31st Annual Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference
In Adult, Continuing, Community and Extension Education
September 27-29, 2012
Edmond, Oklahoma

Conference Host
University of Central Oklahoma
Dr. Don Betz, President

Conference Planning Committee
Kristi Archuleta Frush & Ed Cunliff- Conference Co-Chairs
Jim Berger- Proposal Review
Len Bogner & Jeff King- Pre-Conference Session
Josh Brandeberry- Conference Website
Karrie Terrell- Registrar, Volunteers, & Guthrie Event
Tracey Romano & Kristi Archuleta Frush - Program
Kalpana Gupta-Graduate Student Awards
Karen Barnes, Candy Sebert, Greg Wilson, Myron Pope & James Machell-
UCO Conference Members

Proceedings Editor
Michelle Glowacki-Dudka

Graduate Student Research Paper Awards Committee
John A. Henschke
Kathleen P. King

University of Central Oklahoma Conference Volunteers
Undergraduate and Graduate Students

Special Thanks
UCO Academic Affairs- Dr. Bill Radke, Provost
UCO Center for Elearning and Continuing Education (CeCe)
UCO Office of Research & Grants- Dr. Greg Wilson
UCO Enrollment Management- Dr. Myron Pope
UCO College of Education and Professional Services- Dr. James Machell- Dean
Gail Rocquemore, A.D Parties- www.adpartiesandevevents.com
UCO Center for Excellence in Transformative Teaching and Learning (CETTL)- Dr. Jeff King
All Proposal Reviewers

Mission Statement*

This conference provides a forum for practitioners and researchers to discuss practices, concepts, evaluation, and research studies to improve practice in adult education. Through discussion and collaboration, participants will contribute toward the realization of a more humane and just society through lifelong learning.

*Prepared on behalf of the Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference Steering Committee by Boyd Rossing, May 28, 1991.
Conference Proceedings: Present and Past

As in the past, the conference proceedings are available online on the conference website at http://www.uco.edu/ceps/events/mwr2p.asp and hard copies can be ordered through CreateSpace.com, if desired. Following the conference, the proceedings will be stored, along with those from past conferences, in the IUIUI Digital Archives collection.

Co-Chairs’ Welcome

Welcome to the 31st annual Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, Extension, and Community Education. This is the first time the conference is being hosted by the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) and is sponsored by several UCO departments as well as an outside partner, all noted in the Special Thanks of the program.

The Conference Location

The University of Central Oklahoma was founded in 1890 and is the oldest institution of higher learning in the state of Oklahoma. The mission of The University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) exists to help students learn by providing transformative education experiences to students to that they may become productive, creative, ethical, and engaged citizens and leaders serving our global community. UCO contributes to the intellectual, cultural, economic, and social advancement of the communities and individuals it serves.

Our 210-acre walking campus, beckons you to take some time to relax and enjoy the fountains, gardens, and sculptures that line the pathways. Our hope is that you take time to generate new ideas for both research and practice, but also to connect with one another informally as you share in the beauty of environment and friendliness of the people of Oklahoma.

What is Nearby

Edmond is home to many eateries, shops, and landmarks. Just a few minutes away, in downtown Edmond peruse the antique shops, and find some great coffee. There are also two beautiful lakes within a fifteen minute drive. You may also want to visit POPS restaurant, a one-of-a-kind experience just east on the original route 66 (Edmond Rd), or visit the world famous Round Barn in Arcadia.

Bricktown, in downtown Oklahoma City, is full of live music, a riverwalk, restaurants, and is just fifteen minutes south of campus. You may also want to take time to visit the Oklahoma City Museum of Art, home to Chihuly Glass, the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, or the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum which was designed to remember those who were killed or survived the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing.

Don’t miss the chance to travel back in time in Guthrie, just north of Edmond, a historical landmark and charming city with a unique ambiance not to be missed. Transportation will be provided for this dinner excursion on Friday night.

We encourage your participation in all aspects of this conference and hope that you will find time for rejuvenation along with inspiration for your practice and future research as a result of your time here.

We are honored to host this conference and to have the opportunity to spend time with all of you.

Sincerely,

Kristi Archuleta Frush and Ed Cunliff
Conference Co-Chairs
## Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference
### Steering Committee Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>University/School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archuleta Frush, Kristi</td>
<td>University of Central Oklahoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnett, Deborah</td>
<td>Southern Illinois University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berger, Jim</td>
<td>Western Kentucky University</td>
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<td>Cunliff, Ed</td>
<td>University of Central Oklahoma</td>
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<td>Dirkx, John M.</td>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
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<td>Elsey, Max</td>
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<td>Ferro, Trenton R.</td>
<td>Indiana University of Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>Glazer, Hilda R.</td>
<td>Harold Abel School of Psychology</td>
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<td>Glowacki-Dudka, Michelle</td>
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<td>Stein, David</td>
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<td>Titi-Amayah, Angela</td>
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<td>Wanstreet, Constance E.</td>
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</table>
## Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference Meetings and Proceedings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Host(s)</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Northern Illinois University</td>
<td>DeKalb, IL</td>
<td>Oct. 8-9, 1982</td>
<td>K. Czisny</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, MI</td>
<td>Oct. 10-11, 1985</td>
<td>L. S. Berlin, G. S. Wood, Jr., &amp;D. Wood</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Ball State University</td>
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<td>Oct. 3-4, 1986</td>
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<td>Michigan State University</td>
<td>East Lansing, MI</td>
<td>Oct. 8-9, 1987</td>
<td>S. J. Levine</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>University of Wisconsin—Madison</td>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
<td>Oct. 21-22, 1988</td>
<td>C. C. Coggins</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Columbus, OH</td>
<td>Oct. 13-15, 1993</td>
<td>K. Freer, G. Dean</td>
<td>ED362663</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>University of Nebraska</td>
<td>Lincoln, NE</td>
<td>Oct. 17-19, 1996</td>
<td>J. M. Dirkx</td>
<td>ED477391</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
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<td>Oct. 15-17, 1997</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Ball State University</td>
<td>Muncie, IN</td>
<td>Oct. 8-10, 1998</td>
<td>G. S. Wood, A. Austin, G. E. Hynes, &amp; R. T. Miller</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>University of Missouri—St. Louis</td>
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<td>Eastern Illinois University</td>
<td>Charleston, IL</td>
<td>Sept. 26-28, 2001</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Northern Illinois University</td>
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<td>Oct. 9-11, 2002</td>
<td>R. A. Orem</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>The Ohio State University, Cleveland State University, &amp; Indiana University of PA</td>
<td>Columbus, OH</td>
<td>Oct. 8-10, 2003</td>
<td>T. R. Ferro, G. J. Dean</td>
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Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, Community and Extension Education, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma, September 27-29, 2012
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Indiana University-Purdue University</td>
<td>Indianapolis, IN</td>
<td>Oct. 6-8, 2004</td>
<td>M. Glowacki-Dudka</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee</td>
<td>Milwaukee, WI</td>
<td>Sept. 28-30, 2005</td>
<td>S. Conceição</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>University of Missouri—St. Louis</td>
<td>St. Louis, MO</td>
<td>Oct. 4-6, 2006</td>
<td>E. P. Isaac</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Ball State University</td>
<td>Muncie, IN</td>
<td>Sept. 25-27, 2007</td>
<td>R. C. Young</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Western Kentucky University</td>
<td>Bowling Green, KY</td>
<td>Oct. 2-4, 2008</td>
<td>M. L. Rowland</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Michigan State University</td>
<td>East Lansing, MI</td>
<td>September 26-28, 2010</td>
<td>M. Glowacki-Dudka</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Lindenwood University</td>
<td>St. Charles, MO</td>
<td>September 21-23, 2011</td>
<td>M. Glowacki-Dudka</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>University of Central Oklahoma</td>
<td>Edmond, OK</td>
<td>September 27-29, 2012</td>
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Past Proceedings are available at https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/85

Revised 2012/08/15
31st Annual Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, Community, and Extension Education

Conference Schedule
University of Central Oklahoma
Edmond, OK
September 27-29, 2012

Program Overview

**Thursday, September 27th, 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 am- 6:00 am</td>
<td>Registration, Sign-in</td>
<td>Nigh University Center (NUC) 2nd Floor, outside Legends</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 pm-4:00 pm</td>
<td>Graduate Student Program</td>
<td>NUC 300 Carl Albert Room</td>
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<td>“Finding your place in Adult and Higher Education- presented by Drs. Len Bogner, Kristi Archuleta Frush and Jeff King.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30pm- 6:30 pm</td>
<td>Reception, Refreshments, and Music Dr. Frank Nelson</td>
<td>Ballroom A, NUC</td>
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**Friday, September 28th, 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 am- 4:00 pm</td>
<td>Registration, Sign-in</td>
<td>NUC, 2nd floor Outside Legends</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 am- 8:45 am</td>
<td>Continental Breakfast</td>
<td>Ballroom A</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:45 am-10:00 am</td>
<td>Open- Dr. Myron Pope Keynote: Dr. John M. Dirxx</td>
<td>Ballroom A</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 am-10:15 am</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15 am-11:05 am</td>
<td>Concurrent Session I</td>
<td>NUC 3rd floor 300, 301, 304, 320B, 320C</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:15 am-12:05 pm</td>
<td>Roundtable Session I</td>
<td>Ballroom A</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15pm -1:30 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>NUC 3rd floor, Ballroom A</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 pm-2:20 pm</td>
<td>Concurrent Session II</td>
<td>NUC 3rd floor, 300, 301, 304, 320 B, 320C &amp; Ballroom A</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30 pm-3:20 pm</td>
<td>Roundtable Session II</td>
<td>Ballroom A</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:20 pm- 4:25 pm</td>
<td>Concurrent Session III</td>
<td>NUC 3rd floor, 300, 301, 304, 320 B, 320 C, Ballroom A</td>
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<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 pm-</td>
<td>Guthrie Excursion</td>
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<td>Meet in front of the NUC</td>
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<td><strong>Saturday, September 29th, 2012</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 am- 10:00 am</td>
<td>Registration, Sign in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Center of Transformative Learning (CTL) South Lobby</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 am-8:30 am</td>
<td>Continental Breakfast</td>
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<td>CTL Foyer</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 am- 8:15 am</td>
<td>Steering Committee Meeting</td>
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<td>CTL 108</td>
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<td>8:30 am-10:30 am</td>
<td>Open- Dr. Jim Machell</td>
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<td>Keynote: Dr. Bill J. Radke</td>
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<td>Graduate Student Awards</td>
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<td>CTL 120 Radke Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 am-10:15 am</td>
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<td>CTL, Foyer</td>
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<td>10:20 am-11:10 am</td>
<td>Concurrent Session IV</td>
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<td>11:20 am- 12:10 pm</td>
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<td>CTL 108, 109, 117, 188, 237</td>
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<td>12:15 pm</td>
<td>Luncheon</td>
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</table>
Table of Contents: Conference Papers

Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference Steering Committee Members .................................. 3
Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference Meetings and Proceedings ........................................ 4
31st Annual Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, Community, and Extension Education Conference Schedule ................................................................. 6
Table of Contents: Conference Papers ....................................................................................... 8
Conference Roundtable Abstracts in Alphabetical Order ............................................................. 11
A Study of Factor Influencing Choice of Continuing Professional Education among Three Professions ................................................................................................................................... 12
Joseph Armstrong and Kevin Nolley Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana ........................... 12
Creating Inclusive Learning Environments .................................................................................. 13
Kalpana Gupta, Kristi Archuleta Frush, and Kerry Mitchell ....................................................... 13
Evaluating the Critical Thinking Skills and Personal and Academic Characteristics of Undergraduates at Two Post-Secondary Institutions with Different Curriculum Models .. 13
Michael Hepner .......................................................................................................................... 13
University of Dubuque .............................................................................................................. 13
Trust in Learning – It Makes a Big Difference .......................................................................... 13
John A. Henschke ..................................................................................................................... 13
Enabling Adult Learners on a Path of Self-determined Learning: A Case Study based on Heutagogy ............................................................................................................................ 13
Malar Hirudayaraj and Jeff Kaufman Southern Illinois University .......................................... 13
Concerns about the Divine Nine organizations at non-HBCU institutions, Practitioner Concerns, and Roundtable .................................................................................................. 14
Shontesa Jones .......................................................................................................................... 14
University of Central Oklahoma ................................................................................................. 14
Meeting Star Researchers: The Long-Term Impact of Graduate Students Meeting Nobel Laureates ............................................................................................................................... 14
Jeral Kirwan ................................................................................................................................. 14
University of Tennessee ............................................................................................................ 14
Back to the Future is NOW: Enabling Teachers to Teach Technology ..................................... 14
Sarah Lambert and Jackie Huffman ............................................................................................ 14
University of Central Oklahoma ............................................................................................... 14
John A. Henschke: Exploring Congruency in Practice and Scholarship .................................... 15
Lori Risely Lindenwood University ............................................................................................ 15
Perceptions of Learning Objective Use and Academic Motivation Among University Students ................................................................................................................................. 15
David Swingle, Karen Barnes, and University of Central Oklahoma ....................................... 15
The Human Condition, Humor, and Adult Learning: Lessons from Shakespeare for Human Resource Development and Adult Education ................................................................. 15
Conference Papers in Alphabetical Order

Perceptions of Social Loafing and Coursework Satisfaction among University Students..
Teresa Allen and Karen L. Barnes

Interdisciplinary Strategies for Teaching Qualitative Field Methods: Facilitating Collaborative Approaches to Learning
Wayne A. Babchuck and Angela Wassenmiller

The Practice of Generative Governance: A Case Study
Debra Beck

Efficacy of Andragogical Versus Pedagogical Teaching Strategies in Online Non-formal Education: Experimental and Qualitative Perspectives
Joe Bernard Bradley

Cooperative Learning as a Transformative Tool
Christine Maria Cobb

Tourism or Transformation: Making Sense of Education Abroad Experiences Among Adult Learners
John M. Dirkx and Julie Sinclair

Evaluation of the Midwest Research to Practice Conference: Year Thirty-One (31) and Looking Forward
Michelle Glowacki-Dudka, Lori Risley, and Jennifer Murray

Journals as Evaluative Tools
Wendy Griswold

Identification of Communities of Practice within a Small, Non-Profit, Faith-Based Organization
Molly Hamilton

Helping International Students Transition to American Higher Education
April Haulman and Regina Lopez

Faith Communities and Adults with Disabilities
E. Paulette Isaac

Using Andragogy to Build a Doctor of Andragogy Program
Susan K. Isenberg and John A. Henschke

The Protective Paradox: Do Current Ethical and Legal Guidelines Inhibit Research into Human Trafficking?
Jesse Bach, Carrie Love, and Carly Evans

College Faculty as Adult Learners in Outcomes Assessment
Jeff King

Perspectives on Leadership from Belizean Women
Kathleen P. King
Examination of the Big Five and Narrow Traits in Relation to Learner Self-Direction... 107
Jeral Kirwan, John Lounsbury, and Lucy Gibson................................................................. 107

The Retention Problem: Observations and Outcomes of a Best Practice ..................... 113
Josh Krawczyk ....................................................................................................................... 113

Gaining Advantage: From Theory to Practice, Utilizing Classic Grounded
Theory/Grounded Action in Action-Oriented Research...................................................... 118
Mike Nelson and Mark D. Maddy......................................................................................... 118

A Critical Review of Concept Mapping Research Literature: Informing Instructional
Practices in Urban GED Preparation Programs................................................................. 123
Larry Martin, Fatima Martin, and Erica Southworth.............................................................. 123

STEM Workforce Development: Creating Enduring Understandings for Public
Employment Office Career Counselors.................................................................................. 129
David Nickolich, Michele Wedel, Stephen Hundley, Charles Feldhaus, Kristin Bentrem, and Jill
Goodwin.................................................................................................................................. 129

Considering Andragogical Learning in a Pedagogical Classroom................................... 134
Lori Risley and Kathleen Petroff............................................................................................ 134

One Andragogical Approach to Comprehensive Examination Question(s): Encouraging a
Doctoral Student to Develop His or Her Individualized Comprehensive Examination
Question(s)............................................................................................................................... 140
Lori Risley ............................................................................................................................... 140

Transformative Learning in an International Context: Issues and Solutions from the
Confucian Perspective .......................................................................................................... 147
Qi Sun .................................................................................................................................... 147

The Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Performance: A Literature Review...................... 153
Angela Titi Amayah................................................................................................................ 153

Where Law Meets Religion, Ethnicity, and Gender: The U.S. Constitution and Diverse
Muslim Women and Men in the United States ................................................................. 159
Rey Ty and Awni Alkarzon.................................................................................................... 159

Deconstructing Culture: An Interdisciplinary Critique of Contending Theories of Culture
.................................................................................................................................................. 165
Rey Ty, Michelle Glowacki-Dudka, and Jim Berger .............................................................. 165
Conference Roundtable Abstracts
in Alphabetical Order
A Study of Factor Influencing Choice of Continuing Professional Education among Three Professions

Joseph Armstrong and Kevin Nolley
Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana

In Continuing Professional Education (CPE) there is a need for baseline information on what factors influence professionals in the selection of CPE programs in which to participate. The purpose of this study was to identify what factors influenced members of three professions (Psychiatrists, Pharmacists and Adult Educators) in their selection and attendance of a particular CPE event.

See Tables 1-3 below.

Table 1: Psychiatrists

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<th>Factor</th>
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<td>Personal Invitation</td>
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<td>Others Attending</td>
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<td>Cost/Price of CPE</td>
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Table 2: Pharmacists

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Table 3: Adult Educators

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Creating Inclusive Learning Environments  
Kalpana Gupta, Kristi Archuleta Frush, and Kerry Mitchell

Inclusion is one way of connecting a diverse group of learners by creating a respectful environment with a sense of belonging. This roundtable is aimed at discussing strategies for creating inclusive learning environments for diverse learners. The conversation will focus on: How can we best incorporate the different cultures, perspectives, and belief systems in various learning settings?

Evaluating the Critical Thinking Skills and Personal and Academic Characteristics of Undergraduates at Two Post-Secondary Institutions with Different Curriculum Models

Michael Hepner  
University of Dubuque

This study examined whether undergraduate students enrolled in a school focusing on liberal education, which incorporates primary texts and the Socratic Method in the classroom, achieve higher scores on a critical thinking exam when compared to the scores of students enrolled in a school that focuses on degree specialization (majors).

Trust in Learning – It Makes a Big Difference

John A. Henschke  
Lindenwood University

Research on the productive learning relationship between teachers and learners, or a productive working and working relationship between employers and employees is most strongly influenced by trust that initiated by teachers and employers. When trust is present, it makes all the difference; if trust is absent, almost nothing else matters.

Enabling Adult Learners on a Path of Self-determined Learning: A Case Study based on Heutagogy

Malar Hirudayaraj and Jeff Kaufman  
Southern Illinois University

This case study demonstrates Hase and Kenyon's (2000) concept of heutagogy, an approach to teaching and learning which moves the instructor to the background and makes the learner the major agent of learning, who negotiates the process and content of what will be learned. Concerns, contexts, and considerations related to this method are discussed.
Concerns about the Divine Nine organizations at non-HBCU institutions, Practitioner Concerns, and Roundtable

Shontesa Jones
University of Central Oklahoma

This roundtable will discuss the concerns that have risen with African American Fraternities and Sororities (Divine Nine) at non-HBCU institutions. The concerns are the campus image of the organizations and do they contribute positively to the institution. This roundtable will also discuss solutions to the concerns.

Meeting Star Researchers: The Long-Term Impact of Graduate Students Meeting Nobel Laureates

Jeral Kirwan
University of Tennessee

This roundtable will describe the results of a study of the long-term impact of the Lindau Meeting of the Nobel Laureates Graduate Student Awards Program on its participants. The specific goal of the evaluation was to assess students’ exposure to the Nobel Laureates and their attitudes towards STEM fields and careers. The participants in this evaluation included 196 graduate students who attended one of the Lindau Meetings of the Nobel Laureates between 2000 and 2008 as part of the student awards program. Survey findings revealed nearly all awardees have completed (or are making adequate progress toward completing) their Ph.D. degrees. Awardees expressed their participation in the meeting broadened their scientific perspective and inspired them to continue in a research career.

Back to the Future is NOW: Enabling Teachers to Teach Technology

Sarah Lambert and Jackie Huffman
University of Central Oklahoma

Today’s educators need adequate training in the use of products like iPads, Smart boards and innovative learning products in their classrooms to assist today’s learners. The presenters’ goal is to facilitate discussions that aid educators and administrators in assessing and implementing professional development based on the needs of their educational community.
John A. Henschke: Exploring Congruency in Practice and Scholarship

Lori Risely
Lindenwood University

Modeling and authenticity are important aspects of leadership. Considered a leader in adult education, John A. Henschke’s scholarship asserts theory and practice must be congruent. This research asked, “How does John A. Henschke’s practice mirror the andragogical theory espoused in his scholarship?” producing material evidence of the practice theory connection.

Perceptions of Learning Objective Use and Academic Motivation Among University Students

David Swingle, Karen Barnes, and
University of Central Oklahoma

This descriptive study finds evidence of a moderate relationship (r=.394, p=.004) between learning objective use at the university level, and Deci and Ryan’s (1985) concept of student motivation. Participants responded to a modified survey instrument based on Pintrich’s (1991) Motivated Strategies of Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) and a Learning Objective Scale (LOS).

The Human Condition, Humor, and Adult Learning:
Lessons from Shakespeare for Human Resource Development and Adult Education

Rey Ty and Awni Alkarzon
Northern Illinois University

Adult learners whom we teach non-formally in organizations and informally in community settings experience problems. While recognizing all these real-world problems with which people are confronted, we can lighten up the learning atmosphere. We can learn from Shakespeare who injected humor in the saddest of tragedies, such as King Lear.
Conference Papers in Alphabetical Order
Perceptions of Social Loafing and Coursework Satisfaction among University Students

Teresa Allen and Karen L. Barnes

This paper includes the results of a study designed to identify relationships between the perceptions of social loafing and coursework satisfaction among university students. Two measurements were used for hypothesis testing: (a) A modified version of the Social Loafing Questionnaire (SLQ) by Jassawalla, Malshe, and Sashittal (2008), and (b) a Likert scale for course satisfaction relating to experiences with social loafers in groups or teams. A negative relationship was found for the impact of the social loafer on the team and course satisfaction. Results indicate students found social loafing to be distractive and disruptive to team functioning. Additionally, management of social loafers might extend beyond the professor to include the team or individual members in reporting and evaluation. As group and team work has gained in popularity as a learner-centered teaching strategy in the university setting, careful consideration and attention is warranted to achieve ideal effectiveness of this strategy. This paper includes a discussion of a variety of approaches to enhance positive and productive group and team work in the university setting which may also be applied in a variety of other settings.

Introduction

Groups and teams often find themselves frustrated because one or more social members of a group have a tendency to engage in social loafing. As members in group projects, many college students face this ongoing problem without a clear understanding of why a person is loafing. Some college students have experienced instances when members of groups with one or more social loafers received the same grade without contributing their fair share of work to the project. In some groups, a member engaged in social loafing because of a controlling group member took over. Some individuals have been discouraged to participate by other members, and wanted to do all of the work alone (Pfaff & Huddleston, 2003). Social loafing is a growing problem that needs further research to help find effective ways to identify, control, and/or eliminate social loafing in groups.

This study has relevance because being an effective team member is a valued skill for students and professionals alike. The ability to create, facilitate, and promote the effectiveness and satisfaction of teamwork has value for practitioners working in adult, continuing, extension, community, and higher education programs. Social loafing occurs when the group is negatively affected by the social loafer or free-rider in the presence of others. These group members intentionally reduce their efforts and refrain from completing their fair share of the work while expecting the other members of the group to pick up the slack (Brooks & Ammons, 2003; Latane, Williams, & Harkins, 1979; Murphy, Liden, & Erdogan, 2003). Although this study focused on social loafing, it is important to consider those who carry the workload.

Jassawalla, Malshe, and Sashittal (2008) found team members pick up the slack of the social loafers in the group, and do more than their share to compensate for the social loafer’s poor quality or lack of work. Kerr (1983) refers to the group member who carries the social loafer or free-rider as the “sucker”. Other names for those who carry the workload are non-slackers and non-loafers (Dommeyer, 2007). Few people want to be a sucker while working in
groups (Kerr, 1983). Students are more likely to feel positive about group work if they feel the work and contributions of the members are equally shared (Pfaff & Huddleston, 2003). Taking on the role of the sucker creates a negative effect on the group, and often leads to intense feelings of resentment by the sucker.

Latane’s (1973) Social Impact Theory provided the theoretical framework for this study, and stated if a person is targeted by social forces, then increasing the number of people in the target group should lessen the compelling influence on each person because the impact is divided among the group members. On the other hand, this theory also suggests if a person is targeted by social forces, then the amount of pressure on the person targeted during social influence should increase with the number of people in the group, strength, and immediacy (Latane, Williams, & Harkins, 1979). Application of this theory has implications for group dynamics and more specifically the selection of the number of group members.

Past research has focused on methods and suggestions to reduce social loafing in order to help students collectively work in groups. Deeter-Schmelz, Kennedy, and Ramsey (2002) suggested team-building exercises to add cohesiveness in groups and among team members. Dommeyer (2007) proposed the use of the diary method when dealing with social loafers. Dommeyer’s suggestion for using the diary method is to monitor the behavior and performance of group members. The direct approach of the “You Are Fired” technique (Abernathy & Lett, 2005) was used and saves considerable time for students and instructors. George’s (1992) findings indicate intrinsic involvement might reduce social loafing in organizational contexts. George (1992) stated, “the greatest reduction in social loafing is likely to occur when individuals are made accountable for specific tasks” (p. 199). Additionally, developing strategies to increase the meaningfulness of tasks and workers’ perceptions of their organizational contributions have particular value to enhance group efforts. As with many learning tasks, nurturing an individual’s intrinsic motivation is key, but often challenging for the educator.

The social loafing phenomenon of self-reported social loafing from the students’ perspectives has received little research attention (Hoigaard et al., 2010). Though many researchers agree social loafing contributes to a negative learning experience in groups; this research is relevant because the student’s perspective of social loafing is under-investigated.

Social loafing and satisfaction with the group are common problems students and instructors face, but they often have no idea of how to deal with it. Perceived social loafing may occur regardless of any actual loafing (Hoigaard, Safvenbom, & Tonnessen, 2006). This descriptive research study addresses the perceptions of: (a) how students view social loafing behaviors; (b) the impact social loafing has on their team; (c) what professors should do to manage the problem; and (d) their own personal social loafing behaviors.

The research question for this study was: is there a relationship between perceptions of social loafing and coursework satisfaction among university students? The hypotheses for this study were: (H1) there is a relationship between perceptions of social loafing behaviors and coursework satisfaction among university students; and (H2) there is a relationship between the impact of social loafing on the team and coursework satisfaction among university students.

Methodology

A convenience sample of undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in courses at a regional university in Oklahoma was used for this descriptive study. The study was approved by the University Institutional Review Board and students were recruited two undergraduate
classrooms and one graduate classroom. Consenting participants were given a questionnaire to complete during class.

The questionnaire included a demographic section, modified versions of the Social Loafing Questionnaire (SLQ), the Self-Reporting Social Loafing Questionnaire (SRLSQ), a scale for course satisfaction, and open-ended questions. The SLQ was developed by Jassawalla, Malshe, and Sashittal (2008), and permission to use was granted. The SLQ has three sections: social loafer behaviors, impact of social loafers, and what professors should do to manage the problem. The first section has 6 statements describing social loafer behaviors and asked the participants to relate these to their experience using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (does not describe at all) to 5 (describes the most). The second and third sections used a five-point agreement scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The second section has 8 items asking participants to rate their agreement with the statements regarding the impact of the social loafer on their team performance, and the third section includes four statements asking what professors should do to manage social loafers. Data from the first two sections of the SLQ were used for hypothesis testing. Course satisfaction was measured by one item which stated: Considering your experiences with social loafers while working in groups or teams in an academic setting, please circle the number that best estimates your satisfaction with the course. This item used a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 6 (very satisfied). As it was assumed there would be individuals who might be social loafers, the SRLSQ (George, 1992) was modified and used to capture this information. Four open-ended questions were added to gather more detailed information and affective data by asking students to explain their reasons for loafing, why they believe others loafed, and what was done in response to the social loafing.

**Results**

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 18. Descriptive statistics and correlational analysis were used to investigate the relationships between social loafing and course satisfaction. The sample consisted of 48 participants who were predominately female (63%), undergraduate students (61%), full-time students (58%), and Caucasian (70%). The age range was 19 to 60 years with a mean age of 28 years, and a median age of 22 years.

Findings included no statistically significant correlation between social loafing behaviors and course satisfaction (Hypothesis 1), and a statistically significant low negative correlation ($r(47) = -0.35, p = .015$) between the impact of the social loafer on the team and course satisfaction (Hypothesis 2). The mean score for course satisfaction with working with a social loafer in group or team in an academic setting was 3.78 ($SD = 1.36$). Considering experiences with social loafers in groups or teams, undergraduate students ($M = 3.77, SD = 1.19$) expressed higher satisfaction with the course than graduate students ($M = 3.77, SD = 1.55$).

**Social Loafing**

The highest mean for what the social loafer does was the “member who did a poor job of the work she/he was assigned” ($M = 4.09, SD = 1.04$) followed by members coming poorly prepared to team meetings ($M = 4.06, SD = 0.97$). The social loafing behavior rated lowest was members who engaged in side conversations while the team was working ($M = 3.76, SD = 1.06$). Of the 8 measures of the impact of the social loafer on the team, the highest agreement was with...
the statement “other team members had to do more than their share of the work” ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 0.71$), and the lowest agreement with “the team missed deadlines” ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.50$).

The responses to the statements asking what professors should do to manage the problem of social loafers in the future included the following: (a) “Evaluate individual effort on teams in more ways” ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.85$); (b) “Let the team make a report on what each member did” ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.83$); (c) “Make the team report mid-semester on who is doing what” ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.26$); and (d) “Let me make a formal written evaluation of what others are doing” ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.06$). It is notable 23% of the responses to the last two statements were “neither agree nor disagree”. Two open-ended questions followed the SLQ.

The data obtained from the open-ended questions were examined for patterns and themes of responses. Responses to “Explain why you believe the student engaged in social loafing behaviors” indicated participants thought the social loafer was either lazy, unmotivated, procrastinating, uninterested, uncaring, experiencing burnout, socially awkward, immature and/or irresponsible, or did not like group members or group work. Some responses communicated empathy for the social loafer recognizing the loafing was unintentional due to more “dominant” personalities within the group, or the loafer was busy and had other priorities, lacked knowledge, or did not feel part of the group. The second question “What did you (or other members) do in response to the social loafer on your team?” had responses indicating participants usually took up the slack, completed the assignment, and ignored the social loafer. Some wrote they confronted the social loafer, scored them low on evaluations, or informed the teacher. A few responses indicated a positive approach as they tried to engage the social loafer, include them in communication and collaboration, “increase contact and urgency”, and communicate concern. A few responses indicated the member was kicked off the team.

### Self-Reported Social Loafing

The SRSLQ was added to appreciate those who might have practiced social loafing personally. The means for the 9 personal social loafing statements ranged from 1.39 to 2.61 indicating disagreement. Some responses of agreement indicated a presence of social loafers within this sample. The strongest agreement was with the statement “Less likely to volunteer for a task if another member is available to do the work” with responses of agree (27%) and strongly agree (3%). Two open-ended questions were added following the SRSLQ.

Responses to “Explain in your own words the reason why you loafed” yielded 26 responses which indicated no personal loafing. Those who indicated loafing reported: (a) a lack of time due to other obligations, (b) a lack of interest in the topic or it was “busy work”, (c) physical and psychological conditions such as illness, fatigue, stress, frustration or feeling overwhelmed, (d) laziness, (e) lacked knowledge, or (f) felt contributions were not valued.

Responses to “How did other members in your group treat you as a loafer?” centered around negative feelings of rejection, lack of respect, and social isolation and included statements such as “badly”, “they did not like me”, “they were not friendly”, “not good, an outcast and out of the loop”, “left me out”, and “seemed put-off/annoyed”. Few responses indicated positive treatments such as “normal”, or “nicely”.

Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, Community and Extension Education, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma, September 27-29, 2012
Discussion

Findings in this study indicate a negative relationship between the impact of the social loafer on the team and course satisfaction among university students. This finding is in concert with the study by Jassawalla, Malshe, and Sashittal, (2008) which suggested students found social loafing to be distractive and disruptive to the team. Since instructors may not know how to properly deal with social loafing in groups, it is important for them to seek and use effective methods for decreasing social loafing when designing their curriculum, which has group work components. This study and others can provide some direction for strategies to consider. Since working in groups at the collegiate level is considered role rehearsal for professional roles, students would benefit by learning to address these issues in a supportive learning environment.

Results of this study suggest educators pay close attention to ways to enhance intrinsic motivation for group members. Although this approach is an expectation of good teaching, it appears specific efforts for group work would be mutually beneficial to reduce the emergence of social loafing. Strategies should include ways to establish a climate of inclusion, mutual respect, and connectedness through various techniques and activities which can accomplished in the beginning of the group’s assignment. Student comments regarding how they were treated as a social loafer often included exclusion and intimidation, which could contribute to poor self-esteem. Additionally, creating ways early in instruction to add task value and make the task personally meaningful, relevant, and interesting should also reduce social loafing (George, 1992).

Since group work may be completed without any observations by the instructor, the final project can be assessed without knowledge of group dynamics or contributions. Instructors could monitor groups for signs of social loafing, and grade students according to individual contributions to the group. A variety of approaches with external rewards and consequences are suggested in the literature to promote the accountability of group members. According to George (1992), a group grade depends on the work of others to a certain extent. This dependence can be avoided by use of a method termed identifiability when one’s work is identifiable and separate (Deeter-Schmelz, Kennedy, & Ramsey, 2002). Each member can be evaluated and graded according to their contribution without the group sharing the same grade. Methods such as peer evaluations, journaling, reports of meetings, diary keeping, and progress reporting offer important feedback to the instructor. These methods also provide some self-assessment opportunities, especially with the diary method (Dommeyer, 2007). Should evidence of social loafing emerge, there is opportunity to directly address the issue and communicate the seriousness of the practice. Development of these extrinsic rewards and consequences takes time and effort for both students and instructors. The “You Are Fired” (Abernathy & Lett (2005) method was discussed previously and offers empowerment to the nonloafers, and saves time.

Further research is needed to investigate this phenomenon in order to find more effective ways to identify, control, or eliminate social loafing in groups. It is assumed that information from this research study could be helpful to educators and learners by providing them with insight on the perspectives of social loafers and to help educators understand the student’s perspective when working in groups.

References


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Interdisciplinary Strategies for Teaching Qualitative Field Methods: Facilitating Collaborative Approaches to Learning

Wayne A. Babchuck and Angela Wassenmiller

Drawing upon the experiences of the co-authors who have taught undergraduate and graduate courses in traditional, blended, and online formats across disciplines, this inquiry explores collaborative learner-centered strategies for teaching qualitative field methods and design. We begin by identifying foundational components and procedures associated with qualitative research. We briefly touch upon the history and epistemological underpinnings of the qualitative paradigm, consider unique and shared attributes of qualitative designs, and discuss which of the many contemporary approaches have most often been advanced in qualitative texts written by scholars of this tradition. At the heart of this inquiry, we introduce and illustrate the use of a comprehensive Qualitative Design Procedural Checklist and companion Collaborative Mentoring Feedback Matrix that has proven highly effective for traditional face-to-face instruction and also holds great potential for blended and online formats. We assess the viability of this technique given the shared and unique challenges inherent in alternative educational delivery systems and our goal of forging feedback rich learning environments across settings. Although the checklist and feedback matrices have been specifically designed to better facilitate the collaborative teaching of qualitative research methods, the strategies outlined here may be highly generalizable to other educational contexts and curricula.

Introduction

The proliferation and rapidly growing acceptance of qualitative research designs in education and the social sciences over the past few decades has ushered in new and emancipatory ways of linking research and practice across disciplines. Coupled with the expanding role of alternative educational delivery systems and other considerations such as an increased focus on mixed methods research and on new or emerging forms of data collection (see Creswell, 2013, Figure 7.3, p. 160, for a compendium of qualitative data collection techniques), educators are redefining traditional modes of research and rethinking instructional strategies and techniques. Along these lines, we advocate interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches that encourage active participant-centered instruction and hold great promise for facilitating the teaching, learning, and application of qualitative field methods.

Teaching Qualitative Field Methods

There are a number of conceptual and procedural considerations that need to be taken into account when teaching qualitative research methods and design. Topics that need to be addressed include selecting a textbook; the history of qualitative methods; paradigmatic assumptions and world views; unique and shared characteristics of qualitative research; identifying research topics, theoretical frameworks, and the use of the literature; the problem and purpose statement; formulating the central question and sub-questions; choosing among qualitative approaches and sub-approaches; ethical considerations, IRB, and field challenges;
purposeful sampling; strategies of data collection and analysis; triangulation, validation and evaluation; presentation of the research findings, writing the report, implications, and conclusions, etc. A detailed discussion of these topics is well beyond the logistical requirements of this paper, but we will touch on several of these topics below with the hope of providing some guidance or direction that can be of use to researchers interested in learning about or teaching qualitative research methods (and see Babchuk & Badiee 2010; 2011).

There are several well-written and conceptually sound qualitative textbooks from which to choose. Good introductory guides include those by Merriam (2009), Stake (2010), Glesne (2011), Maxwell (2012), and Richards and Morse (2013), and those effective for more intermediate or advanced study include Wertz, Charmaz, McMullen, Josselson, Anderson, and McSpadden (2011), Berg and Lune (2012), Creswell (2013), and Lichtman (2013). Although Charmaz’s (2006) text is directed at the use of constructivist grounded theory, her book provides helpful suggestions and techniques useful for qualitative researchers. We recommend combinations of Charmaz (2006), Merriam (2009), Creswell (2013), and Lichtman (2013).

The use of qualitative research has its origins in the early twentieth century primarily in the work of field anthropologists (e.g., Boas, Malinowski, Mead, Radcliffe-Brown, Evans-Pritchard), “Chicago School” sociologists (e.g., Burgess, Park, Thomas, Small, Wirth, Redfield, etc.), and of pioneering educational researchers that contributed to this tradition. Good overviews have been provided by Vidich and Lyman (2000), Bogdan and Biklen (2007), Deegan (2007), Sluka and Robben (2007), Erickson (2011), and see Denzin and Lincoln (2011). These scholars set the stage for a major retooling of the research enterprise marked by publication of the canonical works of Becker, Geer, Hughes, and Strauss’ (1961) Boys in White, Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) The Discovery of Grounded Theory; Garfinkel’s (1967) Studies in Ethnomethodology; Turner’s (1967) The Forest of Symbols; Blumer’s (1969) Symbolic Interactionism; Geertz’s (1973) The Interpretation of Cultures; Guba’s (1978) Toward a Methodology of Naturalistic Inquiry in Educational Evaluation; Spradley’s The Ethnographic Interview (1979) and Participant Observation (1980); and the work of others in the anthropology of education (George and Louise Spindler, Harry Wolcott, etc.).

Another important consideration is to become familiar with what have been referred to by various authors as paradigms, philosophical, or epistemological perspectives, traditions, or assumptions, interpretive frameworks, or worldviews, etc. These philosophical or paradigmatic orientations help ground the research literature and inform theory and practice at all levels of the research enterprise. Although many ways of approaching this topic exist (e.g., Merriam, 2009; Glesne, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Creswell, 2013), a good starting point is Neuman’s (2009) discussion of three alternative approaches to social science (positivist, interpretive, and critical) “each which rests on philosophical assumptions and has a stance on what constitutes the best research” (p. 90). Here, Neuman reviews these “ideal types” as well as feminist and postmodern approaches and their implications for research and practice. A thorough understanding of this material is needed for researchers to effectively position themselves, conceptualize their research designs, and justify use of qualitative methods and approaches.

Scholars and practitioners also list factors driving the selection of qualitative approaches and unique and shared characteristics of qualitative designs (e.g., Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2010; Creswell, 2013; Richards & Morse, 2013). Shared characteristics include a focus on rich description and understanding the participants’ points of view, long-term face-to-face research conducted in naturalistic field settings, inductive data analysis, nonrandom, purposeful sample selection (sites and participants), the researcher as the primary data collection
instrument, a concern with process, an emergent and flexible design, a holistic understanding gleaned from multiple sources of data, and a focus on meaning-making and providing an avenue for participants’ voices to be heard (Babchuk & Badiee, 2010).

As stated by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.), “an embarrassment of choices now characterized the field of qualitative research” (p. 20), potentially overwhelming both novice and experienced researchers interested in choosing among and employing qualitative designs. In an attempt to sidestep this problem, several authors have identified a much smaller number of popular qualitative approaches and have offered suggestions as to when and how to use them. Merriam (2009), for example, outlines six approaches (basic qualitative research, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative analysis, critical research and case study), Glesne (2011) presents five (ethnography, life history, grounded theory, case study, and action research), Creswell (2013) and Lichtman (2013) five (narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study), and Richards and Morse (2013) also identify five (ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, discourse analysis, and case study).

**Strategies for Facilitating Collaborative Approaches to Learning**

Conceptual and procedural considerations are presented in the *Qualitative Research Design Procedural Checklist* below, as are sample collaborative feedback matrices. Originally developed for use in traditional classrooms, the checklist has been effectively utilized as a tool to keep students on track in fulfilling “Mini Research Project” requirements of qualitative methods courses taught at the university level. Although the checklist has been helpful to students in planning research design, it has been the use of learner-centered collaborative feedback matrices that have proven to be the most effective instructional aid. In this approach, students regularly meet in small groups to share and discuss central components of their evolving research designs. Students then submit these to the instructor who loads them into the matrices in black type (Step 1). Next, the instructor provides feedback listed in red on the matrices (below the black) and is made available to the entire class online (Step 2). Once in place, the entire class engages in face-to-face collaborative feedback to help craft each student’s research design. This feedback is then listed in blue or purple ink and is also online and reviewed by the class (Step 3) resulting in a rainbow of input on each student’s research project. In this manner, students and instructors collaboratively co-construct each student’s research design throughout the course.

**Teaching Qualitative Research Methods in Blended and Online Formats**

Yet to be employed in other formats, we believe this technique would be equally effective for blended and online instruction. Blended and online course materials are often delivered via a learning management system (LMS) such as Blackboard. The LMS, however, does not usually facilitate multi-user collaboration on documents. We recommend the use of a Web 2.0 tool such as Google Docs for creating the feedback matrices. Once a document (the matrix) is created, the instructor can share it with a class and each student can contribute information to that same document. The aforementioned steps can then take place, with the instructor adding feedback in one color and class feedback listed in another color. Chat or comment features can support class discussion. Using a collaborative document such as Google Docs could also be used effectively in a face-to-face environment as well.
Qualitative Research Design Procedural Checklist

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<tbody>
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<td>Introduction and identification of the research problem (what is the topic, why it is an</td>
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<td>important topic to study, why the study is needed, etc.)</td>
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<td>Qualitative purpose statement (or problem statement)</td>
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<td>Qualitative research central and sub-questions (consistent with the goals and rationale of</td>
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<td>the study, feasible, well-written, and succinct)</td>
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<td>A concise summary of relevant literature and how and where it is used in the study</td>
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<td>Researcher positioning/reflexivity (worldview, theoretical lens, and approach)</td>
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<td>Definition of terms (clearly define terms and concepts used in the study)</td>
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<td>Rationale for why qualitative research was selected (over quantitative or mixed methods)</td>
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<td>Rationale for choice of qualitative approach (e.g., case study, phenomenology, grounded</td>
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<td>theory, ethnography, narrative, discourse analysis, participatory research, etc.)</td>
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<td>IRB and ethical considerations (identify permissions that have been granted)</td>
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<td>Sample selection procedures documented and explained (include number and demographic</td>
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<td>information of participants, how participants will be recruited and how they will benefit</td>
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<td>from the study; also provide site selection criteria, etc.)</td>
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<td>Data collection methods documented and justified (e.g., interviews, observations,</td>
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<td>Discussion and presentation of research findings, results, and conclusions. What</td>
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<td>Attached data collection instruments</td>
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Statement of Purpose and Research Questions Collaborative Matrix

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<tr>
<th>Student Name Qualitative Approach</th>
<th>Purpose Statement</th>
<th>Central Research Question and Sub-Questions</th>
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<td>1. Student Submission</td>
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<td>2. Instructor Feedback</td>
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<td>3. Peer (Class) Feedback</td>
<td>3. Peer (Class) Feedback</td>
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Data Collection and Sample Selection Collaborative Matrix

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<th>Student Name Qualitative Approach</th>
<th>Primary Data Collection Procedures</th>
<th>Others Forms of Data Collection</th>
<th>Selection of Site(s), Participants</th>
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<td>Student Submission Instructor Feedback Peer Feedback</td>
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Conclusion

Many contemporary researchers in education and the social sciences have embraced a paradigm shift moving from more traditional quantitative approaches to those employing qualitative designs. In particular, practitioner-driven fields such as education, health care, nursing, social work, and adult and continuing education have increasingly employed qualitative methods with considerable success. This inquiry has provided an introductory framework and strategies for facilitating an interdisciplinary and collaborative learner-centered approach for teaching qualitative field methods and research design. We believe that qualitative research will continue to gain momentum as it becomes increasingly clear that to better understand human behavior and social interaction we must accommodate multiple ways of knowing and amplify the voices of our participants, many who have historically felt marginalized by society and long underrepresented by the academy’s long-standing and stifling positivist research tradition.

References


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The Practice of Generative Governance: A Case Study

Debra Beck

This case study drew upon theories of practice -- specifically, situated and sociocultural learning theories -- to describe how learning occurs in the routine activities of preparing for, and participating in, nonprofit board meetings. This research had a two-fold purpose: to understand nonprofit board learning within the context of their primary workspace (meetings) and to understand and articulate the factors that best contribute to an environment where generative governance can occur. A case study approach allowed for immersion in the meeting environment and deep exploration of the experiences, roles and motivations of individual members. Data were collected via observation of five consecutive board meetings, two focus groups, in-depth interviews of board members and the agency executive director, and content analysis of meeting materials. Evidence of a community of practice was found and linked to the qualities necessary to foster generative thinking and governing. Particularly notable were the multiple ways in which the board focused on mission (domain) and relied upon it to drive deliberations, the collegial and trusting environment in which it worked (community), and the critical importance of peer learning – in both expert and non-expert roles – to fuel group understanding (practice).

Introduction

As the nonprofit sector expands – nearly 1.6 million registered organizations in 2011 (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2012) – so do public expectations for services and professionalism. Responsibility for true leadership and accountability continually grows for the sector as a whole and for individual nonprofit boards. Expectations are high and opportunities rich, but traditional board development efforts cannot begin to prepare those charged with governance. Most of those efforts are confined to relatively brief, formal experiences (e.g., training sessions and retreats) that occur outside of the context of daily governance work. In this setting, as special events in a board’s life, their failure to rise to the challenge is inevitable.

Emerging governance discussions, sparked by release of Governance as Leadership (GAL) (Chait et al., 2005) and BoardSource’s The Source (2005), call for a new board work culture. They also describe, in different ways, the need for richer, more holistic approaches to board learning and thinking. Learning is not a special event in these conceptualizations. It is a part of governance life. Existing ideas about board development cannot fully support these more demanding approaches.

This research was driven by one overarching question: How does preparation for, and participation in, nonprofit board meetings impact members’ ability to engage in generative governance?

The Practice Problem

Publication of Governance as Leadership (Chait et al., 2005) introduced new opportunities to reframe the work of nonprofit boards and the training that prepares members for responsibilities that promised to be more personally fulfilling. The problem for the researcher, an adult educator focused on board development, was how to translate revolutionary but fuzzy
ideas (especially a new concept, generative governance) into practical, actionable roles that engage and inspire nonprofit leaders. The researcher wondered what aspects of this model might look like in meetings of a high-functioning board, and how that information might be shared appropriately with other boards. She also hoped to be able to incorporate insights from this research into actionable approaches to her work as a consultant, trainer and writer supporting nonprofit boards.

The Theoretical Foundation

Situated learning theory, especially its core community of practice component (Lave & Wenger, 1991; McDermott, 1999; Wenger, 1999, 2000), provided the foundation from which this research was built. In a nutshell, situated learning theory says that learning occurs in everyday life and is context-driven. Learning takes place in our informal interactions and activities. Learning is not confined to training, school and other formal events. Learning also cannot be separated from the context in which it takes place. Learning does take place in board work and is shaped by the environment, constraints, and other aspects of organizational life. Houle’s (1989) work on governing boards provided a direct link between this theoretical perspective and the environment to be studied.

Sociocultural learning theory added depth of understanding to the question of how commitment to organizational mission, so essential in nonprofit work and especially governance, is built and incorporated into daily board practices. Gherardi’s (1999; 2000; 2006) work, as well as Cook and Yanow (1993) and Yanow (2003; 2004), provided the frame for demonstrating how this theoretical perspective contributes to mission-based governance work.

Methods

Since this research was intended to study learning in context, a case study of one high-functioning nonprofit board was chosen. The primary research question was this: What aspects of interaction in their monthly board meetings facilitated an open exchange that fostered an environment where generative thinking would not only be welcomed but would flourish? A case study allowed the researcher to observe the processes that have the potential to facilitate this type of thinking and identify ways in which that thinking enhances the board’s ability to apply outcomes to decision making.

As a vision of the ideal environment for conducting this research took shape, one local nonprofit board emerged as offering the greatest potential to come close to that setting. No board is perfect, but some have greater clarity about their purpose and are more innovative in their approach to governance work than others. The board of the “Rocky Mountain Clinic” stood out as just such a group. The RMC is a small community organization that provides medical services and referrals for community residents who lack either private insurance or public assistance (e.g., Medicaid). Volunteer health care professionals staff the clinic, with the support of a small, part-time staff. The board governing this community program includes individuals with medical backgrounds, community connections, and expertise in various areas considered essential to building and maintaining organizational capacity (e.g., fundraising, financial management, personnel).

Four components provided the methodological approach for this research: observation of meetings, focus groups interviews, individual interviews with board members and the executive director, and content analysis of board materials.
Discussion

As adult learners, board members want common-sense concepts and actions that they can use to approach their work differently and more effectively. Governance as leadership is a marvelous theory, with tremendous potential to transform nonprofit governance, yet translating it into concepts and actions that make sense to busy adult learner-leaders is the key. This research attempts to advance that translation process.

The researcher drew widely from a range of adult learning theories in anticipation of this research, working to avoid missing unexpected insights while looking for something else. In the end, situated learning offered the strongest fit. She found evidence of all three elements of a community of practice – domain, practice and community – in the data. Each contributed in different ways to an environment where learning was embedded in routine board activities and where evidence of generative thinking/governance was observed. Of particular importance were the ways in which focus on mission infiltrated the agenda and discussions, the role of peer learning in building the board’s capacity to govern, and the strategic use of questions to broaden thinking.

Research Highlights

The researcher initially identified two major themes in data analysis: mission and capacity. As she continued to refine that analysis, she eventually found the three core elements of a community of practice. The domain of a community of practice was a close fit to the concept of “mission” as it was emerging in the data. The community and practice elements emerged from the original “capacity” concept. Both “community” and “practice” build capacity to govern generatively and effectively, while the “domain” (mission) provides the collective motivation.

**Domain.** Across observations and interviews, the researcher found two major “domain” evidence themes: collective focus on organizational mission, and individual connections made between that mission and their personal motivations to serve. The ways in which members repeatedly raised the mission in routine decisions was noteworthy. A particularly vivid example occurred in the first meeting observation, during discussion about whether to approve a local health care provider’s request to rent space on a day when the clinic was not operating. Many attentive boards would have seen the request as an opportunity to help a colleague – and add rent funds to the agency budget – and approved it without significant discussion. When a member raised the question, “How does this fit our mission,” the Rocky Mountain Clinic board’s deliberation began from a different place. That starting point prompted the board to consider potential impacts on donor and volunteer relations, the agency’s staff, and potential granting sources. In the end, they declined to accept the request.

Board members were able to clearly articulate their personal motivations for service within the context of the clinic’s mission. Their individual motivations fell into three categories: Civic (e.g., “We have a responsibility to give back to the community”), Moral/spiritual (“I think it is an incomplete life if you don’t do something for somebody, somehow”), and Social/political (belief in filling the gaps in services that others [e.g., the federal government] “should” be providing).

**Community.** Three major factors contributed to board community: leadership, strategic member recruitment, and organizational climate. Members described three primary sources of leadership, two of whom – the founding board member and the executive director – were easily
identified. The third source was more invisible to board members, but emerged as a common theme in the data: the situational leadership that individual members exercised at different times in board work. For example, on issues related to mission (health care), physician, hospital administrator and nursing faculty members naturally stepped in to guide discussions.

What was particularly striking to the researcher was the clarity with which board members defined and embraced those responsibilities. Members described a strategic approach to identifying recruitment targets, based on governance needs — the skills, community connections, etc., needed to govern effectively. They recruited with those specific needs in mind. (While that sounds like a common-sense approach that all boards would naturally adopt, many boards struggle with identifying both the goals and recruiting individuals who best fit them.) The organizational climate, as described by the board members themselves, was one where trust and respect were given. They trusted each other to act in the best interest of the agency. They respected each other’s expertise and discernment in deliberations.

**Practice.** Four factors emerged around the concept of “practice:” role clarity, peer learning, member questions, and resources. Role clarity began before board service began. In every interview, members described knowing up front why they were being recruited and what they were expected to bring to the boardroom table. They understood, and accepted, what was being asked of them from the moment they joined the board.

Two major types of peer learning emerged in the data. One was as the board expert on a specific skill area (e.g., fundraising, financial management, public relations). The less obvious learning role was that of the non-expert. Members were willing to ask questions about unfamiliar concepts, challenge “common sense” assumptions, and offer different perspectives based on their own experiences.

Meeting observations yielded several illustrations of how member questions directed, clarified and expanded thinking. Observing who asked what types of questions, and how those questions focused board discussions and resulting decisions, was one of the more enlightening aspects of this research. The frequency of questions centered on mission impact was noteworthy to the researcher. So, too, was member willingness to pose questions that challenged peers to look beyond the obvious and easy answer. Equally remarkable was the way in which that question focused the board on its governance responsibilities.

The fourth factor, governance learning resources, covered a range of tools and member sources of information and insight. Particularly important to this group were meeting minutes, the printed executive director’s report, and the presence of a founding member of the clinic board.

**Takeaway Messages and Practice Impact**

While early opportunities to share this work with nonprofit scholars have been validating, the researcher is most energized by the fact that she emerged from this research with a framework (communities of practice) for describing effective board practice. She has vivid ways of articulating how generative governance can be fostered within the routines and deliberations of these critical leadership bodies. Four key messages developed through this research, all ultimately impacting how, and what, the researcher/practitioners share with nonprofit audiences.

**A constant focus on mission is critical.** There are many ways in which boards can ensure that mission remains at the center of their work. Here are some specific recommendations based on the case study data:
• Make sure everyone recruited to the board understands and embraces your mission—and can articulate how doing so connects to their own values.
• Recruit people who think critically and broadly, who are inclined to ask on their own, “what about the mission?”
• Build in mechanisms to ensure mission focus. Build the agenda around mission. Include regular opportunities to learn about how your programs advance the mission. Regularly review and reflect on how your work as a board contributes to mission fulfillment.

**Role clarity is essential, in recruitment and beyond.** Before a board approaches anyone to join, it must be absolutely clear in articulating the contributions it expects a new member to make. Use that information to help identify prospective board members (from a pool of people who support your mission, of course). In recruitment efforts, be up front with what the individual is expected to add to the board’s capacity to govern.

**Recognize, value and use peer learning.** The knowledge and perspectives required to govern effectively likely are already in the room if the board has recruited strategically. Draw first upon that inside expertise. Invite members to share what they know, freely and often. Recognize that asking the burning questions is not a sign of deficit, but a service to the board. The act of articulating what we “know” and challenging the board to check assumptions facilitates learning.

**A safe, respectful environment is critical.** Without the strength of a supportive community, nothing else is possible. It is important to actively foster an environment where board members feel safe to interact openly, disagree when needed, and come together to fulfill a common governance call.

Besides having opportunities to share this research with different scholarly audiences, the researcher has drawn from it to launch a model, Board Practice Communities (http://boardpracticecommunities.wikispaces.com/) that she shares with practitioners in workshops and other board development settings. She incorporates insights and examples from this case study in other governance-related consulting and training projects.

Themes emerging resulting from this research also form the foundation for her blog, The Laramie Board Learning Project (http://www.boardlearning.org/). In that space, the author shares not only the essential themes from this research, but expands upon those themes to demonstrate how they are enacted in daily nonprofit board life. Posts also provide a focal point for engaging nonprofit practitioners and other governance experts via a range of social media, especially Twitter (https://twitter.com/#!/npmaven) and LinkedIn. Through these public writings and interactions, the researcher is not only contributing to the conversation about nonprofit governance, she also is helping to shape it.
References


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Presented at the Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma, September 27-29, 2012
Efficacy of Andragogical Versus Pedagogical Teaching Strategies in Online Non-formal Education: Experimental and Qualitative Perspectives

Joe Bernard Bradley

The efficacy of andragogy as a set of assumptions about teaching adults remains unsubstantiated due to scarce empirical research. One recent online study found no significant differences in outcomes between andragogical and pedagogical cohorts in an online non-formal professional development course on grant proposal writing. Though not statistically significant, the satisfaction levels as gleaned from course evaluations were noticeably higher on average among participants in the andragogical cohort. Qualitative comments from participants also favored andragogical teaching methods and activities. These qualitative differences, in conjunction with the clearly more favorable aggregated mean course evaluation ratings among participants in the andragogical module as compared to the pedagogical module, supported the finding of higher overall learner satisfaction levels among andragogical participants. Implications for research and practice are offered.

Introduction

Significantly, the number of both formal and non-formal online learning programs for adults continues to increase at a rapid pace. An extensive review of the literature, however, failed to uncover any previous studies comparing the relative efficacy of andragogy versus pedagogy in online non-formal adult education programs that emphasize personal or professional development (Bradley, 2011). This experimental study, the first of its kind to heed all of Rachal’s (2002) suggestions for andragogy researchers as far as the author was able to discover, only begins to fill a large gap in research in this field. Though large numbers of polemical writings exist on the effectiveness of andragogy, its efficacy in continuing and non-formal online educational settings has not yet been substantiated in the empirical literature (Bradley, 2011).

History of Distance Education as a form of Adult Education in North America

The rich history of distance education as a form of adult education in North America imparts the necessary backdrop to support current discussions encircling the implementation of andragogy’s assumptions in today’s ever-expanding virtual learning environments.

Historically, the primary aims of adult education in what is now the United States have changed based on the changing needs of local populations (Knowles, 1977). For example, during the Colonial era, adult education focused almost exclusively on religious and ethical matters, while after becoming a nation the emphasis was on leadership and citizenship. More recently, however, more attention has been given to the economic realities of a global workforce that is becoming more technological and diverse. As the economy has transitioned from heavy industrialization to services and information technology (IT), the need for career and workforce training has never been higher. The demand for distance education among adults, which affords learners with the convenience of time and place, continues to grow (Cross, 1981; Isenberg, 2007).

Chautauqua was originally conceived in 1874 by its founders Dr. John Vincent and Lewis Miller solely for the training of Sunday school instructors, and it rapidly expanded as an educational institution to include other participants and programming, including distance
education. John Vincent, one of its chief proponents, believed that education should be available to the masses, not just an elite few. As a result, according to Stubblefield and Keane (1989), by the post- Civil War period,

The Chautauqua Institution combined residential education and leisure, and it extended into remote communities through the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circles, Women’s clubs, local Chautauquas, traveling tent Chautauquas, and lyceum lecture bureaus formed a national network, bringing Americans in both urban and isolated rural areas into contact with scientific, cultural, international and political ideas. (p. 30)

Today’s expansive distance education offerings also represent an outgrowth of Chautauqua. Notably, “the first significant distance education effort in North America was part of the Chautauqua movement” (Garrison, 1989, p. 223). In 1883, William Rainey Harper joined the movement and helped the Chautauqua University to receive its charter. The College of Liberal Arts, a component of the Chautauqua University, operated primarily as a “correspondence school,” with Harper as its principal. By 1892, Harper had ascended to the presidency of the University of Chicago, where he integrated his own beliefs concerning distance education within the university’s extension offerings thereby earning him widespread recognition “as the father of correspondence education in North America” (Garrison, 1989, p. 223).

Although popular, correspondence education as a form of distance education was not without its naysayers. Dropout rates were high, and instructor feedback was necessarily slow. Garrison (1989) wrote,

The problem of slow and irregular feedback in the correspondence educational transaction has caused distance educators to explore the use of rapidly evolving communications and computer technology. The adoption of these new technologies in some situations has changed drastically the educational transaction at a distance and certainly has made distance education a more complex and exciting field of practice. (p. 224)

More recently, Isenberg (2007) and Blondy (2007) each proposed roadmaps for implementing the assumptions of andragogy in online educational programs for adults. Importantly, researchers and practitioners need to consider situational constraints when implementing the assumptions of andragogy (Knowles, 1980; Knowles, 1984; Pratt, 1988; Rachal, 2002; Blondy, 2007; and Bradley, 2011). This is because virtually all implementation scenarios have limitations that are imposed due to various internal and/or external constraints.

Research Questions

The purpose of this mixed-methods experimental study was to compare the outcomes among staff members of nonprofit social service agencies who participated in or completed an andragogically-facilitated or a pedagogically-conducted online learning module on foundation grant writing. The efficacy of andragogical methods is unknown and often debated due to scarce empirical research on the topic (Pratt, 1993; Rachal, 2002). Though most prior empirical studies revealed no significant differences in outcomes between the two methods, this is the first study of its kind to address each of the assumptions of andragogy in an online non-formal learning
environment. Effectiveness was measured based on participants' self-reported reaction to learning (course evaluation instrument), program completion rates, achievement growth (level of evaluative skill) and grant writing performance scores as a function of learning group. Two open-ended items were included within the course evaluation instrument to add narrative depth to the empirical results via triangulation.

**Methods**

A quantitative experimental design was utilized because it provides the researcher with the ability to compare two levels (andragogical and pedagogical learning modules) of an independent variable with that of several dependent variables to determine if there are statistically significant differences.

In order to address the hypotheses of this study, two different statistical procedures were used. These include an analysis of variance (ANOVA) as well as a chi square test of independence. The ANOVA was used since the purpose is to determine whether there was a significant difference between two or more levels of independent populations when it comes to the average scores obtained for a continuous dependent variable. For the purpose of this study, the independent populations were comprised of participants who are in the andragogically-facilitated and pedagogically-conducted modules. A chi square test was then used to determine whether there was a difference between the two learning groups when it comes to the completion rates of participants. The chi square test is appropriate for this study because both the andragogically-facilitated and pedagogically-conducted modules and completion rates are dichotomous variables. Though originally conceived as purely quantitative in design, two open-ended response items were added to complement quantitative results via triangulation.

Fifty-two volunteer staff members of nonprofit agencies in a Southeastern state who expressed interest in participating were randomly assigned to one of two online learning modules, resulting in at least partial data on 33 participants, including 16 who received an andragogical learning module and 17 who received a pedagogical learning module. Among 33 participants, 28 were also completers including 14 who received an andragogical learning module and 14 who received a pedagogical learning module.

**Findings**

Among both participants and completers, one-way ANOVAs revealed there were no statistically significant differences as a function of learning group between each of three dependent variables: reaction to learning (course evaluation ratings), achievement growth (level of evaluative skill), and grant writing performance scores. Similarly, a chi square test of independence revealed that program completion rates did not differ significantly as a function of learning group. As such, the primary implication is that andragogical learning methods as facilitated in the current study were just as effective as pedagogical methods in online non-formal grant writing modules with respect to the aforementioned variables.

Qualitative results among participants indicated that 15 of 16 subjects (93.75%) in the andragogical module and 11 of 15 subjects (73.33%) in the pedagogical module who responded to the first open-ended question, stated affirmatively their enjoyment of learning from the experiences of others while participating in non-formal non-credit learning opportunities. In addition, 13 of 14 subjects (92.86%) in the andragogical module and 14 of 16 (87.50%) in the
pedagogical module who responded to the second open-ended question stated affirmatively that by participating in the online course they were more likely to pursue future educational opportunities of a similar nature. These qualitative differences, in conjunction with the clearly more favorable aggregated mean course evaluation ratings among participants in the andragogical module as compared to the pedagogical module, supported the finding of higher overall learner satisfaction levels among andragogical participants. Among completers, a significant positive correlation was also found between grant writing performance scores and participants’ experience writing funded grants over the last five years.

Conclusion

While the case cannot yet be made that andragogy is a superior instructional methodology, it is at least an equal to the traditional pedagogical method in certain implementation scenarios. In addition, course satisfaction results were clearly higher among participants in the andragogical module. High levels of learner satisfaction can lead adults to pursue similar continuing education opportunities in the future. As online learning continues to grow because of the convenience of time and place it affords, such programs represent viable alternatives for busy adults. Additional research, however, is needed relative to non-formal continuing education opportunities for adults. A new situational implementation model of andragogy, inclusive of today’s ever-expanding array of distance education technologies, is needed that better categorizes variegated implementation strategies in order to improve both research and practice. Additionally, mixed-methods research approaches are especially encouraged.

References


Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, Community and Extension Education, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma, September 27-29, 2012


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Cooperative Learning as a Transformative Tool

Christine Maria Cobb

The purpose of this fall 2011 research was to analyze Oklahoma City University’s (OCU) TESOL students’ perceptions of the five elements of Cooperative Learning (CL), and the relationship of these CL elements to students’ academic achievement. In this study, academic achievement was defined as “your ability to keep up with your TESOL coursework.” OCU’S TESOL students rated four out of the five CL elements (positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face processing, and small group skills) as having above average importance.

The research indicated that small group learning was helpful in increasing TESOL students’ skill sets in a) studying, b) reading/writing, speaking, c) thinking, d) self-motivation and confidence, and e) social settings. This paper also noted the University of Central Oklahoma’s (UCO) mission to help students learn by providing transformative education experiences so that they can become productive, creative, ethical and engaged citizens and leaders serving the global community, and melded this mission with the research findings on students’ positive views on CL. This research finding, together with decades of relevant research literature suggest that integrating CL in UCO’S campus wide curriculum could improve academic performance, and contribute to realizing UCO’s mission of providing students with a transformative education experience.

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Professional educators are always concerned with the question of how students learn, and its corollary, how best to maximize the “delivery system.” Research has revealed that students can learn in three ways, “competitively, individualistically or cooperatively” (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991, p. 21). McKeachie’s (1988) survey of teaching methods as cited in Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1999), effectively demonstrated that “… if we want students to become more effective in meaningful learning and thinking, they need to spend more time in active, meaningful learning and thinking – not just sitting and passively receiving information” (p. 97).

Research findings by Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991) revealed that interaction with their peers will help students become “active cognitively” (p. 105) by utilizing ‘focused discussions’ before and after the lecture and interspersing pair discussion throughout the lecture” (p. 106). Rather than just being the “sage on the stage” that carries on an uninterrupted authoritative lecture, the instructor should act as a “guide on the side,” involve students in learning the material and create a healthy learning environment by providing discussion opportunities (p. 116).

Research by Johnson and Johnson (1999) also argued that CL “by far has the most powerful and positive influences on instructional outcomes” (p. 35). Adopting the CL approach helps students, as well as their group members, reach their highest learning potential. In order for CL to be successful, the authors’ emphasized that the following five basic elements would need to be present: a) positive interdependence (meaning if one fails, other team members would suffer the same fate); b) individual accountability (each member assuming his/her responsibility of team work); c) face-to-face promotive interaction (members supporting each other via face-to-
face interaction); d) small group skills (members demonstrating leadership, communication and conflict resolution skills); and e) group processing (members’ reflection of the team’s goal achievement and working relationship with each other).

The literature relevant to this study was produced over the last century and grew out of what John Dewey popularized as “progressive education.” The advantages of cooperative learning (CL) for TESOL have been trumpeted by leading researchers, such as John Dewey, Kurt Kufka, Morton Deutsch, David Johnson, Roger Johnson and Karl Smith, both in teacher education courses and published research for several decades. There is, however, a persistent, vexing problem. Although future TESOL instructors often are familiar with CL theory, they also often do not incorporate this theory into their own classes (DelliCarpini, 2009).

Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1991) reiterated that “although much has been written about cooperative learning, little is aimed at the college level” (p. 19). There is therefore a need for college faculty to understand what constitutes cooperative learning, and this research will explain a) the advantages and relevance of CL; b) how it should be implemented by instructors; and c) what is incorrectly labeled as CL. However, merely assigning students to groups for discussion will not bring about the desired results. They quoted Nobel laureate Mother Teresa’s 1979 words, “The biggest disease today is not leprosy or tuberculosis, but rather the feeling of being unwanted, uncared for, and deserted by everybody” (p. 118). Therefore, the authors advocated the formation of permanent base groups in colleges to apply CL throughout the collegiate experience, and explained that these base groups are intended to let students find the academic and social support they need to succeed in the collegiate experience.

Tinto’s (1996) study demonstrated that the lack of academic skills or poor study habits accounted nationally for 30 to 35% of all departures, and that students’ failure to connect with other students was another reason to leave college. The overall conclusion in Tinto’s (1993) study was that “a student’s holistic (that is academic and social integration) collegiate experience was more important than any individual student characteristic or prior experiences in determining student persistence. If CL was properly implemented as advocated by Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991), it can reduce the drop-out rate that could be caused by academic or social reasons. This research will help provide college instructors with a clear understanding of how to incorporate CL activities in their classes.

Studies by Song (2007) dealing with China, Islam (2011) dealing with Taiwan, and Peklaj and Vodopivec’s (1999) research on CL techniques in Slovenian elementary schools showed that CL was partially effective, but emphasized that “teachers’ attitudes, communication and leadership styles” were crucial in instilling effective CL skills in their students (p. 370). Conclusions from Johnson and Johnson’s (1999) research revealed that there was a need for additional research to “establish the cultural nuances of how cooperative efforts are conducted” (p. 14). All the articles dealing with the foreign learning environment, be it in the People’s Republic of China, Taiwan, or Slovenia, point to the utility of my study, which can lead to a sharper understanding of international TESOLers’ perception of CL’s utility.

After a review of the relevant literature, which focuses on the University of Minnesota’s Johnson and Johnson and a handful of specialized American and international studies, this research will focus on a pragmatic point neglected in the literature. This research of students at a Master’s TESOL program at Oklahoma City University and their perception of the five elements of CL will help provide insight on whether students’ perspective of CL techniques vary by student characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity or current academic performance. This
research will also provide suggestions to the TESOL faculty to determine the extent to which instructors should focus on cooperative teaching strategies in their class facilitation.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this fall 2011 research was to analyze students’ perceptions of the five elements of cooperative learning (CL) and the relationship of these CL elements on students’ academic achievement. The assumption made in this study was that TESOL students’ positive perception of Oklahoma City University’s (OCU) emphasis on CL elements might increase their academic achievement and result in higher level of satisfaction with their academic work.

**Research Questions & Research Methods**

The research questions had two parts: (a) What were students’ perceptions of each of the five elements of CL, namely: (i) positive interdependence (helping each other succeed and achieve mutually shared goals); (ii) individual accountability (holding each team member responsible for mastering assigned materials); (iii) face-to-face promotive interaction (giving oral language encouragement to team members); (iv) small group skills (using leadership and social skills to foster decision-making, trust building and conflict management leading to team success); (v) group processing (member’s reflection of the team’s goal achievement and working relationship)?; and (b) How did students’ perceptions of each of the five elements vary by the following student characteristics, namely, age, gender, ethnicity, current academic performance (specifically cumulative grade-point average)? Qualitative, descriptive and quantitative statistical approaches (Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test) were utilized to interpret the results of this study.

**Results of the Study**

**Tables 1A & 1B – Student Demographics**
Tables 2A & 2B – Breakdown on gender and age by race and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>&gt;=20 and &lt;=29 %</th>
<th>&gt;=40 and &lt;=49 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Cau. Am</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Cau. Am</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Libyan</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Libyan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students from the 17 sections of TESOL classes completed a total of 69 surveys (response rate of 89.6 percent). The research sample consisted of a larger proportion of females (75.4%), predominantly Koreans (55.1%), age range of 25 to 29 years (27.5%), currently in the 1st semester, with high GPA of between 3.65 to 4 (44.9%). The demographics also revealed that the more than three quarters (78.9% or 30 out of 38) of the Korean students were females, and 73.3% or 22 out of 30 female Koreans were between the ages of 40 and 49. 77.8% or seven out of nine Chinese students were females. All the 9 Chinese students were between the ages of 20 and 29. Nine (75%) out of 12 Libyan students were females, seven (77.8%) of these nine female Libyan students were between the ages of 20 and 29. Three (60%) out of five Caucasian
Americans were females. Two out of these three female Caucasian students were between the ages of 40 and 49.

The research results also revealed that this predominantly female, Korean-dominated student profile rated their academic achievement to be above average and gender had a significant difference in students’ perceptions of OCU’s TESOL course emphasis on individual accountability.

This study also supported research findings that four of the CL elements had an impact on students’ academic achievement. The possible lack of emphasis in OCU TESOL courses on mandatory reflection of teamwork could have impacted the significance of students’ perceptions of their academic achievement on students’ emphasis of OCU TESOL course emphasis on group processing.

**Qualitative Analysis**

**Tables 3A, 3B & 3C – Reasons why small group learning is helpful**
Small group learning - “increases my understanding of the subject matter, encourages creativity in learning, gaining and sharing more information, addresses my questions.”

L2 skill improvement - helps me “practice and improve my proficiency in my listening, speaking and writing skills.”

Mental skills - “stimulates me, makes me think more.”

Motivational skills - “increases my learning motivation and confidence and reduces intimidation.”

Social skills - “improves my cooperation skills and makes me more open to others.”

The qualitative dimension of this study attempted to find out reasons why small group learning was or was not helpful in assisting students with a) attaining a GPA of 3.5 or higher in their TESOL coursework, and b) increasing their level of satisfaction with their academic work at OCU. Out of the 69 comments, 27 (39.1%) stated affirmatively that small group learning was helpful in assisting them with attaining a GPA of 3.5 or higher in their TESOL coursework. 47 (68.1%) stated affirmatively that small group learning was helpful in assisting them increase their level of satisfaction in academic work at OCU. The five main categories of reasons on why small group learning is helpful and possible reasons for neutral answers on whether small group learning would assist students to obtain a GPA of 3.5 or higher are listed under tables 3A, 3B and 3C.

Conclusions

Importance of the research

This research a) supported research findings that CL elements had an impact on students’ academic achievement, b) increased awareness among instructors of the need to incorporate all CL elements in their courses, and c) increased educators’ awareness of the need to shift their traditional role as “sage on the stage” to “guide on the side” in a collaborative, student-centered classroom setting.

In line with previous research by Johnson and Johnson (1984), in order for CL to succeed, instructors need to assign roles to students. An acronym, CASE, was created as a reminder that the instructor needs to be: (i) a communicator to ensure that all team members are assigned to groups, and understand the lesson objectives and assigned tasks, (ii) an accuracy coach to provide guidance on team skills, (iii) a summarizer/reviewer to evaluate the team’s finished word, and (iv) an evaluation seeker to prod team members to relate their project to previous work in the course.

Recommendations

According to Johnson, Johnson and Smith (2007), cooperative learning (CL) is a very “cost-effective” institutional paradigm because CL is a “virtuous circle,” meaning that the harder students work together, the more they like each other, and vice versa, and the greater growth there will be in their social skills, self-esteem and psychological health. The skill sets of CL, when properly taught, applied and monitored by a trained instructor, can significantly enhance students’ positive engagement in any adult, continuing, community or extension education classroom setting.
CL is a vital, dynamic ingredient in the transformative learning success of students at UCO. As part of the transformative learning experience, instructors need to focus on treating the class as a “community of learners” (Teaching Strategies for transformative learning, 2: Forging a crucible for self-transformation, 2012, p. 3) and create a conducive environment for students to learn to work with each other through incorporating CL strategies in group work. Literature review and this research indicate that incorporating CL into campus-wide instruction would result in better grades, higher student morale and retention. Therefore it is worth the effort for educators to incorporate and utilize CL as a transformative learning tool.

References


Tourism or Transformation:  
Making Sense of Education Abroad Experiences Among Adult Learners  

John M. Dirksen and Julie Sinclair

As part of graduate education, adults are increasingly participating in internationalizing experiences. However, few studies have focused on how these learners understand and make sense of their experiences or how they relate these experiences to their academic and professional goals. Using the metaphorical lenses of deep travel, odyssey, and pilgrimage, we develop a conceptual framework to study and facilitate meaning-making processes among adults participating in graduate education abroad programs.

Introduction

Over the last 10 years, the number of U.S. students studying abroad has increased, from 154,168 during the 2000-2001 academic year to 270,604 for the 2009-2010 academic year (IIE, 2011), contributing to an evolving scholarship (Deardorff, 2009; Lewin, 2009; Savicki, 2008; Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012). Less attention, however, has been given to the expanding number of adults participating in some form of international education experience, particularly at the graduate level. Their proportion has been steadily increasing, as have the number of higher education institutions offering short-term international experiences for their graduate students (Sinclair, 2012). This paper focuses on graduate education abroad (GEA) as a specific context of internationalizing experiences intended for adults. Despite this relatively rich body of theory and research, we know relatively little about GEA programs or how they relate to the students’ professional and personal interests. GEA is usually couched within vague goals such as fostering internationalizing experiences or global awareness, and programs often display a bewildering array of content, contexts, and methods. How participants make sense of these short-term education abroad experiences, what they learn or how they learn remains unclear. Institutions and faculty members, as well as their adult participants, invest considerable time, energy, and money in educational programs that take graduate students half way around the world and immerse them in dramatically different cultures for periods of one to four weeks. But what are these programs intended to achieve, and what are adult participants actually learning?

In this paper, we describe a framework for the study of deeper, underlying processes of meaning-making that characterize adults’ experiences in GEA. We explore GEA through the metaphorical lenses of deep travel, odyssey experience, and pilgrimage. Through a lens of travel, we hope to illuminate aspects of GEA that are academically important but generally not considered. Our method is exploratory and theoretical, relying on scholarly literature, as well as our own experiences as participants and researchers in GEA. We do not claim that our depiction of GEA is representative of universal patterns. Rather, our intent is to stimulate discussion and research on adult experiences of education abroad.

Graduate Education Abroad and the Idea of Travel

Education abroad programs are typically conceptualized as intercultural experiences (Deardorff, 2009; Savicki, 2008; Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou, 2012) or opportunities to foster global citizenship (Lewin, 2009). Within this body of scholarship and practice, learning about
the self and self-other relationships (Tennant, 2012) represents a central theme. This learning, however, is largely conceptualized as a rational, reflective, cognitively mediated process (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012). By focusing on the students’ experiences, faculty leaders are encouraged to stimulate awareness of and critical reflection on existing assumptions, beliefs and values (Hunter, 2008). The experience of stressors posed by different cultural contexts requires students to develop coping skills to manage these emotions (Savicki, 2012). Conceptualizing education abroad through the lens of travel; however, helps illuminate dynamics not directly addressed by intercultural perspectives. The idea of travel also helps us broaden our understanding of the self-exploratory and self-formative processes (Tennant, 2012) associated with education abroad, often evoking mythic, sacred, and perhaps universal dimensions of the human condition. Within the context of education abroad, travel can be conceptualized as reflecting a continuum of experiences, ranging from a kind of educational tourism to deep travel and transformation. We start first with the lens of tourism.

Educational Tourism

Smelser (1996) describes tourism as an age-old “search for the unfamiliar and desirable” (p. 97), relating it to religious odyssey experiences. In comparing modern-day travel to Biblical times; however, Stavans and Ellison (2012) suggest that travel for many of us has lost this epic-like quality and become routine, amounting to perhaps little more than entertainment and personal enrichment. Within the scholarship on travel, a variety of different types of tourism have been identified, indicating a diversity of traveler motives and interests (Smelser, 1996).

One such type, educational tourism, is defined as a trip or excursion in which formal learning represents a primary or secondary aspect of the experience, such as adult study tours (Ritche, 2003). Travel through the lens of the educational tourist is generally oriented outward towards external aspects of the setting, something akin to sitting down on a weekend with the Sunday edition of the New York Times. Metaphorically speaking, the traveler is offered page after page of information on an infinite number of potentially interesting topics. In GEA, these topics include contexts, such as production plants, schools and universities, primary care clinics, forest preserves, and urban development locations. Or they may represent cultural icons of the country, such as pagodas, temples, monuments and memorials, shrines, or historic buildings. In such forms of travel, learning seldom challenges personal orientations, dispositions, interests, and everyday consciousness. It also implicitly assumes a largely passive role of the learner. In education abroad, from a tourism perspective, we may learn to think differently about some aspect of ourselves or the country we are visiting, but we seldom think about or reflect on what these experiences might mean for others, our being in the world, or a culture as a whole.

Even experiences from the perspective of a tourist, however, hint at aspects of travel that trouble our bubble, that take us out of our cultural comfort zones, and invite deeper, more profound forms of learning. Adopting the language of others (Hiss, 2010; Stavans & Ellison, 2012), we refer to this form of travel as “deep travel,” a form of education abroad that opens the learner to its mythic and potentially sacred qualities.

Deep Travel, the Odyssey Experience, and Pilgrimage

At its core, Stavans and Ellison (2012) argue that travel represents a search for meaning, both in our own lives and in the lives of others, reflecting a kind of restlessness that characterizes the human condition. They argue for the need to reclaim this sense of stirring and curiosity and to think of travel as a way of exploring the uncertainties that lie beyond ourselves and our own
contexts, to realize the promise of transformation represented in travel as a quest (Smelser, 2009). Hiss (2010) states that “during the memorable trips, people somewhere along the way enter a different part of their own minds, and begin to make use of an awareness that has its own range of interests and concerns and methods” (p. 5). Hiss refers to this tendency as an innate capacity for adventuring, or deep travel. Reflecting on travel in general, and his experiences with undergraduate study abroad in particular, Smelser (2009) thinks of travel as a kind of odyssey experience, “a finite period of disengagement from the routines of life and immersion into a simpler, transitory, often collective, and often intense period of involvement that often culminates in some kind of regeneration” (p. xi). He argues that much travel, especially international travel, demonstrates key characteristics of an odyssey experience. While leaving behind routine obligations and commitments usually entails a sense of relief, the traveler may experience growing feelings of apprehension associated with a lack of psychological moorings. The odyssey experience also can generate intense feelings of solidarity, contributing to a sense of special membership and bonding among those who are also perceived to be a part of this experience. Perceptions of the completion of the experience often reflect expectations of “personal betterment, growth, regeneration, or even rebirth” (p. 18). In reflecting on his own experience with leading study abroad groups, Smelser remarked, “I noticed their [the students’] uncertainties, fears, and anticipations in embarking on the experience, as well as the dynamics of their adaptation and personal growth” (p. xii). According to Smelser, the experiences conveyed by the idea of the odyssey are deeply rooted in the human condition.

The experience of deep travel or odyssey hints at an emerging awareness of a broader journey or story within our lives as a whole, and suggests more universal, mythic, or sacred dimensions that may be associated with and evoked by travel (Biallas, 2002; Cousineau, 1998; Smelser, 2009; Stevans & Ellison, 2012). These characteristics are effectively illuminated through the idea of pilgrimage. In recent years, the idea of travel as a kind of pilgrimage has become an increasingly popular way of characterizing the inner qualities of outer journeys (Clift & Clift, 1996; Cousineau, 1998). Clift and Clift (1996) define pilgrimage as “a journey, a ritual, a commemoration, a search for something” (p. 9), an inherently a inner journey.

The ideas of deep travel, odyssey, and pilgrimage convey a sense of a journey undertaken to seek or clarify meaning in one’s life. It requires a certain letting go of normal or routine practices, and being open to the newness and uncertainty of different and often strange and uncomfortable contexts that may foster a deep, emerging sense of ambiguity, apprehensiveness, and anxiety. Through these experiences and relationships with fellow group members, GEA participants may realize a regeneration or transformation of their sense of self. It is not uncommon to hear adults returning from a short-term education abroad experience exclaim that the experience changed their lives. For many who participate in such journeys, the experiences seem to leave a lasting impression. As a form of deep travel, odyssey, and pilgrimage, GEA reflects and connects with Jung’s notion of individuation, an archetypal, inner journey of the Self towards wholeness (Clift & Clift, 1996).

**Meaning-making in GEA as Archetypal**

As a form of travel, GEA potentially evokes a common pattern of qualities that are indicative of a common human experience. Jung used the ancient Greek term *archetype* to refer to what he found to be universal patterns of human experience: “Archetypes are, by definition, factors and motifs that arrange the psychic elements into certain images, characterized as archetypal, but in such a way that they can be recognized only from the effects they produce”
Archetypes represent underlying psychic structures that provide consistent and common forms to human experience. They don’t, however, specify the content of these experiences. Jung likened the nature of archetypes to the structure of a snowflake. At their core, all snowflakes are similar, despite an endless variety to their size and specific shapes. In a similar way, GEA manifests a set of experiences that, regardless of the country or culture visited or the content of the program, seems to point to a common, underlying form. As metaphors of the GEA experience, deep travel, odyssey, and pilgrimage reveal those qualities of universal and spiritual significance that are reflective of Jung’s concept of an archetype. This perspective provides a way for us to understand more fully the deeper meaning-making processes that may be at the core of GEA experiences.

This phenomenon is not automatic, however, or something that is manifest in the lives of all who participate. For some, GEA may seem primarily like an experience of educational tourism. As an archetypal symbol, however, the GEA experience may manifest aspects that, for others, may feel as if they are “in contact with some mysterious and irresistible power or overwhelming compulsion, highly charged, numinous, life-changing” (Clift & Clift, 1996, p. 10). These individuals may feel themselves inexplicably drawn to the journey-like experiences represented in GEA, the stages of which parallel the cyclical and iterative phases of Jung’s concept of individuation, an archetypal, inner journey of the self towards wholeness (Clift & Clift, 1996). A sense of ritual in GEA helps students realize the symbolic meaning that is associated with their experiences.

When we consider international travel as an educational experience, the tendency, as Clift and Clift (1996) suggest, is to concretize the outer practice or experience, pay attention only to what is manifest rather than its symbolic meaning. Viewing GEA through the conceptual lens of an archetype, however, provides opportunities for using the symbols manifest in one’s outer reality as a window into one’s inner reality. This underlying pattern of meaning and meaning-making contributes to “the inner growth and development of the person, towards an enlargement of personality or worldview, toward the transformation of the person by their connection with some important reality or value beyond themselves” (Clift & Clift, 1996, p. 20). As Merton (1967) suggests, “The geographical pilgrimage is the symbolic acting out of an inner journey. The inner journey is the interpolation of the meaning and signs of the outer pilgrimage” (p. 92).

Our conclusion, therefore, is that how adults come to understand and make sense of education abroad experiences, in part, reflects an underlying archetypal process consistent with Jung’s characterization of the process of individuation (Dirkx, 2012). Clift and Clift (1996) argue that pilgrimage carries those qualities of universal and spiritual significance that are reflective of Jung’s concept of an archetype, and that such a perspective provides a way for us to understand more fully the meaning of pilgrimage in our lives. As an archetype, pilgrimage reflects and connects with Jung’s notion of individuation – the journey of the Self towards wholeness. While manifestly an outward-oriented experience, education abroad as pilgrimage also suggests how it might parallel this inner journey. Participating in study abroad, from this perspective, may represent a manifestation of this inner journey taking shape within the realities of physical travel within a particular location or locations.

Implications for the Design and Facilitation of Graduate Study Abroad

In our experience, many adults who have participated in education abroad report that the experience was “life-changing” or transformative. These reports imply that the experience of
international travel may contribute to self-formative and transformative processes in professional development and adult life (Hunter, 2008; Tennant, 2012). In this paper, we focused on developing a deeper understanding of how adults participating in international travel for education might come to perceive and understand this experience. Specifically, what is it that contributes to this sense of the experience as transformative or life-changing?

Much of the education abroad literature tends to approach this problem from the perspective of intercultural competence or global awareness. In contrast, we explored the idea of travel as a critical dimension of the GEA experience. Viewing GEA through the metaphors of deep travel, the odyssey experience, and pilgrimage, we argued that the experience of GEA represents, at its core, an archetypal phenomenon that manifests itself, through its outer activities, as an inner journey. This journey is conceptualized in Jung’s psychological theory of individuation, the process through which the individual becomes more fully and completely who they are as a person, a process that reflects the fundamental struggle in the human life journey for meaning and consciousness (Dirkx, 2012).

The capacity for GEA to evoke deep travel and this inner journey to which Jung refers is particularly appropriate for adult graduate students, who begin to feel in various ways their inner selves pressing for expression in the outer world. Thus, a focus for GEA should be on the development of a kind of inner competency among its participants: the fostering of self-awareness and self-understanding that contributes to the self-formative and transformative processes associated with individuation. Methods familiar to intercultural perspectives on GEA, such an emphasis on learning from and through experience, the use of dialogue, careful listening, and reflection, should be actively encouraged among faculty leaders and program participants. However, these strategies should incorporate a symbolic approach, rather than focusing only on literal interpretations of the students’ experiences (Dirkx, 2012). Outer actions should be viewed as expressions of inner, unconscious meaning within their lives. For example, in pre-departure meetings, students might be preoccupied with logistics of the trip and demonstrate a lack of interest in reflective activities in which they are asked to engage. An otherwise highly social, interactive person suddenly in the GEA experience becomes quiet and withdrawn.

Often times, these indications of underlying meaning will be expressed through specific affective or emotion-laden images or behaviors. In working with emotions in GEA, the focus should not be on or even primarily on emotion management. Rather, emotions should be interpreted as a kind of language of the unconscious. Emotion-laden images should be noted and described. Students should be encouraged to engage in dialogue with them as a means of deepening their understanding of what their meaning is. This dialogical engagement of emotion-laden images and behaviors reflects a reliance on imaginative and narrative approaches, rather than rational and analytic methods alone. Rather than asking why one is feeling a certain way or what might be needed to get over feeling homesick, students should be encouraged to develop a closer relationship to these emotions, describing the feelings more fully, using metaphors to enlarge or expand their expression, connecting with stories from their own lives as well as those of others that seem to relate to or provide a connection with some aspect of these lived experiences.

Framing GEA experiences through the lens of travel, particularly as deep travel, odyssey, or pilgrimage, can help illuminate underlying processes of meaning-making among adult participants that might not otherwise be as evident in more intercultural or global perspectives. Transformative learning, then, is understood as more than change in beliefs or assumptions about a given cultural context. Rather, transformation involves connecting with given expression to an
inner life – to self-formative processes – that can be easily obscured through engagement in outwardly-oriented actions.

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Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, Community and Extension Education, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma, September 27-29, 2012
Evaluation of the Midwest Research to Practice Conference: Year Thirty-One (31) and Looking Forward

Michelle Glowacki-Dudka, Lori Risley, and Jennifer Murray

After the 30th year for the Midwest Research to Practice Conference, members of the steering committee surveyed past attendees and others in the field as to the value of the conference. This paper reports out those findings and serves as the beginning point to a conversation about the future direction for this conference.

Introduction/Background

The Midwest Research to Practice Conference for Adult, Continuing, Community, and Extension Education is in its thirty-first year. Yet each year, the future of this conference is of concern. The core group of faculty who established the conference in 1982 has now retired and while others have become active as a second generation of steering and planning committee members, the level of commitment to the conference wanes. Adult education as a discipline housed within higher education institutions has been redefined and some of the universities who held the best known programs do not even offer adult education graduate degrees any longer. Adult education courses may be found under higher education programs, human resource development programs, or in many cases in sister programs, such as co-authors’ at “Middle-west” University – Adult, Higher, and Community Education, or leadership programs as currently offered at co-authors’ at “Midwest” University.

The shifting alliances can also be felt through the professional organizations and conferences that adult educators choose to participate in – such as the ACHE, UCEA, AERA, AHRD, while many adult educators still attend conferences that are specific to adult education, these conferences are many and are becoming more specialized. The costs, level of university support, and ability to attend multiple conferences in a year also put constraints on attendance for a small regional conference like the Midwest-Research-to-Practice Conference (MR2P).

In its heyday, the MR2P conference had attendance of 150-200 annually, yet since 2001, it has often been under 100. Panels, conference sessions, and workshops about the future of this conference have not resulted in a change of format or significant growth for the conference. While the steering committee is diligent, the level of commitment has fallen to the point of not knowing if there will be a 32nd conference. Certainly a change is needed.

Focus of the Study/Research Questions

With this in mind, members of the 2011 steering committee decided to send out a survey to participants and other adult educators after the 2011 conference. We wanted to find out the benefits that participants receive from attending the conference. We also wanted to know the barriers to attending and support for the conference.

We asked the following questions:
1. What role did you have when you attended the MWR2P conference?
2. During which years have you participated in the MWR2P?
3. What benefits do you draw from the conference?
4. What are reasons you attend the conference?
5. What are reasons you do NOT attend the conference?
6. Would you or your students be interested in a poster category?
7. Would you be interested in viewing the conference online?
8. How are you willing to support the conference in future years?

**Importance to Practice of Adult, Continuing, Extension and Community Education**

The members of the steering committee for this conference believe that it has a usefulness and benefit to the field of adult education. It provides opportunities for students to present and network with professional colleagues from around the country – often more than 20 states are represented. It represents a welcoming and safe space to share new research, or begin a dialogue around a new topic, or reconnect and recharge energy with colleagues who understand and value this discipline. This study looks for specific data to understand how others perceive the role and place for this conference and may help the steering committee decide whether it should continue into the future.

**Methods**

A needs assessment is necessary before any scholarly endeavor is implemented. As scholars, it is imperative to examine our professional development opportunities for available benefits and to recognize barriers to those opportunities. Professional development is growth. This conference and others like it were established to provide opportunities to stay current with research and provide an avenue of collegiate cohesiveness. This survey data provides evidence of participants’ perceptions of a long-standing conference that many in the field of Adult, Higher, and Community Education have supported in the past, and where this conference is going in future years.

A short electronic survey was distributed to a purposeful sample made up of Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference attendees over the past three years (180), to the Midwest Research to practice Listserv (82), and to the Commission of Professors of Adult Education (CPAE) listserv (453). Total distribution was 612 -with 85 responses, 72 were complete responses. The response rate was approximately 12%. The survey was open from October 15, 2011 – November 20, 2011.

**Findings**

**The Roles of Attendees**

We asked the 72 respondents to the survey to identify the various roles they have held at the MWR2P throughout the years. The responses included 34 as faculty presenters, 32 as faculty, 31 as students and 23 as student presenters. Some of these appear to be overlapping each other but people’s roles can change from year to year. Additionally some participants attended the conference as university administrator, steering committee members, community member, professional staff and helping plan the conference when “my university co-sponsored the conference several years ago.” Clearly, as can be expected, a large number of the conference attendees serve as presenters.

**Professional Development Benefits of the Conference**

Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, Community and Extension Education, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma, September 27-29, 2012
When asked what benefits they derive from the MWR2P conference, the overwhelming reasons given had to do with professional development. The two most cited reasons by far were networking or connections with colleagues (31) and hearing other points of view or staying current on research (29). Seven respondents enjoyed the opportunities for presenting given to faculty. Five enjoyed having the opportunity to develop new ideas to share with their colleagues and test out in a friendly environment. Another participant felt that the conference provides a change to find “organic peer review” before submitting a paper for publication. Three of the surveyed found different colleagues with whom they could engage in research collaborations and three others stated that the conference afforded them opportunities to develop better academic writing skills. One participant was able to compare the research in the U.S. with another nation’s research field. Another mentioned gaining national exposure from participating in the conference.

Benefits of the Conference for Graduate Students and New Professionals

Five respondents who were students or new professionals felt that this conference provided them with an opportunity to become more comfortable presenting research in a non-threatening environment. One other participant mentioned gaining a “greater sense of accomplishment, confidence and recognition as a ‘real’ researcher. Four cited the conference as a good place for graduate students to begin networking and learning about what goes on in a conference. Two faculty members mentioned that they liked to use this conference to help prepare students for the conferences they will be attending as professionals and another believed the conference has sometimes provided a structured experience for the students. Two people found this conference to be helpful in their professional job search. One continues to attend because this was “my first academic home.” Finally one participant found that one of the greatest benefits occurred on the long drive to and from the conference experiencing “fellowship with other grad students.”

Benefits of the Environment of the Conference

Two people felt that this particular conference offers more chances for interaction between attendees. Another person stated that the MWR2P provided a “more focused environment” related to adult education research “but is relaxed in its structure. This environment, to me, is more conducive to engaging colleagues in discussion over that of AERA (too large) and the AERC.” Another stated that this conference allowed, “time to reflect.” One attendee believed MWR2P, “seeks to ease the tension between research and practice.” One person enjoyed the “unconventional approach to presenting” found at this conference.

Reasons for Attending MWR2P

Respondents were asked why they attend the conference and given the choices of networking, keeping current on research, the learning environment, and getting presentation experience. Fifty-three respondents chose networking, 43 keeping current on the research, 37 waiting presentation experience, and 34 sought the learning environment. Three people also mentioned wanting to support or mentor new colleagues and graduate students. Another attended to co-present with a student. One came for a publication and one for a “peer review of recent research and scholarship.” One person attended for fellowship while another came for “fun-joy-love.” One participant came because of the location of the conference. Finally one person attended for the “health of the conference.”
Reasons for NOT attending

The major reason cited for not attending was conflict with time (27). Similar to this, 14 people listed the dates of the conference. 14 participants also cited location. Next most frequently cited reason was registration cost (10). Five people said they did not attend because of the learning environment and three because the conference does not offer value to me. Another person wrote the conference “does not offer enough value.” Four people chose various reasons that had to do with not presenting, such as the proposal was lost or not chosen or the university only pays when the faculty present. Four respondents listed other reasons that deal with cost such as too much distance to the conference or not having enough travel funds. One felt MWR2P is geared more towards students and another felt there were “too many conferences to choose from.” One person suggested connecting MWR2P with a larger, national conference.

When asked how they would be willing to support the conference in future years. Most planned to present (50), followed closely by a willingness to share information with students and colleagues (48). Thirty-one were willing to serve on the steering committee and 27 said they would bring students to the conference. Four indicated a willingness to host future conferences and two would review paper proposals.

Thirty participants would be interested in viewing the conference online, but 23 were not interested, and 18 were not sure. Thirty-two participants would be interested in a poster category for themselves or their students while 14 were not and 21 were not sure.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Results indicate that those who participate in the conference find value in the conference. These values are varied, with the expected high percentage of attendees responding that the conference provided a venue for professional development. However, attendees reported networking was of greatest value. The ability to stay current on research and that of presenting research was also important. Faculty and graduate students commented on the conference being a good starting point for preparing students for larger conferences. With almost a third of the respondent reporting they were “not sure” regarding a poster session, it will be interesting to see how the poster session at this year’s (31st) conference is received.

While institutional budget restraints, distance to travel and timing of the conference are a concern or even a drawback for some, there are few suggestions to counterbalance these drawbacks. These suggestions include:

• Online access to the conference provides an avenue for participation while deleting the travel. Budget restraints are not limited to institutions, providing online access is an alternative that would provide another venue of participation, thus, revenue for the conference. Video recording of the conference could be offered as an internship through the conference host to a multimedia student reducing the cost of recording and providing and educational opportunity at the same time.

• Holding the conference in the spring would provide greater length of time between the national AAACE conference and the regional MWR2P conference. Depending on the institutions fiscal calendar this change could mean additional professional development funds. Regardless of the possibility of additional funds the time between conferences would increase the networking opportunities for those who have not recently attended because of the proximity to the national conference, thus, encouraging a greater attendance.
This survey was conducted to accumulate data regarding the viability and sustainability of the MWR2P conference. One of the questions this survey set out to address was if anyone (institution) was willing to host the conference in the future. The question referencing this was “How are you willing to support the conference in future years?” Speculating that if no attendees responded to the question with “willingness to host conference in the future” the general conclusion could be made that the conferences viability and sustainability was in question. While only four attendees identified a willingness to host future conferences, a co-author is aware of an additional university, without representation at the 30th MWR2P conference expressing interest in hosting future conferences.

Results presented here represent a small percentage of conference attendees; however, these results represent the attendees who found value in participating in the survey. Some could conclude that those that participated are those that value the continuance of the conference. If this correlation is assumed then the assumption could be made that only a small percentage of attendees value the continuation of the MWR2P conference, this is not the position taken by the co-authors of this paper.

There are many factors that must be considered regarding the participation percentages; first the window for response was small, approximately a month. During that window the national AAACE conference was held. The AAACE and MWR2P conferences share a large attendance population. Therefore, there is a possibility that many MWR2P attendees did not respond due to time restraint and/or time conflicts. Secondly, the attendees may not have recognized the senders email address and disregarded the message without opening. One co-author noticed a large number of “deleted unread” responses in the survey tracking system.

Whatever the reason for minimal participation in the survey, the fact is clear that those who responded find value in the conference. Unfortunately, that value wanes. For the conference to continue as a viable resource to adult, continuing and community education, educators’ changes must be implemented. Technology is vital part of adult, continuing and community education and imperative to the sustainability of the MWR2P conference. The co-authors of this paper strongly encourage the steering and planning committee to explore options to revitalize the conference. Exploration could start with a committee established to discuss and evaluate possible options, reporting back to the steering and planning committee at large.

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Presented at the Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing and Community Education, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma, September 27-29, 2012.
Journals as Evaluative Tools

Wendy Griswold

Journaling was used as an evaluation technique for a research experience for undergraduates program related to engineering for sustainable energy. Quantitative and qualitative content analyses were conducted on the weekly journal entries of 32 learners over a three-year period. The intention was to assess the impact of changes in the use of journals on their effectiveness as a means of evaluative data collection. The quantitative content analysis focused on the mean and median word counts of the journal entries. The qualitative content analysis focused on the use of emotional language (the presence of words such as anxiety, stress, worry, excitement) in the entries. Throughout the project, several changes were made to the organization of data collection, structural form of the journal questions, and responsiveness of the researcher to the participants. These changes resulted in a dramatic increase in the quantity of journal entries (both in frequency of submission and word count) and in the use of journals by learners as a tool for processing experiences and the emotions related to experience. Three main implications for practice emerged from this investigation related to structure, responsiveness, and permission.

Introduction

Journaling was used as an evaluation technique to gain insight into any elements of perspective transformations that undergraduate students might be experiencing during a 10-week summer research program, Earth, Wind and Fire: Sustainable Energy for the 21st Century. This was a three-year project funded by the National Science Foundation to expose undergraduates to research careers. Journaling was used as a both a program element to enhance learning and as an evaluation method. Journaling is a commonly used method for enhancing reflective practice and developing writing skill in both formal and informal adult education settings. It has been used as an instructional technique in adult education (Hiemstra, 2001; Boud, 2001), higher education (Dahm, Newell, Newell, & Harvey, 2009; Farmer, 2004; Hubbs & Brand, 2010), and professional development (Diekelmann, 2003; Tillman, 2003). In addition to being an assistive tool in the learning process, journals are also a rich source of evaluative data (Moon, 2006). The journaling process evolved each year in response to feedback from participants and evaluator observations about the data collection and journal content. While this study has a focus on the use of journals as an evaluative tool, the implications are relevant to the use of journals for other educational purposes.

Processes and Instrumentation

At the beginning of each summer program, the evaluator met with students to explain the journal element of the program and to obtain informed consent. While students were not required to submit their journals for evaluative purposes, the journaling activity was presented as a required element of the program in which they were expected to participate. During this meeting, journaling prompts and background information on the benefits of journaling and strategies for journaling were given to students. Journaling is discussed as a professional activity in which scientists and other professionals engage in to enhance the quality and reliability of
their work. Students are asked to submit journal entries for first nine weeks of the ten-week program. In the first year, journal entries were requested for each week. Following a focus group with the students at the end of the program, it became clear that the final week of the program was exceptionally full. In subsequent years, the journaling activity concluded in the ninth week of the program, to ease the burden on the students and to improve quality of final journal entries.

**Summer 2009 Process and Lessons Learned**

In the first year of the program (Summer 2009), ten students participated in the REU and journaling activities. In order to demonstrate that journaling was an important activity, space was given weekly in the program schedule (20-30 minutes) for students to journal in a group setting. Journal entries were sent electronically to the off-site evaluator. There were no set deadlines for submitting journal entries. The evaluator acknowledged receipt of submitted journal entries but no feedback was provided. Student submissions were sporadic, with several students sending two-to-three weeks of entries at a time. Some students only submitted entries after the evaluator notified the PI that participation was a problem. Over ten weeks, six weeks had a 90% submission rate, two weeks an 80% rate, and the final two weeks had submission rates of 70% and 50%. One student consistently did not participate, submitting journal entries in only the first two weeks of the program.

All ten students participated in a focus group in the final week of the program. During the focus group, the journaling activity was discussed. The following suggestions for improvement were given:

- Provide more variety in prompt questions.
- Provide clarification on submission expectations and due dates.
- Provide flexibility in where and when students journal (individual rather than group time).

In the initial instrument, some prompts were repeated; repeating prompts were eliminated in future years. Students also gave input on improvements that could be made in the language used in prompts. Students reported that having a firm due date would be a benefit and improvement in future years. Students also would have preferred to have a choice in when and where they wrote in the journals. They reported that writing during downtimes in the lab would be preferable as a way of using their time more efficiently. Additionally, students did not typically bring computers to the group journaling time, creating the necessity of scanning or typing up handwritten entries, another inefficiency in the Summer 2009 process.

**Summer 2010 Process and Lessons Learned**

In Summer 2010, ten students participated in the program and journaling activities. The same introductory and summative processes were used in 2010 as 2009. Based on feedback and observations from the previous summer, improvements were made to the activity. Journals were required for the first nine weeks of the ten-week program. A weekly deadline (Sunday at midnight) was set for submissions to be sent to the evaluator. Timely submission rates improved over the previous year. When submissions were not received, a reminder message was sent to the student directly from the evaluator on the day following the submission deadline. There was a 100% submission rate for weekly journal submissions.

The evaluator sent responses to each student each time a submission was received. At a minimum, students were thanked for sending their submissions and a supportive comment about
the experience they shared was made (usually, that must have felt good, or that sounds frustrating). Depending on the entry and the student, more conversational responses were given, especially if students directly asked for feedback. Comments that directed the subject matter were avoided. Generally, more extensive comments were attempts to validate the connections they were making in their entries.

The instrument was modified to incorporate feedback received by previous students. Additional prompts were added that encouraged students to reflect on how their research experiences were connected to their personal lives and to the concerns of society.

Nine students participated in the focus group held at the end of the program. During the focus group, the journaling activity was discussed. The following suggestion for improvement was given: Revise writing prompts to be more balanced between program elements and personal experiences.

**Summer 2011 Process and Lessons Learned**

In Summer 2011, twelve students participated in the program and journaling activities. The same introductory and summative processes were used as in previous years. Submission reminder and response methods were the same as Summer 2012. There was a 100% submission rate in the first seven weeks of the program, a 92% submission rate in week 8 and an 83% rate in week 9.

Based on feedback and observations from the previous summer, improvements were made to the journaling prompt instruments. For each of the nine weeks of journaling activity, there were specific questions intended to elicit comments on the program activities. In addition, a “your choice selection” was added, providing students with a list of prompts to choose from or the freedom to free write on any topic of their choosing. The prompts included a range of topics, such as how are you feeling, is this your first research experience, do you live purposely, and describe your perfect job.

Eleven students participated in the focus group held at the end of the program. During the focus group, the journaling activity was discussed. The following suggestion for improvement was given:

- Develop a flexible schedule for journaling deadlines, such as due on Friday afternoon, with a grace period until Monday morning.

**Impact of Modifications on Data**

**Quantitative Impact**

A quantitative content analysis (word count) of student journals was conducted and the results are presented in Table 1 below. In each year of the program, the overall mean and median word counts for individual journal submissions increased, with a dramatic increase between the first year and the two subsequent years. The median word count in 2011 is approximately two and a half times the median word count in 2009. Individuals vary widely in the volume of their entries and the sample includes 32 different individuals across different time periods, making direct comparisons based on the approaches used in the journaling activity tenuous at best. However, the trend in increasing word counts may also be an indication that the changes in methods and instruments might have been contributing factors to the volume and frequency of journal entries and in the activity’s ability to engage students in reflection on their learning.
Table 1. Quantitative content analysis results from individual journal submissions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mean Word Count (Total)</th>
<th>Median Word Count (Total)</th>
<th>Highest Mean Word Count (by student)</th>
<th>Lowest Mean Word Count (by student)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative Impact

It is no surprise that students in REU programs experience a range of emotions: excitement, stress, anxiety. They are embarking on an adventure about which they have both positive and negative feelings. They have high expectations of themselves, in addition to the high expectation of performance that comes with participation in this type of activity. The program schedule is very full and students are kept very busy and have high demands placed on them. Additionally, for some students, they are the farthest away from home for the longest period yet in their lives. One of the functions and benefits of a journal is to help us deal with and process our emotions (Moon, 2006). Students in 2011 used this function of the journaling activity much more extensively than their peers in 2009 and 2010 based on a content analysis of several words that reveal emotional states. Table 2 below shows these words and the result of text queries on the journal database.

Table 2. Qualitative content analysis results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Root (Root, root, roots)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of entries</th>
<th># of students</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Non-Emotional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anx* (anxiety, anxious)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress* (stress, stressed, stressing)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worr* (worry, worried, worries)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nerv* (nervous, nerves)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happ* (happy, happiness)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excit* (excited, exciting, excitement)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several words (variations of anxiety, worry, nervous) were not used in student journals in Summer 2009 and 2010, but were used by 40-60% of students in Summer 2011. Variations of the words stress and happy were used by all three groups, but minimally in 2009 (10-20% of students) and 2010 (10-40%) and more heavily in 2011 (58-66%). Variations of the words excite and frustrate were used more frequently by students in 2010 (40-70%) and 2011 (40-66%), with students in 2009 using the words minimally (10-20%). There is a progressive trend toward students being willing to discuss their emotional reactions to their experiences in their journals from 2009 to 2011, with students in 2011 exhibiting significantly more entries in which they discuss their emotions.

These findings may be attributed to several factors:

- The process used with student journals in 2009 did not engender trust in the researcher. Successive improvements in the process (structure and responsiveness) may have led to the slightly higher rates of discussing emotional reactions in 2010.
- Allowing students the choice in half of their journaling topics in 2011 is the best explanation for the dramatic increases in their choosing to discuss their emotions. Allowing choice gives ownership and control of the journal to the students directly, making the process more effective (Moon, 2006).
- In 2011, permission to discuss their emotions was provided in two related ways. First was the freedom of choice in topics. Second was a list of potential free-choice prompts that were provided to students. One of these prompts asked the direct question, “How are you feeling? Happy, sad, anxious, excited, freaked out? What is affecting your mood today or this week?” In prior years, students had never been granted direct permission to talk about their emotions, which may have prevented them from doing so.

On the surface, gender does not appear to be a factor. In 2009, the student gender division was two females and eight males. In both 2010 and 2011, there was 100% gender parity (2010 – 5 female, 5 male; 2011 – 6 female, 6 male). Deeper analysis would need to be conducted to further understand the impact of gender on the findings.

Implications for Practice

There are three main recommendations for the use of journals as evaluative tools: structure, responsiveness, and permission.

Structure

Establish clear deadlines and expectations for the submission of journals. Share the purpose of the journal with the students. It is a tool for program evaluation and a personal development tool for themselves. Deciding on what this structure is in partnership with students will help to develop ownership and accountability for the journals and increase frequency and improve content (Moon, 2006). When deadlines are not met, gentle reminders have been found to be very effective in working with errant or forgetful students.
Responsiveness

Journal submissions should be promptly acknowledged and a personal response provided to the student. This helps to develop trust between the reader and writer. You are the audience and knowing that an expectant and appreciative audience is out there is motivating and reassuring to the writer.

Permission

Give students freedom to write about what they are concerned with and permission to discuss their emotions and personal lives. A certain amount of structure in the topics of the journal is recommended to ensure that students are reflecting on aspects of the program that are important (Moon, 2006), but this can be balanced with flexibility and personal choices. Permission to discuss emotions directly is also a key element, particularly in fields and settings where emotions are typically not welcome or expected.

References


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Identification of Communities of Practice within a Small, Non-Profit, Faith-Based Organization

Molly Hamilton

This research synopsis was derived from a larger study that investigated the impact of culture upon communities of practice (CoPs). The questions discussed in this paper, review the extent of the existence of CoPs within a small, non-profit, faith-based organization, as well as answer how the organizational members recognized their participation in a CoP. The findings suggested that a CoP existed within the organization and that organizational members did not recognize what a CoP is nor that they participated in one. Other findings suggested that organizational members utilized face-to-face communication more frequently than other modes of communication. Additionally, the staff members are recognized as the central hub of communication for the CoP.

Introduction

This paper begins with a brief explanation of communities of practice (CoPs) sharing the attributes and the purpose of a CoP. Next, there will be an explanation of the research questions and methodology, including a discussion of the epistemology, theoretical framework, and methodology employed. Additionally, there will be a review of the significance of the study. Then, there will be a discussion of the findings. Finally, conclusions and implications will be shared. In conclusion, recommendations for practice and research will be provided.

Communities of practice (CoPs) were first identified in Lave and Wenger’s (1991) book, *Situated Learning*, and have become a relevant topic within the realm of informal learning. Important to this research, and to organizations, is how CoPs allow knowledge sharing in ways that help organizations foster a learning environment (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Domain, community, and practice are the three attributes that make up a CoP (Wenger, 2004). The domain consists of the common area of interest, or knowledge that brings the group together (Wenger, 2004). In turn, the community is made up of the people who form a relationship around the domain (the common purpose) (Wenger, 2004). Finally, the practice attribute is the doing part (Wenger, 2004). In essence, it is not just about building relationships, but about what can be accomplished through working together. Organizations can help manage knowledge, both tacit and explicit, through the use of CoPs (Wenger, 2004). One might consider a CoP is no different than teams or groups; however, Wenger and Snyder (2000) explained that CoPs are based on self-selection and a passion for what knowledge the group shares.

The purpose of a CoP is concerned with building the capabilities of its members, as well as building and exchanging knowledge (Wenger & Snyder, 2000, p. 142). In turn, this can be considered different than other types of work teams or informal networks, which operate to gather information in order to pass it forward, or simply to accomplish a task (Wenger & Snyder, 2000). Such communities typically exist in everyone’s life, whether work or personal, but may not be understood and recognized. The three attributes: domain, community and practice, were utilized in this research, to help identify the existence of a CoP within a small, non-profit, faith-based organization (Hamilton, 2011). Additionally, the attributes helped in understanding if organizational members recognized the existence of a CoP themselves. The findings, of this
research, did reveal that a CoP existed, but was not understood or recognized by the community members (Hamilton, 2011).

The following discussion will review the findings and conclusions from two research questions that were extracted from a larger study (Hamilton, 2011). These two questions focused on the extent of the existence of CoPs within the given organization and how organizational members identified the existence of CoPs. The findings revealed that a CoP existed within the organization; however, the members did not explicitly recognize it (Hamilton, 2011). Other findings suggested communication was predominately face-to-face, with the staff members being the central hub of communication for the CoP (Hamilton, 2011). The conclusions and implications showed that communication is deliberate and valued, which is a valuable aspect of CoPs (Hamilton, 2011).

**Research Questions and Methodology**

This study was an investigation of a small, non-profit, faith-based organization and the CoP(s) that existed within it. The non-profit organization, investigated in this research, is a publicly oriented non-profit, which is considered a non-profit that serves the public, often having charitable tax status, possible government funding, and reliance on volunteers (Sousa & Quarter, 2003). Additionally, for the purposes of this research faith-based was defined as:

A formal funding or administrative arrangement with a religious authority or authorities; a historical tie of this kind; a specific commitment to act within the dictates of a particular established faith; or a commitment to work together that stems from a common religion. (Smith & Sosin, 2001, p. 652)

The questions discussed in this paper, are drawn from a larger study where the purpose was to investigate communities of practice and how they are impacted by the culture of an organization (Hamilton, 2011). In order to understand the larger scope of the impact of the culture on CoPs, it was first necessary to understand if CoPs even existed in the organization and if organizational members recognized their existence. Thus, the findings shared here are related to the following research questions: (a) to what extent are communities of practice (CoPs) found to exist within the small, non-profit, faith-based organization of study, and (b) how do the organizational members identify the existence of CoPs within the organization (Hamilton, 2011)?

Symbolic interactionism is the epistemology that informed the scope of this qualitative study (Hamilton, 2011). Symbolic interactionism involves understanding that people respond to the meaning they know already; that meaning is derived through social interaction; and that meanings are then modified through interactions with what is around them (Crotty, 2003). Additionally, the social theory of learning was used as the theoretical framework for this study (Hamilton, 2011). Wenger (1998) explained that the social theory of learning makes the assumption that learners are social in nature. Furthermore, that knowledge respects “valued enterprises; part of knowing is through participation in the world; and that meaning is made through learning” (Wenger, 1998, p. 4).

An ethnographic informed design was utilized for this qualitative study. An ethnographic informed design is one that utilizes ethnographic approaches (Wolcott, 2001). Various ethnographic methods can be employed in gathering data. In this study, three methods were
utilized: participant-observation, interviewing, and analysis of documents, both written and non-written sources (Hamilton, 2011).

The organization, referred to as The Center, is a small, non-profit, faith-based organization that serves clients facing pregnancy issues or concerns. It is located in a small community in the Midwest. Since 1995, The Center has served over 1200 clients, who live within a 40-50 mile radius of the facility. The Center offers various services, which include options, such as: ultrasound, STD testing, abstinence education, male mentoring, and several others. They serve both men and women who seek help for issues surrounding pregnancy. The Center is open four days each week, and offers a 24-hour hotline for immediate help (Hamilton, 2011).

**Significance of Study**

Schein (1993) explained that technological advances, in all industries, have pushed organizations to better understand organizational knowledge and how it impacts and is distributed within any given organization. Additionally, Schein shared that the faster rate of change in organizations increases the need for learning more quickly. Thus, knowledge can be seen as a valuable asset for any organization. In turn, it is necessary for organizations (large and small) to better understand how knowledge is shared informally. The importance, of knowledge sharing, may be even more prevalent for small organizations, in that they lack the resources and budgets for formal training and education (Hamilton, 2011).

In addition to the lack of research in this area, there is a stress that has been added by the government through welfare reform. In recent years, the Obama administration has pushed for involvement of faith-based organizations in welfare reform (White House, 2009). The formation of the White House Office for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships has proven that this is something for these organizations to pay attention to. Part of the priority of this partnership is a focus on community groups becoming an integral part of economic recovery and poverty (White House, 2009). Whether faith-based organizations or citizens agree with this approach or not, there remains a need to help such organizations understand how to develop staff and volunteers to better serve those in need. Thus, this research was focused on understanding how a faith-based organization utilized knowledge sharing through CoPs, and if they even recognized their participation in a CoP (Hamilton, 2011).

**Findings**

The questions addressed in this study reflected: (1) what extent communities of practice (CoPs) were found to exist within the small, non-profit, faith-based organization of study, and (2) how the organizational members identified the existence of CoPs within the organization (Hamilton, 2011). There were two findings related to each of the questions posed in this study.

**Findings Related to Research Question One**

The first finding, related to question one, showed that there is one identifiable community of practice (CoP) evident at The Center, which can be identified through a common domain, a community of members, and a practice. Secondly, communication was channeled through staff (as a central source) rather than directly communicating with one another (Hamilton, 2011).
The themes that reflected the domain of the community members were: a passion for Christ, a passion for the unborn, and a passion for the client. The passion for Christ was exhibited through: actions, such as daily prayer; verbalization of faith during interviews; and documents, such as Bibles being given to clients. The passion for the unborn was shared mostly during the interview process, where staff and board members shared their stories that led them to be a part of The Center. Their beliefs entered around pro-life values. One board member specifically commented that, “the reason everybody comes together is for the pro-life issue” (Hamilton, 2011, p. 105). The passion for the client was exhibited through a non-judgmental love for the client. Most of the interviewees shared that they felt that it was important to be pro-life without judging the client for their situation.

The community of members was identified as internal organizational members. This was determined through understanding that a community is composed of people who share a domain, communicate on a regular basis, and focus on building relationships (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Although, there were external supporters of the work at The Center, the CoP discovered, was composed of internal organizational members only (paid staff members, volunteers, and board members). It was found that these members shared a common domain, communicated regularly and were concerned with building a relationship with one another (Hamilton, 2011).

However, it is through the social interaction, that the paid staff, volunteers, and board members came together as a community. The social interaction of the group is what allowed relationships to grow and learning to take place. Wenger (1998) shared that being part of a community is not a passive relationship, but is a “way of talking about the social configurations of which enterprises are defined…” (p. 5). The interaction between these groups of people is what helped define the CoP. The staff interacted regularly with each other, volunteers and board members (although the staff member that interacted with the board members the most was the Executive Director). The volunteers interacted with each other and the staff. Finally, the board members interacted with other board members and the staff. The findings revealed that the staff is the central group that acts as a conduit of communication and knowledge sharing for both volunteers and board members. Additionally, it was noted that the medium of the message was typically face-to-face communication. This described the value placed upon getting together and building relationships in person (Hamilton, 2011).

Finally, the practice part of the CoP was found in two emerging themes: serving clients and serving each other. The internal organizational members work at The Center to serve God, yet through service to God they also served the clients. Data that supported this service of clients was found through the various services offered by The Center. Additionally, this service was shown through how the staff and volunteers shared what they enjoyed doing as a support to serving the client; some enjoyed counseling, while others did paperwork, answered phones, or cleaned the building and donation items dropped off for the clients to use. The internal organizational members also served each other through encouragement. Much of the work was client centered, but they also felt a need to serve one another in prayer and support (Hamilton, 2011).

Findings Related to Research Question Two
The first finding, related to research question two, revealed that organizational members “recognize that they work as a group, toward a common goal and with shared passions” (Hamilton, 2011, p. 99). The internal organizational members described that they came together
for the same reason and goal. One staff member stated that “God brings together all of the volunteers and we all have something in common” (p. 134). Additionally, a volunteer shared that “…I would think that is what we share in common, we’re all here for a common goal, to save unborn babies and then save those moms who made those decisions…” (p. 134).

Finally, the second finding, related to research question two, revealed that the organization did not recognize that they were actually a part of a community of practice. Wenger et al. (2002) discussed that CoPs can have various relationships, including: unrecognized, bootlegged, legitimized, supported, and institutionalized. The CoP at The Center was classified as unrecognized, because the organization did not officially recognize that a CoP existed within its borders (Hamilton, 2011).

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

Although, the larger study, from which these questions were drawn from, provided several conclusions, there are two conclusions related specifically to the two questions discussed in this paper. First, that the staff is the central hub of communication for all internal organizational members. Second, that there is a deliberate time for socializing and prayer (Hamilton, 2011).

The communication patterns were different than what was expected. There was an assumption that technology would have been utilized more frequently for electronic communication; however, face-to-face communication was found to be the preferred method. The implications of this conclusion, was that by understanding that the staff is the most central path of communication to all others, the organization could utilize this as a way to foster better communication. Additionally, the organizational members could work on ways to communicate with one another more regularly, rather than use staff as a conduit (Hamilton, 2011). Additionally, the preferred use face to face communication revealed that one-on-one face time with each other was valued as a part of relationship building.

The second conclusion that was drawn was that the organizational members were deliberate in socializing, sharing and praying together on a consistent basis. This was part of the culture of the organization and was used to foster communication between staff and volunteers. Considering social interaction is the premise of CoPs, this was very relevant to the growth of the CoP at The Center. Although, this study cannot be generalized to other organizations, the findings could help The Center, and similar organizations, better understand how CoPs might operate within their organization.

**Recommendations**

There are several recommendations that should be considered. First, organizational members, at The Center, should receive an explanation concerning what a CoP is about, how they are part of one, and how they might be able to gain further development through the CoP that currently exists. Second, internal organizational members (staff, board members, and volunteers) should reflect on interactions they have on a regular basis and try to identify if other CoPs exist internally or externally. Understanding this would help organizational members grow in knowledge and skill and seek out other sources that might be of benefit to the organization. Third, staff, volunteers and board members need to recognize that they communicate through the staff members on a regular basis. The organizational members could exploit this network more fully, as well as recognize how they might communicate more often with each other directly.
Finally, a more comprehensive qualitative study could be conducted to understand what CoPs might exist between internal and external organizational members (Hamilton, 2011). This could assist The Center in understanding what outside resources they might already be connected to.

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Helping International Students Transition to American Higher Education

April Haulman and Regina Lopez.

With the increasing numbers of international students in higher education classrooms in the United States in recent years (Shenoy, 2002), university instructors and administrators are frequently asking themselves how to best provide for successful transition into the all-English environment. Many professors and students alike discover that an acceptable score on an English proficiency exam used for admission purposes is not a guarantee that the student will possess the necessary social or academic language needed to be successful in American classrooms. Additionally, internationals often have monumental adjustments to new cultural norms, both in and out of the classroom. The authors know that most university professors are discipline-specialists, and not language specialists, but we believe there are some adjustments that can easily be made to make the transition more understandable and humane for international newcomers. This review provides an explanation of challenges faced by both students and professors, and offers both general and specific suggestions for classroom adjustments that may provide assistance to the international students.

Introduction

The most recent annual census of international students in the United States conducted by the Institute of International Education and released in November, 2011, indicated a steady increase over the past decade of student coming from abroad to the US to study in American universities. The number increased to a “record high of 723,277 students, a 32% increase since 2000/01” (Open Doors, 2011). Additionally, the Wall Street Journal (July 27, 2012), reported that “this past school year, Saudi Arabia sent 66,000 students to U.S. universities, four times the number before the 2001 attacks and the fastest-growing source of foreign students, ahead of China.”

This increase interest in American higher education from students overseas has universities that may otherwise be facing financial challenges from a sluggish economy, scrambling for ways to increase their enrollments because of the lucrative potential from non-resident tuition and fees. Universities are eager to tap this source of increased revenue and have committed increasing resources for recruitment and admissions (Bista & Foster, 2011), but there is also some concern for the low graduation/retention rates among these academic sojourners. College Measures (2012) reports a graduation rate among undergraduate international students across the nation to be around 54.5%.

International students often arrive with unrealistic expectations about what they will face in terms of adjustment to language and cultural demands, in and out of class. Sometimes the host universities provide services to help them make the transition; the Noel-Levitz Report (2009, as cited in Bista & Foster, 2011) noted, “33.9 percent of four-year public institutions had programs specifically designed for retention of international students, but only 6.8 percent of the respondents felt the programs were very effective” (p. 2). Besides the best intentions of higher education institutions, it most often falls to the course instructors to guide internationals through a potentially difficult transition.
This paper will describe the basis of the language and cultural issues and offer some suggestions for effective instructional practices that will not demand too much additional time and effort for the instructor.

For our purposes, “international student” is defined as students from abroad under a temporary visa, whose goal is to obtain an American degree with the intent of returning to their home countries. This degree could be an undergraduate, graduate or professional degree.

**Major Challenges for International Students**

**Language**

International students who decide to study abroad are often the best, brightest, and most highly motivated students in their countries (Shenoy, 2002). They have most likely spent many years studying not only their academic area, but English as well. They usually know a lot about the language, but frequently have not had the opportunity to use English in any meaningful way, neither as an interpersonal communication tool, nor as a tool for learning new content in their chosen fields.

In addition to basic conversational language skills, international students often have problems understanding lectures, taking notes, knowing when and how to take part in class discussions, giving oral reports, and writing papers (Huntley, 1993, as cited in Kuo, 2011). International students may think that they are too incompetent in conversational English to participate in class discussions or to even ask for clarification when they do not understand.

Language development for adult learners in both social and academic contexts, takes a long time and consists of more than memorized vocabulary and written translation drills, which is often the way they have been taught in their native countries. They learn about English as a subject well enough to demonstrate mastery on the English language admission test (usually the Test of English as a Foreign Language, i.e., TOEFL) rather than acquire proficiency as a result of meaningful exposure and usage. Often they have not been exposed to native speakers of English either in social or academic settings, thus face many challenges settling in to the new community. It may take some additional time to acclimate to the sounds and rhythms of natural spoken English, regional dialects, American slang, idioms, jokes, and cultural references used when speaking in order to understand what is going on around them (Kuo, 2011); and time is not something they have a lot of due to the time constraints of their student visas.

International students often express fear, frustration, and intimidation in the face of their language insecurities; they avoid that which might help them the most—to move out of their comfort zone and establish relationships with native speakers in the host community. If they encounter other students from their home country, it is understandable for them to want to bond with their compatriots for emotional, intellectual relief, but it makes practicing English skills difficult since neither is likely to have native-like English proficiency.

**Culture**

Many international students have not developed their cross-cultural adaptation skills. According to Pierre Casse (1981, cited in Shenoy, 2002), it is

the process by which an individual is forced to function effectively, but without alienation, in a setting that does not recognize all or parts of the assumptions and behavioral patterns that a person takes for granted. Culture shock is brought on by the
anxiety that results from losing all the familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse.
(Adjustments for International Students section, para. 1)

Culture shock is not unusual and may even be expected by international students, intellectually; but abstract, pre-knowledge may not provide them with the necessary coping skills they will need to navigate the unsure waters of limited language proficiency and academic expectations. Cultural values, world-view perspectives, religious practices, economic values, are all areas of potential conflict, not to mention the mundane, everyday aspects of grooming, finding food that is acceptable, and non-verbal communication and personal space in interpersonal communication. Cultural adaptations will take place both in and outside of the classroom. Institutional interventions may be necessary to help students develop the cognitive and emotional coping strategies they will need.

**Classroom cultural expectations.** Many international students come from educational systems in which they are taught to sit quietly, listen to a lecture and take notes—sometimes verbatim, and then memorize them. American university classes are not typically taught that way, and, in fact are perceived by many internationals, as very informal and even disrespectful. According to Wan (2001, as cited in Kuo, 2011),

In America, teachers allow students to eat or drink in class, and often, student participation is encouraged or even part of the grade…the teacher is more interactive, creative, and flexible, but to many international students this approach does not seem to have any structure at all” (p. 38-39).

Students in America are expected to ask questions when they do not understand, to contribute to class discussions and offer their own opinions, pose challenging and clarifying questions. International students often do not have the language skills or cultural confidence to do these things.

Another potential cultural misunderstanding is in the area of how academic integrity is defined. Many students in other countries, because of the instructional style of lecture/notes/memorize/repeat, have never been asked to write an academic paper before—even in their own languages. They do not know how to cite the work of others and have often not been instructed on ways to synthesize “expert’s work” into an original exploration of a topic. They frequently do not understand the concept of plagiarism. This is not to say that there are never any incidences of deliberate cheating from some international students, but it does beg the question of intent. Perhaps, universities could do a better job of defining cheating and the consequences for international students.

**Instructional Adaptations**

**General Suggestions**
The following are some considerations and suggestions when working with international newcomers:
- Get to know all of your students including a little bit about their backgrounds.
- Learn their names or what they want to be called. Try to pronounce them correctly. Some students from other cultures are not addressed by their first names and may feel uncomfortable being addressed that way.
• Encourage students to practice speaking English as much as possible in and outside of class. Likewise, encourage American students to engage the international students in conversations – create opportunities in class for international students and native English speakers to interact.
• Make participation part of your course requirements but ease newcomers into it by providing paired or small group discussions where everyone is expected to contribute. This allows students to practice concepts with a smaller audience before speaking in front of the whole class. Be clear, firm, but patient about participation.
• Allow students to tape record your lectures, so they can review it as many times as they need to in order to understand.
• When lecturing, avoid idiomatic expressions, jargon, or pop cultural references, unless you take the time to paraphrase or explain.
• Encourage international students to utilize tutoring and learning lab resources that are available to them on campus. Also encourage them to engage in peer review with their English-speaking friends.

Instructional Adaptations
When making curricular adaptations, there are three basic areas to consider: content, the information and skills that students need to learn; process, how students make sense of the content and the manner in which it is delivered; and product, how students demonstrate what they have learned (Ford, 2011). The goal of differentiating instruction is to provide maximum access to course content, while not compromising the depth or breadth of the knowledge base. The following ideas are offered to provide a starting point for instructors:
• Ask for and validate international students’ cultural perspective of the course material; e.g., have they been taught the background content differently or with a different slant? Use international case studies where possible.
• Many international students have been taught not to ask questions, especially during class. They may need to be questioned directly to get them involved in the class discussions. Start with questions requiring one-word responses before moving into more complex expectations like open-ended questions.
• Allow sufficient wait-time during class discussions for students to formulate their answers; they may need more time to process the language. Also consider allowing more time when taking written tests, if possible.
• Tell students to read the end of the chapter summaries in their textbooks as well as any discussion questions written at the end of the chapters before reading the rest of the material.
• Encourage students to read for the main ideas in the textbook and not look up every word they do not recognize; but do allow them to use their dictionaries in class.
• Encourage students to use reference materials written in their native language if available to help them consolidate their understanding of key concepts.
• Consider providing graphic organizers or topic outlines for student to use for note-taking during lectures or for reading assignments because it draws attention to the main ideas or relationship of ideas.
• Summarize important information at various stages of instruction and provide closure with an overall summary.
• Design group work both for in-class activities and out of class projects that will provide more opportunities to practice and refine their use of academic language.
• Design grading rubrics that include explicit expectations for performance. Include the mechanics of writing for all academic writing assignments. Add an explicit writing policy statement to your syllabus.
• “Academic rigor” means different things in different cultures. Be clear about your approach to rigor, as well as the performance expectations you have. Consider providing exemplars of your expectations for projects or papers.
• Discuss with your students what cheating and plagiarism mean in the US. Help them learn to avoid it by using http://www.turnitin.com as part of the writing process.
• Help students build their academic vocabulary for your discipline. Find and provide information for online resources that are available; e.g., http://englishpage.com
• Use D2L technology (or webct) to enhance course content and encourage chats and discussion between students in the class.
• Provide a study guide for students to prepare for exams.

Conclusions

We believe that if universities are going to continue to admit and enroll international students using a single admission standards of their language proficiency, then they should responsibly provide support services and adaptations in order to improve their chances of success. Additionally, professors and instructors should also have a vested interest in their academic success, and be willing to make accommodations that do not detract from the integrity of their content nor add unnecessary demands on their time. There is much that can be done to provide better opportunities for success in the American higher educational system.
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Faith Communities and Adults with Disabilities

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The purpose of this study was to understand church leaders’ perceptions of adults with disabilities and how they are meeting those adults’ learning needs. Twelve church leaders were interviewed to learn their perspective on disability and how adult members’ needs are met. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Overall, the majority of pastors believed their church was doing a good job of meeting the needs of adults with disabilities.

Introduction

As our society becomes increasingly diverse, many U.S. corporations have responded by conducting diversity and sensitivity training while at the same time hiring employees with diverse backgrounds. In elementary and secondary education, a push to make certain that teachers are sensitive and respectful of the diverse students whom they teach has emerged. Many higher education institutions now require undergraduate students to enroll in some type of multicultural or social justice course. A number of universities and colleges have engaged in aggressive efforts to recruit under-represented and minority students as well. Even religious institutions have developed strategies to make their worship and other learning experiences more inclusive.

Religious Institutions

An historical examination of many mainstream religions in the United States tells a story of activism (Brown, 2006). Activism, within religious institutions, can come in many forms. To illustrate, some religious institutions created economic development corporations to provide job training for underrepresented groups (Nash, & Herring, 2006). Others were instrumental in educating adults on political and social issues through forums and meetings. Many religious institutions address health-related topics through partnerships with health organizations or higher education institutions (Rodriguez, Bowie, Frattaroli, & Gielen, 2009; Rowland & Chappel-Aiken, 2012). In the midst of their activism, religious institutions had to make adjustments to meet the needs of adults with disabilities. Like other businesses, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) affected religious institutions and they, too, had to respond by providing disability access to their buildings. Yet while the “outside” issues were addressed, some religious institutions overlooked the internal measures needed to meet the needs of adults with other disabilities. The purpose of this research was to explore how religious institutions meet the needs of adult learners with disabilities.

The mission and vision of many religious institutions is guided by its core beliefs and values. Hence the mission may include loving all people, empowerment, espousing justice, and being inviting and respectful of others. From outward appearances, it may seem that religious institutions have been successful in manifesting their mission. Even though Sunday is still considered the most segregated day of the week (Williams, 2011), there are numerous examples of churches, whose congregations reflect society. It is not uncommon to find members of
different ethnic groups sitting in the same pews. Nonetheless, adults with disabilities who are members of religious institutions may feel “segregated” from the rest of the congregation.

The worship experience is a time for adults to grow in their religious and spiritual development. However, this may not always be the case for congregants with disabilities. Often to meet the needs of adults who are deaf and hard of hearing during the worship experience, many religious institutions provide a sign language interpreter. Some provide large print bulletins and other documents (i.e., Braille) for those who are visually impaired. Willis (2010) believes more can be done to make churches welcoming to adults with disabilities. This includes developing an “awareness of metaphorical language in proclamation and liturgy, and hymns. Willis also suggests using a variety of cues such as combining “simple printed directions in the bulletin with oral and physical cues” (para. 4). Other helpful strategies include having assistants during the worship experience, developing “an awareness of the forms and amount of physical movement involved in worship,” reflecting “on the sacramental practices of [the] faith community,” being cognizant of how one speaks about disabilities, participating in “Disability Awareness Observances,” and speaking loud enough for adults who are deaf and hard of to clearly hear and understand what is being said (Willis, para. 5-6, 8-10).

Relative to disabilities, adult education researchers have focused their attention on ableism, strategies, accessibility, and discrimination. However, a review of the adult education literature reveals few discussions of how congregations meet the needs of adults with disabilities. Thus, while the literature on disabilities in this context is growing, other areas warrant further study.

Disabilities

Thanks to the efforts of many and particularly the presence of war veterans returning home with loss of limbs, adults with disabilities are seen in a new light. “In higher education,” war veterans have served as the “catalysts’ for changes in programs and services provided to persons with disabilities” (Ostovary & Dapprich, 2011, p. 66). Nonetheless, there is still cause for concern. There were significant changes to the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA) in 2008, and as a result, the “pool of individuals now considered disabled has increased” (Bowman, 2011, p. 87). This explains why based on the 2010 census bureau figures, 19% of the U.S. population had a disability (U.S. Department of Commerce [USDC], 2010), which represented an increase of 2.2 million people from 2005. In addition, both “the number and percentage with a severe disability rose, however. Likewise, the number and percentage needing assistance also both increased” (USDC, para 2). For purposes of this study, an adult with a disability is defined as someone with a mental or physical impairment that “substantially limits one or more ‘major life activities’” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], n.d, para. 3).

The increase in the number of adults with disabilities lends itself to educational and research opportunities for adult educators. Nonetheless, in adult education, the purview of disabilities research has not garnered the attention that other topics in the field receive such as race, class, and gender. When disabilities is discussed, it often focuses on a particular impairment and is contextualized within “medical or functional models” (Rocco & Delgado, 2011, p. 4.). Clark (2006) stated a review of adult education literature shows that too many adult educators have not recognized the “potential of an interdisciplinary approach with respect to disability as a social category for research” (p. 309). The field of disabilities studies within the context of adult education provides more opportunities for research.
Undergirding issues of disability is critical disability theory (CDT). Similar to critical race theory, which, “offers . . . a unique lens with which to view practice and work toward social justice” (Isaac, Merriweather, & Rogers, 2010, p. 361), critical disability theory charges that “discrimination against people with disabilities is so ordinary that it is invisible (Rocco, 2002, para 3). Rocco expanded her CDT to include six principles:

1. Disabled people have a unique voice and complex experience.
2. Disability should be viewed as part of a continuum of human variation (Asch, 2001).
3. Disability is socially constructed (Oliver, 1990; 1996).
4. Ableism is invisible.
5. Disabled people have a right to self-determination (Gorman, 2000).
6. The commodification of labor and disability business . . . combine to maintain a system of poverty and isolation among people with disabilities (Albrecht, 1992). (Rocco & Delgado, 2011, pp. 7-8)

CDT helps us to better understand the issues and needs of adults with disabilities. An examination of the intersection of disabilities, adult education, and religious institutions clearly espouses the need for more research. The purpose of this study was to understand church leadership perceptions of adults with disabilities and how they are meeting their learning needs.

Methodology and Findings

To examine how religious institutions meet the needs of adults with disabilities, purposive sampling was used. Twelve religious leaders of different denominations in the Midwestern U.S. participated in one-on-one interviews. The religious institutions ranged in congregational size from 50 members to 1600, with the majority (4) having a membership between 1,000 to 2,000 people. Four of the churches were affiliated with the Baptist denomination, two were Catholic, one was Episcopalian and another was Apostolic. Four churches were identified as nondenominational. Many of the churches were located in a suburban area. Most church leaders reported that most of their members were in the middle income bracket. Five of the church leaders were 60-69 years old. Four of the pastors were between the ages of 50-59. All the pastors attended college. Five had earned doctorates. Three of the church leaders had one or more disabilities.

Church leaders were asked to respond to several questions including a definition of disability, the number of adults with disabilities, the identification of adults with disabilities and meeting the learning needs of adult members with disabilities. Using thematic analyses and triangulation, themes were created to examine church leaders’ perceptions about adults with disabilities.

An apparent theme emerged from the church leaders’ definition of disability. Limitations, described a person who was unable to perform a particular activity due to a limitation. For example, one church leader indicated, “It can be physical or mental impairment or limitations.” Another church leader, who is confined to a wheelchair, defined disability as “Limitations that keep one from normal behavior or actions.” A church leader from a non-denominational church stated that a disability “keeps a person from being able to lead a productive lifestyle.”

Five themes encompassed the types of adults with disabilities in the churches. Mobility reflected members who needed assistance in getting around. Every church leader described someone that fell into this category. In two cases, the church leader himself was confined to a wheelchair. One church leader of a non-denominational church with 500-1000 members stated,
“We have members who are unable to walk or need assistance.” However, most church leaders indicated members were either “in a wheelchair” or “mobility impaired.” The second theme, mental, described an adult with some form of mental disability. One pastor, who himself is disabled, identified a person who has less of a physical challenge and more of a “mental issue.” And the pastor of an Episcopal church reported a member with dementia. “There may be [there is] one that has more of mental problem than a physical problem, according to the pastor of small congregation.

Another theme was vision. Of the four church leaders who had members that fell under this theme, they described them as vision impaired, blind or legally blind. Another theme describing adults with disabilities was hearing impaired. Potpourri, the last theme, captured several disabilities, but not any that were necessarily reflected in more than one church. A pastor of a small Baptist church indicated that he had “elderly people” who had “arthritis really bad or some issues like that.” Another pastor had a member with autism. Church leaders also identified adults with COPD and diabetes.

In addition to asking church leaders about adults with disabilities in their church, they were also asked how they identify them. One way church leaders identified adults was through observation. As one church leader with a membership between 1,000 and 2,000 stated, “They are observed in the congregation.” Another indicated, “Well, the physical stuff I automatically know.” Two of the church leaders specifically observe people during worship services. Shared knowledge was another way adults were identified. One church leader is informed by his members. At a smaller church with less than 250 members, people can call a designated person and inform him of their needs.

Members with disabilities have their needs met in a number of ways. For those hearing impaired, “hearing boosters” are used “for those who request them.” Two churches use signers. Special seating is provided for adults in wheelchairs. One pastor, confined to a wheelchair, stated, “We make sure that they have a place to put their wheelchair.” In another church, “What we do is, those with disabilities they are given a special seat that, . . . makes them comfortable. This same pastor has a member with autism and the person “sits in the vestibule to “hear the sermons that way.” Outside of the workshop experience, one pastor indicated that Bible study is held on the first floor to accommodate adults confined to a wheelchair. Another church offers Sunday school in the sanctuary for this same population of learners.

As education is important to gaining a better understanding of disabilities, church leaders were asked about their own learning experiences with disabilities and if their church provided disabilities awareness learning opportunities. One pastor, who has been confined to a wheelchair for eight years, has conducted disabilities workshops at his church and for community organizations. Another pastor, with several disabilities, uses himself as an example when he preaches. He reminds congregants that he uses a hearing aid and has a prosthetic. By sharing his own disability it seems to help them, because a lot of times people are going through something and they, they, think no one is concerned until they realize somebody else is going through something. And that kind of puts them back on track.

Only 3 of the 12 church leaders had attended some form of disabilities workshop or seminar within the past two years. One pastor of a Baptist church attended a workshop that was offered through his denomination. A pastor, who has a full-time job, outside of the church, indicated he attended a workshop through his place of employment.

Finally, the church leaders were asked if they believed their church was doing a good job of meeting the needs of members with disabilities. All but one indicated the church was doing a
good job. In most instances, this was related to those they were aware of as indicated by one church leader when he said, “For those who we know of, yes.” As one pastor stated, “I think we do what we feel is needed to meet the need of those with disabilities.” Although one church leader stated the church met the needs, he expressed some doubt.

Discussion and Conclusion

Some religious institutions have a long history of social justice and advocacy. Their mission calls upon them to help where needed. With the passage of the ADA and subsequently the ADAAA of 2008, businesses, including religious institutions, had to comply to make their buildings accessible to adults with disabilities. For many, this called for adding a ramp for easy entrance into the building and/or an elevator. Exterior changes are easy to detect. What is not as visible are people’s awareness of disabilities and other accommodations that made for adults in learning contexts.

In the current study, the church leaders’ definitions of disability were similar to that used by the HHS. They, too, believed that a disability caused some type of limitation or impairment. Several identified members that were confined to a wheelchair, visually or hearing impaired or that had mental disabilities. As suggested by Willis (2010), the churches in the study appear to make their church welcoming for adults with disabilities to a certain extent. Several mentioned that their building was ADA compliant. During worship, they use large print bulletins and/or sign language interpreters. A few of the pastors had attended disabilities awareness workshops or seminars. The church leaders appear to understand that disabled people have a unique voice and their experiences are complex (Rocco & Delgado, 2011). Furthermore, it seems that they support adult with disabilities in their determination (Rocco & Delgado) to learn more about their religious beliefs.

The church leaders in this study are to be commended for the efforts in meeting the needs of adults with disabilities. Yet, more can be done. For example, none of the church leaders mentioned an awareness of the forms and amount of movement that is involved during a worship experience, nor was it apparent that they changed the language used in liturgies or hymns that might be offensive to a person with a disability. This study lends itself to additional research. More in-depth questions of church leaders can shed light on other issues relative to disabilities within religious institutions. In addition, the perceptions of church members with or without a disability should be examined. If church leaders and members have a better understanding of disabilities, their response could lead to more people with disabilities attending religious institutions and subsequently aiding disabled adults in their spiritual growth and development. Adult educators can expand our knowledge of the intersection of disabilities, adult education, and religion with additional studies.

References


Using Andragogy to Build a Doctor of Andragogy Program

Susan K. Isenberg and John A. Henschke

Andragogy professors at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri (Drs. Susan Isenberg and John Henschke) are applying andragogy to create a new Doctor of Education degree program in andragogy by involving students of andragogy in the process. This application of andragogy is a best-practice model because it is based on the assumptions of the adult learner, the elements of the adult learning process, a 1999 theoretical model, a 2011 conceptual framework, and years of experience and research. Current Andragogy Emphasis students volunteer to meet for an hour every Friday with Isenberg and Henschke to think strategically, plan and assist to carry out the necessary steps to create the program from which they intend to graduate. This is a work in progress and the initial three years is a test upon which the long-range program is being built.

Introduction

Establishing a new accredited doctoral program at an established university is a difficult undertaking. University faculty members who are experts in a content area historically create new degree programs at universities. These fill a need for a population that requires a degree in a field of study in order to be employable in that field.

Students of andragogy are not seeking employment in andragogy. Instead, they seem to seek improvement in their current employment practice. This difference is fundamental and unique to an andragogy doctoral degree; therefore, it attracts those who are focused on self-improvement, not employment. Students seem as eager for the journey (learning) as the destination (degree). In an effort to model what is taught, students who are currently taking andragogy courses at Lindenwood University in the Instructional Leadership Ed.D. – Andragogy Emphasis Specialty program, are participating in the journey of creating a new andragogy doctor of education degree program guided by two professors of andragogy, Susan Isenberg and John Henschke.

Importance of This Best Practice to the Field of Adult, Continuing, Extension, or Community Education

Typically, the practice of involving participants actively in the adult learning process is included in the component parts of a workshop, conference, symposium, or other kinds of adult education programs. However, this has not been attempted (as far as we know) in the development of a Doctoral Degree in andragogy. Vigorously engaging participants in each step of the process of developing a doctoral degree, may be tested as an example for possibly helping to improve the field of adult and continuing education.

This also will provide an opportunity to analyze how it is being accomplished. Changes may be implemented along the way that will help refine andragogy as it is applied to new territory.
A Theoretical Context for Developing a Doctoral Program in Andragogy

We ask ourselves three guiding questions when considering the choice of any adult learning method or technique that we may think about using in an adult learning experience where we are in charge, including developing a new university degree program. We seek to answer these questions with an educationally sound answer. The questions follow. How does my selection and use of this method or technique fit into my understanding of the way adults learn, change or grow (what is my learning theory)? What position does this method or technique hold in the context of the learning goals or objectives toward which I am working in this adult learning / teaching situation (what is my learning design for this experience)? What immediate and observable learning needs does this adult learning technique or method meet at this time with these participants (what is the specific relevance now)?

Thus, we thought it would be well us as professionals, as we were developing a doctoral program in andragogy, to ask and answer for ourselves each of these questions (Henschke, 1975. 1992). When these questions are addressed and implemented in adult education they very clearly support the cardinal principles of andragogy.

Articulating an Andragogical Learning Theory Which Informs and Supports the Development of a Doctoral Program in Andragogy

There may be many theories that could contribute to this activity. Nonetheless, we have chosen the theory of andragogy – the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1989, 1990, 1995, 1996), which is focused on involving adult learners actively and implies to students that what they have to offer is extremely important. It has six assumptions and eight process elements. The six assumptions of andragogy follow.

1. Concept of the learner – As adults, we have a deep psychological need to be self-directing—to be treated by others as able to take responsibility for ourselves.
2. Role of the learner’s experience – Adults possess a greater volume and a different quality of experience than youths. It means that adults are themselves the richest learning resource for one another for many kinds of learning.
3. Readiness to learn – when adults experience a need to know or be able to do something to perform more effectively in some aspect of their lives — marriage, the birth of children, loss of a job, divorce, the death of a friend or relative, or change of residence.
4. Orientation to learning – adults enter an educational activity with a life-, task-, or problem-centered orientation to learning. Hence, their learning is for immediate, not postponed, application.
5. Motivation to learn in adults – much more internally oriented (self-esteem, confidence, recognition by others) than externally oriented (chance for promotion, change of technology).
6. Why learn something – Adults have a need to know a reason that makes sense to them why they should learn a particular thing, rather than because the teacher said so.

The eight process elements of andragogy follow and are sequential or cyclical.
1. Preparing the learners for the program – Learners become informed on the contents of this experience, generally how it will be conducted, and the general process of each segment building upon the previous element.
2. Setting the climate – A climate conducive to learning is a prerequisite for effective learning. Two aspects of climate are important: physical and psychological. Physical climate
needs to be comfortable, bright, colorful, and exciting. Psychological climate for learning needs
to be infused very deeply with support, mutual respect, pleasure/fun, humanness, openness,
authenticity, mutual trust, and collaboration.

3. Involving learners in mutual planning lets them share responsibility in planning
learning activities with the facilitator. Research indicates that learners will be committed to a
decision or activity to the extent they have had a say in constructing what happens.

4. Diagnosing their own learning needs — Learners can share in small groups what they
perceive their needs and interests to be regarding the acquisition of knowledge, understanding,
skill, attitude, value and interest (KUSAVI) in this learning experience. The needs include such
things as a growth like movement toward: wholeness, perfection, completion, justice, aliveness,
richness, simplicity, beauty, goodness, uniqueness, effortlessness, playfulness, truth, honesty,
reality, and self-sufficiency.

5. Translating the learning needs into objectives – Participants now face the task of
translating the learning needs into learning objectives. These are positive statements of
directions of growth in knowledge, understanding, skill, attitude, value, and interest (KUSAVI)
regarding expanding their horizons in things like autonomy, activity, altruism, objectivity,
enlightenment, many responsibilities, broad interests, self-acceptance, integrated self-identity,
focus on principles, deep concerns, and originality.

6. Designing a pattern of learning experiences — This plan (mutually designed by the
learners and teachers) will include identifying and using relevant resources.

7. Helping adult learners manage and carry out their learning plans. Learning contracts
are among the most effective ways.

8. Evaluating the extent to which the learners have achieved their objectives. What
happened with the learners and how differently they are performing in life.

When the three contextual questions are addressed along with being coupled with the
theory of andragogy (the art and science of helping adults learn) and merged in practice, they
become a beneficial pair. Thus, it may be possible to identify using andragogy to build a doctor
of andragogy program as a ‘best practice’.

Identifying the Techniques Used for Actively Engaging the Learners

By way of background, Isenberg studied andragogy with Henschke at the University of
Missouri – St. Louis (UMSL) and gained experienced there in teaching andragogy courses with
his guidance before coming to Lindenwood University (LU) in 2008 as supervisor of graduate
research for a new Doctor of Education program, which included the role of dissertation final
reader. The LU EdD program at its inception was designed for K-12 doctoral students seeking
either the administrative or instructional leadership tract. It became clear that some students
were interested in pursuing doctoral studies in track(s) other than public school education; i.e.
corporate settings, religious organizations, health care, military, government, higher education,
etc.

When Henschke accepted Isenberg’s invitation to come to Lindenwood University (LU)
in July 2009, his first assignment was to help with the dissertations of doctoral students who
were already there. LU had quite a backlog of doctoral students and faculty members were
working diligently to serve them. Henschke was told that sometime in the future – perhaps four
or five years – there would be opportunity to teach some courses in adult education and start a
doctoral degree program in that academic area. LU had been having inquiries from current and prospective doctoral students about the possibility of developing a doctoral thread that was oriented to education other than K-12 leadership instruction or administration. There was an expressed desire for application of doctoral studies to corporate, social service, government, religious, health care, and other institutions. However, two weeks before the start of the 2009 fall semester, the School of Education Dean came to Henschke and said she wanted him to develop two courses in adult education and teach them in that fall semester.

Henschke developed new courses he had never taught before, since this was to introduce adult education as a new academic area of study at LU. One of the courses was entitled “Developing and Implementing Learning Contracts with Adult Learners.” From a practical point of view the students in that course needed to develop learning contracts as part of their course responsibility. Thus, he took advantage of the opportunity for them to be involved in their learning contracts being done as a group and designing an emphasis specialty doctoral program in adult education along with the first five courses to be included in the program. Thus, these students, faculty members, and administrators coalesced around this idea. By late February of 2010, Henschke and Isenberg had administration and faculty approval for a new doctoral thread, naming it “andragogy.”

In June of 2010, Isenberg left the supervisor of graduate research position to join Henschke as the second full time professor of andragogy to seriously develop this effort for the long haul. As the andragogy emphasis specialty progressed, other courses beside the original two were offered and students got more involved in the overall development. The need to carry on regular discussions was determined, which turned into weekly Friday meetings. Students voluntarily gather for weekly meetings with andragogy faculty members to discuss individual and program wants and needs, share responsibilities and workload, mutually plan every step in the process, treat all andragogy students as constituents – regularly ask those not at the meetings for input and feedback, invite all who are interested to attend the weekly meetings, conduct focus groups on important topics to move forward, foster respectful and inclusive relationships with program administrators, and document every step carefully and thoroughly.

How This Best Practice Relates to the Conference Research and Practice

In this program, participants are invited to be involved in the process each step of the way, with andragogy professors providing guidance and oversight in that process. This, in essence, blends the actual research and practice as an inseparable unit and exemplifying what this conference is all about.

Henschke and Isenberg’s foundational research has informed this process. The program stems from theoretical underpinnings of a presentation by Isenberg and Titus at the 1999 MWR2P conference, and 22 years later an e-learning framework by Glancy and Isenberg (2011) that was an outgrowth of the Isenberg and Titus (1999) presentation, and Henschke’s years of experience in the research and practice of andragogy. In this case, Henschke and Isenberg’s new practice application of andragogy theory is based on research and is now an important resource for new research.
Why the Authors Think It Qualifies as a Best Practice

During the three years that we have been developing and implementing this andragogy doctoral degree program, we have been involving the students at every step of the way. In other words, we are saying to them in ‘word and deed’ that they have a stake in shaping their own learning and being that it is a new program under development, they can help the faculty shape it into a degree program that serves the vital needs of the participants. Andragogy’s eight process elements have been attended to (see Table 1).

Table 1. Aligning the Eight Process Elements of Andragogy with the Process Elements of Building an Andragogy Ed.D. Program to Demonstrate Theory Application

| Preparing the learner | Professors communicated vision and weekly mutual planning meeting approach to all andragogy students through email and during andragogy courses |
| Setting the climate   | Voluntary participation, sitting at round table in cheery office, drinking coffee, with an open invitation, open discussion, and respect for all voices and viewpoints |
| Involving learners in mutual planning | Timeline sequence of events working backward from a “go live” deadline |
| Diagnosing their own learning needs | -Developed Master’s and Doctoral Assessment Instrument completed by all students in the program. -Sent out SurveyMonkey to all andragogy students to see what courses they would like offered and in what sequence. |
| Translating learning needs into objectives | Contract doctoral degrees as short-term goal, master’s online degree and doctoral degree as long-term goals |
| Designing a pattern of learning experiences | Weekly meetings, contract degree process, market analysis, marketing plan, webpage planning, new course critiques, conference presentation, creating a sense of place |
| Helping adults manage and carry out their learning plans | Advocacy and seeking ways around barriers, providing F2F experience for internships, graduate assistants, and independent study students |
| Evaluating the extent to which learners have achieved their learning objectives | Weekly meeting participant evaluation after first four months, program standards assessment at start and finish of program. |


Conclusion

Applying andragogy to the designing and creating of a new Doctor of Education program in andragogy is deviating from traditional practice. Three critical questions are asked and combined with the assumptions and processes of andragogy to provide the foundation of developing the doctoral program. Students and faculty collaboratively engaged in developing the structure and implementation of the program. Henschke and Isenberg have divergent backgrounds and have brought together a combination that fosters this kind of experimentation,
aligning the eight process elements of andragogy in the development of the program. What seemed impossible is now real and we have only taken the first step.

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The Protective Paradox: Do Current Ethical and Legal Guidelines Inhibit Research into Human Trafficking?

Jesse Bach, Carrie Love, and Carly Evans

The literature surrounding human trafficking is limited and often involves advocacy groups, victim shelters and/or “gate keepers” and as such may present an inaccurate representation of the crime. To increase independent research and contribute to the existing literature many investigators are crafting methodology involving the examination of online advertisements as placed for commercial sex. Such investigation involves the undetermined ontological status of the Internet and asks the question; are Internet postings representative of text or are they representative of human participants. This paper takes the stance that the mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse as required by state law and the required reporting of felonious behavior as required by federal law prohibits the examination of the Internet as a textual repository when conducting human trafficking research. This paper advocates for the adoption of a human subjects approach to Internet research when investigating potential sex trafficking online as it is often considered the safest model to employ, but to request a waiver of informed consent as is outlined in §46.116 and §46.408 (c) of Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects.

Introduction

Human trafficking, the accepted terminology for modern-day slavery is speculated to be the third largest worldwide criminal enterprise. Worldwide estimates range between 20 and 27 million individuals currently exploited representing a multi-billion dollar criminal enterprise (Bales, 2004; 2007; Bales & Doodalter, 2009; Hussein, 2011; Schauer & Wheaton, 2006; Skinner, 2008). Human trafficking is a crime of economic exploitation and intense human rights violations and occurs when one is forced to work through fraud or threat of violence for no money beyond subsistence (Bales, 2004, 2007; Skinner, 2008). There has been a recent call to the academic community to examine the field of human trafficking although access to willing research participants can prove troublesome in terms of ethical and legal considerations (Tyldum, 2010; Brunovskis & Suertees, 2010). The trafficked victim is considered a protected individual and as such much of the current literature surrounding the issue involves advocacy groups, victim shelters and/or “gate-keepers” and cannot be assumed to be representative of the population of trafficked victims or of the crime of human trafficking as a whole (Tyldum, 2010; Brunovskis & Suertees, 2010). To narrow the scope of human trafficking, which includes a vast array of exploitation, this paper will concentrate on sex trafficking that includes Adult Forced Prostitution (AFP), the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CESC) and Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST).

Body of Paper

The relationship between existing literatures, researcher, Institutional Review Board (IRB), the environments in which sex trafficking occurs and the mandatory reporting of child abuse represents a difficult to navigate paradigm which may unnecessarily guide researchers away from the examination of sex-trafficking. In addition, investigation into the various forms
of forced prostitution presents a considerable paradox for researchers in that the complex legal and ethical guidelines set up to protect participants may inadvertently discourage research which increasingly adds to the oppression of an already stigmatized group. The researcher may not consider the intricacies required in researching human trafficking and as such may consider “lurking” online in order to mine data for evaluation (Schrag, 2008). Moreover, the researcher may think that this method of data collection is low impact to the population being studied and may not even necessitate the filing with the IRB. However, one must incorporate the nature of risk to the participant, the ethical and legal requirements as applied to the researcher and the supporting university. This paper is written in the hopes of encouraging research into AFP, CESC and DMST by outlining various considerations to aid the investigator in crafting research methodology.

One of the most recent additions in both the proliferation and research of sex trafficking has been the unprecedented development of networked technologies and Internet-enabled devices (Latonero, 2011). As such, the Internet can be viewed as a contributing factor in both committing the act of and the ability to discern the nature of the crime of sex trafficking (Kara, 2008; Latonero, 2011). Much of the existing literature surrounding sex trafficking involves online advertisements for commercial sex as hosted on public, semi-private, private or peer-to-peer (P2P) websites and networks as it is suspected that some of the advertisements are not placed by willing and consensual parties (Bach & Dalton 2011; Latonero, 2011). The ability to research advertisements for commercial sex placed on the Internet represents a great leap forward in sex trafficking research; however, the undetermined ontological status of the Internet muddies the nature of important ethical and legal considerations (Berry, 2004; Capurro & Pingel, 2002; Hudson & Bruckman, 2004; Koepsell, 2003). Due to the accessibility and reproducibility of the Internet, many assume that web-based content is both created and available in a public sphere (Berry, 2004). Accessibility to content does necessarily mean public due to the increased usage of intranets, secure network technologies, opt-in subscriptions and the ability for one to reproduce private content in public spheres (Barry, 2004).

Researchers holding to the viewpoint that the Internet is a textual repository may consider research methodology that invokes U.S. copyright law. Legally, written materials such as transcripts of chat sessions are considered copyrighted materials and therefore can be studied within the bounds of fair use as long as researchers do not identify their participants in any way (Cavazos & Morin, 1994; Hudson & Bruckman, 2004). The lack of anonymity and the subsequent increased potential for risk to participants may clash with Subpart A of the Basic HHS Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects (2009) wherein:

§46.101 (2) Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior [is exempt], unless (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation

§46.101 (4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records pathological specimens or diagnostic specimens [is exempt], if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
§46.102 (i) Minimal Risk means the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during their performance of routine physical or psychological examination or tests.

When examining Internet-based advertisements for commercial sex, the researcher must be cognizant that such text is representative of human participants that may be in need of help. Due to the risky environment in which suspected sex trafficking occurs, the researcher may be required by law to intervene in order to stop a potentially abusive and/or exploitative situation. Currently 48 states require social workers, teachers, school personnel, physicians, health-care workers, mental health professionals, childcare providers, medical examiners, coroners, and law enforcement officials to report all suspected incidences of child abuse; two states, Wyoming and New Jersey require all individuals to report (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2010). In addition, as human trafficking in all of its forms is felonious, researchers may be subject to reporting known instances per 18 USC § 4 wherein:

> Whoever, having knowledge of the actual commission of a felony cognizable by a court of the United States, conceals and does not as soon as possible make known the same to some judge or other person in civil or military authority under the United States, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than three years, or both.

A researcher uncovering potentially exploitative situations during sex trafficking research is not without precedent and is evident in The Cleveland Backpage Report (Bach & Dalton, 2010). In this particular case two human trafficking advocacy groups, The Imagine Foundation and Operation Broken Silence, were evaluating a website to discern its role in localized sex trafficking when they happened upon numerous advertisements for commercial sex linking to a single out of state phone number. The researchers involved were mandatory reporters of the crime and as required contacted the National Human Trafficking Resource Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigations Child Exploitation Task Force. The researchers suspicions were confirmed as an individual was arrested and charged with sex trafficking of a minor correlating with the data that was uncovered during research.

The human subjects approach to Internet research considers web-based postings as representative of human participants and considers protections such as anonymity, informed consent and beneficence paramount when considering proper research methodology (King, 1996; Hudson & Bruckman, 2004), and is often considered the safest model to apply when dealing with Internet research (Basset & O’Riordan, 2002). Informed consent however, is exceedingly difficult when researching potential sex trafficking online due to the clandestine nature of the crime and the environments which host it. If the researcher’s intentions were known by virtue of obtaining informed consent, the potential for research influence and observer effects may increase. In addition one cannot know the potential for harm to a sex trafficking victim if the trafficker feels threatened through such observations. There are ways to work within the human subjects model for safety while altering consent procedures to pass IRB standards as covered in Subpart A of the Basic HHS Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects (2009).

(1) The research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects;
(2) The waiver or alteration will not adversely affects the rights and welfare of the subjects;
(3) The research could not practically be carried out without the waiver or alteration; and
(4) Whenever appropriate the subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation.

When working within the human subjects approach to Internet research §46.116 (c) an IRB may approve a consent procedure which does not include, or which alters some or all of the elements of informed consent set forth above, or waive the requirement to obtain informed consent provided the IRB finds and documents that:

(d) An IRB may approve a consent procedure which does not include, or which alters, some or all of the elements of informed consent set forth in this section, or waive the requirements to obtained informed consent provided the IRB finds and documents that:

Surrounding sex trafficking research one must consider the potential for investigating children who are being forcibly prostituted. Informed consent procedures surrounding children often involve parents/guardians or other family members. One must be exceedingly careful surrounding informed consent with children involving sex trafficking, as the child may not understand the context of their actions and the potential for family members to be involved in perpetrating the crime.

Subpart A of the Basic HHS Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects (2009) states:

§46.408 Requirements for permission by parents or guardians and for assent by children. (a) …If the IRB determines that the capability of some or all of the children is so limited that they cannot reasonably be consulted or that the intervention or procedure involved in the research holds out a prospect of direct benefit that is important to the health or well-being of the children and is available only in the context of the research, the assent of the children is not a necessary condition for proceeding with the research.
(c) … if the IRB determines that a research protocol is designed for conditions or for a subject population for which parental or guardian permission is not a reasonable requirement to protect the subjects (for example, neglected or abused children), it may waive the consent requirements in Subpart A of this part and paragraph (b) of this section, provided an appropriate mechanism for protecting the children who will participate as subjects in the research is substituted, and provided further that the waiver is not inconsistent with federal, state or local law. The choice of an appropriate mechanism would depend upon the nature and purpose of the activities described in the protocol, the risk and anticipated benefit to the research subjects, and their age, maturity, status and condition.

Conclusion

Research into sex trafficking is necessary to both understand the nature of the crime and to craft interventions to rehabilitate those who are or may become involved. Sex trafficking research may challenge traditional research methodology as it might involve investigating active crimes and may uncover people who are in need of immediate help. The researcher may be tempted to simply “lurk” online to mine data (Schrag, 2008) but may not consider the legal and
ethical requirements of reporting of the crime. The very nature of the human subjects approach requires informed consent, yet this may alter the online environment to be studied and may put potential research participants at an increased risk. There are considerations put in place within Subpart A of the Basic HHS Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects (2009) to alter informed consent however the IRB must be willing to approve such measures. The culmination of the above variables however may steer researchers away from investigating sex trafficking and into arenas involving less risky subject matter. This is the very nature of the protective paradox wherein the ethical and legal guidelines set forth to protect individuals may inadvertently increase the oppression of an already stigmatized group.

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Misprision of Felony of 2012, 18 USC §4


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College Faculty as Adult Learners in Outcomes Assessment

Jeff King

College faculty members are adult learners who are often placed into non-self-initiated learning scenarios because they may not have received training in how to teach well. Paradoxically, this situation is common: the Ph.D. is a research degree, and many doctoral programs do not include coursework in pedagogy and/or andragogy. With accreditors’ measures of institutional quality now more rightly focused on what students learn, how you prove it, and how you get better at it as a result, faculty find that they must assess outcomes (distinctly different in most cases from grading). To do so, faculty must learn about rubrics, learn how to connect assignments and activities to outcomes (often requiring a re-conceptualization of their courses), become facile at assessing student learning outcomes achievement, and then use the resulting information to improve subsequent teaching and learning. This paper will describe the two key training activities which succeeded in helping faculty at a medium-sized, southern, private university accomplish this and will also discuss the transformation in faculty’s perspectives about assessing learning outcomes. The implications for improving college teaching practice as a result of the practitioners — faculty — changing a key perspective are considerable and illustrate well the power of transformative learning among adults.

Introduction

Cranton (2006) posits that “[e]ducators’ awareness of themselves as people and practitioners is the foundation of transformative learning about teaching” (p. 198). In a time of changing expectations of institutions and faculty — changes brought on by market forces, new technologies, governmental mandates to improve student success and graduation rates to keep America competitive within the global economy, a shifting college student demographic, and other precipitating factors — awareness of self, of one’s beliefs, and of one’s personal conception of teaching and learning is now more explicit among faculty who are having to react to such change because their evaluations of themselves as teachers often must factor in the shift in higher education from the teaching paradigm to the learning paradigm (Barr & Tagg, 1995). That accreditors and governmental regulatory agencies have begun to operate on learning paradigm assumptions, too, means that success as a teacher is no longer defined at many colleges and universities by what you do as a teacher but by what your students learn and how you can prove that they have learned it.

In such a new landscape, a change in perspective about teaching is often required. In her doctoral dissertation, Sanchez (2012) indicates that while some study has been conducted of the conceptual changes undergone by college faculty, most of those studies consider conceptual changes in discipline knowledge as opposed to teaching practice knowledge (p. 12). Her qualitative investigation of 20 faculty at a research-intensive university led her to state that relationships (with peers, with family, with students, with faculty developers, for instance), contextual factors (e.g., “the setting and the dynamics of the setting of the specific institution”; p. 40), and beliefs (“professors’ thinking about change, and values about teaching are a source of motivation”; p. 46) are major contributors to why faculty change their teaching practice.
Among those factors, there is a very strong, externally motivating factor that prompts faculty to make changes in how they teach. As mentioned above, accreditors’ focus on what students learn as the measure of institutional quality has caused colleges and universities across the nation to find ways to measure student learning and to prove students have achieved program and institutional outcomes. In Sanchez’ study, “Carl,” a tenured professor in the School of Engineering who had been teaching for more than 20 years, summed up this kind of motivation:

They required that we develop a system of continuous improvement based outcomes of assessment. And so the outcomes of the assessment program are pretty much in every class. We used to look at ‘What did you teach?’ and now we look at “What did students learn?” We have to sit down and analyze, here are the goals of the class, we have to develop a way of measuring it and if they didn't get it, then we have to do something about it. Now you have program outcomes okay, which the department as a whole deals with but sometimes, though, program outcomes are parsed in little bits and a bit will just be in my class and so I actually have to be able to provide that analysis and provide that to the department as a whole, and so if I’m not getting that done, I sure as heck better figure out how to make it get done. (pp. 41-42)

Having such a change forced on one from the outside, however, often creates negative affect. For faculty developers working to help faculty shift their perception of what teaching is (i.e., shift from teaching as, “what I do,” to, “what the students have learned and are able to demonstrate authentically” — in essence, shifting from the teaching to the learning paradigm), overcoming this negative affect is a huge challenge, especially in an environment where faculty are being mandated to make this change.

While mandates may prompt a faculty member’s felt need (Knowles, 1975) to change her perspective, they are not optimal in doing so. Mandates can create resentment, something faculty developers across the nation see often. This is a frequent topic of conversation on the listserv maintained by the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education, a national professional organization of college faculty developers (POD, 2012).

In such a setting, what training could be devised to help faculty learn how to assess student learning outcomes, and what changes in faculty perceptions about teaching and themselves as teachers might result?

**Faculty Training in Learning Outcomes Assessment**

One of the first steps in assessing how well you’re helping your students achieve learning outcomes is to know what class activities and assignments connect to the learning outcome being assessed. This is actually part of planning your course. When you assess at the end of the course, the instructional strategies and the artifacts produced by students are the components which can be improved, shuffled, and/or eliminated as you work to be more effective in helping students reach the course outcomes. The ADDIE model is one well-known process (Grafinger, 1998) defining efficacious instructional planning and improvement, but there are others, which might be summarized as plan-do-measure-fix-reiterate.

Faculty must be intentional in helping students achieve outcomes, and this means thinking carefully about what kinds of activities and resources will facilitate the best
achievement. In instructional design parlance, this means that faculty must know which activities and assignments “map up” to a given outcome.

It is yet another paradox in higher education that faculty sometimes do not go through this thought process. In the teaching paradigm, which is an information delivery system (Barr & Tagg, 1995), teaching can be seen as breaking content down into chunks and simply “delivering” that content to students. Whether students learn the content or not is not the responsibility of the teacher in the teaching paradigm. What can happen, then, is that faculty deliver information in lecture-sized chunks and give tests and require papers and projects in which students are supposed to demonstrate that they have learned the content. Further, such demonstration is often subject to interpretations on the faculty member’s part when she assigns either a B- or a C.

But such an approach does not work in the new paradigm because it is the achievement of the learning outcome that is the focus. No longer can you simply “deliver content”; you must now “create learning” (Barr & Tagg, 1995).

Further, within the learning paradigm and its focus on what students learn as the indicator of quality teaching, you must assess student learning against some clearly defined standard so that both you and your students know when they have learned and when they have not. This means you must develop clear criteria to know when students have learned (or not). Faculty must know how to create and use rubrics in order to do this.

So the challenge in designing faculty training focused on assessing learning outcomes is that you must start at the very beginning with, in essence, course design, and you must then include training in how to create and use rubrics to assess student achievement of course outcomes.

**Course Redesign as a Result of Ah-Ha Moments**

The picture below shows the result of one faculty member’s “card sort.” In this activity, we ask faculty to write each course outcome on a 3x5 card and then array those cards across the top of their table space. We then ask them to write each month (or other suitable time unit) of the term on a card and place those cards down the left side of their table space. Then, using their syllabi, they are to write each learning activity or assignment on cards and place the cards in their relative position according to which outcome the activity/assignment is supposed to move students toward achievement and when the activity/assignment happens during the term. (This may mean duplicating cards because sometimes the assignment or activity maps up to different outcomes.) This activity often results in sudden realizations by faculty.

One faculty member said, “Now I realize why my students have complained about February and April for so many years.” It was not until she looked at her course in this visually laid-out fashion that the timing of her assignments was the factor causing student complaints. She had too many assignments due in February and April. Even after seven years of writing and updating syllabi for the course, which included a course schedule showing due dates for all assignments, it was not until she saw the result after laying out her cards on the table.

Another faculty member was dismayed to see that one of her assignments did not map up to any outcome. “But I love that assignment,” was her explanation. There are other examples of how this activity, and the resulting view of one’s course, caused faculty to see a need to change. Without any prompting on the faculty developer’s part, seeing the need usually resulted in a course redesign of one scale or another.
Learning to Create and Use Rubrics

With faculty now satisfied that they had sufficient activity scheduled appropriately to support student’s progress toward achieving each outcome, they next had to learn how to create and use rubrics to assess that student achievement. Following neuroscience’s findings that it’s easier for humans to remember that which they can relate to based on their own experience (e.g., Willingham, 2009), the activity to teach the creation and use of rubrics is done in an active-learning, cross-disciplinary setting which faculty enjoy even as they hammer out sometimes sophisticated rubrics in spite of the short time it takes to conduct the exercise.

Faculty members are assigned a persona to adopt as they apply for college admission. Examples are: 19-year-old overachiever, 28-year-old returning Afghanistan war veteran, 35-year-old career changer, 17-year-old slacker, etc. Then they are told they must write Page 217 of their 300-page autobiography to be submitted as the essay portion of their application to the institution. (Incidentally, this application component was used for years at the University of Pennsylvania.)

After writing these one-page essays, faculty read each other’s writing so they all see all the “application essays.” We photocopy these sheets and provide everyone a copy of all the essays. Then faculty members are directed to take off their applicant hats and put on their Admissions Committee hats. With only the 1-page essay before them for each applicant, they are tasked with deciding which applicants should be admitted, which rejected, and which wait-listed. A matrix is projected on a screen with the columns already addressed as ‘reject,’ ‘wait-list,’ and ‘accept.’ It then becomes the faculty’s job to determine 1) the things they can tell from the essays that would bear on the candidates’ chances of succeeding at the institution, and 2) the descriptions in each of those categories that would distinguish the applicant as being accepted, wait-listed, or rejected. The facilitator acts as a scribe who types into the matrix first the names of the rows, which are the categories of attributes faculty decide the page of writing can tell them about an applicant, and then the descriptions of achievement in each category that would sort the applicant into each of the three buckets: ‘accept’, ‘wait-list’, and ‘reject’.

The discussions are spirited, and because this is a non-disciplinary activity, all faculty engage as colleagues while they role-play being Admissions Committee members. This activity not only demonstrates how to create a rubric, it also demonstrates why to create a rubric. Further, there is a subversive agenda with the ‘reject,’ ‘wait-list,’ and ‘accept’ categorizations comprising what amounts to a 3-level rubric. You can see in Table 1 (below) that the column

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Didn't Get It</th>
<th>Sorta Got it</th>
<th>Got It</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of commitment, aimless, lack of service, don't take advantage of opportunities</td>
<td>Limited evidence of growth, follower, not a leader, inconsistent in initiative, extenuating circumstances</td>
<td>Value commitment, focused, actively engaged, self-directed, seizes learning opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Writing | Poor grammar, poor writing process, disorganized, lack of development, didn't address prompt | Satisfactory communication, style, but no class | Focused writing, polished, articulate, depth, breadth, style |

| Maturity | Incomplete, can’t follow directions, late, one sided, self-centered | Just-in-time, lack of preparation, lack of complete ownership, lack of self-awareness | Confident, goal-oriented, professional demeanor, works well with others, ahead of schedule |

Table 1. Typical rubric developed by faculty during rubric creation role-play.
headings have been changed to ‘didn’t get it,’ ‘sorta got it,’ and ‘got it.’ This happens as the last step when the rubric has been built to all faculty’s satisfaction. The explanation about why the facilitator changes the column headings is that it helps prepare faculty to make the distinction between grading and assessing learning outcomes, activities, which are usually different despite some faculty’s protestations that they assess outcomes because they give grades.

If there are only three levels of achievement, faculty are not quick to translate immediately to grading. Were there four levels, it would be easy for faculty to start thinking in terms of A-B-C-F. Were there five levels, then A-B-C-D-F would be the natural translation. For the purposes of this paper’s description of two key training activities which prompt changes in perspective about teaching, though, delving into the grading-vs.-assessing issue is contraindicated.

It is important to note that both these activities meet the criteria described by Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000, pp. 26-27) as being efficacious for adult learners.

**Changes in Perspective about Teaching**

The shift for a faculty member from the teaching paradigm to the learning paradigm can be huge. It is, however, one of the most important in re-conceptualizing herself as a teacher. For one thing, shifting means that faculty can no longer simply shrug their shoulders when students fail, assuming it’s the students’ fault for the failure.

Thinking of oneself at a teaching paradigm instructor means no longer simply “delivering content.” Peter, a tenure-track history professor at the private university where this training took place, describes this shift:

One of the things I always worried about is whether I’m accomplishing what I’m supposed to be accomplishing. I can guess, but it’s only a guess. The [learning outcomes assessment] data really did give me some numbers that helped me see very clearly that students were making progress and what kind of progress… In sitting down and asking myself, and in going through this detailed exercise of trying to determine exactly what I wanted the students to learn, how I intended … to help them learn that, and then building the syllabus from there was something of an eye-opening experience for me. I always started with a syllabus and assignments and then thought, “Well, that should get me to this place.” But, in essence, what I’ve done now… is turned it around… As a result, I think my assessment of student work has been more accurate, more fair, more appropriate. (P. Worthing video, February 24, 2011)

Peter’s statement is only one example. Other faculty report a “new way of thinking about teaching” which has them focusing first on what they want their students to learn and then on the content best suited to help students reach that point. Other faculty have reported a strong sense of affirmation because the process of creating and using rubrics to assess student learning outcomes really proved to them that what they have been doing has been working, something about which they were always unsure beforehand.

In short, many of the faculty trained in this manner came away with a different perspective about how they would go about teaching, about themselves as teachers who were now able to reliably measure their students’ learning, and about the dreaded “A-word” itself — assessment of learning outcomes was no longer an onerous and value-devoid task for them.
Conclusions

Faculty self-reports about changed perspective were accompanied by actions reflecting their new beliefs about teaching and student success. We witnessed this transformation in working with faculty as they self-initiated adjustments to courses and instructional strategies.

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Perspectives on Leadership from Belizean Women

Kathleen P. King

This study explores higher education Belizean women leaders’ experiences for trends of globalization and greater female presence in executive leadership. The study integrates transformational leadership and learning to identify how women leaders in higher education cope with changes, turning points, etc. across their careers. The extensive interview data reveal the need to question culture-bounded assumptions regarding success and leadership in international and cross-cultural contexts of ACHE. Critical themes explored include transformational leadership roots and development, transformative learning experiences in leadership development and the transnational experiences of women leaders in Belize. By exploring these successful leaders emerging from Belizean middle class culture, a discussion of leadership models, cross-context applications and research methodologies unfold. This research study revealed that almost all of the participants were transnationals. In an increasingly global society, this is a relevant trend not often addressed in leadership development. Future research topics regarding ACHE leadership, transnational students, and TL research also emerge.

Introduction

The Need

Even in 2012, we see headlines regarding the “glass ceiling” which women professionals encounter around the world (Ng, & Chakrabarty, 2005; Robbins et al., 2009). Sociologists and anthropologists confirm the variability of these experiences as the dynamics are based on very different cultural understandings of gender and the professions internationally. Consider that women gained the right to vote in Finland in 1906 (Pylkkänen, 1999); while in many other countries (United States, Canada, and Europe) this did not occur until post World War II (Pylkkänen, 1999) or later.

Transactional and transformational leadership models have endured among the theories of leadership (Monaghan, 2010). Some leaders adopt an approach of investing in developing their staff using the model of transformational leadership, and thus they transform people and organizations. This study integrates transformational leadership and the adult learning theory of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978) to determine whether international leaders, in this case women in Belize higher education, have themselves been transformed as leaders and how they might work to transform their organizations and staff.

Combining these characteristics offers multiple layers to examine leaders’ actions with their teams, staff and beyond their organizations. In addition, the international focus moves beyond the heavily researched arena of USA higher education. Examining experiences and insights of Belizean women leaders in higher education includes several unanswered questions, including: How do social and gender roles interplay with leadership roles in other nations? How do international women and their families adjust to these issues within and beyond their homelands? What conflicts do they experience as transformational leaders?
Background Literature

**Transformational Leadership.** Transformational leadership research examines leaders invested in advancing their organizations by developing their staff as resources. As vision builders, these leaders cultivate people and organizations to deliver their goals (Berquist, 2007). Unlike most of this literature, Berquist (2007) and Monaghan (2010) shift the popular focus from business to higher education. However, there does not exist a connection among this leadership literature and the transformative learning models for examining woman leaders in higher education.

**Transformative Learning.** Qualitative research has been the favored research design for the studies on transformative learning; however King (2009) introduced a mixed-methods research design and survey instrument in 1997, which has been very popular. Transformative learning describes the process wherein adults navigate encountering a “disorienting dilemmas”, begin to re-examine their previously unquestioned values, beliefs and understanding, and traverse several stages of learning. The extensive research body of transformative learning reveals the profound learning experienced in many contexts across formal and informal education, life experiences, the workplace and more.

**Transnational Literature.** Parreñas’ (2005) study of transnational families reveals a dominant finding that added to the struggles of family absence, there is also conflict and disapproval with societal expectations. In this study it is expected that professional transnationals may be more accepted due to affluence, and standing, but questions arise as to how widespread the experience of transnationalism is and how did any acceptance begin.

Research Method

As described above, this international study requires a methodology addressing multiple layers of complex data. Qualitative research explores not only observation, but also meaning (Creswell, 2003). Guided interviews were conducted using a modification of King’s LAS survey instrument in a qualitative design (King, 1997; 2009). Extensive data collection included historical documents, semi-structured interviews, participation in local and national educational, religious, and community events, and reflective journaling. Individual data analysis was conducted among and between each data set. The process used five of seven processes of data analysis: data reduction, data displays, data consolidation, data comparison, data integration.

Participants

This research included interviewing eight Belizean women involved in different areas of higher education. Regarding marital status, one was single, three married and the rest divorced (57.1% of marriages), and their ages ranged from 38 - 70 years. All of the interviewees were transnationals since they pursued some of their education in the USA and/or UK. Most of the women were senior management (4), while two were middle managers, and two managers. Most of them were regional or local junior college or college administrators, with titles such as executive director, president, dean, campus head, director, and coordinator. However, one served as a government administrator for higher (tertiary) education. When the interviews were
conducted, all but one had already earned their doctorates. The last participant was currently completing her doctoral studies online.

Findings

Belize’s Historical Background

As a small Latin American/Caribbean country, Belize is unusual in using English as the trade and educational language. In 2011, Belize’s population was 321,115 in 22,965 square kms (CIA, 2011). The country’s GNP is $2.65 billion (CIA, 2011) and has five institutions of tertiary education with several additional “junior colleges” (The Commonwealth Secretariat, 2011). Agriculture is the major industry and unemployment is at 13.1% (CIA, 2011). Literacy reports varied widely over the years, recent figure is 76 % (U.S. Department of State, 2011). In 1968, Belize gained its independence from long-standing U.K. Colonial rule and slavery (U.S. Department of State). Belize maintains a UK style government and education systems, while communicating their distinct cultural pride.

Interplay of Social and Gender Roles in Belizean Leadership

The interviews revealed that the women had discovered sufficient space within Belizean culture to not only pursue their doctoral studies abroad (most of them, but also to be organizational leaders), but also hold public leadership positions. In addition, several of the leaders’ positions in higher education far outranked the status and or earning power of their male spouses.

Indeed the interviewer, from U.S.A. working class roots, was surprised to learn about the flexibility of Belizean social and gender roles. In the case of several of these leaders, Belizean women left their husbands and children behind for several years in order to pursue their doctorate in the U.S.A. or U.K. (King, 2012). The interviews revealed that extended families help support this arrangement. Moreover, the women and souses viewed the decision as a wise investment in the future of the immediate and extended family, as well as the nation.

Adjustment of Belizean Women Leaders to Social and Gender Roles Changes

Regarding the second research question, how do international women and their families adjust to these issues within and beyond their homelands? Another set of observations in these areas of social and gender roles were about spousal relationships of the Belizean women leaders. As the demographic data revealed, nearly 60% of the sample were now divorced; however, all cited the demands or commitment to work as an issue in that occurrence. The women experiencing persistent marital relationships indicated their husbands were supportive of their work and most engaged in discussing work issues with them. These findings demonstrate a varied pattern of successful Belizean women leaders leveraging collective support for career and family advancement, while still having to navigate individual spousal relationships.

Conflicts as Transformational Women Leaders

The nature of the transformative learning (TL) experiences in the development of these women higher education leaders varied from formative to forging, and minimal danger to life threatening. Nonetheless, these “turning points” in their leadership development varied greatly in contexts and timelines.
Pearl and her mother survived a hurricane, which resulted in her in committing herself to make a better place in the world for herself and family.

Ruby faced great risk with no supporters during institutional and political strife.

Hope had death threats against her, accusations by the government, and was exiled for her educational work with needy and oppressed nationals.

Chantal had to take great risks to gain control of the staff reporting to her by challenging the college president.

The interviewees also had several examples of the barriers they encountered as transformative leaders in higher education. It seems that although they were investing in their staff and organizations to advance further, they were prime targets for attacks, blame, and faced conflict frequently.

Jade- “I had to realize that there was no reason she [an opposing teacher] would stand up for me because of prior friendship. I had to adjust my expectations and understand. Still I was so wounded at this time.”

Hope- [Ultimate conclusion from discussion of her exile.] “Overcome the barriers by offering superior education to all people, regardless of party. The party divides, not race, ethnicity or religion. In talking about it maybe it can change.”

Discussion

Overall, this study uses transformative learning to examine the transformative leadership model. Indeed, while research reveals that many of the women interviewed identified salient turning points, crises, and “forging” experiences, a conclusive causal relationship is not possible from qualitative research. However, the interviewees reveal that these experiences formed their leadership style, ability and resolve. Critical turning points included

- Persisting as an agent of change despite political, verbal and governmental attacks.
- Exposing injustice, in the face of conflict.
- Standing up/taking charge, when no one else would.
- Continuing personal and professional development: not being static or satisfied regardless of age or position.
- Dedicating themselves to the people they serve and the organization, instead of self-interest.
- Realizing that the welfare of others depended on their decisions and actions.

In addition, considering social and gender roles, one may consider whether these barriers were especially striking for them because in their culture, they valued the collective. In addition, their interviews already revealed their dependence on the collective especially because they were women (transnational displacement and family support).

While this study portrays a comprehensive theme of dedication, vision and empowerment there is a powerful theme of social and gender roles intertwined. These women leaders demonstrate a unified vision to commit personal and collective efforts to overcome barriers. The vision is widespread in this young country among higher educational professionals. This is a vision of hope and dedication to conquering the vast social and economic needs which continue to dominate Belize today.
Belizean women who are leaders in higher education make family and economic sacrifices based on these values and purposes. The stories of these women leaders specifically reveal the scope of the choices, which need to be made in their personal and professional lives. TL and transformative leadership provide illuminating perspectives for analyzing these experiences, because they include dedication, vision and cognitive dissonances, which were seen in their leadership accounts.

Even when people advanced swiftly in leadership roles, they encountered conflicts, and TL, as leaders. Important for aspiring, new and current leaders to know is the fact that, many of these leaders classified theses conflicts and challenges as unexpected. The conflicts were not only unexpected in occurrence, but also what and when they happened, by whom, how, and the severity. Their accounts indicate that to succeed they needed to successfully

• Recognize political agendas, and subtexts,
• Navigate political agendas, and subtexts,
• Use effective political strategies when confronted, or in a minority or unpopular opinion,
• Stand against major opposition, and/or against multiple factions,
• Appropriate leadership while weighing the risks,
• Develop a contingent of followers when in the minority opinion, and/or when challenging the organization.

This research revealed transnational experiences as the dominant pathway for the preparation of women leaders in higher education in Belize at this time. These transnational experiences illustrate and/or amplify the opportunity for gender role equity, sharing of fiscal responsibility for the family unit, and commitment to the national welfare within the Belizean culture among those couples in which one pursues advance degrees. The willingness of these couples to separate for educational advancement communicates high commitment and flexibility among all involved (Kossek, 2005). In all of the married interviewees, there continues to be sharing of power in the family and the husbands respect the wife’s professional position. In addition, and most significantly among the women who divorced since their transnational education and leadership roles began, each of them had a spouse who could not adjust to their professional role. It appears that when a partnership perspective is sustained through transnational educational periods into the leadership employment, couples successfully navigated their marriages (Kossek, 2005; Lee, & Shaw, 2011).

Conclusion

Future research in this area is needed to determine what similarities and differences exist among international women leaders in higher education experiences or whether they are entirely contextually and culturally bound. Currently, the author is analyzing data from her parallel research in China and France. Issues of culture and philosophy frequently arise in all of these discussions with differing definitions of social roles, gender issues, workplace roles, regulations, expectations, and practices.

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Self-direction in learning is a major topic in the field of adult learning. There has been extensive coverage of the topic by theorists, researchers, and practitioners. However, there have been few studies, which look at learner self-direction specifically as a personality trait. The present study addresses the relationship between learner self-direction and other personality traits of college students when the traits represented by the five-factor model of personality are differentiated from narrow personality traits. Analysis of the data revealed five significant part correlations between specific traits and learner self-direction. Results were discussed in terms of the predictive relationship between personality variables and learner self-direction.

Self-direction in learning is a major topic in the field of adult learning. It has been shown that many psychological variables are directly related to learner self-directedness (Oliveira & Simões, 2006). However, there have been few studies that look at learner self-direction specifically as a personality trait. If personality traits are relatively consistent for learners across situations and over time, and if learner self-direction changes across situations and over time, the most logical interpretation of why the personality trait—learner self-direction relationship is relatively consistent within and across such disparate factors as age and returning to college after a long break is because the personality traits are driving the relationship. This implies that other personality traits are affecting learner self-direction, not that learner self-direction is influencing other personality traits. The goal of the present study is to try to understand the connection between personality and self-direction in learning and ascertain to what extent individual personality traits are related to learner self-direction when the traits represented by the five-factor model of personality (Digman, 1990) are differentiated from narrow personality traits. The study draws on and extends the work of Lounsbury, Levy, Park, Gibson, and Smith (2009), who reported on the development of a valid personality measure of learner self-direction.

**Method**

For this study, the focus is on learner self-direction as an individual differences variable that can be represented on a continuum from low to high rather than a categorical or nominal variable. With respect to Brockett and Hiemstra’s (1991) two-dimension, self-direction in learning model; the learner self-direction construct in this study corresponds to their learner self-direction construct. Consistent with prior conceptualizations of self-direction in learning (e.g., Brockett, 1983; Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Costa & Kalick, 2003), we conceptualize and measure learner self-direction as a personality trait reflecting individuals’ preference to be in charge of his or her learning process; ability to conceptualize, plan, implement, and evaluate one’s academic experience; and disposition to be goal-oriented and to work independently or in group settings with little guidance.
Population and Sample

Undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory psychology course \((n = 1484)\) and undergraduate student-mentors in a peer-mentoring program \((n = 618)\) at a large southeastern state university were recruited to participate in this study. Of the 2102 participants in this study, 40% were male \((60\% \text{ female})\). Fifty-five seven percent of the participants were Freshmen; 26%, Sophomores; 14%, Juniors; and 5%, Seniors. Eighty-four percent of the participants identified themselves as Caucasian, 9%--African-American, 2%--Hispanic, 2%--Asian, and 3%--other. The median age of participants was 18-19 years old.

Instrumentation

The personality measure used in this study was the Resource Associates’ Transition to College inventory (RATTC) (Lounsbury & Gibson, 2010). The RATTC is a normal personality inventory contextualized for late adolescents (Jaffe, 1998) and adults through high school and college. It measures the Big Five Traits of Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. The RATTC also measures the narrow traits of Aggression, Career-Decidedness, Optimism, Self-Directed Learning, Sense of Identity, Tough-Mindedness, and Work Drive. Information pertaining to scale development, reliability, criterion-related validity, construct validity, and norming can be found in Kirwan, Lounsbury, and Gibson (2010), Lounsbury, Levy, Park, Gibson, and Smith (2009); Lounsbury, Tatum, et al. (2003); Lounsbury, Gibson, and Hamrick (2004); Lounsbury, Loveland, et al. (2003); Lounsbury, Steel, Loveland, and Gibson (2004); Lounsbury, Gibson, Sundstrom, Wilburn, and Loveland (2003); Lounsbury, Sundstrom et al. (2003); and Lounsbury and Gibson (2010).

Results

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated between learner self-direction and the Big Five traits as well as narrow traits of Work Drive and Optimism. Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among the study variables are displayed in Table 1. As can be seen in Table 1, all of the Big Five personality traits are correlated significantly and positively with learner self-direction, except for Extraversion. Specifically, in descending order of magnitude, the correlations with Self-Directed Learning were: Openness \((r = .43, p < .01)\), Agreeableness \((r = .21, p < .01)\), Emotional Stability \((r = .20, p < .01)\), Conscientiousness \((r = .20, p < .01)\), Extraversion \((r = .01, \text{ ns})\), and the narrow personality traits also correlated significantly with learner self-direction, with the largest magnitude correlation observed for Work Drive \((r = .49, p < .01)\), followed by Optimism \((r = .31, p < .01)\). The next phase of the analysis involved examining the part correlations of learner self-direction with Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Emotional Stability, Optimism, and Work Drive. A multiple regression analysis was conducted with learner self-direction as the dependent variable, and the remaining variables as predictors entered simultaneously. The part correlations represent the correlations of learner self-direction with each of the predictor variables, independent of the other predictors. Thus, the squared part correlations give an indication of the unique contribution of each variable to learner self-direction. An examination of the squared part correlations of the five significant variables indicates that Work Drive accounted for 9.6% of the variance, Openness accounted for
approximately 4.3% of the variance, Optimism accounted for almost 1% of the variance, and Extraversion and Agreeableness each accounted for less than 1% of the variance in learner self-direction.

All variables were entered simultaneously into a multiple regression model to estimate the degree of learner self-direction prediction. The overall regression was significant, $F(7, 2094) = 15.19, p < .01$, and these variables accounted for over 52% of the variance in learner self-direction. As can be seen in Table 1, five of the variables explained significant variance in the model: Work Drive, Openness, Optimism, Emotional Stability, and Extraversion (Table 6). The strongest correlate of learner self-direction was Work Drive ($\beta = .37, p < .01$), followed by Openness ($\beta = .23, p < .01$), Optimism ($\beta = .12, p < .01$), Emotional Stability ($\beta = .07, p < .01$), Extraversion ($\beta = -.05, p < .05$), Conscientiousness ($\beta = .03, \text{ns}$), and Agreeableness ($\beta = .02, \text{ns}$), which had the lowest magnitude correlation with learner self-direction in the study.

Table 1. Simultaneous Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coeff.</th>
<th>Correlations</th>
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<tr>
<td>B SE $\beta$ $T$ Sig. Zero-order Partial Part</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Constant) .57 .13 .436 .00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Drive .39 .03 .37 15.90 .00 .49 .33 .31</td>
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<td>Openness .24 .02 .23 10.08 .00 .43 .22 .21</td>
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<td>Optimism .18 .03 .12 5.85 .00 .31 .13 .09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Stability .11 .02 .07 4.69 .00 .20 .10 .05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extraversion -.07 .02 -.05 -3.40 .01 .01 -.08 -.04</td>
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<td>Agree. -.04 .02 .02 -1.67 .10 .21 -.04 -.03</td>
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<td>Conscien. .01 .02 .03 .09 .93 .20 .01 .01</td>
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Discussion

The present study was generally successful in terms of providing validation of the main research propositions. Six of the eight hypotheses were supported, which is both consistent with and extends prior studies (Kirwan, et al., 2010; Lounsbury, et al., 2009) in that learner self-direction was uniquely related to four of the Big Five traits studied as well as and both of the narrow traits examined here. The present findings reinforce and support Lounsbury, Levy, et al.’s (2009) study which demonstrated “…the importance and richness of the self-directed learning construct and … its role as a personality trait” (p. 417). Considering first the Big Five traits, the significant, positive relationships between them and learner self-direction are consistent with Lounsbury, Levy et al.’s (2009) findings. Regarding the narrow traits, significant, positive relationships between learner self-direction and Work Drive as well as Optimism were also supported.

In the present study, Conscientiousness was not found to have a unique, significant relationship with learner self-direction when controlling for the other traits—which does not support the second hypothesis. We failed to find evidence of a unique relationship between Conscientiousness and learner self-direction as suggested by previous research (e.g., Lounsbury, et al., 2009; Oliveira & Simões, 2006). While there was a significant bivariate correlation between Conscientiousness and learner self-direction, the part correlation was small and not significant. From a statistical standpoint, one possible explanation for this discrepancy is that
Conscientiousness is multicollinear with the other traits and does not uniquely predict learner self-direction alone. However, from a learning perspective, some aspects of the global traits likely contribute to the complexity of the learner self-directed learning construct. One reason for the multicollinearity is the complexity of learner self-direction. For example, it is possible that some facets of Conscientiousness (such as competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, and self-discipline (Costa & McCrae, 1992) are important to learner self-direction (e.g., Oliveira & Simões, 2006) and could possibly be used to enhance the level of predictability (Moon, Hollenbeck, Humphrey, & Maue, 2003) that broader traits cannot distinguish alone. It is possible that many of these facets are expressed in narrow trait of Work Drive, which had the strongest correlation, and part correlation, with learner self-direction.

Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) emphasized the importance of self-directed learners being able to plan their own learning program and consistently evaluate progress. Hiemstra (1994) noted that self-directed learners should be prepared for the “unexpected” and capable of dealing with challenges in learning. Ponton and Carr (2000) state that “The concept of autonomy (Knowles, 1980; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999) exists under the personality characteristic rubric of self-directed learning” (p. 273). A student showing initiative, resourcefulness, and persistence is exhibiting manifestations related to personality characteristics as a learner. Ponton and Carr (ibid) note that Confessore (1991, p. 129) suggests that individuals who exhibit these “conative” factors in their learning activities “possess traits which are essential to successful self-direction in learning” (p. 273). These factors are related to Ponton’s (1999) discussion of autonomous learning consisting of five behaviors: goal-directedness, action-orientation, active-approach to problem solving, persistence in overcoming obstacles, and self-startedness which is consistent with the afore-mentioned conceptualizations of Work Drive (Lounsbury & Gibson, 2010). Again, this aligns with Lounsbury, Gibson et al.’s (2004) Work Drive construct as a predictor of performance and Gladwell’s (2008) emphasis on persistence leading to success.

There are two primary limitations of the current study that should be acknowledged. First, this study was limited to a four-month interval in time in a single geographic area at a large, public university, leaving open the question of generalizability to other time periods, geographic areas, and types of universities. Second, most of the study participants were lower-level students; thus, it is not possible to know if the results would generalize to samples of primarily upper-level or graduate students.

There are a number of other interesting areas for future research, which could clarify and extend the present findings. In addition to the need for replication on different samples, research could be conducted on how the Big Five and narrow personality traits relate to sense of identity and learner self-direction. Another topic for investigation is the relationship between age of students and learner self-directedness. As mentioned earlier, perhaps the most important need for future research is to utilize longitudinal research designs to help clarify the direction of causality for personality traits vis-à-vis self-directed learning and to try to determine how these linkages are established.

Conclusions

The results of the present study indicate that the Big Five traits as well as the two narrow traits measured in this study were each related to learner self-direction, with Work Drive and Openness accounting for most of the variance in learner self-direction on their own. Taken as a whole, the present findings were interpreted as, in part, confirming and extending the results of
Lounsbury et al. (2009), and Kirwan et al. (2010) regarding the Big Five, narrow traits, and learner self-direction, demonstrating the generalizability of personality trait—learner self-direction relationships across a variety of different demographic and personal subgroups of students, and providing some clues that the direction of the causal arrow may be from personality traits to learner self-direction.

In conclusion, it is clear that learner self-direction has multiple connections to personality traits and is not clearly associated with just one of the Big Five traits. In a sense, this pattern of multiple connections to personality is consistent with the diverse factors learner self-direction has been linked to in the theoretical literature, as, for example, the six vectors of college student development that Chickering and Reisser (1993) posit as leading to identity establishment for college students. Hopefully, further research will extend and clarify the nomological network of personality traits and self-direction in learning across a broad range of settings.

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The Retention Problem: Observations and Outcomes of a Best Practice

Josh Krawczyk

Retention of students at colleges and universities has represented a compelling challenge and area of scholarship for more than four decades. More recently, colleges and universities seek to address an anticipated shortage of more than 23 million educated workers in the global workforce by 2025. Additionally, funding questions related to neoliberal calls for accountability and efficiency make retention one of the most critical concerns facing higher education to date. To address this challenge and improve retention, Oklahoma State University has implemented the Academic Success Facilitator program. Facilitators help students with basic organization and time management skills, refer students to campus resources, and help students find balance with other challenges they face in their personal, professional, and academic lives. This program is based on a model that has been employed for scholarship student-athletes for a number of years. Retention and graduation rates of student-athletes frequently exceed rates of individual academic colleges or the university as a whole. This case study documents the first year of a campus-wide version of the program, including a 5.7% increase in retention of first-year students in the program’s pilot year.

Introduction

Like most colleges and universities, Oklahoma State University seeks to improve retention of undergraduate students. Based on a model in place for a number of years in the athletics department, the University has implemented the Academic Success Facilitator program, aimed at increasing retention of undergraduate students. While the program focuses primarily on retention of students from their first year to their second, broader visioning for the program aims to benefit all undergraduate students. Long-term planning for the program includes annual growth to reach a higher percentage of all enrolled students. The program is housed administratively in the Learning and Student Success Opportunity (LASSO) Center; the Center is affiliated with no single college, and serves students campus-wide. The LASSO Center provides academic advising for undecided or alternatively admitted students, and is charged to be a primary retention resource on campus.

From its first year to the second, the program grew from a single full-time Facilitator working with a few dozen students, to 18 Facilitators working with more than 300 students and more than 1,200 hours of individual appointments. This exponential growth in the program represents one indicator of success, at least in terms of student usage and return appointments. It also indicates success in credibility of the program among academic colleges and advisors, who referred students to the service in large numbers. By the end of the second year, more than 40 percent of students using the program were referred from another academic college.

This paper will describe the origins of the program, the campus-wide implementation of it, and outcomes of the program after two years. The outcomes section will include anecdotal and qualitative evidence of the success of the program. (Quantitative retention statistics for the second year of the program are not available as of the publication date of this paper.)
Guiding Theory

Successful socialization markedly improves student retention (Tinto, 1993), as does a student’s connection and affiliation with a campus (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The Academic Success Facilitator program seeks to capitalize on these theories of persistence and retention by fostering successful social interaction and integration of students. Facilitators offer a personal connection to students with regular meetings; they also help connect students to campus by providing information about campus resources. This may include encouraging exploration and membership in student groups and other peer interactions, or referrals to support units on campus. Facilitators also extend the influence of academic advisors, another critical tool for retention and persistence (Drake, 2011).

In short, Facilitators make campus smaller and more accessible for individual students by acting as a single point of contact for information, a personal connection, and liaison to campus resources. While Facilitators do not necessarily receive training or have knowledge in all potential areas of support a student may need, the Facilitator staff is trained to help the student find the help they need, wherever it exists.

Role of the Facilitator

Facilitators work to extend the presence of academic advisers to regular weekly contact with students. Facilitators and advisers exchange information regarding mutual students on a regular basis. This allows advisers to have deeper and more-timely knowledge of issues facing advisees.

Additionally, facilitators work with students on balance between their academic obligations and goals, social lives, part- or full-time jobs, and family responsibilities. Facilitators do this by helping students prioritize their time, better organize themselves, and take a higher level of accountability for academic and personal success. Facilitators may provide assistance with learning styles, classroom behavior, or other academic capital (Bordieu, 1984) issues challenging the student.

Perhaps most importantly, facilitators provide a personal connection to campus for students by fostering a relationship of trust and accountability. With a student body of more than 24,000, individual students may easily slip through bureaucratic cracks and fail to gain attention of support units. Facilitators prevent this slippage and foster immediate and ongoing connections to campus, and help students make use of academic and other support resources.

Facilitator Profiles

Members of the facilitator staff tend to be experienced educators, either as veteran high school teachers or college instructors. Several facilitators currently pursue graduate credentials in the College of Education, often in educational psychology or school counseling programs. Others work toward graduate degrees in college student development.

In all cases, the facilitators possess experience in working with students aged 17-22 years, and demonstrate credibility and maturity beyond that of an undergraduate. While some of the facilitators may only be in their mid-20’s as doctoral candidates, they demonstrate professionalism and credibility in the eyes of their students. Facilitators are not peers to the undergraduates they serve, by design.

At the same time, facilitators must be able to maintain a comfort level and casual interactions with students. Facilitators seek to move beyond the clinical, across-the-desk setting...
that often constrains advisors and faculty members; physical settings for facilitation often include coffee shops, the student union food court, and other informal settings.

**Campus History of Facilitators**

The Academic Success Facilitator program originated in the Athletics department at the University. First-year retention rates of student-athletes at Oklahoma State University have frequently equaled or exceeded that of the non-student-athlete population in the last 10 years, while the Facilitator program has been in place there. In addition to administering the Facilitator program for student-athletes, Academic Services for Student-Athletes (ASSA), a unit within the Division of Academic Affairs (and not overseen by the athletic department), provides academic co-advising for student-athletes, as well as individual tutoring and other support services.

Administrators in the unit attribute much of their success in first-year retention to this program. Facilitators in athletics are assigned to specific sport teams and work with student-athletes in groups as well as individually and assist in the transition into the hectic life of a scholarship student-athlete. Based on early success, the program quickly grew to include virtually all sports teams. Based on the success of the program in retention of student-athletes, the LASSO Center adopted the program for broader implementation.

**Campus-Wide Implementation**

In the pilot year of the program, the LASSO Center hired a single Academic Success Facilitator on a full-time basis to reach out to students assigned for academic advising in the Center. His efforts included contacting LASSO advisees on academic probation after their first fall semester, having weekly meeting with those who responded, and helping them manage their spring semester more successfully. The student demand for working with Facilitators quickly outgrew the capacity of a staff of a single Facilitator.

Based on the success of this limited pilot, LASSO now employs 18 full- or part-time Academic Success Facilitators who work with more than 400 students. Participation in the program has grown exponentially, with students self-referring, or being referred by other academic colleges, to participate. We anticipate continued growth of the program, and have set goals to increase campus-wide retention of students to a 10-year high for the 2011-entering cohort. For 2012, goals include growth in participation of the program by at least 20 percent. This growth goal reflects the University’s commitment to improving undergraduate retention.

The program enjoys high-profile support from the President of the University and the Provost, and recently received a $1 million gift to support its continued growth. Such high-level recognition and private giving are critical to the program and foster long-term support for the program beyond its infancy.

**Outcomes of the Program**

This pilot contributed to a 5.7% increase in retention of first-year students advised in LASSO. Beyond this correlated increase from the pilot year, success of the program may only be measured by increase in participation rates and usage until such time as retention percentages can be confirmed. Measurements of academic impact including grade point average of participants or year-to-year retention remain to be completed once subsequent year enrollment is
confirmed. Based on metrics of participation, the LASSO Center and the University Provost have viewed the pilot year of the program as a success.

Anecdotally, student participants generally report high satisfaction with the program. More than 80 percent of students returned for a second meeting with their facilitator after the initial meeting, and 74 percent had three or more meetings. A large number of students met nearly every week of the fall and/or spring semester, depending on when they were assigned to work with a facilitator. Students choosing not to meet at all, or not to meet more than once, usually said they lacked time for an additional meeting. Facilitators in communication with these students tended to infer that these students did not see potential value in participating in the program, or had overloaded schedules and desired to avoid adding additional obligations.

Rates of referrals from advising units in other academic colleges increased over time, another indicator of satisfaction. Advisers and faculty members in these colleges came to trust the program and deemed it helpful, referring students at high rates (about three per week day) during the spring semester from February to April. These indicators of success, rates of participation and referrals, fall far short of comprehensive assessment or evaluation of the program. For a pilot year, these measures suffice, but much future measurement remains to be completed.

Future Assessment and Evaluation

Evaluation of the Facilitator program going forward will include longitudinal quantitative data comprised of cohort retention rates and GPA impact. Qualitative data will include surveys of participating students, advisers, and faculty members. Such data are critical to determining the true success and value of the program in terms of retention and persistence.

Implications

At a large public university, first-year students often find themselves feeling lost and overwhelmed by the sheer size of campus, confusing bureaucratic processes for enrollment, tuition, and other requirements, all while address the social and personal challenges of leaving home and family for the first time. The Academic Success Facilitator program represents one strategy to help mitigate this sense of being overwhelmed, or lost in the shuffle of a huge campus, by providing a single point of frequent, personal contact for students. Facilitators provide a personal connection with the student’s welfare as a top priority, combined with detailed knowledge of campus resources, policies, and procedures to help the student navigate their academic career.

The Academic Success Facilitator program combines the strengths of mentoring, advising, and student development programming into a single, simple, cost-effective retention strategy. Facilitators improve and increase communication between student and adviser, and help students make use of current resources, in turn improving the effectiveness of programs already on the ground.

Academic Success Facilitators are most often current graduate students in social science disciplines such as education, psychology, or sociology; Success Facilitators also include experienced high school teachers familiar with the struggles students face in transitioning to college. The program may be altered for campuses with centralized advising or college-based advising, and for campuses of various enrollment sizes. It is a simple and effective strategy for improving retention.
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Gaining Advantage: From Theory to Practice, Utilizing Classic Grounded Theory/Grounded Action in Action-Oriented Research

Mike Nelson and Mark D. Maddy

The following paper delineates the use of grounded theory/grounded action to discover the core variable of “gaining advantage”. It will outline the basic tenets and processes for conducting grounded theory research, how it allowed for the emergence of a core variable, and how an action plan was formulated from the data.

Introduction

The Biology Department at UCO established a Bio-Medical Freshman Learning Community (BM-FLC) in the fall of 2007. After the first cohort, the BM-FLC saw declines in participation and student success during the next four cohorts. Due to these declines, the Biology Department sought explanation. To minimize the influence of preconceptions on the research, the director of the BM-FLC collaborated with members of the Professional Teacher Education Department. By using grounded theory methodology, the action plan emerged from and was fully supported by the data—a grounded action.

An Overview of Grounded Theory

Glaser and Strauss (1967) “discovered” grounded theory while conducting a study of dying in a hospital setting. As they analyzed the data they were collecting, Glaser and Strauss noticed patterns in the substantive code that indicated a theory emerging from those data. Their willingness to allow the data to show them the relevant psychosocial concepts at work in the natural setting grounded the theory of “social loss” in the data rather than an a priori hypothesis. Through systematic application of inductive reasoning to identify the patterns of variables, they “discovered” the embedded theory.

Definitions

Glaserian grounded theory (classic grounded theory) has been modified and codified over the years (Glaser, 1978; 1992; 1998; 2001; 2003; 2004; & 2005). In order to gain an understanding of the process of conducting grounded theory research, it is imperative to define some of the basic terminology used in Glaserian grounded theory:

- Action scene – the naturalistic setting from which foundational data are gathered
- Substantive code – underlying psychosocial constructs present in the data gathered from the action scene
- Property – a characteristic of a category, or variable, identified during data analysis; useful in comparative analysis to help determine similarities between groups
- Dimension – an aspect of the core category identified during analysis
- Variable – a category of behavior observed and noted for study; key component of data collection and analysis whose identification helps determine each subsequent step in the process of generating theory
• Indicator – an idea or aspect of the data that points to categories relevant to the emerging theory
• Coding – conceptualizing the data and comparing incident to incident, incident to category, and using them to help the theory emerge; determining the properties of the categories and their relevance toward the emerging theory
• Concept – an underlying idea and/or pattern within a set of descriptive incidents generated through data collection and analysis; the subject of memoing
• Core variable – the primary category at the center of the theory you are discovering; it accounts for the greatest variation and is not easily saturated
• Grand tour question – a general statement of inquiry used to begin an open-ended interview
• Emergence – the process of discovering theory through data collection, analysis, coding, memoing, and sorting
• Memos – theoretical notes generated from contemplating the codes, categories, properties, or other substantive codes to later be sorted and compiled to write the emergent theory (Glaser, 1967, 1978, & 1992)

Grounded theory research differs from traditional quantitative and qualitative research methods because it is a systematic inductive approach, which allows a theory to emerge from the data. Grounded theory provides a set of strategies for the collection and analysis of data from a wide variety of sources, including interviews, personal journals, and autobiographies. Its first requirement is for the researcher to set aside preconceptions and to allow a core variable to emerge from the data. During data analysis, the researcher remains attentive to the patterns in the variables, which begin to point toward a core construct that provides a cogent explanation of what is happening in the action scene. Glaser and Strauss (1967) identified a drawback of verifying theory to validate the utility of the grounded theory method:

In the face of this prevalent attitude, we contend, however, that the masters have not provided enough theories to cover all the areas of social life that sociologists have only begun to explore. Further, some theories of our predecessors, because of their lack of grounding in data, do not fit, or do not work, or are not sufficiently understandable to be used and are therefore useless in research, theoretical advance and practical application. On the other hand, the great theorists have indeed given us models and guidelines for generating theory, so that with recent advances in data collection, conceptual systematization and analytic procedures, many of us can follow in their paths: from social research we can generate theories for new areas, as well as better theories for areas were previous ones to not work. (p. 11)

Doing Grounded Theory

Getting Started

Because the theoretical constructs and action plan are directly dependent on the behaviors present in the action scene, the researcher needs to minimize preconceptions to avoid biased interpretations. Simmons and Gregory (2003) explained this: “There are no a priori formulations of problems, issues, hypotheses, or theories. There are no a priori categories, concepts, ideas, etc. to make sense of a subject before data are collected or analyzed” (p. 4). Because there is no hypothesis to verify or refute, the researcher conducting grounded theory

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research does not do a literature review before collecting data. Glaser (1978) stated, “In our approach we collect the data in the field first. Then start analyzing it and generating theory. When the theory seems sufficiently grounded and developed, then we review the literature in the field and relate the theory to it through integration of ideas” (p. 31). The researcher will incorporate relevant data from the literature later only if it fits.

**Grand Tour Question, Data Collection, and Constant Comparative Analysis**

Once the general area of interest has been identified, the researcher formulates an open-ended question from which the research will proceed. Many view grounded theory as a qualitative method, yet because for a grounded theorist “all is data”, data collection can take many forms from interviews and analyzing diary entries or other personal correspondence to analyzing quantitative data, including Likert scale surveys and statistical data. In the early stages, data collection follows the same basic format, for example, if the first data come from an interview, the researcher uses other interviews until the patterns identify a core variable. Glaser (1978) discussed the process of open coding and stated that the researcher has a series of questions to keep in mind. The first question is: “What is the data a study of?” The second is: “What category does this incident indicate?” The last question is: “What is actually happening in the data?” These questions provide the basis to further analyze the interview or other documentation for theoretical codes (p. 57). After a pattern of properties, variables, codes, and other constructs has emerged, data collection focuses on those areas that are not saturated, and the researcher will begin selective coding. Selective coding entails looking at the data for those specific constructs.

**Theoretical Memos, Integrating Existing Literature, and Creating the Action Plan**

During the analysis process, the researcher begins writing theoretical memos. When the researcher has an epiphany, whether it is during coding, sorting, or collecting data, he/she needs to write it down. It is important to differentiate between descriptive and conceptual memos; the conceptual memo focuses on identifying theoretical constructs rather than simply providing a description of the activity. Over time memos take the data from a descriptive to a conceptual level.

After the core variable has emerged and the indicators and properties have been identified, the researcher can move into the existing literature. He/she must be certain that the psychosocial constructs found in the literature fit the emergent theory; they must earn their way into the theory. Forcing a code or category can invalidate the theory as bias has altered it, which can skew the effectiveness of the action plan.

Once the theoretical memos have been sorted and the theory finalized, the action plan is created starting from the end a working backwards in order to identify the specific steps that lead to a successful resolution. A grounded action plan is a blueprint formulated from the theoretical constructs uncovered in the research that provides for interventions that meet the complex organizational needs in the action scene.

**Gaining Advantage: From Theory to Practice**

For this project, the research team did not have direct ties to the data or program for which it was being analyzed, which helped minimize preconceptions. However, it was still imperative that the team stayed sensitive to the possibilities of bias. The program directors asked
the team to investigate the expectations and experiences these students had had regarding the BM-FLC. Our grand tour question was: Why did these students want to be in the FLC?

The BM-FLC provided completed surveys that had been distributed to the students who had participated in their cohorts. The team began with the first cohort’s surveys to search for substantive codes that would provide some explanation of the properties and dimensions that led to the decision-making of the students in the BM-FLC. From the surveys, patterns of variables began to emerge, such as, belonging and assistance-seeking. The team analyzed the remainder of the surveys, comparing the pattern of indicators and properties emerging from the data. This constant comparative analysis (identifying substantive codes from data, comparing them to codes that have been identified from the generalized sampling in order to delineate the patterns that are emerging) provided the basis to identify the core variable of “gaining advantage” to be the underlying construct at work in the action scene. The team conducted individual and group interviews to gather more specific data in order to saturate the properties, categories, and dimensions that were the theoretical indicators.

Throughout the study, the team discussed the theoretical constructs for the BM-FLC and gathered data from other campus Freshman Learning Communities and the existing literature studying FLCs at other universities. FLCs have demonstrated their effectiveness in providing a good transition into college life, yet the BM-FLC was struggling to maintain a sufficient level of participation. Our action plan question then became: Why is participation lagging? A second question was: Has the BM-FLC met its goals of improved retention and graduation rates? A review of university records show minimal differences between students from the cohorts and other undergraduate biology majors regarding retention or GPA.

Comparing the theoretical underpinning of “gaining advantage” to the actual experience, the action plan addressed four recommendations:

1. **Goals Clarification.** Clarify the stated goals of the program through the development of specific, measurable outcomes.
2. **Acceptance Criteria.** Establish general guidelines/criteria for student inclusion in the Biomedical LC.
3. **Program Changes.** Make adjustments to the program to better utilize the academic, professional, and social opportunities provided through membership in the Biomedical LC.
4. **Recruitment Practices.** Develop recruitment plans that provide detailed and concise information to students and parents regarding the expectations and advantages of the program.
5. **Timeline for Implementation.** At this time it is unknown if and/or when the UCO Biology Department will begin the implementation process.

**Conclusion**

A grounded theory methodology provides a framework from which to build an action plan that focuses on what is occurring in the action scene. Its foundation in data rather than *a priori* concepts, categories, or theories creates an action plan that is likely to be effective in resolving issues and accepted by the interested parties.
References


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Larry Martin, Fatima Martin, and Erica Southworth

Our literature review included 56 refereed journal articles that reported the results of empirical studies involving concept mapping and academic achievement for a wide variety of student populations. Our findings provide useful information for adult literacy practitioners interested in utilizing concept mapping as an approach to learning in their classes.

Introduction

For the majority of adults unable to complete high school, adult literacy classes and a General Education Diploma (GED) represent an avenue to develop and document their literacy attainment. Yet only about 2.3 million adults (less than 6% of those eligible) enroll in adult literacy programs yearly and, of those who participate, the majority are students of color (Keenan, 2009). Keenan (2009) further indicated that 72% of participants were students of color compared to 26% who were white. In contrast, those who pass the GED tests tend to be white, as exemplified in 2008 when white students represented over 60% of participants who passed their tests (GED Statistical Report, 2008). Lastly, only about 1.5% of school non-completers take and pass the GED tests each year (GED Statistical Report, 2008), and only 2% of those who receive a GED actually complete a four-year college degree (Tyler, 2004). These data suggest students of color are ill-prepared to take and pass the GED tests, and those who do achieve this goal, too often fail to successfully pursue and complete postsecondary education.

The chronically high failure rate of urban adult GED test takers evidences the reality that many students may have never really learned “how to learn.” The historically consistent low academic performance results lend support towards an inability to teach students how to learn which correlates directly with poor GED test performance. However, in various levels of education, students using concept maps and constructivist learning approaches have consistently demonstrated positive results in both learning “how to learn” and achieving significant academic outcomes. Currently digitized and accessible via Internet-based programs, concept maps are two-dimensional, node-linked schematic devices for representing verbal, conceptual, or declarative knowledge in a meaningful framework of propositions (Novak & Gowin, 1984). While already successfully applied in both traditional and non-traditional learning settings, little evidence exists of either the application of concept maps in adult literacy classes, or of offering concept maps as an appropriate alternative to current approaches to learning.

The Potential for Concept Maps in Adult Literacy Programs

Supporters of concept maps argue that as humans, we think and learn with concepts; thus relating new knowledge to what we already know composes meaningful learning. Through the use of concept maps, adult literacy instructors can assist learners to connect their existing knowledge to new content, i.e., when they are aware of how learners store these concepts hierarchically and how they differentiate these concepts as their learning grows.

Most students enter adult literacy classrooms with their knowledge base organized like that of a compulsive hoarder. Little focus exists on sorting and storing the new possessions in
specific places and there are no shelves and labels to assist in quickly locating and retrieving the new possessions (Martin, 2010). Concept maps assist learners to label and compartmentalize new knowledge thereby making it easier for them to access and retrieve the new knowledge under the stressful circumstances of GED testing situations. Concept mapping could thereby offer urban adult learners the opportunity to not only improve their testing performance, but to also make meaningful, fully integrated, and supervised connections between their lived experiences and the knowledge explored in literacy classes.

**Concept Maps: Description and Theoretical Base**

Arguing that both concepts and propositions composed of concepts are the central elements in the structure of knowledge and the construction of meaning, Novak and Gowin (1997) based their work on Ausubel, Novak, and Hanesian’s (1986) Assimilation Theory of Learning. This theory identifies concepts and propositional learning as the foundation upon which individuals construct their own idiosyncratic meanings. Additionally, the theory contrasts rote learning (i.e., new knowledge acquisition via memorization and a structural absence of interconnectedness with the existing knowledge structure) with meaningful learning in which learners must choose to integrate new knowledge relevantly with pre-existing concepts.

Because they attempt to represent meaningful relationships between concepts in the form of propositions, concept maps differ from other graphically-based instructional approaches (e.g., flow charts, cycle diagrams, and predictability trees) which adult literacy educators may have utilized to assist students in graphically representing their learning efforts. Unfortunately, using the existing literature to guide learning practices on the inclusion of concept mapping in adult literacy programs is problematic for several reasons: 1) there is a paucity of adult literacy research on this topic; and 2) it is not clear what types of research literature are most informative (i.e., adult literacy classes utilize academic content relevant to K-12 instructional programs, yet the student learners are typically either adults, or adults and youths).

Investigating published reports of empirical studies that tested the effects of concept maps on the achievement ability of learners comprised the purpose of this study. Consequently, our review of the literature included a broad search of the empirical research studies published in refereed journals. While concept maps have a number of purposes, to be included in our study, the article had to focus on the contributions of concept maps in relation to academic achievement and residual learning outcomes in educational and learning settings. The following criteria were used to guide article selections: 1) the purpose of the study was to investigate the use of concept maps in educational and/or learning settings; 2) the purpose of the study included a focus on the academic achievement-related outcomes learners experienced from their use of concept maps; 3) the study included a focus on the learning processes of learners; and 4) the study utilized a clearly described methodology section thus implying it was an empirical study as opposed to a conceptual article. The following questions were addressed: a) in what ways do concept maps contribute to the academic outcomes of learners? b) In what ways do concept maps contribute to the cognitive and psychological effects experienced by learners? c) How do the structural complexity of concept maps relate to academic achievement?

**Research Method**

Using a variety of phases, e.g., “concept maps and learning outcomes,” “concept maps and achievement”; “concept maps and academic outcomes”; “concept mapping and GED”; we
relied primarily on Google Scholar, Educational Research Complete (EBSCO), and Education Resources and Information Center (ERIC) to identify the most relevant and applicable empirical research articles.

Findings

After reviewing over 400 electronic abstracts of potential refereed journal articles, we subsequently narrowed this list to 56 articles that met our study’s criteria. Each article was reviewed and abstracted for inclusion in a summary table (i.e., based upon the sample population and topic, research design, and effects) that can provide useful information for adult literacy practitioners interested in utilizing concept mapping as an approach to learning in their classes.

Contributions to Academic Achievement

The concept mapping literature suggests students who utilize concept mapping as a means to develop their knowledge should demonstrate academic gains superior to the gains of students not utilizing concept maps. Our literature review identified 37 empirical studies designed to determine the effects of concept mapping on the academic achievement of students. The majority of the studies employed experimental and quasi-experimental designs. Twenty-seven studies compared the academic performance of students using concept maps with at least one control group that did not use concept maps. However, some of the studies compared concept mapping to alternative interventions, e.g., retrieval practice (Karpick & Blunt, 2011); note taking (Arslan, 2006); visualization (Brandt, 2001); lecture (Okoye & Okechukwu, 2010), and homework (Boujoude & Attieh, 2008). Of the 37 studies, 27 (73%) found statistically significant differences in which the concept mapping groups or classes academically outperformed either a control group or an alternative intervention. One of these studies (i.e., Nesbit & Adesope, 2006) was a meta-analysis of 55 empirical studies involving 5,818 participants. The authors concluded that concept-mapping activities proved more effective for attaining knowledge retention and transfer while benefitting learners across a broad range of educational levels, subject areas, and settings. In our review, a total of 6 studies (16.22%) found no statistically significant differences, and 3 studies (8.1%) found mixed results, i.e., some positive academic results for concept mapping students and no significant differences in other results; however, one study reported a positive outcome for the concept mapping group, but did not provide statistical significance levels. The majority (i.e., 25 or 67.57%) of the studies involved K-12 students in a variety of classes, e.g., biology, chemistry, math, English, and others. Eleven (i.e., 29.73%) of the studies involved university students (including some adult learners) in a variety of classes and programs; however, none involved adult literacy, or GED students.

Concept Maps and Problem-Solving

Observing that previous research has shown traditional instruction in problem-solving methods to be unsuccessful, Pankratius (1990) investigated the degree to which concept maps could be used to help high school physics students to construct an organized knowledge base that could be used to effectively solve problems. The classes that created maps before, during, and after instruction scored significantly (18%) higher than the classes that received traditional instruction, and the classes that only created maps after instruction also scored significantly higher (6.6%) than the classes that received traditional instruction. The results also indicated that the before, during, and after instruction class scored significantly higher (11%) on the post-test than the class that only created maps after instruction.
Concept Maps and Scaffolding Instruction

Scaffolding instruction typically involves a process in which a more knowledgeable person helps a learner succeed in tasks that would be otherwise beyond their reach (Reiser, 2004). To determine the extent to which the pre-structuring of concept maps can aid in students’ learning efforts, Chang, et al., (2001) compared different approaches to concept mapping by students: construct-on-scaffold (COS), construct-by-self (CBS), and paper and pencil (PAP). They found that the COS group academically performed significantly better than the CBS and PAP. The CBS group performed no different than the PAP group. In a similar study, Schau, et al. (2001) found strong and significant correlations between select and fill-in maps and standard multiple choice exam (MC) scores.

Concept Maps and Retrieval Practices

Karpick and Blunt (2011) examined the effectiveness of retrieval practice (i.e., the active, cue-driven process of reconstructing knowledge) relative to elaborative studying with concept mapping. They argued that each retrieval act changes memory; therefore, the act of reconstructing knowledge must be considered essential to the process of learning. They found that concept-mapping students produced a greater proportion of ideas on the initial concept maps than they did on the initial tests in the retrieval condition. However, retrieval practice produced better performance than elaborative concept mapping for both types of science tests. Overall, 84% of students performed better on the final test after practicing retrieval than after elaborative studying with concept mapping. They also indicated that when students create concept maps in the presence of materials they are learning, the activity involves elaborative studying. Students could also create concept maps in the absence of materials they are learning; the activity would then involve practicing retrieval of knowledge (Karpick & Blunt, 2011).

Timely Feedback on Students’ Maps

Hwang, et al. (2011) observed that an extra load is created for the teachers who should provide timely evaluations of students’ maps. That is, learning improvements are difficult for those students who are not aware of their shortcomings, implying that the provision of immediate learning guidance (or hints) is needed for assisting the students in reflecting on and revising their knowledge structures. They developed and tested an intervention, i.e., a concept map-oriented Mindtool with a remediation mechanism, ICM3 (Interactive Concept Map-oriented Mindtool for Mlearning), to assist students in developing and revising their concept maps. They found that the learning achievements of the experimental group students were significantly better than that of the control group students, implying that the ICM3 approach was more helpful to the students in improving their learning achievement than the traditional concept map feedback approach.

Non-Significant Concept Mapping Results

Several studies found no significant differences between concept mapping groups and other learning approaches. Royer and Royer (2004) found no statistically significant differences in achievement between concept mapping via technology and paper and pencil; however, they observed statistically significant differences for the technology group for more complex maps, higher concept map scores, and learning strategies. Hsu (2004) found no significant differences in achievement between a concept-mapping group and a problem based learning (PBL) group. It was suggested that concept maps could be used as a learning strategy for PBL to encourage...
active learning. Lastly, Hillbert and Renkl (2008) found no significant differences between a concept mapping group and a group employing “thinking-aloud.”

**Contributions to Learners’ Metacognition**

Our literature review identified 34 studies that attempted to identify the effects of concept mapping on students’ learning strategy use, metacognitive skills and self-regulation, and the attitudes of learners toward mapping.

**Learning Strategies**

Learning strategies serve to aid the learner in encoding information and thus affect learning outcomes and performance. A total of 20 studies in our review found statistically significant correlations between the use of concept maps and learning strategy use. For example, Kostova and Radoynoska (2010) conducted a study comparing the effects of concept mapping, free word association, and content analysis on biology students. The results indicated concept maps were associated with improved achievement in analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. That is, students were discovering connections and developing their higher order thinking skills. In other studies, students indicated the visual nature of concept maps assisted their understanding and remembrance of concepts in the performed classroom experiments (Markow & Lonning, 1998); as well as in their ability to master technical terminology, the correct use of rules in math, and vocabulary recall (Hasemann & Mansfield, 1995); aided in eliminating misconceptions by initiating discussion; and increased students’ confidence about their knowledge base (Wilkes, et al., 1999).

**Self-Regulation by Learners**

Several studies sought to determine how concept maps assist students to self-regulate (i.e., the ability to create and sustain thoughts and actions that are intentionally oriented toward goal attainment (Trifone, 2006)) which gives students a sense of control and encourages them to monitor their learning methods (McKeachie, 1988, cited by Chen, 2002).

For example, Trifone (2006) empirically investigated the role that motivation plays in affecting the depth of students’ conceptual understanding as a result of using concept mapping, i.e., the extent to which concept mapping motivated students to become more self-regulated learners by adopting a more meaningful approach to learning. The results indicated students in the high mapping proficiency group reported positive and significant changes in intrinsic goals, task value, control beliefs, and self-efficacy. In contrast, students in the low-proficiency group reported higher and significant mean changes in test-anxiety. This suggests that high-proficiency mappers displayed more adaptive changes in their overall motivational profile, while low-proficiency mappers displayed more maladaptive changes. Similar findings were reported by Kostova and Radoynavska (2010) who found that study skills, metacognitive skills, and self-efficacy improved with the cmapping. Also, Jegede, et al., (1990) and Okebukola (1990) found that concept mapping led to significantly greater reductions in anxiety level.
**Attitudes Toward Mapping**

A total of seven studies assessed the attitudes of learners toward mapping. The participants in three of the studies found concept maps to be helpful to their learning efforts and thereby gave them a positive rating; the participants of two studies rated them negatively, i.e., concept maps were not easy and required more time. In one study (Barenholz & Tamir, 1992) the rating was neutral, i.e., students considered them to be more work but helpful, and in one study (Schmid & Telaro, 1990) the results were mixed, i.e., high-reading ability students rated them positively and low-reading ability students were neutral.

**Cmap Structural Complexity and Academic Achievement**

Several studies in our literature review investigated the relationship between the structural complexity of concept maps and academic achievement. These studies generally report statistically significant differences between the academic performance of students who produce highly complex and integrated concept maps and those who produce less complex maps. Students with more complex maps tended to consistently academically outperform those who produced less complex maps. For example, Trifone (2006) defined proficiency as a demonstrated understanding of: (1) how to hierarchically organize concepts from most to least inclusive, (2) how to propositionally link together several different concepts provided to the student by the teacher, and (3) how to cross-link two related “branches” of a concept map. He argued that crosslinks are reflective of what Ausubel (2000) referred to as integrative reconciliations. They are a consequence of students making deeper and more meaningful leaps in understanding, and can therefore represent large gains in conceptual learning. He found that the relationships between concept mapping proficiency groups and test performance groups were statistically significant, indicating that students’ levels of concept mapping proficiency were significantly correlated with test performance.

**Conclusions**

Our literature review found strong evidence that concept maps may offer adult literacy instructors an appropriate alternative strategy for urban GED adult literacy students seeking to significantly enhance their learning efforts. Close to 75% of the studies in our review found concept mapping is more effective in assisting students to achieve academically when compared to control groups, note taking, homework, lecture, and other approaches. In addition, concept mapping demonstrated significant levels of effect on learners’ problem solving ability, learning strategy use, meta-cognition, motivation, and a reduction in anxiety. Serious consideration should be given to using scaffolding and providing timely feedback along with the maps.

*Note: References will be distributed at the conference and provided upon request.*

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STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) jobs are of increasing importance to the Central Indiana economy. Area WorkOne public employment office career guidance professionals need to have knowledge about STEM jobs: What are examples of STEM jobs, what skills are required for these jobs, where training programs exist for these jobs, and which Indiana companies need employees to fill their STEM jobs. This STEM knowledge enables the employment office career guidance professionals to effectively assist displaced (unemployed and underemployed) workers. Through a coordinated program with IUPUI’s Purdue School of Engineering and Technology was contracted by EmployIndy, Inc. through the STEMworks INDIANA grant to put together a series of workshops during 2010 and 2011 for the Central Indiana WorkOne public employment office professionals. As evidence of practical significance, the STEM workshop was deemed to be a success by EmployIndy, WorkOne, and the participants.

Introduction

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) jobs are of increasing importance to the Central Indiana economy. Area WorkOne public employment office career guidance professionals need to have knowledge about STEM jobs: What are examples of STEM jobs, what skills are required for these jobs, where training programs exist for these jobs, and which Indiana companies need employees to fill their STEM jobs. This STEM knowledge enables the employment office career guidance professionals to effectively assist displaced (unemployed and underemployed) workers.

IUPUI’s Purdue School of Engineering and Technology was contracted by EmployIndy, Inc. through the STEMworks INDIANA grant to put together a series of workshops during 2010 and 2011 for the Central Indiana WorkOne public employment office professionals. The focus of this research is the third and final STEM workshop, delivered on November 10, 2011.

The final workshop was developed in an agile manner by the primary researcher (from IUPUI), the secondary researcher (from BizEd Consulting), and two WorkOne office professionals. This collaboration was a success factor in the design and development of the workshop in a short three and a half week timeframe. Both traditional curriculum development processes and the elements of the Understanding by Design (UbD) process of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (Wiggins & McTigue, 1998; Wiggins & McTigue, 2005) were used to develop the workshop.

Understanding by Design (UbD) requires the developer to understand the required results and what represents effective evidence of them before the lessons with learning experiences and instruction are developed. UbD is also known as “backwards planning” (Isecke, 2011).

After the developer identifies the required results, she then focuses on known standards relating to the content area to make for identifying enduring understandings of the big ideas that help to answer “why do we care?” The developer formulates guiding or essential questions,
using key processes and skills (in this case, using the STEMworks Indiana Web site and other ways of accessing and assessing STEM job information).

The developer then formulates how to assess the learning from the lesson or unit. Finally, the lesson plans are developed with activities, schedule, and resources.

As federal and state training and Workforce Investment Act dollars were at stake, as well as the important futures of displaced or underemployed workers, proper guidance by employment office counselors is vital to serve the public well. Not matching the correct candidates can waste money, the candidates’ time, and employer resources. It is noted that approximately one half of the projected job openings in Indiana in the 2006 to 2016 time period will require middle-skilled workers (National Skills Coalition, 2010). These workers must be highly adaptable and comfortable working in a dynamic, ever changing work environment. Acquiring the necessary skills for these positions typically requires more than a high school education but less than a traditional four-year degree. These types of STEM positions are common training and work placement opportunities.

Not matching the right candidate to the right STEM job possibilities can result in employee turnover. Unwanted employee turnover is one of the largest and most costly problems organizations face. A number of studies (Hundley, et al., 2007; Drizin & Hundley, 2008) report that the costs associated with employee turnover can average upwards of $25,000 per employee, because of lost productivity, loss of intellectual capital, and the direct and indirect expenses of recruiting, selecting, and training new employees. Beyond costs is the impact on employee loyalty has on an organization’s ability to serve customers and succeed in an ever-competitive global marketplace. Employee loyalty is directly associated with organizational success, including its impact on performance, innovation, professional and life satisfaction and retention (Hundley, et al., 2007).

**Research Questions or Hypotheses**

Was the training appropriately prepared and delivered to get the desired learning outcomes?

\[ H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0, \] or there is no difference between the means scores of the posttest \( \mu_1 \) and the pretest \( \mu_2 \).

\[ H_a: \mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0, \] or there is a difference between the means scores of the posttest \( \mu_1 \) and the pretest \( \mu_2 \), **or the mean of the posttests is higher than the mean of the pretests.**

**The Importance of the Research**

This research examined if the STEM training provided a level of STEM employment related understanding to appropriately identify and place candidates into either STEM job preparatory training or directly into STEM jobs. As previously noted, approximately one half of the projected job openings in Indiana in the 2006 to 2016 time period will require middle-skilled workers (National Skills Coalition, 2010).

As federal and state training and Workforce Investment Act dollars are at stake, as well as the important futures of displaced or underemployed workers, proper guidance by employment office counselors is vital to serve the public well. Training had to be appropriately prepared and delivered to get the desired outcomes from the efforts of employment office counselors.
Methods

Identical pretest and posttest assessments were given to each workshop participant on the day of the workshop. Each learner had a code to write on the pretest and the posttest so that the assessments could be paired. No personal identifiers were kept of any assessment. A correlated groups t test (one-tailed) was calculated to compare the mean scores of pretest and posttest assessments.

An end of workshop summative evaluation was given. In addition, discussions by participants and sponsors were noted. Finally, a follow-up examination was done of the volume of the required Career Blueprints© that were produced after the workshop to see if the learners followed through with their STEM career exploration using the tools at the Web site www.stemworksindiana.org.

Using the responses from these assessments, the data was analyzed using the PASW Statistics 19 and conclusions were drawn from the test results.

Status of Research (Completed) and Summary of Findings

Statistical examination of the posttest assessments as compared to the pretest assessments, and the significant production of the required Career Blueprints© produced after the workshop provided evidence of an increase in relevant STEM job understandings and an application of learning. As evidence of practical significance, the STEM workshop was deemed to be a success by EmployIndy, WorkOne, and the participants.

Of the 75 workshop participants, there were 53 matched pairs of pretest and posttest assessments, although there were 22 unmatched pretests and seven unmatched posttests. Only the n = 53 of match pairs were used in the analysis of assessments to determine learning growth. Results showed that 35 attendees improved over the pretest, 15 attendees had the same score, and three attendees declined on the posttest.

Tables 1a and b. Paired Samples Correlated Groups T Test (One-tailed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PreTestNumberCorrect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PostTestNumberCorrect</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Test</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PreTestNumberCorrect - PostTestNumberCorrect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics from End of Workshop Summative Evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Statistics - End of Workshop Evaluation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1. Training objectives were identified and accomplished</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>.471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2. Training was well organized, well presented, and conducted in a professional manner</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.746</td>
<td>.4884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3. I will apply what I learned today to my job.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>.574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was an increase in the mean scores of the 53 pairs of post test assessments and pretest assessments. A correlated groups t test (one-tailed) was calculated to compare the mean scores of pretest and posttest assessments. As \( t_{obt} = -3.970 \) falls within the region of rejection, we reject the null hypothesis \( H_0 \) and accept the alternate hypothesis \( H_a \). This result indicates that there is significant difference in the mean scores of pretest and posttest assessments. \( t(52) = -3.9750, p < .05 \) (one-tailed).

There were 34 Career Blueprints © created by those believed to be WorkOne professionals in the two weeks after the workshop, thereby demonstrating a significant application of workshop learning of how to access and assess STEM career information. In addition, the end of workshop summative evaluations had a positive bias in qualitative comments and quantitative ratings.

Implications

Further research needs to be conducted to determine if the perceived effectiveness of the STEM training has resulted in the proper placement of potential STEM workers into immediately provided STEM preparatory training or directly into STEM jobs. In addition, it would be of interest to track the potential future STEM workers to see if they were placed into STEM jobs. For those that were directly placed into STEM jobs without taking immediately STEM preparatory training it would be of interest to conduct a longitudinal study to determine if they remained in STEM jobs after one, two, three, four, and five years.
References


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Considering Andragogical Learning in a Pedagogical Classroom

Lori Risley and Kathleen Petroff

When the question of trust in learning is raised, do we as educators trust our students/learners to learn? Should we trust our learners? The central idea explored in this paper is the lack of trust in learning. A group of adult learners, doctoral students in an Adult Education degree program, enrolled in a Statistics in Educational Administration course, was faced with an overwhelming lack of trust, in an environment incongruent with previous learning. However, the adult learners (and in this case andragogues) trusted themselves and each other and learned statistics...The doctoral students utilized trust that was not a part of their typical (statistics) class, and learned statistics that summer. Trust or the lack of trust in learning is an important concern to both research and practice in adult, continuing, extension and community education. This paper addresses three important questions, a) how did the doctoral students enrolled in the stats course accomplish their learning goal; b) why is it of interest to other adult educators and c) how can identification of trust or the lack of trust in a learning environment change the learning experience?

Introduction

What significance does trust between teacher/facilitator and learner have on learning? How does the presence of trust or the absence of trust impact the learning process? In a private, Midwestern university, a handful of adult learners entered a Statistics in Educational Administration (stats) classroom and met the pedagogue professor teaching the class. This group of adult learners, who were doctoral students in an Adult Education degree program and adult educators themselves, was faced with an overwhelming lack of trust, and an environment incongruent with previous learning. However, true to form, the adult learners (and in this case andragogues) did what they do best; they trusted themselves and each other and learned statistics...The question is how did they accomplish this learning goal and why is it of interest to other adult educators?

Concerns and Connections to Research and Practice

Although these authors/learners faced many concerns during the semester of Statistics, the primary concern this paper will address is the lack of trust in learning. The leader of the class is responsible for setting the climate. When the teacher starts the first night of class by announcing that each data set, quiz and test will be different because she is aware that the class will “cheat,” a climate of distrust is established. Trust is a word used in everyday conversations; however, the meaning of trust is subjective. In this example, the teacher obviously felt that the students/learners were not trustworthy. With this in mind the question of trust in learning is raised, should we as educators trust our students/learners to learn? The central epistemological question about trust is, “Ought I to trust or not?” This means, given the way things seem to me, is it reasonable for me to trust (McLeod, 2011)? What is it about the pedagogue that leads them not to trust the learner(s)? Trust or the lack of trust in learning is an important concern to both
research and practice in adult, continuing, extension and community education. Henschke (2011) asserts that trust in learning makes all the difference.

Trust between teacher and learner as evidenced by the Instructional Perspectives Inventory (IPI) continues to be the strongest positive element in learning contexts which includes the following seven elements: a) Teacher trust of learners, b) Teacher empathy with learners, c) Planning and delivery of instruction, d) Accommodating learner uniqueness, e) Teachers insensitivity towards learners, f) Experience based learning techniques, and g) Teacher centered learning process (Henschke, 1989). Trust is a common theme in every relationship and adult education theories such as andragogy assert that it is the relationship that teaches, thus, trust is essential to learning. Adult educators must utilize the research available on trust within the adult learning environments (practice) to promote positive learning experiences and continue to advance the research on trust and its effects on the learning experience.

Various Approaches

There are many approaches that attempted to deal with the idea of trust within a learning experience. Learning experiences are broad in nature, and they cover traditional classrooms, corporate offices, workshops and the like. Henschkes’ IPI identifies the importance of trust as an element of positive learning environments. Covey (2008) in his book “The Speed of Trust” acknowledges the value of trust in both personal and professional environments. Young (2008) asserted that trusted and effective leadership make healthy organizations. His paradigm for profitability contended that knowing led to respect, which led to listening, leading to communication leading to relationships and all of these elements together equaled trust. Trust was necessary to continue in the paradigm to effectiveness, leading to productivity thus reaching profitability. Many would consider trust a key component in leadership and current research shows the correlation between employer and employee trust and employee satisfaction (Vatcharasirisook, 2011). When research correlates employee trust with employee satisfaction and consideration of the profitability paradigm are factored into the notion that hiring and training new employees is costly then trust is a vital element of the economy as well as education. There is a defined parallel between facilitator/learner trust and employer/employee trust. Establishing and “practicing” trust in the classroom, becomes a portable skill students take with them into the workplace, where the cycle of trust plays itself out, or the lack of trust repeats itself in a new venue.

The basic concepts underlying Andragogy, according to Knowles (1970), is the relationship that exists between the facilitator and the learner. The relationship and the trust that accompanies it is vital and is represented in Knowles theories of andragogy and adult learning. The six assumptions of the adult learner include: a) Concept of the learner, b) Role of the learner’s experience, c) Readiness to learn, d) Orientation to learning, e) Motivation to learn in adults, and f) Why learn something (Knowles, 1970). The eight process elements are: a) Preparing the learners for the program, b) Setting the climate, c) Involving learners in mutual planning, d) Diagnosing their own learning needs, e) Translating the learning needs into objectives, f) Designing a pattern of learning experiences, g) Helping adult learners manage and carry out their learning plans, and h) Evaluating the extent to which the learners have achieved their objectives (Knowles, 1970)
In this case of the statistics course, the element of climate setting needs further examination; therefore, let us examine the andragogical climate these students/learners were familiar with using as both facilitator and learner.

**Setting the climate.** A climate conducive to learning is a prerequisite for effective learning. Two aspects of climate are important: physical and psychological.

**Physical climate.** The typical classroom setup, with chairs in rows and a podium in front, is probably the one least conducive to learning that the fertile human brain could invent. It announces to anyone entering the room that the name of the game here is one-way transmission—the proper role for the students is to sit and listen to the professor. The effective educator of adults makes a point of getting to the classroom well before the learners arrive. If it is set up like a traditional classroom, consider moving the podium to a corner and rearrange the chairs in one large circle or several small circles (this is not always possible with stadium style halls; however, when possible, consider using). If tables are available, place five or six at a table. A bright and cheerful classroom is a must.

**Psychological climate.** Important as physical climate is, psychological climate is even more important. The following characteristics create a psychological climate conducive to learning:

- **A climate of mutual respect.** Adults are more open to learning when they feel respected. If they feel that they are being talked down to, ignored, or regarded as incapable, or that their experience is not being valued, and then their energy is spent dealing with these feelings at the expense of learning.

- **A climate of collaboration.** Because of their earlier school experiences where competition for grades and the professor’s / teacher’s favor was the norm, adults tend to enter into any educational activity with rivalry toward fellow learners. Because peers are often the richest resources for learning, this competitiveness makes these resources inaccessible. There are climate-setting exercises that can be used to open courses which put the learners in to a sharing relationship from the beginning for this reason.

- **A climate of mutual trust.** People learn more from those they trust than from those they aren’t sure they can trust. And here educators of adults [ones who seek to help adults learn] put in a position of teacher of adults, are at a disadvantage. Students in traditional schools learn at an early age to regard teachers [and professors] with suspicion until teachers / professors prove themselves to be trustworthy. Why? For one thing, they have power over students; they are authorized to give grades, to determine who passes or fails, and they hand out punishments and rewards. For another thing, the institutions in which they work present them as authority figures. Professors will do well to present themselves as a human being rather than as an authority figure, to trust the people they work with and to gain their trust.

- **A climate of support.** People learn better, when they feel supported rather than judged or threatened. Teachers of adult learners should try to convey their desire to be supportive by demonstrating their acceptance of them with an unqualified positive regard, empathizing with their problems or worries, and defining their role as that of helper. It will help for professors to organize the learners into peer-support groups and coach them on how to support one another.

- **A climate of openness and authenticity.** When people feel free to say what they really think and feel they are more willing to examine new ideas and risk new behaviors than when they feel defensive. If professors demonstrate openness and authenticity in their own behavior, this will be a model that the adult learner will want to adopt.
**A climate of pleasure / fun.** Learning should be one of the most pleasant and gratifying experiences in life; it is, after all, the way people can achieve their full potential. Learning should be an adventure, spiced with the excitement of discovery. It should be fun. Dullness is the unacceptable part of the adult learners’ previous educational experience, and the professor will improve the learning climate by making a lot of use of spontaneous [not canned] humor.

**A climate of humanness.** Learning is a very human activity. The more people feel they are being treated as human beings, the more they are likely to learn. This means providing for human comfort—good lighting and ventilation, comfortable chairs, availability of refreshments, frequent breaks, and the like. It also means providing a caring, accepting, respecting, and helping social atmosphere (Risley, 2012).

These elements of climate setting were not recognizable in the stats course. The relevance to climate setting is clearly stated when examining the importance of trust in a learning environment. Trust is mutual, it is given to those seen as “trust worthy”, given to individuals who want and will help the learner to succeed in the learning process. Learning is not an activity that can be forced or that will flourish in an atmosphere without trust. Trust, like learning, is fundamental to being human; however, trust like learning, is a process.

**Discussion**

In the statistics course taught by a pedagogue, there was a lack of congruence between theory and practice – saying and doing. There was no trust between teacher and learners. The adult learners came to the stats course with a set of principles and beliefs they had learned and had themselves utilized as facilitators of learning. These beliefs and experiences guided their understanding about how best to facilitate the learning of adults. It also ‘set’ an expectation that they entered the statistics classroom (as learners) ready and motivated to learn, and that they would either contribute to the overall ‘class’ learning or would be encouraged to carry out their own learning plan. The lack of congruence was significant and was based on the professor as ‘teacher’, operating from the ‘teacher centered’ model, that by its’ very nature, excludes the learner and implies the learners are empty vessels, thus, we are handing off a broken model to the next generation.

All adult learners bring experiences with them into classrooms. The teacher centered model as practiced by the pedagogue requires a ‘neutral (or worse) expectation or “belief”. Those beliefs, i.e., students will cheat, several iterations of the same tests or assignment are needed to prevent dishonesty, or the lack of trust as practiced by the pedagogue are made visible to the learners through the words and actions of the instructor. In this class, those actions were clear to the doctoral students, who observed and felt the impact of the lack trust. However, these adult learners knew they could be trusted.

When faced with the incongruent learning environment, the andragogues responded to the use of pedagogy as they do; they trusted in themselves and utilized a basic adult education premise, they self-directed. Because the stats professor set a climate of mistrust in the class, the adult learners initiated a plan; they would meet on weekends at a local deli to collaborate on homework and to complete the class project. The professor informally questioned the learners as to why they would meet to work on homework, given that the data set for the project were all different, what benefit would there be to working collaboratively outside of class? The learning of statistics was accomplished; however, the majority of the learning occurred outside of the
classroom, in a highly self-directed way. The learners’ overall readiness, their motivation to be successful and mutual trust created a climate of learning that proved to be successful.

**Conclusion**

At the time of the stats course there was not an instrument available for the learner to use to specifically document the presence or lack of trust demonstrated by the teacher. Developed during doctoral research, the visible elements of trust inventory (VETI) is now available. This inventory focuses on trust in a learning experience. The inventory identifies eleven elements of trust that if visible in a learning experience can help establish a trusting relationship, thus, a trusting learning environment. Those elements are: a) Communicates to learners that they are each uniquely important, b) Expresses confidence that learners will develop the skills they need, c) Demonstrates that learners know what their goals, dreams and realities are, e) Prizes learners’ ability to learn what is needed, f) Communicates to learners they need to be aware of and communicate their thoughts and feelings, g) Enables learners to evaluate their own progress, h) Indicates ability to “hear” what learners say their learning needs are, i) Engages learners in clarifying their own aspirations, j) Works towards developing a supportive relationship with individual learners, k) Exemplifies unconditional positive regard for learners, and l) Demonstrates respect of learners’ dignity and integrity. Each of these items is either “visible” or “not visible”. Either there is trust or there is not trust displayed by the teacher. Perhaps the use of this inventory in the classroom will prevent future learners from experiencing the lack of trust demonstrated by the pedagogue in the stats course.
References


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One Andragogical Approach to Comprehensive Examination Question(s): Encouraging a Doctoral Student to Develop His or Her Individualized Comprehensive Examination Question(s).

Lori Risley

The author is seeking to improve the process of building and conducting active adult learning experiences for adult learners by providing an alternative to traditional Comprehensive Exams/Comprehensive Questions in a Graduate Program. This alternative reflects the author’s personal experience. As part of the author’s doctoral program, like many other graduate and doctoral programs, comprehensive questions are built into the program as an evaluation of learning. This author informed her advisor that she was ready for the comprehensive questions expecting to receive a list of questions that she would answer providing supporting evidence and references. Instead this author received a question in return, “What do you want to learn more about?” This author replied, “Are you asking me to develop my own comprehensive question?” The Andragogue who is her advisor just smiled. Thus, this “best practice” experience was born.

Introduction

Comprehensive examinations are an important part of doctoral and other graduate studies. They are usually taken after a student has satisfactorily completed all of the course work requirements in his or her discipline. In the case of a majority of doctoral programs, comprehensive examinations are required before the student completes the dissertation process. Utilized in universities since the Middle Ages, examinations of a comprehensive nature are a standard method of evaluating learning. Common in undergraduate programs early in 20th century, comprehensive examinations have slowly shifted to graduate studies where today they are standard in a vast majority of doctoral and Master’s programs. Most doctoral programs today require a comprehensive examination. However, some students and faculty members have raised questions regarding comprehensive examinations challenging its usefulness. Traditionally comprehensive examinations are used to 1) assess knowledge, 2) stimulate learning, 3) synthesize curriculum, and 4) confirm research skills. An andragogical alternative to the traditional comprehensive examination is allowing the learner to ask and answer or develop an individualized comprehensive question(s) in his or her field of study. This encourages the learner to: a) be self-directed, b) reflect internal motivation, c) show a readiness to learn, d) provide an orientation to learning-life centered, e) acknowledge learners “need to know why” and f) draw on previous learning experiences. This is based on Andragogy’s six assumptions of the adult learner (Knowles, 1970) while still meeting the traditional use of the comprehensive examination.

Importance of this Best Practice

The use of this alternative to the traditional comprehensive examination, encouraging the learner to develop his or her individualized comprehensive examination promotes active participation and pro-active learning. Andragogy has long acknowledged that learners “take ownership” when the learner is included in the fundamental development of the learning
experience. By encouraging the learner to actively participate in the design process of the comprehensive examination you are providing a pro-active learning environment, which stimulates active involvement in the learning process. The inclusion of the learner in the design process also demonstrates trust by the facilitator (major advisor) in the learner, trust that is necessary in all relationships including that of educator and learner (Henschke, 2011).

Although this alternative is used in a doctoral program setting it can easily be used in any adult, continuing, community, and extension education setting. When using this alternative the adult educator must take into consideration why it is to be used, what educational purpose it will serve, how it may need to be adapted or changed (either very little to a lot), in order for the learner and subject matter it will be used with, to have an enriched learning experience.

Comprehensive examinations are rich learning experiences that can be overlooked due to the stress and apprehension associated with the preparation and the actual taking of the comprehensive examination. The use of this alternative used in any setting can relieve some of the stress associated with the examinations, thus, enriching the learning experience and allowing for continual growth of the learner.

Techniques for Actively Engaging the Learners

While in Building Blocks in Adult Learning a doctoral level course, in the Andragogy specialty emphasis of the Instructional Leadership track offered at Lindenwood University (LU), St. Charles, Missouri, this author was introduced to the concepts necessary for developing an adult learning experience. Three techniques are critical when designing a learning experience for adults and these techniques apply to the use of this alternative to a comprehensive examination. Since the introduction of these techniques, I ask myself three questions before designing any learning experience whether the experience is for other learners, or in the case of the development of my individual comprehensive examination question where I am the learner. I ask myself these questions with the goal of developing an educationally sound answer. The questions follow: What immediate and observable learning needs does this adult learning method or technique meet for this/these participants (what is the specific relevance now)? What position does this method or technique hold in the context of the learning goals or objectives of this adult learning/teaching experience (what is the learning design)? How does my selection and use of this method or technique fit into my understanding of how adults learn (what is my learning theory)? (Henschke, 2010). As adult educators it is important for us to be able to provide educationally sound answers to each of these questions before designing and implementing learning experiences. It is encouraged to share these questions with your learner, thus providing context for all future learning experiences.

By utilizing these techniques the learner is engaged in the development of not only the individualized comprehensive examination but the complete learning experience with a clear understanding of the relevance to themselves. Informing the learner of why you are encouraging this alternative to the comprehensive examination also reinforces the trust you place in the adult learner to guide his or her own learning experience.
Articulating the Learning Theory Which Informs and Support the Techniques

Multiple theories could contribute to this alternative. However, I have chosen the theory of andragogy – the art and science of helping adults learn. My theory on the lived approach to learning coincides with Knowles’ (1995, 1996) theory of andragogy. It has six assumptions and eight process elements. Following are the six assumptions of andragogy:

1. Concept of the learner – As adults, we have a deep psychological need to be self-directing—to be perceived by others and treated by others as able to take responsibility for ourselves.
2. Role of the learner’s experience – Adults have a greater volume and a different quality of experience than youths. Thus, adults themselves are the richest learning resource for one another for many kinds of learning.
3. Readiness to learn – when adults experience a need to know or be able to do something to perform more effectively in some aspect of their lives — marriage, the birth of children, the loss of a job, divorce, the death of a friend or relative, or a change of residence.
4. Orientation to learning – adults enter an educational activity with a life-, task-, or problem-centered orientation to learning. Therefore, their learning is for immediate, not postponed, application.
5. Motivation to learn in adults – frequently much more internally oriented (self-esteem, confidence, recognition by others) than externally oriented (chance for promotion, change of technology).
6. Why learn something – Adults have a need to know a reason that makes sense to them, as to why they should learn some particular thing, rather than because the teacher said so.

The eight process elements of andragogy are as follows. It is important for these to be sequential or as part of a continuous cycle.

1. Preparing the learners for the program – Learners become informed on the contents of this experience, generally how it will be conducted, and the general process of each segment building upon the previous element.
2. Setting the climate – A climate conducive to learning is a prerequisite for effective learning. Two aspects of climate are important: physical and psychological. Physical climate needs to be comfortable, bright, colorful, and exciting. The psychological climate for learning needs to be infused very deeply with support, mutual respect, pleasure/fun, humanness, openness, authenticity, mutual trust, collaboration, and critical thinking.
3. Involving learners in mutual planning - Learners sharing the responsibility for planning learning activities with the facilitator. Research indicates that learners will be committed to a decision or activity to the extent they have had a say in constructing what is to be done.
4. Diagnosing their own learning needs — Learners can share in small groups what they perceive their needs and interests to be regarding the acquisition of knowledge, understanding, skill, attitude, value and interest (KUSAVI) in this learning experience. The needs include such things as a growth like movement toward: wholeness, perfection, completion, justice, aliveness, richness, simplicity, beauty, goodness uniqueness, effortlessness, playfulness, truth, honesty, reality, and self-sufficiency. This makes for a well-rounded, comprehensive, total person involvement in determining their most crucial needs.
5. Translating the learning needs into objectives – Participants now face the task of translating the learning needs into learning objectives—positive statements of directions of
growth in knowledge, understanding, skill, attitude, value, and interest (KUSAVI) regarding expanding their horizons in things like autonomy, activity, objectivity, enlightenment, large abilities, many responsibilities, broad interests, altruism, self-acceptance, integrated self-identity, focus on principles, deep concerns, originality, tolerance for ambiguity, and rationality.

6. Designing a pattern of learning experiences – This plan (mutually designed by the leaders and the participants) will include identifying the resources most relevant to addressing each objective and the most effective strategies for utilizing these resources.

7. Helping adult learners manage and carry out their learning plans – Learning contracts are among the most effective ways to help learners structure and conduct their learning.

8. Evaluating the extent to which the learners have achieved their objectives – Finding out what is really happening inside the learners and how differently they are performing in life.

When applying these six assumptions and eight process elements (andragogy) into the use of this alternative to the comprehensive examination and encouraging a learner to develop his or her individualized comprehensive examination question(s), this alternative can be considered a “best practice.”

Discussion

This author admits that there are challenges with this alternative to the comprehensive examination question(s). Not only is this alternative unfamiliar to the learner, it is unfamiliar to many faculty members as well, thus, causing feelings of discomfort and distrust from multiple participants on many levels of the educational process. For this or any alternative to the comprehensive examination to be successful, the faculty administering the alternative must believe and trust not only in the process, but also the learner. This confidence must be transmitted to the learner by the faculty. The learner needs to be confident in the process and that there is unlimited potential for individual growth with this alternative, otherwise as stressful and confining as the traditional form of the comprehensive examination may be to the learner, the learner will typically choose that which is familiar over the unknown. The adult educator who implements this andragogical active learning alternative to the comprehensive examination will need to be familiar and embrace the theory of andragogy, specifically the six assumptions of the adult learner. Faculty will need to be able to effectively communicate that the desired outcome is nothing more and certainly nothing less than the learners’ educational growth and that they (the faculty) are confident in the learners’ ability to meet this pinnacle. This author is aware of alternative approaches to the examination utilized at institutions such as University of Missouri- St. Louis and Pepperdine University (California) (MaCall & Cannings, 1992).

This alternative approach is categorized as action research. Three of the many definitions for action research include: a “systemic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical and undertaken by participants in the inquiry” (McCutcheon & Jung, 1990); “a form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out” (Kemmis & McTaggert, 1990); and “action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework” (Rapoport, 1970).

Within all these definitions there are four basic themes: empowerment of participants; collaboration through participation; acquisition of knowledge; and social change. The process
that the researcher goes through to achieve these themes is a spiral of action research cycles consisting of four major phrases: planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Zuber-Skerrit, 1991).

Kemmis and McTaggart (1990) assert that there are three minimal requirements for action research. These requirements incorporate the goals of improvement and involvement which characterize any action research project. The conditions which are set out there as individually necessary and jointly sufficient for action research to exist are:

1. The project takes as its subject-matter a social practice, regarding it as a strategic action susceptible to improvement;
2. The project proceeds through a spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, with each of these activities being systematically and self-critically implemented and interrelated; and
3. The project involves those responsible for the practice in each of the moments of the activity, widening participation in the project gradually to include others affected by the practice and maintaining collaborative control of the process.

Many of educational “best practices” are derived from action research, and it is the author’s opinion that such is the case with this andragogical approach to the comprehensive examination question(s). This experience provided the learner the opportunity to actively participate in, not only the development of the comprehensive examination, but in action research both of which allowed for reflection and growth by the learner.

It is the author’s hope that by sharing her experience as the learner in this alternative approach to comprehensive examinations, other learners, and faculty will embrace the active learning opportunities provided by this approach. The author recommends the use of alternative formats to comprehensive examinations, particularly that of encouraging the learner to develop his or her individual comprehensive examination question(s) at other institutions where adult, continuing, community and extension education is facilitated.

Why This Qualifies as a Best Practice

The author was not the originator of this adult education “best practice.” This alternative style in various formats is commonly used by Dr. John A. Henschke, Ed.D. Chair of the Andragogy department at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri. Dr. Henschke was introduced to alternative approaches while studying with Dr. Malcolm S. Knowles during his graduate work. Using an alternative to the comprehensive examination can and is used currently within the Andragogy specialty emphasis at Lindenwood University with success and learner satisfaction. The author’s involvement with this alternative is as a learner. Nonetheless, as the learner this author believes this alternative to the comprehensive examination of encouraging the learner to develop and address his or her own comprehensive question(s) is a “best practice” for the following reasons:

- As the learner this author was required to be self-directed, this author had vast subject matter to choose from within the field of andragogy and was trusted to know her individual learning needs and how to achieve them.
- The format for my “question(s)” was up to me. Example-1 could have chosen: oral with documents provided to me the learner for analysis and synthesizing, group format with either oral or written product, individual format written on topic of learner choice or on topic with documents provided, even a paper for presentation at
conference, my ultimate choice. The variety is unlimited which allows for active learner participation.

- Fulfills the readiness to learn desire in adults, although a comprehensive examination is a requirement of the program the topic of research is what the author (learner) felt she needed to learn.
- The author’s motivation for the use of this alternative was internal verses external, this format was about the author’s desire to learn not about fulfilling a program requirement.
- The entire alternative is an example of one of the six assumptions of the adult learner- why learn something. The author’s “need to know” was the beginning and end of this alternative and everything in between fed that need.
- As a learner the author’s past learning experience provided a reference for a topic the author would ultimately choose to research and which style/format the author would choose to present the alternative comprehensive question(s).
- This alternative allowed and encouraged the author to engage in an educational activity that was new and unfamiliar, thus allowing growth. The author intends to present the finished research at conferences displaying immediate application of her learning.
- This format meets the traditional requirements of comprehensive examinations which are: 1) assessing knowledge, 2) stimulating learning, 3) synthesizing curriculum, and 4) confirming research skills.

This is only one learners experience with using an alternative to the comprehensive examination format that is traditionally found in doctoral programs today. However, she has conferred with peers who have participated in the traditional version of the comprehensive examinations and peers who either are currently preparing for an alternative version of the comprehensive examination or have completed an alternative version, regarding their personal experiences with the process. The consensus is that the alternative version provided more active learning opportunities and not just “another examination to study and remember answers for.” Of note, this author perceived the learners who participated in an alternative version of the comprehensive examination felt they had a trusting relationship with the faculty responsible for providing the alternative. It is noted that this data was obtained during causal learner-to-learner conversations and only recently synthesized into the above observation.

**Conclusion**

While this is not a new idea in the field of education the practice of this alternative is not widely utilized. From the view of the author/learner this alternative provided multiple learning and educational growth opportunities. This alternative encouraged active participation, pro-active learning, understanding of not only the finished product but the process of developing the learning experience, and an observable trusting relationship between learner and facilitator. In the mind of this author these are the characteristics of “best practice” in education.
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Transformative Learning in an International Context: Issues and Solutions from the Confucian Perspective

Qi Sun

This paper addresses learning for transformation of international students, particularly students from East Asia, such as, China (including Taiwan), Korea, and Japan, which have been strongly influenced by Confucianism (Sun & Cho, 2008; Yang, Zheng, & Li, 2006). The paper argues that international students go through a series of phases, curves, and levels of adaptations and transformations while living and learning abroad. Applying the Confucian learning model is likely to facilitate a deeper understanding of learning that involves multidimensional processes of transformation, which is imperative for educators and administrators of host educational institutions to recognize and to become more conscious while helping international students adjust to the learning and living in the very new environments.

Introduction

International students go through a series of phases, curves, and levels of adaptations and transformations while living and learning aboard. This paper focuses learning for transformation of international students, particularly students from East Asia, such as, China (including Taiwan), Korea, and Japan, which have been strongly influenced by Confucianism (Sun & Cho, 2008; Yang, Zheng, & Li, 2006). First, the paper identifies a context for understanding international students who confront issues and disharmony while studying abroad. Second, it reviews transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 1991; Mezirow & Associates, 2000) and Jarvis' (2006) lifelong learning model to illustrate the possibility and necessity of learning for transformation in an international context. Third, it describes core values of the Confucian culture, explains how they have shaped and influenced East Asian students’ ways of life and learning, which all link to issues and concerns of their study and life on US campuses. Finally, it briefly presents a Confucian multidimensional learning model and discusses its implication for holistic human developments and transformations.

Context

To cope with the globalized world, more and more learners pursue higher education abroad. As Ann Stock, Assistant Secretary of State states, “young people who study abroad gain the global skills necessary to create solutions to 21st Century challenges. In turn, international students globalize our campuses and communities” (Open Door, 2011). International students, particularly students from Confucian tradition countries such as China, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan, have become an increasingly significant presence on U.S. university campuses. In fact, China, South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan together comprise close to 40 percent of the total international students on U.S. campus (IIE, 2011).

The U.S. higher education institutions with more enrollments of international students continue to better prepare American students to succeed in an increasingly global environment. However, the international students also bring with them their own cultural values of living,
learning, socializing, and communicating, which to varying degrees mismatch the culture of the host country and campuses (Holmes, 2005). Different cultural values, teaching and learning mechanisms, and unique perspectives not only present challenges to the American educational system (Wang, 2006), but they also bring considerable amount of stress and difficulties to these international students’ lives. They undergo challenges and struggles due to the complexity of language barriers, culture differences, new roles, and novel contexts (Gu & Maley 2008), constantly confronting adaptation and transformation of their former life with their new one.

Numerous studies have explored challenges and barriers experienced by East Asian students abroad (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2006; Holmes, 2005, Signorini, Wiesemes, & Murphy, 2009), Yet, few study has employed the Confucian perspective to illustrate and review learning as multiple dimensions of transformation, particularly within an international context.

Given the fact that almost 40 percent US international students are from East Asian region, there are escalating needs for educators, administrators, and policymakers of host educational institutions to actively engage in learning of aspects of Eastern culture and traditions so to better understand these students needs holistically. It is within such s context that Confucian cultural values and the learning model become increasingly significant that we should draw meaningful applications for successfully transformative learning of the international students.

**Learning for Transformation of International Students**

Not all learning is transformative and transformative learning happens only when we alter our beliefs or attitudes, or we change perspective or habit of mind (Mezirow, 2000). Living and studying in the US presents international students an environment that requires them to adjust feelings and attitudes, and even shift their philosophical and moral suppositions in their learning.

Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) summarized Mezirow’s 10-step model emphasizing four major components of the transformative learning process: experience, critical reflection, reflective discourse, and action. These processes may occur slow or fast depending on the particular individual’s specific situation. “The learner must critically reflect on his or her experience, talk with others about his or her new worldview in order to gain the best judgment, and act on the new perspective” (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 137).

Being an international educator, I have experienced, observed, and identified patterns of the complex process that loudly echo the above components of the model (but not limited to):

- Experiencing disharmony: such as discomfited by language barriers; experiencing the complexity of living; misunderstanding others and being misunderstood; struggling with differences in classroom; and feeling isolated.
- Reflecting on situations and self as emotional anxieties become intense: such as, why friends are so “superficial? What is wrong with me? Why do others treat me like this? who am I?
- Discussing with others of same culture or people with similar experiences: such as sharing fear, anger, guilt, and/or shame, comparing with others on similar situations/feelings, and, exchanging ideas and thoughts on what should do.
- Taking action and feeling renewed: such as stopping blaming self and beginning to reanimate life, learning to view things from host culture’s perspectives, looking for alternatives to resolve “problems,” and forming a new self-identity.
This pattern of disorienting situations and moments kindle emotional, cultural, social, and critical reflections for transformative learning (Boyd & Myers 1988; Cranton, 2006; Illeris, 2004; Jarvis, 2006; Mezirow, 1991; 2003; Mezirow & Associates, 2000). Applying transformative learning theory to learning in an international context suggests that international students must establish what Mezirow (2000) termed new a “frame of reference” and experience changes related to “meaning schemes” (points of view) and “meaning perspective” (habit of mind) in order to renegotiate their identities and roles within the new life world for success. Frame of reference may be viewed from two dimensions: habit of mind and point of view. A habit of mind is “a set of assumptions—broad, generalized, orienting predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience” (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, p. 17). For instance, moral, ethical, aesthetic, philosophical, and psychological assumptions are examples of varieties of habit of mind (Merriam et al., 2007). A point of view is a “set of immediate, specific beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and value judgments” (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, p. 18). Point of view changes more easily than habit of mind. For learners to change their point of view, they must engage in critical reflection on their experiences, which in turn leads to a “perspective transformation” (Mezirow, 1991).

Jarvis’s (2006) lifelong learning model helps explain the complex processes in transformative learning of the international students. “Learning occurs as a result of the person-in-the-world”…There are “four different relationships between the person and the world: Person to person; person to phenomenon (things/event); person to a future phenomenon; and person to self” (Jarvis, 2006, p. 17). Each relationship enables some kind of learning and people change as a result. This point has vital implications for international students who have transplanted themselves in a new culture in which so many new relationships wait to be developed. Such relationships may be with the new living and learning environments, their fellow students, host universities’ professors, administrators, and anyone who works or socializes with them in ways that facilitate learning. People seek harmony with the world in which they live, yet “disjuncture may appear via any relationship, or combinations of relationships that they may have with the world” (p. 24). In response to disjuncture, various types of learning may occur (pp. 10-31).

Thus, international students must make conscious changes in their previous frame of reference in order for perspective transformation. As they continue to become changed persons with increasing fitness and compatibility with their new world, they must keep negotiating their identities, adjusting to new roles toward other people from both their home and the host culture.

To help East Asian students make a smooth transition to their new lives, host educators and administrators must seek to understand how these students think, live, and learn.

Confucian Cultural Values and their Influence on Teaching and Learning

Inadequate language skills have been found to mask other problems stemming from other causes, such as lack of familiarity with a new educational and social environment and with a new culture and background contexts (Gu & Schweisfurth, 2006; Huaung & Brown, 2009). Such findings help explain how these students’ previous social and educational environment, especially their cultural norms and traditions have shaped the way they live and learn.

Confucian Culture Values

Historically, Confucian values have strongly influenced East Asian societies (Sun & Cho, 2008; Yang et al. 2006), which share some common cultural values: harmony, filial piety,
respect for the elderly, and moderation, collectivism, hierarchical social structures, and family-centeredness (Huang & Brown; 2009; Yang et al. 2006). For example, in the Confucian tradition, human relatedness is the primary given. Human beings exist in a social context. Confucian values view harmony among human beings necessary to achieve a harmonious society. Wu Lun, based on the Confucian five basic human relationships (Xu, 2006), has long been practices by these societies. Resting on: Wu Lun, family plays critical roles for each individual’s development. Parents always have authority over their children and the children should respect and show filial piety to their parents. In school, students should always respect teachers, who are regarded as the authorities. In society, younger people should always show respect for older people. Persons of lower social status should be loyal to the authority (Huang & Brown, 2009). These values serve as standards and rules for social interactions in these Asian societies.

**The Influence of Confucian Values on Learning and Socializing**

The Confucian value of harmony and the emphasis on social hierarchy make these students generally respect older people and people with higher social standing. They often follow their advice without questioning. Teachers, in particular, receive high honor and are considered as authorities for transmitting knowledge. Teachers share knowledge with students but also help students choose their career paths. Thus, teachers are very influential figures in students' lives (Huang & Brown, 2009). This value characterizes learning as an apprenticeship that is teacher centered and in which knowledge flows from the teacher to the student. Thus, within many East Asian countries, teaching is largely didactic and text-bound with little time allowed for discussion (Yang et al., 2006). Students have been shaped by the liner, competition oriented, and authority-centered education. In classrooms, teachers carefully follow their texts and prepare their lectures to offer detailed point-to-point information that students write in their notes. Lectures and taking notes are main formats of teaching and learning, which leave no room or little room for collaboration, creativity, or communication among students (Holmes, 2005).

The Confucian emphasis on social hierarchy results in acceptance rather than questioning of knowledge, especially where such challenges might cause loss of face. Politeness and maintaining face, both one’s own and that of others are important for group harmony. It is also shameful for students to say in front of the class that they do not understand the teachers' instructions and assignments. This cultural difference helps understand why so many East Asian students do not often ask teachers questions in class. However, not asking questions does not necessarily mean that these students do not actively think or learn (Huang & Brown, 2009). Some researchers (Holmes, 2005; Liu, 2001) found that Confucian collectivist values encourage students’ desire to fit in, to be verbally reserved, and to avoid drawing attention to themselves.

Family, as an enriching and nourishing support system, serves as a vehicle for the realization of the self. The self, in turn, must develop in its various roles as son or daughter, parent or sibling. Friends as well as leaders from one’s working organization or learning institution are also seen as the extension of family support. For international students, family and friends are at distance, and their new support system has to be established and developed. The fading of their previous support system from family and friends causes increasing feelings of uneasiness, fear, and helpless
A Confucian Learning Model

This Confucian learning model is an extension of the Confucian ideal human model “Sage” and the realistic Confucian goal for the educated, “Jun Zi” who learned to strengthen self-cultivation and present Ren—humanity and righteousness towards the “world” in which we live (Sun, 2004; 2008). Sage signifies multidimensional relationships that each human being holds within the world in which he or she lives. Sage is one who has reached the highest realm and become (a) the undivided “I” with the Universe, (b) the unity of “I” with other humans and other beings, and (c) the wholeness of “I” with self” (Sun, 2004). From all of these relationships, we learn accountability and to fulfill certain responsibilities. Sun (2004) described and analyzed Confucian educational practice, which is exemplified in Jun Zi. I incorporated Jun Zi into a Confucian Learning Model (See Figure 1), which highlights a continuous transformative learning process that involves whole beings and their multiple life worlds and contexts. As human beings, we not only have physical bodies, rational minds, and emotional hearts, but also a spiritual inner self. The consciousness of the body, mind, heart, and inner self all perceive reality differently. However, all of these parts make up the whole of a person even though each part has its own unique needs and nature.

Figure 1. The Confucian Learning Model.

Confucius emphasized that Jun Zi, living in and interacting with different contexts, are required to learn lifelong. To become Jun Zi, one must remain in a continuous dialogue with the cosmic, natural, social, inner, and spiritual worlds, which help engage various kinds of learning for necessary knowledge and skills, socially accepted values, beliefs, and attitude, and emotional and psychological balance and capability to fulfill the roles they play in different worlds.

In his own teaching practices, Confucius demonstrated that human learning is not only lifelong but also life wide (Sun 2008). Confucius applied extensive human experience and
human concerns within the culture he had inherited to his teaching and learning. One more important version of being human is the international version—Confucius highly respected receiving foreign visitors and visiting other states. Confucius himself visited many states during 14 years of travel (Sun, 2011). Confucius believed that these occasions presented momentous opportunities for exchanging ideas, improvement, and transformation.

Conclusions

Studying abroad transplants international students into a new and multidimensional world. They face many physical and emotional challenges and issues, not only linguistic, cultural, but also social and educational. Thus, perspective transformation and conscious learning for transformation in various aspects are obvious goals for both host educators and international students to achieve.

By linking the Confucian learning model to learning as transformation, we see at least three significant implications for effective teaching and learning. First, administrators and faculty members need to be sensitive to students’ needs and identify issues and difficulties from their whole world rather than only academic study. Host educators and policy makers should help make meaningful connections of academic work to these students’ personal lives and support their social, emotional, and spiritual well being by assisting them in acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to easily interact with each world. Such efforts may be made through helping find proper host families from local communities and scheduling regular visits with students and their families beyond class activities.

Second, host educational institutions should consciously improve their learning regarding their international students’ culture. Appropriate offices on campus, such as the international student office or student learning center, may help by periodically organizing social and learning activities of various kinds to actively and purposefully learn from and interact with these students. In addition, the hosts must be willing to change their mindset that international students are here to learn from the U.S. In fact, we must learn from each other in order to better facilitate these students’ learning and well-being. Such mutual learning will enable hosts’ transformational learning.

Third, faculty members should become consciously aware of the fact that various kinds of learning are needed for these international students rather than just their own program of courses inside of the classroom. Teachers should try to mix the use of examples from North American culture with Eastern culture to help balance the group work/discussion. Faculty might consider altering the format of their office hours to meet the needs of their culturally different students. Faculty should be able to advise international students, and or redirect them to proper campus or community offices if needed.

References will be distributed at the conference.

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The Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Performance: A Literature Review

Angela Titi Amayah

Communities of practice (CoPs) are promoted because of they facilitate interaction and knowledge sharing among members. An essential mechanism of CoPs, knowledge sharing can be used to evidence the effectiveness of CoP with regard to performance. However, the impact of CoPs on the work performance of their members remains largely unseen in studies. Similarly, there is little in the literature on what knowledge sharing really means in organizations and even less on what the most direct and quantifiable outcomes of effective knowledge sharing might be. Empirical research papers on knowledge sharing and performance were identified searching electronic databases. Information on the role of knowledge sharing in work practices and business processes was used to examine the evidence of whether or not knowledge sharing positively changes business outcomes. Ten research papers were identified and reviewed in detail. There was a trend toward studies set in the private sector, focusing on both the direct and indirect link between knowledge sharing and performance. Few studies examined knowledge sharing in the public sector. Additionally, few studies attempted to establish that link at the individual level.

Introduction

Communities of practice (CoPs) have become increasingly popular because of their reputed ability to leverage knowledge and make an organization more competitive. A group of individuals “who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4), CoPs are viewed as an effective way to share tacit knowledge (e.g. Iverson & McPhee, 2008). Studies have suggested that CoPs could improve performance because they allow interaction and knowledge sharing between individuals bound in a common enterprise (e.g. Archibald & McDermott, 2008). However, the impact of CoPs on the work performance of their members remains largely unseen in studies (Dupouët & Yildizoglu, 2006). Therefore, the relationship between CoPs and performance needs to be investigated further. One of the reasons for the paucity of studies investigating the impact of Cops on performance is the fact CoPs are fluid with no clear boundaries. “Their existence can be evidenced, but the true input of their activities for the firm are hard to assess” (Dupouët & Yildizoglu, 2006, p. 669).

An essential mechanism of CoPs, knowledge sharing can be used to evidence the effectiveness of CoP with regard to performance. Knowledge sharing is the “provision of task information and know-how to help others and to collaborate with others to solve problems, develop new ideas, or implement policies or procedures” (Wang & Noe, 2010, p. 117). One of the most common taxonomies of knowledge dimensions distinguishes between two categories of knowledge: explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge can be easily recognized, codified, and stored. Tacit (or implicit) knowledge is understood and implied without being stated; it is embedded in individuals or in organizational contexts, associated with experience (Hau & Evangelista, 2007). Tacit knowledge is acquired by interacting with others.
Knowledge sharing is essential to the success of CoPs. However, the impact of CoPs and knowledge sharing on the work performance of their members remains largely unseen in studies (Dupouët & Yildizoğlu, 2006). Therefore, the relationship between knowledge sharing and performance needs to be investigated further. Additionally, there is disagreement among the few scholars that have examined the role of knowledge sharing in performance. Some believe that knowledge sharing do not have a direct impart on performance; rather, it is the practices encouraged by knowledge sharing that result in improved performance (e.g., Hsu, 2008; Law & Ngai, 2008). On the other hand, other scholars have shown that knowledge sharing is directly related to improved performance (e.g., Wang & Wang, 2012). Wang and Wang (2012, p. 8899) observed that “it is disappointing to note that there is little guidance in the extant literature as to what knowledge sharing really means in organization and even less as to what the most direct and quantifiable outcomes of effective knowledge sharing might be”. Thus, a literature review is appropriate to investigate the impact of knowledge sharing on performance.

**Purpose Statement**

Despite being advertised as a way to improve organizations’ performance, the effectiveness of CoPs and impact of knowledge sharing on performance remain unclear. The purpose of this article is to critically review the scholarly literature that might provide empirical evidence for the impact of knowledge sharing on performance.

**Contributions to the Field**

The general assumption in the CoPs and knowledge sharing literature is that CoPs are positively related to individual, team, and organizational performance. This assumption is based on the belief that the knowledge shared in the CoP results in improved performance because individual members of a CoP directly benefit from their participation (Zboralski, Gemuenden, & Lettl, 2004). This paper contributes to the current literature by shedding light on the association between CoPs, knowledge sharing, and performance at the individual, the CoP group, and the organization levels is unclear (Schenkel & Teigland, 2008). Assessing the extent to which knowledge sharing does, in fact, contribute to performance could enable practitioners to identify possible metrics that can be used to assess the value of their CoPs.

**Method**

To identify articles investigating the impact of CoPs and knowledge sharing on the literature, the following strategy was used to searched studies published between 2007 and 2012:

1. Searching electronic databases, including the Social Sciences Citation Index, EBSCOHost and Google Scholars.
2. Examining the reference lists of the included articles for additional resources.

To examine the evidence of the effectiveness of knowledge sharing on individual and organizational performance, articles were identified that: evaluated CoP effectiveness and the extent to which knowledge sharing activities improve performance; and presented empirical research. The following search terms were used: communities of practice, knowledge sharing, organizational performance, individual performance, business performance, and effectiveness.
Exclusion criteria were as follows: (1) studies reporting on knowledge sharing in sectors other than private sector and government agencies; (2) studies not evaluating the impact of knowledge sharing on performance; (3) articles without abstracts, unless the title of the paper was clear enough to determine its relevance; and (4) theses and dissertations, and abstracts of conference proceedings without full peer-reviewed papers.

**Results**

The search of electronic databases yielded 2,270 articles. A staged review of the articles was conducted (initial review of abstracts, then an in-depth review) to analyze the literature. As a result of this staged review, ten relevant articles were selected. The overwhelming majority of the articles focused on facilitators of knowledge sharing. The selected articles were then fully review and classified by context, method, and findings pertaining to knowledge sharing (Table 1). The overwhelming majority of the articles focused on facilitators of knowledge sharing.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Link between KS and performance</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Yoon, Matsui <em>et al.</em> (2011)</td>
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<td>5. Lin (2007)</td>
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<td>8. Huang, Chen, &amp; Stewart (2010)</td>
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Quant. = Quantitative; Qual. = Qualitative; KS = Knowledge Sharing

The concept of performance was operationalized in a number of ways (Table 2). For instance, Quigley, Tesluk, and Bartol (2007) used a computer-based interactive management decision-making simulation to investigate the stated hypotheses, where each participant acted as the manager of a start-up unit selling cellular phones. Each individual was a manager of a unit and each pair of units formed a division. In this study, Quigley *et al.* (2007) defined performance as the size of the market share individually obtained by the end of the simulation period. On the other hand, Law and Ngai (2008) operationalized performance as business process improvements and product and service offerings (used to measure the ability of firms to respond to changing customer needs and preferences by altering the portfolios of products and services offered).
Table 2. Concept Matrix with Unit of Analysis

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<td>Knowledge Sharing</td>
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Legend: O (organizational), G (Group), I (individual)

The majority of the studies reviewed emphasized macro level outcomes, and somewhat neglect the micro level. Indeed, only 3 studies examined individual level performance outcomes. This finding is consistent with the observations of some scholars calling for more studies investigating performance outcomes at the individual level (e.g., Foss, Husted, & Michailova, 2010). The rationale behind this is that changes in work practices and performance first occur at the individual level, then translate into improved organizational performance. Similarly, few studies connect micro level variables with macro level variables. Thus, there should be more multi-level studies.

The premise of this literature review was the lack of consensus in the literature on the role of knowledge sharing on performance. Of the handful of studies selected, about half posited a direct link between knowledge sharing and performance, while the other posited a mediating role of knowledge sharing on the relationship between some variable and performance. For instance, Wang and Wang (2012) found a direct link between firm operational and financial performance. It should be noted that, according to Wang and Wang (2012), not all types of knowledge have the same impact on performance. Specifically, explicit knowledge sharing did not impact operational performance. That was not the case for tacit knowledge. Similarly, Haas and Hansen (2007), and Du, Ai, and Ren (2007) showed that different dimensions of knowledge sharing affect performance differently.

On the other hand, Hsu (2008) argued that knowledge sharing’s effect on performance is mediated by human capital. In other words, knowledge sharing practices improved organizational capital, which in turn improves organizational performance. Those differences in positions seem to be more philosophical than an outcome of the study (i.e. the authors propose to investigate either knowledge sharing’s direct role on performance, or its mediating effect based on their views). The fact that studies support either position suggests that those differences are not likely to be reconciled.

Of the studies selected, only three included public sector organizations, which were examined in conjunction with private sector entities. This finding was surprising, given that
knowledge is as important to private sector firms as it is to public sector organizations (Willem & Bue lens, 2007).

Conclusion

The importance of knowledge sharing in knowledge management in general and in the functioning of communities of practice in particular is an accepted fact in the literature. Countless studies provide examples of the benefits of knowledge sharing such as improved decision making, innovation, better corporate nimbleness, and speedy, efficient problem solving (e.g., Alavi, Kayworth, & Leidner, 2006). Therefore, it is surprising that so few studies actually examined the link of knowledge sharing on performance. In Haas and Hansen’s (2007) words, “Because more knowledge sharing is no guarantee of improved performance, scholars need to move beyond studying facilitators of knowledge sharing to examine how a firm’s knowledge resources are utilized by task units to improve their performance” (p. 1133). Second, very few studies observed the impact of knowledge sharing on performance in public sector organizations. Public organizations are important agents in the economy and are also under pressure to deliver services in a more efficient manner. Thus, they too have embraced knowledge management initiatives to improve the way they work. Finally, there is need for more multi-level studies on the impact of knowledge sharing.

References


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Where Law Meets Religion, Ethnicity, and Gender: The U.S. Constitution and Diverse Muslim Women and Men in the United States

Rey Ty and Awni Alkarzon

Discrimination against Muslims in the U.S.A. has increased exponentially after 9/11. This paper described case studies of discrimination against Muslims in the U.S. Provisions of the U.S. Constitution related to civil liberties and civil rights as well as landmark Supreme Court decisions are discussed, as they relate to religion, minorities, and women. This paper provided policy recommendations to adult educators and adult learners of all types to promote the constitutional and human rights of Muslims in the U.S.

Introduction

The dominant culture in the U.S.A. is White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. However, there are also millions of people of different colors, ethnicities and faiths living in the U.S.A. As more non-Christians come to the U.S., people of different heritage and backgrounds interact, problems sometimes arise. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution clearly indicates that no law can establish religion or forbid the free exercise of religion. However, the tragedy of 9/11 led to incidents of discrimination against people perceived to be Muslims. Muslims are stereotyped as radical and violent terrorists. Even educated Muslim women are stereotyped as unschooled. Aside from showing an anti-Muslim film in police training, the New York Police Department, for instance, spies on U.S. citizens, specifically targeting Muslims in New York and New Jersey (Human Rights Watch, 2012). Politicians perpetuate cultural stereotypes. Comparing Israel with Palestine, Romney, for instance, said: “Culture makes all the difference…you notice such a dramatically stark difference in economic vitality. And that is also between other countries that are near or next to each other…Chile and Ecuador, Mexico and the United States” (New York Times, 2012). These problems warrant a research on policies and actions that violate the constitutional and legal rights of Muslims in the U.S.

Research Questions

The research questions raised in this paper are the following: What are the provisions in the U.S. Constitution about civil liberties and civil rights that affect the religion and religious freedom of Muslim women and men of different ethnicities? What are some alleged violations of the civil liberties and rights of Muslims in the U.S.? What practical steps would help public officials, employers, as well as academic and other authorities avoid religious discrimination against Muslims in the United States?

The Importance of the Research to the Practice

Because of the alarming situation in which discrimination against Muslims is a daily reality, people engaged in the practice of adult, continuing, extension and community education have the duty to respond, by promoting the civil liberties and civil rights of Muslims. In general, educators have a role to play in raising public awareness of Islam and Muslims. Educators urgently need to rise to the occasion and take this opportunity to increase understanding about
the negative experiences of Muslim women and men of different ethnicities, in relation to challenges to their civil rights in general and their freedom of religion in particular.

Methodology

This paper is a qualitative policy research that examined U.S. law with a view to understanding and interpreting the unique lived experiences of Muslims in the U.S.A. upon whose religious liberty and civil rights are infringed. Case studies of alleged violations of the constitutional rights of Muslims are collected from the documents of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). This paper specifically investigated the alleged violations of the constitutional and legal rights of Muslims in the U.S.A., both women and men. It analyzed the U.S. Constitution and the decisions of the Supreme Court, as they relate to religion and minorities, and recommended action to promote, advance, and speak out for the rights of Muslims in the U.S.A. One of the co-authors is Muslim. Our positionality as male researchers of different cultures and religions color the way by which we conceptualize, analyze, and interpret the results of the study.

Findings

Freedom of Religion and Civil Rights in the U.S. Constitution.

Discussed here are Article VI, the First Amendment, the Fourth Amendment, and the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and landmark Supreme Court decisions. The U.S. Constitution and its Bill of Rights, including the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, guarantee civil liberties and civil rights of U.S. citizens (Janda, Berry, & Goldman, 2011; Patterson, 2010). Article VI of the U.S. Constitution prohibits religious qualifications for federal office, stating that “no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States” (U.S. Const. art. VI). Despite this prohibition, President Obama himself is a victim of smear campaigns and false rumors, which accuse him of being an unpatriotic Muslim terrorist (Hollander, 2009).

Through the establishment clause and the free exercise clause, the First Amendment thwarts governmental interference with freedom of religion in two ways. The First Amendment of the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution (U.S. Const., Amendment, art. I) guarantees freedom of religion, among other freedoms, stating that:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The establishment clause obliges government to uphold religious neutrality. The government may not favor one religion over another religion or over no religion. The power of Congress is limited, as it cannot create a state religion or furnish assistance to any religion through legislation. The establishment clause is interpreted as wall of separation between church and state, banning many forms of relationships between church and state. In Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971), government programs and laws pass the so-called lemon test, so to speak, if they are secular and neutral in relation to religion, do not press forward or restrain religion, and have not
excessively enmeshed the government with religion. The establishment clause asserts that there is no national religion.

The free-exercise clause prohibits government interference with the practice of religion. The government may not forbid free exercise of religion. The free-exercise clause protects religious beliefs but not beliefs-based actions. It forbids the national government from curbing the rights of individuals to the free exercise of religion, as long as their practices do not breach the law (Janda, Berry, & Goldman, 2011). Law may not require special burden on religion. Stressing the limited character of the power of the national government, the first ten amendments holds down the national government from fiddling with basic rights and civil liberties. The Fourteenth Amendment bolsters the freedom of religion (U.S. Constitution). It states:

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Civil Rights. In the U.S., civil rights refer to the equal rights of all individuals, regardless of color, gender, ethnicity, or other differences. In its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954), the Supreme Court rejected the *Plessy v. Ferguson*’s (1896) separate-but-equal doctrine. Moreover, the Congressional passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a product of the struggle of people in social movements for equality, including most especially African Americans throughout U.S. history (Patterson, 2010). By 1987, the Supreme Court ruled that all minorities, including Native Americans and Latinos, are broadly protected against discrimination through the Civil Rights Act of 1866. In the U.S., the equal rights of people with disabilities, women, lesbians, and gays are also part of civil rights (Janda, Berry, & Goldman, 2011). Civil rights guarantee full and equal opportunities in education, employment, and workplace integration as well as respect for diversity in academic institutions (Patterson, 2010).

Alleged Violations of Civil Liberties and Civil Rights of Muslim Women and Men of Various Ethnicities in the U.S.

In 2008, Indiana University School of Law’s Program in International Human Rights Law submitted a report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in Geneva, Switzerland, stating that “the United States has failed to adequately protect Muslims, Arabs, Middle Easterners, and South Asians from discrimination in the following areas: 1) arbitrary detentions, 2) use of secret evidence in closed proceedings, 3) immigration delays and special registration, 4) secret detentions, refoulement and proxy torture, 5) shutting down Muslim-run charities, 6) discrimination in prisons, 7) racial profiling, and 8) employment discrimination” (CAIR, 2009, p. 5).

While freedom of religion is a basic tenet of U.S. democracy, Muslims today are targets of religious discrimination, as Islamophobia is pervasive. Some provisions of the U.S. Constitution and its Bill of Rights cited in the previous section are violated, as they affect diverse Muslim women and men in the U.S. According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, 2012): “…Muslim communities in the U.S. have faced a disturbing wave of bigotry and outright hostility. From religiously motivated discrimination and attacks on existing and proposed Islamic centers to misguided congressional hearings, Muslims in America are being unfairly targeted simply for exercising their basic constitutional right to religious liberty.” ACLU (2012)
listed the following as the major concerns of Muslims in the U.S.A.: (1) bans on Sharia’h and international law; (2) mosques and community centers; (3) discrimination based on appearance; (4) infiltration and surveillance of places of worship and Muslim communities; (5) Congressional hearings on the alleged “radicalization” of the Muslim community in the U.S.A.; (6) unconstitutional administration of the ‘no-fly list;” (7) law enforcement authorities’ mapping of communities and businesses based upon color and ethnicity; (8) anti-terrorism financing laws; and, (9) invasive questioning at U.S. borders and ports of entry. Many of the threats and acts of intolerance, discrimination, and violence against Muslims are due to ignorance of Islam and outdated corporate policies (CAIR, 1998).

Misrepresentations and lack of respect of religious practices and cultural differences negatively affect the educational experiences of Muslim students (Speck, 1997). In a survey, public school systems do not adequately address religious accommodation requirements of Muslim students, in which the problem is not just incidental but structural (CAIR, 1999).

In 1995, Muslims were blamed for the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma, after which the Council for American-Islamic Relations (CAIR, 1996) received reports involving anti-Muslim incidents. These incidents include discrimination, intolerance, verbal abuse, threats of violence, and actual violence. Specifically, they consist of Muslim women denied or dismissed from jobs due to their religious clothes, harassment of Muslims at airports, other public facilities, schools, and government agencies as a result of the persons’ apparent religious affiliation (CAIR, 1997; 1998). Public perceptions affect acts of bias against people people due to their actual or perceived identity (CAIR, 1997): (a) religion, in which women wear hijab (veils) and men beard and kufi (cap), (b) ethnicity, based on Muslim-sounding names, or (3) activist group affiliation. Where there has been improved awareness affecting Muslims in schools and work places, the response is case-by-case and based on the personal preferences of administrators and employers (CAIR, 2001). Muslim American organizations struggle to repeal secret-evidence clause in the 1996 anti-terrorism law, claiming that Muslims were almost used completely against Muslims (CAIR, 2001). According to CAIR (2002), the September 11 attacks further deepened bias-based harassment, discriminatory actions and violence against Muslims in the U.S.A. who were singled out due to the public perception of their religion and ethnicity. Wrongly thinking that his victim was Muslim, Mark Stroman murdered Vasudev Patel who in fact was Hindu, not Muslim (CAIR, 2002).

In the name of national security, legal immigrants and U.S. citizens who are Muslims are subjected to profiling-based interrogations, searches, and raids based on hearsay reports (CAIR, 2002). Muslim civil rights activist organizations such as CAIR (2003) claim that all these are violations of the First and Fourth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution. Some evangelical and neocorporate leaders are responsible for advancing anti-Muslim rhetoric (CAIR, 2003). Profiling of Muslims in the U.S.A. happen at residences, businesses, courts, and the Internet (CAIR, 2003). There are four factors that add to the rise in anti-Muslim incidents (CAIR, 2004). The first is the atmosphere of fear since 9/11. The second is the pro-war rhetoric related to the war in Iraq. The third is the anti-Muslim rhetoric that treats Islam as a false religion and Muslims as enemies of the U.S.A. The last is the implementation of the USA Patriot Act, which is associated with abuses (CAIR, 2004).

Case Studies. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, 2004) reported that, in 2001, law enforcement authorities interviewed over five thousand men, aged 18 to 33, who had legally entered the U.S. from countries the U.S. government linked to terrorism, even if there was no basis to believe that any of them had any knowledge relevant to any terrorism investigation. In
March 2002, three thousand Arab and South Asian Muslim men who were legally residing in the U.S. as students or visitors were targeting for interviews (CAIR, 2005). In December 2002, federal immigration authorities arrested about seven hundred persons from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Syria in southern California, “after they had voluntarily complied with the [National Security Entry Exit Registration System] NSEERs ‘call-in’ program” (CAIR, 2005, p. 11). Among them were college students who did not have enough credit hours and others who were waiting for the results of their green card applications. CAIR (2005, p. 13) contends that the USA Patriot Act endangers “due process, free speech and other fundamental protections guaranteed by the United States Constitution.” For instance, The USA Patriot Act’s “Section 411 and 802…broadly expand the official definition of ‘domestic terrorism,’ so that college student[s], who engage in certain types of protests could very well find themselves labeled as ‘terrorists’” (CAIR, 2005, p. 13). On December 12, 2003, a man followed a Muslim woman who was shopping in a New York toy store, verbally confronted and assaulted her (Parascandola, 2003). On April 24, 2004, a woman “harassed, threatened and attacked” a Muslim mother and her son while they were shopping in Pennsylvania, yelling that U.S. troops were fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan so that women did not have to dress like her, hitting the Muslim woman “with her cart repeatedly” (CAIR, 2005, p. 52). When asked, store employees refused assist by calling security. On July 30, 2004, when soliciting donations for a charity, a New York-based Muslim woman was attacked both physically and verbally (CAIR, 2005). On December 30, 2004, hijab-wearing Muslim mother was pushing a stroller with her baby in it were almost hit by a truck in California. The truck driver said: “It wouldn’t have been a big loss” (CAIR, 2005, p. 54). On April 5, 2006, a white male “pushed, slapped, and kicked” a Muslim female student at Baylor University in Texas who was walking through campus, “using racial and anti-Muslim slurs and pulled off her headscarf” (CAIR, 2007, p. 9). On September 20, 2006, a hate crime was committed when a “copy of the Quran was found in a toilet at the library of library of Pace University in New York” (CAIR, 2007, p. 23). On September 26, 2007, a racist and anti-Muslim graffiti was painted in the restroom of Columbia University’s International Affairs Building, saying “Attention you pinko Commie motherf***rs and Arab Towelheads: America will wake up one day and nuke Mecca, Medina, Tehran, Baghdad, Jakarta, and all the savages in Africa. You will all be f---ed. America is for White Europeans.” (CAIR, 2008, p. 23). On July 10, 2008, the Department Fire Department authorities told a Muslim woman she could not work as an emergency medical services worker “while wearing her hijab,” despite her having passed all the required tests for the job (CAIR, 2009, p. 17). On July 19, 2008, a faculty member demanded to get the contact information of a student who was performing wudu or ritual ablution, reporting the student to the campus police (CAIR, 2009). Luckily for the student, a College official declared the faculty member’s actions were inappropriate, as no campus policies were violated. In December 2008, after seeking to wear her headscarf in a city courtroom, a Muslim woman was jailed. But after CAIR (2009, p. 18) asked “federal authorities to investigate the incident…,” “she was unexpectedly released.” These are some cases that portray how Islamophobia has led to the violation of the constitutional and legal rights of Muslims in the schools, work place, public places, and government offices in the U.S.A.
Conclusion

There are two major findings in this paper. The U.S. Constitution guarantees religious freedom and equal rights for all American citizens, including Muslim women and men of different ethnicities. Muslims in the U.S., however, suffer all forms of discrimination.

Adult educators in general, including employers, civic leaders, and public authorities need to work to eliminate misconceptions about Islam and Muslim women and men. Adult educators can help by stressing the need to stop stereotyping of Muslims and delinking Islam from criminal action (CAIR, 2009). Programs can be funded to promote interfaith dialogue, youth civic engagement, and outreach to law enforcement agencies.

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Deconstructing Culture: 
An Interdisciplinary Critique of Contending Theories of Culture

Rey Ty, Michelle Glowacki-Dudka, and Jim Berger

Adults engaged in the teaching about and researching society use the concept of “culture” as a valuable tool of analysis. However, a problem arises. While “culture” is an often-used term, it is rarely defined. The goal of this inquiry was to provide a comprehensive discussion of the concept of culture from different disciplines. Far from having a singular definition, culture is a contested category. While well-known and often cited, Hofstede’s cultural analysis is problematic, as it provides a useful but insufficient, binary, and immutable framework. Within this paper we examine culture from different perspectives and disciplines, such as anthropology, business, history, philosophy, political economy, and sociology. Anthropology views culture as all-encompassing; business and management, dichotomous and inert; history, ever-changing; philosophy, immutable or dialectical, as well as idealist or materialist; political economy, interacting with the economy and politics; and, sociology, as interacting, conforming or opposed to the social order. Adult education incorporates these definitions depending on the context. In general, this paper provides a smorgasbord of contending explanations from which adult educators, adult learners, human resource practitioners, and academicians can choose their framework in analyzing and working with individuals and groups in society.

Introduction

“Culture” is an important consideration when working in community, adult, and higher education, yet culture is a difficult concept to generalize or confine through theoretical or practical understandings. For example, the popular understanding of culture problematically equates culture with other descriptors of diversity and ways to categorize people, such as sex, age, color, and ethnicity.

A critical review of academic literature reveals that culture is often treated as (1) immutable and (2) structurally binary, both of which provide insufficient explanations of actually existing social phenomena and relations. Using a post-structuralist deconstructionist stance (Derrida, 1978), this survey of literature reveals that culture is not confined to two ends of a spectrum, but measured along multiple spectrums and with much complexity.

This paper answers the following questions:
1. What is the critique of Hofstede’s model, which is the dominant view of culture in community, adult, and higher education?
2. What are the alternative discourses from different disciplines from which a richer understanding of culture can be attained?
3. What are the implications of the deeper understanding of culture on the future direction and practice of adult educators and adult learners?

Methodology

Most literature in adult education and human resource development, among others, presents a one-dimensional perspective of culture. This interdisciplinary, critical review of
literature poses contending views of culture and suggests multi-dimensional perspectives of culture. To complete the literature review, we dissected the elements of mainstream views of culture from the fields of education, business, management, communication and human resource development. This paper presents alternative perspectives from various disciplines, among which are philosophy, anthropology, history, political economy, and sociology in order to present richer and deeper appreciation of culture. As this paper is only focused on the various definitions of the word “culture” in the different fields, “culture” was the keyword used in a search for literature. While scouring and evaluating different literatures, only seminal works and the latest textbooks that contain the word “culture” were considered. Literature to which textbooks within and across the disciplines always make reference reveal that they are seminal works. Hard copies and electronic copies of reading materials were obtained. After searching for, reading, and analyzing the literature on “culture,” the key definitions of “culture” from the reading materials across the disciplines were extracted and recorded and categorized.

Findings

What Is Culture? In general, everything that is not nature is culture (Lévi-Strauss, 1961). Kant was the first person to use the term “kulture,” which meant “civilization”, while Gustav Klemm was the first to use the term “culture” in an anthropological sense (Omohundro, 2008, p. 35). The term culture properly belongs to cultural anthropology. Anthropologists break down all the elements of culture to include material products, ideas, values, norms, and symbols (Kornblum, 2008), such as language, literature, and philosophy. Culture is learned, symbolic, and shared; as culture is all-encompassing and integrated, “[w]hen one behavior pattern changes, others also change” (Kottak, 2009, p. 33). Tylor (1871, p. 1) provided the first definition of culture, according to which: “Culture, or civilization… taken in its wide ethnographic sense is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” Culture refers to “the learned, socially acquired traditions of thought and behavior found in human societies. It is a socially acquired lifestyle that includes patterned, repetitive ways of thinking, feeling, and acting” (Harris & Johnson, 2007, p. 10). Ember, Ember, and Peregrine (2007) refer to culture as

The customary ways of thinking and behaving of a particular population of society. The culture of a social group includes many things—its language, religious beliefs, food preferences, music, work habits, gender roles, how they rear their children, how they construct their houses, and many other learned behaviors and ideas that have come to be widely shared or customary among the group. (p. 6)

Taken together, culture refers to (1) “a general process of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development,” (2) “a particular way of life… of a people, a period or a group,” (3) “the works and practices of intellectual… and artistic activity” such as music, dance, theater, cinema, painting, and sculpture (Williams, 1976, p. 80). It also refers to “the signifying system through which… a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored” (Williams, 1981, p. 13).

What is the Dominant Discourse? Hofstede’s binary model (2001) is the most cited literature used in adult education, business, management, leadership, human resources
development and other related fields. The elements of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions include power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, long-term-short-term orientation, and gratification. Like Huntington’s clash of civilization (1992), Hofstede’s model is useful for synchronic cross-cultural comparison or which “describe[s] a culture at one period in time” (Peoples & Bailey, 2012, p. 96). The merit of the dominant view of culture is also its disadvantage. There are many problems with Hofstede’s model. One, Hofstede’s binary model over-generalizes, as though there are no similarities at all among societies. Anthropologists, however, point out that there are not only particular but also universal and general cultural traits (Kottak, 2009). Two, Hofstede’s model generalizes culture from the national level of analysis only, which is quite partial. Culture must also be analyzed from the individual, group, class, societal, state, regional, international, global, and other levels of analysis. By only focusing on cultural particularism and cultural relativism, Hofstede non-dialectically falls victim to cultural ethnocentrism, missing out on the possibility of some degree of cultural universalism (Peoples & Bailey, 2012; Spradley & McCurdy, 2012). Three, more sophisticated models discuss the McDonaldization (Barber, 1992), hybridization, and “glocalization” of culture (Robertson, 1994), but all these only provide nothing but caricatures. Four, people go through not only a process of enculturation early in life but also acculturation to new ideas, values, and behaviors later in life (Miller, 2007). Five, Hofstede’s model is not capable of capturing diachronic changes in culture. Hofstede’s immutable and ahistorical model misses out on diachronic analysis that “studies the changes in culture of a people over time” (Peoples & Bailey, 2012, p. 96). The succeeding section provides more discussions about culture from the other fields.

What are the Alternative Discourses from the Different Disciplines? To the dominant discourse that promotes a non-viable dichotomous caricature of culture (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007), we present alternative views from cultural anthropology, history, philosophy, political economy, sociology, and business. Different fields provide different factors and rationale that explain certain types of culture. Anthropologists study “[d]ifferences and similarities in contemporary and historically recent cultures; causes and consequences of socio-cultural change; impacts of globalization and contacts on the world’s peoples” (Peoples & Bailey, 2012, p. 3). Anthropologists espouse contending views, such as functionalism, behaviorism, materialism, idealism, neo-evolutionism, holism, universalism, or cultural relativism. Cultural anthropologists focus “on human cultural behavior and cultural systems and the variation in cultural expression among human groups” (Park, 1999, p. 11). The ontologically materialist paradigm, for example, provides “economic, ecological and biological explanations” (p. 35), while the ontologically idealist paradigm provides “interpretive,” “symbolic, representational” and “postmodern” explanations (Bates & Franklin, 1999, p. 35). The behaviorist view considers culture as composed of “learned and shared ways of behaving” (Miller, 2008, p. 31). The holistic view considers culture as consisting of “learned and shared beliefs, meanings, and symbols as well as learned and shared ways of behaving” (Miller, 2008, p. 31).

History as an academic discipline is the study of the genesis, evolution, and the stages of development of societies, of which there are some major trends, namely the maintenance of the status quo, reform, revolution, and the return to the old order. “Cultures are products of history” (Omohundro, 2008, p. 36). However, interpretations of historical events in turn are a product of culture. Cultural anthropologists deal with “universals and variation in culture in the past and present” (Ember & Ember, 2007, p. 6). Note, however, that usually the conquerors write history,
as a consequence of which, other people’s history becomes ignored, deprioritized, and “othered.” Power dictates how history is presented, what artifacts are valued, and what level of provenance is needed for a piece of information to be considered fact (Foucault, 1980).

Philosophy is the study of “the general nature of the world (metaphysics or theory of existence), the justification of belief (epistemology or theory of knowledge), and the conduct of life (ethics or theory of value)” (Honderich, 1995, p. 666). Philosophers refer to the dialectical and immutable views of culture. The study of reality is divided into materialist and idealist ontology. Cultural idealists, symbolists or interpretivists consider culture as consisting of “learned and shared beliefs, thoughts, meanings, and symbols” (Miller, 2008, p. 31). Geertz (1973, p. 89) wrote a seminal work, according to which culture refers to "a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life." Disagreeing with the standard definition of culture, Geertz (1973, p. 44), in his seminal work, wrote:

Culture is best seen not as complexes of concrete behavior patterns—customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters—as has been the case up to now, but as a set of control mechanisms—plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers call ‘programs’)—for governing of behavior.

Political economy is the study of the dynamic relationship between the economy, politics, and culture, investigating stagnation, change, clash, convergence, wealth, and poverty, through space (different social contexts) and time (different historical moments). Cultural materialists view society as composed of (1) infrastructure, including production and reproduction (2) structure, including domestic economy and political economy, and (3) superstructure, such as belief system, religion, ideology, art, and sports (Harris & Johnson, 2007). The economic base determines the political and cultural superstructure, which in term influences the economy.

Sociology is “the scientific study of society and human behavior” (Henslin, 2012, p. G3). It is the study of human behavior, social interaction and social groups (Turner, 2006), conflict and convergence. It deals with groups and organizations, social interaction and structure, groups and organizations, crime, social class and stratification, global stratification and inequality, race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, discrimination, families, religion, education, and health care, among others (Anderson & Taylor, 2013; Kimmel & Aronson, 2012; Schaefer, 2011). In sociology, culture is studied from the perspectives of all types of social behavior, including social interactions, social institutions, social organizations, social groups, social classes, social conformity, social conflict, and social change.

Conclusion

Culture defies having a singular definition. Anthropologists provide an integrated and all-encompassing definition, which includes, among others, things, ideas, beliefs, values, symbols, and behavior. Transmitted within a certain group from one generation to another, culture provides the tools to compare and contrast different societies through time. Historians explain that culture changes through time. Political economists portray the dynamic interaction among the economy, politics, and culture. Philosophers reveal that culture can be viewed ontologically as unchanging or dialectically varies from one person or place to another.
Sociologists explain the culture is used to maintain the status quo or to promote a change in the social order, which in turn affects the culture.

Through understanding this exploration of the literature, practitioners in community, adult, and higher education may better understand cultural differences and better serve adult learners with different cultures. Those who take Hofstede’s binary classification of culture fall victim to maintaining a stagnant view of culture as well as stereotyping and universalizing certain traits of people as permanent. This paper presents alternative views of culture as complex, dynamic, and ever-changing. Educators will benefit from having a more profound view of culture, especially as they relate and are applied to adults in the community, work, and academic settings.

**Implications of Application of the Findings to Practice.**

The greatest dangers of incomplete and incorrect understanding of culture in practice are stereotyping, bigotry, intolerance, ethnocentrism, and racism. By referring to “us and them”, we fall victim to the danger of othering (Derrida, 1978; Foucault, 1990; Lacan, 1966; Said, 1978). In opposition to the unsophisticated, crude, static, and binary view of culture, this paper argues that culture not only changes through time but is also free-flowing, socially determined, interpreted dynamically, and colored by experience. By providing alternative perspectives, the findings help adult educators and adult learners not only avoid such dangers, after which the greater respect for diversity can be promoted pro-actively.

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