



**CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE ADULT HIGHER EDUCATION ALLIANCE
35TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION
IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD:
ITS ROLE IN CULTURAL LITERACY**

MARCH 10-11, 2015

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN PERFORMANCE
MORGRIDGE INTERNATIONAL READING CENTER
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 35th Annual Adult Higher Education Alliance (AHEA) Conference on March 10-11, 2015 in Orlando, Florida, marked several exciting milestones for our organization. It was the first stand-alone conference in five years, saw dramatic increases in student membership and involvement, and an overall rejuvenation. There were 40 presentations from scholars and practitioners from 14 states who participated in the conference.

These highlights are important to mention because they demonstrate our contribution to the field of the intersection of adult education with higher education. The supportive and collaborative nature of the conference also builds on our mission to support adult learners in contexts of higher education.

The contributions by the authors of the following proceedings reflect their dedication to adult learners in various settings and contexts. The proceedings not only build a legacy of scholarly contribution for the authors, but also for AHEA.

I would like to thank the editors, Kemi, Bonnie, and Fred for all their hard work on this document. I would like to thank all the authors who presented their research at the conference and ultimately for print in this edition of proceedings.

As we continue to grow as an organization, your participation will be increasingly important to carrying out the work we are charged with from our mission.

With many thanks,
Thomas D. Cox
AHEA President 2014-2015

AHEA CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

PREFACE

Deliberately different encouraging individual and professional growth through constructed learning.

Part of the purpose of Adult Higher Education Alliance is to promote information sharing. We accomplish this through a few key actions specifically provided by AHEA. The first is our yearly-published book. The book series is accomplished through blind peer review, high standards, and an elite editing team. A second way we provide information sharing is through our yearly conferences. We found that our casual deliberately interactive approach provides a forum for practioners, students, and instructors to learn from each other while sharing their own insights—dialogue in action. A third avenue of sharing information is the proceedings you have before you.

It is nontraditional, but we believe that providing a forum for all of our conference presenters to share their information is important. We establish from the call for proposals to the final version of the proceedings a process that encourages growth. Feedback is provided in response to proposals. This provides authors an opportunity to improve their presentation skills and how information is shared. After a conference, presenters are provided an opportunity to submit manuscripts for conference proceedings. Through a blind review process, each author receives feedback from multiple persons on their submitted work. Our editorial team then works with authors to fine tune their documents. Our desire is to make the review and editing process a learning opportunity for the authors. We believe that by doing so, these persons will become stronger presenters and writers. Thus, learning through the experiences of call for proposals, presenting, writing, re-writing, and working with an editorial team.

We encourage you to mentor others through supportive learning opportunities that correspond with your expertise. What better way to provide robust adult education than through working along side others sharing expertise, knowledge and skill? For us, adult education occurs through service, sharing, and supporting.

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BULLIES IN THE ACADEMY

Patricia Coberly-Holt and Caroline Braun
Armstrong State University

ABSTRACT

The academy is ripe for the rise of bullying behaviors due to the politics at play in most institutions of higher education. The use of subjective evaluations with ambiguous criteria, a peer review process, high job security, subjective performance measures, and tenure all contribute to an environment conducive to bullies and bullying behavior. This article reviews the work climate in academia, bullying behaviors, and how the two interact. Particular emphasis is placed on defining bullying behaviors and how to quell the effects of bullying. To eliminate and prevent bullying behaviors at institutions, administrators must clearly and frequently communicate their commitment to workplace civility and provide formal and informal means through which bullied faculty and staff may report their concerns.

Keywords: Bullying; Victims; Violence; Behavior; Incivility; Higher Education

BULLIES IN THE ACADEMY

Bullying is becoming a widespread and expensive issue in a growing number of workplaces. The estimated cost of workplace bullying is \$180 million in lost production days annually (Heames & Harvey, 2006). Thirty-five percent of the general public experiences workplace bullying, and one in four victims of bullying report leaving their job as a result of it (Glaso & Notelaers, 2012). Although bullying is a significant problem in many workplaces, it is on the rise in the academy (Twale & De Luca, 2008). When compared to the general public, rates of bullying in academia are significantly higher. According to Leah Hollis (2012), 62% of higher education professionals report experiencing workplace bullying.

Due to several features of higher education institutions, recognizing and addressing workplace bullying may be more difficult than in other workplaces. Academic bullies often operate behind closed doors or cloaked in the confidentiality of a group, such as serving on a promotion or tenure committee. The hierarchical structure of the academy also shields bullies, who often work from a position of seniority or hierarchy and have learned that their prominence, rank, or connections (cronyism and schmoozing) serve as effective cover for their maneuvers (Crookston, 2012). Although aspects of the academic workplace may complicate the identification and remediation of bullying, awareness of the characteristics of bullies and their effects upon their victims can help prevent the emergence of bullying behavior and mitigate the damage it inflicts upon victims and the institution as a whole.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMIC BULLIES AND THEIR VICTIMS

Compared to other workplaces, the construction of higher educational institutions provides an environment that is especially conducive to the perpetuation of bullying behaviors. The major unique structural form of the academic workplace is tenure, which provides protection for certain groups of faculty. Although this job security may make some individuals targets, tenure may also serve to embolden tenured faculty to bully others, especially if faculty members believe that tenure protects them from disciplinary action (Hollis, 2012).

Because organizational structure strongly influences the victim-to-perpetrator relationship, faculty are more likely to identify senior colleagues as bullies in the university setting. In almost the same number of instances, tenured faculty bully other faculty members and their administrative superiors. One study concluded that faculty were more likely to identify colleagues as bullies (63.4%), while frontline staff members were more likely to identify superiors as bullies (52.9%) (Keashly & Neuman, 2013). Contrary to the current emphasis on student incivility, faculty concern about workplace harassment is more likely to be associated with colleagues, especially senior colleagues and superiors. Although faculty are likely to

identify their colleagues as bullies, they are more inclined to name administrators, with 72% of bullies working in administration (Crookston, 2012).

A study conducted by Keashly & Neuman suggests that, in general, perceived norms violations will result in higher levels of direct aggression and bullying on the part of senior as opposed to junior, tenured faculty (2013). Senior tenured faculty members tend to direct their aggression and bullying against students, staff, or untenured faculty members who are lower in rank. Senior faculty members are also more likely to engage in indirect forms of aggression against colleagues of equal rank, department chairs, and other senior administrators (Keashly & Neuman, 2013). Ultimately, senior tenured faculty are most likely to engage in bullying and tend to direct their aggression toward other faculty members. Non-tenure track members are the most targeted group and, perhaps as a result, the most likely to leave the organization when faced with a bully.

BULLYING IN THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

Bullying in higher education has a broad impact on not only targeted individuals, but also entire institutions. Bullying reduces organizational learning and creativity; imperils financial efficiency by reducing productivity; creates an unhealthy and revolving workforce that reduces student retention and success; and, in extreme and rare cases, acts as a precursor to violence (Hollis, 2012). In their review of workplace bullying, Rayner and Hoel (1997) developed a five category taxonomy of bullying behaviors. These include:

1. 'Threat to professional status' – including open displays of belittling opinion(s) of the victim, public professional humiliation, and accusation of lack of effort.
2. 'Threat to personal standing' – including name-calling, insults, teasing, and intimidation.
3. 'Isolation' – including preventing access to opportunities (such as training), physical or social isolation, and deliberate withholding of information important to the victim's work.
4. 'Overwork' – including undue pressure to produce work, setting impossible deadlines or constant unnecessary disruptions.
5. 'Destabilization' – including failure to give credit where it is due, assigning meaningless tasks, repeated reminders of blunders, removal of responsibility, and setting up the victim for failure (Dziech & Weiner, 1990).

It is important to note, though, that the core characteristic of bullying is not necessarily the type of behaviors involved per se but rather the pattern and persistency of these experiences; however, the negative and unwanted nature of the behavior involved is still essential to the concept of bullying. (Glaso & Notelaers, 2012). Therefore, Rayner and Hoel's (1997) taxonomy is useful when interpreting the behavior of academic bullies. In the university setting, bullying

can take the form of overwork when a superior places increased pressure, significant workload, or unrealistic expectations upon an individual. In addition to overt physical and social exclusion, bullies in higher education may also withhold information from their targets or restrict their opportunity and access to resources. These actions isolate victims, threaten their professional status, and destabilize them. Targeted individuals may experience further destabilization when a bully refuses to bestow credit to them, intentionally sabotages them, and delivers negative feedback through reiterated reminders of failure. In the most extreme cases, academic bullies may threaten the personal standing of their victims by physically harming or abusing them (Hollis, 2012).

Common practices in the academic workplace only serve to conceal the bullying behaviors that Hollis (2012) identifies. Due to the culture of the higher education workplace, faculty members are frequently evaluated using subjective, often ambiguous criteria. To complicate matters further, colleagues are responsible for personnel decisions through a peer-review process (Keashly & Newman, 2010). Additionally, frequently changing leadership and strict hierarchal structures are factors that may lead to increased incidences of workplace bullying. When organizational and unit leadership turns over, bullying rates increase, suggesting that instability in hierarchy may lead to less attention to collegiality and more overt political behaviors that lead to bullying. Other reasons that institutions of higher education have the perfect climate for bullying include high job security, subjective performance measures, and conflicting goals. Faculty members with tenure are hard to dismiss, so those who wish to see them leave may resort to bullying tactics until the faculty member decides to leave on his or her own. Conversely, bullies who are tenured faculty are often difficult to fire, since bullying is not illegal and does not fall under the federal protected categories (Hollis, 2012).

While the structure of academia provides bullies protection, bullies exploit the culture of higher education to target their victims. When faculty bullying occurs, aggression is frequently indirect in form, given the norms of academic discourse and collegiality (Keashly & Neuman, 2013). The behaviors most frequently cited in higher education institutions involve threats to professional status as well as isolating and obstructing behavior, such as thwarting the target's ability to meet certain objectives. Bullies engage in these behaviors to undermine their victims' professional standing, authority, and competence, or impede access to key resources for their work such as money, space, time, and strong students. Less likely are hostile behaviors such as insults, swearing, shouting, or threats of physical harm that would openly contravene the norms of the academic workplace and run the risk of sanction from colleagues as a result.

In addition to being indirect, academic bullying tends to be long-standing (Keashly & Neuman, 2010). The duration of bullying among faculty and staff typically is three to more than five years. In one study, 21% of the sample reported bullying had persisted for more than five years (Keashly & Neuman, 2010). As bullying takes place over time, more actors tend to become involved in the bullying the longer that the institution permits it to continue. This provides an explanation for the fact that, in academia, the majority of situations reported by targets involve two or more actors, an activity known as mobbing.

EFFECTS OF BULLYING ON THE VICTIM

Bullying has negative effects upon many victims' professional standing, but research indicates that tenured and untenured faculty tend to respond differently to the threat that bullying poses to their careers. Tenured faculty subjected to bullying are more likely than untenured faculty to "retire on the job" and lower the quality of their courses. They are also likely to decrease their engagement in "discretionary" service-related activities (Hollis, 2012). The reaction of tenured faculty to bullying mirrors that of targeted employees in other occupations. Subordinates who perceive supervisory abuse demonstrate lower levels of task performance, are rated more poorly on formal appraisals, and report engaging in fewer organizational citizenship behaviors than their counterparts who do not perceive as much supervisory abuse (Mackey, et al., 2015). Ultimately, 64% of persons targeted by a bully in higher education either lose or quit their job (Hollis, 2012).

Bullying has negative effects upon not only victims' professional standing, but also their physical and psychological well-being. Victims are prone to suffer from a variety of health problems, including cardiovascular problems. Physical symptoms can also include headaches, stomach problems such as ulcers, and sleep problems. Psychological symptoms such as stress or mental disorders such as depression are also possible. Bullying may restrict one's mental capacity, make one less trusting and more negative towards others, result in increased negativity, and limit one's ability to perceive problems in a flexible manner. Bullying leads to accidents, mistakes, increased sick leave, lost productivity, and it can also have a negative impact upon victims' self-efficacy and their ability to perform their jobs. Additionally, bullying has different negative psychological effects on men and women. While women are more emotionally responsive to bullying, men tend to become more and more dissatisfied with their job in addition to suffering psychologically due to exclusion and workplace isolation (Hollis, 2012).

Although targets do not tend to simply accept unfair treatment, their coping strategies do little to prevent further abuse. Passive, indirect information strategies such as talking with coworkers, talking to family and friends, staying calm, and avoiding the bully do not substantively change the situation (Hollis, 2012), which may further exacerbate their psychological distress.

DETECTING A BULLYING PROBLEM

Certain behaviors can assist in alerting one to a bullying problem within an organization. Both a high turnover rate of faculty and staff and a high level of absenteeism for a certain individual may signal a bullying culture. Faculty who experience bullying are less likely to want to be in an area in which they will likely encounter their bully, so a bullied faculty member may decrease their office hours as well as their participation in meetings. In addition, a decrease in research productivity and service responsibilities could indicate the existence of a bullying culture.

CHALLENGING WORKPLACE BULLYING

Many in academia believe that if they clarify shared values of collegiality, respect, and concern for others and if their organization revisits this declaration periodically, then these actions will be sufficient to ensure good “citizenship” throughout the institution. However, according to Crookston (2012), this very expectation of trust provides ideal cover under which a clever bully can thrive. This is because those who bully most effectively target those who prefer to avoid conflict and, when faced with discord or intense competition, prefer to allow their opponent to overpower them or simply withdraw altogether. Therefore, institutional policies in place to prevent bullying may be helpful, and the number of policies to address incivility has increased (Peck, 2002) but not in a manner consistent enough to alleviate the problem.

In addition to instituting preventative policies, Dziech and Weiner (1990) recommends that supporting staff handle harassment complaints through a confidential hotline may be beneficial. Hotlines like these also serve as valuable data-gathering opportunities to uncover how widespread workplace harassment is in academia and where it is located (Twale & DeLuca, 2008). A confidential survey sent to all faculty and staff is also a method for discovering how ubiquitous bullying may be on campus. In order for all faculty to feel comfortable enough to respond, the institution must ensure confidentiality. Additionally, action research may be a viable option for detecting a bullying culture, especially for individual departments where bullying is suspected. Twale and DeLuca (2008) recommend gathering longitudinal data on campus turnover, absenteeism, health issues, office hour patterns, productivity levels, committee assignments, committee meeting attendance, and committee decisions rendered to identify the presence of bullying. They go on to state that beginning with a cultural audit from an outside consultant may be useful as a means to shed light on and improve an ingrained academic bully culture.

In contrast to the anonymous data collection that confidential hotlines and surveys provide, strategies to deal with bullies that take a more formal route, such as the union, human resources, and formal complaints have an increased likelihood of worsening the situation (Twale & De Luca, 2008). When witnesses become overly involved in an attempt to stop the behavior by confronting the bully or reporting the issue to management, they often exacerbate the situation because the bully is likely to retaliate.

To quell workplace bullying indirectly and informally, a policy statement is effective in showing commitment to anti-bullying, but it will only be effective if it is well-communicated and regularly reviewed. Institutions should not ignore complaints and should investigate them quickly and confidentially through procedures that provide formal and informal mechanisms for raising complaints. Often, universities can handle matters informally without need of formal procedures. However, clear time scales should be set for the resolution of complaints. Also, employees should have access to advice and counseling (Vega & Comer, 2005).

If the best resolution to a bullying case is termination of the bully, those interested in resolving the issue must be aware that it is more difficult to dismiss tenured faculty who bully; however, if bullies serve in an administrative capacity, they can be terminated from this

assignment and relegated to the faculty ranks, although they may continue to display aggression and engage in bullying. According to Twale and DeLuca (2008), if a culture harbors bullying behavior, a change in culture can diminish or eliminate these aggressive, dysfunctional behaviors. Perhaps that begins with an examination of the administration and its role in a dysfunctional culture.

When addressing victims of bullying, there are few cases in which it is more important to listen empathically and to suppress the temptation to talk. Feeling that others understand them and having their feelings affirmed can actually help alleviate victims' distress (Crookston, 2012). However, institutions should not pressure victims to file complaints; they should leave this to the victim, since retaliation is a real possibility and a virtual certainty.

Although they should not pressure victims to file complaints, institutions should recognize that double indemnity exists from failure to take action. First, ignoring the case of bullying actually serves as encouragement to those who bully. Second, if individuals who have been emotionally distressed reach out for help only to see that nothing is done, they have not only failed to secure relief from their suffering but are also further demeaned and dehumanized (Crookston, 2012).

For individuals experiencing bullying from their boss, Gunsalus (2006) recommends that a victim's best course of action is to quit his or her job and find other employment. Due to the nature of authority in organizations, others may perceive targeted individuals who speak out as a problem, which also makes seeking other employment an attractive alternative. However, because of the benefits of tenure, targeted faculty members may be reluctant to risk leaving an institution at which they have established themselves to pursue a position elsewhere.

SUMMARY

In an ideal situation, an anti-bullying policy would begin at the top and include discussions and sessions with everyone in the organization or department. If only one person defends a victim, others may come to see that person as a troublemaker, and that individual may make things worse than if he or she had done nothing. Bullying takes place at every level of organizations, and no one is immune to its ravages (Porteous, 2002). Therefore, to preserve civility, supervisors should bring the issue of bullying out into open discussion.

For victims of bullying, detached indifference might be the best way to survive in a workplace environment that harbors bullying, and, if the bully is in a supervisory position, it may be beneficial for targeted individuals to demonstrate respect for their supervisor's authority and commitment to helping them achieve their goals; however, these coping strategies may not cause the bullying to cease. Unfortunately, for many victims of workplace bullying, the best solution for ending their suffering is to leave their job altogether. For targeted faculty members, leaving their position may be a particularly devastating and risky endeavor, especially if they have invested significant time and resources pursuing or securing tenure at their university. The challenging and uncertain nature of the academic job market may explain why bullied tenure

track faculty are more likely than their bullied non-tenured colleagues to continue working in their current position. If this is the case, then bullying may have particularly detrimental effects on a targeted faculty member's psychological and physical health. Ultimately, the organization of higher education creates an environment more conducive to concealing bullying behavior than other workplaces. As a result, it is important for higher education administrators to address the issue of bullying within their departments and institutions to create a healthy, productive work environment.

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**COMMUNITY EDUCATION:
CULTURAL DIVERSITY EXEMPLIFIED THROUGH
COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN AN
ADULT PEER-TO-PEER WRITING GROUP**

Oluwakemi Elufiede and Tina Murray
The Carnegie Writers, Inc.

ABSTRACT

This article provides an overview of how collaborative learning provides a benefit to cultural diversity in an adult community writing group in Nashville, Tennessee. The Carnegie Writers Group (CWG) is a community peer-to-peer writing group for diverse writers in all stages and genres of writing. The mission is to educate, collaborate, provide writing resources with participation in writing activities, workshops and community events. The vision is to encourage writers by providing positive and productive support towards a successful writing experience based on personal writing goals. The collaborative writing activities are briefly reviewed to emphasize the impact it has on exposure to cultural diversity in the literary world.

Keywords: collaborative learning, adult learning, diversity in writing

COMMUNITY EDUCATION: CULTURAL DIVERSITY EXEMPLIFIED THROUGH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN AN ADULT PEER-TO-PEER WRITING GROUP

Adult learners are unique as they seek activities of interest which cater to community education most likely resulting in lifelong learning experiences. Lifelong learning is the recognition of interaction between learning in different life phases that captures the holistic approach of educational activity. It is not determined by where you learn, but how you learn. (Lamb, 2011; Tuckett, 2013). Chisholm (2013) notes that smart lifelong learning should focus on improving the quality of life for everyone, and participation should be consistent with the human scale of community development. Lifelong learning has become a central concept of continuing education over the last decades (Nicoll and Fejes, 2014). With this, adult learners develop meaningful relationships with other adults who promote their readiness to accept and understand the importance of collaborative learning.

Collaborative learning includes two key goals; learning to work and solve problems with different backgrounds and life experiences (Kuh, 2008). Mathews (2013) explains that seeing educational resources in the community as an educator provides an accountability for a political actor that brings together citizenry. As a result, adult learners expect and demand a structured learning environment that is facilitated with efficiency (Kelly, 2013). Community education and lifelong learning has been integral in cultural diversity for collaborative learning practices in relation to literary investigations that promote literacy in writing. Higher level learning requires synthesizing and analyzing information, but for a deeper understanding, collaboration is relevant (Adler, 2012). Community education is considered to be an informal way of learning as there are no specific standards or guidelines on how learning occurs or is explored.

The Carnegie Writers' Group (CWG) is an example of community education. Baldwin et. al. (1990) notes that a key component in educating adults is a learning community that effectively support groups with discussion, interaction, and collaboration. CWG was founded in August 2013 by Oluwakemi Elufiede who has extensive experience working with adult and adolescent writers. CWG is open to diverse writers in different stages and genres of writing. The group meets every second and fourth Saturday of each month. The purpose of the group is to provide community education to adults, who have interest in networking, publishing, and improving their writing skills. Steinert et al. (2008) notes that writing groups are designed to support, assist with the writing process, overcome writer's block and increase writing productivity. With a focus on productivity, psychosocial benefits impact the improvement in writing confidence, encouragement, support, motivation and reflective practices as a writer (Dwyer et. al., 2012).

The most significant benefit of a writing group is remembering what it is like to be student in class as the group informs the complicated nature of constructive feedback (Williams, 1990). During group meetings, adult learners complete various collaborative learning activities, which foster the enrichment in cultural diversity. Collaborative learning activities include power writing, collaborative writing, and writers' workshop. These activities provide diversified perspectives in various areas of writing. Collaborative investigations provide adult learners with a sense of direction and purpose through activities (Cornelius et. al., 2011).

COLLABORATIVE WRITING ACTIVITIES

Power-writing is a free writing activity that is completed at the beginning of each meeting. Group members are given the task of coming up with a theme or writing prompt to write on for five minutes. Writers then share their selection with other members in order to hear other perspectives discussed about the specific topic. They also express to members why they chose to write on what they discussed in their free write. Jones et al. (2012) explains that writing is a dominant forum for how we communicate and promote the collaboration of shared ideas. This is an example of identifying a writer's style and writing personality based on what is expressed in this activity. Writing is the dominant discourse for how we, as people, share our ideas across the divergent field. People write to share the good news of discovered ideas that demonstrate purpose, needs, and progression that explains the interpretation of theories and illustrates the theory to practice (Jones et al., 2012).

A collaborative-writing activity is an activity in which more than one writer participates, each contributing to the outcome. In this activity, members are put on a rotation list, then they complete their section and send it to the next person on the list. Typically, this is done using email correspondence. In the activity, writers notice similarities with other writers. They also get support and help with writing the story. Writing collaboratively creates a stronger product because each of the collaborators can contribute their strengths as a professional and writer (Jones et. al, 2012).

Writers' Workshop is completed once a month and this allows adult learners to share individual writing selections that they are working on for feedback from group members. Dwyer et. al. (2012) notes that peer-review process improves the quality of each individual piece of writing; it increases the chances of acceptance for publication and enhances members' writing techniques. This also allows writers to understand their writing from the readers' perspective, which is the writer-reader relationship. Readers engage in a conversation with the authors' words (Jones et. al., 2012). Elufiede (2014) notes that the writer-reader relationship occurs when the writer and reader have a mutual attachment, which encourages the reader to progress through the text. With feedback from the reader, writers can then decide on revisions.

Writing and revising is situated not only in an instructional context, but also within wider social and experiential frameworks for interactions with the writer, the text and the reader. A text is evidence of the writers' expectations about how the text reads in relation to the readers' ability

to understand and interpret (Keen, 2010). Writing events include professional readings, collaborative community publications and guest author presentations. Once a month, members participate in guest author presentations that include readings, resources, questions and discussion. Professional readings take place in a public venue where members read their writing selections. Presentations focus on a range of topics, such as the basics of grammar, to the building of suspense in storytelling and publication resources. Each of these two writing events includes a component of group discussion and the opportunity for self-expression.

DIVERSITY

Diversity education may be addressed successfully through a multicultural, community-based writer's group, such as CWG, which is comprised of adult learners engaged in individual and collaborative writing activities. Merriam-Webster (2014, online) defines *diversity* as "the state of having people who are different races or who have different cultures in a group or organization." The Queensborough College (CCNY, 2014, online) offers an expanded, more detailed definition of diversity. It stresses, among other things, the need for mutual respect, understanding, and the recognition that different ways of knowing exist, as well as different ways of learning. However, Hunter (2006), although hopeful, suggests that the struggle for equity in adult and community learning is ongoing. For this reason, a community-based writers' group, such as CWG provides a congenial setting that is a relaxed, interactive, expressive and allows a mutual respect for understanding to flourish among equals.

We suggest that a diverse, community-based writers' group can be an appropriate place to foster diversity education because there are theoretical underpinnings for the use of language that is verbal and written. This is an agent of change and development in attitudes and understanding of diversity within the context of collaborative activities. Collaborative activities employed within a writers' group allow for discussion and creative exploration of culturally relevant topics—such as arts, literature, pop culture, and the role of media literacy--which may enhance understanding of life experiences, construction of beliefs and perceptions. Diverse learners have enhanced experiences when learning styles are respected and accommodated, which encourages regular participation from group members.

A multicultural, writing group, such as CWG is a space in which language, creativity, and collaboration meet. In this context, the recognition and appreciation of differences are ultimately inclusive and may be fostered. John-Steiner and Mahn (1996) elucidate Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of development as being a process of social activities becoming internalized within an individual, and furthermore, note that the theory is stressing the interdependence of social and personal processes that includes the importance of semiotics, i.e., signs and language. Thus, the possibility for internalized change through the use of language exists and might be extrapolated to adult learners who are engaged as creative writers of language within a context of periodic collaborative social interactions consisting of diverse participants.

Similarly, self-expression through writing and spoken language may be used to help adult learners re-examine ideas, beliefs, and feelings related to issues of diversity. Wesley (2007) suggests that interaction through the arts can help adults re-imagine issues of diversity by giving them new tools and experiences. Murray (2014) suggests that the use of art, which may or may not be viewed as culturally based, can be a springboard to creative writing. Tisdell (2007; 2008) has explored pop culture and media literacy in relation to teaching for diversity in higher education.

Furthermore, a collaborative writing group provides a unique opportunity for members, as adult learners, to create, present, encounter, and examine relevant content and learning styles. In a supportive group of peers, writers are empowered to acknowledge, welcome, accommodate, and explore diversity. In addition, emotional responses in diverse adult learners can be expressed relatively freely in a setting which encourages self-expression and collaboration, such as a supportive writers' group. Majid (2010) found that his adult students enjoyed learning activities which were designed to accommodate their diverse learning styles. When group members are engaged in collaborative activities, they are empowered by choices made to express individuality and flexibility within the evolving context of learning and growing.

Thus, a multicultural, writing group which engages in collaborative writing activities can foster a greater understanding and acceptance of diversity. Support exists for language and collaboration to function as agents of learning, change and development. In addition, exploration of the arts, pop culture, literature, and the role of media literacy can provide expanded avenues of discussion and understanding in a group of diverse learners. Finally, diverse writers who thrive and grow in a relevant, nurturing environment would seem more likely to seek the experience repeatedly by continuing in ongoing voluntary group membership. To honor and value the diversity of group members within a writers' group may lead to benefits for the society at large with public, higher, and community education.

FUTURE RESEARCH

There is a growing need for more research on community education in relation to writing groups for diverse writers. Research may aid in the development of communication and understanding within, between, and among diverse communities. What are the best ways for adult educators to foster positive change? Which writing activities most engage adult members of a diverse community? Which writing activities lead to greater self-knowledge and empowerment of the individual? Of the group? What role does creative expression play in community cohesion or the lack of it? How does the sharing of ideas and emotions through writing activities lead to greater awareness?

How do writers feel about the impact of collaborative writing activities on their work? How do such activities impact a writer's work? Are such activities beneficial for writers as creative individuals? If so, why? If not, why not? What can adult educators do to facilitate cooperation among diverse writers? How important is listening? Empathy? Storytelling?

Personal experience? How might research in transformative learning and diversity education be incorporated into the quest for diversity awareness within collaborative-writing groups? What unexpected outcomes might future studies reveal? These questions, among others, may be answered only through further research.

With research emerging, interested community members may come to understand the importance of supporting and collaborating with individuals who have an interest in literary concerns across all genres. Writing is a key component of every aspect of progression in society. Facilitation of collaborative, community-based writers' groups by informed adult educators may impact the success of future endeavors. With support, adult learners will feel more motivated and encouraged to reach their personal writing goals. They will also feel supported in their quest to partner with readers and fellow writers in the ongoing search for connection and validation.

CONCLUSION

In the community, adult learners seek to be regarded and respected for their talents and appreciated for their differences. As a result, CWG has proven to provide a benefit to establishing networking relationships with writers along with exposure to cultural diversity. With support, adult learners are not seeking dependency and submission. They are seeking educational supervision that incorporates the concepts of adult learning theory into a model of educational supervision for professional and personal experience. If they can find it, they may embrace an appreciation of diversity.

The influence of writers on the world is greater now, perhaps, than at any time in history. As the impact of writing grows to global proportions through the use of the Internet, writers yield increasing power. Although the pen has been joined recently by the keyboard and the voice command, one basic idea remains the same. Writing changes opinions, attitudes, and lives. Collaborative writing activities within community-based writers' groups have the potential to affect profound change in diversity awareness throughout the world.

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THE LIFE, DEATH AND REBIRTH OF THE COHORT

Bonnie Flynn and Robert Benway
National Louis University

ABSTRACT

The authors' observation and experience is the cohort model of learning became popular in higher education by the mid-1980s. Cohorts are small groups of learners who complete an entire program as a single unit and are often seen in undergraduate adult accelerated degree-completion programs. This model has advantages and disadvantages for both students and administration. These advantages and disadvantages are explored and recommendations for a successful cohort model are offered.

Keywords: cohort, accelerated, degree-completion

THE LIFE, DEATH AND REBIRTH OF THE COHORT

Cohort learning in higher education can be both a blessing and a curse. It can be akin to a Charles Dickens novel, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” Cohorts can be a supportive and nurturing experience for the students or they can be a conflict-filled nightmare. They can be a way to keep students together and revenues streaming or they can be an administrative headache.

According to Lawrence (2002), cohorts are “a small group of learners who complete an entire program of study as a single unit” (p. 83). The cohort-learning model in higher education became popular during the 1980s in response to pressure for educational reform. The cohort model was intended to foster group interaction among adult learners and implement different educational formats such as accelerated classes, learning communities collaborative, and team learning. Even though the approaches are different, each can be used with the cohort-based model (McCarthy, Trenga & Weiner, 2005).

In undergraduate adult accelerated degree-completion programs, cohorts are particularly popular. The classes typically vary between six and 15 students (Flynn, 2011). Students often work in small groups during their classes and complete group activities, projects assignments, and presentations together with their classmates (Flynn, 2011). The role of the instructor changes to be more of a knowledgeable facilitator or “guide on the side” rather than a “sage on the stage.”

The cohort model of learning has many advantages leading to a positive learning experience for students. However, there are also a number of disadvantages which can be challenging for the students and administration alike.

ADVANTAGES

The cohort model offers quite a few advantages for the students. Depending upon university policies, students may be registered for their entire coursework (undergraduate, graduate or doctoral) upon program entry. They have the security of not having to think or worry about what courses they need to take. The classes are generally on the same night(s) per week throughout the program and may even be in the same classroom. There is a security and ease that comes with this model for the students.

Cohort members form supportive bonds with one another, entering into a quasi-family relationship. The bonds they form can be between two or more people and may extend outside of the classroom (Flynn, 2011). Students appreciate the support and, over time, trust each other (Lei, Gorelick, Short, Smallwood & Wright-Porter, 2011). Students may form subgroups, getting together between class sessions to work on course projects or to discuss the previous week’s subject material. They become comfortable with one another and know what to expect from each other when it comes to participating in group activities. They often have a collective set of skills

and help one another when a member may need additional assistance, such as helping with computer skills, offering feedback on presentations or peer reviewing written assignments.

It is not unusual for students to call or text a fellow classmate who does not show up for class. They show genuine concern for each other. They may attend one another's weddings, birthday parties, and children's bar mitzvahs or christenings. It is not unusual for them to make friendships that continue long after their education has finished.

These advantages are strong reasons why the cohort model of learning is popular in higher education. The supportive bonds among cohort members can provide a security system helping to ensure a positive student experience.

DISADVANTAGES

However, the cohort model is not without its disadvantages. The model can be inflexible. Since students in the cohort often register for courses at the beginning of their program of study, and, if for some reason, they need to temporarily drop out, there can be a quagmire of approvals and paperwork required for disenrolling and reenrolling the student. What if a student wants to double up and take more classes, allowing him or her to finish sooner? Such a model often does not allow students to do that since it is a lock-step schedule.

Cohorts are often enrollment driven, meaning a certain number of students are needed, as defined by the university's administration, to start a group. When a potential student has made up his or her mind to pursue an education, he or she does not want to wait, but wants to start sooner rather than later. However, if there is not a critical mass of students to start a program, and the cohort gets delayed, the enthusiasm can wane and the student may look elsewhere to pursue the desired education.

If there is attrition and a number of students leave the program, it not only becomes costly to the university to continue the group, but the interaction among the students can diminish. Even if there are enough students to continue the group, as when one experiences the loss of a friend or family member, students who lose a cohort member can feel sad and even grieve the loss.

Conflict among cohort members is another stressor. As with any group, conflict can arise. While not all conflict is bad, it can cause students frustration with the group process and detract from the learning experience. It can even be so bad that a quieter or more timid student may feel bullied by more aggressive students in the class. The student may feel unsure of whom to go to for help or be afraid that the "bullies" may make it worse if there is a perception that the student has "tattled" on them. As noted earlier, the schedule can lack flexibility, making it difficult for the student to switch to another cohort group. Often these timid students may "stick it out" and put up with the abuse, embarrassed to make a "big deal" of the situation.

The instructor's position as an outsider can be accentuated, particularly for cohorts that have been together for a while. "The cohort has a history, a shared set of experiences, and usually a collection of inside jokes" (Weimer, 2015, p. 1). The instructor has to "win over" the

class every time a new course starts which can be challenging. The instructors in a cohort's initial courses help create the norms of the culture. Subsequent instructors may hear such comments as, "That's not the way [teacher 1] did things" (McCarthy, Trenga & Weimer, 2005). Conversely, if a class had a bad experience with a previous instructor, the current teacher may find herself spending valuable class time listening to a class's "bitch session," even "walking on egg shells" so the same experience does not repeat itself in her class.

The students do not get to choose their own instructors. Since they are in a lock-step schedule, the instructors are chosen for each individual course by the administration. Unlike an open system, the student is not free to choose an instructor from the course schedule. If a student has had a negative experience with a particular instructor or if there is negative feedback regarding the instructor from previous students, the student has to "grin and bear it" and accept the assigned instructor.

These disadvantages can cause tension and even anxiety for students. It can lead to students not doing well or dropping out of the program all together.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To mitigate the negatives, but keep the positives, a more fluid, quasi-cohort model may be the best solution. Keep the scheduling flexible, allowing students to transfer in and out of the group as needed. Encourage students to work closely with their academic advisors to stay on track if they deviate from the standard schedule. Provide a comprehensive orientation for students so there are no misunderstandings along the way, making sure they are aware of the university's policies, procedures and course prerequisites to help them progress smoothly through the program. This puts more of the responsibility on the students but allows for flexibility if the need arises.

Students will end up taking many of the same courses with other students and unofficial cohort groups may emerge as part of the process. Those groups should be honored, respected, and allowed to flourish. That does not mean that the instructor should not assert authority when necessary, but it is important to respect the group process as much as possible.

More importantly, keep the channel of communication open so the students know where to go to get help when needed. It is important to listen to students who may be experiencing issues or conflict and offer to intervene or at least offer advice as appropriate. Flexibility and clear communication are keys to a successful academic experience in the cohort environment.

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THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF ADULT EDUCATION AND THE DOCTORATE

Tom Heaney
National Louis University

Wendy Yanow
Adult Learning Unleashed

ABSTRACT

In recent years many authors have shed light on the hidden world of academe, seeking to re-envision the traditions and practices of the doctorate. Emerging research on adult learning and adult education practice holds special promise for interrogating all that has been taken for granted in doctoral education. The authors reflect on the nineteen-year history of a doctoral program that embedded within it many of the philosophical principles of adult education. In its origins adult education was identified with democracy, social change, collaboration, popular discourse, and centering multiple cultures. We suggest ways each of these can be incorporated in doctoral education specifically, and in higher education generally.

Keywords: adult education, doctorate, social change, culture, collaboration

THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF ADULT EDUCATION AND THE DOCTORATE

At the turn of the last century, adult education in our country was considered by many to be a movement, “a spontaneous commitment to learning outside the walls of formal schooling—learning linked to building a democratic social order” (Heaney, 1996, p.1). Literacy in its broadest sense—in the sense Freire (1994) speaks of it: learning to name the world—was at the center of that movement. Perhaps nothing so well exemplifies this as the Citizenship Schools in the South—a massive and successful literacy campaign that ignited the Civil Rights Movement. (cf. Horton, 1990, pp. 96-112)

Discourse on adult education frequently loses sight of the social and political purposes originally at the core of our practice, focusing rather on the techniques and processes of adult teaching and learning. In this paper we would like to focus on the principles that guide educators who are more concerned with the contours of a world that their work inspires. How we do the work of adult education is important, but that work has ramifications far beyond the classroom. The context for the practice of adult education is defined by the cultural dimensions of lived reality, permeated with the highest aspirations of humankind, but also with struggles for power, inequality, poverty, and oppression.

In the following we examine how our work in the academy interfaces with culture, using the lens of adult education principles, specifically emphasizing democracy, social change, collaboration, popular discourse, and centering multiple cultures.

OBITUARY FOR A DOCTORAL PROGRAM

We begin with a brief story of a doctoral program that almost reached its twentieth birthday. It opened in 1996 after three years of planning. It was designed from the ground up with adult education principles in mind. Numerous leaders in the adult education professoriate were consulted in the planning, not least being Stephen Brookfield who was a consultant throughout. It also happened to be a doctoral program in Adult and Continuing Education (ACE). We use this program to demonstrate how democracy, social change, collaboration, popular discourse, and centering multiple cultures can be incorporated into doctoral education and higher education generally. The story of this program is a cautionary tale, however, since while there were many achievements, there were also times when we stumbled and fell short of the mark.

ACE was a three-year, cohort-based program with the dissertation woven into the coursework. It has had a 96% completion rate with almost all graduates completing their work in the three years allotted. The program began with a two-week residential Summer Institute held at a lakeside campus in Wisconsin and continued with eight monthly meetings in Chicago—Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. The Summer Institute and monthly meetings have been repeated in each of the three years. This schedule allowed students to commute to the program

from significant distances, while carrying on their adult responsibilities for work and family. Students have come from both coasts of the United States, from Alaska, Nova Scotia, and Ontario. A current student, who will graduate in June 2015, is the Mayor of Kingston, Jamaica.

This overview of ACE is but the skeleton of the program. Its flesh and substance comprise the embedded principles, which we will now describe.

DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

Democratic participation has always stood center stage in adult education philosophy (Lindeman, 1926; Bryson, 1936; Knowles, 1950; Liveright, 1959). A goal of adult learners is to find voice, to be heard in rational discourse with their peers, and to shape day-to-day decisions that affect their lives. In developing ACE, we asked how can doctoral students be partners with faculty in charting the direction of their education.

The answer was something we called governance. Students met monthly without faculty present to find common voice in matters related to the program and curriculum. Subsequently, they met with faculty to negotiate decisions that required the teaching team's acquiescence. This has been an experiment in democracy in which doctoral students, in an effort to shape the decisions that would impact their lives as scholars, struggled with the art of balancing self-interest with the common good and come to an understanding of the power and perils of democratic decision-making.

Doctoral work is about learning to become a scholar. Add to that the charge to also become change agents and the result is an inevitable contest in which self-interest is always butting into the common good. Conflict becomes both the brilliance and the constant challenge of governance.

Governance is an exercise in democracy and a meta process in which each student must recognize, acknowledge and then critique the implicit power structures of the cultural lens through which many understand their own life experience. Although a very diverse student body, the cultural lens through which most experience education is Eurocentric, reflecting the realities of a white, male, Christian, heterosexual, middle-class society. Dominant issues of race and gender, often covert and regularly unrecognized just as they are in daily life, play out in governance as students struggle to engage in cultural critique as part of a democratic process. How, for example, does race or gender or sexual orientation find itself in group decision-making? When decisions reflect one or another dominant ideology is that because it is best for the group or reflective of the subtle privilege assumed by members of the dominant group and willingly accepted, even at times promoted, by the others? Therefore, while governance has the potential for promoting critical self-reflection, it can frequently provide a venue for privilege and oppression.

CULTURE OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIAL CHANGE

As research scholars whose task also includes learning about and becoming change agents, engaging in critical reflection is at the heart of learning in ACE. Democracy, at its best is a complex process where there isn't always time for critical reflection in "doing," but without which society is doomed to repeat the inadequacies of the past. Drawing from experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984), and recognizing experience as the foundation of all learning, one understands both the need for scaffolding in learning and the need for critical reflection following an experience before theorizing and creating new models to engage in yet another new experience.

Change within the program wherein the actors are all present to each other is possible, albeit always a challenge. But as educators, the change we seek is to occur in the diverse worlds from which we come. Some students work in universities and community colleges, others in corporations, others in community-based organization, in public media, or in governmental agencies. We can engage with each other across this vocational divide, discussing the inequities and injustices we find in society. But when the rubber hits the road, when we return to our individual workplaces, we are often sole agents lacking the power of numbers to effect change. Nonetheless, we emphasize through the curriculum that the ultimate purpose of thinking is doing—putting thought into action, theory into practice.

The final expression of doctoral work, the dissertation, is called a Critical Engagement Project (CEP) in ACE. Throughout the curriculum, our research scholars are expected to be critical and engaged. The manual students are given at the beginning of the program has this to say, "The CEP and dissertation differ primarily in that the former demands engagement—whereas the later does not. The CEP demands more, not less" (Critical Engagement Project: A Manual, 2003, p. 11). The value of all research can be found in the answer to this question: what difference does it make?

COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

Adult education eschews competition in learning. It is framed in constructivism; knowledge is socially produced as learners strive to create meaning for their shared experiences. There is a synergy that emerges as two or more learners collaboratively engage in inquiry, each partner in inquiry laying claim to the whole, which is greater than any individual's contribution. In its many layers, ACE was determined to avoid the competition that is embedded in much graduate education.

Most courses in ACE were taught by a team of three faculty. This allowed faculty to model academic discourse wherein team members could respectfully disagree, demonstrating the various perspectives that enter into the construction of knowledge. Through this, students came to learn how to enter into discourse collaboratively, engaging each other in the dance of knowledge production.

There were no exams, no tests, and no grades in ACE. There was a great deal of writing, however, and everything written was considered a draft. For every assignment, constructive

feedback and suggestions for revisions came from at least two members of the teaching team and from some peers. Obviously, not all critique was in agreement, reflecting the constructivist nature of knowledge. Frequently, group projects—both presentations (called “teach-ins”) and papers—were assigned, reinforcing the collaborative nature of the program.

The dissertation is frequently a lonely journey in doctoral programs. In ACE, however, the CEP was woven into course work—for example, a course in literature review and several in methodology—that linked elements of doctoral research to the actual preparation of each student’s chosen inquiry. Frequent research “clinics” gave the research scholars support of both peers and faculty. Finally, it was possible for two or more research scholars to share authorship of a CEP—to collaborate in inquiry related to a mutual “fire in the belly.” The likelihood of such a mutually shared interest occurring in a cohort of sixteen or more people is remote, but it did happen and with significant results (see, for example, Charaniya & Walsh, 2001).

There too, an inherent contradiction was designed into the program. Although woven into course work and invited as a collaborative process, completing a dissertation requires intense self focus. And that is particularly poignant in a program in which the dissertation includes a critical self reflection component requiring students to answer three questions, who am I, what are the commitments embedded in my practice, and who am I becoming.

POPULAR DISCOURSE

Scholars most often address their fellow scholars when they communicate the findings of their research. This is a respected tradition among academicians as a way of expanding the knowledge base of their varied disciplines. Unfortunately, this results in volumes of research gathering dust on library shelves and prevents the fruits of scholarship from being disseminated widely and informing life and social conditions outside the academy. It also confines research in a straightjacket of rigor and formality, keeping it separate from the discourse of popular culture.

The dissertation is an obvious example of this, with its five-chapter structure culminating in recommendations, presumably to move its readers to further research or action. Some of the conventions of doctoral research are warranted. There is a reasonable expectation that a neophyte scholar should immerse herself in authors whose conversations she would seek to join. Hence a literature review is certainly an appropriate exercise for a doctoral candidate. So also is a thorough examination of epistemological and methodological approaches supporting inquiry. But that said, these essential aspects of research might have little interest to the persons to whom the research is directed.

In ACE, doctoral candidates write a literature review and a methodology chapter, but these documents are not required to be part of the final presentation of their research. They are included, however, as an appendix to documentation sent to ProQuest or to the library. But the final presentation of the CEP can take many forms. Several scholars have used performance theater to bring their research to the community—in one case, the performance has toured the country, including off-Broadway. Others have produced documentaries for public television and other venues. One scholar “published” his research as a hyperlinked website for national distribution. Many times graduates of traditional programs who seek a publisher for their work,

are required to rewrite their dissertation after graduation to meet the less formal demands of print media. If the aim of a research scholar is to publish, ACE encourages her to write up her research in a format suitable for publication.

CENTERING MULTIPLE CULTURES

Recognizing the centrality of experience, a focus of ACE is to bring to the forefront the multiple cultures represented in society in general, along with an understanding that every experience is a cultural experience that is evaluated, whether consciously or not, through a white, male, Christian, Eurocentric, heterosexual and single gendered lens. Critiquing that paradigm as the dominant paradigm for evaluating experience was a significant focus for learning.

Centering Africentrism, for example, invited students to explore the understanding of experience from another paradigm. That, in and of itself, is unique in doctoral education. But, there is a difference between centering learning, which on the one hand can be an intellectual, cognitive process allowing one to analyze experience after the fact and, on the other hand, engaging in learning from an Africentric perspective. And it is difficult to imagine the possibilities for applying an Africentric analysis to fields that were developed from a Eurocentric perspective. The challenges of creating change through this type of learning become further evident when privileged students, those representing the dominant cultural groups, quietly, perhaps even subconsciously recognize they can and then do, remove themselves from the real learning experience.

The addition of the study of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the related theories, Queer and LatCrit offered alternative opportunities to critique Eurocentric models even from an intellectual, cognitive perspective and even for students who needed to stand within Eurocentrism. As opposed to the Africentric theoretical framework which required students to engage in experience from an African perspective, CRT and other critical theories, encouraged students to critique lived experience even after the fact.

REFLECTIONS: CRITICAL AND OTHER

These social and political purposes described above—purposes that have historically defined an adult education practice—align with multiple academic disciplines, especially those in the humanities and social sciences where foundations are laid for a more just, more equitable, more sustainable world. Embedded in the imagination's grasp of possible futures is the comprehension of democratic practice, social and political change, collaboration, popular communications, and respect for paradigmatic differences. These intellectual skills are not taught, but are experienced in the kinds of graduate practices described above. They are habits of mind and body that are learned by doing.

These intellectual skills have been exemplified in the ACE doctoral program. The sheer success of the program, in terms of completion rates and proliferation of student work beyond

the academy speaks for itself. And that the program has come to an end, not for lack of students, nor for failing to generate sufficient revenue. It was devalued at a time when the university itself was facing several years of budget shortfalls and in restructuring eliminated almost half of its programs, retaining only those that produced the highest margins. It is well known that doctoral programs are not major contributors to a university's bottom line. Perhaps from a more traditional viewpoint, the value of education focused upon democratic practice, valuing diversity, and collaborative teaching/learning within the academy is underwhelming. It is our hope that more graduate faculty will engage in a critique of that tradition and find in the best practices of adult education a model and guide for the future of higher education.

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ESTABLISHING THE RELIABILITY OF AN INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF QUALITY SERVICE

Larchin Leslie, Mathias R. Vairez, Jr., and Tremaine Leslie
Prairie View A&M University

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the reliability of an instrument to measure students' perception of quality service at Historical Black College and University (HBCU). The participants included 350 students, who responded to an online student satisfaction survey over a six-year period. The researchers employed a factor analysis to determine the factors or principal components of the instrument and found an internal consistency of .977 Cronach's Alpha.

Keywords: historically black colleges and universities (HBCU), student satisfaction, quality service, classroom experience, administrative experience

ESTABLISHING THE RELIABILITY OF AN INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF QUALITY SERVICE

Over the years, students expressed their opinions about the services they received from several individuals and departments in the College of Education. Their views were usually in verbal or written format, but sometimes, in silence. The latter is usually more harmful because those who are offering the service are not always cognizant of dissatisfied customers who leave quietly, but spread negative publicity publicly. In this regard, service providers must ensure that the quality of the services be of optimum quality at all times. In fact, “successful service organizations are customer driven to provide quality service as they rely upon the contributions of all organizational members to achieve stated objectives” (Emanuel & Adams, 2006, P. 537). Like the business sector, education should constantly provide quality service to all their customers.

After all, former students can be effective recruiters for the institution especially during a time when university enrolment across the country is steadily declining, and recruiting of students is becoming more and more competitive. It is therefore important that in order to have the current students assist in the recruitment exercise, whether directly or indirectly, the institution needs to provide quality service to the student body. It is for this reason that Nadiri, Kandampully, and Hussain (2009) stated that educational eminence measures pupil satisfaction. Indeed, students should be the main clients of any institution. If there are no students, then certainly, there is no school. This is why it would be advantageous for administration faculty and staff to treat students with the best service possible. Extending quality services to the students will produce positive relationships (Ahmed et al., 2010). This however, does not mean the administration, faculty and staff, should compromise the standard of the institution in order to please the students. It is essential to keep in mind that there are laws and guidelines that must be adhered to and penalties for breaking these laws.

Nevertheless, “in order to attract students, serve their needs and retain them, higher education providers are actively involved in understanding students’ expectations and perceptions of service quality” (Nadiri, Kandampully, & Hussain, 2009, p. 523). It is extremely important that colleges provide quality service to their students. Although there is no empirical evidence that shows providing quality service for students will keep them in college, satisfaction with the service provided can make a big difference (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1996). Hence, providing quality service for students is one way to keep them in college. The fact is that graduation rates are on the decrease while enrolments are on the increase (only for Hispanic population). College administrators have a responsibility to ascertain the reason students are leaving college prematurely (Kelly, Lavergne, Boone, & Boone, 2012), and if it turns out to be the quality of service, then administrators must do something about the services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Regardless of how good any service is, there will always be disgruntled customers who complain. This is no different in the college system. Nevertheless, college administrators must ensure that the institution provides quality service to the students at all times. Students are the best recruiters since they usually tell others about the programs and their experiences during their tenure at the institution. Reichheld (2003) also agreed that when costumers are satisfied with the service and treatment they receive, they would be more than willing to purchase extra products and services. Those customers are also willing to extend encouraging word-of-mouth recommendations to other potential customers to bring in new ones.

Consequently, having students as recruiters would follow the same premise. If students are not satisfied with the quality of services they receive, they will not spread any news about the college and the university in general. Even though Reason, Terenzini, and Domingo (2007) revealed that students' insights of the support of their institution's setting positively connected to an increase in their social and personal capability, student recruiters can eventually affect the institution's future growth in terms of enrolment. There are universities that seek to increase enrolment and are forming partnerships with our majors and leveraging the student's relationships. Others are even forming connections with company recruiters to address the problem (Koch & Kayworth, 2009).

While there are heightened efforts in attracting and retaining student customers, today institutions are also dealing with students who may view the world differently from their predecessors. Some students enter college without ever having the opportunity to face adversity on their own, and as a result, they fail to develop skills in facing challenges that will serve them in life. Students from the millennial generation frequently see themselves as unique, and they often have very specific expectancies that their needs/wants will be met.

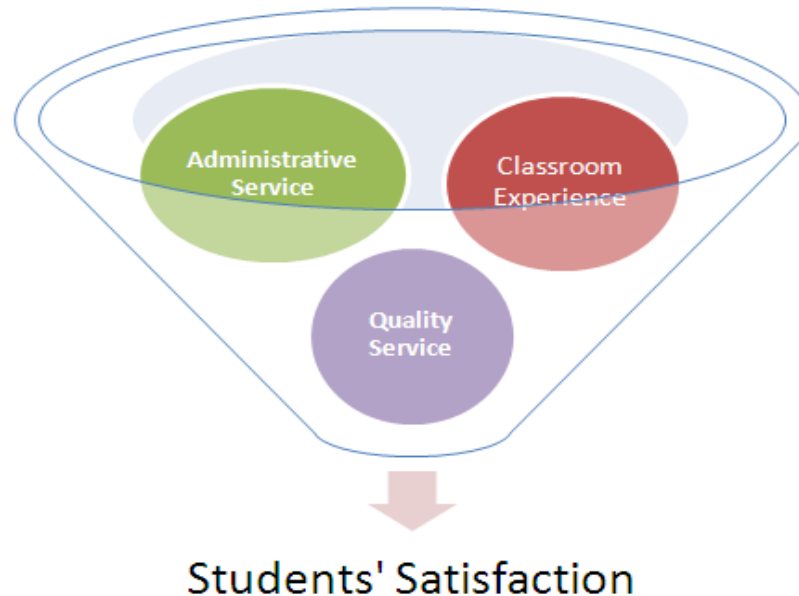
Good customer service is expected from all members of faculty and staff and not just administration. The fact is that in most cases students have closer interactions with faculty and support staff than they have with administration. Students spend more time with their instructors than they do with the support staff and administration.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE STUDENTS' SATISFACTION

Students' satisfaction can take on several forms, which are very important in determining the quality of service offered students. Remember, that in the College of Education, students are the main customers and if those customers are not satisfied with the services provided, very soon they might leave. In addition, some of these students might endure to complete their degrees but they will not encourage anyone to come to the college to pursue their studies. The underlying foundation for this study will take on the factors that determine students' satisfaction. These factors form the framework for this study. The factors include;

- Administrative services
- Classroom experience
- Quality services
- Students' satisfaction

Figure 1: Factors that influencing students' satisfaction



ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Usually the administrative supports are the first and most frequent services students get when they enter the college. This can be from the assignment of advisors, setting up appointments for advisors, providing guidance with degree plans, and just meeting the daily needs of students. In addition to many duties, some administrative staff members do not directly have contact with students but play a very crucial role in the services (Arena, Arnaboldi & Azzone, 2010) that the college provides for its students. According to Dado, Petrovicova, Riznic and Rajic (2011), one of the mistakes some administrative officers make is that they are reluctant to treat students as customers. In education students are our clients and therefore we must treat them with the highest level of respect by all.

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

The classroom experiences of college students are very important to their whole stay in the institution. Barfield (2003) believed that “college classroom creates various instructional, learning and social communication advantages” (p. 356). Some teachers in the classroom just

stick to the core curriculum that they teach. Although students are responsible for their own learning, it is the teachers' responsibility to create that learning experience for the students. To support this claim, Race & Pickford (2007) indicated that excellent learning must evidence excellent teaching. The bottom line is that the college, through the teachers, must facilitate students so they are satisfied with the classroom experience during their tenure with the college. These satisfied students will eventually spread the news about the quality of service with the college.

QUALITY SERVICES

The quality of service can dictate the efficiency and the longevity of the college. Importantly, "the quality of education is the capability of students' knowledge to satisfy stated requirements set by employers, accrediting bodies, professional societies" (Karapetrovic & Willborn, 1997, p. 287). This is extremely essential because even though students are the main customers of the college, they are the product produced by the college for the market. Therefore, the employers of the students are the judge of the quality of service provided by the college. In the same way, most quality efforts observed in higher education to date have focused on non-academic areas (Quinn, Lemay, Larsen & Johnson, 2009).

STUDENTS' SATISFACTION

The culmination of students' satisfaction in education is the ability of the college to offer quality service to the students. When administrative services are at their best and the classroom experience is enriched with the quality of services provided by the college, this will enhance students' satisfaction and encourage them to offer high ratings on their evaluations and encourage prospective students to enroll. According to Round (2005),

Accurate expectations are consistently associated with good adjustment and satisfaction. Expectations and satisfaction with experience show correlations in specific areas, such as workload, time management, social adjustment and teaching methods. However, students' expectations of academic interactions with staff, rather than of the personal qualities of staff seem to determine their perceptions of staff approachability. Students generally feel quite well prepared for university, although the majority feels that their preparation was acceptable or adequate rather than very good (p. 6).

It is quite natural for the college administration to recognize that providing quality service for students can only be an asset to the college. Satisfied students usually sell the institution in such a way that it increases the enrolment.

METHODOLOGY

In an effort to understand students' perceptions of quality services offered by a HBCU, a number of questions were developed based on the literature that addresses several areas related to student

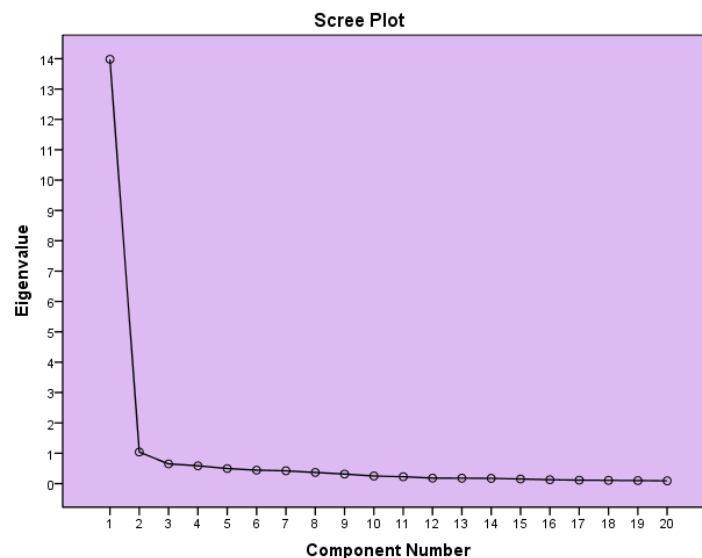
satisfaction. The instrument is a five-point Likert-type rating scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. It measured students' level of satisfaction of the quality of service within various sections of the college. Some of these sections ranged from satisfaction with the instructor teaching style, facilities, technology, and many more. The study includes a sample of 350 students who were randomly selected from a number of participants who responded to an online survey over a six-year period.

RESULTS

The data for this exploration were collected from a sample of 350 participants. The ethnic composition of the 350 participants were, 85.4% ($n = 299$) African Americans, 4.3% ($n = 15$) Hispanics, 5.7% ($n = 20$) Whites, and 4.3% ($n = 15$) Others (0.3%, $n = 1$ missing data). In terms of gender, there were 22.6% ($n = 79$) females and 75.1% ($n = 263$) males (2.3%, $n = 8$ missing data). The majority of the participants were graduate level students (73.7%, $n = 258$), followed by seniors (18.3%, $n = 64$), then juniors (4.6%, $n = 16$), and sophomore (3.1%, $n = 11$) -- one missing data (0.3%, $n = 1$).

In order to extract the major components of the survey, we employed an Exploratory Factor Analysis with Varimax rotation as our data reduction technique. The Varimax rotation is an orthogonal rotation which assumes that the factors are uncorrelated. To determine the number of factors to retain, we used the number eigenvalues greater than one. The eigenvalues indicate how much of the variance in the data is explained by the factors. We also observed the scree plot (see figure 2) which shows three factors on the curve before the line flattens. Thus, we retained three factors.

Figure 2: Scree Plot



Subsequently, we reviewed the factor loadings which are an indication of the strength and direction of the factors on the variables – thus how strongly the factors influence the variables. To group the variables into factors we used the factor loadings that were 0.5 or greater. In order to ascribe labels to the resulting three factors we used our conceptual framework of factors that influence students' satisfaction – Administrative services, Classroom Experiences, and Quality Services. Then we examined the patterns of the factors to identify which variables or items had factor loadings above 0.5 for the three factors. These were the variables or items that clumped together to constitute the three factors: Administrative services (8 items), Classroom Experiences (9 items), and Quality Services (3 items, see figure 3).

To establish the reliability of the overall instrument and the subscales (factors) we computed Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients. The overall Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was .977 for the 20 items survey. For the subscales, Administrative Services, Classroom Experience, and Quality Services, the reliability coefficients were .956, .963, and .866, respectively (see Table 1). Explicitly, the over survey and the three subscales have very high reliability coefficients, thus making the survey very reliable.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	# of Items
Administrative Services	.956	8
Classroom Experience	.963	9
Quality Services	.866	3
Overall	.977	20

CONCLUSIONS

With a valid and reliable instrument, college administrators can better understand the adult learner and find some of the reasons they leave a program before completion. College graduation rates are on the decline and if administrators can identify these areas, then they will know how to cater to the needs of the students, which will help to retain them in college. Because students are the main clients of any institution, administrators will have an instrument to measure how students feel about the quality of services offered by the college.

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WRITING GROUPS: A RECIPE FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOLARLY WRITING

Marilyn Lockhart
Montana State University

ABSTRACT

Productive scholarly writing is critical for faculty success in higher education. This paper presents the steps followed and the results of one university's creation of eleven interdisciplinary writing groups formed over a period of 2 ½ years using the Gray (2010) writing model. The goal of the project was to teach faculty how to become more successful writers and to increase their writing productivity. In a written assessment conducted after 1 ½ years, all faculty reported that they had met their goal of increasing writing productivity and the groups had helped them to become more successful writers. A focus group session conducted after another year, yielded similar outcomes. Additionally, faculty reported that the groups served as valuable professional support.

Keywords: higher education, faculty development, faculty writing

WRITING GROUPS: A RECIPE FOR SUCCESSFUL SCHOLARLY WRITING

The life of a faculty member at most four-year higher education institutions is composed of teaching, research, and service. Many devote most of their time and effort to teaching and service but wrestle with scholarly writing (Boice, 2000). For the life of an academic working in higher education, successful writing is functional literacy or what R.F. Hirsch, Jr. refers to as *cultural literacy* (1987). Knowing how to write successfully is what Hirsch referred to as an “important fact” that faculty need to know in order to be successful in their culture and separate them from unsuccessful faculty (Madren, 2014). As students, they wrote numerous papers; as faculty, many do not know how to convert these skills into successful scholarly writing for projects such as journal articles and grant proposals (Stivers & Cramer, 2013). While they need to be effective scholarly writers in order to receive positive annual reviews and gain tenure, the majority of new faculty lack the skills needed for the task (Boice, 1992). After receiving tenure, some faculty feel relief from the pressure to publish and return to other parts of their lives such as teaching and their families. However, faculty are expected to remain active in their scholarly pursuits throughout their careers (Stivers & Cramer, 2013).

Robert Boice, a social psychologist, is an expert on scholarly writing and has authored numerous articles and books on the subject (Boice, 1990, 1992, 2000). His research of new faculty production of scholarly writing revealed that during years 1 and 2, over two-thirds of them produced no work that counted towards their tenure review. This non-production continued into years 3 and 4 (Boice, 1992). His research reported reasons why new faculty struggle with writing including a) they did not learn how to write with fluency and constancy in graduate school, b) they worked too often in isolation, c) they viewed writing as difficult and mysterious, d) they believed they could master either teaching or writing rather than both, e) they stated they were too busy to write, and f) they had difficulty deciding on what to write about (Boice, 2000). Boice’s writings espouse the importance of working patiently and calmly, writing daily, keeping records, and seeking feedback from others (Boice, 2000).

Tara Gray, a faculty development specialist and national speaker on faculty writing, developed a model for new and experienced faculty to follow when writing. Her model follows Boice’s steps of writing daily and keeping records, and adds the importance of being accountable to others (Gray, 2010). In her model, she recommends writing at least 15 to 30 minutes a day, sharing work weekly with individuals outside the discipline, organizing paragraphs around topic sentences, and moving forward to “kicking it out the door” (Gray, 2010, p. 73) rather than striving for complete perfection. She recommends that writers stop “thinking of writing as a solitary activity” (p. 23) and work with a group of people who are not experts on the topic.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This paper, based upon a presentation made at the Adult Higher Education Alliance 2015 annual conference, will present the steps followed and results of one institution's creation of eleven writing groups formed over a period of two and a half years. My university is located in the Rocky Mountain West, has an enrollment of 15,000 students, 900 faculty, and a Carnegie classification of "very high research intensive." Faculty at the institution are expected to publish refereed journal articles, receive external funding through grant writing, and present at conferences to receive tenure and promotion. I, in the role of the Director of the Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) and also the presenter of the session, created and trained the writing groups following the Gray model for successful writing. Her model was the recipe for our groups and provided the facts to learn and follow in order to become more productive and successful scholarly writers. The goal of the project was to teach faculty how to become more successful writers and increase their writing productivity.

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the 4 steps and timing of the steps that transpired in forming the writing groups and in conducting two assessments of outcomes:

- Formation of two pilot groups: fall semester 2012,
- Formation of additional groups: spring semester 2013 – fall semester 2014,
- Assessment #1 of outcomes: spring semester 2014, and
- Assessment #2 of outcomes: spring 2015.

Note that there is overlap in the timing of steps 2 and 3. As I received informal positive verbal feedback from members of the groups and requests from other faculty to join a group, new groups were formed.

STEP 1: FORMATION OF TWO PILOT GROUPS: FALL SEMESTER 2012

I learned about writing groups at a conference for faculty developers during fall 2012. I attended a presentation by Gray describing her writing group model and two additional presentations by members of writing groups at higher education institutions. I was particularly impressed with the reported increases in writing productivity given by the members of the two writing groups.

After returning from the conference, I offered an information session open to all faculty at my institution who were interested in becoming a member of a writing group. Thirteen people from a variety of disciplines such as education, English, engineering, sociology, mathematics, and microbiology, attended the session. During the session, I presented the Gray writing model, facilitated a discussion of the model, and formed two interdisciplinary groups of six each at the

conclusion of the session. Since the groups intended to meet weekly, six members was deemed the optimal number so that all members could present at least twice a month. One individual decided not to join a group after hearing about the expectations of the group. I joined one of the groups as I wanted to experience the outcomes personally. I became the facilitator of my group and asked the other group to identify a facilitator so I would have a continuing point of contact with the group.

I worked with both groups to help them establish ground rules, a process and schedule for each meeting, and I distributed Gray's book, *Publish & flourish: Become a prolific scholar* (2010), to each person free of charge. Examples of ground rules made are the following:

- We will follow Gray's model of looking for topic sentences in each paragraph and critique organizational structure,
- We will provide positive feedback first – “what I liked” – then go to “what I was looking for” and finish with the positive,
- This is not a fine-tuning editing group,
- We will keep a daily record of our writing,
- Everyone will have equal time – we will have a timekeeper, and
- We will meet weekly.

The two groups differed in how they decided to handle longer writing. One group decided to not review longer papers and the other group decided to review longer papers upon special request. The longer reviews were voluntary. The process and schedule of each meeting varied slightly by group but generally followed these guidelines:

1. Everyone will bring their writing record to each meeting and everyone will talk about their progress during the week,
2. Half of the group will bring writing each week with the person presenting telling everyone what to target in their reading,
3. The presenter will bring paper copies for everyone,
4. Group members will read writing for five minutes and provide feedback for ten minutes, and
5. There will be a five minute closing to discuss the next meeting time and who will bring writing.

STEP 2: FORMATION OF ADDITIONAL GROUPS: SPRING SEMESTER 2013 – FALL 2014

After a month, I began hearing very positive comments from members of the first two groups. Individuals in the groups shared their experiences with other faculty, and I began receiving requests to form new groups. As a result, I held another information session on

forming writing groups during spring semester 2013 and created two new interdisciplinary groups. Following the same format as the previous semester, I attended the first meeting of the new groups to assist them in establishing ground rules, process and schedule, and gave them copies of Gray's book. Continued positive comments from group members caused me to conduct two information sessions during fall semester of 2013 and one during spring 2014. Similar to the first information session, not everyone who came to the meeting joined a group, but only one or two at the sessions did not join. Three new groups formed during fall 2013, two during spring 2014, and two during fall 2014 bringing the total to 11 writing groups created.

STEP 3: ASSESSMENT #1 OF OUTCOMES: SPRING SEMESTER 2014

In April 2014, I conducted a survey assessment of the seven active writing groups' outcomes using Brookfield's Critical Incident Questionnaire (1995) as a model. According to Brookfield (1995), asking about questions about emotional highs and lows of experiences is a valuable method of ascertaining the impact of a practice upon a participant. Additionally, I asked questions that inquired about their use of the model and the project goal of increasing their writing productivity and success. Questions asked were the following:

1. Have your initial goals been met?
2. Has this group helped you to become a more productive and successful writer? How?
3. What writing schedule have you adopted?
4. When did you feel most engaged?
5. When did you feel less engaged?
6. What action did anyone in the group take that you found affirming and helpful?
7. What about the group surprised you the most?
8. Have you submitted any writing? If yes, please indicate what and how many.
[Choices given were grant proposal, book chapter, journal article, and conference proposal.]
9. Have you had work accepted? If yes, please indicate what and how many. [Choices corresponding to the ones in question 7 were given.]

I distributed the assessment forms to the facilitator of groups that had been in operation for a minimum of a full semester and they distributed them to the group members. Responses were anonymous. Seven groups with a total of thirty members were asked to complete the survey.

STEP 4: ASSESSMENT #2 OF OUTCOMES: SPRING 2015

During spring 2015, Tara Gray visited the institution and delivered a session for individuals currently in a writing group using her model. Thirty individuals attended the session with at least one member from each of the ten active groups. During this session, she asked individuals how things were going, what had brought the group success, and what challenges the group had experienced.

RESULTS

Of the eleven writing groups formed over the past two and a half years, there are ten active writing groups. All consist of faculty from a variety of disciplines. The individuals in the groups have changed somewhat. Members have gone on sabbatical; others have left the institution. Some members dropped out of the group for a variety of reasons such as workload. When a group has lost a member, they have either recruited their own new member or they have contacted me for names of people who are waiting to join a group. Periodically, I have people who contact me and ask to be put on a waiting list, and I refer to my list when a group requests assistance. The group then instructs the new member on the process and I give them Gray's book. I have not tracked the specific numbers of people who have left and new joiners; but they have been very few. Since the groups operate very autonomously, these events sometimes occur without my knowledge until I contact the facilitator of each group at the end of the academic year. At this time, the facilitator gives me the names of people who are current active members.

One group disbanded during spring semester 2015 because of difficulty with scheduling and because of members having difficulty keeping a regular writing schedule. The people in the group who wanted to continue gave me their names and I added them to my waiting list that is currently in existence. Those people's names will be given to people in groups who request a replacement for someone who has left.

ASSESSMENT #1 – SURVEY

In the April 2014 assessment, twenty-six responses were received from thirty members. At least one member from all seven groups returned surveys. Length of membership ranged from one semester to four semesters. All respondents reported that they had met their goal of increasing writing productivity and the groups had helped them to become more successful writers. All respondents reported submission of at least one grant, journal article, or conference proposal. Everyone who had been in a group for over a year reported an acceptance of one of these three types of submissions. Thirty-two grants for \$4.6 million had been submitted since joining a group. While some were still under review, four grants for \$63,000 had been awarded. Twenty-three journal articles had been submitted with seventeen accepted. The remainder was still under review or in the revise and resubmit stage. Three book chapters had been submitted and all had been accepted. Thirteen conference proposals were reported as submitted with seven accepted and six still under review.

All responses to open-ended questions were positive except for responses to the question "when did you feel less engaged?" Individuals reported a variety of writing schedules, however they all communicated that they write more regularly now. Some stated they write five days a week; others said they write regularly three days a week. Times of most engagement were while the group was reviewing their work and before their time to present. People reported feeling

least engaged when they had other things on their mind or when they had other work waiting on them. Comments to the query about actions that others took that was most affirming and what was most surprising to them were similar. Ten individuals reported they were surprised that the interdisciplinary composition of the group worked so well and they were surprised they could give people working in other disciplines feedback on their writing. One person stated: “Even when I think a section is well written, it is surprising to me that my colleagues from another discipline can provide feedback that is different and valuable from another perspective.” Twenty respondents reported on the supportive environment of the group. “This group helps to reduce the isolation I feel on campus as I have an opportunity to meet, learn from, and appreciate colleagues from other disciplines.” “This is the closest to scholarly mentoring I have found on campus.”

ASSESSMENT #2 - FOCUS GROUP

Discussion during the focus group session was similar to the written assessment. People reiterated the value that being in the group had on their writing and on their career. One individual asked for clarification and further detail about the definition of a topic sentence. Members from three groups expressed challenges of finding a meeting time that worked for everyone as teaching schedules changed from semester to semester. Another challenge included keeping to the task of reviewing writing when they had come to know each other on a personal level.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The outcomes of the writing groups are very positive. Assessments show that faculty have learned how to be scholarly writers, and have learned the skills to be successful in the environment of our research institution, or what Hirsch (1987) refers to as cultural competency. Informal conversations with administrators revealed that they viewed the groups as a strategy to help the University achieve its goal of increasing national prominence and grant success. While Gray’s model espouses the positive outcomes of interdisciplinary review of writing, many expressed initial doubt. The success of having members from a variety of unrelated disciplines was a surprise to participants. Additionally, forming a strong social and supportive connections was an unexpected outcome and certainly a very positive one.

The assessment of outcomes has been valuable in deciding whether to expand the number of groups and in reporting outcomes of the Center’s work. Informal comments, the formal written results, and the focus group session have all contributed to realizing the value and recognizing the challenges of the groups. This information can then be shared at sessions that recruit individuals to join groups and also to administrators who fund the budget needed to buy Gray’s book.

Based upon our outcomes, the following recommendations are made to those wanting to increase faculty writing productivity and teach faculty the skills needed in order to be successful in a research-oriented academic culture:

1. Conduct writing group information sessions and present the Gray model for successful academic writing.
2. Create interdisciplinary writing groups of 5 to 6 individuals. Help them get started by assisting in forming ground rules and distributing Gray's book or other similar books that describe a model of a) writing 15 to 30 minutes every day, b) keeping records of writing, and c) sharing work with others.
3. Be prepared for membership to change and keep a list of interested individuals who want to join so they can be matched with groups that need a replacement.
4. Regularly assess outcomes using informal and formal methods. Formal methods can be challenging since groups operate autonomously and membership changes. The identification of one point of contact for each group enables ongoing assessment to occur.
5. Communicate to administrators the outcomes of assessments. Positive outcomes give tangible evidence about the value of the work of faculty development centers and show that the work of these centers can help the institution reach important goals.

Hopefully, participants at the conference and readers of these proceedings will find this information of value and incorporate the steps we followed to increase faculty skill and success in the academic culture. Additionally, some of what has been learned from our faculty writing groups could be transferred to other types of adult writing groups.

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PUBLIC PEDAGOGY OF A VICTORIA BROTHEL: AN INFORMAL LEARNING CASE STUDY

Margaret A. Voelkel and Rosa M. Henehan
University of Arkansas-Fort Smith

ABSTRACT

Fort Smith, Arkansas has a unique cultural institution in the Fort Smith Visitors' Center which is housed in a restored Victorian brothel—Miss Laura's Social Club. This paper is a qualitative case study of informal learning at Miss Laura's and the master cultural narrative told through the site. Five themes emerged: a) madams were framed as proto-feminist figures; b) there were tensions between the "Bible belt" values of the community and the visitors' center; c) there were tensions between the center's two roles as museum and visitors' center; d) Cinderella themes were employed in telling the stories of the sex workers; and, e) exhibits and volunteers stressed class distinctions in the narrative of the site.

Keywords: cultural institutions, informal learning, adult learning, transformative learning, heritage tourism

PUBLIC PEDAGOGY OF A VICTORIA BROTHEL: AN INFORMAL LEARNING CASE STUDY

Cultural institutions such as parks, zoos, and museums are potential sites for adult education (Taylor, 2010). Fort Smith, Arkansas has a unique cultural institution in the Fort Smith Visitors' Center which is housed in a restored Victorian brothel—Miss Laura's Social Club. Fort Smith is a self-proclaimed Old West town that attracts visitors to the city through heritage tourism. The definition of heritage tourism is "traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past," (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2015, Pg.2). Miss Laura's Social Club plays conflicting roles as a museum—a cultural institution—and as a Visitors' Center—a marketing tool for tourism. What is the master narrative of Miss Laura's Social Club? Whose story does Miss Laura's tell and how does that story reflect the community in the past and in the present?

The researchers used the work of Taylor (2010) and Sandlin, Wright, and Clark (2011) as the theoretical framework for the study. Taylor distinguished cultural institutions as: (1) places of "cognitive change" (p. 6); (2) places with a specific context and unique narrative; and, (3) places that are contested as the community struggles with which narrative to tell. Sandlin, Wright, & Clark (2011) identified Mezirow's theory of transformational learning as a focus of much of the literature on learning in cultural institutions. The authors contended that cultural institutions provide:

master narratives of adult identity, both individual and collective. That is, we learn who we are (or should be) with regard to race, class, gender, sexuality, and so on and whose cultures and histories are considered "normal" and "dominant" through the ways these cultures and identities are portrayed to us and perpetuated through public pedagogies. (p. 5)

Sandlin et al. (2011) also proposed a perspective of "critical transformational learning" (p. 10) in which adult educators foster transformation through critical discussion and questioning of the master narrative.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the informal learning occurring for visitors and docents at Miss Laura's. The original overarching research question was: "How do the experiences of docents and visitors of Miss Laura's Social Club result in learning?" While the researchers did learn about the ways in which docents and volunteers learned at Miss Laura's, a different overarching research question emerged: What is the master narrative told at Miss Laura's Social Club?

THE SITE

Miss Laura's was originally built in 1896, by Laura Ziegler who operated a house of prostitution in the building. In 1911, Ziegler sold the house to Bertha Gayle Dean, one of the workers employed in the house. Dean ran the house until 1924, when Fort Smith passed an ordinance outlawing prostitution. Dean continued to run the place as a "boarding house"—presumably a clandestine house of prostitution—until the middle 1940s. For a number of years the house was vacant, until Donrey Media financed the restoration of the building. The building housed a restaurant and bar in the early 1980s. In 1992, Miss Laura's became the home of the Fort Smith Visitors' Center, and the title was transferred to the City of Fort Smith in 1996. Under the direction of the Fort Smith Advertising and Promotion Commission, Miss Laura's continues to extend hospitality to Fort Smith's visitors, most recently serving 13,273 tourists in 2014. Visitors represented all 50 states and the District of Columbia with most of the visitors coming from Texas and Arkansas. In 2014, there were also visitors from 33 different countries.

POSITIONING THE RESEARCHERS IN THE STUDY

The researchers became interested in Miss Laura's as a cultural institution through participation in a community leadership program. As area natives, both researchers were familiar with the site as a tourist attraction. The researchers were drawn to Miss Laura's as a research site because of a perceived conflict between the strong fundamentalist Christian roots of the community and the housing of the city's visitors' center in a restored brothel. One researcher (Henehan) had been raised in a strict fundamentalist Christian home, while the other (Voelkel) had a more relaxed religious upbringing with exposure to both fundamentalist and Catholic beliefs. When re-exposed to the site through the community leadership program, the researchers became interested in the narrative being expressed through Miss Laura's and brought a critical feminist lens to the study.

METHODS

This study utilized a qualitative case study approach as a means of investigating the cultural phenomenon that is Miss Laura's. Viewing the research through a constructivist lens, the researchers interviewed a total of 19 participants: three volunteered at the visitors' center as docents, and the other sixteen were equally-divided between adult learners, 25 and older, and traditional learners, 24 and younger. The constructivist viewpoint sees human perceptions structured through social interactions (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The interviewees found this a valid approach, as it allowed the interviewees to respond to a series of open-ended, critical reflection questions about the information they received through social means, during their tours of the restored brothel.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Questions that originally guided this study include: (a) How do the experiences of docents and visitors of Miss Laura's Social Club result in learning? (b) How do visitors respond to the novelty of a Visitor's Center being housed in a restored brothel? What do they learn? (c) What have the docents learned through their volunteerism? How have they engaged in learning? (d) What learning strategies do the docents employ when interacting with adult visitors? (e) How do visitors make meaning of gender roles and power relationships between the madam, the prostitutes, customers, and city leaders as depicted in the visitor's center? How does this meaning influence their beliefs about gender roles in modern society? (f) Has informal learning at Miss Laura's led to perspective transformation?

Qualitative data were gathered via semi-structured interviews in which the participants reflected on information provided during tours through the restored brothel. Closed questions focused on adult learning strategies that may lead to perspective transformation, such as: (a) Providing specific learning objectives, (b) Critical thinking exercises, (c) Visual imagery, (d) Lecture with time for discussion, and (e) Critical reflection opportunities. Open-ended reflection questions centered on the perspectives of the participants, on the historical information received, concluding with a question about their perceptions of the town, as portrayed by this choice of location for a visitor center.

PARTICIPANTS AND SETTING

The setting for this study, as described in the introduction, is the hometown of the researchers. Fort Smith is a city in Western Arkansas, which borders Oklahoma. The city is rich with Old West history and a restored downtown that reflects its historical roots. The choice to have the visitors' center in a restored brothel is an interesting one, as the city houses many churches and several faith-based schools. Historically, the state of Arkansas has been governed with religious fervor: According to Whayne, Deblack, Sabo and Arnold (2002): "Religion occupied a central place in the lives of most Arkansans, and politicians, who were almost always members of a Baptist or Methodist denomination, frequently seasoned their political speeches with religious references, evoking the gospel in order to win votes" (p. 261). Fort Smith is often said to be in the "Bible belt" of Arkansas, referencing the fervor that still exists today. The researchers have found the dual role of Miss Laura's – restored brothel museum and city visitors' center – to be a novelty that is rarely found in communities such as Fort Smith.

The participants for this study were a sampling of docents and tour attenders. Three docents, two of whom are former teachers, eight adult learners and eight traditional learners provided rich commentary upon which the researchers spent time in critical reflection and thematic coding.

ROLE OF RESEARCHERS

The researchers were the key instruments (Creswell, 2009), collecting data via semi-structured interviews with adult and traditional learners who had participated in the touring process at Miss Laura's. Interview protocol was followed with the researchers collecting the participants' reflections on their experiences as tour providers (docents) and attenders (adult/traditional learners).

RESULTS

Five themes emerged from the data: a) the madams were framed as proto-feminist figures; b) there were tensions between the "Bible belt" values of the community and the housing of the visitors' center in a defunct bordello; c) there were tensions between the center's two roles as museum and visitors' center; d) Cinderella themes were employed in telling the stories of the sex workers; and, e) exhibits and volunteers stressed class distinctions in the narrative of the site.

THEME 1: THE MADAM AS PROTO-FEMINIST

The madam, as exemplified by Laura Ziegler and Bertha Gale Dean is shown as a powerful figure both in business dealings along with the authority figure for the prostitutes. Much of the emphasis in the exhibits focus on Miss Laura's [Ziegler's] business acumen. One of the docents (C.J.) said:

She was a very strong gal. Had to be. Strong personality. ...once she got here in order to get her foot in the door, or whatever, she went to work at one of the houses up here. And she knew. I think she knew exactly what she wanted to do ... in deciding to buy this land and borrowing the \$3000 from the banker. Building this house. ... I think it speaks volumes. She had to be a very motivated, gutsy gal.

Docents told stories about Laura Ziegler that emphasized her strength and power. Stories included: a tale of Ziegler concealing a pistol in the sleeve of her evening gown; Ziegler dealing efficiently with bankers, city government, and leading citizens; and Ziegler applying exacting standards of dress and behavior toward her "girls" and the male clientele.

The character of Miss Laura is presented positively as an intelligent, cultured business woman. The center director regularly dresses in professionally designed hats and costumes to greet visitors to the center. Visual exhibits that emphasize the business include framed \$3 tokens that customers used to purchase sexual services; a ledger detailing the health status of each prostitute, and even a stoneware cup bearing the name and address of a competing madam—presumably a promotional product.

THEME 2: TENSIONS BETWEEN BIBLE BELT COMMUNITY AND VISITORS' CENTER LOCATED IN A BROTHEL.

Fort Smith is a town that espouses traditional values; it may be described as a “Bible belt” community due to the large number of fundamentalist Protestant, mainline Protestant, and Catholic churches in the community. Volunteers walk the line between frank acknowledgement of the business of prostitution and the acknowledgement of the church-going community. For example, two separate exhibits feature antique Bibles; one exhibit features a 100 year old Bible in a glass display case next to photographs of the sex workers, while the other Bible is displayed on a parlor table next to a male mannequin holding one of the \$3 tokens for service. Docent L.L. described the tension:

First thing we do, is say, “You’re aware that this is a restored bordello,” so they will know what the main topic is. We’ve had people turn around and leave when you say that, and some will be going on with the tour and will suddenly decide they don’t want to hear any more. . . . We’ve even had a Catholic priest bless us after he took the tour with a group of ladies. He stood out with a prayer circle, blessed the house.

One reflection of the tensions between the community and business of prostitution is the number of euphemisms used in describing prostitution and prostitutes. Docents and visitors rarely used plain language to describe Miss Laura, her occupation, her workers, and her house. Euphemisms for the workers included “ladies”, “daughters of joy”, and “Miss Laura’s Girls”. Euphemisms for the house included: “house of ill fame”, “commercial houses”, “shady businesses”, and “social club.” Two volunteers, after sharing specific instances of the way money changed hands then went on to question whether prostitution actually took place on the premises. One docent, M.J., whispered to the researchers, “After all, we don’t really know what went on here.”

THEME 3: DUAL ROLE AS MUSEUM/MARKETING TOOL

A major theme that emerged from the data was the conflict or tension between the center’s dual roles as museum and marketing tool for the community. For marketing purposes the Center embraces its risqué image and uses a number of tongue-in-cheek references on marketing materials and on the center web site. For example, marketing slogans include; “Our brothel still takes care of visitors;” “Our brothel still caters to out-of-towners;” “It’s a business doing pleasure with you,” and Do not expect any ‘original’ hospitality.” Activities and exhibits that embrace the depiction of prostitution are the director’s costumed tours, exhibits that emphasize how money changed hands, and the exhibits that show the minutia of the business. For example, volunteers emphasize the fact that a physician examined each sex worker every 30 days; the certificate of health was mandated to be posted over the bed where the prostitute conducted business. Each visitor is given a photocopy of the health certificate along with a

federal Marshal's tin star and a sticker that reads, "Hello, Bordello." Photographs, reproductions of the tokens for services, and tee shirts are available for sale in the gift shop.

The volunteers are sometimes more ambivalent about the center's role as a museum. Docent M.J. said, "We just show this building, then we tell them about the things that are in Fort Smith for them to see when they come. It's more about promoting Fort Smith than this building. We promote Fort Smith, not this building." After discussing the center's role as a museum with volunteers and visitors alike, it was clear that while docents tried to be historically accurate, they saw their true role as a promoter of Fort Smith. Visitors cited interest both in the history and in the promotion of activities and sites of interest.

THEME 4: CINDERELLA THEMES IN THE STORIES OF "THE GIRLS"

An unexpected result was the emergence of Cinderella themes in the stories of the prostitutes' lives. Throughout the researchers' tours, docents framed the lives of the prostitutes in terms of transformation and happy endings. One docent made a case that the prostitutes at Miss Laura's were working in a viable career that provided a path out of poverty and a way in which to move into a higher social class through marriage. Docent, L.L. said:

A girl could leave the farm, and if she got hired in this one, the girls made 34-38 dollars per week, which was much, much more than the men were making. So they could contribute to the family. A lot of the ladies would stay here until they had enough for a dowry, and then leave and marry. And then a lot of them married clients.

Specific Cinderella themes that emerged included the following: a) framing the Madam as the "fairy godmother" who provided material comforts, clothing, and training in social graces; b) emphasizing physical luxury and material possessions as benefits to the workers; c) emphasizing physical transformation as a means to social transformation; and d) emphasizing moving out of prostitution and into marriage (usually with a client) as a happy ending.

Exhibits also visually displayed themes of physical transformation. For example, one display case featured a pack of belladonna cigarettes which volunteers said were used to make the skin pale and dilate the eyes in accordance with the beauty standards of the day. The same display case featured small pots in which the prostitutes mixed cosmetics, a small laudanum bottle (liquid opium), and jeweled pink silk garter covers. One framed display featured a photo of madam Bertha Gale Dean with her husband, her former client. Multiple displays featured fine clothing and shoes worn by the workers.

THEME 5: EMPHASIS ON CLASS DISTINCTION AND CULTURE

The final theme that emerged was an emphasis on class distinctions; volunteers repeatedly emphasized the fact that Miss Laura's was of a higher class than other houses of prostitution in Fort Smith's "Row." Volunteers used words such as "refined", "poised", "attractive", "healthiest", and "elegant" to describe the prostitutes who worked in Miss Laura's. Clients were described as "respectable" and "prominent." The brothel itself was described as the

“high dollar house” and “the Queen of the Row.” Docent M.J. said, “These girls were schooled in social graces so that they knew their way around. They went to the opera and they never came down in the scantily [sic] clothes. They came down dressed elegantly.” Visual exhibits that emphasized the class distinction included photos of the Fort Smith policeman who provided security for Miss Laura’s, a male mannequin in evening dress, and a modern photo of the director dressed as Miss Laura posed next to an area politician.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

What is the master narrative of Miss Laura’s Social Club? Miss Laura’s focuses on the history of men who were white, wealthy, and privileged and women who were rural, and uneducated. The figures of the madams Laura Ziegler and Bertha Gale Dean are represented as strong, powerful women who held the power in business transactions with prominent, wealthy men. By contrast the “girls” are represented as country women who are physically and socially transformed into elegant women who rise into respectability through marrying their former customers—the traditional Cinderella story of women rising from rags to riches through marriage with a wealthy man. Miss Laura’s does not document the history of the working class male or male in poverty. The exhibits do not touch on the fate of the women who worked in the “lower class” brothels, those who became pregnant, or those who did not find happiness and respectability. As Sandlin et al. (2011) point out that cultural institutions “reproduce hegemony, through constructing “socially acceptable” and conforming identities” (p. 8).

Miss Laura’s is a site of adult education, meeting Taylor’s (2010) criteria in that it is a place of cognitive change with a unique context and narrative, and the narrative is contested. The master narrative of Miss Laura’s is conflicted in several ways. The site must perform dual roles in serving as a museum and in marketing the city of Fort Smith. The researchers agreed that when those roles conflict, the primary objective of selling Fort Smith and heritage tourism will win over historical accuracy. In other words, the center has a stake in preserving the story of Miss Laura and her girls as part of the colorful Old West past of the town. A further conflict exists between the empowered, feminist depiction of the madams and the passive transformation of “the girls” at the hands of the madams and the clients. Critical transformational learning (Sandlin et al., 2011) appeared to occur for some of the visitors, but not many. Some of the visitors were able to critically assess what they learned at Miss Laura’s. Docents and volunteers on the other hand appeared to be uncritical of the narrative presented and defensive and protective of the property.

While Miss Laura’s in its role as visitors’ center must protect its role as a marketing tool for the city, the researchers have identified topics for future study that may illuminate the hidden history of Miss Laura’s and explore some anti-hegemonic approaches to helping learners navigate the site. Topics for further study include the ways in which the Cinderella themes reflect popular culture approaches to prostitution, the ways the center navigates the conflicts between the community traditional values and the reality of the business of prostitution, and the master

narratives as expressed by other historic sites within the community.

Miss Laura's Social Club is successful as an entertaining introduction to the city's Old West history and a popular attraction for visitors. As adult educators, the researchers wonder how much more successful can the site be as a museum if it also shared the stories of the non-white, the poor, and the lower class.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Robert Benway, Ed.D., M.B.A., has served full time as Assistant Professor at National Louis University since 1998. He also served 6 years as Associate Dean for the College of Management and Business, from 2008 to 2014. After working on the merger of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Management and Business, he returned to his first love, teaching. During his career, he has written and published a book chapter, papers, and newsletters on topics in health care leadership, business communication, business leadership and management, and human resources. He's presented these topics at local and national conferences, where he maintains professional society memberships in health administration, business management, human resources, and adult education. He brings these experiences to our classroom, and encourages students to bring their experiences, also. Prior to National Louis University, Benway held vice president positions at a hospital and a federally designated human organ procurement organization. He was also a director of cardiology administrative services for a national health care cooperative, and held three director of therapeutic and diagnostic services for hospitals spanning several decades. In his spare time, Benway enjoys playing golf, gardening, reading books of history and current affairs, and spending time with his family.

Caroline Braun is a graduate student at Armstrong State University. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Armstrong State University while working in the university Writing Center. Her research interests include writing center theory, English language acquisition, and gender in literature.

Patricia Coberly-Holt, Ph.D., received her M.Ed. and Ed.D in Adult Education from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Arkansas. She is a full professor of Adult Education in the Department of Adolescent and Adult Education at Armstrong State University, where she also serves as Coordinator for the Adult Education and Community Leadership masters' degree

program. Her research interests include workforce development, corrections education, and program planning.

Oluwakemi Elufiede, M.Ed., is the founder and President of the Carnegie Writers, Inc. She is also the founder of two other community-based writing groups in Savannah, Georgia and Huntsville, Alabama. She has experience working in the public education, community education, higher education, mental health, and substance abuse. Her skills include tutoring, teaching, curriculum development, program planning, case management, community relations, and editorial consulting. She has facilitated over 30 community, professional reading, writing, and author events. She is a talented editor with experience in creative, inspirational, academic and publications and is the editor of five books. She is currently working on her next book, *The Desire has Expired*. She holds degrees in P–12 Special Education from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and B.L.S in Psychology and a Master of Adult Education from Armstrong Atlantic State University. She is a Doctoral Candidate in Educational Leadership at Tennessee State University.

Bonnie Flynn, Ed.D., M.P.H., M.S., is an Associate Professor at National Louis University (NLU) in northern Illinois. Dr. Flynn teaches both face-to-face and online undergraduate and graduate courses in health studies and general management. She received her Master in Public Health from Benedictine University and went on to complete a Master and Doctorate in Adult Education and a Master in Written Communication from NLU. Her dissertation focused on the lived experiences of students in an accelerated undergraduate degree-completion program viewed through the lens of transformative learning. Prior to working at NLU, Dr. Flynn worked at the Joint Commission, a health care accreditor, in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois for 15 years where she held a variety of positions. The last five years there, she worked in the Department of Education Programs where she realized her love of education and started teaching as an adjunct professor, eventually leading to full-time employment at NLU. In her free time, she enjoys reading fiction novels, writing, and solving crossword puzzles.

Tom Heaney, Ph.D. is principal and founder of Adult Learning Unleashed, a consulting group of educators leveraging justice and equity through learning. He was the director and co-founder of the Lindeman Center for Community Empowerment through Education, a Chicago-based organization that developed education and research projects with low income and oppressed groups. Center projects focused on indigenous efforts to build democratic structures and transform local conditions. He was among the founding members of the North American Alliance for Popular and Adult Education (NAAPAE) and is a former vice-president of the International Council for Adult Education. Tom is an associate professor in the Adult and Continuing Education Doctoral Program at National Louis University, which began in the summer of 1996. Formerly a member of the graduate faculty at Northern Illinois University, he received his Ph.D. in Adult Education from the Union Institute and University in 1980. The

principal focus of his research, study and practice has been on relating the education of adults to increased democratic participation in decision-making, linking this educational work with action for social change.

Rosa M. “Shelli” Henehan, Ed.D. is the Director of Early Childhood and an Assistant Professor for the School of Education at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith. She earned her doctorate in Workforce Development Education and her Master’s degree in Education from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. She earned her Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from Arkansas Tech University in Russellville. Shelli teaches education courses each semester, and is the administrator of grants for providing professional development for adult learners who teach in the field of early childhood education. Shelli’s research interests include cultural institutions, early childhood curricula and transformative learning strategies.

Larchin Leslie, Ph.D. has a master’s degree in Educational administration and recently completed his doctorate in Educational Leadership at Prairie View A&M University. His research interest is in mentoring, leadership capacity, academic self-efficacy, and learning styles.

Tremaine Leslie, M.Ed. recently completed her master’s degree Human Science at Prairie View A&M University. She holds a master’s degree in Special Education. She is currently contemplating doctoral studies and has research interests in mental health issues among children and minority populations.

Marilyn Lockhart, Ed.D. has worked with adults in various educational settings for over 25 years. She is currently the Director of the Center for Faculty Excellence and a professor in the Adult and Higher Education Graduate Program at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana. She is a past president of the Adult Higher Education Alliance. Her area of research is faculty development, adult learning, and college teaching. She has over 30 published works and numerous presentations in twenty states and in Canada on these topics. Recent publications include *Collaborations and Partnerships: The Foundation of Technology Enhanced Active Learning*, *Developing a Holistic Faculty Development Program*, *The Importance of Authenticity in the Classroom*, and *Collaboration for College Student Improvement*. Her previous work has been in the area of administration at the University of Virginia and in various capacities in adult education. She earned her doctorate in higher education administration from the University of Virginia.

Tina Murray, Ph.D. is the author of two novels, *A Chance to Say Yes* and *A Wild Dream of Love*, both published by ArcheBooks Publishing, Inc. *A Chance to Say Yes*, her debut novel, received five stars from the Midwest Review of Books. Prior to becoming an author, Murray earned two degrees—BA in art and MS in education—from the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Florida, and completed the doctoral program in art education at The Florida State

University in Tallahassee, Florida. Southern by birth, she has lived in various parts of the United States, including Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, New York, and Oregon. Her interests are many and varied, as are her work experiences. Fields of endeavor include entertainment, real estate, retail, and education. Her academic experience includes designing and implementing courses as a TA at FSU and as an adjunct instructor at FAMU. She worked briefly as an Assistant Professor at Ball State University. Most recently, Dr. Murray has become Vice President of Carnegie Writers, Inc. She is currently working on her third novel, *A Big Fan of Yours*.

Mathias R. Vairez, Jr. has been a school teacher and principal in rural Belize, Kentucky, and California. Mathias is a lecturer (currently on study leave) at the University of Belize, Toledo, Belize. He has a Certificate in Primary Education from Belize Teachers' College, a B.S. in Education: Math & English and an M.A. in Educational Administration from Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky, and a M.Ed. in Instructional Technology from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona. Currently, Mathias is a doctoral Candidate and research assistant at Prairie View A&M University (PAVMU) in Prairie View, Texas and a graduate student at Texas A&M University (TAMU) in College Station, Texas. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership with concentrations in Human Resources Management (PVAMU), Applied Statistics (TAMU), and Research, Measurement, & Statistics (TAMU).

Margaret A. "Micki" Voelkel, Ed.D. is an Associate Professor in the Center for Business and Professional Development at University of Arkansas-Fort Smith. She earned her doctorate in Workforce Development Education from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. She has a master's degree in Adult Education from the University of Arkansas and a bachelor's in Performance Studies from Northwestern University. She teaches undergraduate courses computer applications, personal effectiveness, project management, time management, and quality processes. Her research interests include cultural institutions, displaced workers, encore careers, generativity, and narrative inquiry.

Wendy Yanow, Ed.D. is an associate of Adult Learning Unleashed, a consulting group of educators leveraging justice and equity through learning. She is an independent practitioner working as a prior learning assessment consultant in higher education and an adjunct faculty member at several Chicago area colleges including DePaul University's School for New Learning. Wendy is committed to helping adult learners, especially those ill served by traditional education to meet their personal, academic and professional goals. She received her Ed.D. in Adult Education in 2007 from National Louis University. The primary focus of her research has been an exploration of the ways in which race impacts educational equity, opportunity and subsequent experience. Focusing on culture as a context for learning, she uses storytelling and personal narrative as a method for teaching about diverse life experience.

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