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# Attitudes of Returning Peace Corps Volunteers Concerning Impact of Peace Corps Interlude on Subsequent Academic Work

Mary Abrams

Terrence Cullinan

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**IRP**

INTERLUDE RESEARCH PROGRAM

ATTITUDES OF RETURNING PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS CONCERNING  
IMPACT OF PEACE CORPS INTERLUDE ON SUBSEQUENT ACADEMIC WORK

By:

Terrence Cullinan

National Information Center  
for Service Learning  
1954 Buford Ave, Room R290  
St. Paul, MN 55108-6197

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NSLC  
c/o ETR Associates  
4 Carbonero Way  
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

IRP DIRECTORS ● TERRENCE CULLINAN ● JANET ABRAMS

INTERLUDE RESEARCH PROGRAM  
Post Office Box 423  
Menlo Park, California 94025



INTERLUDE RESEARCH PROGRAM  
Post Office Box 423  
Menlo Park, California 94025

*Terrence Cullinan*  
*Janet Abrams*  

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IRP DIRECTORS

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IMPACT OF PEACE CORPS INTERLUDE ON SUBSEQUENT ACADEMIC WORK

*By:*  
Terrence Cullinan

*Contributions By:*

Janet Abrams  
Mary Elsbach  
Carol Gallup

*Prepared under a Grant from  
the Internal Research and Development Program  
of the Stanford Research Institute (SRI)*

## FOREWORD

A survey was undertaken in the summer of 1969, as part of the Interlude Research Program, among young people who had recently concluded service as Peace Corps Volunteers. The study's objectives were to (a) assess the impact of the Peace Corps interlude on subsequent formal education, (b) obtain respondent opinions on the educational value of the Peace Corps interlude itself, and (c) examine what steps, if any, the formal education system in the United States had taken toward incorporating such an experience in formal academic programs.

The survey, based on a questionnaire administered to somewhat more than 250 former Peace Corps Volunteers, had four principal findings:

1. The Peace Corps interlude is seen by participants primarily as an educational experience -- not a service one.
2. The Peace Corps experience has a clear impact on the subsequent formal education of a substantial majority of participants who continue with formal education after their interlude.
3. The Peace Corps interlude is generally judged by participants as the educational equivalent of nearly a full year's formal schooling, yet few participants receive any academic credit for it.
4. The Peace Corps experience is strongly viewed as a positive educational experience for participants, and one from which their contemporaries would benefit considerably.

A small number of academic institutions presently extend formal credit for the Peace Corps interlude. In view of the apparent benefits of the experience on an individual's educational development, other institutions may wish to experiment with some formal encouragement of it.

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## I THE PEACE CORPS INTERLUDE SURVEY: BASICS

This survey was undertaken in mid-1969 among a random sample of former Peace Corps Volunteers whose names appeared in the "Roster of Returning Peace Corps Volunteers Interested in Being Considered for Scholarships, Fellowships, and Assistanceships for the 1968-69 School Year". It was administered to former Volunteers who, at the time of response, had been out of the Peace Corps for about one year\*. Approximately 425 questionnaires were distributed, and 266 utilizable responses returned before cutoff date -- a response rate of 62.5 percent.

### Profile of Respondents

Most respondents had served at least a full two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer, and were in their 20's both during their Peace Corps interlude and at the time of responding to the survey:

<u>Age at time of response to survey</u>		<u>Age at completion of interlude</u>	
(N-266)		(N-266)	
Less than 30:	254 (95%)	Less than 30:	261 (98%)
30-44:	12 ( 5%)	30-44:	5 ( 2%)

### Length of Peace Corps interlude

(N-266)

24 months or more:	191 (72%)
12-23 months:	72 (27%)
Less than 12 months:	3 ( 1%)

The N figures refer to the number of respondents whose answers are included in the tabular presentations.

Of the respondents, 182 (68%) were male, and 84 (32%) female. Prior to their Peace Corps interlude, 92 percent had obtained a bachelor's degree (19 percent had at least some graduate school), an additional seven percent had had some college experience, and the other one percent had not attended college\*\*:

<u>Highest level of school reached prior to joining the Peace Corps</u>			
(N-266)			
Completed graduate degree:	13 ( 5%)	2 years of college:	8 (3%)
Some graduate school:	37 (14%)	1 year of college:	5 (2%)
Completed college:	195 (37%)	Completed high school:	3 (1%)
3 years of college:	4 ( 2%)	Other:	1 (0%)

\*A companion survey was simultaneously administered to a sample of former VISTA volunteers. Footnotes throughout this report will give comparisons between results from the Peace Corps survey and those from the VISTA one.

\*\*In the VISTA survey, 43 percent of respondents were male and 57 percent female. Forty-one percent had finished college (11 percent had at least some graduate school), and another 44 percent had had some college education.

As would be expected, older survey respondents had generally had some post-graduate experience, while those in their early 20's had not.

After their Peace Corps interlude, 75 percent of the returned Peace Corps Volunteers had continued their formal educational experience, 89 percent of these on a graduate level:\*

Level of formal education experienced following  
completion of Peace Corps interlude  
(N-264)

Post-graduate:	177 (67%)
Four-year college:	20 ( 8%)
Did not continue:	67 (25%)

Delimitations of the survey

The Peace Corps interlude survey was not administered to a comprehensive sample of all returned Peace Corps Volunteers. The primary objective of the study was to assess the educational impact of the Peace Corps interlude on those undertaking it -- both the learning effect of the experience in itself and its potential influence on subsequent education. Fund limitations and the reticence of the Peace Corps toward making available lists of former Volunteers combined to make a focusing of the study on an available and relevant grouping desirable.

The "Roster of Returning Peace Corps Volunteers Interested in Being Considered for Scholarships, Fellowships, and Assistanceships for the 1968-69 School Year" does not include students who consciously joined the Peace Corps as an interlude, knowing that they would return to classes at the same college (with the same, if any, scholarships). It does not include those with no interest in fellowships, or in further schooling. Furthermore, this study did not attempt to assess the role of the military draft in inducing or reducing initiative to seek a Peace Corps interlude among young men -- fortunately, in retrospect, as the draft system has since been substantially changed\*\*.

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\* In the VISTA survey, 56 percent had continued formal education, 29 percent of those on a graduate level, 55 percent at a four-year college, and 16 percent at a two-year college.

\*\* Still additional changes to the draft have been proposed, including the establishment of a "national service" system which would make nonmilitary service co-equal with military service and a substitute therefore. This system, if adopted, would make a Peace Corps interlude (and a wide spectrum of other activities) a legal substitute for military service. Information on this proposal is available from the National Service Secretariat, 5140 Sherrier Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. National service systems already exist in a large number of countries; information on such systems is obtainable from The Terrybukk Foundation, Ltd., 333 Linfield Place, Menlo Park, California 94025.

## II THE PEACE CORPS INTERLUDE: EDUCATIONAL DIMENSIONS

The Peace Corps originally coined the term "experiential education" to indicate the learning dimensions it ascribes to the Peace Corps interlude. Such dimensions, if they exist, may be described either subjectively or objectively. The interlude survey attempted to measure participant experience on both scales.

### The subjective dimension

Subjectively, the educational dimension of the Peace Corps interlude should be assessable through (1) participant evaluation of the experience as a learning process of and by itself; and (2) perceived impacts of the experience on subsequent formal education.

The Peace Corps is generally thought of as a means of benefitting others -- of providing service to the disadvantaged and underprivileged of areas of the world less developed than the United States. Yet participants themselves seem to view this service component as of minor importance; they assess the experience as primarily an educational one. Respondents to the interlude survey were asked to compare the amount of learning derived from their Peace Corps interlude with the amount of service to others they gave as a Peace Corps Volunteer. The total experience was given as 100 percent, and respondents were asked to assign portions between the educational value and service value of the interlude. The results (educational value given first):

### Relationship between educational and service values of Peace Corps interlude

(N-255; Educational value given first; Total experience = 100)

100-0:	7 ( 3%)	60-40:	59 (23%)	20-80:	3 (1%)
90-10:	16 ( 6%)	50-50:	42 (17%)	10-90:	0 (0%)
80-20:	29 (11%)	40-60:	7 ( 3%)	0-100:	0 (0%)
70-30:	87 (34%)	30-70:	5 ( 2%)		

Seventy-seven percent of all respondents found the educational dimension of their Peace Corps interlude substantially in excess of the service they had rendered to others -- although the latter is the ostensible purpose of the experience. Only six percent found the service component in excess of the learning value. The average education:service assessment was 65:35; the median was 70:30\*. Participant evaluation of the Peace Corps interlude as a learning process of and by itself appears, therefore, to be very high. A summary of respondent comments concerning the learning dimension of the Peace Corps is found in Table 1, next page.

Perceived impacts of the Peace Corps interlude on subsequent formal  
(text continued p.7)

\*In the VISTA survey, 66 percent of all respondents found the educational dimension of their experience to substantially exceed the service one, while 12 percent found the reverse true. Average education:service assessment was 61:39, and median was 60:40.



Table 1

SUMMARY OF 366 OPEN-END COMMENTS CONCERNING LEARNING  
DIMENSION OF PEACE CORPS INTERLUDE

Contributes to personal learning and development (104)

Beneficial in terms of self-development -- personal growth, discovery, awareness (54)

Invaluable education in developing a sensitivity to complexities of problems -- global, political, economic, etc. -- and new ways of looking at problems (15)

Broadens background and knowledge -- stimulates need to learn academically (9)

Triggers new interests; Encourages further study on ideas of how to develop a community; Individual derives more for himself in form of personal adventure than he can offer; Provides opportunity to carry out same career goals as would have in U.S. (4 each)

Frustrating yet rewarding; Contributes to process of slow personal change (3 each)

Makes one want to keep serving in some way (2)

No longer a desire for money-making career; Shows that unswerving effort and faith produce positive results (1 each)

Cross-cultural learning through awareness of other ways of life (102)

Learn how to understand and communicate in a foreign culture, with another language and different life outlooks (35)

Gain exposure to new cultures and hence change previous views, attitudes, and values (20)

Gain exposure to other cultures' ways of thinking and living (14)

Gain better understanding of subcultures in our own society (9)

Learned about another culture in human terms, not statistical ones (7)

Gained better understanding of "foreign" point of view regarding the United States (4)

Gained ability to more objectively evaluate U.S. foreign policy; Gain ability to experience things with minimal societal (Western) constraints to learning process; Learn the questionable nature of trying to help bring "improvements" according to one's own view of the good life; Develop less tolerance toward the U.S. and one's own countrymen (2 each)

Isolation from other Americans brings understanding of readjusting of foreigners who move to U.S.; Realize conflicts between life style resulting from Peace Corps experience and that of majority of society; Opened eyes to U.S. interests abroad (i.e.: protection & continued domination of U.S. economic interests); Gain

Table 1 (continued)

awareness of "foreign" consequences of U.S. domestic politics; Learned that language and previous environment greatly affects ability to help (1 each)

Supplemented or augmented previous formal education (62)

Primarily experiential -- cannot be duplicated, nor assigned a precise value (15)

Its worth exceeded any number of years of college (12)

One learns much about the kinds of things colleges can't teach: (a) one's own possibilities, resourcefulness, limitations; (b) increased respect for variety of ways of different members of human species to make way through life (10)

A "real world" experience -- so different from formal education (6)

A learning experience on an entirely different plane than from U.S. academia; Opens dimensions in the emotional context of learning rather than the narrow intellectual dimensions used in U.S. formal education; One learns as much as one desires -- not is forced -- to learn (3 each)

Gain valuable technical information about community development and specifically cooperative administration and development; Have practical levels of learning sociology, geography, history, science, humanities, psychology, etc.; 'Better than two-year work experience in the U.S. (2 each)

Unstructured group-dynamic learning very valuable; Experience worth a Master's degree; Exposed deficiencies in previous academic training; Provided excellent tool for teaching change on return (1 each)

Developed new interpersonal skills or understandings (87)

Increased perspective on, and objectivity toward, self, spouse, U.S., and world -- man's needs, common concerns for the betterment of mankind (41)

Deepened appreciation of complexities of human interaction; Learned a great deal about interpersonal relationships (9 each)

Gain tolerance through contribution to understanding and appreciation of people with different background; Fosters need to know others so as to help them improve themselves through mutual learning (8 each)

Learn patience, compassion, & understanding for others (6)

Informal but essential education about social interactions (3)

Learn about other peoples' actions and reactions (2)

Learn how to motivate people (1)

Table 1(continued)

Miscellaneous negative or semi-negative responses (11)

Peace Corps should not be part of U.S. State Department; Peace Corps should be internationalized; There is need to have a Peace Corps in the U.S. (2 each)

There is no learning experience because volunteers have no direction to follow -- they are given no "intellectual" tools, and the Peace Corps in any case is racially prejudiced; Should wait until one has obtained more skills before being accepted; Could have been a six-month experience for learning value; Peace Corps "good will" insufficient to meet development problems; Does the U.S. have the right to conduct "interlude education" in other countries under the guise of technical aid? (1 each)

education were measured in two ways. First, respondents were asked if work experienced during the Peace Corps assignment was related to prior formal education, and, separately, if such experiences were related to subsequent formal education:

Relationship of work experiences during Peace Corps interlude  
to pre- and post-interlude formal education

	<u>Pre-interlude education</u> (N-264)	<u>Post-interlude education</u> (N-198)
Closely related	52 (20%)	56 (29%)
Somewhat related	111 (42%)	86 (44%)
Not related	101# (38%)	54 (27%)

*#The higher the level of education completed prior to the interlude, the lower the percentage of non-relationship among respondents. Increased maturity and more specialized education may mean a better "match".*

The Peace Corps interlude apparently affected choice or relevance of post-interlude education to a marked extent. The percentage of participants reporting their formal education unrelated to their "experiential" interlude dropped eleven percent on an absolute scale -- from 38 to 27 percent -- approximately 30 percent on a relative one\*.

Second, respondents were asked to describe specifically the impact the Peace Corps interlude had on any subsequent formal education. In a one-choice question, they were asked to indicate the degree of impact their Peace Corps interlude had on subsequent schooling:

Degree of impact of Peace Corps interlude on  
subsequent schooling of participants\*\*  
(N-195)

Strong: 105 (53%)	Not much: 15 (8%)
Some: 68 (35%)	None: 7 (4%)

Given a multiple-choice opportunity to describe the ways, if any, in which the Peace Corps interlude made participants' subsequent formal education

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\* In the VISTA survey, the corresponding percentage dropped by an absolute 19 percent -- from 48 to 29 percent -- a relative decline of almost forty percent.

\*\* In the VISTA study, percentages were: strong - 59%; some - 35%; not much - 6%; none - 5%.

more meaningful, respondents indicated:

Means by which Peace Corps interlude made subsequent  
schooling of participants more meaningful\*  
(N-197)

Helped to determine the course of study:	122 (62%)
Helped to understand courses taken:	117 (59%)
Helped to make courses more relevant than before:	69 (35%)
Other:	65 (33%)

Responses add to more than 197 because of the multiple responses possible.

The impacts of the Peace Corps interlude on subsequent formal education are apparently perceived to be substantial by those participants in the experience who continue formal schooling after completion of the interlude. A summary of respondent comments on interlude value to subsequent schooling appears in Table 2, following page.

The objective dimension

Objectively, the educational dimension of the Peace Corps interlude may be assessable through amounts of formal academic credit extended for it, or by the amounts of formal credit believed earnable by it. Some institutions attended by respondents after their interlude have extended academic credit for it, as indicated in Table 3, following Table 2.

A partial explanation for the brevity of the list in Table 3 is that few returned Peace Corps volunteers apparently seek academic credit for their interlude experience. Only 35 respondents to this survey had sought such credit, just 18 percent of the 197 who answered the survey questions concerning credit. Eleven of the 35 had sought undergraduate credit, and the other 24 had asked for credit at the graduate level. The applications had been relatively successful:

Institutional response to requests for formal academic  
accreditation of Peace Corps interlude\*\*  
(N-35)

Number of requests for credit:	35
Favorable responses:	25
Percentage of approval:	71%

Average number of hours or units of credit received:	
Semester system (16 approvals):	6.7
Quarter system (7 approvals):	14.9

(text continued p.11)

\*In the VISTA study, percentages were: helped determine - 52%, helped understand - 42%; helped relevance - 51%; other - 46%

\*\*In the VISTA survey, 23 percent of respondents sought credit for their VISTA interlude. Fifty-two percent were granted credit, with an average of 5.8 semester credits and 6.0 quarter credits.

Table 2

SUMMARY OF SEVENTY TWO OPEN-END COMMENTS CONCERNING  
VALUE OF PEACE CORPS INTERLUDE TO SUBSEQUENT SCHOOLING  
AS PERCEIVED BY RETURNED VOLUNTEERS SURVEYED

Beneficial to individual's own continued education (38)

Made formal education more relevant and more enjoyable/influenced career choice (19)

Increased personal motivation and growth (7)

Enabled rational choice of postgraduate studies and enhanced postgraduate performance (6)

Changed general attitudes (2)

Gave data and understanding for papers; Necessary inclusion for academic credentials; Learned a language; Increased ability to work with minority and disadvantaged groups (1 each)

Increased awareness of value of roles and opinions of others (18)

Added to ability to listen to others and other viewpoints, through increased maturity and experience (8)

Created an awareness of problems of real world outside (7)

Brought new awareness of fellow students (2)

Related education to international issues (1)

Supplemented or augmented previous formal education (6)

Brought practicality to theory (3)

Gave valuable opportunity for unstructured learning not possible through formal education (2)

Supplied basic knowledge of country not otherwise studied; Provided good break in lock-step formal schooling; Provided de facto sensitivity training (1 each)

Made some or all formal schooling seem irrelevant (8)

Showed weaknesses of some formal courses (3)

Made formal education and courses seem even more irrelevant than before (3)

Revealed liberal arts course of study as useless; Made life in U.S. meaningless (1 each)

No value seen (2)

Table 3

SOME INSTITUTIONS WHICH HAVE GRANTED ACADEMIC  
CREDIT FOR PEACE CORPS INTERLUDE

California State College - Los Angeles  
Columbia University (Teachers College)  
Dartmouth College  
Dartmouth - Columbia joint program  
Michigan State University

New York City Board of Education  
Rhode Island College  
Syracuse University  
University of Colorado  
University of Minnesota

University of New Mexico  
University of Notre Dame  
University of Washington  
University of Wisconsin  
Utah State University

Yeshiva University

*n.b.: According to respondents to this survey,  
institutions from which credit was sought and  
not obtained as of survey date (May 1969)  
included Colorado State University, Harvard  
University, Indiana University, Northern Illinois  
University, Oregon State University, Pacific  
Lutheran University, Rutgers-University of  
Hawaii joint program, University of Nebraska,  
and Washington State University.*

Two respondents did not indicate the number of credits given.

If an average semester-system academic year is assumed to contain 30 academic credits, and an average quarter-system year 45 credits, then the number of hours or units of credit awarded by institutions averaged from one-fourth to one-third of an academic year. This assessment falls far short of the number of credit hours or units to which participants in the Peace Corps interlude felt their interlude experience was comparable:

Number of academic terms to which Peace Corps interlude  
is judged comparable by participants  
(N-197)

1 term:	115 (58%)	3 terms:	0 (0%)
2 terms:	29 (15%)	4 terms:	53 (27%)

Respondents equating the Peace Corps interlude to a semester scale gave the experience an average value of 23.34 academic units (hours); respondents using the quarter scale averaged 37.31 units. This was a range of from 78 to 83 percent of an academic year, as opposed to the 25 to 33 percent actually granted.\*

It appears that institutional attitude toward the Peace Corps interlude falls considerably short of the educational recognition it deserves, based on participant assessments.

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\*In the VISTA survey, the percentages were: 1 term - 52%, 2 terms - 24%, 3 terms - 1%, 4 terms - 23%. Average values given were 16.11 semester units and 27.54 quarter units, a range of 53 to 61 percent of an academic year, compared to the 13 to 19 percent actually granted.



### III INTERLUDE DESIRABILITY: A STRONG VOTE "YES"

#### For Themselves and For Others

The Peace Corps interlude's educational benefits are given a strong vote of confidence by those who have experienced them, both in personal terms and in giving advice to other young people. Respondents were asked if they would have taken a Peace Corps interlude had they had their present knowledge of the experience at the time of deciding to take the interlude. They were then asked if they would recommend to their friends and colleagues that those friends or colleagues spend 20 months or more on a Peace Corps interlude. To both questions, the response was decidedly positive:

#### Desireability of Peace Corps Interlude as seen by participants

Would have taken Peace Corps interlude themselves with present knowledge of experience (N-264):

Yes: 250 (95%)                      No: 14 (5%)

Would recommend to friends and colleagues that they spend 20 months or more on Peace Corps interlude (N-255):

Yes: 231 (91%)                      No: 24 (9%)

Males were slightly more positive in their reactions than were females. With regards to their own participation, 96 percent of males said yes, and 93 percent of females. Where friends and colleagues were concerned, the figures were 92 percent "yes" for males, 88 percent for females\*. A summary of respondent comments concerning whether respondents would recommend a Peace Corps interlude to others is given in Table 4, next pages.

#### Implications for the Peace Corps

The implications of these attitudes for the Peace Corps itself are, of course, positive. First, they indicate that the Peace Corps is seen by those who experience it as being "relevant". Second, with some young people questioning the advisability or even possibility of imposing well-intentioned assistance on the disadvantaged, it may be beneficial to the Peace Corps that its participants view it more as a vehicle for personal education than as a service organization. Third, in spite of articles which have appeared from time to time during the past few years suggesting that the Peace Corps was losing attractiveness to its young participants for one reason or another, the Peace Corps has, at least among those continuing formal education after Peace Corps interlude, apparently maintained the high  
(text continued p. 15)

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\* In the VISTA survey, the response for respondents themselves was: yes - 94%, no - 6%. For recommendation to friends and colleagues the result was: yes - 95%, no - 5%. The positive response percentage for males was slightly (less than one percent) lower in each instance than that for females.

Table 4

SUMMARY OF 186 OPEN-END COMMENTS CONCERNING  
WHETHER RESPONDENT WOULD RECOMMEND A  
PEACE CORPS INTERLUDE TO OTHERS

Yes (52)

Provides a chance to learn about self, people, a skill, language, different culture, and ability to adapt (16)

Experience of a lifetime (6)

Rewarding to help improve others lots; Experience a great value (5 each)

Valuable experience to new graduates; Benefits outweigh frustrations (4 each)

Peace Corps is a continuation of university study, but in the field; Placement of volunteers is highly correlated with a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction; More valuable than college to some people (2 each)

Provides chance to help on more basic level; Allows one to look at one's own society from outside; Give opportunity to spend 20 months in non-Western world; Valuable even though there are ramifications; Offers beneficial background to anyone; Peace Corps is the moral equivalent of war (1 each)

Qualified Yes (84)

Dependent on the person, program, country offered, and age (45)

Should have maturity, sense of humor, tact, desire to accomplish something, warmth, sincerity (11)

Only if participants are able to utilize field of knowledge they know before becoming volunteers (i.e., no history majors teaching agriculture) (10)

Only if one has honestly prepared oneself that the Peace Corps is no "bed of roses" and/or that one must not expect much overall success, that there will be many downs and ups (6)

Only if participants are qualified and know to some extent the area of work they are getting into (4)

If done between sophomore and junior years (2)

Must have interest, flexibility, and desire to work in foreign country; Must be emotionally and physically capable; Must not be adverse to working with the poor; If one realizes that no matter how "prepared" he be (through intelligence or academic background), one can actually give a limited amount of help; If sympathetic to the struggle for survival in the Third World; If male (1 each)

Qualified Yes/Military Draft - related (4)

Only if one wants overseas experience or to avoid the draft (2)

Only if draft requirements have been fulfilled -- Peace Corps and draft both require too much of one's lifetime and are too disruptive (2)

Table 4 (continued)

Yes, But With A Difference (8)

In-country (U.S.) service might be more fruitful (4)

Volunteers should stay only one year, not two (3)

Prior time overseas should be a requirement; first time experiencing overseas life sometimes creates negative response in volunteer (1)

Noncommittal (13)

"Its an individual decision" (9)

There is much frustration, culture shock, etc. (2)

Educational, but not rewarding; Peace Corps not marketable like college (1 each)

Reservations on Peace Corps organization (13)

Success and satisfaction depend on luck of assignment (3)

Experience dependent on quality of Peace Corps staff (2)

Staff knowledge of volunteer work is nil; Reformation in Peace Corps needed, reevaluation of program; Do away with "red tape" statisticians (2 each)

Ineffective staff and volunteers should be dismissed; Training methods should be used to find out actual committment of individual (1 each)

No, because of U.S. Government involvement with Peace Corps (10)

U.S. foreign policy furthered by Peace Corps, it is self-interest, and thus not good (7)

One should work abroad on private, non-government affiliated contracts (2)

Philosophy of new administration and new Peace Corps Director unpalatable (1)

No (2)

Insulting to treat other parts of the world as a playpen for adolescent Americans; Some volunteers have no interest, others no discipline (1 each)

status which it has historically enjoyed. Fourth, the Peace Corps might consider both stressing the educational aspects of a Peace Corps interlude in its recruiting activities and directing Peace Corps research more toward quantification of these aspects.

#### Implications for Higher Education

That this informal interlude experience -- with no classrooms, teaching staff, or any of the usual trappings of formal education -- should be so highly thought of in an educational context may be significant for formal higher education. Whether more than 90 percent of those experiencing higher education of a formal nature would give it high marks is not known, but certainly this strong a positive rating would be a satisfactory one. Incorporation of the Peace Corps and other interlude experiences in formal academic programs -- whether by compulsion or at the option of the individual student -- could be a step toward increasing the relevance of higher education, integrating theory with practice, and relating the campus to the "real world" beyond its confines.

The Peace Corps interlude would have some distinct advantages in the spectrum of off-campus educational interludes for which an academic institution could extend formal credit recognition. The Peace Corps is an ongoing program, administered outside the campus, and thus would not require institutional inputs of finances, time, and faculty (except for the faculty time which might be required to review theses on the interlude experience or other interlude accreditation requirements). If enough students participate in an off-campus experience, an institution can take care of many more students -- possibly important in view of the increasing numbers of students in colleges.

Formal credit recognition for the Peace Corps interlude might be one way an institution could experiment with the impact and desirability of accrediting off-campus educational experiences within the formal program.

The experimental Old Westbury College of the State University of New York, now in its second year, grants up to 45 credits for service in the Peace Corps. Old Westbury's president, a former associate director of the Peace Corps, describes as follows the principles behind inclusion of the Peace Corps interlude in his college's formal curriculum:

"Education is not doing something now in order to do something else later, but is an essential life process. As such. . . cross-cultural experience becomes an integral part of what we mean by 'higher education'. It furthers the principle that joint learning-application is a lifetime process. And, finally, it creates social concern."

Whether or not they agree with all of the foregoing, other institutions may want to seriously consider following the example of Old Westbury and others such as those offered by the colleges and universities listed in Table 3, which have already moved to link experiential with classroom education. A Peace Corps interlude is one means by which such linkages might be effected. If response from past participants as expressed in this survey is any guideline, the linkage would be both beneficial to the individual student and positive in its impact on the student's overall educational development.