where a culture of education and democracy and citizenship is at odds with a culture where education for private benefit and

vocational outcome has increasingly seized the policy agenda?” (Langworthy, 2007, p. 1). She suggests that, although Australian universities may not have a history of being venues of social change, there is support for service-learning as a key methodology to connect students to their community. Other studies (Parker, Myers, Higgins, Oddsson, Price & Gould, 2009) suggest that further research on the effects of service-learning in the Australian context are needed. Therefore, our attention turns to current curricular practices in Australia.

In his book *Curriculum Development and Design*, Print (1993) suggests that there are five dimensions of curriculum: curriculum of entitlement, intended curriculum, enacted curriculum, received curriculum, and hidden curriculum. The curriculum of entitlement in Australia, is, at the time of writing, stated in the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008), noted earlier and discussed below. Reflecting the broad outcomes of the curriculum of entitlement, the intended curriculum is embodied in official national and state curricula. Enacted curriculum is how the school interprets and enacts the intended curriculum of the jurisdiction in which it operates. The last two dimensions concern students’ reception of curriculum: what they experience in the enacted curriculum, which may vary from classroom to classroom, for example; and their experience of the value-laden curriculum which may not be explicit as the others. In consideration of the goals of the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008), service-learning experiences meet the curriculum of entitlement through promoting equity and developing Australian students as confident, active and informed students. While not explicitly part of the WA State K-10 Curriculum (SCSA, n.d.), where and when schools mandate or encourage service-learning, it then becomes part of the enacted curriculum which in turn impacts on the students’ experiences of the school curriculum.

In December 2008, the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (MCEETYA) agreed by Commonwealth and State Ministers of Education, was published. The purpose of the document was to recognise the changing needs and demands of education in the 21st century, and to set goals to meet these needs and to improve outcomes for all Australian school students and schools (MCEETYA, 2008). In doing so, it, in effect, outlined the curriculum of entitlement for young Australians. The Declaration states that schooling should support a variety of needs, beyond literacy and numeracy, including “national values of democracy, equity and justice, and personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience and respect for others” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 5). The goals of the MCEETYA are:

Goal 1: Australian schooling promotes equity and excellence

Goal 2: All young Australians become

- Successful learners
- Confident and creative individuals
- Active and informed citizens.

(MCEETYA , 2008, p. 7)

The explanation of Goal 2 directly relates to service-learning by maintaining that students should be able to plan activities collaboratively and make sense of how their world works (MCEETYA, 2008). As connection with the community is an element of service-learning, it could be said that service-learning is embedded in the curriculum of entitlement of the nation.

Service-learning fits into the intended curriculum of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority of Western Australia (SCSA), through its connection back to the MCEETYA. SCSA details the general capabilities which are to be integrated across curriculum which include Intercultural Understanding, Personal and Social Capability and Ethical Understanding. The introduction to Intercultural Understanding states that the capability helps to build a society that is culturally diverse and cohesive, through a shared understanding of the various cultures, languages and religions that exist in Australia. In immersive service-learning programs, by removing students from their natural environment and allowing them to experience a new culture, Personal and Social Capability is being developed. Overall, immersive service-learning enriches a student's Ethical Understanding by offering the opportunity to explore, interact and consequently understand another's point-of-view.

As evidenced earlier in this chapter, diverse schools at various educational levels have begun, or have continued over time to integrate service-learning programs as a part of their enacted school curriculum. Schools may choose how their students will access the intended curriculum, based on their school community vision and goals (Sharma, 2016). In 2004, the Australian Council of Deans of Education (ACDE) launched a project with the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) called the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (VEGPSP) (Lovat, Toomey, Clement, Crotty & Nielsen, 2009). The goal of this study was to use case study research to examine the effects of school-selected values education programs (Lovat et al., 2009). One of the findings of this research was that service-learning affected the "emotional side of learning" (Lovat et al., 2009, p. 61).

The dimensions of received curriculum and hidden curriculum are closely related as they involve the transmission and reception of curriculum. Depending on a school's vision and goals, educators can easily integrate service-learning across all areas of their curriculum, without explicitly having to label it as a service-learning experience. For example, a teacher might choose to teach

their class biological science and how living things adapt to their environmental conditions (SCSA, 2014) by cleaning up their local beach. Using the definition of service-learning prescribed by this dissertation, the experience benefits both the provider and the recipient of the service, while focusing on both serving and learning. If they were to be asked what they took from the experience, (the received curriculum), the children might respond that they helped the environment and living things by cleaning up the beach, and learned that they need to take more care to dispose of their rubbish carefully.

It is evident that while service-learning is an emerging field in Australian schools and jurisdictions (Coffey & Lavery, 2015), it can play a part in all dimensions of the curriculum of Australian youth. Not only can service-learning act as a vehicle through which to learn aspects of the prescribed curriculum (curriculum of intent), it also serves as an opportunity for students to be leaders and make a difference in their community (Sharma, 2016). This leadership could be gained by students who are not usually seen as leaders within the regular classroom. As service-learning experiences are so varied, students can successfully engage with their learning through a variety of modes, dependant on personal needs (the school's enacted curriculum).

While the current research on service-learning experiences with primary school-age participants in Australia is almost non-existent, a similar study to this case study was found. It focused on the effects of service-learning on pre-service, Australian teachers, in Western Australia (Lavery, Cain & Hampton, 2018). The service-learning experience of the pre-service teachers at the centre of Lavery's research was very similar to that of the primary school-age participants' experience at the centre of this case study research; participants were immersed in a remote Aboriginal community for eight days and asked to reflect on their experience; similarly, the primary school-age participants in this case study were immersed in a remote Aboriginal community for three days, and then asked to reflect on their experiences. As stated in Lavery et al. (2018), Colby, Bercaw, Clark & Galiardi (2009) differentiate immersive service-learning experiences from other service-learning experiences because "[b]y its very nature, the immersion process gives students a more sustained hands-on learning experience in an area that is potentially outside of their comfort zone" (2009). Lavery et al.'s aim was to develop an awareness of the implications of the program on participants' understanding of cultural implications of teaching in a remote Aboriginal school, and participants' understanding and respect of Aboriginal culture (Lavery, et al. 2018). Similarly, perspectives on Australian culture was an area of focus in the questionnaire used in this case study.

One of the key findings of Lavery, et al.'s (2018) research was the development of the participants' appreciation of remote living through the immersive service-learning experience.

Participants in their research commented that the extended journey to the Aboriginal community brought an immediate understanding of the remoteness of the community. Furthermore, the participants reflected that due to this remoteness certain comforts of home, such as mobile phones, were unavailable. These elements of being removed from their comfort zone posed challenges to the adult participants. Seen through the eyes of an educator, such challenges can allow for great growth to occur.

Clearly, service-learning can provide broad learning opportunities at several levels of education. Furthermore, due the challenging nature of immersive service-learning, and the high level of skills necessary for a successful service-learning experience, the learning afforded through these experiences seems to be much deeper and to develop more quickly. The value of educational experiences which involve a high-level of skill at a challenging level was considered by Kahn (2003), when he explored the role of optimal-experience learning, or 'flow' in Montessori education. The concept of flow stems from the work of Csikszentmihalyi (2002) and has significance for this study as will be seen later in the Discussion chapter.

Conclusion

This review of the relevant literature has explored the philosophical bases of service-learning and has distinguished between different types of activities that are often viewed as service-learning: volunteering, community service and service-learning. It has also shown that there is considerable support for service-learning as an educational philosophy, tool and design. The review has outlined the elements of a quality service-learning program, and a clear definition of service-learning. It has also shown that there are known positive effects on secondary and tertiary students, as well as pre-service teachers. What the relevant, current literature is more silent on is an understanding of the effects of service-learning on the primary school-age group, and particularly in an Australian context. This gap in the research supported the need for further empirical research on service-learning at this educational level of participants, and therefore, both justified and informed the direction of this study.

Chapter 3: Methodologies and Methods

As Thomas (2013) suggests, a trait of educational social scientists is observing people and social phenomena to generate conclusions on what is happening and why it might be happening. In this case study, conclusions are generated through observing themes in quantitative data, and

exploring them through qualitative data. To explore the implications of the case study service-learning tour on the perspectives of its primary school-age participants, data from surveys were analysed to produce basic descriptive statistics, and qualitative focus group interviews were used to further explore and describe these implications.

This chapter outlines in detail the methodology and methods used. A discussion of the methodology will include details regarding the research design, study participants, ethical considerations, and the pilot study. A discussion of the methods will include development of the survey tool, survey administration, focus group question development, the collection of focus group data, and the analyses of both sets of data.

Research design

As stated in Chapter 1, the aims of this study were: to gain an understanding of the impacts of a single, case study, service-learning experience from the perspectives of primary school-age students and their parents; to ascertain the impacts of their experience on aspects of Aboriginal culture; and to add to the body of knowledge regarding the effects of service-learning on primary school-age students. The study sought to address the main research question: *To what extent, and in what ways, does immersive service-learning impact on primary school-age children?* In doing this, it was intended to develop some substantive theory on the impacts of immersive service-learning on primary school-age children in an Australian context.

The design frame was a case study. Following the framework of De Vaus (2001), this case study had a number of dimensions. Firstly, it was an explanatory case study, with the focus on theory building (De Vaus, 2001). It has already been acknowledged in the previous chapter that there was a sparsity of literature on service-learning in primary school contexts, and especially in Australian settings. Therefore, an explanatory case study that sought to build theory was considered appropriate (De Vaus, 2001). Additionally, this case study focused on a single case, rather than multiple cases. Sanesteban School's immersive service-learning tour was a unique case; therefore, there was no opportunity for a comparative case study. The case study holistically (De Vaus, 2001) set out to describe and explain the implications of an immersive service-learning program from the perspectives of two levels of constituents, parents and students, and through mixed methods data collection and analysis. Through understanding the implications of the program, justification for service-learning programs at the primary school level has emerged.

The underpinning approach of the case study was mixed methods. Through the quantitative data collection and analysis, a foundational understanding of the participants' social-emotional,

empathetic and intellectual dimensions of, as well as attitudes towards, service and Australian culture was ascertained. The qualitative data was then gathered to add greater voice and to explore the findings of the quantitative data. This mixed methods approach is analogous to creating a painting: the canvas, brushes and paints are the tools needed to develop the end goal, similar to the quantitative survey. The colours and lines used to create the shapes and symbols in the image are like the more detailed qualitative data. That is to say, just as without the brushes and paints being used to create the colours and lines, the image would not emerge from the painting, the full picture and understanding of the impacts of service-learning would not emerge without the mixed methodology. This methodology created a well-rounded, in-depth picture of the immersive service-learning program at Sanesteban School, which in turn increased the internal validity of the research.

At the core of the research was personal experience. Firstly, there were the experiences of the school students engaged in the service-learning. Second, there were the more indirect experiences of the parents who were also important participants. Thirdly, there were the personal experiences and perspectives of the researcher who brought to the study her own ideas that were explored in the quantitative aspect of the research and the personal perspectives involved in analysing and making sense of the qualitative data.

Because there was a longitudinal dimension to the study, the quantitative data results differed, both between participants, and along the time continuum of before and after the service-learning tour. Therefore, four sets of quantitative data were collected: i) student pre-tour surveys; ii) student post-tour surveys; iii) parent pre-tour surveys; and iv) parent post-tour surveys. The initial quantitative data were gathered through two on-line surveys, and these helped to identify themes in attitudes and perspectives. These themes were then used to inform semi-structured focus groups. The researcher's language and words were used to create the quantitative survey and to guide the responses of the participants; while the students' voices generated the language of qualitative data sets. Because of this, there are two sets of perspectives in the data.

The qualitative data was collected and analysed with the aim of exploring the themes in the changes of the quantitative data across the four surveys. These data were collected through two focus groups: i) a student focus group; and ii) a parent focus group. The choice was made to conduct two separate focus groups to create an environment in which both participant groups would speak freely. The focus groups were an appropriate data collection method for this study because of their conversational nature. With the interviewer acting as more of a facilitator (Punch, 2014), members of each group were encouraged to support and stimulate each other's thinking, with the intention of

bringing ideas to light that might have been missed if individual interviews alone had been conducted.

Collecting data both before and after the tour allowed for a comparative understanding of the attitudes and perspectives of the students *prior to* the service-learning experience, with those that were developed *through* the service-learning experience. By using both individual survey data and focus group interviews, the data was more transparent and rich, enhancing the validity of the entire study. Mixed methods best suited the study (Billig & Waterman, 2003).

Study participants

As stated above, the case study presented is an embedded case study (De Vaus, 2001). This recognises that there were two 'layers' of participants in the study: the first were the students who participated in the ISL, and the second were the parents who (i) paid for the experience, thus making them stakeholders in the learning; and (ii) were very likely to have expectations of the impacts of the learning experience, both before and after, as well as contribute to the perspectives of their participating children.

All students at Sanesteban School are encouraged to take part in a service-learning tour. Service-learning tours are offered from Year 6 to Year 12. Each of the service-learning tours requires interested students to undertake an application process. The first step in the application process is to complete a written application. Applications for the tours are initially distributed at an information session for parents and students. At the information session, parents and students are introduced to the tour, its purpose, location and activities that students will take part in, as well as viewing photos from previous years' tours. Attendees are given the opportunity to ask questions and to take home an information package and application if they are interested. On this application, students are asked to complete questions which explore their reasons for wanting to take part in the tour, how they will contribute positively to the tour, and how they will share their experience with the school community upon their return. Applying for the tour is completely voluntary and has no academic benefit or penalty.

Students are encouraged to complete the written application independently. Some might argue that this is discriminatory against students with learning disabilities. However, being a school that is aware of its students and their needs, accommodations are permitted by way of applications being completed on a computer or scribed by someone else. Once applications are completed and reviewed, all applicants are invited to take part in a face-to-face interview with the Head of Campus and another teacher.

The interview process might initially be daunting for the student applicant however it can also be a time for them to justify their application. For students with stronger oral expression skills than written expressive skills, this is an opportune time to explain their motivations and goals for the tour. The interview is conducted during regular school hours, in a place that is comfortable and known to students. Its duration is approximately 15 minutes.

To further ascertain whether an applicant has the qualities and intentions that best fit the tour, input is also sought from other relevant school staff (i.e. classroom teacher and specialist teachers). Based on the interviews and ratings, students are chosen to attend the tour. An effort is made for equal representation of sexual orientation and the two campuses of the school. Applicants are informed of their success in a face-to-face conversation, as well as an email sent to parents and participants.

Fifteen students were chosen to participate in the case study tour group. This number was agreed upon by Sanesteban School and the partner remote Aboriginal school. Factors that were considered when making this decision were the size of the Aboriginal school and community, and the need to ensure that the small community would not feel overwhelmed by the visiting staff and students of Sanesteban School, as well as the needs within the community. In consideration of the age of the student participants (approximately eleven years old) and the immersive nature of the experience, both the students and their parents were included in this study. This further ensured transparency of the research. Furthermore, the researcher believed that by being removed from their home environment, students have the opportunity to explore their personal values and beliefs more authentically. However, to better understand what their home environment was, it was important to have included the thoughts and ideas of their parents.

Before contacting the chosen tour participants and their parents, and to further demonstrate transparency, an information letter was sent to and discussed with Sanesteban School's Principal (see Appendix C). The researcher was commended for undertaking the research and the request was made to share the findings with the School upon completion.

Considering that this study was related to the experiences of the participants of this tour, these fifteen students and their parents were the *only* possible participants for the study. While it was understood that this was a very small number of case study research participants, it should be kept in mind that fifteen students and their fifteen sets of parents was the maximum possible number of participants. All students and their parents were provided an information letter about the study and a letter of consent (see Appendices D, E, F and G) to take part in the study. The information letters and consent letters were sent to parents before communication was initiated

with the students. Three families chose not to participate in the study; this was fully respected and contact with these families by the researcher ceased immediately. There were no negative consequences for lack of participation in terms of the research, and for the service-learning experience. The final participant group consisted of twelve students and their parents.

The twelve consenting students consisted of eight from one campus, and four from the other; five were males, and seven were female. All students were enrolled in Year 6. Although demographic data was not included in the survey, it was unveiled through the focus groups that many of the families involved were immigrants to Australia.

Ethical considerations

Throughout this study, all ethical, professional, and legal expectations and responsibilities were adhered to. Ethics approval was attained from Edith Cowan University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and all recommendations were followed. Four main ethical considerations were informed consent, vulnerability, confidentiality, and withdrawal (Thomas, 2013).

The guidelines of Gillick-competent children, as set out in Wiles' book *What are qualitative research ethics*, were used when considering informed participant consent (Wiles, 2013). These guidelines suggest that children younger than sixteen years of age are capable of consent when they can demonstrate an understanding of the research (Wiles, 2013). Considering that, in this specific case study, students must apply and take part in an individual interview, in order to participate in the service-learning program, it was believed that the student participants had the capacity to understand implications of being involved in the research. However, parental consent to both approach the children, and to personally participate in the research, was first also sought. Following parent information and consent, an information letter and consent form (see Appendices D, E, F, and G) were to students. The case study goals, procedures, and outcomes were clearly outlined in the information letter to parents and students, as well as in the consent letters as recommended by Thomas (2013). As this research was centred around a specific, case study school, an information letter and letter of consent was obtained from the school Principal and Head of Campus, as the gatekeeper of the school (Wiles, 2013). Again, transparent information pertaining to the study goals, procedures and outcomes was provided.

Due to the researcher's employment at the case study school and having had a perceived position of power as a teacher, a certain perception of vulnerability of the students could have been alleged. In order to avoid any perceived power imbalance between the participants and the researcher, all surveys were conducted away from school and a third-party individual led the student

focus group, whilst the researcher led the parent focus group. This choice aided in increasing validity as students did not feel the need to answer focus group questions as they perceived that the researcher would want them to.

The identity of all participants has been kept completely confidential by using a coding system to tag and match participant survey results. Upon transcribing the focus group data and to keep participation confidential when necessary, pseudonyms have been used, and any identifying details have been removed. A pseudonym has also been created for the case study school's name.

Survey tool development

Following on from the literature review, it was considered essential that the questionnaire explored five dimensions of the impact of ISL. These were social-emotional impacts; intellectual impacts; empathic development; perspectives on Australian culture and perspectives regarding service. The survey instrument was developed by combining questions from previously created surveys found in the *Measurement Instrument Database for the Social Sciences* (MIDSS, 2018). The site states that it contains instruments for individual researchers to use in their own research (MIDSS reference). Upon completion of the research, the researcher intends to make the survey tools used in this case study available through the website for use by other researchers. No single survey instrument by itself covered the range of necessary areas, therefore, questions from a number of existing instruments were chosen to develop a composite survey instrument specifically designed for this study. Some language was changed in the student survey to make it more child-friendly. The instruments and the items they addressed are tabulated in Table 3.1, overleaf. The survey tools themselves are presented in Appendices H, I, J, and K of this dissertation.

Table 3.1

Instruments and items used in the development of the survey proposed for the quantitative data collection in this study

Domain	MIDSS Instrument Used
Social/Emotional	Toronto Empathy Scale (Spreng, McKinnon, Mar, & Levine, 2009)
Empathy	Feeling and Thinking (Garton & Gringart, 2005)
Intellectual	Curiosity and Exploration Inventory (CEI-II) (Kashdan, Gallagher, Silvia, Winterstein, Breen, Terhar, & Steger, 2009)
Service	Global Citizen Scale (Reysen, Stephen, 2012)
Australia	Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Ryder, Alden & Paulhus, 2000)

As this study sought to gather descriptive data, questions regarding 'attitude' content were the focus (De Vaus, 1985). As this research aimed to describe the implications of service-learning on stakeholders' perspectives, data regarding the intensity of participants' perceptions and attitudes was gathered. This was accomplished by presenting the participants with a series of closed-choice, position statements, and asking them to rate the intensity of agreement with the statement, through a Likert scale (De Vaus, 1985). The scale was: 1= strongly disagree, 2= somewhat disagree, 3= neither agree or disagree, 4= somewhat agree, 5= strongly agree. A highly scored item (5 or 4) indicated a strong agreement with the given statement, and a low score indicated a low agreement (Bryman, 2012). A mix of both positive and negative statements were used to increase internal reliability of the test (Bryman, 2012).

There were both advantages and disadvantages to using this method of data collection. The advantages of self-completion surveys were that they were inexpensive, quick, convenient, and there was an absence of interviewer effects such as interviewer bias and variability (Bryman, 2012). An element of bias could stem from participants tailoring their responses to fit perceived, socially desirable responses (Sudman & Bradburn 1982, as cited in Bryman, 2012). This may also include providing answers they thought I would like. On the other hand, by not being present when the students completed the survey, meant participants could not be helped to better understand questions, or to elaborate further on their responses; at the same time, but there was the risk of missing data due to the respondent perceiving the question as boring or insignificant (Bryman, 2012). In this case study, there was also the risk that student participants would not understand

questions and consequently respond incorrectly. All these considerations were managed through the use of five statements in each category.

Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to evaluate the survey tool and participant interest. Because the service-learning tour had been conducted in two previous years, past tour participants and their parents were used as pilot study participants. Emails were sent to 15 different participants and their parents inviting them to be a part of the pilot study and stating that the information gathered from their responses would not be used in the actual research project. Due to the short time period between ethics approval and the need to conduct the actual data collection (pre-tour survey), only six pilot study surveys were completed. Participants were asked to complete the survey and then respond to the researcher with any feedback pertaining to the vocabulary that was used, question type or general feedback.

The main finding from the pilot study data was that creating a pseudonym was difficult for the participants. Many participants (both parents and students) did not create it properly (favourite colour + digits of phone number). This was of particular concern as a requirement of the study and fundamental aspect of the methodology was the ability to compare pre-tour survey data with post-tour data, among participants, while keeping the names of participants secret. It was also key to recognise parent data from student data, and to preserve anonymity.

Little feedback was received from pilot study participants concerning the statements themselves. The majority wished the researcher well and acknowledged the value of conducting the research. One parent participant stated that she found some of the questions difficult to answer as they required her to infer what her child would think. She felt that while she knew her child very well, it was important to note that we cannot truly state the ideas of others. This feedback was duly noted, and in fact supported the research's purpose that was for parental data to provide a deeper understanding of the student and their perspectives.

A possible shortcoming of the pilot study was the small number of participants, and the researcher acknowledges this as a limitation. Nevertheless, important outcomes were realised and the study did contribute to improvements in the actual empirical research reported here. As a result of the pilot study, a focus became the re-construction of the pseudonym question in such a way as to ensure that all participants created their personal pseudonym accurately. It was questioned whether I should allocate identities to help eradicate the worry as to whether the pseudonym would be created accurately and remembered. Allocation of identities would give me much more control. I

did not choose to conduct the research in this manner due to my proximity to the participants and my desire to provide as great a sense of partiality as possible. After the re-construction of the survey, it was ready for distribution.

Focus group question development

It will be remembered that the mixed methods approach was chosen to collect, explore and understand participants' perspectives on the implications that the case study service-learning tour had on them or their children. In order to understand these perspectives in a deep and meaningful way, focus group interviews were conducted following the tour, one with the student tour participants and one with their parents, each in their own group.

The student post-tour focus group was led by a third-party person with previous experience in conducting market research and focus group interviews. As previously stated, this was an ethical design choice to eliminate any chance that the student participants would feel that they needed to 'say what I would want' because of my position as a teacher at the school in that year group. A guarantee of confidentiality was signed by the third-party person (see Appendix L). Before the focus group was conducted, the researcher met with the focus group leader and discussed the nature of my research and tour to provide some sense of contextual understanding. The focus group discussion was generated in response to ten questions; some of which were chosen to delve deeper into the survey responses and others as a continuation of the natural conversation. The questions for the student focus group were:

- i) What was your best memory from the trip?
- ii) How do you think that being a part of the service-learning tour has changed you?
- iii) Has anything changed for you since you've come back to Perth?
- iv) Has it changed your view on the community?
- v) What does service mean to you?
- vi) What did you find most challenging on the tour?
- vii) How do you feel that the tour has helped you to understand the feelings and perspectives of others?
- viii) Did you find it easy to support each other on the tour?

ix) What effect do you think that being away from your home environment had on you?

x) What is one thing that you think is different between before and after the tour?

The parent focus group was led by the researcher. The focus group discussion was generated in response to eight questions; some of these were chosen to delve deeper into the survey responses and others as a continuation of the natural conversation. The questions were:

i) What motivated you to support your child's application for the tour?

ii) Is this the right age for the tour?

iii) What did your child seek to achieve?

iv) How has this changed your child?

v) What effect did the immersive nature have?

vi) How have you seen confidence change?

vii) How do you get the sense that they see social responsibility?

viii) What do you think was the biggest challenge for your child while on the tour?

No pilot study was considered necessary for the focus groups as they were semi-structured and conversational in nature. These qualities meant that clarification of any prompts could be made as necessary, by the researcher, during the focus group session itself.

Procedures for Data Collection i) Survey Administration

Throughout the survey development process, assistance and feedback was sought through ECU's Support Opportunities Advice Resources (SOAR) Centre. The SOAR Centre ambassador was very helpful in fleshing out the details and best method for accurate pseudonym creation. The SOAR ambassador provided excellent support regarding the use of Qualtrics software. One of the features of Qualtrics that the SOAR ambassador brought to light was the function of sending survey links and tracking responses. Many of the student participants provided the researcher with their student (school-linked) email address. Fortunately, through support sessions at SOAR it was also found that the case study school's firewall did not allow emails from Qualtrics. This was a key finding because if it had gone un-noted, many participants would not have received the survey link.

All four surveys (parent and student, pre- and post-tour) were distributed electronically by the email addresses obtained on the informed consent forms. To preserve the methodology of the

case study, it was essential that the parents and student completed and submitted the pre-tour surveys before the tour commenced. This was a very stressful time in the research as many of the participants did not complete the survey until the day of the tour group departure. Nonetheless, all pre-tour surveys were collected allowing the researcher to analysis the results while the tour occurred.

Two weeks after the tour group returned, the post-tour surveys were distributed, again by email. The short time frame was intentionally chosen by the researcher, to allow students to settle back into their regular routine, reflect on the tour experience, and to help ensure that the data was as accurate as possible. Again, receiving the post-tour surveys was somewhat stressful due to slow submission; friendly reminder emails were sent to participants ensuring that they understood the importance of receiving both before and after surveys. Again, all post-tour surveys were collected allowing the researcher to analyse the results and develop focus group questions.

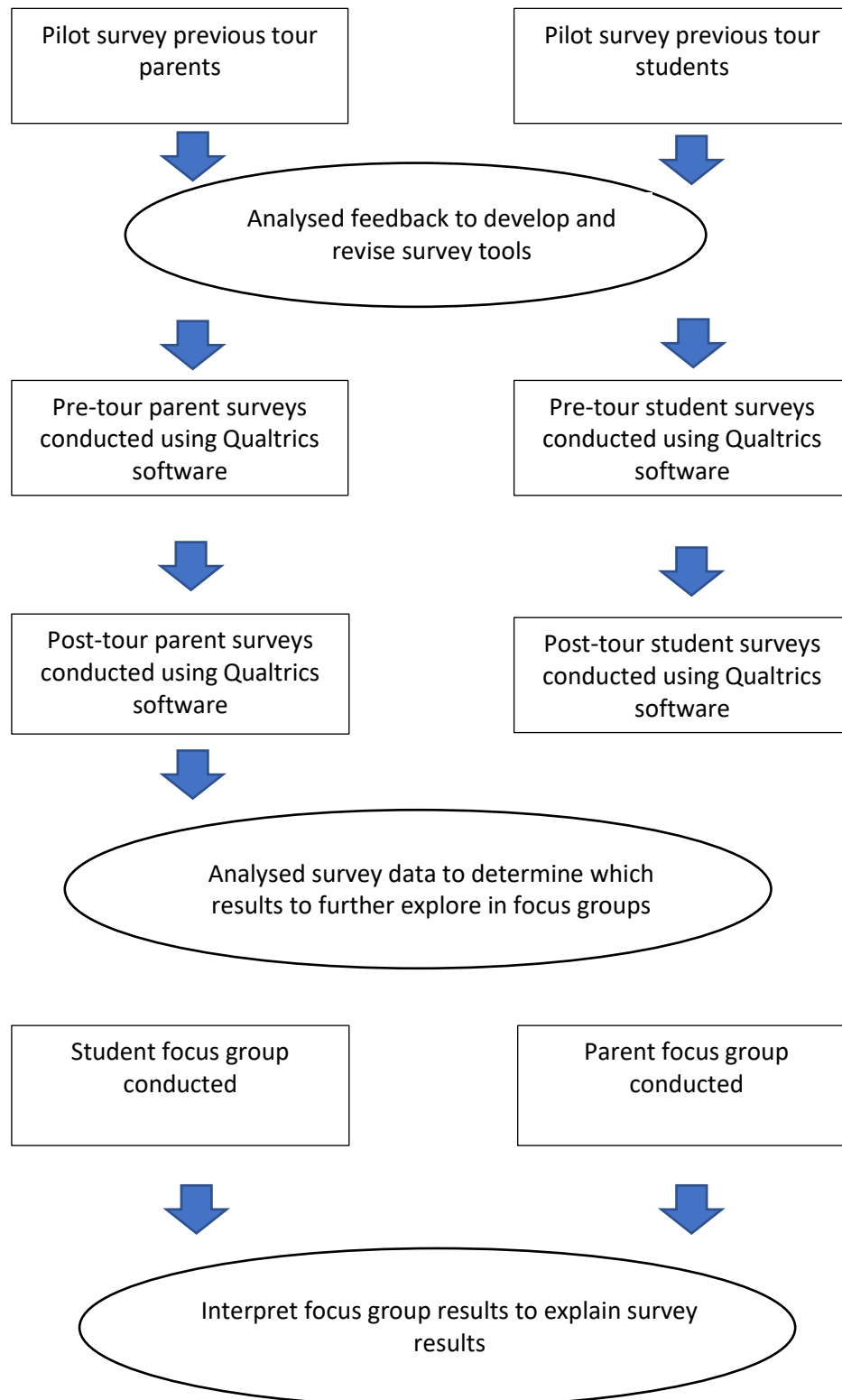
Procedures of Data Collection ii) Focus Groups

While the students were away on the service-learning tour a brief analysis of the survey data was conducted. This analysis provided a summary to compare with the post-tour data. The post survey links were distributed two weeks after students had returned from the tour. This time period was chosen to allow students (and their parents) to settle back into their regular routines, while at the same time keeping the experience as authentic as possible in their minds by not having too long a wait-period. Included in the post-tour survey were questions relating to the timing of the focus groups. However, a post-tour debrief was organised by the School and the researcher was able to arrange for the focus groups to be conducted an hour before it. This made attendance at the focus group convenient for parents and students. The focus groups each lasted approximately 40 minutes and were conducted simultaneously in separate rooms.

The questions asked in the focus group interviews focused on exploring interesting themes that had arisen from the survey data, or themes where significant changes had occurred in the pre- and post-tour data sets. Audio recordings of the focus groups were made and transcribed by an external source. At the end of the focus groups, all participants were thanked for their participation. The explanatory sequential design is summarised and outlined in Figure 3.1, overleaf.

The case study methodology involved 7 interdependent stages. Without each stage noted below, the data findings would not have been as accurate or transparent as possible. This mixed methodology was a key choice in ensuring valid findings were gathered.

Figure 3.1 *Explanatory sequential design*



Data Analysis

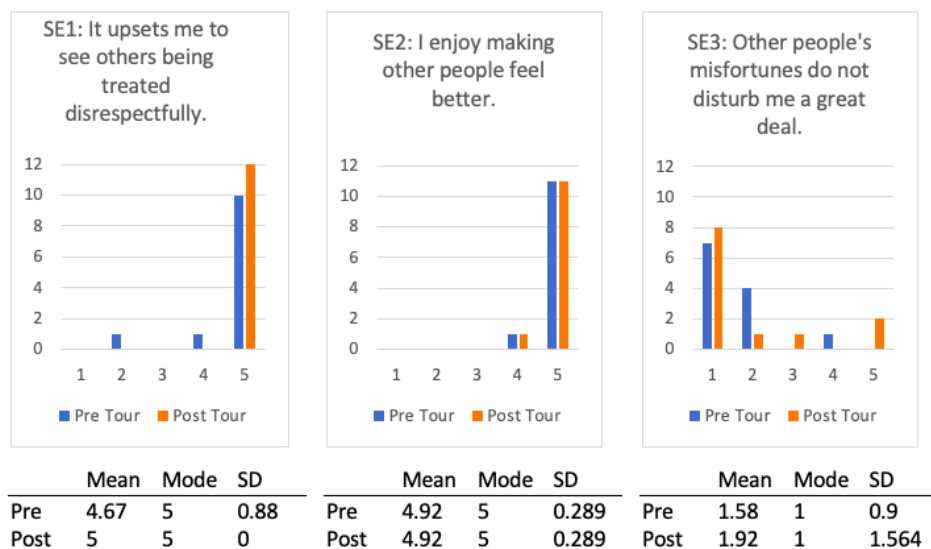
Methods of data analysis appropriate to the type of data collected were used to analyse the data carefully to ensure richness, depth and rigour. The quantitative survey data was analysed using SPSS to generate descriptive statistics, and then imported into Microsoft Excel to produce graphs and tables that summarised the data. The qualitative data was analysed through constant comparative coding (Thomas, 2013), again using Microsoft Excel to generate tables that summarised the data.

i) Quantitative Data

As previously noted, SPSS was used to generate descriptive statistics of the quantitative data. These statistics were then input manually into Microsoft Excel to create side-by-side bar graphs and tables of pre- and post-tour responses. The parent survey data was kept separate from the student survey data. The side-by-side column graphs allowed for an at-a-glance comparison of the data sets. The columns represented pre- and post-data and the occurrence of each level of agreement. Below each graph, the descriptive statistics (mean, mode and standard deviation) were presented. This presentation of the data aligned with the design methodology as the quantitative data was meant to produce a foundational view of the participants' perspectives. Figure 3.2 shows a snapshot of the graphs and tables created to analyse the survey data. The complete set of graphs and tables is contained in Chapter 4.

Figure 3.2 An excerpt of the graphs and tables created to analyse the quantitative survey data

i) Social emotional Impacts



i) Qualitative Data

In addition to the graphic analysis of the survey data, the short-answer responses contained in the pre- and post-tour surveys for both student and parent participants were analysed. Because of the open-ended nature of these questions, participants were able to voice their personal opinions and perspectives. This qualitative data was then coded, again using Microsoft Excel for sorting and storing; key words and phrases were highlighted and their frequencies collated. These key words and phrases were then coded and regrouped until overall themes emerged. Figure 3.3 shows an excerpt of the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet used in data analysis, while Tables 3.2 and 3.3 show the codes which emerged through analysis, alongside their frequency. The data was presented in ranking, side-by-side order, to allow the reader to surmise relationships between the participant's opinions and perspectives. This was a further step in recognising the overall emergent themes.

Figure 3.3 An excerpt of initial coding of short answer survey questions

Q1: Please describe your reasons for participating in this service learning tour.		
Secret Code	Response	
Blue3014	To experience different aspects of the land and people of Western Australia.	different Aus experiences
yellow4659	It is an amazing opportunity for them to be involved in a remote community and to learn about the indigenous culture and traditions.	opportunity to learn about Aboriginal culture
Green2001	To learn more about Aboriginal culture and to help in the community. She is very excited about this tour in Year 6 so I want her to experience it while she is young to develop life skills, experience the importance of helping others and enjoy the natural beauty of the Kimberley.	learn about Aboriginal culture
		develop life skills while young
		experience importance of helping others
		enjoy beauty of Kimberley region
Red 0455	We wanted our child to experience something which would challenge her and expose her to different cultures, different ways of life. She has a strong commitment to service and we wanted to encourage her to seek new challenges, to learn more about Australia and to learn more about herself. She was also very passionate in her own reasons for wanting to go and we were supportive of them.	challenging experiences
		challenging experiences
		experience different cultures
		encourage child's commitment to service
		learn about Australia
		learn about herself
		support child's passion and reasons
Blue9310	Community service is important to her. It was one of her concerns moving over to SSS that they wouldn't have the community service she was used to at her old school - however SSS has exceeded her expectations in this respect.	support child's passion and reasons

Table 3.2

A coded summary of the short-answer question responses in pre- and post- tour surveys from the student participant group

Student pre-tour survey short answer responses		Student post-tour short answer responses	
Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency
learn about Aboriginal culture	10	impacted thinking about Aboriginal people	10
learn about different cultures	6	confident with making new friends	8
make new friends	5	impacted understanding of two cultures	8
experience Australia	4	developed life skills	6
help other people	5	increased acceptance of others	6
learn how others live in remote areas	3	satisfied	6
become more empathetic towards other cultures	3	appreciation for Australia as a country	6
being outdoors- camping	2	increased appreciation	5
different experiences	2	Aboriginal people are very caring and welcoming	4
increased gratitude	2	changed perspectives	4
increased self-confidence	3	great life experience	4
learn to make connections between academics and real-life	2	increased confidence	4
more comfortable with challenges	2	increased desire to help in community	3
self-improvement	3	fun	2
changing ideas about Aboriginal people	1	grew as a person	2
experience Aboriginal culture	1	helped out	2
form perspectives	1	thank you	2
increased independence	1	appreciation for life	1
involved in making a difference	1	became more responsible	1
learn how to stop discrimination	1	enjoyed making Aboriginal kids happy	1
memories	1	experienced different lifestyle	1
		importance of community	1
		increased awareness of others needs	1
		increased desire to travel	1
		learned the way the remote school works	1
		life changing	1
		shown importance of teamwork	1
		students should learn more about Aboriginal culture	1
		thinking about others more	1

Table 3.3

A coded summary of the short- answer question responses in pre- and post- tour surveys from parent participant group

Parent pre-tour survey short-answer responses		Parent post-tour survey short answer responses	
Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency
encourage commitment to service	8	appreciates Aboriginal culture	11
deep understanding of Aboriginal culture	7	developed independence	7
different Australian experiences	7	increased cultural awareness	6
support child's passion	7	developed gratitude	4
encourage appreciation for home	6	more mature	3
encourage self confidence	6	greater empathy for Aboriginal issues	3
independence	5	more caring	3
encourage empathy	5	developed sense of self	3
challenging experiences	4	developed self-confidence	2
experience different cultures	4	learned a great deal	2
better understanding of self	3	met expectations	2
encourage advocacy for Aboriginal people	3	more relaxed	2
learn through real-life experiences	3	increase desire for service	2
decrease social anxiety	2	increased life skills (especially initiative)	2
inspire a desire to travel	2	increased understanding of world around	2
develop life skills at young age	1	made new friends	2
encourage leadership	1	no change	2
organisational skills	1	developed confidence	2
learn responsibility	1	decreased discrimination	1
form thinking and perceptions	1	developed resilience	1
new friendships	1	developed responsibility	1
understand people's differences	1	didn't increase confidence	1
understand child's influence in the world	1	didn't increase independence	1
		increase desire to travel	1
		increased respect	1
		increased sense of community and family	1
		more accepting of challenges	1
		more appreciative	1

The coding of the focus group transcripts began immediately upon receipt of the transcripts from www.waywithwords.net. Initially, the focus group data was coded by manually highlighting a hard copy and noting first impression, potential themes. Coding the data served to be much more difficult and frustrating than this initial highlighting. Through this process, the researcher had to keep in mind the goal of coding this qualitative data was to reveal themes relevant to the participants, instead of focusing on the five domains (social- emotional effects, intellectual effects, effects on empathy, perspectives on service, and perspectives on Australian culture) around which the survey was focused. Figure 3.4 shows the initial coding of some of the qualitative data. Colour-coding was used to categorise the participant's comments according to the initial five domains of affect. After reflecting on this completed coding, the researcher noted that no new themes had emerged (i.e. the reason for conducting focus groups). It was then realised that the coding needed to be re-done with a new vision of finding the voice of the participants (Figure 3.5), that would result in a deep and rich understanding of the overall implications of the tour.

Figure 3.4 *Initial (and incorrect) coding of focus group comments*

Summary	
authentic learning experience was valuable	...
breaking down stereotypes	.....
child driven	.....
child excited for tour	..
child helping more	...
child sought independence	.
child travelled	...
child well prepared	....
coming home was biggest challenge	.....
greater sense of empathy	.
immersion= depth	..
increase appreciation	.....
increased independence	...
increased maturity	....
increased problem solving	.
increased self-confidence	...
increased sense of responsibility	....
independence was challenging	..
migrant family	...
need prep for return	.....
overcame shyness	..
parent driven	..
real benefits of tour will be evident in long term	.
relationships formed with Aboriginal community	.....
resilience	...
saw tour as a part of bringing up child as Australian	.....

Figure 3.5 Re-coding of the focus group transcripts, using Microsoft Excel to track emerging themes

Parent focus group themes			
Learning about Aboriginal culture	Count	Frequency	
breaking down stereotypes	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●	14	
relationships formed with Aboriginal community	●●●●●●●	7	
sought greater understanding of Aboriginal culture	●●●●●●●	6	
authentic learning experience was valuable	●●●	3	
immersion= depth	●●	2	
wanted child to become an advocate for Aboriginal people at large	●	1	
tour as a part of education	●	1	
unconscious attainment of cultural understanding	●	1	
valuable to break down stereotypes at young age	●	1	
Total		36	21%

The final step of the data analysis involved creating side-by-side tables of the coded summaries (Figure 3.6); that is, placing the parent participant summary next to the student participant summary. This allowed the researcher to discover further themes or observations in the data.

Figure 3.6 An excerpt of the side-by-side, coded analysis summary of the two participant groups' focus group interviews

Student focus group themes				Parent focus group themes			
Learning about Aboriginal culture	Count	Frequency		Learning about Aboriginal culture	Count	Frequency	
felt very comfortable with [Aboriginal] kids	●●●●	4		breaking down stereotypes	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●	14	
[Aboriginal] kids were caring nicest people ever met	●●	2		relationships formed with Aboriginal community	●●●●●●●	7	
changed view of Aboriginal communities	●●	2		sought greater understanding of Aboriginal culture	●●●●●●●	6	
challenge was initial interactions with [Aboriginal] kids	●	1		authentic learning experience was valuable	●●●	3	
service means to be aware of other people	●	1		immersion= depth	●●	2	
service means to be empathetic towards other people	●	1		wanted child to become an advocate for Aboriginal people at large	●	1	
better understanding of [Aboriginal] community living conditions	●	1		tour as a part of education	●	1	
enjoyed learning [Aboriginal] kids daily life	●	1		unconscious attainment of cultural understanding	●	1	
[Aboriginal] community was very safe	●	1		valuable to break down stereotypes at young age	●	1	
Total		14	8%	Total		36	21%

Conclusion

This chapter has described in detail the overall methodology and the different methods used to collect and analyse data, within a mixed methods framework. It also serves to show that through the use of mixed methods of data collection and analyses, the desired outcome – a deep and holistic understanding of the effects of an immersive service-learning experience on primary school-age students in Australia – has emerged. The quantitative data and qualitative data were each necessary to create a complete picture, and therefore, justifying the methodology mixing. Placing the two data sets side-by-side, facilitated the comparing and contrasting of the findings. This resulted in conclusions being developed and drawn from both sets of data together; and in this way, mixing of the data has taken place as recommended by Creswell (2012). The next chapter will present both sets of findings and the rich theory that emerged from them.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the data collected from the surveys and focus groups with the two sets of participants. Presenting this data involved summarising the findings from the two groups of participants: (i) the students and (ii) the parents. In each case, the analysed data are described and preliminary findings are summarised. This presentation format mirrors the data collection method, allowing for the reader to experience the data and findings in a similar manner to the way in which they unfolded through the research method, and therefore, experiencing the data as the researcher did.

It will be remembered that the main research question asked: *To what extent does immersive service-learning impact on primary school-age children?* This question was considered in terms of social-emotional, empathetic development, and intellectual effects, as well as attitudes towards service and Australian culture, from the perspectives of the student tour participants and from those of their parents. These were based on themes found in the review of literature from previous research. Appendices H, I, J, and K contain the student and parent surveys as they were presented to the participants. Both surveys were divided into the five domains mentioned above, with five statements in each section. The participants were asked to describe to what extent they disagreed or agreed with the statements, using a scale of: 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neither Agree nor Disagree), 4 (Agree), and 5 (Strongly Agree). The student surveys required the participants to reflect on *their own* perspectives regarding each statement; while the parent surveys required participants to reflect on the perspectives *of their child* and the family unit, not on the parent's own, personal perspectives. This was intentional, as the research focused on the impacts of the service-learning experience on primary school-age students. The parent participants were involved as a source of information on their participating child's perspectives. Findings are also presented in a way that makes it evident that two main sets of variations occur: (i) variations in the distribution across the range of responses, with either skews to the left (Strongly Disagree) or to the right (Strongly Agree); and (ii) variations between the responses given in the first survey (Pre-Tour) and the second survey (Post-Tour).

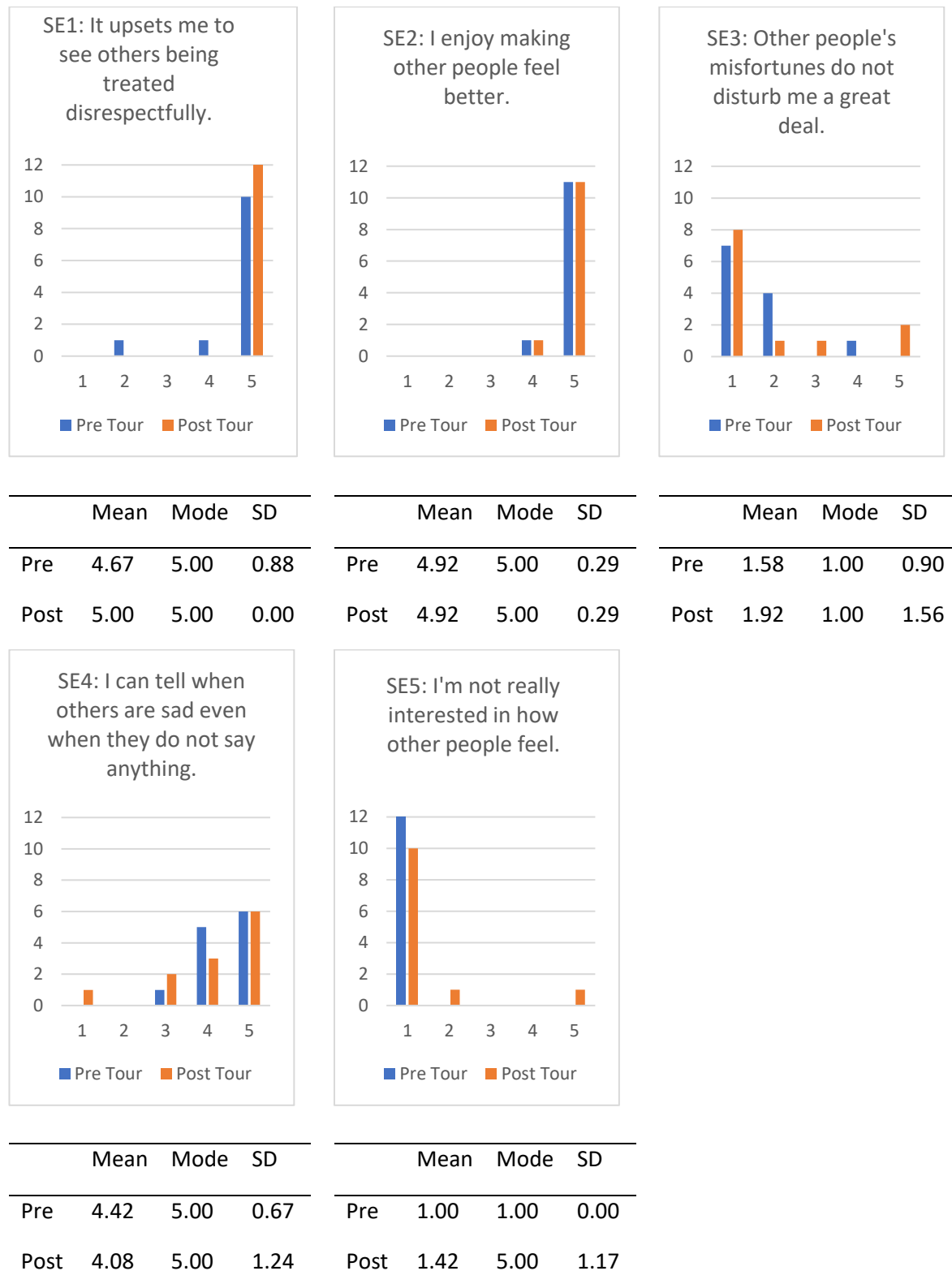
Following the presentation of findings from the survey responses, the findings from the short-answer survey question responses are shared, and finally, reflecting the explanatory, mixed methods approach of the case study methodology, the findings from the qualitative, focus group interviews are presented to facilitate a deep and holistic understanding of the data. It will be remembered from the previous chapter that the quantitative survey results are like an artist's tools (i.e. canvas, brushes and paint), while the qualitative findings are analogous to the lines and shapes

used in an artwork to create an image; once the tools, lines and shapes have been used together, an image emerges.

Student participant survey findings

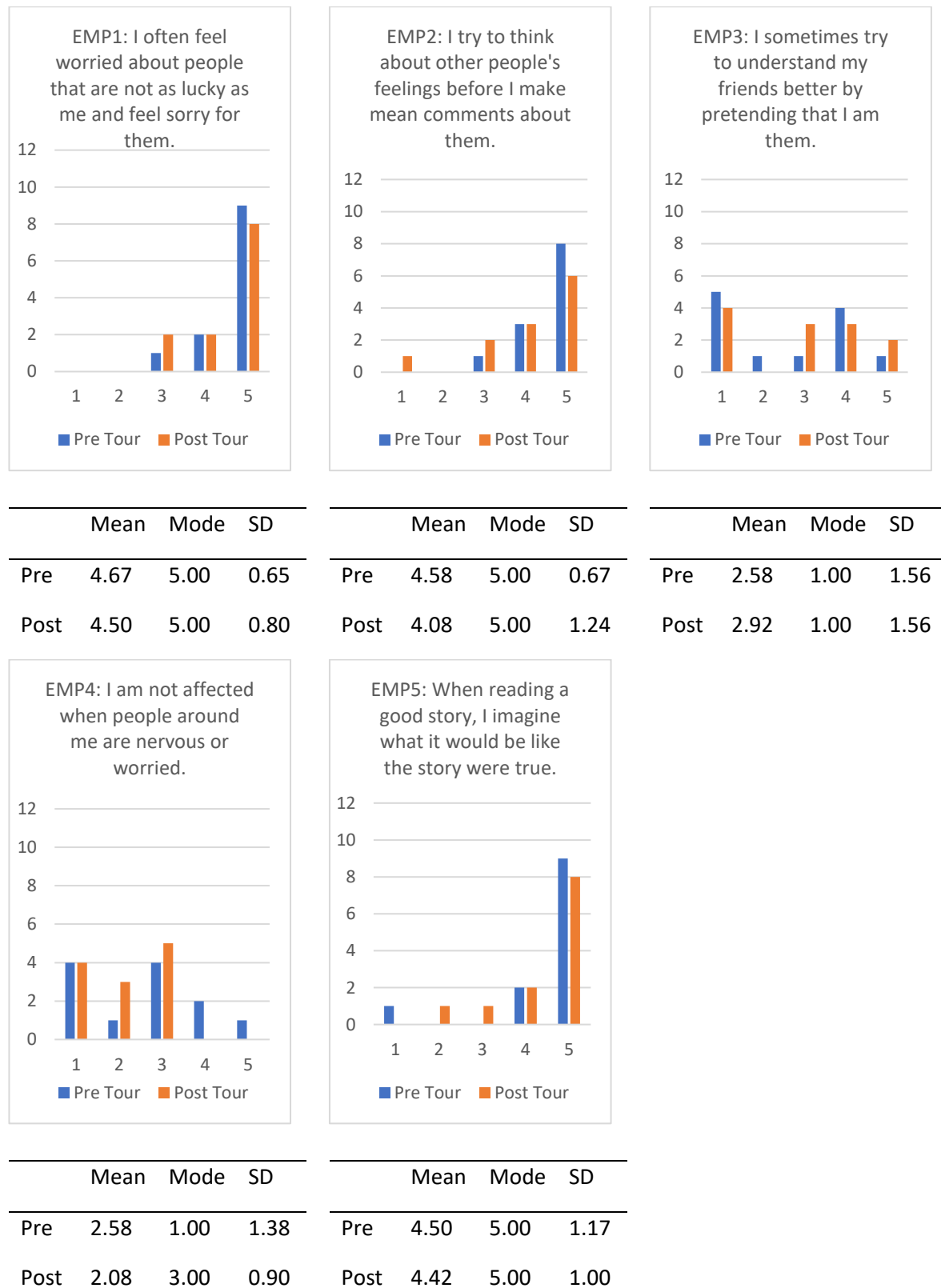
In the first section of this chapter the findings from the surveys completed by the students are presented. The findings are grouped into five sets based on the five themes: impacts on social-emotional development; impacts on empathic development; impacts on intellectual development; attitudes towards service; and perspectives on Australian culture. The findings are presented in graphical form to display a visual comparison of the pre-tour and post-tour findings. Comments on each set of graphs then follows. Next the findings from the open-ended survey questions which were analysed using qualitative data analysis are presented, and finally, the findings from the students' focus group are presented.

Figure 4.1 *Impacts on social-emotional development according to student survey results*



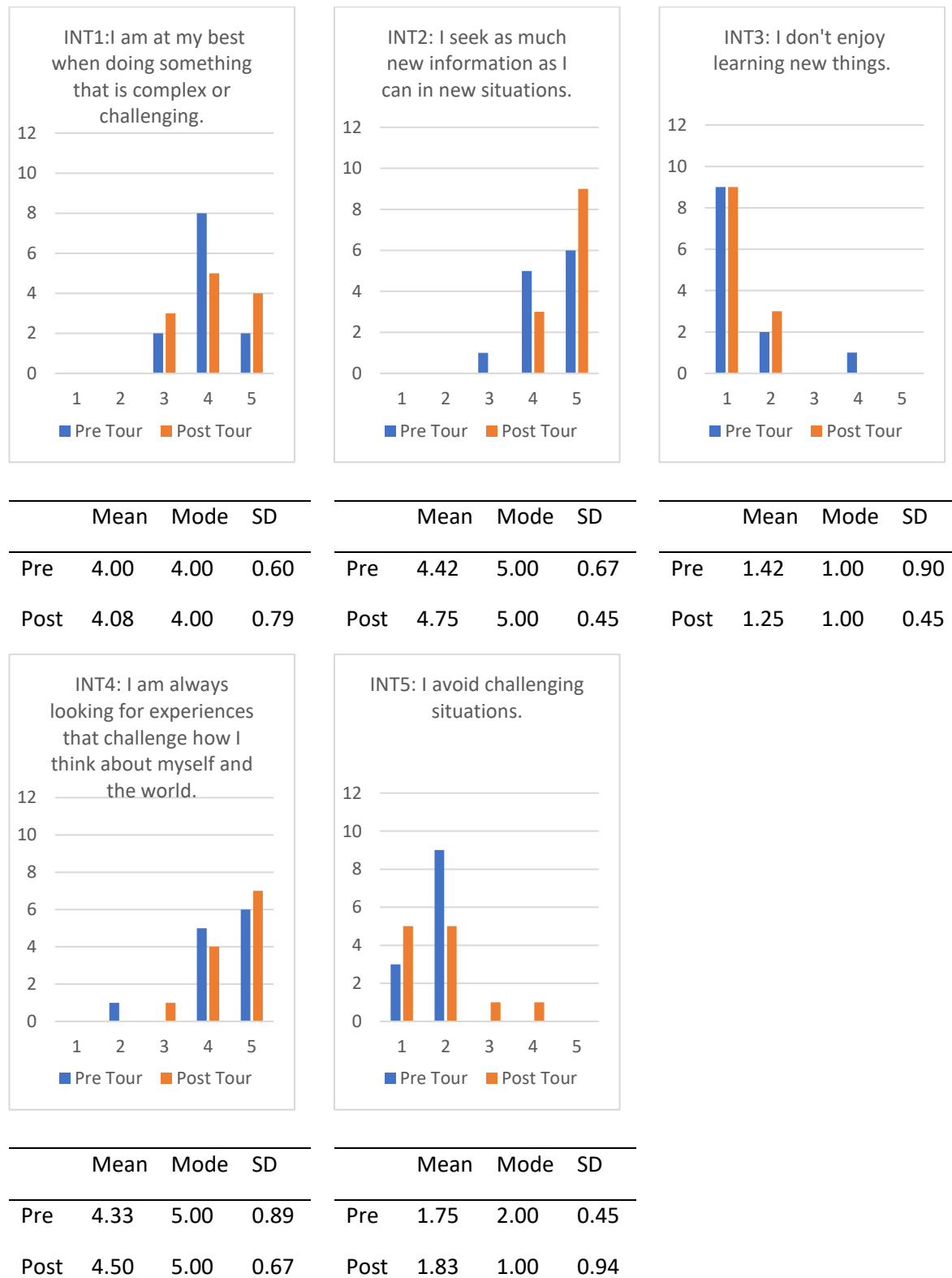
The responses to the questions SE1 and SE2 reveal an expected pattern; in both, students considered themselves to enjoy making people feel better and were upset by others being hurt. Considering these responses, the question SE3 appears to have caused some confusion for participants; a response of 'Strongly Agree' to not being bothered by other's misfortune was quite unexpected. The same could be said of the results for question SE5. It would seem that either participants did not read the question accurately or that they were confused by either the statement or the response scale. The participants' responses to question SE4 show a greater spread between pre and post-tour surveys; this could be explained by the students thinking more deeply about this statement than they did when they answered it before going on the tour.

Figure 4.2 *Impacts on empathic development according to student survey results*



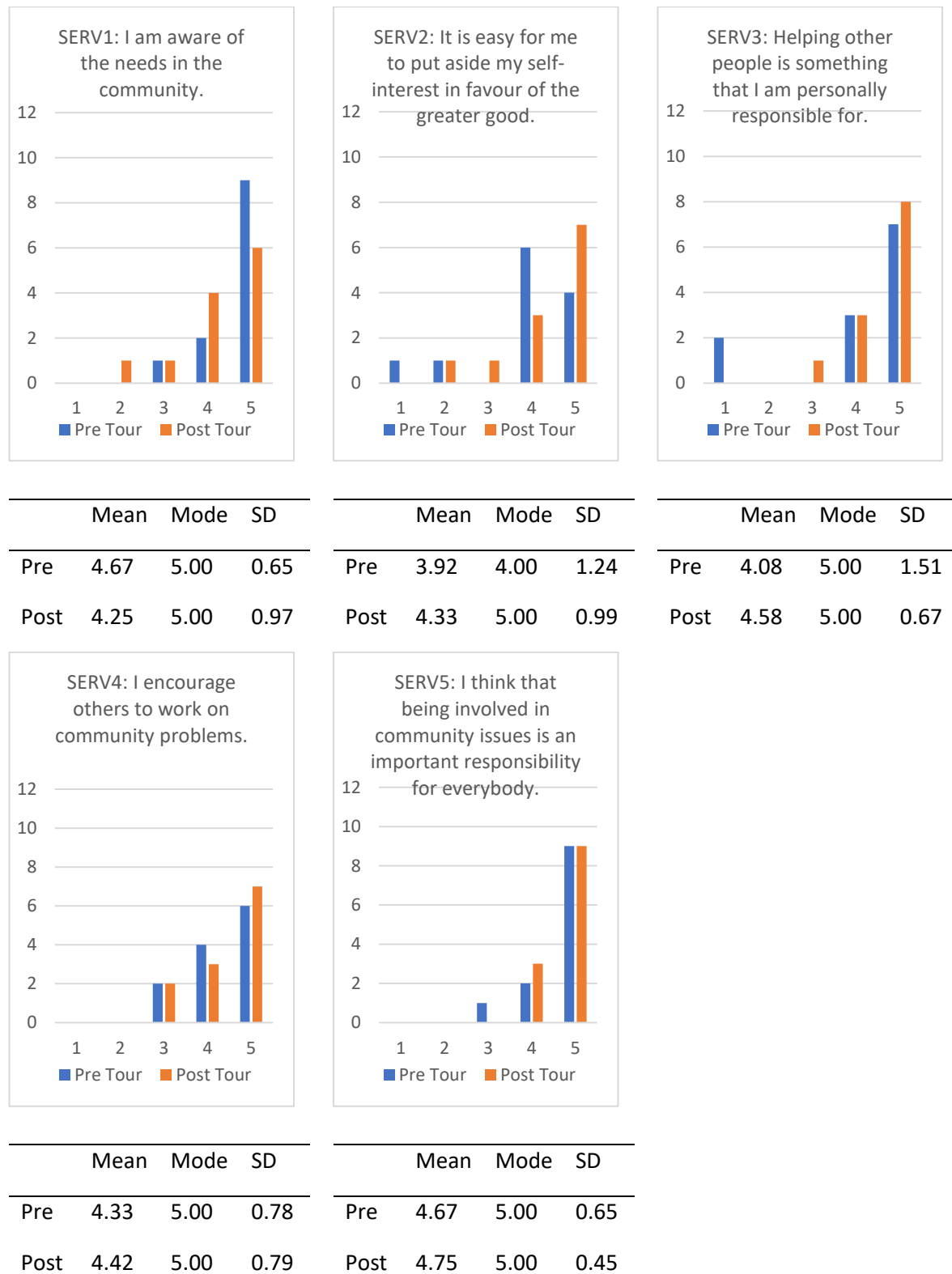
Overall, the range of the students' responses to the questions exploring the empathy affect were more widely dispersed. The responses to the questions EMP 1 and 2 show a skew towards 'Strongly agree' as expected but there are more responses in the mid-sections of each graph. The results of EMP3 could be skewed to the 'Strongly disagree' by the use of the word 'pretending' in the question; participants may have viewed this term as reflecting an immature attitude or behaviour, which might not be how pre-adolescents would want to view themselves. Another pattern which emerged in the responses to question EMP4 as the responses showed a spread across all five levels in the pre-tour survey but some skewing towards the 'Disagree' in the post-tour survey; perhaps participants felt uncomfortable answering the question honestly, considering the relationships that they had made on the tour. An increased dispersion in the participants' responses to EMP5 might again be an indication of thinking about the response on a deeper level after the tour, than before the tour.

Figure 4.3 *Impacts on intellectual development according to student survey results*



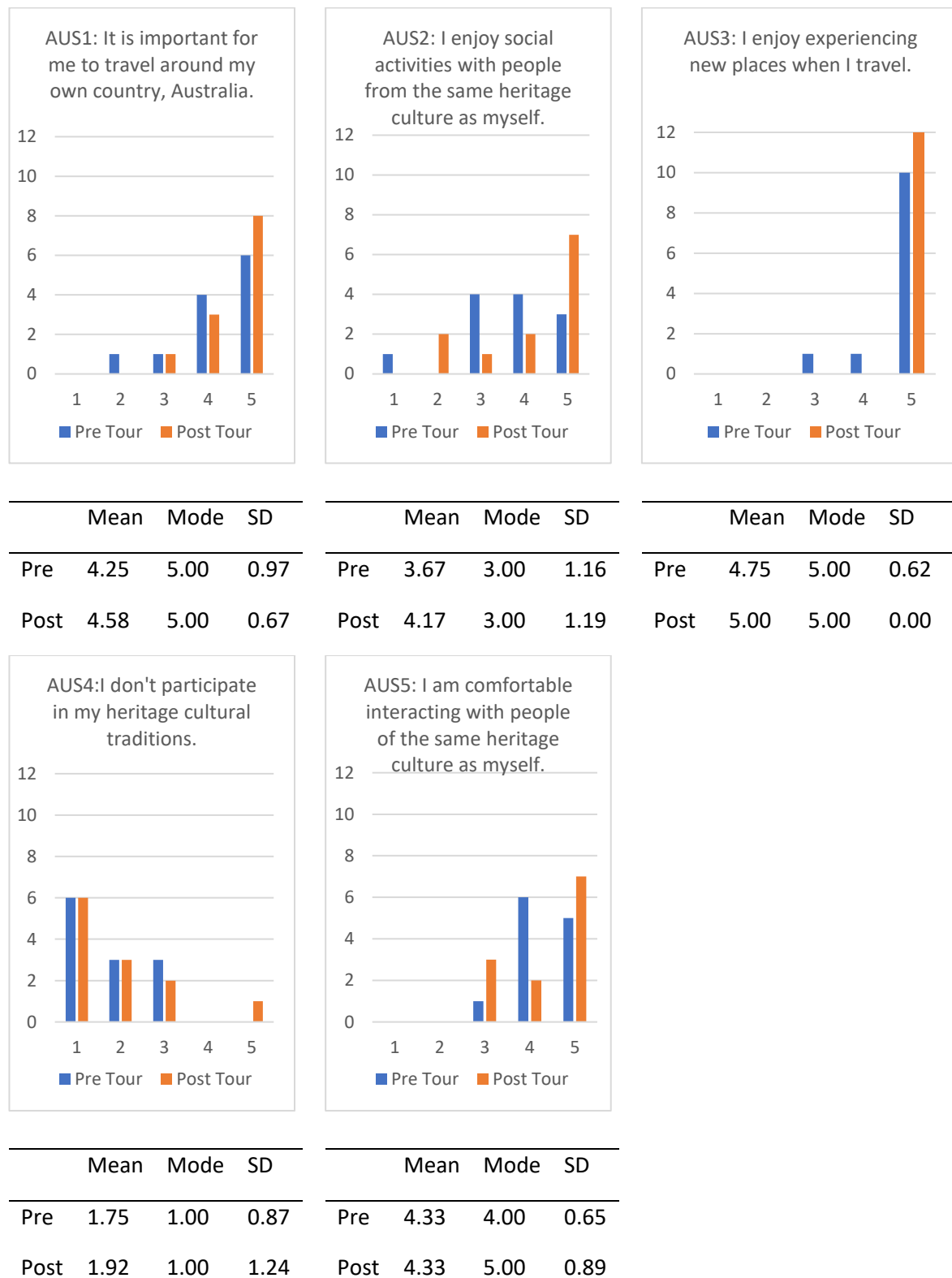
The student responses with regard to their perspectives on the intellectual affect showed some change between pre- and post- tour surveys. The participant responses for INT1, INT4, and INT5 were more diverse while the responses for INT2 and INT3 indicate a more uniform perspective. INT1 asked students to reflect on their perspectives towards challenging tasks; notably, there was an increase in the number of students who indicated post-tour that they 'Strongly agree' to being at their best when doing something challenging. This was again evident in their responses to INT5, where their responses were more spread in the post results; the overall distribution remains similar but more students 'Strongly disagree'. Both of these data sets indicated that the students whose initial belief was 'that they were at their best when challenged', and that they did not 'avoid challenging situations' had their beliefs enhanced by the tour. The participants' responses to the questions INT2 and INT3 were expected; it seemed that they became more aware of their desire for new information (INT2) and perhaps gained an appreciation for learning new things (INT3). Finally, a slightly greater skewed distribution to the 'Strongly agree' response in the post-tour survey for the question INT4 could be indicative of students having had a greater understanding of how their experience challenged their thinking.

Figure 4.4 *Impacts on perspectives on attitudes towards service according to student survey results*



In the responses to the five questions regarding service, it was evident that at the outset of the tour students already had a service-oriented mindset, but that that mindset became slightly more enhanced through the tour experience. This is not unexpected given that they would have been unlikely to apply for the tour if they had not been motivated by the opportunity to serve others. The most significant change that occurred was in response to SERV2 indicating that students believed that after the tour experience they more readily put aside their own self-interests for the greater good. The student responses to SERV3 and SERV5 indicated that although they initially felt that it was their responsibility to help others, they felt more compelled to take even greater responsibility for getting involved in community issues after their tour experience. The student responses to SERV 1 and SERV4 indicated minimal change in attitudes; this could be an indication that while students recognised a change in perspective within themselves, they might not have seen the need or importance of sharing their attitudes towards service with others in their community.

Figure 4.5 *Impacts on perspectives on Australian culture according to student survey results*



The students' responses to these five questions showed interesting patterns. The highly skewed responses to AUS3 were predictable; furthermore, in the post-tour survey participants unanimously agreed that they enjoyed experiencing new places when they travel. The service-learning tour certainly seemed to have created a broad agreement amongst the students with regard to enjoying travel and experiencing cultural heritage through that travel. However, participants did not have this same agreement with regard to enjoying social activities with others as their responses showed a wider spread for the question AUS2. Perhaps the use of the phrase 'social activities' in AUS2 accounted for the dispersion of responses as students might not have seen themselves to be likely to socialise with the tour group in the future. Student perspectives were similar with regard to travelling around Australia (AUS1) and interacting with people of the same heritage culture (AUS5). In response to the question AUS4, there was one outlier. This could be due to an inaccurate response or lack of understanding the question.

Student responses to open-ended survey questions

As previously mentioned, each survey ended with a small number of open-ended questions that asked for short answer responses. On the student surveys, these questions were:

Pre- Tour Survey

- i. Please describe your reasons for participating in this service- learning tour.
- ii. Please say how you think that participating in this service- learning tour will impact on your life.

Post- Tour Survey

- i. Please describe whether the Tour satisfied your reasons for participating in it.
- ii. Sometimes experiences can impact our thinking. Has your participation in the tour impacted your thinking about things? Please describe how.
- iii. Please describe how this experience has affected you overall.
- iv. Please tell the researcher anything else about the tour that you think is important.

As explained in the Methodology chapter, these short answer responses were coded and the frequency of the codes recorded. The coding process continued until themes emerged from the data. Four main themes emerged from the coding process; i) learning about and experiencing Aboriginal culture; ii) experiencing rural/ remote living; iii) interpersonal skill development; iv) personal development. Each of these themes appeared in both the pre- and post-tour short answer responses and will be examined further. As stated in some of the preliminary findings above, there were some questionable results obtained from the survey data (i.e. EMP3 and AUS2); the beauty of a mixed methodology is the opportunity for the qualitative data to provide the researcher with an opportunity to explore any questionable responses through a focus group. Again, where the survey questions represented the ideas that the researcher sought to explore, the qualitative results from the surveys and the focus groups brought together the ideas and voices of the participants. This voice adds depth and vigour to the survey results.

i) Learning about and experiencing Aboriginal culture

In both sets of short-answer survey questions, the students' thinking centred largely around learning about and experiencing Aboriginal culture. While in the pre-tour responses, students were

most motivated to apply for the tour due to a desire to learn more about Aboriginal culture, a third of post-tour student responses reflected that their thinking about Aboriginal culture had been impacted by the tour and that their perspectives had changed. This is summarised beautifully by the following quote:

I think it has impacted my thinking majorly about the Aboriginal people because I used to think they were grumpy people who hated the white settlers and debated on Australia Day. Now I think that they [are] some of the kindest people in the world by the [way they] talk to everyone like their family even [us kids] who went on the tour.

ii) Experiencing rural/ remote living

In the initial pre-tour short answer survey questions, a quarter of student responses focused on an interest in experiencing remote living. Many students saw this as an opportunity to do more camping and enjoy life outdoors. The impact of the remote living experiences seemed less important to the students in their post-tour responses as less than 10% of them referenced them when reflecting on the impacts of the tour. While students enjoyed the opportunity to explore more of their country, there were other experiences that made greater impacts. The greatest of these was the impact on interpersonal development. One student stated that “[g]oing on this tour has definitely affected the way I think about the resources that we are blessed with here in Perth.”

iii) Interpersonal skill development

When comparing the frequency of codes in this area of development, it is evident that it is here that the greatest impact on students had occurred. In the pre-tour surveys, only fifteen percent of codes focused on interpersonal development. Upon reflecting on the tour in the later survey, more than half of the codes related specifically to impacts on the students’ development of interpersonal skills. Comments frequently described the effects that the tour had had on relationship building skills, desire to help others and acceptance of others. When considering that students completed the surveys independently and without the influence of each other, it is significant to note that this was a major area of focus and perhaps at the forefront of their minds when they considered the impact of the tour. This was definitely an area of development in which they were affected, without expecting to be. Such opinions are reflected in the following statement:

If I hadn't gone on this tour, I wouldn't have seen that with some things it works better if you work together. Sure, it might be challenging to cope with other people at first but when you get to know them and appreciate them you can work together.

iv) Personal development

The final theme that emerged from the student short-answer survey responses was the impact on personal development. When compared with the change seen in prevalence of comments regarding interpersonal development, students were aware of the possibility for personal growth through the tour; in both pre- and post-tour responses approximately one quarter of comments related to personal development. Students initially recognised the possibility for personal development through participating in the tour, and the post-tour survey short answer responses confirmed that this growth did indeed occur. Students mentioned that they felt more confident and more appreciative; one participant even suggested that it had been life-changing, *"[i]t has really changed my perspective on our world. The [Aboriginal] children were so friendly and it was just life-changing meeting them."*

Findings from the student post-tour focus group

Before considering the findings from the student post-tour focus group, it is important for the reader to develop a sense of the atmosphere in which the group interview took place. Firstly, the focus group was the first time that the students had been back together as a group since the tour. As the students gathered at the meeting place, they seemed happy to see each other and mentioned that although they had been messaging or communicating through social media, because the students attended two different campuses, some of them had not interacted face-to-face before the focus group. Due to this, the focus group leader noted that they were quite excited and at times, she had difficulty focusing their attention to the task at hand. The transcripts show that while some of the participants dominated the conversation, the leader was still successful in getting all participants involved.

During the focus group, students shared many memories and inside jokes from the tour. These comments seemed to put them at ease, and created an atmosphere of friendship and comradery. As an onlooker, the atmosphere of the group would be interpreted as a group of individuals that had had a special shared experience; one that brought them great joy and that they could easily talk about.

Upon initial reading of the transcripts, an overall theme of acceptance seemed to be present. The transcripts were carefully coded and four specific themes emerged, which coincided

with the short answer survey responses: i) learning about Aboriginal culture, ii) remote living, iii) interpersonal growth and iv) personal development. It will be seen that in the student focus group, the most prevalent theme was personal development. Table 4.1 presents a snapshot of the most frequently occurring comments relating to each theme, followed by a discussion of these themes, in order of prevalence.

Table 4.1

Snapshot of the most prevalent comments from the student post- tour focus group

Emerging theme	Occurrence
Personal development	
appreciated Australian experiences	5
help at home more	5
increased empathy	5
Overall percentage of comments	37%
Interpersonal growth	
increased empathy	5
more interactive	5
service means to help-out our community	5
Overall percentage of comments	34%
Remote living	
appreciated Australian experiences	5
challenge was setting up swag	5
challenge was coming home	3
Overall percentage of comments	21%
Learning about Aboriginal culture	
felt very comfortable with [Aboriginal] kids	4
[Aboriginal] kids were caring nicest people ever met	2
changed view of Aboriginal communities	2
Overall percentage of comments	8%

Findings from student responses related to personal development

Personal development was a major theme of the focus group comments, with over a third of the comments related to this theme. As Table 4.1 shows, the students expressed the view that through the service-learning tour they had gained an appreciation for their country and the experiences that it could offer; they were more helpful at home post-tour, and they had an increased sense of empathy. These comments align with the short-answer survey responses relating to the tour having helped to increase their self-confidence, to be more appreciative and that the tour was life-changing. Some of the other comments related to personal development focused on the challenges of the tour and how the participants developed through them, and generally how they felt more committed to experiences and friendships. Again, the choice of a mixed methods

design is affirmed; through the short answer survey questions, it can be inferred that part of the reasons that the participants were interested in the tour was personal development, and through the post-tour focus group it is evident that this goal was fulfilled, as this focus group quotation shows: *"I've increased in my responsibility and maturity. I think I've developed more life skills. I understand the true importance of family."*

Findings from student responses related to interpersonal development

As students were concerned and motivated by a desire to develop themselves, it also seems that they were looking to develop their interpersonal skills. Through the focus group comments, it was evident that some students felt that they were initially shy but through the tour they had developed the confidence to interact with a larger peer group as well as an entirely new community. This development was almost an equal concern to personal development, as it was also the focus of over one third of the comments made. Common statements related to interpersonal development included discussion of developing empathy, interacting with more people and helping in the community. Such comments were reflected in the following statement: *"I've become more aware of issues within my community. I've become more aware of other people. I feel that I've become more empathetic than I was before the tour."*

Findings from student responses related to remote living

The theme of experiencing remote living was evident through one fifth of all the focus group comments. It seems that while students were challenged by the change from their usual urban Perth home to living in the remote Kimberley region, they also found it very rewarding. Students spoke about enjoying the experience of exploring their country and gaining an appreciation for it. Many students spoke about the initial challenge of setting up a swag but also the fulfillment they felt when they could later do it with greater ease. Some students spoke about their return home as being the real challenge. This was an interesting revelation of the focus groups. It will be seen that both students and parents reflected on the return home from the tour as being difficult. One student put it like this:

I would have preferred to stay for a longer time, because when I got home, I was quite bored. Because you can't really find any comparisons between the two apart from the fact that there are people there. But I am jealous, because at night you can actually see the stars and you can hear things like birds.

Findings from student responses related to learning about Aboriginal culture

The final emergent theme was about understanding Aboriginal culture. While this was the least frequently occurring theme, it is significant to note that one tenth of the student focus group comments were related to it. Students reflected that post-tour they felt much more comfortable with Aboriginal people, that the Aboriginals were in fact some of the kindest people they had ever met, and that through this tour their previous view of Aboriginal communities had changed. Some of the other comments related to having more awareness of the needs and issues within Aboriginal communities, understanding relationship dynamics within the Aboriginal community, and that the communities were very safe.

"I really liked meeting the kids up in the Kimberley. They were probably one of the most caring nicest people I've ever met."

Summary of findings from mixing student qualitative and quantitative responses

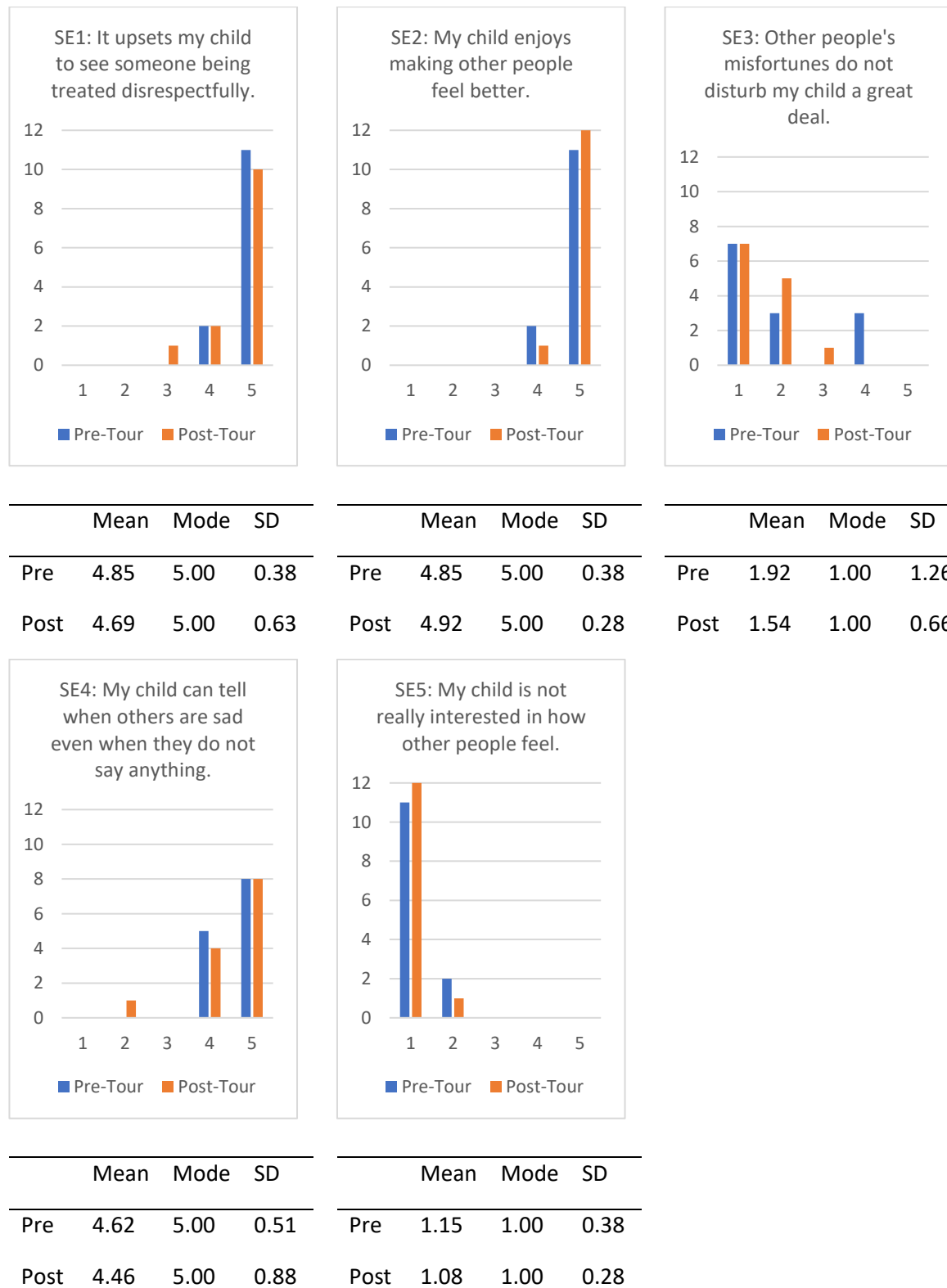
This concludes the presentation of the findings from the student data sets. The survey data showed that the ISL had effects on student thinking in all domains: social-emotional; intellectual; empathic development; attitudes towards service and perspectives on Australian culture. Through the quantitative surveys, understandings of some of the basic effects of the ISL were collected. The student participants became more unified in some of their responses, such as those on the social-emotional scale. However, their responses were more dispersed on the empathic development scale. On the other scales, students shared that they valued challenges, put their own needs aside for others, and enjoyed travelling to new places. The survey data did not however, create a full and complete picture of the effects of the ISL tour on the students. Thankfully, the researcher had the more descriptive, qualitative data to delve deeper into understanding these effects. The qualitative data provided an opportunity for the students' voices to be heard through their personal stories. These stories revealed more specific details about how the students were affected by the tour, and it is now understood that the students enjoyed learning about Aboriginal culture, and its contributions to Australia's culture as a nation. This new knowledge of what it means to be Australian contributed to the students' individual growth and increased their understanding of those around them. This mixture of quantitative and qualitative findings created a deeper, more wholistic understanding of the effects of the ISL on the students.

Parent responses: Quantitative survey results

Having outlined the findings from the data collected from the student participants, the chapter now turns to outlining those from the parents. It will be remembered that parents completed similar data collection forms; a pre-tour and post-tour survey, as well as a follow-up focus

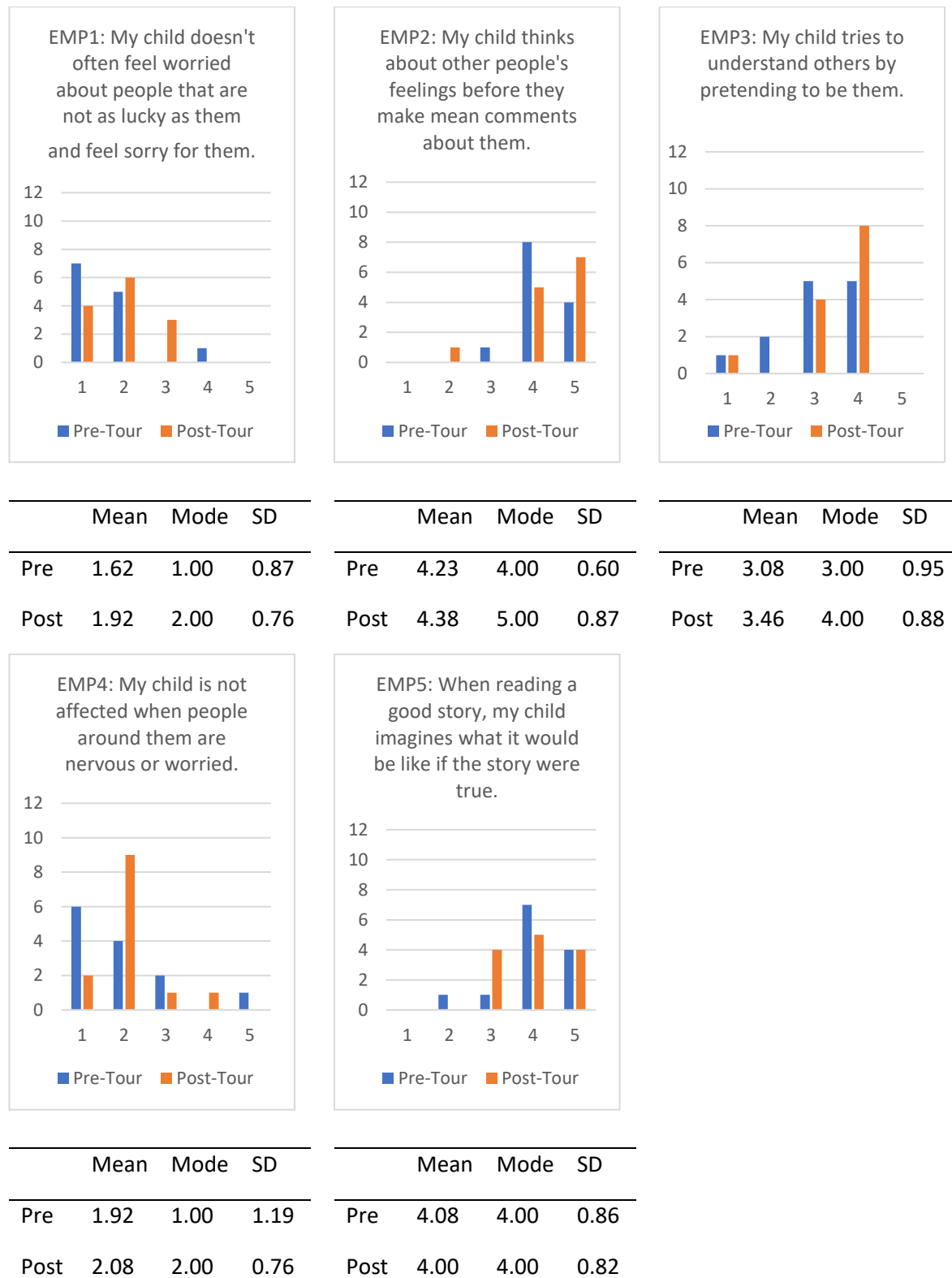
group, relating to the same themes as the student surveys: impacts on student's social emotional development, impacts on student's empathic development, impacts on student's intellectual development, student's attitudes towards service, and student's perspectives on Australian culture. The findings are presented in graphical form to display a visual comparison of the pre-tour and post-tour findings. Similar to the presentation of the students' data, the first set of findings are those from the two surveys; these are followed by a summary of findings from the two sets of qualitative data – the open-ended questions on the survey and the focus group interviews.

Figure 4.6 *Impacts on social-emotional development according to parent survey results*



With regard to the social-emotional perspectives of their children, the responses of the parent participants generally followed a similar pattern to those of the students. Questions SE1 and SE2 showed expected results, as the parent responses were skewed to 'Strongly agree'; these were that their child was upset by seeing someone being treated disrespectfully, and that they enjoyed making others feel better. It is difficult to discern whether the tour would have had any impact on these things as it would be extremely difficult and unlikely, due to social expectations, for a parent to state that their child did not enjoy making others happy or did not care about others being disrespected. It is interesting to note that while parents almost unanimously agreed that their child was interested in how other's felt (SE5), they were much less in agreement with regard to the extent to which the misfortunes of others disturbed their child (SE3) and whether their child could identify when someone else is sad (SE4). When considering this finding, it should be remembered that the parents were answering based on their understanding of their child's perspectives, which is most likely informed by their child's behaviours. It could be suggested that the effects of others' misfortunes and understanding the sadness of others do not have clearly explicit behaviours tied to them, and which consequently might not have been witnessed by the parents.

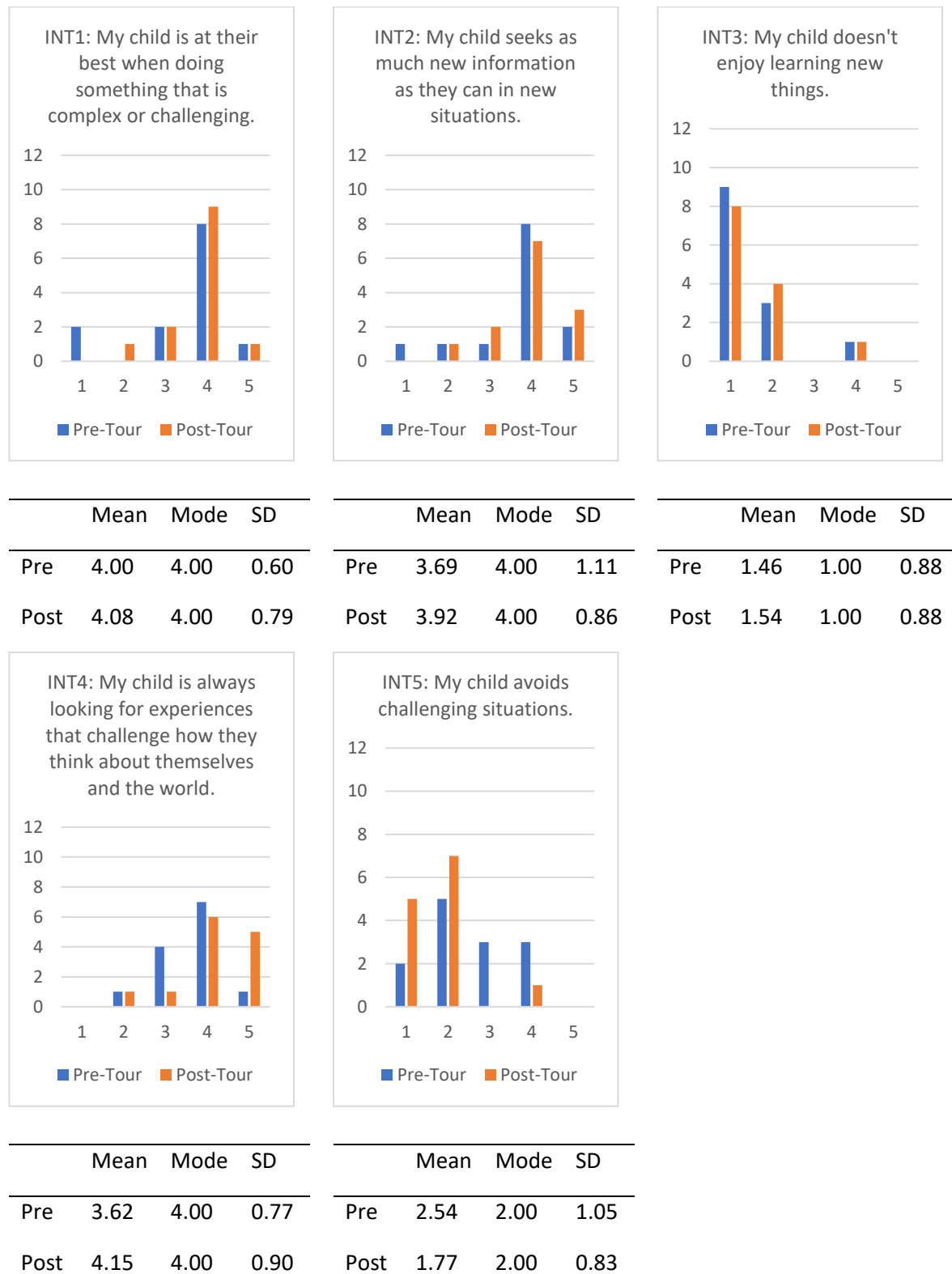
Figure 4.7 *Impacts on empathic development according to parent survey results*



Overall, the participant responses regarding this scale showed the greatest dispersion of all the scales. In response to the items EMP2, EMP3 and EMP 4, there were unexpected results in each of the item; each shows that one parent felt that their child did not think about the feelings of others before making a negative comment about them, did not try to understand others and was not affected when people around them were worried. Although it is unknown whether this is the same parent that responded in this way to all three items, it could indicate that they have misread the question. Especially when considered alongside the focus group data, it does not seem likely that any parent believed that after the tour their child's thinking had changed in such a way as to think less about others. Otherwise in their responses to these three items, all other parents agreed that participating in the tour had influenced their child's empathic development.

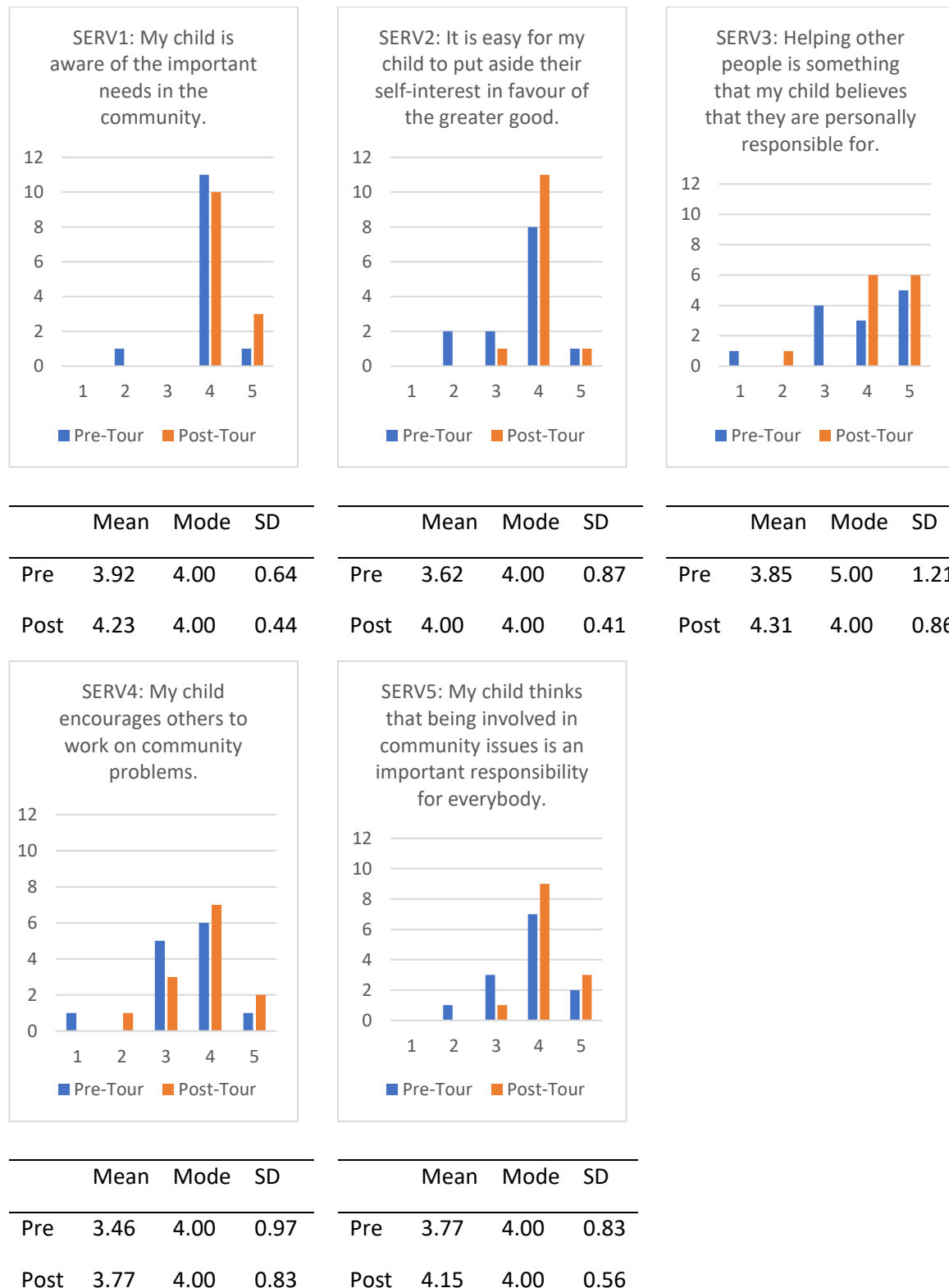
The parents' responses to questions EMP1 and EMP5 were similarly somewhat expected, except for the increase in the number of respondents choosing the neutral 'Neither agree nor disagree' rating. This could indicate that participants now felt unsure of whether their child worried about others not as lucky as them (EMP1) or whether they imagined what it would be like if a story were true (EMP5). Perhaps post-tour, the parents did in fact feel that their child's thinking had changed about these empathetic statements, but were unsure of to what degree, or had difficulty comprehending the shift in their child's thinking.

Figure 4.8 *Impacts on intellectual development according to parent survey results*



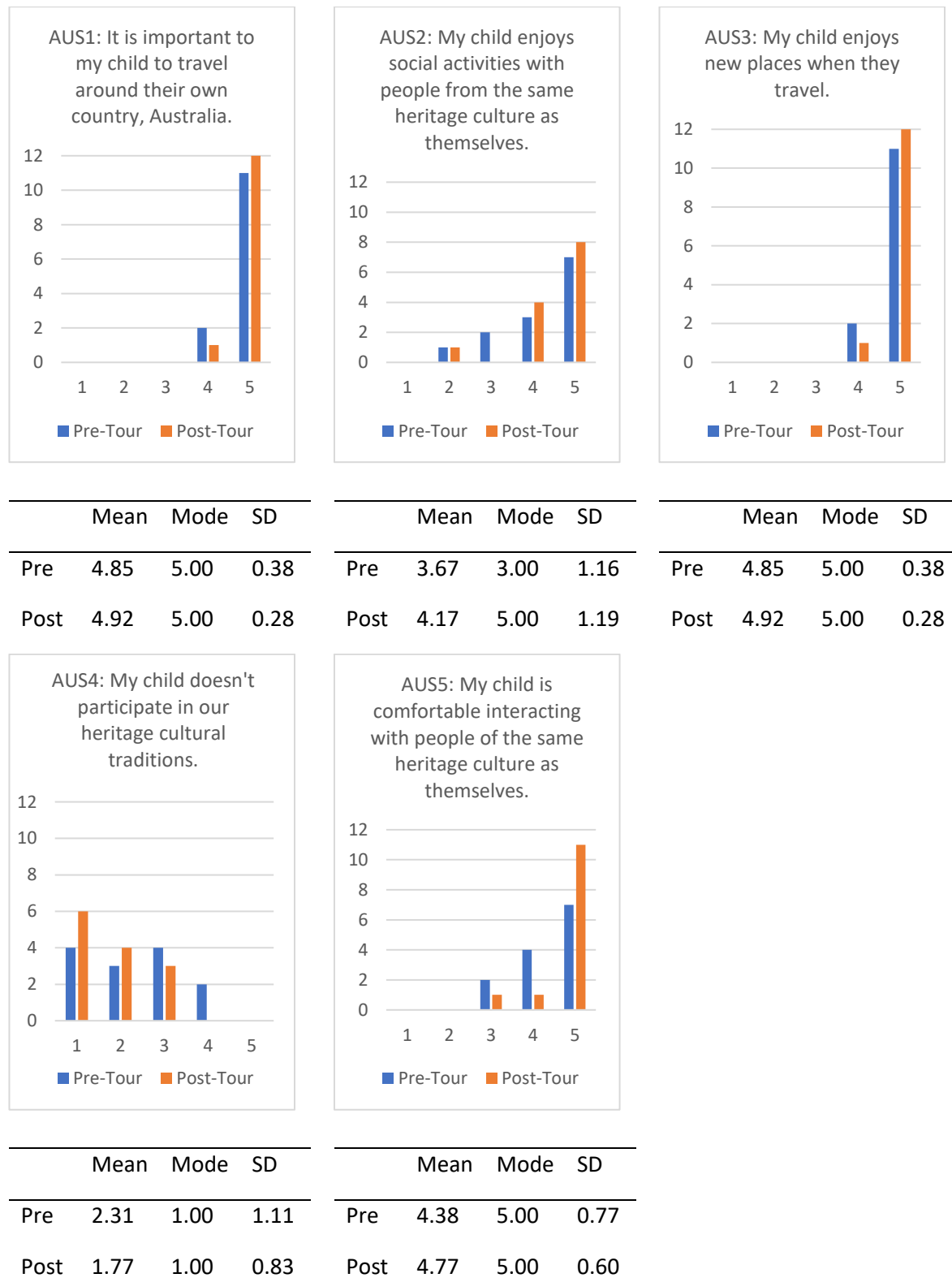
There was minimal change in the parents' thinking post-tour regarding their child's intellectual perspectives. Across all five items they stated that their child was at their best when challenged, sought new information, enjoyed learning new things, and that their child looked for challenging experiences. In fact, none of the modes changed for any of the statements. For INT1, INT2 and INT3 the means shifted only slightly. Parent responses for INT4 are more skewed to the 'Strongly agree' response, and the responses to statement INT5 (reversed rating) are more skewed to the 'Strongly disagree' response. Both of these statements pertained to how their child approaches challenges; perhaps some students felt the challenges that they were met with on the trip were too much for them. It should also be noted that the post-survey was conducted approximately two weeks after the students returned home. Due to this timing, it could be possible that parents had not had enough time to observe resiliency to challenges.

Figure 4.9 Impacts on attitudes towards service according to parent survey results



The parent responses regarding their child's attitudes towards service were generally expected. With reference to SERV2, it was pleasing to see that more parents believed that following the tour their child was about to put aside their self-interests in favour of the greater good. They felt that their children showed a greater sense of maturity and responsibility. The growth in their children's sense of responsibility was further supported by parent responses to SERV3, that their child post-tour believed that helping others was something that they were personally responsible for. Parent responses for SERV1 and SERV5 remained skewed to the 'Strongly agree' response, showing that they believed their child to have an awareness and interest in community needs. It is interesting to note that an outlier remains in the responses for SERV4, as one parent seems to believe that their child does not encourage others to work on community problems.

Figure 4.10 *Impacts on perspectives on Australian culture according to parent survey results*



After the experiences of travel through Australia's Kimberley region, parent participants agreed that their child valued travel in Australia (AUS1), enjoyed travelling to new places (AUS3) and was comfortable interacting with people of the same heritage culture as themselves (AUS5). This finding that the parents believed that their children had responded positively to the experiences in the Kimberley was a pleasing outcome of the service experience. Parent responses to AUS2 show that one parent felt that their child did not enjoy social activities with people from the same heritage culture; perhaps this question was misunderstood or their child expressed that they did not enjoy some of the experiences on the tour. This is particularly interesting when contrasted with parent responses skewed to 'Strongly disagree' that their child did not participate in cultural traditions. These responses could indicate that while some students participated in cultural traditions, not all of them enjoyed the experiences.

Parent responses to open-ended survey questions

Similar to the student surveys, each parent survey ended with a small number of open-ended, short answer questions. On the parent surveys these questions were:

Pre- Tour Survey

- i. Please describe your reasons for supporting your child's participation in this service-learning tour.
- ii. Please tell how you think that participating in this service-learning tour will impact on your child's life.

Post- Tour Survey

- i. Please describe whether the Kimberley Tour satisfied your reasons for supporting your child's participation in it.
- ii. As a parent, you know your child very well. Do you notice any change in your child's thinking since their Kimberley Tour experience? Please describe.
- iii. Please describe how you think that the Kimberley Tour has impacted on your child's life.
- iv. Please use this space to tell the researcher any other information that you think would be pertinent to the study.

As explained in the Methodology chapter, these short-answer responses were coded and the frequency of the codes recorded. A few small differences arose out of the parent short-answer responses, in comparison to the student responses; a very small percentage of parents specifically shared that their child had grown intellectually and had learned a lot while on the tour, while another small group reflected that they didn't see the change in confidence and independence that they were hoping for. This is interesting to note, as the student responses were all very enthusiastic regarding how the tour had positively impacted them both intellectually and personally. This might be evident that some of the impacts were most evident through internal thought processes (that could be difficult for parents to perceive) and less evident through behaviours.

In the same vein as the student responses, through the coding process four main themes emerged: i) experiencing Aboriginal culture, ii) personal development, iii) interpersonal skill development, and iv) experiencing Australian culture. Through the short-answer responses provided, greater understandings of the parents' perspective were gained. General findings of each of these themes will now be presented, in order of prevalence.

i) Learning about and experiencing Aboriginal culture

As would be expected, many parents supported their child's desire to take part in the tour with the hope that it would help them to better understand and appreciate Aboriginal culture. Through the responses of the short-answer survey questions, it was evident that this was of great importance to parents and also an area that the tour had had a great impact on the students' perspectives. This was evidenced by a quarter of parent participants stating in the pre-tour survey that this was a desired outcome, while the post-tour survey comments rose to a third of parents finding that their child's perspectives had been impacted by experiencing Aboriginal culture first hand. Parent responses regarding the impact of experiencing Aboriginal culture described a greater sense of empathy and appreciation having been developed. It was very evident that through experiencing the culture, their children's perspectives on the Aboriginal community had vastly changed.

Our child had said on his return that the kids at the [Aboriginal] school had much simpler lives than his without the technology and computer games and they were so happy. He also commented on the differences in football, how they play with no shoes on and play on dirt. He has come home from the tour with a better appreciation for his life here and much better awareness of the Indigenous culture.

ii) Experiencing rural/ remote living

The next theme that arose from the parent short-answer responses centred around their child having had an Australian cultural experience. Similar to interpersonal skill development, many parents focused on the Australian cultural experience as an aim for their child's participation in the tour. However, upon their return other factors such as understanding of Aboriginal culture and personal development were the greater focus of their responses. While 15% of parent pre-tour responses focused on the Australian experience, this decreased to only 5% on the return post-tour responses. Again, it is important to note that this does not necessarily indicate a lack of impact, but instead a shift in degree of impact; the degree of impact of the Aboriginal cultural experience and personal development outweighed that of the Australian cultural experience. This is also an area of impact that parents discussed to a large degree during the focus group.

We feel that our child has grown as a person and been made more aware of different cultural traditions. She certainly learnt a lot while she was away and in that regard the Tour has satisfied our reasons for supporting it.

iii) Personal development

The area of personal development appears to have been a focus for parents as they supported their child's participation in the tour. In the pre-tour survey, more than half of the parent respondents mentioned that they hoped their child would gain "an appreciation for home", increased self-confidence, and independence. The short-answer responses show that the tour fulfilled this hope as again, half of the respondents stated that their child's sense of self, gratitude and maturity were positively impacted by the tour.

Opened his eyes to a challenge – they were stuck at the airport and he learnt that you just have to deal with the situation as it presents itself. He took care of others by helping with setting up swags and collecting wood. In the past, he has always been the lazier of the boys but now he has really stepped up his act. He is more loving towards us as well.

iv) Interpersonal skill development

Of the four main themes that arose from the short-answer responses, this was the one with the most surprising result. In the pre-tour survey, a quarter of parents expressed that they hoped their child would gain interpersonal skills through participating in the tour. These skills were mostly focused on their child acquiring a commitment to serving others and a greater sense of the possible influence that they could have in the world. However, upon return, only two parents noted that

their child's interpersonal skills had been impacted. It is important to note that this finding could be due to parents' responses being more focused on the personal development that had been gained. While some parents noted that their child did return with an increased desire to serve others, the impact on their child as an individual seemed to be much greater. In short, the students seemed to have returned from the tour with a stronger commitment to themselves being the best people that they could be, and less so a desire to serve others. This is interesting to note when considering the researcher's reflections and comments on the parent focus group, which had a great mood of compassion for others (as if the parents were surprised by how much their child now cared for the Aboriginal community). As one parent wrote: *"He is more helpful now. He has started respecting things around him. He was a bit nervous and scared before leaving, but now he is missing all his Kimberley mates."*

iv) Experiencing rural/ remote living

The final theme that arose from the parent short-answer responses centred around their child having had an Australian cultural experience. Similar to interpersonal skill development, many parents focused on the Australian cultural experience as an aim for their child's participation in the tour. However, upon their return other factors such as understanding of Aboriginal culture and personal development were the greater focus of their responses. While 15% of parent pre-tour responses focused on the Australian experience, this decreased to only five percent on the return post-tour responses. Again, it is important to note that this does not necessarily indicate a lack of impact, but instead a shift in degree of impact; the degree of impact of the Aboriginal cultural experience and personal development outweighed that of the Australian cultural experience. This is also an area of impact that parents discussed to a large degree during the focus group.

We feel that our child has grown as a person and been made more aware of different cultural traditions. She certainly learnt a lot while she was away and in that regard the Tour has satisfied our reasons for supporting it.

Findings from the parent post-tour focus group coding

The parent post-tour focus group was led by the researcher, at the same time as but in a different location from the students' focus group. This was also the first time that the parents had come together to debrief on the tour. While some parents might have known each other from incidental interactions at their child's school, none of them appeared to have had previous relationships or connections beyond the normal school-parent realm. The atmosphere surrounding the discussion was very comfortable and friendly.

It is interesting to note that while the emerging themes do not reflect much discussion about empathy, the researcher left the gathering feeling that the conversation had been bursting with empathetic comments. Before listening to the focus group recording or reading the transcripts, I was convinced that the greatest theme that would emerge from the parent focus group would be regarding the empathy that their children had developed from the tour. When analysing and revisiting the data, this was not the case; its importance or prevalence was not reflected in the group comments or coding. This may be the danger in quantifying codes; sometimes the way things are spoken has a greater impact than the content of what is said.

Mirroring the presentation of student data, Table 4.2 presents a snapshot view of the most prevalent comments from the parent focus group data: personal development, learning about Aboriginal culture, experiencing remote living and interpersonal development.

Table 4.2

Snapshot of the most prevalent comments from the parent post- tour focus group

Emerging theme	Occurance
Personal development	
breaking down stereotypes	14
child driven	7
coming home was biggest challenge	6
Overall percentage of comments	50%
Learning about Aboriginal culture	
breaking down stereotypes	14
relationships formed with Aboriginal community	7
sought greater understanding of Aboriginal culture	6
Overall percentage of comments	21%
Remote living	
coming home was biggest challenge	6
increase appreciation	5
saw tour as a part of bringing up child as Australian	5
Overall percentage of comments	15%
Interpersonal growth	
breaking down stereotypes	14
relationships formed with Aboriginal community	7
child helping more	3
Overall percentage of comments	14%

Summary of parent comments related to student's personal development

Discussion regarding the personal development that had occurred through the tour dominated the parent focus group, with half of the comments being related to it. While this theme was also dominant in the student focus groups, the parents' comments related to other aspects of

personal development. The focus for parent participants was that through the tour their child had developed an understanding of Aboriginal culture which, in turn, had disproven previously held stereotypes. Another important group of comments related to personal growth was regarding participation in the tour having been driven by the child, and that parents saw this as an opportunity for growth. The other main comments related to personal development focused on students having enjoyed being immersed in another culture and community, and in turn finding it difficult to return home. It seems that the tour helped the parents to better recognise and understand their child's level of independence and development of self, as evident by the following quotation: *"He had to look after himself the whole eight days. I know he knew he could do it but he had a full-on sense of achievement when he came back. He was a totally different kid when I saw him."*

Summary of parent comments related to student's learning about Aboriginal culture

While discussion in the student focus group did not focus heavily on the students' development of understanding of the Aboriginal culture, this theme was much more prevalent in the parent focus group. The parents expressed that through the relationships that were formed with the Aboriginal community, their child's understandings of Aboriginal culture and traditions had deepened. In fact, there was considerable discussion from parents regarding their child's desire to continue to deepen their understanding of Aboriginal culture and to bring awareness of it to their peers. Parents expressed that through this understanding of Aboriginal culture, their child also seemed to have a greater desire to understand other cultures, and to accept cultural differences.

I think the most potent lesson she'll learn from it is longer term, in the way that she understands Aboriginal culture and the way that she understands Aboriginal people. And I think the benefits of that, the real benefits will only become apparent in the years to come maybe. And she's been given a framework with which to understand a different culture.

Summary of parent comments related to student's experience of remote living

Following from an understanding and acceptance of the Aboriginal culture, the parent participants also felt that their child had developed a greater sense of what it means to be an Australian. Parents expressed that through being immersed in the remote Kimberley Region, their child had gained first-hand experience of what the country of Australia had to offer. Several parents said that through this authentic experience, their child had been able to apply their understanding of what it means to be Australian and consequently to feel greater appreciation for being a citizen of the country. One parent remarked: *"It's a connection to the land as well. I find it's not only the*

people but the land and that's one of the reasons we wanted her to really go is to form that connection to the land."

Summary of parent comments related to student's interpersonal growth

The final emergent theme was interpersonal growth. The parents discussed many levels of relationships that had developed over the course of the tour; relationships between the student group themselves; enriched relationships with family and friends at home; and finally, relationships with the Aboriginal community members. It was clear that the students from two different campuses had bonded through the experience; many parents spoke about how their children did not previously interact but now were quite close and understood each other very well. The parent group also spoke about how the tour had helped their child understand and appreciate their relationship with their family members; they spoke of a new found desire to spend more family time together. It will be remembered that the goal of this tour was to develop relationships with the remote Aboriginal community. This was not facilitated by structured activities, but instead it happened through natural, authentic, shared experiences. A large portion of the comments related to this theme focused on these relationships that were formed with the Aboriginal community members and the depth of them. It seemed that the parents were surprised that their children had become so attached and connected with the Aboriginal community in such a short period of time. This deep attachment grew alongside the students' understanding of the Aboriginal culture and therefore breaking down of previously held stereotypes. This had encouraged not only an understanding and acceptance of differences between cultures, but also between the participants themselves.

And what I really liked was when he came back, mum, can you tell me? You know how there was a community there and everyone knows everyone? So he was really happy and he just liked that concept where the community knows each other so well and helps each other and be there for each other. And he was like, why can't we be like that?

Summary of findings from mixing parent qualitative and quantitative responses

This concludes the presentation of the findings from the data sets collected from the parent participants. Similar to the findings from the student data sets, the parent survey responses showed that the ISL tour had affected their child. The parent responses regarding social-emotional development, and intellectual development showed that the parents were fairly unified in their thinking that the tour had a fairly minimal effect on their child. While the results from the empathic development scale showed that parents were unsure of how the tour had affected their child in this

regard. Both of these findings (the lack of social-emotional and empathic growth, as well as ambiguous empathic growth) commanded further exploring. Ambiguity was again found in parent responses to their child's perspectives on Australian culture through unexpected responses such as their child not enjoying taking part in cultural traditions. It will be remembered that the parent participants were involved in the research primarily to assist the researcher in understanding the context of the students' understandings of the world around them. Once again, the mixing of qualitative findings with these quantitative findings was the key to developing a deep understanding of the effects of the ISL tour on the children. Through the short answer questions similar themes to the student responses were found; the students had enjoyed learning about Aboriginal culture and its contributions to Australia's culture as a nation. This knowledge helped them to better understand themselves and ultimately, others around them. The deepest understanding of the parents' views of the effects of the ISL on their children was in their voices during the focus group discussions; the parents spoke passionately and proudly about the personal growth that they had seen in their child, and their child's desire to help others. In fact, many saw the ISL experience as transformative. It seemed that the parents found it difficult to answer the survey questions reflecting the thoughts of their child, but found it much easier to describe the effects of the ISL during the focus group discussion. The methodology of the case study allowed the mixed methods data to be merged, producing a full and deep understanding of the effects of the ISL tour.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings from the three main sources of data collected through survey-responses to the Likert-scale items and written responses to the open-ended questions – and the focus groups. These three sources were conducted across the two sets of participants; the students on the service-learning tour themselves, and the parents. The presentation of the findings, shows that the mixed-methods data collection allowed the researcher to successfully explore the impacts of the tour in a deep and meaningful way, as well as to allow the voices of the participants to be heard through their responses. The quantitative survey data allowed the researcher to explore specific aspects of the tour, while the qualitative focus group data gave an opportunity for the thoughts and opinions of the students to shine through. Essentially, the survey data was a tool used to understand the impacts of the tour, and out of the open-ended questions and focus group data a more detailed picture of the full impact of the tour arose. Without one, the other would not have been as significant. Through the use of both student and parent participants, a

well-rounded representation of the tour and its impacts have been gleaned. The impacts of the tour and the implications of this research will now be explored in more depth in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This explanatory mixed methods case study had two main goals: (i) to better understand the impacts of a service-learning program through the voice of its participants, and (ii) to develop theories regarding the conceptualisation of quality service-learning programs at the primary school-age level. Ultimately, the goal of this study was to use empirical data to understand more of, and to inform educators about the benefits of service-learning experiences for their primary school-age students. To accomplish this, qualitative data has been used to explore trends and themes found in quantitative data. Through both sets of data, the voices of service-learning participants have emerged through the themes presented. This chapter moves the research to addressing and answering the research questions by presenting themes that emerged through data collection, comparing them with the literature and developing some theory around the effects of an ISL on primary school-age students. These aspects will be woven together to form a colourful presentation of the effects of service-learning on the perspectives of its participants and their parents. The emerging picture will clarify the story of a single, immersive service-learning experience and through this, will present new understandings of service-learning.

It will be remembered that the overarching research question was:

How does immersive service- learning impact on primary school-age children?

To develop a response to this question, five guiding questions were formulated and explored. They were:

1. To what extent does immersive service learning (ISL) at Sanesteban School impact students socially and emotionally?
2. To what extent does ISL at Sanesteban School impact students' development of empathy?
3. To what extent does ISL at Sanesteban School impact students intellectually?
4. To what extent does this ISL experience impact students' perspectives on Australian culture?
5. To what extent does being outside of the students' natural environment affect the overall impact of ISL?

Previous to this research, the understandings of the effects of service-learning programs on primary students were quite sparse, and almost non-existent in Australian research literature. Celio

et al. (2011) found through their meta-analysis of service-learning programs, that a mere 5% of programs pertained to primary school-aged students and consequently, research findings from studies on secondary students were often generalised to primary students, regardless of the differing developmental levels. Through the research of Celio et al. (2011), Melchior and Bailis (2002) and White (2001), some of the understandings were that students involved in service-learning programs showed gains in attitudes towards themselves, towards school, greater civic engagement, and were generally more involved in acts of service. Scott and Graham (2015) specifically researched the effects of service-learning programs on students in years 1, 2, and 5 and found that student involvement in such programs could increase levels of empathy and community engagement. Scott and Graham (2015) further suggested that, as both were key pro-social behaviours in adolescence, they required further investigation. All the findings above were in the American context.

In the Australian context, the research was almost non-existent. A single study was found which explored the impacts of an immersive service-learning experience, but was focused on pre-service teachers, not primary school-age students (Lavery, et al., 2018). When considering the sparse research that was available, the comments of Langworthy (2007) should be recalled; she questioned whether the American research could be generalised to the Australian context where the policy agendas are different. The need for further research in the Australian context was further substantiated by Bursaw (2012) and Parker et al. (2009).

Specific to the Australian educational context is the Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008). These agreed national goals for Australian schooling stated that schooling should support needs beyond literacy and numeracy, and that these should include “national values of democracy, equity and justice, and personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience and respect for others” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 5). Some goals of the Declaration could be particularly connected to service-learning through stating that a purpose of Australian education should be to ensure that “all young Australians become: successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens” (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 7). Similarly, Swalwell (2013) states that in order to develop national values and informed citizens, such as the participants of this research study, who are likely to become the leaders of tomorrow, it is important to understand the implications of educating the privileged students of society,

In summary, this case study has helped to inform and address a significant gap in pedagogical understanding, and in fact, a gap of nationally recognised importance. Up until this time, we have known very little of the effects of service-learning programs on primary students;

however Australian policy makers have suggested that the pedagogical practice is one of importance for both the education system and the future of the country's leaders.

The effects of service-learning

Addressing guiding research question 1: To what extent does immersive service learning (ISL) at Sanesteban School impact students socially and emotionally?

Social-emotional effects were investigated through survey questions that asked participants to reflect on their emotions towards the treatment and misfortunes of others, and their own emotional reactions toward others. Their responses showed that the student participants generally enjoyed making others feel better and stated that they were upset by others' being hurt. In comparing the pre-tour data collection to the post-tour data collection, changes in the data set were seen through all students agreeing positively that it upset them to see others being treated with disrespect. The greatest changes were seen in the data set where students were asked whether the misfortunes of others disturbed them and whether they could tell when others were sad. In both instances the data became more dispersed. This could show that students found these introspective questions difficult to answer. This difficulty aligns with previous research on adolescence and introspection, as it has been found that introspective ability develops with age (Blakemore, 2018).

The parent participant responses were somewhat conflicted in that they generally felt that their child enjoyed making others feel better and were upset by seeing someone being treated disrespectfully, yet they also felt that their child did not seem very interested in how other people felt. This particular item showed very little change between pre-tour and post-tour data sets. However, the rest of the social-emotional data set showed a greater change from pre-tour to post-tour data; more parents felt that their child was disturbed by the misfortunes of others, and that their child could tell when others were sad. Some of the parent responses on these two questions seemed unsure. Perhaps parents found it difficult to discern and define their child's emotional development.

This last conclusion stems from the feedback on the pilot survey, which stated that the parent survey was difficult to answer as it required them to infer the feelings of their child. It is assumed that the parent responses were based on their understanding and perception of the behaviour of their child, which is not necessarily a direct reflection of their child's emotions. Slade (2005) has conducted research on this relationship between parents and their children and the term 'parent reflective functioning' was coined to define the parent's capacity to hold the child's mental state in mind. While parents do have the capacity to consider their child's mental state, parents do

not necessarily always know what their child is thinking. The researcher believes that it is true that most people have experienced situations where they may have thought and felt one way but acted in a very different way. Our actions do not always mirror our emotional state. While it is fair to say that, as human beings, our acted-out behaviours do not always mirror our emotions, considering the parent's close relationship to their child, and this 'parent reflective functioning', it is assumed that parents would have a good understanding of their child's social-emotional state.

Many respondents became more aligned in their thoughts regarding social-emotional development. Perhaps due to the experience of the tour, the students' emotional awareness was heightened at the time of the survey data collection, resulting in reflective responses. This is most prevalent in responses to the survey question asking about their feelings towards others being treated disrespectfully. This strong emotional reaction to the treatment of others connects to the effects of the service-learning experience on students developing empathy.

Over one third of the data from the focus groups referred to the social-emotional effects of the tour. In order to better understand the changes that had occurred in terms of social-emotional responses, students were asked in the focus group, "How do you feel that the tour has helped you to understand the feelings and perspectives of others?" It will be remembered that the tour brought together students from the same school but two different campuses, and was co-educational in nature. Therefore, the students were required to interact with peers that they would not normally interact with. Another effect that the structure of the participant group had was that the students were supported through emotionally vulnerable experiences by peers that they did not normally rely on.

The experiences of the service-learning tour could create circumstances in which the participants feel emotionally vulnerable, as students were away from their regular environment, routine and social structure. Outside of the tour group itself, students also interacted with strangers of a completely different culture; an Aboriginal culture. These new relationships immediately allowed them to compare the new environment with their regular environment, their new routine with their old routine, and their new social structure with their old social structure. The findings suggest strongly that students developed a better understanding of the feelings and perspectives of others.

Furthermore, as no student mentioned any comments or experiences that were damaging in any way, it can be concluded that the experience was socially and emotionally a positive one. It was an experience through which they gained interpersonal awareness and personal development. This is substantiated by Lavery et al.'s (2018) research in which the importance of relationship was

highlighted; through participant reflections, anecdotal evidence had shown that relationships had been developed both between participants of the immersive service-learning experience, and between the participants and the community of the Aboriginal school (Lavery et al., 2018).

To gain an understanding of the parents' perspectives of the possible social-emotional changes of their child, parents were asked in the focus group, "How has this changed your child?" and "How have you seen your child's confidence change?". In line with the student focus group data, over one-third of the focus group coding was related to the social-emotional effects of the tour. As the leader of this focus group, the researcher has a lasting memory of the sense of pride that many of the parents seemed to have regarding how confident and grown up their child was upon return from the tour. The parents perceived this growth and maturity as stemming from the tour requirements that students carried out daily chores and activities independently with self-assuredness. One parent likened this growth and maturity as problem solving ability.

I suppose I saw not so much confidence but this problem-solving ability that suddenly went, "I'll give it a shot. I'll try. If I can't do it, it's not the end of the world." ...It's that idea of taking ownership a little bit.

While the data collected from the student participants and parent participants shows some degree of variation regarding the effects of the service-learning experience on social-emotional development, two main themes are present in both data sets. The first is that students grew in their ability to think reflectively, and the second was that the need to rely on themselves and their new support network created a level of vulnerability in the participants. These two themes are key findings in this research.

A current, growing phenomenon in educational research is neuro-education. This field has emerged from the belief amongst scientists and educators that through better understanding how children develop and learn, education systems can be strengthened (Nagel, 2014). Particularly pertinent to this project is the neuro-educational research in adolescence. While there is no definitive age or developmental characteristics which defines adolescence, it is generally thought of as the second decade of life (Nagel, 2014); precisely the period of life that the participants of this study are on the cusp of, as twelve-year-olds. Blakemore (2018) has made considerable contributions to neuro-educational research on adolescence. She is particularly interested in understanding the adolescent brain and how it develops. In her 2018 book, *Inventing ourselves: The secret life of the teenage brain*, she explains how, for humans to develop an understanding of social development, we must consider a "complex set of cognitive processes which we can call the *social mind*" (Blakemore, 2018, p. 97).

Through her research, Blakemore (2018) has found that humans are able to distinguish a vast array of emotional expressions and are constantly reading the faces of others and actions to better understand them. This innately human ability to understand the feelings and actions of others is called “mentalizing” or “theory of mind” (Blakemore, 2018, p. 98). Blakemore and her team of researchers studied numerous brain scans and found that the brain matter responsible for mentalising was most prevalent in brain scans of ages 7 to 10 years old, after which point it begins to decline.

While Blakemore focuses on the neurological structures involved in mentalising, in Nagel (2014), the development of social understanding is further examined. Nagel suggests that social development is a product of interactions between brain development, experience and sociocultural factors. Through this service-learning experience, participants were exposed to an experience that was new and stimulating, with varying sociocultural factors. In fact, the experience at the core of this research seems to be the perfect vehicle through which to develop an individual’s social-emotional capacity. Nagel states that to mentalise (or have a functioning theory of mind), individuals must use both cognitive and affective processes. As previously stated, service-learning experiences are developed around specific learning goals or cognitive outcomes and through the experience, many emotions are evoked (Nagel, 2014). Nagel further states that in order to appreciate the beliefs that might guide the emotions of others, one must develop an understanding of the beliefs themselves. As the students were spending time developing relationships within and with a remote Aboriginal community, they were also learning about Aboriginal culture and beliefs and, in turn, learning to understand the Aboriginal behaviours and emotions that they have previously witnessed. Through growing in relationship with others on the tour, the student participants gained an understanding of what was important to their peers, and therefore, developed an understanding of why some people behave as they do.

It will be remembered that before this research project, the case study service-learning experience was often questioned by some members of the school community as to whether the students were too young to benefit and succeed from such an experience. Data-sets from both parents and students, as well as the research of Blakemore and Nagel directly support the notion that the primary school-age, later primary school specifically, is an appropriate time for such service-learning experiences. With students at the cusp of adolescence, they are developing the ability to mentalise and to better understand the behaviours and emotions of others. Through mentalising they develop the ability to support each other in a seemingly vulnerable situation. And finally, through this experience of vulnerability, students develop a sense of empathy.

In summary, the changes in social-emotional development were seen through self-assured growth in confidence and maturity. The students returned with greater concern for the respectful treatment of others, a sensitivity to possible misfortunes of others, and a clearer understanding of the emotional state of others. This development was through forming new relationships from both within their natural home setting and beyond, as well as being immersed in a new environment. The growth was both inter- and intra-personal in nature.

It will be remembered from Chapter 1, that Swalwell (2013,) suggests that there are three levels of citizenship: “personally responsible citizenship, participatory citizenship and justice-oriented citizenship”. Swalwell states that through developing these levels of citizenship, students will be empowered to take initiative to create positive change in their world. Based on the findings of this research related to the social-emotional effects of this immersive service-learning experience on its participants, support for Swalwell’s statement is found. These primary school-aged students’ developed levels of maturity (personally responsible citizenship), concern for the respectful treatment of others (participatory citizenship), and sensitivity to the misfortunes of others (justice-oriented citizenship) suggest that they will have a heightened desire to make positive change within their world. This is the first instance of emerging theory regarding the perspectives that are constructed through a service-learning experience.

Addressing guiding research question 2: To what extent does ISL at Sanesteban School impact students’ development of empathy?

The effects on empathic development were examined through survey questions that asked students: whether they think about the feelings of others and worry about those who are less fortunate than them; whether they imagined being like others; and whether they were affected by others’ nervousness or worry. The student responses in this area were somewhat varied across both surveys; their responses indicated that other people’s nervousness and worry affected some of them, but not all of them. These varied results could indicate that the students were unsure of how to answer the questions. Perhaps they were unsure because, due to their recent experience that affected them social-emotionally, they were reflecting on their responses more deeply in the post-tour survey. With this lack of clarity in responses, it was important that empathic development was further explored in the focus group.

The two main focus group questions that were asked with regard to empathic development were: “How do you feel that the tour has helped you to understand the feelings and perspectives of

others?” and “Did you find it easy to support each other on the tour?”. Comments related to empathy were only a small percentage of the focus group conversations; however, the (independent) student focus group interviewer noted that the students seemed genuinely connected and deeply caring towards the new friends that they had made, both at the Aboriginal school community and within the tour group. Both trends were noted while listening to the focus group recordings. This tone of empathy was similarly reflected within the parent focus group.

Again, in alignment with the student responses, the parent empathy survey scale results were quite varied. Overall, parents seemed unsure of whether their child had developed empathy through the tour; it was difficult for parents to quantify their child’s empathic development. This difficulty may have been because parents had only the outward behaviour and communication of their child to rely on to inform their response, and while they do not truly know the internal feelings of their child, they were asked to quantify their understanding of their feelings through survey questions.

This ambiguity calls for further exploration. Due to time constraints, there was not one key question asked in the focus-group related to empathic development, yet much of the conversations were connected to empathy. The topic was addressed indirectly through exploring how the parents felt that the experience had changed their child overall. One parent relayed an anecdote that all the parents could connect to. In summary, the parent stated that, upon picking up their usually talkative child from the airport, the child was unusually quiet. The parent finally pulled the car over to directly question their child as to whether something bad had happened on the tour that needed to be addressed immediately. The child responded by saying that they just couldn’t put it into words, that they just felt so saddened that they were never going to see the Aboriginal community again. When sharing this story with the focus group, the parent became emotional and many other parents nodded or smiled in agreement with confirmation of the remarks. This shows that empathy might not be easily directly addressed or not be spoken about, but instead inferred through connecting aspects. This is especially interesting when considering that empathy is, by its very nature, about connecting with others. This is supported by Nagel’s (2014) statement that in order to understand another’s perspective and to empathise, both thinking (cognitive) and emotional (affective) processes must be considered.

Blakemore suggests that there are two sets of emotions: i) basic emotions such as joy, fear and anger that do not require the affective person to consider another’s thoughts, and ii) emotions that require mentalising such as guilt and embarrassment, which require the affective person to consider how others would think or feel about them in a given situation (Blakemore, 2018). This

second set of emotions relies on social connectivity, and specifically, a complex process referred to by Nagel (2014) as perspective taking. Perspective taking is the complex thinking process by which people relate to and empathise with others, allowing them to better understand the feelings, motivations and perspectives of others (Nagel, 2014). Similar to some of the empathy scale survey questions, perspective taking requires individuals to imagine how another is affected by a situation, while separating their own personal feelings about the situation (Nagel, 2014).

Social connectivity is a particularly interesting aspect to explore in the context of this case study experience; it will be remembered that the service that the tour group was providing to the remote Aboriginal population was relational in nature. The original understanding between the Aboriginal school community and Sanesteban School was that the Year 6 students would participate in regular school community activities, and ultimately form relationships with the community members. While previous research examined the effects of classroom-based service-learning programs (Billig, 2000b; Celio, Durlak, Dynmicki, 2011; Scott & Graham, 2015), the immersive, new environment at the core of this service-learning experience may be a contributing factor to this further development of empathy.

In summary, the changes in empathic development were difficult to measure; however, they were definitely present. An inferred theme emerging from both the qualitative and quantitative data is that empathic development emerged from social connectivity. As evidence, students stated, and demonstrated, genuine connectedness and deep caring towards the new friends that they had made, both at the Aboriginal school community and within the tour group. This deep-seated connection led them to articulate a sense that they understood others better and that they felt upset when others were mistreated. Their energy and body language upon return from the tour had changed; they just couldn't put it into words. The experience had had a definite impact on their cognitive development.

Addressing guiding research question 3: To what extent does ISL at Sanesteban School impact students intellectually?

A key element of any service-learning program is the academic or curricular connection. This case study service-learning tour integrated the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cross-Curricular priorities, as well as the Year 6 History (HASS) program regarding understanding Australia as a nation. While the tour did explore knowledge and understanding in both of these areas, the survey questions asked were focused more generally on the participants' intellectual thought processes. The survey questions asked required the participants to reflect on how they approach challenges and new situations. The changes in the students' perspectives regarding challenges were positively

affected in that post-tour they showed greater agreement regarding seeking information in new situations, and that they did not avoid challenging situations. The students' perspectives as to whether they are at their best when doing something complex and challenging, and about whether they sought out challenges, became more enhanced as more of them said that they 'strongly agreed' with the statements.

The students' approaches to challenging and new situations were further explored through the focus group question, "What did you feel was most challenging on the tour?". As previously mentioned, effects on intellectual development were studied from a general thinking skills approach, rather than with regard to specific learning outcomes. During the focus group discussion, students referred many times to the challenges of having to demonstrate maturity and independence in tasks such as setting up their swags, preparing meals and their general approach to day-to-day tasks. Participants proudly shared anecdotes and inside jokes regarding their quick development of these skills because their parents were not available to do things for them.

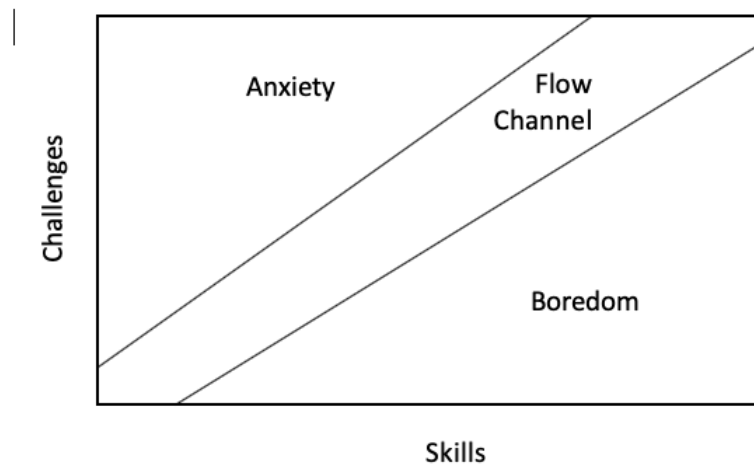
While this growth is closely linked to social-emotional development, the boost in confidence and sense of responsibility has impacted on the students' approach to learning and allowed them to authentically deepen their understanding of Aboriginal cultures and of what it means to be an Australian. This supports Thomsen's (2006) argument that understanding is facilitated through authentic community need problem-solving (Thomsen, 2006), as well as Billig's (2000b) belief that service-learning programs should allow students to experience the content that they are learning about. Furthermore, Billig has suggested that the greater the degree of contact that a service-learning program affords its participants, the more the participants will value the knowledge and skill gained through the experience. While the students may have learned about certain aspects of Aboriginal culture in the regular classroom, immersing them in a new environment, one where they practice some of the ways of life of Aboriginal culture and live an alternative Australian lifestyle, seems to have been the optimal setting to enhance their intellectual understandings.

The quantitative data from the parent surveys suggests that it was difficult for parents to evaluate the intellectual effects that the tour had on their children. It will be remembered that the survey questions asked parent participants to reflect on how their child approaches challenging situations, and new learning. The results showed minimal changes between surveys. It is important to note that the post-tour survey was completed two weeks after the students' returned home. This brief time period might account for the lack of change, as few challenging situations may have arisen at home.

Although the quantitative data did not reveal many changes with regard to intellectual development, one of the most prevalent themes in the focus group discussions was the intellectual development that had occurred. Parents described their children having broken down previously held stereotypes, having a greater understanding of Aboriginal culture and increased problem-solving capabilities. Again, we see the value of the mixed methods methodology. The two data sets correlate in that parents struggled to definitively describe how their child had grown intellectually, yet 37% of codes related to general intellectual growth. While the students had focused more on the effects that independence had had on their perspectives towards challenges, the parents focused on the opportunity that the tour had afforded their child academically. The parents agreed that while the impacts of the tour on intellectual growth might not be clear immediately, they were optimistic that the tour had allowed their children to create connections and extensions between concepts that had been learned in class and now experienced. They felt that intellectual benefits would likely be seen in the long-term after students had properly processed the full extent of their learning. In summary, parents felt that the tour had impacted their child's thinking and understanding of Aboriginal culture, their responsibilities as Australian citizens and how they can serve others.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) introduced the theory of 'flow', or optimal experience. Flow theory suggests that flow is "the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter" (Csikszentmihalyi, p. 4, 1990). The state of flow is reached through flow activities, activities with a primary function of being enjoyable experiences. They are activities that are specifically "designed to make optimal experience easier to achieve. They have rules that require the learning of skills, they set up goals, they provided feedback, they make control possible." (Csikszentmihalyi, p. 72, 1990). Through examining a variety of flow activities, Csikszentmihalyi found that all activities "provided a sense of discovery" (1990, p. 74). Through this discovery, the person experiencing the flow activity was led to a higher level of performance and higher state of consciousness. A growth of 'self' emerged through the flow activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The two most important dimensions of the flow experience are challenges and skills. There is an optimal level of each, and at which point the desirable flow experience is found. This was conceptualised graphically by Csikszentmihalyi, as shown in Figure 5.1 overleaf.

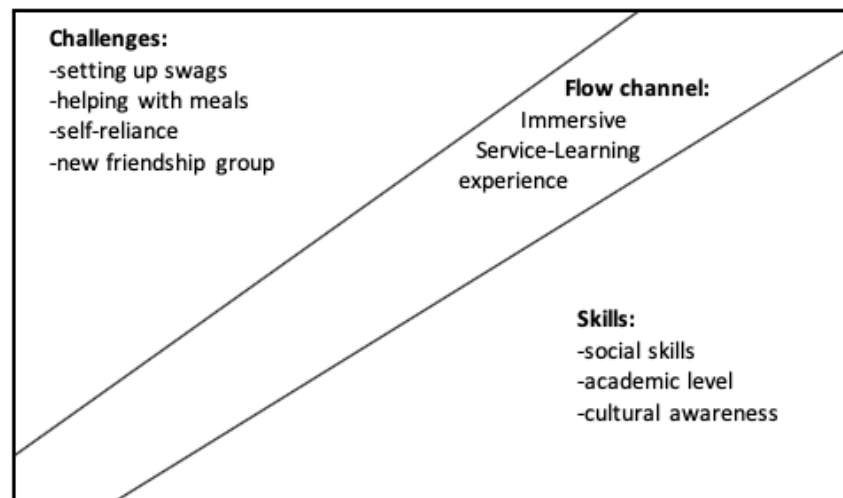
Figure 5.1 Csikszentmihalyi's Flow experience diagram



(Csikszentmihalyi, p. 74, 1990)

As the preceding sections have shown, through this immersive service-learning experience, participants have positively developed social-emotionally and empathically. Reflecting Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Theory, due to the challenges that were presented to the students, and the skills that they were equipped with before embarking on the tour, students were able to enter a state of flow, and engage in an optimal experience. The challenges that the students endured created an optimal level of stress, known as eustress (Nagel, 2014). While stress itself is an "adaptive response to some environmental stimuli triggering the brain into action" (Nagel, p. 184, 2014), eustress "creates powerful empathetic, motivational and creative forces" that push us to achievement (Nagel, p. 184, 2014). The case study experience benefitted its participants socially, emotionally and intellectually. Nagel (2014) suggests that problem-based learning offers opportunities that are personally relevant and novel. Through offering these opportunities to adolescents, their brains can be stimulated to learn and find meaning. Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Theory and Nagel's concept of eustress worked together to create an optimal experience for the ISL students. This is illustrated in Figure 5.2 overleaf.

Figure 5.2 A combined conceptualisation of Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Theory and Nagel's concept of eustress



Based on the works of Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and Nagel (2014)

This state of flow allowed for a deep level of learning that would not have been achievable in the regular, classroom environment. Nagel (2014) states that learning occurs when the brain puts together bits of information to develop a level of understanding. Through the challenges of the immersive service-learning experience, the case study student participants have been able to combine their classroom knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture, with the challenges of remote living to synthesise a deep understanding of Aboriginal culture in Australia, through the support of social connection. As stated by the parents, through this intellectual growth, lasting memories have been created. Through these memories, the seeds of cultural understanding have been planted, the fruits of which will gradually emerge through the shape of future ideas and perspectives of the participants.

Addressing guiding question 4: To what extent does this ISL experience impact students' perspectives on Australian culture?

Through discussing the effects of an immersive service-learning experience on students' social-emotional, empathetic and intellectual development, an understanding of the students' changed perspectives on service began to emerge. As noted in Chapter 3, all students of Sanesteban School are encouraged to take part in service-learning experiences, and more specifically, all Year 6 students are given the opportunity to apply for an immersive service-learning tour, which is the basis for this case study. However, a limited number of students choose to apply for the tour, and an even more limited number of students attained the opportunity to be a member of the tour group. That being said, it is fair to say that a motivating factor for applying for the tour is a predisposition to, or

interest in, service. This is supported by both sets of student survey data in which responses scored highly towards helping others, and feeling responsible for being involved in community issues, showing that participants likely had a predisposition to serving others. Changes within the data related to service are evident in the questions related to students' awareness of needs in the community and students' feeling responsible for helping others. The post-tour data showed more dispersal when students were asked to reflect on their awareness of the needs in the (Aboriginal) community. This might be because upon return from the tour, students were consciously aware of the needs of the Aboriginal community, an awareness that they didn't have before the tour. Consequently, students might believe that if their awareness of the possible needs of this one community was so changed, they would have had a similar lack of awareness regarding the needs of other communities. Another question that evoked more dispersed results was related to students' abilities to put aside their own needs for the greater good. While the majority of students strongly agreed with this statement, some felt more neutral or disagreed. This might be explained by the students reflecting previously on the effects that the challenges and new learning had on them.

It will be remembered that part of the rationale for this project arose from the researcher's desire to develop an understanding of whether the Year 6 primary school-age was an appropriate time for such an immersive service-learning tour. Transcripts from both focus groups validate that it was; over one quarter of the comments in the student focus group, and approximately ten percent of the comments in the parent focus group related to the positive effects on the students' perspectives towards service. To deepen the understanding of the effects on perspectives towards service, the students were asked what service meant to them, how it changed their view on community and whether it had been easy to support each other while on the tour. The student responses showed that through the previously mentioned social-emotional, empathic and intellectual development, they had developed relationships and, in turn, an understanding of the needs of the Aboriginal community, and consequently a desire for greater equality between the Aboriginal community and their own. This desire for equality ignited their sense of civic duty and responsibility and most importantly their desire to bring about a sense of joy and happiness – a desire to make positive changes in the world around them.

Continuing the discussion of optimal experience and flow theory, through the challenges presented to the primary school-age participants, they developed resilience, maturity and social awareness; as one student articulated, *"I felt that I'd been... I've increased in my responsibility and maturity. I think I've developed more life skills. And I've become a more responsible person."* The development of such characteristics is transformative and assists in the development of a strong

sense of self. Csikszentmihalyi states that “the self becomes more differentiated as a result of flow because overcoming a challenge inevitably leaves a person feeling more capable, more skilled” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 41). These characteristics were developed through immersion into a new environment, and community. While the student participants set out with a goal of helping others, they in turn have helped themselves. Drawing on Csikszentmihalyi (1990) it would appear that through coupling the goals of the service-learning tour, the new environment and new community, the participants’ focus had shifted from themselves to the outward environment. Through this shift, previously held frustrations or focus on the self is turned to problem-solving in the new environment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

The parent survey data echoed the results of the student data; they believed that the tour had encouraged their child to put aside their own needs in favour of the greater good, something that they had come to feel personally responsible for. These data showed that parents felt that, through developing their child’s personal development in maturity and responsibility, their children had become more aware of the needs of the community.

As previously mentioned, the service component of the tour was relational in nature. This was another aspect of the tour that had been previously met with pessimism from the Sanesteban School community; school community members often questioned the value of this goal of the tour. This outlook on the tour might have been understood by the lack of any actual physical representation of the end-goal of the tour. Parents and stakeholders in the community seemed to find it easier to support other programs where student participants were creating tangible products such as buildings or renovations, but the emotional nature of the goal of this tour was more difficult to measure.

Again, this was another aspect of the rationale for this case study. From the parent focus group, it was clear that, post-tour, parents definitely saw the merit in the relational service goal of the tour. While there was no physical evidence that the goals of the tour had been met, parents felt that the mark of the tour was left on the hearts and minds of their children. As has been previously examined, through striving to achieve this goal, social-connectiveness has occurred, benefitting both the service providers and likely the service recipients. Several parents felt that the students had a clear conceptualisation that the tour had been more of a job than simply a holiday. Through completing this job in a remote Australian community, students had also gained an awareness and appreciation for the country that they live in as well as the value of travel.

Addressing guiding question 5: To what extent does being outside of the students' natural environment affect the overall impact of ISL?

As previously mentioned, the main goal of this service-learning tour was to develop relationships between metropolitan, relatively privileged, primary-school aged students and remote Aboriginal community students. In part, this goal was accomplished through the Sanesteban students travelling to and through the East Kimberley region where the Aboriginal students lived. Their travel entailed a two-and-a-half-hour flight, followed by a four-hour drive, to reach the Aboriginal school. This experience in itself gave the participants a sense of the vastness of the Australian Outback, and the remoteness of the Aboriginal school. Outside of their stay at the school, students visited iconic Australian sites such as Tunnel Creek, Windjana Gorge and Geiki Gorge. While touring through such sites, students gained an understanding of the varied landscapes in the region and made comparisons to their previous understanding of Australian landscapes as predominantly urban ones.

The quantitative data results from both students and parents showed that the students unanimously agreed that through the tour they had enjoyed travelling to new places, experiencing challenging experiences, and learning about the diversity of their country. There were some differences in responses with regard to perspectives on activities of heritage culture. This may have been due to ambiguity around the terminology.

In the focus group interviews, both the students and the parents reported that spending more time in the natural environment was very stimulating and something that students wished that they could do more of in their regular home environment. Through spending this time in nature, students gained an appreciation for the simpler things such as the colours of the earth, the sounds of nature and the connection that the Aboriginal people had to the land. They came to appreciate their country; a country they shared with the remote Aboriginal students.

With the understanding provided by discussing the five guiding research questions, we can now turn our attention to understanding the overarching research question: how does immersive service-learning impact primary school-aged students?

Addressing the overarching research question, how does immersive service-learning impact primary school-aged students?

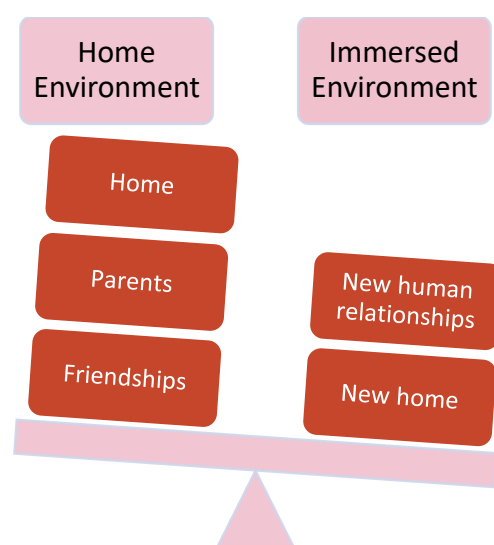
While the location of the tour definitely affected students' understandings and appreciation of the landscape of Australia and its culture, the greatest effect seems to have been made through the literal change of environment in which the tour participants were living and interacting. It seems

that, through removing the students from their home environment, including the physical space and amenities as well as human support network, students seemed to have developed in various ways: social-emotional development; empathetic development; intellectual development; perspectives on service; and perspectives on Australia as a nation. The vulnerability created by forcing students to be independent and reliant on others outside of their usual network appears to have been the key to completing the goals of the tour. The immersion into a new world completes the loop of service-learning. Through this final loop, the greatest effect of this immersive service-learning tour emerged: acceptance.

Vulnerability: The conduit for change

It is at this point in the discussion that the focus will shift from the researcher's perspectives on the impacts of the tour to the student participants' perspectives of the impacts. As earlier mentioned, the greatest impact of the tour seems to have been precipitated through the literal change of environment. Through removing the students from their parents, their habitual friendship groups, and the comforts of home, the student's support network has been disrupted. This disruption is relational in nature as there has been no physical harm done to the students; they are instead being required to create a new support network. In a way, the balance of support has become imbalanced, as represented in Figure 5.3.

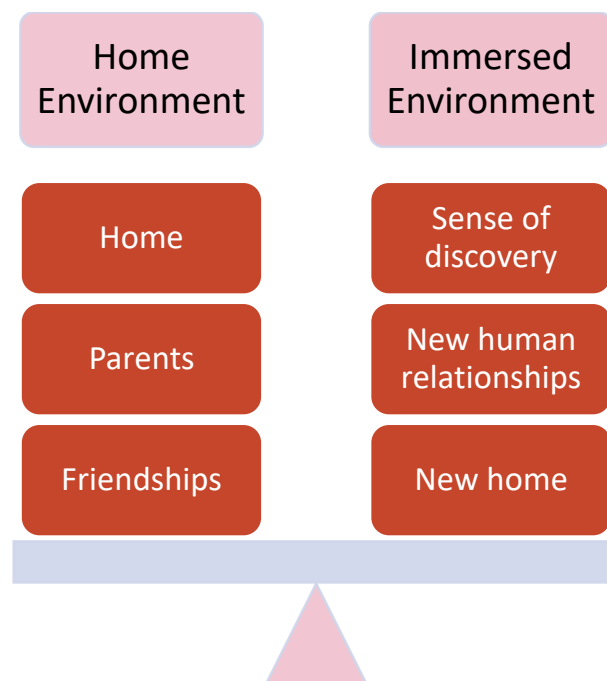
Figure 5.3 *A conceptualisation of the effects of disrupting the usual support network of participants*



The students have had to find a new balance by making sense of their new environment and constructing the meaning of it. This new building of meaning began before the students went on the tour, through training sessions. These training sessions were led by the teachers that accompanied the students on the tour, and consisted of practising some of the skills that they would require while

away, such as, setting up a swag, cooking meals, and relationship skills (related to meeting new people such as peers from the other campus, as well as the Aboriginal community). While the students likely had some pre-existing proficiency in these areas, enhancing these skills through the lens of being in a new environment would have given them a different meaning. The construction of meaning continued through the students then employing these skills autonomously from their parents, in the new environment of the remote Kimberley region. Again, building this skill-set correlates to Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Theory, which suggests that optimal experience is achieved through a balance of skills and challenge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Csikszentmihalyi says that another factor shared by optimal experiences, is "a sense of discovery, a creative feeling of transporting the person into a new reality" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 74). This sense of discovery leads the person to a higher state of consciousness which leads to a growth of self (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). This sense of discovery seems to be the building block through which the students regained balance (see Figure 5.4) in their new environment; a balance obtained through an optimal experience.

Figure 5.4 *A conceptualisation of effect of discovery on regaining a sense of balance*



Through the focus groups the researcher was able to gain a deeper understanding of the students' discovery experience. The students and parents shared stories of favourite memories, challenges, and growth. A commonality amongst these stories was the impact of the environment through which the experiences occurred. This aspect of the tour sets it apart from other service-learning experiences and activities. While the participants are still fulfilling a goal deemed to be

beneficial to the recipient community, the participants were required to engage in this experience through a completely new world, one which would present them with both challenges and benefits.

Immersive environment: the home of change

In his 1995 book, *What do I do on Monday?* John Holt describes four worlds that we could think of ourselves as living in. These are: i) World One: the world inside our own skin; ii) World Two: the world we have been in and know. The mind's eye mental model, made of places, people, experiences, events, what we believe and what we expect. Others only know this world as much as we can express it; iii) World Three: the world we know of, but have not experienced; and iv) World Four: the world that is made up of all those things that we have not even heard of or imagined (Holt, 1995). Holt further postulates that learning is growth of ourselves into the world around us (Holt, 1995). Through new experiences, we are expanding our World Two, because through our experiences we expand the world that we have been in and know. Our World Two is developed into our World Three, as we now know more of the world. This is a key aspect of this case study tour. Through immersion into a new environment, students are literally being placed into a new world; a world that they may have previously known a little about but not actually experienced. As we have seen, this immersion into a new culture and environment has been instrumental in developing many of the effects at the centre of this case study. However, it is believed that another key factor of this immersion is that the students were immersed in a new environment on their own, without their parents. This immersion into a new world sets this service-learning experience, and knowledge gained from it, apart from knowledge that could have been gained through the classroom. While some might argue that the students could have learned about the Aboriginal culture in the classroom, by immersing them in the Aboriginal community culture, their learning was much deeper and extensive.

To understand the full impact that the tour has had on its participants one must look at it through this lens of immersion. As previously alluded to, through deliberately removing the students from their familiar home environments (i.e. habitus) and placing them in a new environment (i.e. new habitus with a new set of values and norms), the students' Worlds have changed, and consequently, their view of themselves in the world has also changed. The students have operated autonomously away from their parents and not only survived, but thrived. This growth proved to be very rewarding for the students and changed their thinking. Through making meaning of their new environment, they have had to substitute the familiar rewards of their world with the reward of serving others. The students have combined their institutional understandings of Aboriginal culture (i.e. that acquired in the classroom) with their experiential understanding of Aboriginal culture,

manifesting in a deeply authentic knowledge base. For instance, before the tour, the students would likely have recognised that Aboriginal art often includes patterns of dots in a variety of colours through Art class. However, upon their return from the tour, the students have a deeper understanding of Aboriginal art as an expression of dots of colours of the earth representative of the region and community of the artist. Just as the experience of creating art with the Aboriginal community would have enriched the experience of the tour, the immersion into a new environment has coloured the perspectives of its participants.

Furthermore, because it is widely understood that parents are one of the key factors in child development (Nagel, 2014), understanding the attitudes and values of the home environment was key to understanding the outcomes of this research. This was the main reason for involving the parents in the case study research. Parents help form what is known as ‘the habitus of the child’ (Webb, Schirato, Danaher, 2002). Habitus is a concept introduced by Bourdieu in 1977, to mean the values and dispositions gained from our cultural history. These values and dispositions “allow us to respond to cultural roles and contexts” (Webb, Schirato, Danaher, 2002, p. 37). Bourdieu associates a number of factors with habitus: knowledge (the way we understand the world); ways of behaving; being in-the-moment; and unconscious processes (Webb, Schirato, Danaher, 2002). Therefore, by removing the children temporarily from their parents in the immersive, service-learning experience, the students are being placed into a new habitus, where they can develop their own understandings of their expanding World Two. This new habitus, created through authentic, immersive experiences, unlocked understandings of Aboriginal culture, remote living, personal development and interpersonal skills for its primary school-aged participants.

Through this newly formed ‘World Two’ (Holt, 1995), the students were affected social-emotionally, empathetically, and intellectually, as well as having their perspectives on service and Australia as a nation impacted. However, these were not the only impacts of the tour. In fact, it could be argued that they were the lesser impacts because they were the researcher’s assumed impacts based on the literature, not the experience itself. The impacts of the experience itself arose from the focus group comments of the parents and students. These impacts are of greater importance because they present first-hand, primary-source accounts of the impacts of a service-learning experience on its participants. The ability to gain first-hand information was afforded to the researcher through the mixed methods data collection of this case study. Without the second data collection layer of the focus groups, the impacts of the tour on the participants would lack depth and rigour. The four main themes that emerged from a second coding of the transcripts, and reflecting the voices of the participants, are personal growth, acquisition of interpersonal skills, an

understanding of Aboriginal culture, and finally an understanding of remote living. Each of these themes are interconnected through the immersive nature of the experience.

The impact of vulnerability and immersion on personal development

The opportunity for personal development was a strong theme from the outset of this project. In the initial, pre-tour survey short-answer questions, both the student and parent participants mentioned it as a desired outcome for participating in the tour. The student participants were aware of the possibility for personal growth, and in part were motivated to take part in the tour because of this possibility. It is again important to note that while the tour was open to all Year 6 students at Sanesteban School, only a small percentage applied, and an even smaller percentage of applications were actualised. In the focus group, the parents of the participant students agreed that applying for the tour was motivated by their child. By taking both of these factors into consideration it can be said that the participating primary-school aged students already had a sense of self, who they are as a person, and a desire to further develop this self. Five main themes arose from the concept of personal development: increased confidence, appreciation, responsibility, empathy, and commitment.

The theme of developing self-confidence was further explored in the focus groups. Students shared that they felt that because of the opportunity to face challenges, problem solve and resolve challenges on their own, that they had a deeper sense of responsibility. These challenges were a product of the immersive nature of the experience. Undoubtedly, the students had a certain degree of apprehension when faced with leaving their parents at the airport; however, they were placed directly into in a problem-solving situation, an extended delay at the airport, and resolved the disappointment with calm success. As earlier discussed, the situations that the tour presented were at an appropriate level of challenge; when coupled with the skill sets of the children, they were able to independently problem-solve and feel positively enhanced. The problem-solving experiences placed the students in a state of optimal flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Through these flow experiences, the students' self-concept grew.

It is important to differentiate between self-concept and self-esteem. While the two terms are often used interchangeably, they are different: self-concept refers to a person's understanding of themselves and their beliefs, while self-esteem refers to our level of satisfaction and pride that we have in ourselves (Nagel, 2014). With these two definitions in mind, it seems that the participants have grown in both self-esteem and self-confidence. Through positively resolving problems on the tour, they feel proud of themselves (developing self-esteem), and through learning about their

country, the Aboriginal culture, and themselves in a new environment, their self-concept broadens. This growth would not have developed as quickly if the students' habitus and environment had not been changed.

Again, through growing their knowledge of their World Two (the world they had been in and know) their understanding of their World Three (the world they knew of but had not experienced) (Holt, 1995) was been broadened and they gained a sense of the impact they could have on a greater scale. For instance, for a child whose parent previously made their meals, reminded them about bedtime routine, and cleaned up after them, through the tour, comes the realisation that they have the capacity to do all of these things independently. While on the tour, these responsibilities were assumed; they were not presented with a daily list or in a nagging nature; the students were simply expected to fulfil them. The impact of these responsibilities was multi-faceted and included taking responsibility for helping out at home more often, as well as taking responsibility to serve and help others in the greater community. The parents stated that they felt that their child seemed more attentive to things at home and was able to see where help was needed. A pivotal moment for the parents was when the students arrived home from the tour. The parents noted that their children arrived home with an air of maturity about them: *"there was just this energy of having grown so much"*. This moment and realisation for the parents further signified that their child had grown in responsibility, and that they could do many more things on their own than their parent had previously recognised. This understanding connects back to the parents' reflective functioning, or their ability to understand their child's mental state (Slade, 2005).

The levels of increased appreciation directly related to the student's greater self-esteem achieved through increased responsibility. While the students may have previously taken their parents and home-life for granted, post-tour these things had greater value to them. In fact, a theme to emerge from the student focus groups was that even though the children from the Aboriginal community seemed to have less technology, they were very happy. Through this realisation, the Sanesteban students held greater appreciation for what they did have at home, as well as the natural world around them. Through building these relationships with the Aboriginal students who had fewer physical possessions, and through not being allowed to take many of the comforts of home with them on tour, the Sanesteban students gained empathy and understanding. The empathic growth helped them to understand the Aboriginal culture better, and to accept some of the differences between it and their own cultural values.

All of the aforementioned themes, confidence, appreciation, responsibility, and empathy culminated in students have a growing sense of commitment. Through the optimal flow experiences,

students have developed resilience which required a commitment to themselves. This commitment to self has allowed them to see more clearly beyond themselves and in turn to develop a greater commitment to their peers, their parents and the larger community. Through having been removed from their World Two and changing their habitus (cultural values and dispositions) (Bourdieu, 1990) they have successfully adapted to a new reality, a new reality to which they have developed a life-long commitment. This commitment has helped them to understand themselves in their world and in relationship with other.

The impact of vulnerability and immersion on interpersonal skills

Although interpersonal growth was the second most prevalent theme from the qualitative data sets, it was an area upon which the tour had the greatest impact. It will be remembered that the service-learning goal of the tour was relational in nature. Due to the remote location of the Aboriginal school community, the primary school-aged participants were setting out to form relationships with the students of the community. This goal in itself pushed some of the participants to step out of their comfort zone, and presented an opportunity for self-improvement, but resulted in an even greater impact.

Through the focus group discussions, some of the students shared that, previous to the tour, they had been quite shy and reluctant to interact with others. Other students shared that while they weren't shy, they tended to interact primarily with their immediate peer group. Due to the nature of the tour, both of these approaches to social situations were changed; the students knew that they had signed up to participate in an experience that would require them to interact with others outside of their regular peer group. However, the interpersonal skills that developed through the tour experience did not just push students to interact with the Aboriginal community, but it also required them to rely on the tour group which consisted of individuals that came from similar demographic populations, and with whom they did not have previous relationships. This is the vulnerability that has been previously discussed. It is widely accepted that as children move into the adolescent years, they tend to rely more on their peers than their parents, they spend more time with their peers, and they become more self-conscious (Nagel, 2014). Through this immersive service-learning tour, the students do not have their known peer group with them and need to rely on others that they don't know as well; essentially, they are risking being judged by others. Thankfully, judgement did not emerge from this study but, instead, acceptance did.

In the student focus group, the initial questions required students to share their favourite memory from the tour. Many shared that their favourite memory was how welcoming, accepting

and caring the Aboriginal community was. This immediate acceptance and openness had a lasting effect on the Sanesteban students. It seems that through *being accepted* by the Aboriginal community, they were able to *give acceptance* more readily to others. This acceptance was another key aspect of the tour. Considering that the student participants are at the cusp of adolescence, a stage of life in which we care deeply about what those around us think of us, this acceptance was deeply connected to their development of self-concept and self-esteem. As students grew in their understanding of the Aboriginal community, they grew to understand that helping others (service) was important to them as individuals, and also allowed them to empathise with others. The parent participants noted that while it was difficult to pinpoint exactly how the tour had affected the interpersonal skills of the students, it was clear that it had changed their attitudes towards service; their children had moved from a passive sense of service to a more urgent call to action.

Interesting to note is that the students suggested that they had developed empathy while on the tour. Through reading the transcripts of the focus groups, it can be noted that the focus group leader did not introduce the term empathy, but in fact the students raised it spontaneously, of their own accord. Discussion of empathy consisted mainly of comments regarding how they were now more “empathetic”; that they understood or were aware of the feelings of others, as this student stated, *“I’ve become more aware of issues within my community. I’ve become more aware of other people. I feel that I’ve become more empathetic than I was before the tour.”*

This relates to the students’ development of self-concept, in that self-concept is closely tied to the relationships one has with others (Nagel & Scholes, 2016). As the students’ relationships with the Aboriginal community members was one of acceptedness, they reciprocated and developed a mindset of acceptance towards others. As the students journeyed through the remote regions of the Kimberley, their knowledge of the country and awareness of issues related to remote-living grew out of authentic experience. This intellectual growth allowed the students not only to *know* of the issues, but to *feel* them. This emotional response created a deeper learning and life-changing perception. This understanding created the greatest impact, releasing students from previously held negative stereotypes about Aboriginal culture.

Development of these interpersonal skills aligns with learning theory regarding pro-social behaviour (Eisenberg, Shell, Pasternack, Lennon & Et, 1986), which states that later primary school-aged students are developmentally in the self-reflective, empathetic orientation. This pro-social behaviour and developmental level contributed to the students finding that they had deepened their understanding of Aboriginal culture.

The impact of vulnerability and immersion on understanding another culture

Along with personal development, a better understanding of Aboriginal culture was another desired outcome of the tour for its participants. This desire was evident through the students' responses to the short-answer survey questions, but it was not as prevalent in the focus group discussions. The parents recognised that their children's recognition of other cultures had grown, but did not describe an increased understanding of explicit aspects of Aboriginal culture. The overwhelming comment from the student participant group was how caring and welcoming the Aboriginal community had been. The students recognised that in the Aboriginal community 'family' extended much beyond their standard parent and sibling structure, but instead the entire community functioned as a family. The students felt that upon their arrival to the community, this communal family structure extend to embrace them as well. During the parent focus group, one participant expressed their child's experience as follows

You know how there was a community there and everyone knows everyone? So he was really happy and he just liked that concept where the community knows each other so well and helps each other and be there for each other. And he was like, why can't we be like that? We hardly, like how we are. Yes, maybe one day. I didn't have an answer for that because we are so busy with day to day life. That feeling, the humanity that he caught from there, that impressed me.

The students expressed an understanding that, although the Aboriginal community's way of life was much different from theirs, it still felt very safe. Prior to the tour experience, some students had expressed their understanding of Aboriginal culture in a negative light. It seemed that although the students had been taught in the classroom about some of the traditional Aboriginal ways, it was their personal experiences of Aboriginal people in the city, and under the influence of alcohol, that had formed their perspectives. Post-tour, after having been immersed in an Aboriginal community, the student's perspectives had vastly changed, and they felt empathy and appreciation for the lives of its members. The student participants felt a deep and close connection to the Aboriginal community and hoped to explore it further. Some of the parents felt that while the students did not show explicit growth in their understanding of Aboriginal culture, that knowledge would emerge in later years, that the memories would help them to connect to some of their studies on a deeper level.

In light of this case study being based in Australia and specifically addressing service-learning in the Australian education system, it is important to consider the effects that this tour might have had on Reconciliation, and the student's understanding of its importance. The Melbourne Declaration states that partnerships between schools and Indigenous communities are a main way

of achieving effective schooling for Indigenous students (MCEETYA, 2008). While in the Aboriginal community, the students of Sanesteban School gathered much of their knowledge of culture through conversations and experiences with their new Aboriginal friends. Through sharing this knowledge, the Aboriginal students themselves might also experience a deeper understanding of themselves and their knowledge base, therefore enriching their own education. This is the value of a partnership such as the case study service-learning tour. It is reciprocal in nature. While the Sanesteban students experience a Welcome to Country ceremony firsthand, the Aboriginal students gain an understanding of the importance of such a ceremony in their culture and personal identity. As the Sanesteban students walk through the community with their Aboriginal peers, or visit Sacred Sites together, they informally share knowledge and understanding of their Country and the approaches to it that they share or differ on. As the Sanesteban students have grown in their understanding of Aboriginal cultures, they have experienced firsthand the Aboriginal system of Kinship ("Our shared history," n.d.). The Shareourpride website (<http://shareourpride.reconciliation.org.au>) suggests that some of the successful ways of moving towards Reconciliation include building relationships with Aboriginal communities, showing respect for Aboriginal communities (i.e. through taking part in a Welcome to Country ceremony), and having cultural awareness. These experiences are all a part of the case study immersive service-learning tour. Dr Tom Calma, co-chair of Reconciliation Australia recognises that engaging Australian youth in Reconciliation is key to the future of the Reconciliation journey. He states that the Australian youth are the future leaders and therefore, the custodians of the Aboriginal culture, stories and history (<http://shareourpride.reconciliation.org.au/sections/our-shared-history/>).

The impacts of vulnerability and immersion on understanding a new home environment

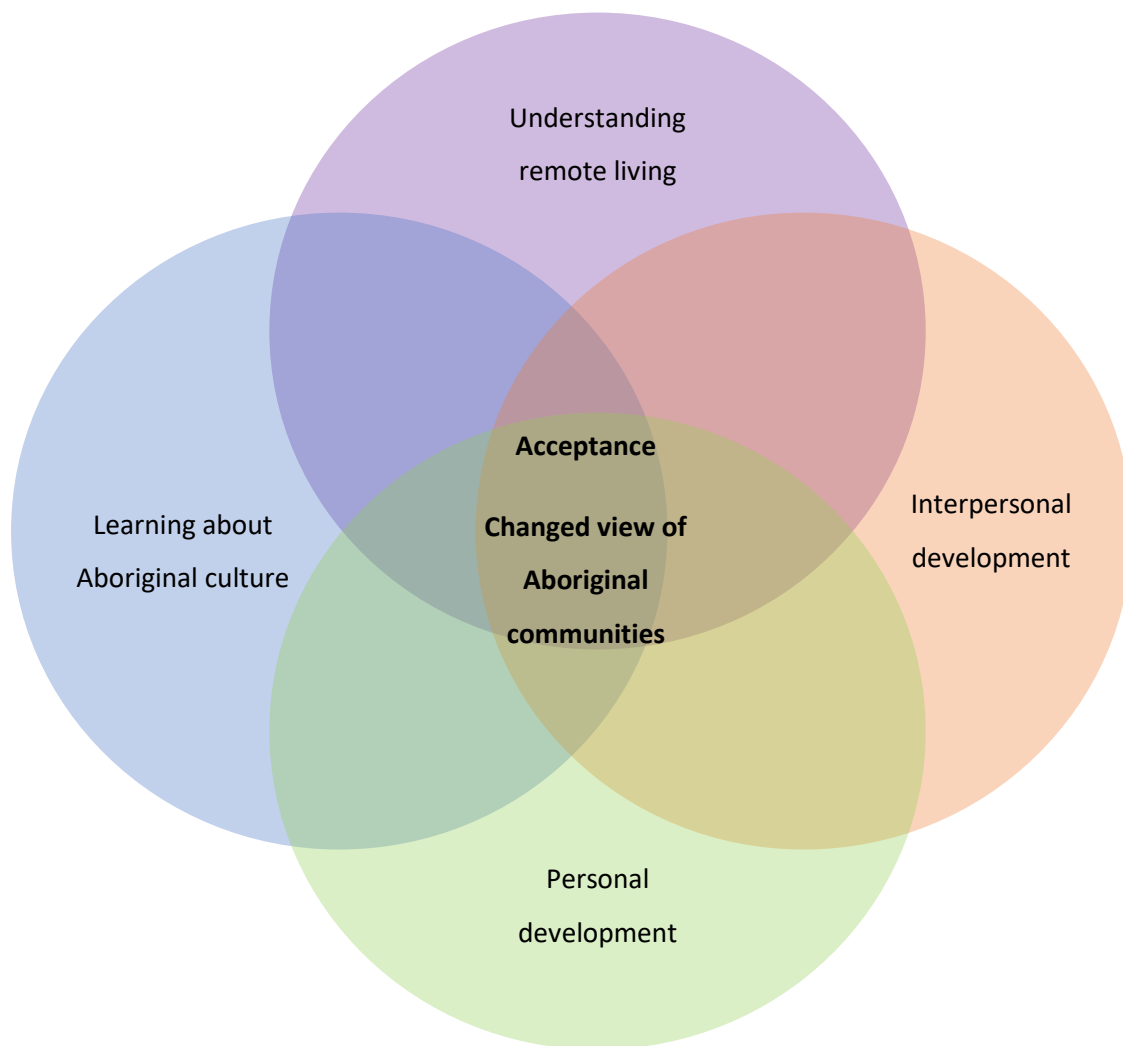
Through living in the Aboriginal community, the students of Sanesteban School came to recognise that although individuals lived remotely, without many of the amenities of urban life, this simple life could be more gratifying. It seems that through this change of habitus and community norms and values, the students were able to see beyond their usual habits of life and value the simple things, such as the rich colour of the soil, the vast sky full of stars, and the fresh outdoor air. The students felt a rich sense of adventure in this new environment, an adventure that challenged them to develop resilience and self-confidence. This remote living was instrumental in creating an optimal flow experience that would result in life-changing memories. In fact, while recognising that life in the remote Kimberley region had been much simpler, the students agreed that returning home had been difficult and a change that they had found boring. This correlates to the Csikszentmihalyi's Flow theory, as the level of challenge was diminished upon their return to their regular environment and routines.

[C]ourage, resilience, perseverance, mature defence, or transformational coping- the dissipative structures of the mind- are so essential. Achieving this unity with one's surroundings is not only an important component of enjoyable flow experiences but is also a central mechanism by which adversity is conquered... [T]he person whose attention is immersed in the environment becomes part of it... This, in turn, makes it possible for her to understand the properties of the system, so that she can find a better way to adapt to a problematic situation. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 202 & 205)

Beyond the Aboriginal community, the flow experience continued. It will be remembered that the tour group did not spend the entire week away in the Aboriginal community but, instead, spent three days exploring the Kimberley Region. Through this exploration, the students further developed their self-concept as Australians. It is interesting to note that while demographic information was not collected intentionally, many of the parent participants expressed that their families had immigrated to Australia and that part of their motivation for their child being involved in the tour was to deepen the child's understanding of what it meant to be Australian. Furthermore, while the goal of the tour was to develop relationships with the Aboriginal community, an outcome was the deepening of a relationship with Country, as the Aboriginal community saw it and as remote Australia presented itself. Through recognising the differences in landscape and lifestyle in the remote Kimberley region, again, the students' understandings of their Worlds were enhanced and extended.

In summary, as many of the researcher's five established themes were interconnected, so were the themes that emerged from the participants. Through this interconnectedness, deeper understanding of self, others, culture and country was established and synthesised as acceptance (see Figure 5.5). This acceptance mirrors the suggested requirements for Reconciliation.

Figure 5.5 A conceptualisation of the interconnected learning experiences that occurred through the immersive service-learning tour which resulted in acceptance



Emerging theory of the effects of immersive service-learning on primary school-aged students

Through exploring the researcher's own presumed impacts of a service-learning tour, as well as the impacts heard through the voices of the participants, a new theory on the impacts of an immersive service-learning experience is emerging. In accordance with O'Donoghue's views in, *Planning Your Qualitative Research Thesis and Project* (2018), as the theory is being presented after the research in this case study, and as the goal of the research was partly to develop a substantive theory, this theory is an etic substantive theory, as it has emerged from the researcher's perspective as an outsider of the tour. As a means of simplifying the outcomes of the research, the researcher has developed a conceptual model (Figure 5.6) of the impacts of an immersive service-learning

experience on primary school-aged students. Each of the components of the model will be explained and synthesised in a final interconnected, substantive theory.

Figure 5.6 *The emerging conceptual model of the impact of an immersive service-learning experience on its participants*



There are four main concepts involved in this emerging theory: immersion, acceptance, impacts, and the service-learning experience. The shape and colour of each concept has been chosen with purpose. At the centre of the theory is the service-learning experience itself. In this case study, the service-learning experience involved building relationships between urban Year 6 school students and remote Aboriginal school students. The experience involved spending time in the school community as well as exploring the greater Australian outback. Both of these aspects align with previous research by Billig and Waterman (2003), who stated that service-learning offers students an opportunity to take ownership of their education while connecting them with the greater society in which they live. The uniqueness of this service-learning experience was its immersive nature. The great impact that this immersion had on the student participants is

substantiated by Billig's (2000b) suggestion that the greater the degree of contact students have with the recipient community, the greater the participants will perceive the value of the experience.

As previously stated, the immersive feature of this case study service-learning experience was unique, as no other similar service-learning experiences for primary school-aged students were found. Therefore, it is impossible to compare the extent to which this immersion impacted on the students. However, through the mixed methods approach, it can be confirmed that it was a key feature of the experience, as it was mentioned as having an impact through both the survey short answer questions, and the focus group discussions. The immersion seemed to permeate all impacts of the tour, as it created a feeling of vulnerability amongst the tour participants, and it was through this vulnerability and search for re-balance that the participants came to accept and understand the Aboriginal community in which they were immersed. This is why the immersion is set at the backdrop to the other concepts in the model; it was the backdrop on which the other concepts played out.

Through this immersion, the perspectives of the primary school-age participants were affected in nine different ways: understanding remote living, intellectual development, interpersonal development, social-emotional development, personal development, empathetic development, perspectives on Australian culture, learning about Aboriginal culture, and perspectives on service. These impacts are represented in a series of equally sized, touching circles, as they are each of equal importance. While the researcher set out with five specific concepts to better understand, the survey data through which they were initially explored helped to delineate the focus group discussion questions through which the four other impacts arose from the voices of the participants. It is key that the circles are touching, as this represents the interaction and interdependence that they had on each other. They are presented in a circular formation as a means of again representing the equality of them, but also the flow and continuous relationship between them.

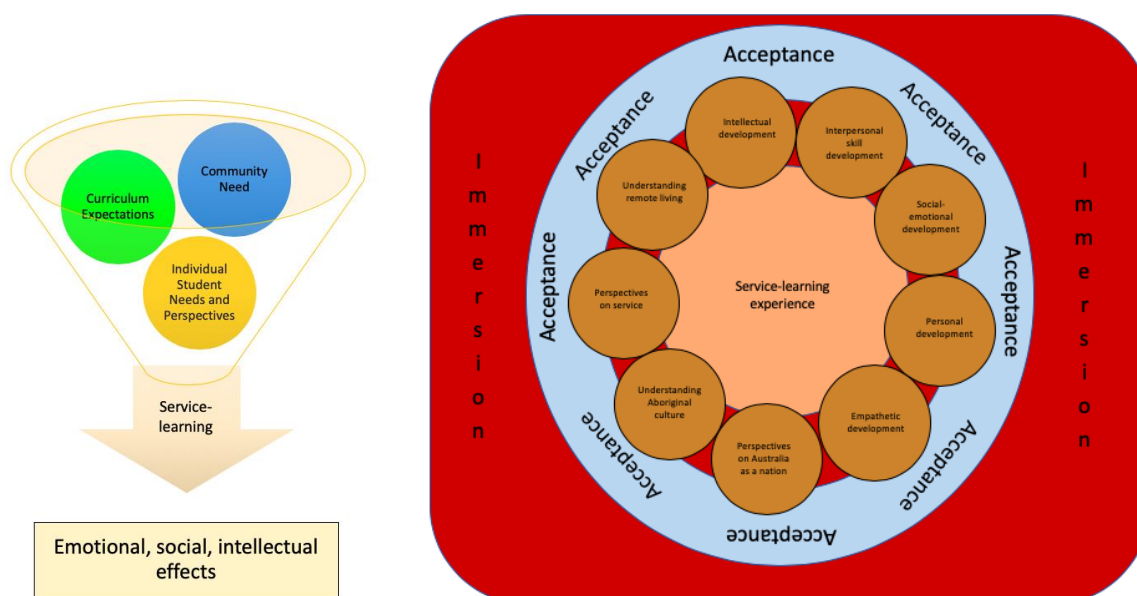
This connected circle of impacts is supported by a ring of acceptance. This acceptance is the channel through which the impacts occurred and the relationships between them formed. There is no designated start and finish to these interdependent relationships as the acceptance was a reciprocated concept generated through the growth, learning and discovery that occurred on the service-learning tour. As previously stated, this acceptance had depth to it; while the urban students of Sanesteban School felt accepted by the remote Aboriginal community school members, they had many stereotypical barriers broken down allowing for the birth of positive, caring relationships in which each other was accepted. The placement of this ring on the outside of the impacts is

significant as it represents the support that acceptance had in producing the impacts. Acceptance emanates from the impacts; it is the essence of the experience.

Finally, the colours in the diagram are also quite significant; the red and light orange represent the colour of the earth in the Kimberley Region, which is often used to create ochre paint for traditional paintings. The blue ring of acceptance is meant to represent the blue skies of Australia which all students share and embrace as a significant feature of the Australian environment.

This interconnected substantive conceptual framework is much more complex than the originally presented conceptual framework (Figure 5.7). It is a complex work of art.

Figure 5.7 *A comparison of the emerging understanding of the effects of an immersive service-learning experience on primary school-age students*



Conclusion

At the close of this chapter, a new, deep understanding of the effects of an immersive service-learning tour on its primary school-age participants has emerged. This understanding hinged on the research method through which it was gathered; mixed methodology. Through exploring and responding to the research questions, the goals of the researcher have been met. Through delving deeper into these questions and informing our understanding with the voices of the participants, a clearer picture of these effects has been garnered. Together, the complete story of the case study immersive service-learning experience has been told. The tools have been used to create an artwork

which paints a beautiful picture of interconnection and acceptance. In closing, final chapter of this dissertation will outline the justification, implications, and limitations of the study, as well as present possibilities for future research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to conclude the study by justifying the outcomes and methodology used, consider the implications of the findings, reflect on any limitations of the study and propose future directions for research on the topic. It will be remembered that the aim of the study was to establish the effects of an immersive service-learning experience on primary school-age students. The first section of this chapter aims to justify the study in terms of its research rigor and trustworthiness. In doing so it considered the significance of the study and its contribution to the field of research; this is important as it will be remembered that there was very little research literature on the topic of primary-school service learning and precious little on immersive service-learning which was a principal feature of this study. Secondly, the implications for the findings of the study are considered in terms of the context of immersive service-learning in primary school in Australia and specifically, Western Australia. Considering the dearth of research into service-learning in Australian primary schools, there may be important implications for the future of service-learning as a pedagogical practice, eventuating in greater research opportunities being available. Thirdly, the limitations of the study are considered, and finally, and in the light of the limitations, future directions for research are suggested.

Justifying the Study

It will be remembered that this case study was originally presented as a story. This choice was made to facilitate the reader's experience into being immersive in nature; to help the reader to be a part of the research. Through this storytelling, an adventure unfolded and an image emerged. The adventure was an immersive service-learning experience in which twelve primary school-age students set out to create relationships with their peers at a remote Aboriginal school. As stated in Chapter 2, the Literature Review, service-learning pedagogy is a model of education where community service is the fulcrum (Billig & Waterman, 2003) supporting experiential learning as a vehicle for gaining a deeper understanding of the world (Thomsen, 2006). The experience at the core of this study was immersive in nature because it involved the primary school-age participants being removed from their home environment to be immersed in a new, remote Aboriginal community, where they would learn about themselves, Australian culture, and Aboriginal culture, as well as growing to be more informed citizens.

The motivation for this story grew out of the researcher's personal interest in service-learning and its importance pedagogically, as well as a desire to present empirical data regarding the effects of such experiences to encourage more educators to value service-learning. This was an

important story to tell, as many (i.e. parents, participants, educators, and governments) speak of the value and positive effects of service-learning, but few have collected and analysed the perspectives of the primary source of the story; the student participants themselves. Furthermore, when “many speak of the value”, that is rarely through research-based findings, as the scarcity of research studies – particularly in Australia – showed. Through the collection of empirical data, this case study research forms the beginnings of evidence to justify the value of service-learning as a pedagogical practice.

In an age where teaching and pedagogical practices are being scrutinised more and more, justification of such practices is key. The literature review showed that past research had been conducted with secondary and tertiary students, as well as pre-service teachers, but very little research had been focused on the effects of service-learning experiences on primary-school aged students. As this group of students is very different to their secondary and tertiary counterparts, it was important that such research be conducted. Further, as this group of students will be among the leaders of tomorrow, it is imperative to nurture in them, a sense of global citizenship. Of the research that was found on the topic, none was on the effects of an immersive service-learning experience, and very little was in the Australian context. In summary, the opportunity to collect research on a group of Australian, primary school-age students taking part in an immersive service-learning experience was unique and invaluable. The opportunity for such research was not to be missed.

This story unfolded through gathering, analysing and discussing mixed-methods data. This data was collected through pre- and post- immersive service-learning tour surveys, with both the student participants and their parents; as well as post-tour focus group interviews of both the students and their parents. The quantitative dimension of the study was based on five themes informed by the literature, which was based more on US contexts than Australian. The qualitative dimension was shaped by themes that emerged in the analysis of the data and called for further exploration following the survey responses. The mixed methodology was key to presenting a complete picture of the story; the quantitative survey data explored the researcher’s predicted themes, whilst the qualitative focus group interviews permitted a deeper exploration of these themes through the voices of the participants, eventuating in a comprehensive understanding of emergent themes. Without these two types and sets of data, the complete picture could not and would not be understood.

As the complete picture of the experience became clarified, a final, overarching theme emerged from the study. This theme justifies both service-learning as a pedagogical approach, and

at the primary school level. This theme was that of acceptance. While this theme was not specifically spoken of by the participants, it emanated from the environment at the focus groups and through the types of comments made. Furthermore, when considering the goals of education as whole and the practice of nurturing leaders, acceptance is a most desirable quality.

The chapter now turns to the implications for this new and complete picture of the implications of an immersive service-learning experience on its primary school-aged participants,

Implications for Future Research

The grassroots impetus for this study was to present some empirical data on the positive implications of service-learning, to encourage other schools, teachers, parents and students to participate and provide such experiences. The first part of that goal has been met; the second will be considered in terms of the implications that schools may draw on although the message now needs to be disseminated.

It will be remembered that at the outset of this case study, it was believed that immersive service-learning consisted of integrating the needs of the recipient community, the service-providing participants, and the curriculum, through a service-learning experience to develop emotional, social and intellectual effects (see Chapter 2, Figure 2.1). Through the case study research, a much broader and deeper understanding of service-learning has emerged: it is now understood that the effects of the service-learning experience are interdependent and fluid. Furthermore, acceptance permeates through these effects, generating growth, learning and discovery for the participants. Knowing that immersive service-learning experiences can have such profound and deep effects on the participants gives great weight to the value of such programs. New literature to support this notion has recently emerged, Fullan (2019) and states that

The most important purposes for schooling [are]:

- helping students understand the context of their lives
- empowering students to create social change and solve problems that will improve living conditions and increase well-being
- teaching students to embrace difference and get along with others
- providing skill development, as well as opportunities for joy, beauty, play and playfulness

(Fullan, 2019, p. 107)

Furthermore, this research supports and extends the research of Dr Shelley Billig's qualities of effective service-learning programs (2000b, reference). She suggests the greater the level of contact with the recipients of service-learning, the greater impact the experience will have on both its participants and its recipients. The participants in this study were literally removed from their home habitus and immersed in a new environment, living alongside of the recipients of their service-learning tour. This extended contact has been the channel through which the various beneficial effects of the tour have occurred. Therefore, it is confirmed and suggested that the greater the level of contact between participants and recipients, the more positive the effects of the experience will be.

A more comprehensive understanding of the effects that service-learning experiences have on the participants has also been garnered. While previous research focused on the social, academic and interpersonal effects of service-learning, this research shows that the underlying condition of acceptance is the key to all effects being deep and meaningful. Through the aforementioned immersion into a new habitus, the student participants become emotionally vulnerable. This vulnerability presented a challenge to students which required them to approach their new habitus with a sense of trust and discovery. In doing so, they experienced being accepted into a new community; a feeling that creates a reciprocal acceptance. Essentially, through being vulnerable, students are more willing and able to accept others' differences and other cultures. This acceptance is an excellent vehicle for Reconciliation to occur.

These two findings, the value of immersion and the acceptance created through vulnerability, are new understandings with regard to the effects of immersive service-learning on the perspectives of its participants. This is the major contribution of this research, a contribution that helps to fill the gap in the current research on the implications of service-learning experiences on primary school-aged students. Both of these findings have emerged through an experience that did not leave behind any tangible evidence of its occurrence; it merely, but importantly, left evidence on the hearts and minds of its participants. This knowledge allows schools and teachers to validate the need for service-learning experiences to occur at the primary school level. This knowledge is the *value* that the *many* previously spoke of. The emotional impacts of an experience such as the case study tour are extensive. Education policy and curriculum very much support the development of student's mental health and emotional awareness. Service-learning is an excellent pedagogical vehicle to develop both of these aspects, while at the same time developing a sense of citizenship and empowerment in the leaders of tomorrow.

Limitations and Future Research Possibilities

This study is limited in at least four ways: i) the size of the participant group, ii) the singularity of the case study tour and therefore a lack of comparable studies, iii) the element of being confined to a single Australian school, and finally iv) the presentation of only one side of the tour's story. It could be argued that a principal limitation of this study was the small number of participants and the fact that this was a single, one-shot case study tour. However, as was mentioned in the literature review, an exhaustive search for other similar service-learning experiences specific to primary school-age children was conducted but none were found. Furthermore, and so as not to overwhelm the small, recipient, Aboriginal community, only a very small sample group for the tour, and therefore for the study, was possible. Both of these features of the service-learning tour were not controllable by the researcher. To compensate for this, attempts were made to find comparable research studies, and also to enlist all possible participants. As mentioned in the justification of this case study research, although there were restraints and limitations on this study, it remained a unique opportunity for research.

To further validate the claims of this research, a comparison study with a similar service-learning experience involving primary school-age students would be needed. Hopefully, through sharing this research and the knowledge that it contributes to the body of research on service-learning, other schools and teachers will be encouraged to incorporate service-learning programs. This would lead to other comparable tours being available. Furthermore, the conclusions of this case study are based on one single, immersive service-learning tour in Australia. While this tour helped to develop an understanding of national identity in its participants, it would be interesting to investigate whether similar conclusions would emerge through comparable tours in other countries.

The environment and situation through which the effects of this tour have occurred are quite unique and therefore, limiting. This limitation brings forth the question as to whether the effects have been long-lasting, and therefore a longitudinal study of the perspectives of the participants would be meaningful. This is especially important as service-learning is being suggested as a vehicle through which to develop characteristics of global citizenship, compassion and social justice in the leaders of tomorrow. The age of the participants has been previously questioned; however, this research supports service-learning programs at the young, primary school age. As the participants are only beginning to develop their personal ideas and ideals for the future, it would be interesting to explore the growth of these effects over their personal development.

The final limitation of this study might be the most significant; its one-sidedness. While the methodology allowed for a deep and thick understanding of the implications that the service-

learning tour had on its suburban, middle-class participants, the researcher is left wondering what the other side of the story might be. That is to say, what were the implications of this service-learning tour on the recipient, Aboriginal, primary school-aged students and their community? Photographic, video and anecdotal evidence from the tour imply that the tour was mutually beneficial, however empirical evidence is necessary to know for certain.



Understanding the perspectives of the recipients of the study would assist in the future development of a well-rounded body of knowledge on the effects of service-learning on the recipient community, but also it would help educators and service-learning program developers to have confidence in their program being beneficial and providing a service.

Considering the aforementioned limitations, the most immediate suggestion for future research would be to focus on the service, recipient community. One main difference between such a study and the current study, would be that the recipient community is not being immersed in a new environment, but instead that they are required to share their home environment, and to live in a very transparent way as they welcome their guests into it. This would suggest that future research might explore, following a research methodology that accords with Aboriginal Traditions and perspectives of research, the nature and meanings of the experiences of the Aboriginal, primary school-aged students that hosted the non-Aboriginal students. The aim of such a research project would be to gain an understanding of the service-learning story of primary school-age, Aboriginal students. This would truly complement the research of this study and help to complete the picture of service-learning theory.

Other than conducting research with the recipient community, the researcher will continue her search for other primary schools offering similar experiences to their students. Once located, the researcher could conduct a similar case study, replicating the methodology, and hoping for generalisability of the results. Lastly, the researcher could invite the primary-school age participants to partake in a longitudinal study to investigate whether the effects of service-learning are long-lasting, however, that would shift the focus of the research from understanding the implications on the perspectives of the primary school-aged students to understanding the efficacy of service-learning programs in developing a sense of citizenship.

Afterword

As an initial investigation into the implications of an immersive service-learning tour on the perspectives of its primary school-age participants, this case study has succeeded in its goals. It has brought forth the voices of its participants through empirical data and laid the foundations of a theory on the implications of service-learning on primary school-aged students. At the core of the researcher's personal ethos as an educator is the desire to empower students to take action on those things that they'd like to change in their world. This case study has validated the researcher's belief in service-learning as a valuable pedagogical practice. To have a primary school-age participant reflect on their experience with the following quote, has left the researcher feeling that this research has added much value to the body of research on service-learning.

"The Tour has changed my thinking about Aboriginal people and I learnt a lot about how their community works and how close they are as a family. It has also changed the ways in which I think about my own parents and I have a lot more respect for them because of the things they do for me I learnt a lot about my own responsibilities and to look after both myself and other people."

References

- Astin, A. W., Vogelgesang, L. J., Misa, K., Anderson, J., Denson, N., Jayakumar, U., ... & Yamamura, E. (2006). *Understanding the effects of service-learning: A study of students and faculty*. Report to the Atlantic Philanthropies, 1155. Retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266456683>
- Billig, S. (2000a). Research on K-12 school-based service-learning: The evidence builds. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(9), 658-664. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=slcek12>
- Billig, S. (2000b). The effects of service-learning. *Service-learning, General*, 42. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a30a/d1449ef655cb7c1f1a0bf863b102da540183.pdf>
- Billig, S., Jesse, D., & Grimley, M. (2008). Using service-learning to promote character education in a large urban district. *Journal of Research in Character Education*, 6(1), 21-34.
- Billig, S., & Waterman, A. (Eds.). (2003). *Studying service-learning: Innovations in education research methodology*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Blakemore, S. J. (2018). *Inventing ourselves: The secret life of the teenage brain*. London, UK: Penguin Random House.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Celio, C., Durlak, J., & Dynmicki, A. (2011). A meta-analysis of the impact of service-learning on students. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 34(2), 164-181. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/105382591103400205>
- Coffey, A., & Lavery, S. (2015). Service-learning: A valuable means of preparing pre-service teachers for a teaching practicum. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(7), n7. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2015v40n7.7>
- Creswell, J.W. (2012). *Educational Research. Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.
- De Vaus, D. (1985). *Research design in social research*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Eisenberg, N., Shell, R., Pasternack, J., Lennon, R., Beller, R., & Mathy, R. M. (1987). Prosocial development in middle childhood: A longitudinal study. *Developmental Psychology*, 23(5), 712–718. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.23.5.712>
- Eyler, J., & Giles, D. E., Jr. (1999). *Where's the learning in service-learning?* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fiske, E. B. (2002). *Learning in deed: The power of service-learning for American schools*. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266456683_Understanding_the_Effects_of_Service-Learning_A_Study_of_Students_and_Faculty
- Fullan, M. (2019). *Nuance: Why some leaders succeed and others fail*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Furco, A. (1996). Service-learning: A balanced approach to experiential education. *Service Learning, General*. 128. Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/slceslgen/128/>
- Garton, A., & Gringart, E. (2005). The development of a scale to measure empathy in 8-and 9-year old children. *Australian Journal of Educational & Developmental Psychology*, 5, 17-25. Retrieved from: https://www.newcastle.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/100394/v5-garton-gringart.pdf/
- Hecht, D., & Fusco, D. R. (1996). *Student Perceptions of the Opportunities Available from Participating in Service Learning*. Retrieved from ERIC Depository: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext>
- Heider, K. (Ed.) (2016). *Service learning as pedagogy in early childhood education: Theory, research, and practice*. Springer Verlag e-book. Retrieved from: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ECU/detail.action?docID=4718080>

- Holt, J. (1995). *What do I do on Monday?* USA: Boynton/ Cook Publishers. Retrieved from:
https://archive.org/stream/WhatDoIDoMonday-JohnHolt/whatdoidomonday_djvu.txt
- Kahn, D. (2003). Montessori and optimal experience research: Toward building a comprehensive education reform. *NAMTA Journal*, 28(3), 1-11.
- Kashdan, T., Gallagher, M., Silvia, P., Winterstein, B., Breen, W., Terhar, D., & Steger, M. (2009). *Curiosity and exploration inventory (CEI-II)*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.midss.org/content/curiosity-and-exploration-inventory-cei-ii/>
- Langworthy, A. (2007). Education for the public good: Is service learning possible in the Australian context? *The Scholarship of Community Engagement: Australia's way forward*, 70. Retrieved from:
http://www.universityworldnews.com/filemgmt_data/files/Education%20for%20the%20Public%20Good.pdf
- Lavery, S., Cain, G., & Hampton, P. (2018). Walk beside me, learn together: A service-learning immersion to a remote Aboriginal school and community. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, 28(1), 154.
- Leeman, J., Rabin, L., & Román-Mendoza, E. (2011). Identity and activism in heritage language education. *Modern Language Journal*, 95(4), 481-495. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2011.01237.x
- Lovat, T., Toomey, R., Clement, N., Crotty, R., & Nielsen, T. (2009). *Value education, quality teaching and service-learning: A troika for effective teaching and teacher education*. Macksville, NSW, Australia: David Barlow Publishing.
- Melchior, A., & Bailis, L. N. (2002). *Impact of service-learning on civic attitudes and behaviors of middle and high school youth: Findings from three national evaluations*. In A. Furco & S. H. Billig (Eds.), *Advances in service-learning research: Vol. 1. Service-learning: The essence of the pedagogy* (pp. 201–222). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.
- Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) (2008). *Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians*. Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. PO Box 202 Carlton South Victoria, 3053, Australia. Retrieved from:
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/resources/national_declaration_on_the_educational_goals_for_young_australians.pdf

- Nagel, M. (2014). *In the middle: The adolescent brain, behaviour and learning*. Camberwell, Vic: Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Nagel, M., & Scholes, L. (2016). *Understanding development and learning: Implications for teaching*. South Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press.
- O'Donoghue, T. (2018). *Planning your qualitative research thesis and project: An introduction to interpretivist research in education and the social sciences*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Print, M. (1993). *Curriculum, development and design (2nd ed.)*. Frenchs Forest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Punch, K. (2014). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Reysen, S. (2012). Global citizen scale. Retrieved from: <http://www.midss.org/content/global-citizen-scale/>
- Richards, M., Sanderson, R., Celio, C., Grant, J., Choi, I., George, C., & Deane, K. (2013). Service learning in early adolescence: Results of a school based curriculum. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 36(1), 5-21.
- Scott, K. & Graham, J. (2015). Service-learning: Implications for empathy and community engagement in elementary school children. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 38(4), 354-372.
- Sharma, L. (2016). Service learning in schools. *Teacher Magazine*. Retrieved from: <https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/articles/service-learning-in-schools/>
- Slade, A. (2005). Parental reflective functioning: An introduction. *Attachment & Human Development*, 7(3), 269-281.
- Spreng, R., McKinnon, M., Mar, R., & Levine, B. (2009) Toronto empathy questionnaire. Retrieved from: <http://www.midss.org/content/toronto-empathy-questionnaire/>
- Swalwell, K. (2013). *Education activist allies: Social justice pedagogy with the suburban and urban elite*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Thomas, G. (2013). *How to do your research project: A guide for students in education and applied sciences*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Thomsen, K. (2006). *Service-learning in grade K-8: Experiential learning that builds character and motivation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Waldstein, F. (2003). Introduction. In S. Billig & A. Waterman, (Eds.) *Studying service-learning: Innovations in education research methodology* (pp. 35 – 46). New York, NY: Routledge.

Wiles, R. (2013). *What are qualitative research ethics?* London, UK: Bloomsbury.

Yin, R. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods (3rd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Yin, R. (2010). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications.

Appendix A: National Service-Learning Cooperative's standards of quality service-learning programs

Cluster 1: Learning

Essential Element 1. Service projects have clear educational goals that require the application of concepts, content and skills from the academic disciplines and involve students in constructing their own knowledge.

Essential Element 2. Projects engage students in challenging cognitive and developmental tasks.

Essential Element 3. Teachers use assessment to enhance student learning and to document and evaluate how well they have met standards.

Cluster 2: Service

Essential Element 4. Service tasks have clear goals, meet genuine community needs and have significant consequences.

Essential Element 5. Teachers use formative and summative evaluation in a systematic evaluation.

Cluster 3: Critical components that support learning and service

Essential Element 6. Students have a voice in selecting, designing, implementing, and evaluating their service project.

Essential Element 7. Diversity is valued and demonstrated by participants, practice and outcomes.

Essential Element 8. Service projects foster communication, interaction, and partnerships with the community.

Essential Element 9. Students are prepared for all aspects of their work.

Essential Element 10. Students reflect before, during, and after service. Reflection encourages critical thinking and is a central force in the design and fulfilment of curricular objectives.

Essential Element 11. Multiple methods acknowledge, celebrate and further validate students' service work.

National Service-Learning Cooperative (Fiske, 2002)

Appendix B: Positive effects of service-learning programs

Dr Shelley Billig, Vice-President of the Research Making Change (RMC) Research Corporation in the USA, compiled a list of the positive effects of service-learning on primary school-age students. The list, as cited in Thomsen 2006 (p. 8), is as follows:

1. Students who participate are less likely to engage in risky behaviours.
2. Service-learning has a positive effect on students' interpersonal development and ability to relate to culturally diverse groups.
3. Service-learning helps develop students' sense of civic responsibility and citizenship skills.
4. Service-learning helps students acquire academic skills and knowledge.
5. Students who participate in service-learning are more engaged with their studies and more motivated to learn.
6. Service-learning is associated with increased attendance.
7. Service-learning helps students become more realistic about careers.
8. Service-learning results in greater mutual respect between teachers and students.
9. Service-learning leads to more positive perceptions of school and youths on the part of the community members.

Appendix C: Letter to case study school Principal



Kimberley Luinstra

Masters of Education by Research, ECU

RE: Master's of Education research project: Service Learning: A Case Study of the Effects on Primary School-Age Students, and Their Changing Perspectives

I am currently enrolled in Edith Cowan University's Master's by Research program, where I am planning research to better understand the effects of service learning on primary school-age children, from the perspectives of the children and their parents. The study's aim is to explore each participant's perception of service, the impact of immersing students in a new environment and understanding motivation for taking part in the service-learning tour.

I am writing to you to inform you that I would like to conduct my research using Sanesteban School as the 'case study school'. As Sanesteban is currently the only primary school in Western Australia that provides an immersive service-learning tour for its primary school-aged students, it is the best choice for my project. I believe strongly in the value of the tour and wish to undertake this research to both validate the Sanesteban tour, and to develop empirically based theory on the value of such programs. Sanesteban has been assigned a pseudonym, Sanesteban School, to protect the identities of the study participants.

I will be asking both Year 6 student tour participants and their parents to take part in an on-line survey, both before and after the service-learning tour and to participate in a half-hour focus group session post-tour. The focus groups will be audio recorded. The student focus group will be led by an adult other than myself, to eliminate any perception by your child of being pressured to respond in a particular manner.

This study has been approved by the Edith Cowan University Ethics Committee and been given a favourable review. I look forward to discussing my research with you.

Appendix D: Information letter for parents



Service-Learning: A Case Study of the Effects on Primary School-Age Students, and Their Changing Perspectives

Researcher: Kimberley Luinstra kluinstr@our.ecu.edu.au

Supervisor: Dr William Allen w.allen@ecu.edu.au

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a Master of Education by Research at Edith Cowan University.

I am inviting you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the effects of service learning on primary school-age children, from the perspectives of the children and their parents. The study's aim is to explore each participant's perception of service, the impact of immersing students in a new environment and understanding motivation for taking part in the service-learning tour.

In order to understand these perspectives, I would like to ask you to complete an on-line survey (a length of approximately 10 minutes), both before and after the service-learning tour and to participate in a 30-minute focus group session post-tour. The focus groups will be audio recorded. I would also like to ask your Year 6 student that is participating in the Kimberley Tour to complete before and after, on-line surveys and to participate in a student focus group. The student focus group will be led by an adult other than myself, and who has signed a confidentiality agreement, to eliminate any perception by your child of being pressured to respond in a particular manner.

You are being asked to participate in this study as the parent of a child that has been selected to take part in the Kimberley Service-Learning Tour. Your participation in this study is voluntary and no explanation or justification is needed if you choose not to participate. Should your child have any emotionally upsetting experiences while on the tour, you are both free to withdraw from the study. A decision not to participate will not disadvantage you or your child in any way. You

are free to withdraw your consent to further involvement in the research project at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the research, information or material that has already been collected from you will be withdrawn from the study. That is to say, any survey data that you provide will be deleted or destroyed. I will be unable to delete your oral contributions to the focus groups but in the transcripts of the pertinent focus group, references to you and the information you provide will be deleted. These are the essential 'working' documents.

Your participation will be kept anonymous and you may request access to the data at any time. Anonymity will be achieved by you assigning a pseudonym to yourself, generated by your favourite colour, followed by the last four digits of your phone number (e.g. Yellow1860). Your child will be asked to do something similar: their favourite colour, followed by the last three digits of their phone number (e.g. Blue759). Please record this pseudonym in a safe place, as you will need to use it when completing a survey before taking part in the service-learning tour and after participating.

The project has been approved by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee. It has also been reviewed by the Principal of the school, who gave permission for the school to be involved.

If you would like to participate in this research study, please complete the attached consent form.

If you have any questions or require any further information about the research project, please contact Kim Luinstra at [REDACTED]. If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact: Research Ethics Officer at research.ethics@ecu.edu.au or by phone at (08) 6304 2170.

Participant preferred method of communication:

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Appendix E: Informed consent letter for parents



Service-learning: A Case Study of the Effects on Primary School-Age Students, and Their Changing Perspectives

Researcher: Kimberley Luinstra [REDACTED]

Supervisor: Dr William Allen w.allen@ecu.edu.au

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a Master of Education by Research at Edith Cowan University.

By signing this Consent Form, you are acknowledging:

that you have read, understood and been provided a copy of the Information Letter for Parent Participants in the study, Service-Learning: A Case Study of the Effects on Primary School-Age Students

- that you have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
- that you are aware that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team
- that you understand that your participation in the research will involve:
 - completing two, 10-minute online surveys (one before the service-learning tour, and one after)
 - taking part in a 30-minute focus group interview, led by a third party
- that you understand that your child's participation in the research will involve:
 - completing two, 10-minute online surveys (one before the service-learning tour, and one after)
 - taking part in a 30-minute focus group interview, led by a third party
- that you understand that the information provided will be kept confidential, and that the identity of the participants will not be disclosed without your consent
- that you understand that the information provided will only be used for the purposes of this research project, and that you understand how the information is to be used
- should your child have any emotionally upsetting experiences while on the tour, they are free to withdraw from the study

- that you understand that you are free to withdraw from further participation at any time, without explanation or penalty
- that you freely agree to participate in the project

If you have any questions or require any further information about the research project, please contact Kim Luinstra at kluinstr@our.ecu.edu.au. If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact: Research Ethics Officer at (08)6304 2170 or research.ethics@ecu.edu.au.

I consent / do not consent for my child who is a Year 6 Kimberley Service-Learning participant to be involved in this study.

I consent /do not consent to be personally involved in this study.

[Delete which is not applicable]

Name of parent/guardian _____

Name of student _____

(Signature)

(Date)

Participant preferred method of communication:

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Please return this signed and dated consent form by email to [REDACTED] or as a paper copy to the school office by Friday, July 27 2018. Thank you in advance.

Appendix F: Information letter for student participants



Service-Learning: A Case Study of the Effects on Primary School-Age Students and Their Changing Perspectives

Researcher: Kimberley Luinstra [REDACTED]

Supervisor: Dr William Allen w.allen@ecu.edu.au

This research project is being completed as part of the requirements of a Master of Education by Research at Edith Cowan University.

I am inviting you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of this study is to try to understand the effects of service-learning on primary school-age children, such as yourself. The study's aim is to understand what you think service is; how travelling from your home environment and being placed in a completely different environment, without your family, has on your experience; and understanding what motivated you to take part in the service-learning tour.

In order to understand these things, I would like to ask you to complete an on-line survey (a length of approximately 10 minutes), both before and after the service-learning tour and to participate in a 30-minute focus group session post-tour. The focus groups will be audio recorded. A focus group is basically a group interview; a trusted adult from outside of the school will help to lead the discussion with you and the other student participants. Your parents will also be asked to complete before and after surveys, as well as a focus group. Your focus group will be led by an adult other than myself so that you don't feel any pressure to say certain things. The person has signed a confidentiality agreement, which means that they may not share your information for any reasons other than this research study.

You are being asked to participate in this study as a student that has been selected to take part in the Kimberley Service-Learning Tour. Your participation in this study is voluntary and if you

choose not to participate you don't need to give a reason. Should you have any emotionally upsetting experiences while on the tour, you are free to withdraw from the study. If you decide not to participate, you will not be negatively affected in any way. You are free to drop out of the study at any time. Should you choose to drop out from the research, information or material that has already been collected from you will be removed from the study. That means that any survey data that you provide will be deleted or destroyed. I will be unable to delete your oral contributions to the focus groups but in the written record of your focus group, references to you and the information you provide will be deleted.

Your participation will be kept secret and you may request access to the data at any time. You will make-up a secret identity for yourself by combining your favourite colour with the date of your birth, and the last three digits of your mobile phone number (e.g. Blue601). Your parents will be asked to do something similar. Please record this secret identity in a safe place, as you will need to use it when completing a survey before taking part in the service-learning tour and after participating.

The project has been approved by the ECU Human Research Ethics Committee, which means that it is safe and will in no way harm you. It has also been reviewed by the Principal of the school, who gave permission for the school to be involved.

If you would like to participate in this research study, please complete the attached consent form.

If you have any questions or require any further information about the research project, please contact Kim Luinstra at [REDACTED] If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact: Research Ethics Officer at research.ethics@ecu.edu.au or by phone at (08) 6304 2170.

Your preferred method of communication:

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Appendix G: Informed consent letter for students



Service-Learning: A Case Study of the Effects on Primary School-Age Students, and Their Changing Perspectives

Researcher: Kimberley Luinstra [REDACTED]

Supervisor: Dr William Allen w.allen@ecu.edu.au

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of a Master of Education by Research at Edith Cowan University.

By signing this Consent Form, you are agreeing:

that you have read, understood and been provided a copy of the Information Letter for Student Participants in the study, Service-Learning: A Case Study of the Effects on Primary School-Age Students

- that you have been able to ask questions and have had any questions answered to your satisfaction and understanding
- that you are aware that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team who are listed above
- that you understand that your participation in the research will involve:
 - completing two, 10-minute online surveys (one before the service-learning tour, and one after)
 - taking part in a 30-minute focus group interview, led by an approved, safe adult other than myself
- that you understand that the information provided will be kept secret, and that your identity will never be told to anyone
- that you understand that the information provided will only be used for the purposes of this research project, and that you understand how the information is to be used
- should you have any emotionally upsetting experiences while on the tour, you are free to withdraw from the study
- that you understand that you are free to drop out of the study at any time, without explanation or penalty
- that you freely agree to participate in the project

If you have any questions or require any further information about the research project, please contact Kim Luinstra at [REDACTED]. If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact the Research Ethics Officer at research.ethics@ecu.edu.au.

I consent / do not consent to be involved in this study.

[Delete or cross out the one that does NOT apply]

Name _____

(signature)

(date)

Participant preferred method of communication:

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Please return this signed and dated consent form by email to [REDACTED] or as a paper copy to the school office by Friday, July 27 2018. Thank you in advance.

Appendix H: Parent pre-tour survey

Welcome and thank you for participating in this research. This survey has 26 multiple choice questions and 2 short answer questions. It should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete. ***Please complete this survey in the next week (before your child leaves for the Kimberley Tour), as the link will be deactivated after that.*** Click the next button to get started. If you would like to review your responses at any time, click the back button. Once you have completed the survey, press the submit button.

Section 1 Please create a pseudonym for yourself.

It will be generated by your FAVOURITE COLOUR, followed by the LAST FOUR DIGITS of your phone number (e.g. Yellow1860).

Please record your pseudonym somewhere safe because you will need it later.

	Favourite Colour	Last 4 Digits	Final Pseudonym
		(1)	(Colour + 4 digits) (1)
Pseudonym (1)	▼ Blue (1 ... Purple (5)		

Please complete the survey by using the following scale: Strongly disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral (Neither agree nor disagree) Somewhat Agree Strongly agree SD D N A SA

Soc/ Emo Please select the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements, when thinking about your Year 6 child.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
1. It upsets my child to see someone being treated disrespectfully. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. My child enjoys making other people feel better. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Other people's misfortunes do not disturb my child a great deal. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. My child can tell when others are sad even when they do not say anything. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. My child is not really interested in how other people feel. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Empathy Please select the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements, when thinking about your Year 6 child.

	Strongly disagree (11)	Somewhat disagree (12)	Neither agree nor disagree (13)	Somewhat agree (14)	Strongly agree (15)
6. My child doesn't often feel worried about people that are not as lucky as them and feel sorry for them. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. My child thinks about other people's feelings before they make mean comments about them. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. My child sometimes tries to understand their friends better by pretending to be them. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. My child is not affected when people around them are nervous or worried. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. When reading a good story, my child imagines what it would be like if the story were true. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Intellectual Please select the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements,

	Strongly disagree (13)	Somewhat disagree (14)	Neither agree nor disagree (15)	Somewhat agree (16)	Strongly agree (17)
11. My child is at their best when doing something that is complex or challenging. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. My child seeks as much new information as they can in new situations. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. My child doesn't enjoy learning new things. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. My child is always looking for experiences that challenge how they think about themselves and the world. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. My child avoids challenging situations. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Service Please select the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements, when thinking about your Year 6 child.

	Strongly disagree (11)	Somewhat disagree (12)	Neither agree nor disagree (13)	Somewhat agree (14)	Strongly agree (15)
17. My child is aware of the important needs in the community. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. It is easy for my child to put aside their self-interest in favour of the greater good. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Helping other people is something that my child believes that they are personally responsible for. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. My child encourages others to work on community problems. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. My child thinks that being involved in community issues is an important responsibility for everybody. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Australia Please select the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements, when thinking about your Year 6 child.

	Strongly disagree (37)	Somewhat disagree (38)	Neither agree nor disagree (39)	Somewhat agree (40)	Strongly agree (41)
22. It is important for my child to travel around their own country, Australia. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. My child enjoys social activities with people from the same heritage culture as themselves. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. My child enjoys experiencing new places when they travel. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. My child doesn't participate in our heritage cultural traditions. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. My child is comfortable interacting with people of the same heritage culture as themselves. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Short Ans1 Please describe your reasons for supporting your child's participation in this service learning tour.

ShortAns2 Please tell how you think that participating in this service learning tour will impact on your child's life.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. I appreciate your participation. Once your child has returned from the Year 6 Service Learning Tour I will be asking you to complete another online survey and to participate in a focus group. Enjoy the Kimberley experience.

Before submitting your final responses, please re-enter the pseudonym from that you created earlier (see Section 1). Remember to record this somewhere else, as you will need to enter it for the post-tour survey.

Appendix I: Parent post-tour survey

Intro Welcome and thank you for participating in this research. This survey has 26 multiple choice questions and 3 short answer questions. It should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete. Once you have completed the survey, press the submit button

Please enter the secret code that you created for yourself in the Pre Tour Survey. Remember that it was made up of your **favourite colour** and the **last four digits of your phone number**. (The colours that you chose from were Red, Blue, Purple, Yellow or Green.)

Please complete the survey by using the following scale: Strongly disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral (Neither agree nor disagree) Somewhat Agree Strongly agree SD D N A SA

Soc/Emo Please select the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements, when thinking about your Year 6 child.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
1. It upsets my child to see someone being treated disrespectfully. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. My child enjoys making other people feel better. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Other people's misfortunes do not disturb my child a great deal. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. My child can tell when others are sad even when they do not say anything. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. My child is not really interested in how other people feel. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Empathy Please select the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements, when thinking about your Year 6 child.

	Strongly disagree (11)	Somewhat disagree (12)	Neither agree nor disagree (13)	Somewhat agree (14)	Strongly agree (15)
6. My child doesn't often feel worried about people that are not as lucky as them and feel sorry for them. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. My child thinks about other people's feelings before they make mean comments about them. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. My child sometimes tries to understand their friends better by pretending to be them. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. My child is not affected when people around them are nervous or worried. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. When reading a good story, my child imagines what it would be like if the story were true. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Intellectual Please select the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements, when thinking about your Year 6 child.

	Strongly disagree (13)	Somewhat disagree (14)	Neither agree nor disagree (15)	Somewhat agree (16)	Strongly agree (17)
11. My child is at their best when doing something that is complex or challenging. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. My child seeks as much new information as they can in new situations. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. My child doesn't enjoy learning new things. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. My child is always looking for experiences that challenge how they think about themselves and the world. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. My child avoids challenging situations. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Service Please select the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements, when thinking about your Year 6 child.

	Strongly disagree (11)	Somewhat disagree (12)	Neither agree nor disagree (13)	Somewhat agree (14)	Strongly agree (15)
17. My child is aware of the important needs in the community. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. It is easy for my child to put aside their self-interest in favour of the greater good. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Helping other people is something that my child believes that they are personally responsible for. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. My child encourages others to work on community problems. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. My child thinks that being involved in community issues is an important responsibility for everybody. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Australia Please select the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements, when thinking about your Year 6 child.

	Strongly disagree (37)	Somewhat disagree (38)	Neither agree nor disagree (39)	Somewhat agree (40)	Strongly agree (41)
22. It is important for my child to travel around their own country, Australia. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. My child enjoys social activities with people from the same heritage culture as themselves. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. My child enjoys experiencing new places when they travel. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. My child doesn't participate in our heritage cultural traditions. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. My child is comfortable interacting with people of the same heritage culture as themselves. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 Please describe whether the Kimberley Tour satisfied your reasons for supporting your child's participation in it.

Q12 As a parent you know your child very well. Do you notice any change in your child's thinking since their Kimberley Tour experience? Please describe.

Q13 Please describe how you think that the Kimberley Tour has impacted on your child's life.

Q17 Please use this space to tell the researcher any other information that you think would be pertinent to the study.

Q16 The final phase of data collection will be attending a focus group. This group discussion will give participants an opportunity to give more detail about their responses.

You are asked to attend ONE session, which will be approximately 30 minutes in length.

Your child will also be asked to attend a focus group. Please rank the date and location which best suits you for the **PARENT FOCUS GROUP (1= most preferred choice- 7= least preferred choice)**. Based on the results of this survey, you will be sent an email invitation for the focus groups.

- _____ D CAMPUS Thursday, 6 September @ 4:30pm (2)
- _____ D CAMPUS Monday, 10 September @ 4:30pm (3)
- _____ D CAMPUS Tuesday, 18 September @ 4:30pm (4)
- _____ C CAMPUS Tuesday, 11 September @ 4:30pm (5)
- _____ C CAMPUS Monday, 17 September @ 4:30pm (6)
- _____ C CAMPUS Wednesday, 19 September @ 4:30pm (7)
- _____ C CAMPUS Thursday, 13 September @ 4:30pm (8)

Q18 Please rank the date and location which best suits your child for the **STUDENT FOCUS GROUP** (1= most preferred choice- 5= least preferred choice). It will be approximately 30 minutes in length. Based on the results of this survey, you will be sent an email invitation for the focus groups.

- _____ D CAMPUS Wednesday, 12 September @ lunch break (1)
- _____ D CAMPUS Wednesday, 19 September @ lunch break (2)
- _____ C CAMPUS Tuesday, 11 September @ 3:30pm (3)
- _____ C CAMPUS Thursday, 13 September @ 3:30 pm (4)
- _____ C CAMPUS Monday, 17 September @ 3:30pm (5)

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. I appreciate your participation.

I will be emailing you an invitation to attend a focus group soon.

Appendix J: Student pre-tour survey

Welcome and thank you for participating in this research. This survey has 26 multiple choice questions and 2 short answer questions. It should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete. ***Please complete this survey within the next week (before you leave for the Kimberley Tour), as the link will be closed after that.*** Click the next button to get started. If you would like to review your responses at any time, click the back button. Once you have completed the survey, press the submit button.

Section 1 Please create a Secret Code Name for yourself.

It will be made up by combining your FAVOURITE COLOUR and the last THREE digits of your mobile phone number (e.g. Blue601).

Please record your secret code name somewhere safe because you will need it later.

	Favourite Colour	Last 3 Mobile Digits	Secret Code
		(1)	(Colour + 3 Digits) (1)
Secret Code Name Generator (1)	▼ Blue (1 ... Purple (5)		

Q14 Please complete the survey by using the following scale: Strongly disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral (Neither agree nor disagree) Somewhat Agree Strongly agree SD D N A SA

Soc/ Emo Please select the extent to which you AGREE with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
1. It upsets me to see someone being treated disrespectfully. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I enjoy making other people feel better. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Other people's misfortunes do not disturb me a great deal. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I can tell when others are sad even when they do not say anything. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I am not really interested in how other people feel. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Empathy Please select the extent to which you AGREE with the following statements.

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
6. I often feel worried about people that are not as lucky as me and feel sorry for them. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I try to think about other people's feelings before I make mean comments about them. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by pretending that I am them. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I am not affected when people around me are nervous or worried. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. When reading a good story, I imagine what it would be like if the story were true. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Intellectual Please select the extent to which you AGREE with the following statements.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
11. I am at my best when doing something that is complex or challenging. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. I seek as much new information as I can in new situations. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. I don't enjoy learning new things. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I am always looking for experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. I avoid challenging situations. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Service Please select the extent to which you AGREE with the following statements.

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
17. I am aware of the important needs in the community. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. It is easy for me to put aside my self-interest in favour of the greater good. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Helping other people is something that I am personally responsible for. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I encourage others to work on community problems. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. I think that being involved in community issues is an important responsibility for everybody. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Australia Please select the extent to which you AGREE with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (51)	Disagree (52)	Somewhat disagree (53)	Neither agree nor disagree (54)	Somewhat agree (55)	Agree (56)	Strongly agree (57)
22. It is important for me to travel around my own country, Australia. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. I enjoy social activities with people from the same heritage culture as myself. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. I enjoy experiencing new places when I travel. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. I don't participate in my heritage cultural traditions. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. I am comfortable interacting with people of the same heritage culture as myself. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Short Ans1 Please describe your reasons for participating in this service learning tour.

ShortAns2 Please say how you think that participating in this service learning tour will impact on your life.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. I appreciate your participation. Once you have returned from the Year 6 Service Learning Tour, I will be asking you to complete another online survey and to participate in a focus group. Enjoy the Kimberley experience.

Please return your Secret Code Name here (from Section 1). Remember to also record it somewhere else so that you can use it on the next survey.

Appendix K: Student post-tour survey

Student Post Tour Survey

Welcome and thank you for participating in this research. This survey has 26 multiple choice questions and 3 short answer questions. It should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete. Once you have completed the survey, press the submit button.

Q1 Please enter the secret code that you created for yourself in the Pre Tour Survey. Remember that it was made up of your **favourite colour** and the **last three digits of your phone number**. (The colours that you chose from were Red, Blue, Purple, Yellow or Green.)

Q2 Please complete the survey by using the following scale: Strongly disagree Somewhat Disagree Neutral (Neither agree nor disagree) Somewhat Agree Strongly agree SDDNASA

Soc/ Emo Please select the extent to which you AGREE with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
1. It upsets me to see someone being treated disrespectfully. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I enjoy making other people feel better. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Other people's misfortunes do not disturb me a great deal. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I can tell when others are sad even when they do not say anything. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I am not really interested in how other people feel. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Empathy Please select the extent to which you AGREE with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
6. I often feel worried about people that are not as lucky as me and feel sorry for them. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I try to think about other people's feelings before I make mean comments about them. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by pretending that I am them. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I am not affected when people around me are nervous or worried. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. When reading a good story, I imagine what it would be like if the story were true. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Intellectual Please select the extent to which you AGREE with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
11. I am at my best when doing something that is complex or challenging. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. I seek as much new information as I can in new situations. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. I don't enjoy learning new things. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I am always looking for experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. I avoid challenging situations. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. I frequently seek out opportunities to challenge myself and grow as a person. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Service Please select the extent to which you AGREE with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
17. I am aware of the important needs in the community. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. It is easy for me to put aside my self-interest in favour of the greater good. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Helping other people is something that I am personally responsible for. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I encourage others to work on community problems. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. I think that being involved in community issues is an important responsibility for everybody. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Australia Please select the extent to which you AGREE with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
22. It is important for me to travel around my own country, Australia. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. I enjoy social activities with people from the same heritage culture as myself. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. I enjoy experiencing new places when I travel. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. I don't participate in my heritage cultural traditions. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. I am comfortable interacting with people of the same heritage culture as myself. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13 Please describe whether the Kimberley Tour satisfied your reasons for participating in it.

Q14 Sometimes experiences can impact our thinking. Has your participation in the tour impacted your thinking about things? Please describe how.

Q15 Please describe how you think this experience has affected you overall.

Q19 Please use this space to tell the researcher anything else about the Kimberley Tour experience that you think is important.



The final part of this research is a focus group discussion. This is a chance for you to tell more detail about your survey responses and Kimberley Tour experience.

Please rank the date and location which best suits you to attend the **STUDENT FOCUS GROUP** (1= most preferred choice- 5= least preferred choice). It will be approximately 30 minutes in length. Based on the results of this survey, you will be sent an email invitation for the focus groups.

- ☐ D CAMPUS Wednesday, 12 September @ lunch break (1)
 - ☐ D CAMPUS Wednesday, 19 September @ lunch break (2)
 - ☐ C CAMPUS Tuesday, 11 September @ 3:30pm (3)
 - ☐ C CAMPUS Thursday, 13 September @ 3:30 pm (4)
 - ☐ C CAMPUS Monday, 17 September @ 3:30pm (5)
-

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. I appreciate your participation.

I will be sending you an email soon to confirm the date of your focus group.

Appendix L: Guarantee of confidentiality



Project Title: Service Learning: A Case Study of the Effects on Primary School-Age Students, and Their
Changing Perspective

I promise that I will not reveal any details of the material I hear during the focus group interviews for the research project being conducted by Kimberley Luinstra, who is undertaking this project for the purposes of a Master of Education.

I recognise that to do so would be in breach of participant confidentiality, and of ethical guidelines for research.

Further, I promise to ensure that while data or other materials related to work that I am doing for Kimberley Luinstra are in my care, they will be kept in a secure location until they can be returned, and that they will not be accessible to others entering my work place.

Name: _____

Business name (if applicable): _____

Postal Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher: _____