AAACE

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education

Inaugural
2020 Conference Proceedings

October 27-30, 2020
Virtual Conference

Editors
Dr. Yvonne Hunter-Johnson, Chair
Dr. Catherine A. Cherrstrom
Dr. Jacqueline McGinty
Dr. Christy Rhodes

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education

Vision Statement

The American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) is dedicated to the belief that lifelong learning contributes to human fulfillment and positive social change. We envision a more humane world made possible by the diverse practice of our members in helping adults acquire the knowledge, skills and values needed to lead productive and satisfying lives.

Mission Statement

The mission of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) is to provide leadership for the field of adult and continuing education by expanding opportunities for adult growth and development; unifying adult educators; fostering the development and dissemination of theory, research, information, and best practices; promoting identity and standards for the profession; and advocating relevant public policy and social change initiatives.

2019-2020 Board of Directors

President	Dr. Mary Alfred
President-Elect	Dr. Thomas Cox
Immediate Past President	Dr. Larry Martin
Secretary	Dr. E. Paulette Isaac-Savage
Treasurer	Dr. Charlotte Chase

2020 Conference Leadership

2020 Conference Chair	Dr. Petra Robinson
2020 Conference Vice Chair	Dr. Kenda Grover

2019-2020 Commissions Directors

Adult Basic Education and Literacy (CABEL)	Dr. Christy Rhodes
Community, Minority and Non-Formal Education (CCMNFE)	Dr. Jacqueline McGinty
Distance Learning and Technology (CDLT)	Dr. Tricia Berry
Graduate Students (CGS)	Ms. Josie Andrews
International Adult Education (CIAE)	Dr. Mejai Avoseh
Professors of Adult Education (CPAE)	Dr. Steven Schmidt
Workforce and Professional Development (CWPD)	Dr. Matt Ramirez

Message From Mary V. Alfred
2019-2020 President

Inaugural Publication of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education Conference Proceedings

As the 2019-2020 President, and currently the Immediate Past President, of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), I am pleased to introduce the inaugural issue of our conference proceedings. Before moving forward, it is important to draw some attention to AAACE within the contexts of its history and mission. To make this statement, I draw from the writings of two long-term and dedicated stewards of our profession, namely Amy Rose (2008) and John Henschke (2007). These colleagues have documented the history of the field, creating a foundation upon which to stand and from which to grow. As both authors noted, AAACE went through a series of professional associations and identities, dating back to 1921 when the National Education Association established the Department of Immigrant Education, driven by it its interest in educating teachers of immigrant learners. Three years later, the name was changed to Department of Adult Education, broadening its scope beyond immigrant education to include education of adult, broadly defined. In 1926, the Carnegie Association established the American Association for Adult Education (AAAE; Rose, 2008; Henschke, 2007). According to Rose (2008), the vision for AAAE was not clearly defined, and turbulent world events like the Great Depression and World War II had negative impact on its survival. In 1952, the National Association for Public School Adult Educators (NAPSAE) was founded, and 1972 saw the emergence of the National Association of Public and Continuing Adult Educators (Henschke, 2007; Rose, 2008). These organizations merged in 1982 to the current American Association for Adult and Continuing Education.

I shared excerpts of our history to provide some context for our annual conferences and bring attention to the lost opportunities to build on the literature of the field. Information retrieved from our website (https://www.aaace.org/page/Conference) indicates we have engaged in conferencing every year since 1952 with the first documented conference held in East Lansing, Michigan. From 1952 to 2019, we have disseminated knowledge, ideas, theories, and best practices at 67 conferences; however, none of it was captured in any written form for future use. Our conferences provided opportunities for sharing of ideas and for socialization, but we can also use these opportunities for knowledge management. Knowledge management is a concept used in business organizations that captures the process of creating, sharing, using, and managing knowledge and information of an organization. There are myriads of definitions for knowledge management, but the overall concepts are creation, sharing/dissemination, storing, and the future use of the knowledge. AAACE as an organization is engaged in the practice of knowledge management as evidenced in its publication of three journals and the handbook which is published every 10 years. Adding conference proceedings to this repertoire of managed knowledge will serve to expand the literature base of the field

and make knowledge disseminated at the conference available for use in research and practice.

I am pleased to introduce our inaugural issue of the AAACE Conference Proceedings. As the first production, publishing papers presented at the 2020 conference was optionally available to participants regardless of their category of presentation. I am very pleased at such a response, and I thank the presenters who answered the call.

Most importantly, I thank the editors who responded to my charge to deliver a conference proceeding with little guidance or directions. They exhibited true self-directedness and found a way to bring the task to fruition.

To Cathy Cherrstrom, Yvonne Hunter-Johnson, Jacqueline McGinty, and Christy Rhodes, thank you for taking on the charge to produce AAACE's first annual conference proceedings.

Sincerely,

Mary V. Alfred

Texas A&M University

References

Rose, A. D. (2008). AAACE: Where are we going and where have we been? The future of AAACE in light of its past. *Adult Learning 19*(1-2), 34-36. https://www.aaace.org/page/WhoWeAre

Henschke, J. A. (2008). *Adult education professional societies* [Unpublished manuscript]. University of Missouri St. Louis. https://www.aaace.org/page/WhoWeAre

Editors' Notes

Dear Reader,

With great pride and privilege, we present the inaugural conference proceedings for the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education 2020 conference. These historic proceedings for the general conference provide a platform to highlight the valuable presentations facilitated at the virtual conference. The proceedings reflect a combination of presentations featuring empirical research and the practical application within the field of adult and continuing education. As editors, we extend our gratitude to all stakeholders including, but not limited to, the board of directors, members, staff, sponsoring partners, and authors. We are grateful to you, for without you, this conference proceedings would not be a reality.

To the board of directors, we say thank you for your vision to institute such an endeavor and for entrusting us with the opportunity to compile and edit the inaugural conference proceedings for AAACE. This was an honor for each of us, and we are truly grateful.

To the illustrious contributors to the conference proceedings, we extend our gratitude. Without your hard work, dedication, attention to detail, creativity, and ambition, the conference proceedings would not be a reality. You have provided a platform that serves not only as an academic inspiration but a source reflecting a conglomerate of topics. Your contributions to theory and practice will benefit scholars and practitioners and aligns with the overarching theme of AAACE. We are grateful and say thank you!

To members, we thank you for sharing your knowledge and expertise at this year's conference. We strongly encourage all of you, who may not have submitted a manuscript in this year's conference proceeding, to submit for next year's conference proceedings. The knowledge, experience, and ability you possess is worth sharing to inspire and empower other scholars and practitioners within the field of adult and continuing education.

We hope you enjoy reading the conference proceedings.

Thank you,

Yvonne Hunter-Johnson

Cathy Cherrstrom

Jacqueline McGinty

Christy Rhodes

Table of Contents

Improving Scholarly Discourse: Responding to Reviewers and Understanding Scholarly Impact

Lisa M. Baumgartner
Texas State University

Abstract: Publication expectations continue to rise at academic institutions. Successfully publishing an article means effectively responding to reviewer comments. In this paper, I briefly delineate the publication process. I discuss best practices for responding to reviewer comments and provide examples. I review how the scholarly impact of one's work is measured. Terms such as impact factor, H-index, and ¡10 index are defined and critiqued. Altmetric measures the effect of scholarly impact in social media. I describe and critique venues for sharing research such as ResearchGate and Academia.edu.

Keywords: scholarship, publication, reviewers, scholarly impact

Academics need to produce research and scholarship. Part of the publication process is to respond to reviewers' feedback on an author's manuscript. Useful answers to reviewers' suggestions increase the chance of publication. I discuss the academic publication process. I define journal article ratings (e.g., accept, conditional accept, revise and resubmit, and reject), include some best practices to respond to reviewers, and provide some sample responses. I explain how scholarly impact is measured and how researchers can promote their scholarship.

Academic Publication Process

There are responsibilities for authors, journals, and reviewers in the publication process. Authors need to select the most appropriate journal for their work after examining the journal's submission guidelines (Cherrstrom, 2020). The submission guidelines detail the journal's mission, which describes the topics the journal covers, the methodological approaches welcomed (e.g., qualitative or quantitative methodologies), the epistemologies, and the audience (e.g., scholars, practitioners, teachers, policymakers). Authors should review published articles in their targeted journals, decide on a journal, write the manuscript, blind the document so there is no identifying information on it, and submit the manuscript (Cherrstrom, 2020).

Journal editors determine if the article is appropriate for the journal. If the item is deemed within the scope of the journal, it is sent out for review. Generally, two or three reviewers receive the article. The article may be under consideration for several months. The reviewers provide feedback and recommend a decision (Cherrstrom, 2020). Journal editors consolidate reviewers' feedback, add to reviewer comments, decide on the manuscript, and send the author a letter advising the author of the decision and recommend the next steps.

Decisions on articles generally fall into four categories. The first option is: *accepted without revisions.* This decision is rare. The *conditional accept* rating indicates that minor revisions are needed, including but not limited to adding more details in the methods section, including citations from particular authors, or adding more information in the

implications and conclusions section. The *revise and resubmit* rating indicates that the reviewers see promise in their scholarship. The manuscript needs more substantive changes and is often sent out for a second review. *Reject* means the journal did not find the article suitable for the journal. Authors need to target another journal, revise the manuscript, and submit it (Cherrstrom, 2020). Other possible responses from journals can include *major revisions* or *reject and resubmit*. In these cases, the journal sees promise, but there is very substantive work to do.

Reviewers' Comments

The quality of reviews varies. In general, a more detailed review helps the author improve the subsequent submission. "Literature that explores the relationship between transformative learning and trauma is needed in the literature review. The authors may consider the following sources [with article and book citations listed]" is more helpful than "More transformative learning/trauma literature is needed." Consider reviewers' constructive comments as a gift. They want to improve the manuscript. Reviewers' comments can range from helpful and constructive to personal and irrelevant. It is best to ignore personal, irrelevant comments. Mean-spirited comments say more about the reviewer than the manuscript.

The journal editors consolidate the comments. Attend to what *they* consider essential to revise. Good editors provide adequate guidance that informs the author how to change the manuscript to increase the chance of publication.

Best Practices for Responding to Reviewer Comments

A response letter is required that details the changes made per the reviewers' recommendations. The letter includes a summary of the changes made and delves into more specific detail. Some suggestions follow as to how to respond to reviewer comments.

Be polite and courteous when responding to reviewer comments. Reviewers' comments generally reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the article. If the reviewer did not understand an aspect of the author's work, recognize that readers may not either. Write an article for an intelligent audience that may not be an expert on the topic. The item needs to be understood by everyone, not just those who specialize in the article's subject (Noble, 2017). Provide clear responses to reviewers in a linear, point-by-point manner (Nobel, 2017). Taking the reviewers' comments verbatim or providing a good summary and responding to the critique with the revision allows reviewers to ascertain how the author addressed their comments efficiently. For example, the authors may choose to present their responses in a feedback form. Table 1 represents how my colleagues and I responded to editors' comments, which led to article publication (Deer et al., 2020).

Accommodate reviewers' requests to the best of one's ability. If reviewers' comments substantively help shape the manuscript, acknowledge their contributions (Noble, 2017). Sometimes the author cannot accommodate the request. The author should appreciate the advice and explain why she/he cannot address the issue. A phrase such as, "Thank you for your

suggestion to expand the discussion. Instead, we refer the reader to articles for further study as this would help us to keep within the word limit of the paper" (Tress Academic, 2019a, para. 5).

Table 1: *Reviewer Responses to Editors' Comments in Table Form*

Editors' comments	Action/Responses
Thus, there is just a bit of additional work to do. Table 1 reports considerable heterogeneity in the variables "age at entry" and "years in the sex trade." We would have liked to read more quotes from Elle and Gloria, as they tend to represent the more senior employees in your sample—and their transitions to legal work might have intersected with age	We returned to the data to address this suggestion, specifically the interview transcripts with Gloria and Elle. Two issues arise: First, the editors' comment points us to an error in the table—we had mislabeled participants ages at the time of the interview as age of entry. We have corrected the error and relabeled the columns Second, we agree that age is a relevant consideration but in connection to the purpose for this manuscript, age is not present in the data. As a result, we added an additional participant quote from Gloria (p. 18) regarding age and pursuing higher education. Her only other comment about age-related to how strange it was that people still sensed a couple of participants made (independent of age), but not relevant to this paper. Elle did not make any comments reflective of age and no additional transcript quotes would add value.
Could you add some reflections on the influence age or senior might have on the reported findings?	We have added the issue of age as a recommendation for future research (p. 27). As previously discussed, the issue of age was not sufficiently present in the data for us to be able to justify saying much.
Second, your findings are highly relevant for other women intending to exit the sex trade. In addition, we see relevance of your findings to transpeople and to men who have sex with men—perhaps these two populations could be included as a direction for future research that follows from your pioneering work.	We have expanded the recommendations for future research to include additional marginalized groups, including transgender individuals and men engaged in sex work (p. 28).

Understanding Scholarly Impact

As the number of publications and their impact affects tenure and promotion decisions, it is crucial to know the various ways that the impact of an individual's scholarship is measured. I

review several measurement indexes, including the impact factor, h-index, and the ¡10 index and Google Scholar. Venues for distributing scholars' research are delineated.

The article's scholarly impact is quantified in several ways. Journals indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus have impact factors. A journal's impact factor is "used to sort or rank journals by their relative importance" (The Ohio State University, 2018, para 1). The higher the impact factor, the more prestigious the journal. The H-index measures "the number of papers (h) with a citation number [greater or equal to] h" (Cornell, University, 2020a). If a scholar has an H-index of 14, that means s/he has 14 papers cited at least 14 times. The advantages to this measurement allow for "direct comparisons within disciplines," and this number "measures quantity and impact by a single value" (Cornell University Library, 2020b, paras. 5-6). However, the number is not accurate for early-career researchers. Articles published in the Web of Science are the only ones indexed" (Cornell University Library, 2020b). Google Scholar reports the H-index on Google Scholar Citations. Last, the ¡10 index measures "the number of publications with at least ten citations" in Google Scholar (Cornell University Library, 2020b, para.2).

There are several ways to view one's scholarship's influence. Google Scholar provides the scholars' names, institutional affiliations, research areas, and publications. The scholarship is listed in descending order, with the most cited citation listed first and the year it was published. To the right of this list is the total number of citations, h-index, and ¡10 index scores for all time and within the last five years. A bar graph pictorially represents the number of citations per year.

ResearchGate

ResearchGate is a website that provides a venue for researchers and scholars to share their research. ResearchGate, founded in 2008, has "over 17 million members from all over the world" (ResearchGate, para 1, 2020). Their mission is to "connect the world of science and make research open to all" (ResearchGate, para 1, 2020). Scholars share their work publicly or upload a copy of their scholarship available on request. A scholar's site statistics include Research Interest. A Research Interest score shows how individuals are interacting with one's work. Metrics included in the score are publication views, downloads, recommending the scholar's work, and the publication's citations (Research Interest, 2020). Several metrics are not calculated in the score, including "multiple reads and recommendations by a researcher in a single week" (Research Interest, 2020, para 13), inquiries by automated systems, and reads by people outside the ResearchGate community. The number of citations the work received, recommendations, and publication recommendations round out the metrics. These statistics are provided in a graphic form on the "Stats" page also.

ResearchGate features a "Scores" page where members can see their ResearchGate score, which is "calculated based on any contribution you share on ResearchGate or add to one's profile such as published articles, unpublished research, project, questions and answers (RG Score, 2020, para 1). This score includes published and unpublished work, projects the author has listed, and the questions the researchers have asked and answered (RG Score, 2020). The "Scores" page lists the author's publication with the highest H-index and provides suggestions for increasing the RG score.

ResearchGate provides an "About Me" section where authors briefly introduce the languages they speak, their disciplines, and their skills and expertise. There is a reminder to the scholar of the texts that do not have full texts yet. A graphic provides a research overview of the number of research items, projects the scholar is working on, the number of questions the scholar asked other scholars in ResearchGate, and the number of answers provided. ResearchGate members can show members' current projects in progress. The overview page includes the scholars' school affiliation and members who are following the scholar's work.

Academia.edu

In Academia.edu, researchers can upload papers to this site, see the number of document views of their research, the unique visitors to the site, and view profiles at no cost. Subscribers may download papers, track funding opportunities, search papers, see profiles of who is reading the scholar's work, and view scholarly impact measures. Other information that can be seen at no cost under the "Impact" feature of Academic.edu include the following demographics of those who viewed the scholars work: countries, cities, universities, research fields, job titles, pages read, traffic sources (e.g., Google, myway,), and how many people searched for the scholar's work.

For $99 a year, subscribers can see who cites and reads their work and have access to enhanced analytics, access to millions of papers, a personal website, grants, search alerts, and summaries of papers (Academia, 2020). Subscribers can also bulk download papers (Academia, 2020).

Altmetric

Altmetric measures how much attention your articles obtain by collecting data from social media, traditional media such as the *New York Times*, blogs from organizations and individual researchers, and online references managers. Altmetric tracks "the mention of a wide variety of publications including "books, book chapters, journal articles, presentations, dissertations, reports, conference proceedings, reviews, data sets, working papers, grey literature, [and] clinical trials" (Altmetric Sources, 2020, para 4). The sources they track authors mention of research include policy documents, online reference managers such as Mendeley and CiteULike, social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit and Wikipedia, YouTube, and Open Syllabus (Altmetric Sources, 2020).

Altmetric can showcase scholars' influence in the field when they apply for grants. Researchers can see where their colleagues' work is being visited (e.g., how often it is Tweeted, mentioned in blogs, read on Mendeley, etc.) and learn how to publicize their work best. Authors can see who is talking about their research, track activity around how their research is being seen, and these metrics. Altmetric provides "funders and review panels . . . the broader influence of [scholars'] work" (Altmetric for Researchers, 2020, para. 5).

Best Practices in Understanding Scholarly Impact and Promoting Scholarly Work

Submit your work to journals that have impact factors, if possible. The higher the impact factor, the better. The H-index and ¡10 factors are good to know. The dissemination through social

media allows authors to promote their work. ResearchGate and Academia.edu allow authors to disseminate their work. Paid subscriptions to Academia.edu unlocks a host of other features. Scholars may consider featuring their work on one or both platforms to build a reputation. Promoting works on blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube can increase authors' social media presence and authors can cite these Altmetric statistics when applying for grants.

In summary, scholars need to publish and promote their work. Responding to reviewers' comments effectively is a necessary aspect of the publication process. Tenure and promotion committees particularly note the impact of scholars' work as measured by a journal's impact factor. Altmetric also estimates how scholarly work is being seen. Authors can showcase their work and see others' work on ResearchGate and Academia.edu

References

Academia. (2020). *Academia premium features*. https://support.academia.edu/hc/en-us/articles/360043383853-What-is-Academia-Premium-

Altmetric for Researchers. (2020). *Who is saying what about your published work*? https://www.altmetric.com/audience/researchers/

Altmetric Sources. (2020). *What outputs and sources does Altmetric track?* https://help.altmetric.com/support/solutions/articles/6000060968-what-outputs-and-sources-does-altmetric-track-

Cherrstrom, C. (2020). *Publication process* [PowerPoint slides for AAACE presentation].

Cornell University Library. (2020a). *Measuring your research impact: 10-index*. https://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=32272&p=203393

Cornell University Library. (2020b). *Measuring your research impact: H-index*. https://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=32272&p=203391

Deer, S., Zarestky, J., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2020). "Learn how to hustle for good": Women's work transitions out of the sex trade. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *31*(1), 31-48.

Noble, W. S. (2017, October 12). Ten simple rules for writing a response to reviewers. *PLOS Computational Biology, 13*(10), e1005730. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1005730

ResearchGate. (2020). *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/about

Research Interest. (2020). *What is research interest?* https://explore.researchgate.net/display/support/Research+Interest

RG Score (2020). *RG Score*. https://explore.researchgate.net/display/support/RG+Score

The Ohio State University. (2018, March 1). *Scholarly impact and citation analysis*. https://osu.libguides.com/c.php?g=110226&p=714742

Tress Academic. (2019a). *Blog post #34: Seven features of a good response to reviewers*. https://tressacademic.com/response-to-reviewers/

Tress Academic. (2019b, December 3). *Seven features of a good response to reviewers*. https://tressacademic.com/response-to-reviewers/

The Mind's Design: The Neuroscience of Stress and Resilience

Ellen N. Beattie
Ashford University

Abstract: Resilience and the ability to manage stress contribute to life satisfaction and success. Resiliency contributes to academic and professional success, healthy interpersonal relationships, confidence in oneself, and is a positive predictor of life satisfaction. The body's stress response is a highly orchestrated biological action that can help or hinder resiliency. Understanding both the psychological and neuroscience components of stress and resiliency aids in understanding the "resilient person" prototype and offers insights into what interventions might increase the highly desired characteristic of resiliency.

Keywords: mindfulness, psychological resilience, resilience, stress, neuroscience

Stress is an unavoidable consequence of life and is at epidemic levels in American culture today. Definitions vary, but a commonly used definition of stress by the American Institute of Stress (2020b) is the "physical, mental, or emotion strain or tension" (para. 4). The global pandemic, an uncertain political future, and racial injustice add to the multitude of stressors faced by the American people in 2020. Now, more than ever, the importance of understanding and managing stress and increasing resilience is paramount.

Resilience contributes to academic and professional success, healthy interpersonal relationships, confidence in oneself, and is a positive predictor of life satisfaction (Roth & Herzberg, 2017). This article integrates research from neuroscience and positive psychology. It explores the neurobiology of the stress response, the consequences of excessive or chronic stress, the underpinning of biological variations in response to stress, the neuroscience of mindfulness and meditation. It presents an evidence-based framework for building resiliency. The article concludes with an immediately applicable neuroscience-based method for inducing the parasympathetic response to calm the body.

Literature Review

The literature is critically analyzed, synthesized, and integrated to share research insights into the fields of stress and resilience. Key search words included stress, stress response, resilience, psychological resilience, neuroscience, and mindfulness. Exploring the topics from both a biological and a psychological perspective presents a holistic approach to the topics and directly connects to satisfaction and success in everyday life.

Stress is essential to human survival and occurs on a continuum with positive and negative effects on the body. For immediate, short-duration stress can be beneficial to your health. When the brain detects risk and responds by instantly triggering the hormones and neurotransmitters of the stress response, the body prepares for immediate action. The benefits of stress extend past survival. Eustress, or "good stress," motivates and facilitates learning and change. Mild stress levels enhance attention and memory formation. The stress response positively stimulates the

immune system to ward off infections and heal from wounds (American Institute of Stress, 2020a). Conversely, sustained and chronic stress results in negative physiological and structural adaptations. Chronic stress wears down the body and results in irritability, anxiety, depression, and insomnia (American Institute of Stress, 2020b). An exploration of how the body and brain processes stress will explain this variance in stress' consequences.

Neuroscience of Stress

Stress is a well-researched topic in basic and clinical neuroscience. The last century of research provides a clear picture of its complex neuroanatomy and how homeostasis can be regained (Godoy et al., 2018). Scientists now understand the stress system as an engagement of the integrated brain structures that collectively detect and identify events as real or perceived threats (Godoy et al., 2018).

Stressors can be either physical, where one's physiological status is disrupted, or psychological, where a stimulus threatens in the present moment or can be anticipated to cause harm (Godoy et al., 2018). Physical and psychological stressors engage separate but potentially overlapping neural brain circuits. Physical stressors are processed primarily by the brainstem and hypothalamic regions. These encompass trauma to the body, infection, or blood loss. Psychological stressors are processed with the limbic system, including the prefrontal cortex. Upsetting events or the anticipation of such events are examples of such stressors. Conflicts, increasing professional demands, loss of a loved one, and financial strain are examples of prevalent psychological stressors.

When triggered by a stressor, the brain orchestrates a response. Two complementary biological pathways mediate the stress response: the autonomic nervous system and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis. Within the autonomic nervous system, the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) is the first phase responder of the body's stress processing. This response occurs before conscious awareness and within a second of the brain's detection of the stressor. The sympathetic-adreno-medullar (SAM) axis activates the adrenal medulla of the adrenal glands (which sit on the kidneys), releasing adrenaline and noradrenaline into the bloodstream. The SNS provides a rapid response, activating the cardiovascular system and increasing alertness, vigilance, and the ability to appraise the situation (Godoy et al., 2018).

The second phase of the body's stress response engages the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis. The HPA axis consists of the hypothalamus, the pituitary, and the adrenal cortex, where cortisol is produced. It intertwines the central nervous system and the endocrine system. Signals from the hypothalamus and pituitary release cortisol from the adrenal glands. The hypothalamus integrates body functions to maintain homeostasis. Cortisol, a steroid hormone, then crosses cell membranes to enter the brain to lock into its receptors. Cortisol signals back on the hypothalamus and pituitary gland to regulate cortisol's production.

All the body's cells host receptors for the hormone (King, 2016). Cortisol is known as the "Goldilocks hormone" because just the right amount is necessary for the body to be healthy. Two types of receptors in the brain regulate how quickly brain structures activate. High-affinity receptors have a six to tenfold higher affinity for the cortisol molecule. Those receptors are

activated faster and by smaller amounts of cortisol. The hippocampus, regulating memory and learning, and the amygdala, regulating emotions include these high-affinity receptors. They are activated by slight rises in the hormone and are more quickly affected than other brain regions (King, 2016). The frontal lobe, which regulates executive planning and control, has only low-affinity receptors. Activation in this region occurs later. The existence of these two receptor types explains why stress is both positive and negative. If only the high-affinity receptors are activated, memory and retrieval are enhanced. If the low-affinity receptors are activated, cognitive impairment results.

Stress duration is a contributing factor to whether stress acts as a positive or negative biological adaptation. Acute stress prompts the production of neural stem cells and increases the numbers of new neurons, which take at least two weeks to mature. These adaptations may occur due to a proactive response to future anticipated stress (King, 2016). Conversely, chronic stress minimizes new neurons and dendrites and suppresses new synaptic connections.

If stress hormones remain elevated for months or years, they can stimulate physiological changes. The hippocampus, critical to memory and learning, shrinks. The amygdala, critical to emotions, grows. Eventually, the complex feedback system that suppresses the excess secretion of cortisol is disturbed. Once this happens, the capacity to discriminate between threat levels falls away. Either everything seems threatening, resulting in anxiety, or else nothing does, with depression or burnout as a result.

Stress affects the body and brain differently at different periods of one's lifespan. The Harvard Center for the Developing Child (2014) reported that the stress response's neural circuits are remarkably malleable during the fetal and childhood period. Chronic or toxic stress in childhood disrupts the body's stress response system long term and may result in a system that is overactive or slow to shut down when faced with stress later in life. There are significant damaging effects on learning, behavior, and physical and mental health from this early stress.

Psychology and Neurobiology of Resilience

The word resilience, derived from the Latin verb *resilire*, means to "leap back" (Robertson et al., 2015, p. 534). Psychologists define resilience as the "process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors" (American Psychological Association, 2020, para. 4). Someone resilient has the capacity and adaptability to overcome stress and adversity while maintaining normal psychological and physical functioning (Wu et al., 2013). While the neurological understanding of resilience is in its infancy, research provides insights into the psychological, developmental, and genetic factors that influence the ability to adapt to adversity, change, and trauma.

Unique biological and personality characteristics, environmental aspects of family, community, and culture, and learned adaptations gained through life experiences shape an individual's resilience. The psychological personality traits studied by social scientists show the resilient prototype scores low on neuroticism and above average on extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Roth & Herberg, 2017). Higher self-confidence levels, academic and

professional success, success in relationships, and better self-reported health characterize resilient individuals (Roth & Herzberg, 2017). Grit, the personality trait of perseverance and passion for long-term goals, is a predictor of one's resilience (Vainio & Daukantaitė, 2016). Duckworth et al. (2007) extensively studied grit and conclude that grit is the most reliable predictor of personal success.

Developmental factors contribute to resilience. Rodent and primate studies have consistently shown that maternal abuse in early childhood led to high anxiety levels and increased HPA Axis activity, resulting in delayed independence and diminished stress management skills later in life (Wu et al., 2013). Southwick et al. (2016) explored the effect of parents' well-being and child-rearing skills and the social support available from the community. Survivors of childhood trauma exhibit changes to the central nervous system (CNS) and reduced volume in the hippocampus, often observed in patients with mood disorders (Wu et al., 2013).

Genetic factors influence resilience. Variances in resilience are influenced by genetic variations identified in the Neuropeptide Y (NPY), the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis (HPA Axis), the noradrenergic and dopaminergic systems, and the serotonergic systems (Wu et al., 2013). The serotonin transporter (SERT) gene is regularly connected to increased mental illness rates and increased sensitivity to stress (Wankerl et al., 2014).

Research highlighted in Thomas Boyce's book, *The Orchid and The Dandelion,* presents an interesting theory on why some children thrive and others do not. He observed differences in a child's sensitivity to his or her environment. Boyce (2019) posited that most children demonstrate indifference to adversity and have stress response systems that react minimally to adverse experiences. Like the *wild dandelion* that grows out of a sidewalk crack, these children thrive. Other children are highly sensitive to both highly nurturing and highly traumatic experiences. Like the *delicate orchid*, these children can thrive in supportive settings but wither if the ideal conditions are not met. Boyce's research suggested that there may be some truth to being *born resilient*.

Learned adaptations refer to those behaviors obtained through attention, focus, and practice. These behaviors allow for tailoring to the environment. Psychological interventions to support and grow resiliency focus on skill development. These skills could include physical exercise, reframing thoughts and emotions, mindfulness, and social skills (Southwick et al., 2016). The awareness of one's perspective to life's challenges may prompt a focused and intentional strategy to gain coping skills.

Resilience clearly results from a multitude of factors. The notion that resilience is a binary variable, meaning one either has it or does not, denies its complexity. Resilience relies on behaviors, thoughts, and actions that one can develop (American Psychology Association, 2012). While biological and personality factors are outside of one's control, other factors, such as personality and learned adaptation, can increase resilience.

Research Approach

The exploration of stress and resilience draws on contemporary research from the fields of neuroscience and positive psychology. The purpose of this article is to understand resilience from a psychological and a biological perspective to solidify interventions to maximize resiliency. Research article subjects included mindfulness, psychological resilience, resiliency factors, stress, and stress response. The author selected articles due to their relevance to the article's topics and recent publication within the last five years.

Major Themes and Discussion of Resiliency

The stressful events of life are primarily outside of one's control. Resilience will determine how long one can continue to bend instead of break and how long one can sustain positive emotions. Self-awareness of the physical and emotional signs of chronic or excessive stress is essential to resilience. This increased self-awareness mitigates the adverse consequences of stress.

Previous notions that the ability to be resilient was inherent in some individuals and not others have been discounted. While resilience neuroscience research focuses on gene expression, the number of cells, and brain networks (King, 2016), other considerations must be factored in. This section presents a framework for building personal resilience and explores the widely recognized practices of meditation, mindfulness, and breath control.

Framework to Build Personal Resilience

A model of building resilience, offered by McKay (2020), presents practical interventions. In this building resilience model, three distinct factors are considered—bottom-up, outside-in, and top-down (McKay, 2020). Bottom-up factors include genetics and physical health. Without the ability to adjust genetic makeup, one can build resilience by positively influencing our physical health with a healthy diet, adequate sleep, and regular physical exercise. Outside-in factors include the social support structure. Those seeking to increase resilience should build networks of support. Benefiting from the love, care, and kindness of other people is one of the best ways to support oneself. Finally, top-down factors include our thoughts, beliefs, and emotions. Identifying and expressing emotions, controlling conscious thought patterns, and engaging in emotional regulation build resilience. This practical model offers a realistic and achievable plan to begin building resilience.

Mindfulness, Meditation, and Breath Control

Many individuals and wellness professionals tout the benefits of meditation and mindfulness to reduce psychological stress and stress-related health problems. The subjectivity of these ancient practices creates difficultly in research. A meta-analysis examined 47 trials including more than 31,000 participants explored meditation programs' efficacy in improving stress-related outcomes, including "anxiety, depression, stress/distress, positive mood, mental health-related quality of life, attention, substance use, eating habits, sleep, pain, and weight" in a diverse adult population (Goyal et al., 2014, p. 357). Mindfulness meditation programs had moderate evidence of improved anxiety, depression, and pain but insufficient evidence of improved stress/distress

and mental health-related quality of life. The meta-analysis found no influence or insufficient evidence of any effect of meditation programs on positive mood, attention, substance use, eating habits, sleep, and weight (Goyal et al., 2014). The researchers concluded that there was no evidence that meditation was better than any other treatment, including exercise, drugs, or behavioral therapies.

While the 2017 meta-analysis cannot promote meditation programs as beneficial to reducing stress and stress-related health problems, neuroscience research on breathing shows promise. The control of the breath has been used for centuries to promote mental calm and relaxation. Breathing functions both as an automatic function and one that can be manipulated by higher-order brain functions. The previously unexplored relationship between the breath and higher-level brain functions became the research topic of Stanford neuroscientists. A 2017 study presented evidence of a cluster of neurons in the brain stem contributing to alertness, attention, relaxation, and stress. This cluster of neurons communicates between the brain's respiratory control center and the structures responsible for generating arousal (Yackle et al., 2017). Understanding this cluster's function may lead to discoveries and strategies to alleviate stress, anxiety, and negative emotions through breath control.

Stanford neuroscientist and Principle Investigator of the Huberman Lab, Dr. Andrew Huberman, shared insight into how one can use breathing to change one's mental state. This calming breathing technique involves two short inhales, ideally through the nose, followed by one extended exhale, ideally through the mouth. It mirrors the natural sigh and is the most effective and quickest way to induce a sense of calm by activating the parasympathetic nervous system. Resilience is a quality worthy of continued exploration. Since resilience contributes to academic and professional success, healthy interpersonal relationships, confidence in oneself, and is a positive predictor of life satisfaction (Roth & Herzberg, 2017), the development of effective interventions will benefit society. This article aimed to understand stress and resilience from a psychological and a biological perspective and explore the researched interventions. The neuroscience of the body's stress response and a comprehensive understanding of stress formed the basis of exploring resilience. The author presented a holistic framework to build resilience. Finally, a breathing technique to engage the parasympathetic nervous system and induce a sense of calm concluded the article.

References

American Psychology Association. (2012). *Building your resiliency*. https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience

Boyce, T. (2019). The orchid and the dandelion: Why sensitive children face challenges and how all can thrive. Penguin Random House.

Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*(6), 1087-1101. https://doi:10.1037/0022-3514.92.6.1087

Godoy, L. D., Rossignoli, M. T., Delfino-Pereira, P., Garcia-Cairasco N., de Lima Umeoka, E. H. (2018). A comprehensive overview on stress neurobiology: Basic concepts and clinical implications. *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience, 12*(1), 1-23. https://doi:10.3389/fnbeh.2018.00127

Goyal, M., Singh, S., Sibinga, E. M. S., Gould, N. F., Rowland-Seymour, A., Sharma, R., Berger, Z., Sleicher, D., Maron, D. D., Shihab, H. M., Ranasinghe, P. D., Linn, S., Saha, S., Bass, E. B., & Haythornthwaite, J. A. (2014). Meditation programs for psychological stress and well-being: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA Internal Medicine, 174*(3), 357-368. https://doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.13018

King, A. (2016). Neurobiology: Rise of resilience. *Nature* (531), 18--19. https://doi.org/10.1038/531S18a

McKay, S. (2020). *Building resiliency*. The Neuroscience Academy. www.theneuroscienceacademy.com

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2014). *Excessive stress disrupts the architecture of the developing brain: Working paper No. 3* (Updated edition). www.developingchild.harvard.edu

Robertson, I., Cooper, C., Sarkar, M., & Curran, T. (2015). Resilience training in the workplace from 2003 to 2014: A systematic review. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 88*(3). 533, -, 562. https://doi:10.1111/joop.12120

Roth, M., & Herberg, P. Y. (2017). The resilient person prototype. *Journal of Individual Differences,38*(1), 1-11.

Southwick, S. M., Sippel, L., Krystal, J., Charney, D., Mayes, L., & Pietrzak, R. (2016). Why are some individuals more resilient than others: the role of social support? *World Psychiatry: Official Journal of the World Psychiatric Association, 15*(1), 77-79. https://doi:10.1002/wps.20282

The American Institute of Stress. (2020a). *Stress effects*. https://www.stress.org/stress-effects#body

The American Institute of Stress. (2020b). What is stress? https://www.stress.org/daily-life

Vainio, M. M., & Daukantaitė, D. (2016). Grit and different aspects of well-being: Direct and indirect relationships via sense of coherence and authenticity. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 17*(9), 2119-2147. https://doi:10.1007/s10902-015-9688-7

Wankerl, M., Miller, R., Kirschbaum, C., Stadler, T., & Alexander, N. (2014). Effects of genetic and early environmental risk factors for depression on serotonin transporter expression and methylation profiles. *Translational Psychiatry, 4*(1), 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1038/tp.2014.37

Wu, G., Feder, A., Cohen, H., Kim, J. J., Calderon, S., Charney, D. S., & Mathe, A. A. (2013). Understanding resilience. *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience 7*(1), 6-20. https://doi:10.3389/fnbeh.2013.00010

Yackle, K., Schwarz, L. A., Kam, K., Sorokin, J. M., Huguenard, J. R., Feldman, J. L., Luo L., & Krasnow, M. A. (2017). Breathing control center neurons that promote arousal in mice. *Science,* 355(6332), 1411-1415. https://doi: 10.1126/science.aai7984

Prior Learning Assessment in the US: A Systematic Literature Review

Carrie J. Boden, Catherine A. Cherrstrom, and Todd Sherron
Texas State University

Abstract: Earning a college degree offers many benefits but requires time and money. Prior learning assessment (PLA) saves time and money by translating prior learning into college credit. This systematic literature review examined peer reviewed journal articles about PLA from the last decade. The research design used systematic literature review procedures to identify articles, collect data using the matrix method, and analyze data using thematic coding. Findings included journals publishing PLA articles, authorship, publication years, underlying empirical studies, and six major themes: the big picture, higher education changing PLA and PLA changing higher education; equity and access; program overviews; approaches, methods, and processes; and quality assessment.

Many Americans dream of a college degree and earning one offers multiple benefits. College graduates have access to a greater number of occupations and wider range of careers and enjoy better employment rates, earnings, employee benefits, and job security and satisfaction (Cherrstrom & Boden, 2018; Ma et al., 2016; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Department of Labor, 2017). Pursuing a college degree, however, requires time and money (Bowers & Bergman, 2016), and students must overcome such challenges.

Prior learning assessment (PLA) can make the difference between earning or not earning a college degree (Boden et al., 2019). Using assessment testing or competency portfolios, PLA documents college-level learning gained outside the classroom for academic credit (Klein-Collins & Wertheim, 2013). According to the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL, 2010), outside the classroom includes learning in the workplace and military, from travel and hobbies, and through civic activities and volunteer service. Benefits include reduced tuition costs, greater student persistence, and shorter time-to-degree, especially for non-traditional students and underserved populations (Klein, 2017). Students with PLA credit have higher graduation rates than those without, irrespective of academic ability, age, financial aid, gender, grade point average, and race-ethnicity (CAEL, 2010). PLA merits further examination.

The purpose of this review was to examine the academic literature related to PLA in the US. Several research questions guided the review: Where, when, and how many peer reviewed journal articles about PLA have been published in the last 10 years? What institutions and organizations do published authors represent? How many articles are based on empirical studies? What PLA-related findings and results do authors examine and discuss?

Research Design for Systematic Literature Review

Systematic literature reviews contribute to current research by studying themes, gaps, and synergies regarding a specific subject (Booth et al., 2012). To identify articles, search criteria

included *prior learning assessment* in the article abstract, peer reviewed journal articles, and articles published during the last decade in English. The search initially yielded 135 publications, but after eliminating duplicates and those not meeting inclusion criteria, resulted in 47 journal articles.

For data collection, we used the matrix method using an Excel spreadsheet to systematically capture data (Garrard, 2014). Each row summarized one article, and columns organized data related to journals. For data analysis, we read the data in their entirety and examined data related to the journal, article, and underlying study with special attention devoted to abstracts. Based on the latter, two of us independently, inductively, and initially coded each article for primary article purpose. As reliability and validation strategies, we held four coding sessions to test and reach inter-coder agreement and categories (Creswell & Poth, 2017). We then read articles, one category at a time, finalizing coding and categories and identifying major findings.

Findings

Major findings included journals publishing about PLA, authorship, publications by year, underlying empirical studies, and six major themes. Sixteen journals published 47 articles about PLA during the last decade with three to eight publications each year. The 47 articles represented 65 unique author perspectives, predominately affiliated with higher education institutions. Only 11 articles had underlying empirical studies but collectively represented quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Finally, the six major themes comprised the big picture, higher education changing PLA and PLA changing higher education; equity and access; program overviews; approaches, methods, and processes; and quality assessment.

Discussion of Findings

This section discusses journals publishing about PLA, author perspectives, few underlying empirical studies, and six primary themes.

Journals Publishing About PLA

Academic journals play an important role in a discipline's history, parameters, knowledge base and support the process of new knowledge joining the body of existing knowledge (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Although not considered a discipline, we deepen our knowledge by examining when and where articles with new PLA knowledge have joined the existing body of knowledge. During the last decade, 16 journals published 47 articles about PLA with annual publications ranging from three to eight articles over the decade. One journal, the *Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, represented half of all publications with 24 articles in nine of the decade's years. These findings indicate continued interest in PLA across the decade and identify journals with aims and scopes encompassing PLA.

Author Perspectives

Along with journal editors and reviewers, authors support new knowledge joining the body of existing knowledge (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Thus, discerning an author's perspective is

critical in examining academic literature. This review's 47 articles represented 65 unique author perspectives, predominately affiliated with higher education institutions. Although not surprising given the emphasis on publishing in higher education, PLA can benefit from author perspectives from nonprofits, businesses, and governments. These findings illustrate the critical role of higher education institutions in PLA, especially public institutions, and identify an opportunity for private institutions and other organizations.

Few Underlying Empirical Studies

Empirical research derives knowledge from experience based on the observation or measurement of a phenomenon (PennState University Libraries, 2020). In this review, less than one-quarter of articles were based on empirical studies. These findings illuminate a gap in the literature regarding published empirical studies examining PLA and opportunities for future research.

Major Themes

This review identified six major themes related to PLA. We will briefly discuss each theme using examples from the literature.

The big picture comprises six articles addressing foundational, historical, or broad-based topics. In the first of two articles, Travers (2012) traced the history of PLA in North American adult higher education from the 1970s to 2012. PLA grew in popularity during this time, and most published research centered on institutional practices as well as institutional and student learning outcomes. In the second article, Travers (2013) concluded institutions can measure the effectiveness of their PLA programs by assessing the interrelationships across five factors—institutional mission and commitment, institutional support, PLA program practices, PLA evaluator training program, PLA program feedback and evaluation. The articles in this theme suggest PLA is mature, versatile, and adaptive, pivoting and evolving to serve the needs of adult learners and the workforce.

Higher education is changing PLA, and PLA is changing higher education. Six articles comprise this theme, illustrating a symbiotic change relationship between PLA and higher education. In 2011, Kamenetz discussed the transformation of higher education through PLA, including the addition of open-network courses (e.g., Kahn Academy, MIT's Open Courseware) for PLA and quicker, more affordable degrees. The author discussed Empire State College's positive return on PLA investment, CAEL's work to extend PLA to additional universities through the LearningCounts program, and the rise and opportunity presented by free, open-network instructional courses for PLA. Agreeing with Kamenetz, Boilard (2011) further concluded PLA challenges the status quo and, thus, examined critical public policy issues for higher education including do-it-yourself education and PLA regulations. The articles in this theme indicate a symbiotic change relationship between higher education and PLA with opportunities to adapt to participatory societal shifts and capitalize on opportunities to synthesize learning across emerging options.

PLA supports *equity and access* for learners pursuing a college degree. Four articles comprise this theme. Focusing on students of color, Leaker and Boyce (2015) purported PLA is "more

than a mechanism of access; it can and must be a practice of equity" (p. 204). Noting higher graduation rates for students of color with PLA credit, they advocated different approaches for different racialized communities and designed the Women of Color and PLA workshops using critical race research. In 2017, Bergman and Herd identified the challenges military members face in transitioning to the civilian workforce, such as required education to gain civilian employment. PLA offers a bridge between military and academic knowledge, assisting active duty and veteran students. The authors highlighted military learners in transition, specific pathways for students, and implications for theory and practice in human resource development. The articles in this theme illuminate the opportunities for PLA to support equity and access and for institutions to create inclusive spaces and structures for special populations of learners.

Twelve articles provide *PLA program overviews* at 11 institutions, and sub-themes included numerous benefits to students participating in PLA and tools and best practices other institutions might adopt. Overall, PLA provides a quicker and less expensive path to graduation and develops important skills. Average credit awards for PLA ranged from 10 credit hours at Charter Oak State College (Adams & Wilder, 2016) to more than 30 credit hours at SUNY Empire State College (Kerr, 2013). Klein (2017) reported students at Capella University saved an average of $4,320 by participating in PLA. Articles also shared tools and best practices other institutions might adopt to improve PLA. The articles in this theme illustrate the wide variety of PLA programs offering numerous benefits to students and offer best practices for other programs to consider.

PLA uses a variety of *approaches, methods, and processes*. Eleven articles comprise this theme. According to Popova and Clougherty (2014), institutions typically choose between course-match (i.e., students apply for PLA credits to match learning to specific courses or outcomes) and non-course-match PLA models. The authors suggested competency-based learning as an assessment framework, offering the advantages of course-match and non-course-match without the disadvantages. However, defining the competency level, for example from baseline to mastery, remains the challenge. For non-course-match, Lambe (2011) described a writing method for the PLA essay facilitating a shift from what students experienced and accomplished to what they learned. The articles in this theme illustrate the variety of PLA approaches, methods, and processes and offer yet additional resources for those beginning or enhancing PLA programs or practices.

Quality assessment, the final major theme, comprises eight articles discussing assessment of programs, assessment of prior learning, or student outcomes and perceptions. For the latter, three articles situated at Middle Tennessee State University with one common author; we provide two examples here. Rust and Brinthaupt (2017a; 2017b) published two articles describing the underlying portfolio course and reported survey results regarding the perceptions and experiences of students who complete the course. Students reported improved academic skills, increased self-confidence and awareness, positive affective responses toward the course and portfolio, and whether participating in the online or hybrid course format, enhanced feelings of inclusion in the university. The articles in this theme provide examples of assessment for programs and prior learning along with student outcomes and perceptions. Such examples may offer resources to those beginning or enhancing PLA programs and practices. Collectively, the findings from this review offer implications and inform future research.

Implications and Future Research

This review offers implications for theory and practice and informs future research. For theory, the review adds a systematic examination of the academic literature on PLA in the US over the past 10 years. The review illustrates continued interest in PLA and adds synthesized findings. Such findings include the big picture perspective and context, illustrate the symbiotic relationship between higher education and PLA, illuminate opportunities for those in marginalized and special populations, highlight specific PLA programs, include multiple approaches, methods, and processes, and describe examples of quality assessment.

For practice, this review documents journals publishing and authors writing about PLA and articles offering PLA information, resources, best practices, and collaborative activities. For PLA administrators, this review provides knowledge and numerous examples of PLA practice in single institutions and across systems. These examples provide opportunities to strategically begin new or enhance existing PLA programs, build on CAEL standards, benchmark accomplishments, and glean new approaches, best practices, methods, processes, and tools. For students, PLA offers numerous benefits and supports equity and access for those in marginalized and special populations. For assessors, the review illuminates the importance of assessment for programs and prior learning, including student voices and achievement of learning outcomes.

Future research opportunities include more empirical studies, replicating this review beyond the US, and further examination of topics. PLA will benefit from more empirical studies to examine assessment models and tools, interventions, overall results, and the experiences of stakeholders—students, instructors, assessors, and administrators. Future research opportunities also include replicating this review beyond the United States. Such research, along with this review's findings and implications, will provide benefits to all PLA stakeholders, especially nontraditional students pursing the American dream of a college degree.

References

Adams, S. M., & Wilder, L. (2016). A new approach to PLA using scholarships and an audit tool. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 64*(2), 125-129. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2016.1177703

Bergman, M., & Herd, A. (2017). Proven leadership = college credit: Enhancing employability of transitioning military members through prior learning assessment. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 19*(1), 78-87. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1523422316682949

Boden, C. J., Cherrstrom, C. A., & Sherron, T. (2019). Redesign of prior learning assessment in an award-winning degree completion program. *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology*, *10*(3), 1–19. http://dx.doi.org/10.4018/IJAVET.2019070101

Boilard, S. (2011). Perspectives: Prior learning assessment challenges the status quo. *Change, 43*(6), 56-59. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2011.618083

Booth, A., Papaioannou, D., & Sutton, A. (2012). *Systematic approaches to a successful literature review.* Sage.

Bowers, A., & Bergman, M. (2016). Affordability and the return on investment of college completion: Unique challenges and opportunities for adult learners. *Journal of*

Continuing Higher Education, 64(3), 144-151.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2016.1229102

CAEL. (2010). *Fueling the race to postsecondary success. Executive summary*.
https://www.cael.org/fueling-the-race-to-postsecondary-success-executive-summary

Cherrstrom, C. A., & Boden, C. J. (2018). Beacon of hope: Award-winning program redesign for post-traditional students. *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology*, *9*(2), 30-47. http://dx.doi.org/10.4018/IJAVET.2018040103

Cope, W., & Kalantzis, M. (2009). Signs of epistemic disruption: Transformations in the knowledge system of the academic journal. *First Monday, 14*(4), no pp.
http://journals.uic.edu/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2309/2163

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.

Garrard, J. (2014). *Health sciences literature review made easy* (4th ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Kamenetz, A. (2011). The transformation of higher education through prior learning assessment. *Change, 43*(5), 7-13. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2011.599293

Kerr, T. (2013). An update on PLA for labor leaders and electricians. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 61*(3), 183-185. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2013.839236

Klein, J. (2017). Early results in Capella's prior learning assessment experimental site initiative. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 65*(1), 54-58.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2017.1272401

Klein-Collins, R., & Wertheim, J. B. (2013). Growing importance of prior learning assessment in the degree-completion toolkit. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education, 2013*(140), 51-60. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ace.20073

Lambe, J. P. (2011). Communicating college learning through noncourse matching: An approach to writing the prior learning assessment essay. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 59*(1), 50-53. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2011.546283

Leaker, C., & Boyce, F. A. (2015). A bigger rock, a steeper hill: PLA, race, and the color of learning. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 63*(3), 199-204.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2015.1085949

Ma, J., Pender, M., & Welch, M. (2016). *Education pays 2016: The benefits of higher education for individuals and society*. The College Board.
https://research.collegeboard.org/pdf/education-pays-2016-full-report.pdf

PennState University Libraries. (2020). *Empirical research in the social sciences and education*.
https://guides.libraries.psu.edu/emp

Popova, V., & Clougherty, R. J. 2. (2014). PLA binaries in the context of competency-based assessment. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 62*(1), 56-58.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2014.877769

Rust, D. Z., & Brinthaupt, T. M. (2017a). Student perceptions of and experiences with a PLA course and portfolio review. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 65*(2), 115-123.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2017.1320206

Rust, D. Z., & Brinthaupt, T. M. (2017b). Using student feedback to improve PLA portfolio courses. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 65*(3), 205-210.

Travers, N. L. (2012). What is next after 40 years? Part 1: Prior learning assessment: 1970–2011. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 60*(1), 43-47.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2012.650571

Travers, N. L. (2013). PLA philosophy, policy, and practice implications: Revisiting the 2009 Hoffman, Travers, Evans, and Treadwell study. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 61*(1), 54-58. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2013.759491

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2018, September 12). *Unemployment rate 2.1 percent for college grads, 3.9 percent for high school grads in August 2018*. Author. https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2018/unemployment-rate-2-1-percent-for-college-grads-3-9-percent-for-high-school-grads-in-august-2018.htm?view_full

U.S. Department of Labor. (2017). *High school graduates who work fulltime had median weekly earnings of $718 in second quarter*. https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2017/high-school-graduates-who-work-full-time-had-median-weekly-earnings-of-718-in-second-quarter.htm

Improving Continuing Professional Education: A Study of Paramedic Ethical Decision-Making Dilemmas and Supports

Susan Braithwaite[1] and Susan J. Barcinas[2]
[1]Western Carolina University and [2]North Carolina State University

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to share information on The Learning EMS Ethics Project, referred to as the LEEP project. LEEP is a long-term study of paramedic navigation of ethical dilemmas and decision making in prehospital care. The project additionally aims to contribute to the future development of future paramedic capacity building from education and licensure, to evolving expertise in the field, and continuing professional education.

Keywords: health professions, ethics, decision making, emergency medicine, experiential learning

Paramedicine, often referred to as prehospital emergency medical care, is a relatively new profession and while it has had aspects of protocol-driven decision making, it has evolved considerably in complexity and the autonomy associated with the role of a paramedic. Currently, paramedics have a high degree of autonomy, and a density of decision-making, as shown by making difficult, intense decisions in compressed time frames. Despite the growth of complex duties, professional paramedic preparation programs are still early in their approaches to curriculum and credentialing. In fact, depending upon the state in which a paramedic practices, she/he may be licensed, registered, certified, or practicing. With regard to academic or empirical understanding of the role of ethics or ethical decision making in prehospital emergency clinical situations, there are very few studies of how paramedics learn about, approach or build experience in this vital aspect of their work in the field.

This paper shares work from the Learning EMS (Emergency Medical Services) Ethics Project, referred to as LEEP. The purpose of LEEP is the long-term study of how paramedics develop field expertise in navigating ethical dilemmas and situations. The project also has a goal of the development of corresponding connections to future paramedic education and continuing professional education.

Why study this topic? Being skilled in navigating difficult, ethical situations is a mainstay of paramedic practice and it is important to everyone to have high quality medical care in emergency situations that take place in prehospital environments. For professional paramedics, ethical decision making is a source of stress, requires continuous learning, and requires adaptation to an ever-increasing scope of paramedic practice. There are few empirically driven ethics studies that guide or support paramedic formal education and learning, and/or their expertise development and growth in the field.

Literature Review/Background

The paramedic literature to date is largely international and relatively sparse--predominantly consisting of small studies taking place in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand,

and the United States. The prevailing approaches of existing studies on paramedic ethics and decision making tend to focus upon the use of protocols such as resuscitation, updates and advances in life-saving measures, and transport. Of those studies that specifically address ethics, the framework varies, or there is an absence of a framework, and in its place a general thematic exploration of paramedic field awareness and experience.

The National Health Service in the United Kingdom, for instance, has made recent strides in their paramedic education and recently adopted the six Cs of compassion, care, courage, communication, commitment and competency" (Eaton, 2019, p. 2094). Eaton's (2019) study researches paramedic learning of values during the practicum phase of their preparatory education program and key findings include the notion that paramedic students do differentiate between theoretical (text) based learning and practical learning when it comes to ethics, and are oriented towards learning practically. Further, they found that students did not receive a sufficient grounding during their educational experiences to meaningfully build upon once in their future practice.

Torabi et al. (2019) conducted research on the barriers to ethical decision making in Iran prehospital care. Their qualitative study suggests that most paramedic navigation of ethics is dependent upon several broad factors such as the situational elements, patient-related characteristics, and known environmental elements. Further, the authors suggest that it to understand navigation of ethical situations, paramedics work aims to sustain a balance between input and output knowledge, which includes the expectations and awareness of patients and their families, and the role of futile care, where a positive outcome is not expected. The study found that in the presence of an uncoordinated health care system where there is low trust in the services that a patient may receive or the support a paramedic may receive, that decision making may be more fluid and unpredictable in the direction of attempting to balance what is good for the patient with what is best for the actors within a healthcare system. Finally, the researchers found that there are certain types of paradoxes which surface, such as inner conflict between the law, values, regulations, and beliefs.

With relatively parallel findings, researchers in the United Kingdom interviewed focus groups of emergency clinicians, exploring decision making in relation to case vignettes (Brandling et al., 2017). Their study found that decision making in critical care situations was based upon several inter-twined elements, some similar in nature to Torabi (2019) with perhaps a few more additions. For instance, findings indicated that the factual information available to the EMS provider such as existence of a do-not-resuscitate order (DNR), or patient illness information played a large role in decision making. Paramedics navigated structural factors such as recommended or required protocols, transport distance to hospital, and available guidance and research. Paramedics were also influenced by cultural beliefs and values—their perception of the age of patient, perception of suffering, and how that influenced a decision about gauging, "what would you do if it were (a loved one or yourself)?" The findings suggested that paramedics consider interpersonal factors including the culture of their ambulance or other professional colleagues and hospital, perceived reactions or expectations of bystanders and calculation of risk factors such as personal safety, patient safety, and legal issues. Finally, personal values and beliefs--confidence in the system and in one's professional capacities, experience as a

prehospital caregiver, and the presence of fatigue were found to be critical components of ethical situation navigation.

In Ireland, a recent quantitative survey analyzed nearly 500 advanced paramedic recent graduates' responses in relation to their awareness of legal legislation regarding the ethics of DNR and the processes that they felt influenced their related ethical decision making in the field. Paramedics were asked for demographic information as well as for examples of when case study situations may go differently based upon the unique circumstances of a given emergent situation. Responses were classified about whether respondents felt a decision was a) an unwise decision, b) a decision not based upon sound medical principles; or c) decision may lead to patient's harm or death. One of their central study findings was that paramedics did not draw primarily upon their training, instead they relied upon experience to navigate situations, especially if the training they had received was hypothetical or theoretical rather than practical. The concepts of beneficence, non-maleficence, and respect for autonomy were central to decision-making (Bury, et. al, 2019). Similarly, they identified patterns in responses in four categories akin to the studies referenced above, labeling the categories as clinical, attitudinal, comprehension, and 'acting in the best interest of'. Yet another additional qualitative study reported that paramedics often rely upon role perception during decision making--and their perception of the role and responsibilities, which could be framed as boundary setting, largely influenced their decision making and added a sense of legitimacy or confidence in their choices. (Simpson et.al, 2017)

While the existing literature suggested some common themes and served as a directional guide, it did not fully address our goal of more deeply identifying and understanding how experienced paramedics learn to and actually do navigate ethical situations and how the learning itself, assumed to be developing expertise, occurs in the field.

Developing occupational expertise via everyday work activities and interactions is well studied and Ericsson et al.(2018) theorize that expertise is a dynamic that is a reflection of knowledge which is accepted or 'known' within a given field or occupation. In academic terms this is sometimes referred to as a canon. This knowledge is additionally integrated with environmentally situated factors, in this case the culture of paramedic work, the specific geographic or organizational context, and any personal factors specific to individual professionals. Building upon that and specific to the health professions education, mastery learning is a model that advocates for the intentional capacity building of all learners to an expertise or expert level, rather than aiming for a bell or distributed curve in learning and performance. In a recent (2020) book on mastery learning in health professions education, Issa, et. al. (2020) address mastery learning in emergency clinical care, encompassing paramedics. Their writing posits that deliberate practice with targeted feedback, and rapid cycle deliberate practice (RCDP), is highly effective in emergent care situations and its success not only depends upon the initial learning experiences but also upon a reoccurring cycle of spaced or distributed learning--refreshers or updates via continuing professional education (Issaet et al., 2020). Combining these concepts, our future goal is of continuing professional education for paramedics that addresses how best to integrate relevant experientially derived expertise with opportunities for periodic mastery learning.

In the United States, paramedic education requirements vary from state to state. There is a National Registry Paramedic (NPR), which contains several conditions and requirements, and it is also accepted in some states as a reciprocal credential. Within preparation programs, there are a range of textbooks used, and one of the leading texts, for example, is Sanders' Paramedic Textbook, a fifth edition published by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (2019). Within it, there is one short chapter that addresses ethical decision making in the field. The foundational curriculum draws upon Iserson's model of ethical decision making (Sanders, et. al., 2019), which was developed from his practice situated within hospital emergency departments.

We adapted Iserson's *Rapid Approach to Ethical Problems in an Emergency* for use as the conceptual framework to guide the first qualitative study of the Learning EMS Ethics Project. It was a reasonable place to begin. In spite of the fact it was originally intended for hospital emergency department physician use, the model is already taught in paramedic education programs which use the Sanders' textbook, and it suggests a series of steps that can be used during emergent ethical medical situations.

Iserson et al. (1995) suggest a process when there isn't time for a systematic lengthier process. In emergent cases, health professionals' first step is to reflect and see if any prior dilemma has led the professional to draw upon an experiential 'rule' that can be applied in the current context. If the answer is yes, the paramedic would then repeat the prior situational response. If no, the next step is to consider alternatives that would buy time for consideration and deliberation, so long as there is not undue risk to the patient (Iserson et al., 1995, p. 45). Next, Iserson et al. (1995) suggests communication or consult with others, for example, a medical director.

In prehospital settings, this is not always an option, particularly in cases of patient resuscitation. The next recommended steps include three tests: impartiality, universalizability, and interpersonal justifiability. In lay terms, a paramedic would ask her or himself: Would I be willing to have this action performed if I or a loved one were the patient? Would this be what is likely to be done in a similar situation? And can I justify my actions to others, with sound rationales?

Research Design, Findings and Discussion

The Learning EMS Ethics project research design is phased. The first phase utilized a case study design and included the interview of thirteen experienced paramedics in an approximately 90-minute semi-structured interview. All paramedics were from one Southeastern state; thus, it is assumed that there was some basic shared educational preparation and working contextual elements. The first phased study in some sense, explored whether and how Iserson's model played a role in paramedic navigation of ethical situations, whether explicitly or indirectly. In addition, the study yielded data about the nature of paramedic experience during ethical situations. In that respect, the study was *in media res*, or 'in the middle of'. The beginning point for the study protocol was not chronological in following a paramedic participant's education, licensure, and progressive experience. Rather, it was an exploration of navigation of emergent ethical dilemmas and situations, encouraging deep reflection about what paramedics were drawing upon and acting upon while in the moment (Barcinas & Braithwaite, 2019).

After analyzing the findings from the first study, we recognized several important things. First, we learned that paramedics do not explicitly think of or rely upon a specific ethical model or framework in the moment, including not drawing upon the suggested Iserson steps in the textbook predominantly used in their preparatory education. Their descriptions and narrative reports reflect little systemic structure.

Second, we also learned quite a bit about how some partial components or assumptions suggested by Iserson were present within the navigation or decision making process, but it was incomplete as a picture for understanding an unfolding situation, or even the reflective process that occurred after difficult dilemmas took place. For example, participants did not indicate that they often consult prior memories or consult external directors with immediacy during an unfolding situation.

Third, our findings indicated that there is a gradual, experiential development of expertise and that process and evolving expertise serves as the influencer during ethical decision-making situations. This process was retrospective--one where learning occurred through repetitive cycles of remembering, analyzing, and personal consideration. Paramedics considered the ways that an evolving sense of responsibility and sense of being present in community with their patients and patients' loved ones played a role in decision making, as well as their professional accountability.

Building upon these findings, we adapted the protocol to the first study, adding, removing and adjusting questions that expand the data collection, and that allow exploration of participants' informal experiential learning, a broader systems analysis of the situational influences, and of their reflection and refinement associated with expertise building. When we returned to our internal review board (IRB), we made the decision to request a broad consent, allowing us to look forward in conducting cascading incremental case studies, and to combine case study data as we proceed forward.

Next, we conducted a pilot interview phase of the second case study, which is sometimes referred to in qualitative research as cognitive interviewing. We are now actively recruiting additional participants—licensed paramedics with at least 3-5 years of professional experience. The phase two pilot data combined with the phase one findings also led to the bracketing of other findings which will likely inform additional future case studies. These include research questions about the degree of variance we found in participant approach to navigating ethical decision making, with accountability to the patient or the self being the predominant underlying sense-making. The role of fatigue and tiredness, which was a finding in a comparable European study (Brandling et al., 2017) appeared to have two dimensions in our study—a literal fatigue associated with immediate shift schedules or intensity, and a fatigue that was rooted in a sense of *heaviness*, a weight that paramedics reported that was always present, as their experiences meant they routinely and repeatedly experienced issues with human life and death, human suffering, and the balancing of accountabilities to employers, colleagues, patients, families, communities and themselves.

The purpose of this paper proceedings was to share the phase one and phase two pilot findings of the Learning EMS Ethics Project (LEEP). The development of expert judgment in navigating

ethical dilemmas or difficult emergent situations is of crucial importance to paramedics and to all whom they serve, and we invite you to communicate with us for further information about LEEP and its contributions to adult learning, health professions, and continuing professional education.

References

Barcinas, S. J. & Braithwaite, S. (2019, October 8-11). *Understanding ethical decision making and lifelong learning in paramedic practice* [Conference session]. American Association for Adult and Continuing Education Conference, St. Louis, MO, United States. https://www.aaace.org/page/2019ConfLanding

Braithwaite, S. S. (2014). *Ethics in paramedic practice: A qualitative case study of paramedic perceptions of ethical decision-making in practice* [Doctoral dissertation, North Carolina State University]. https://repository.lib.ncsu.edu/handle/1840.16/9932

Brandling, J., Kirby, K., Black, S., Voss, S., & Benger, J. (2017). Emergency medical service provider decision-making in out of hospital cardiac arrest: an exploratory study. l. *BMC Emergency Medicine, 17*(1), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12873-017-0136-3

Bury, G., Thompson, A., Tobin, H., & Egan, M. (2019) Ireland's assisted decision making capacity: The potential for unintended affects in critical emergencies: A cross-sectional study of advanced paramedic decision making. *Irish Journal of Medical Science, 188*(4). 1143-1148. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11845-019-01994-w

Eaton, G. (2019). Learning value sin shared decision-making in undergraduate paramedic education. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice,* 25(6), 1094-1101. https://doi.org/10.1111/jep.13247

Ericsson, K. A., Hoffman, R. R., Kozbelt, A., & Williams, A. M. (2018). *The Cambridge Handbook of Expertise and Expert Performance* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Iserson, K. Sanders, A., Mathieu, D., & Buchanon, A. (1995). *Ethics in emergency medicine* (2nd ed.). Williams and Wilkins.

Issa, N., Salzman, D. H., & Adler, M. (2020). Mastery learning for clinical emergencies. In W. C. McGaghie, J. H. Barsuk, & D. B. Wayne (Eds.), *Comprehensive healthcare simulation: Mastery learning in health professions education* (pp. 259-270). Springer.

Lindemann, H., Verkerk, M. & Walker, M. (2009). *Naturalized bioethics: Toward a responsible knowing practice.* Cambridge University Press.

May, L. (1996). *The socially responsive self: Social theory and professional ethics*. The University of Chicago Press.

Sanders, M. J., McKenna, K., Tan, D. K., Pollak, A. N., & Mejia, A. (2019). *Sanders paramedic textbook* (5th ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Simpson, P, Thomas, R., Bendall, J, Lord, B., Lord, S. & Close, J. (2017). 'Popping nana back into bed' a qualitative exploration of paramedic decision making when caring for older people who have fallen. *BMC Health Services Research*, *217*(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-017-2243-y

Torabi, M., Borhani, F., Abbaszadeh, A., Atashzedah-Shooridah, F. (2019). Barriers to ethical decision-making for prehospital care professionals. *Nursing Ethics, 27*(20), 1-12. 10.1177/0969733019848044

Veatch, R. (2012) (3rd Ed). *The basics of bioethics.* Pearson Education.

Privacy Issues in Online Learning Environment

Bo Chang
Ball State University

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explore privacy issues in online learning. This study shows that there are direct legal-related privacy issues, such as students' personal data and grades protected by the FERPA, and students' right to protect their privacy in the context of a public website. There are also some privacy issues which occurred in much nuanced ways in the online learning process, such as open access to each other's work, transparent reflections, public comments, critical analysis of the assignments, critical comments, and collaborative evaluations of students' work.

Key words: Privacy in online learning, resistance to knowledge sharing, students' rights and comfort, blogs in learning

When the world is becoming globally connected, we no longer isolate ourselves in our own world. We extend our learning boundaries to the outside world and gain new knowledge from those we are not familiar with; we reach out to others' networks to gain information we need; we share our inside worlds with each other to understand the subjective aspects of our worlds at a deep level. "Sharing" becomes a popular word that is highly advocated in many fields. However, in practice, we also encounter resistance to sharing from some learners due to their privacy concerns. Learners' privacy issues need to be addressed while we are advocating for sharing knowledge publicly in an online learning environment. The purpose of this paper is to explore the issues which contribute to students' resistance to sharing knowledge with others publicly in an online learning environment due to their privacy concerns. There are two research questions that will be addressed in this study: (a) What kind of privacy issues are presented in various online learning scenarios? (b) How can these privacy issues be addressed? This paper is based on work that is under review for publication in *Distance Education* (Chang, in press).

Literature Review

Online privacy issues are reflected in various activities, such as peer reviewing, group collaborative work, and learners' evaluations. In doing peer reviewing and assessment, learners access online portfolios which contains sensitive information such as scores, project-related assignments, and self-reflections. The main issue regarding privacy in collaboration is about learners' desire to control how they are perceived by other people (Patil & Kobsa, 2005).

When learners don't feel comfortable about sharing knowledge in social media websites or in online environment, or if they don't recognize the value of knowledge gained through sharing in an online environment, they become resistant to such learning platform. A safe learning environment is protected by guaranteeing learners' privacy (Anwar & Greer, 2012). When instructors encourage students to share their information as part of a community, they need to know that some information shared at school or workplace are FERPA and HIPAA protected.

Booth (2012) stated that in class or in online discussions, students reveal lots of personal and private information that might be questionable or even threatening to our boundaries and ethical responsibilities, which raises a question about how much students should share their personal information with the instructor. Booth (2012) suggested that instructors can integrate the privacy criteria and learning expectations into the rubrics and focus on assessing students' learning outcomes to avoid being influenced by students' self-disclosed information.

In collaborative work, it is important that the members trust and respect each other's privacy and the instructors create a trust and privacy guarded environment. We should develop norms about what information is to be shared and the steps taken to process and anonymize that information. We should also know that privacy issues are context based, and information in one context might not be transferred to another without being associated it to its original context (Nissenbaum, 2011). In learner assessment and evaluation, bias can occur due to differences in gender, ethnic and other factors.

Social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs provided flexible digital environments for learners to learn anywhere, anytime, at various online platforms. More and more instructors are starting to integrate such non-institutional learning platforms into their teaching. However, such environment also raises challenges for learners, which causes resistance from learners. The challenges include learners' skillfulness and comfort in using new technology and their comfort level with digital identity, time that might be wasted on new technology, and concerns about the boundaries between social and professional identities (Salmon et al., 2015).

Methodology

Vignettes will be employed in this study to present the data. Vignettes "are generally described as short stories, scenarios, depictions of situations, accounts using imagery, and recollection of actions" (Hunter, 2012, p. 92). In other word, a vignette is a short description of a scene that captures a moment, an idea, or a specific part of a larger story. In this study, data was collected and analyzed based on the information provided in several vignettes. These vignettes were created based on the data collected from instructor's stories and experience in grading, analyzing and sharing the course-related assignments, instructor's thoughts, reactions and actions to the anonymous course reflections, final anonymous course evaluations, and the process of how instructor address both students' privacy and to promote collaborative work.

The context of this study was in the online courses operated through BlackBoard in higher education institution at the Eastern part of America. The common thread in all the courses selected for this study is that students were required to do group projects, and they were asked to post their group related assignments in their group blogs. Students in these courses were required to access each group's work, read, and make comments on each other's work.

I analyzed each assignment after I graded it and used some students' examples to show the whole class how to improve their assignments. I also commented on students' group work with constructive feedback. To provide students opportunities to openly share and exchange knowledge with each other, all these comments were posted in students' group blog and were accessible to the whole class. To avoid the free-rider effect and promote collaborative work, the

instructor integrated the peer and self-evaluations (two points for each group assignment) into the rubrics. To promote knowledge sharing, commenting on each other's work was also integrated into rubrics (one point for each assignment). Please see Table 1 for privacy issues in assignments.

Table 1. *Privacy Issues in Assignments*

Privacy issues in assignments	Using anonymous names	Open to the class	Open to the public (optional)
Assignments posted in blogs	√	√	√
Students' comments in blogs	√	√	√
Instructors' comments in blogs (later stopped this practice)	x	√	√
Mid-term course evaluation	√	√	x
Peer evaluation	√	x	x
Instructors' evaluation comments and evacuation points to the group members	x	x	x
Examples from students' assignments	x	√	x

Findings

This study found scenarios and responses to such scenarios (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Findings*

Scenarios	Responses to scenarios
Analyzing students' examples (strengths and weaknesses) were viewed as violation of students' right.	Analyzing students' examples is part of instructor's teaching practice. It does not violate students' Right (FERPA).
Sharing good examples was viewed as giving privilege to some students and discriminating others.	Addressing privacy and power, privilege, and discrimination by highlighting the assignments, not the names of the students.
Public comments from instructor and students and open course reflections were viewed as violation of privacy.	Instructor changed to private comment and private course reflection by using anonymous survey.
Sharing the grades with the group members (peer/self-evaluations) was viewed as violation of privacy.	FERPA does not prohibit the discussion of group or individual grades on classroom group projects, so long as those individual grades have not yet been recorded by the teacher; Instructor made adjustment to make students feel more comfortable.

Conclusions

This study shows that there are direct legal related privacy issues, such as students' personal data and grades protected by the FERPA, and students' right to protect their privacy in the context of public website. Such policy should be transparent, and students, practitioners, and professionals should be informed about such policy to avoid misunderstandings. Moreover, in online learning environment, it is not enough to only follow the general policies on privacy since privacy issues in online learning are complicated and are not all covered by policy. When students feel uncomfortable about certain practice, instructors can make some adjustment to benefit majority students' learning and at the same time to satisfy some students' individual needs without violating the policy. There are also some privacy issues which occured in much nuanced ways in online learning process, such as open access to each other's work, transparent reflections, public comments, critical analysis of the assignments, critical comments, and collaborative evaluations of students' work.

Sharing knowledge publicly is becoming more and more important. However, it is equally important to respect and protect learners' privacy, especially in an online learning environment when privacy issues are more complex and nuanced compare with the privacy issues in a physical learning environment. Some instructors may stop some good practice such as openly sharing the knowledge among peers when such practice makes students feel that their privacy has been violated. It is a balance between respecting students' privacy and convincing students to step outside of their private zone to share knowledge openly with their peers.

Privacy is contextual, it is difficult to have a universal privacy policy that can be applied everywhere. Privacy concerns are context based and may change over times within different groups of community. New privacy issues need to be identified and some privacy contracts may need to be revised and tailored to a new group of the community or a new context (Martin, 2016). When the group of students changed, they may have different levels of sensibility on privacy.

Privacy concerns are also nuanced, and it is not just about FERPA related policies, it is also about identifying the reasons which prevent students from sharing their knowledge publicly and find out the motivations which encourage students to step outside of their private zone to embrace the diverse perspectives and enlarge their knowledge boundaries by sharing knowledge publicly. To balance the needs for privacy and the benefits of sharing knowledge publicly, students can be informed about the ways they can conveniently modify and control their privacy identification information (Biehl et al., 2013; Patil & Kobsa, 2005).

This study also shows that privacy issues in some areas are not addressed comprehensively and clearly, nor are they informed to the practitioners. Higher education institutions need to train instructors and practitioners about the privacy issues relevant to FERPA policies, particularly in an online learning environment. There should be "an urgent move to educate online behaviors in all school levels, and professional training" (Schomakers et al., 2019, p.744).

References

Anwar, M., & Greer, J. (2012). Facilitating trust in privacy-preserving E-learning environments. *IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies, 5*(1), 62-73. https://doi.org/10.1109/TLT.2011.23

Biehl, J. T., Rieffel, E. G., & Lee, A. J. (2013). When privacy and utility are in harmony: Towards better design of presence technologies. *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing, 17*(3), 503-518. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00779-012-0504-7

Booth, M. (2012). Boundaries and student self-disclosure in authentic, integrated learning activities and assignments. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 2012*(131), 5-14. https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20023

Chang, B. (in press). Privacy issues in online learning environment. *Distance Education.*

Hunter, P. (2012). Using vignettes as self-reflexivity in narrative research of problematised history pedagogy. *Policy Futures in Education, 10*(1), 90-102.

Martin, K. (2016). Understanding privacy online: Development of a social contract approach to privacy. *Journal of Business Ethics, 137*(3), 551-569. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2565-9

Nissenbaum, H. (2011). A contextual approach to privacy online. *Deadalus, 140*(4), 32–48.

Patil, S., & Kobsa, A. (2005, July 15-20). *Privacy in collaboration: Managing impression* [Paper presentation]. First International Conference on Online Communities and Social Computing, Las Vegas, NV, United States. https://www.ics.uci.edu/~kobsa/papers/2005-ICOCSC-kobsa.pdf

Salmon, G., Ross, B., Pechenkina, E., & Chase, A. (2015). The space for social media in structured online learning. *Research in Learning Technology, 23*(1), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.3402/rlt.v23.28507.

Schomakers, E., Lidynia, C., & Ziefle, M. (2019). A typology of online privacy personalities: Exploring and segmenting users' diverse privacy attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of Grid Computing, 17*(4), 727-747. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10723-019-09500-3

Trends and Direction of Adult Education

Bo Chang
Ball State University

Abstract: In this paper, I will analyze the shifts of adult education historically through the lens of power and policies, technology, the nature of the field, and the structural constraints in the context of higher education. The findings show that in general, in the field of adult education, there has been a change from social justice, anti-poverty to efficiency and job-oriented adult education; from more social and politically-driven in the past decades to more job-related and economically-driven in recent years, from serving the marginalized people to serving the elites. Technology, nature of the field of adult education, and structural setting of the higher education constrained the development of adult education.

Keywords: Trends and direction, policy and politics, technology, history

Adult education is unique. It is deeply embedded in the life experience of adults and the local and global social contexts. It plays an important role in enriching the lives of adults and changing their knowledge, skills, lifestyles, and their living conditions. Lately, however, adult education has been marginalized. It is depicted as supplementary education, one which is not marketable, not competitive, and not scientifically defined. These negative perceptions of adult education have resulted in funding cuts, elimination and merger of programs, and marginalization of adult educators in policy decision- making (Cunningham, 1995; Hill, 2010; Quigley, 1993). This trend is not only occurring in America but in other countries as well.

The field of adult education has been trying to survive by incorporating more valued trends in the larger field of education, such as more "scientific" research, an emphasis on marketable efforts such as vocational and professional training and human resources development, and calling for more structured professionalization of the field (Bierema, 2010; Knox & Fleming, 2010). Replacing adult education with other concepts, such as lifelong learning also represents similar endeavors.

The changes occurring globally have an impact on adult education. Adult education does need to adapt to the changing landscape of the social and political environment. However, adult education also needs to maintain its uniqueness as a distinct field. The purpose of this study is to investigate how adult education is shaped historically and the future direction of adult education.

Literature Review

Adult education includes three main categories: (a) Basic level adult education, such as General Education Development (GED)/Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL)/English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Developmental Education/College Readiness programs (Coffey & Smith, 2011); (b)

undergraduate/graduate level adult education; and (c) training/human resource development programs and community-based adult education programs (Douglah & Moss, 1969).

In category one and category two, adult education plays a primary role for the development of individual adults. It includes scholars' teaching and researching on adult education, and administrators and organizers' application of adult education principles in adult education practice. Category three is the application of adult education in other fields. It is the intersection between adult education and other fields. It requires a general background in other fields and the principles and methodology in adult education (Douglah & Moss, 1969). In this category, adult education plays a secondary role to serve the primary goals of the individuals, communities, and organizations.

Figure 1. *Categories of Adult Education*
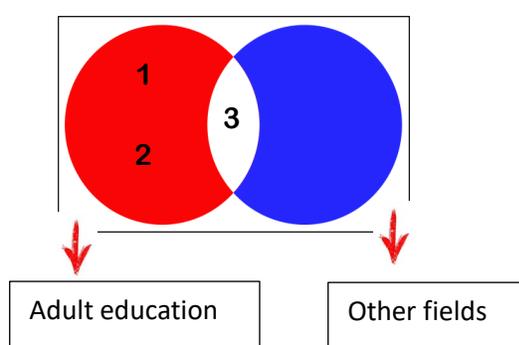
The topics that relate to different historical periods of adult education have been studied by some scholars. For example, Brunner, Wilder, Kirchner, and Newberry (1959) investigated non-vocational adult education research since the mid-1920s. Long and Agyekum (1974) studied adult education from 1964-1973. Rose (1991) examined 25 years of the adult education act from 1966 to 1991. Stubblefield (1988) wrote a book entitled *Towards a History of Adult Education in America: The Search for a Unifying Principle*. The roles of adult education and future trends were also discussed by the educators in the field (Rose, 2008; Schroeder, 1970). In the future, adult education research should find a point to balance its role of solving social problems and practical issues. These perspectives from different historical periods show the changing roles and different focuses of adult education in a specific historical context.

Unlike other scholars whose main focus targets on the history of adult education, this study will use the historical documents as background and the perspectives from the scholars, practitioners and policy makers as references to show the trends and direction of the field.

Methodology

In this study, ideas from documents will serve as the background information, and perspectives from 21 participants will serve as the primary data for this project. The documents collected include these such as Adult Education Task Force (1960s), Education for Public Responsibility (1960s), some important adult education organizations such as the Adult Education Association

of the USA. (AEA-USA), CPAE (Commission of Professors of Adult Education), UNESCO; Lifelong education in the 1960s; The Annual report on adult education since the 1950s; the lists of the papers presented at the AERC conferences; and the topics relevant to adult education in a variety of adult education publications, such as the Yearbook of Adult and Continuing Education, Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education, Handbook of Adult Education, the major journals of adult education, the important adult education organizations, etc.

The documents I collected provided me with the contextual information about the historical development of adult education. This collection of the materials also left some questions that have not been answered. Therefore, I interviewed 21 participants who were either involved in policy work, or have worked in the field of adult education as leaders, or they have played a significant role in the field and are familiar with the history of adult education, or who know the in-depth knowledge of one aspect of the field

Findings

The field of adult education has shifted during the last several decades and has been shaped by various factors (see Change 2020).

Adult Education Moves from the Primary Role to the Secondary Role

Adult education changed its direction to market-driven and job-oriented approach. Its sizes are decreasing, and it must collaborate with other fields to survive. However. in the third category, where adult education plays a secondary role, adult education is active, and its size is increasing. Other fields in category three are taking the leadership role and replace adult educators, which caused the adult education program to decline.

Adult Education Is More Economic and Utilitarian Driven

The ideology of the government drove adult education. Usually, when republicans were in power, adult education was expected to have job and business oriented positive results. When the Democratic Party was in power, community and social issues were favored. In the early decades, adult education focused on social consciousness and social justice. It emphasized social function. It was more social and political oriented. Since the 1980s, influenced by new liberalism, adult education is reviewed as individual investments by both parties. Politicians and interest groups are more interested in short-term benefits. Adult education is becoming more job-oriented, and market and commercial-driven.

Adult Education Moves from the Margin to the Center in Practice

Lack of financial support also causes a weak job market and lack of full-time jobs in adult education, which constrains the development of adult education since it provides few incentives for students after they graduate. Universities become more realistic and favor programs that can bring money and grants. Adult education is moving more towards the higher end sector of adult education to survive. It moves from serving the marginalized people to serving the elites.

Unlike adult education in category one and category two, in practice, adult education in category three is very active and has moved from the edge/margin to the center. Profit universities and organizations can also enroll adult learners, which introduces competition in other fields. However, other fields do not identify themselves as adult education since they have their own professional associations and their own identities. They are taking the leadership role and replacing the roles of the adult educators.

Technology Is Changing Structure and Physical Scope of Adult Education

Technology impacts the direction of adult education and makes the physical scope of adult education decreased. Due to the technology change, learners move from learning through face to face courses to learning from free online courses. Adult education gradually loses its dollar benefit, its physical base, and its market to other fields. For example, YouTube makes free knowledge sharing among peers easy. Everyone can be an adult educator. Adult education lost a large portion of its market in this area.

Diversity and Practice Nature of Adult Education and the Structural Setting of the Higher Education Constrain the Development of Adult Education

The adult education researchers mainly arise from the practice side, and the nature of adult education is more practice oriented. Since adult education is diverse and each program is small, there is a lack of a consistent research agenda. Major research universities have cut off the adult education programs because the research agenda and research base in the field of adult education are not concentrated (Cunningham, 1995; Hill, 2010; Quigley, 1993).

In the higher education context, promotion and tenure policies emphasize faculty members' teaching and publications, and extensive work in the community context is not adequately credited, which constrains professors' work and does not recognize the nature of adult education being deeply integrated into the context of community. Within the university structure, outreach is supported, but not substantial to the point that it would influence a faculty's tenure and promotion. Faculty members' work is limited to the structure. They focus on their small world and are not interested in connecting to the policymakers, nor do they actively reach out to the community for support. After the faculty in adult education retires, the adult education program changes its direction for survival.

Conclusions

In general, in the field of adult education, there has been a change from social justice, anti-poverty to efficiency and job oriented adult education; from more social and political driven in the past decades to more job related and economic driven in recent years (Cervero & Wilson, 2001), from serving the marginalized people to serving the elites. Bosworth (2008), for example, stated that the low-income working adults are not well supported by the Federal grants and loans since such grants and loans are not designed well for low-income working adults' education. Technology, nature of the field of adult education, and structural setting of the higher education constrained the development of adult education.

References

Bierema, L. (2010). Diversity education: competencies and strategies for educators. *Developing Human resources, 12*(3), 312-331. https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422310375024

Bosworth, B. (2008). The Crisis in Adult Education. *Issues in Science and Technology, 24* (4). https://issues.org/bosworth/

Brunner, E. Des, Wilder, E. S, Kirchner, C, & Newberry, J. S. Jr. (1959). *An overview of adult Education research.* Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. (ED022073)

Cervero, R. M., & Wilson, A. L. (2001). At the heart of practice: The struggle for knowledge and power. In R.M. Cervero, A. L. Wilson, & Associates (Eds.), *Power in practice: Adult education and the struggle for knowledge and power in society* (pp. 1-20). Jossey-Bass.

Chang, B. (2020, October 4). *Trends and directions of adult education* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKs5NA4KZKo&feature=emb_title&app=desktop

Coffey, R. D., & Smith, T. C. (2011). *Challenges, promising programs, and effective practices in adult and developmental education.* https://raymarshallcenter.org/files/2008/07/rvsd_Tulsa_Adult_Education_Report_Feb_16_2011.pdf

Cunningham, P. M. (1995). U.S. Educational policy and adult education: Social control, social demand and professional adult education preparation. *Proceeding of the Adult Education Research Conference, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.* https://newprairiepress.org/aerc/1995/papers/

Douglah, M. A., & Moss, G. M. (1969). Adult education as a field of study and its implications for the preparation of adult educators. *Adult Education Journal, 19* (2), 127-184.

Hill, R. J. (2010). Policy and adult learning and education. In C. Kaswom, A. Rose, & J. Ross-Gordon (eds.), *Handbook of adult and continuing education* (pp.103-112). Sage.

Knox, A., & Fleming, J. (2010). Professionalization of the field of adult and continuing Education. In C. Kaswom, A. Rose, & J. Ross-Gordon (Eds.), *Handbook of adult and Continuing education* (pp.125-134). Sage.

Long, H. B., & Agyekum, S. K. (1974). Adult education 1964-1973: Reflection of a changing discipline. *Adult education, 24*(2), 99-120.

Quigley (1993). To shape the future: Towards a framework for adult education social policy Research and action. *International journal of lifelong education, 12*(2), 117-127.

Rose, A. D. (1991). *Ends or means: an overview of the history of the Adult Education Act.* http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovadult education/pi/adulted/anniv40/end-mean.pdf

Rose, A. D. (2008). AAACE: Where are we going and where have we been? The future of AAACE in light of its past. *Adult learning, 19*(1), 34-36.

Schroeder, W. L. (1970). Adult education defined and described. In R. M. Smith, G. F. Aker, & J. R. Kidd, *Handbook of adult education* (pp. 25-43). Collier Macmillan Publishers.

Stubblefield, H. W. (1988). *Towards a history of adult education in America: The search for a unifying principle.* Croom Helm.

Wage Gap: Myth or Reality? Earning Gap Between Immigrants and Natives in STEM Occupations

Aynur Charkasova
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Abstract: The demand for U.S. temporary workers has doubled since the 1990s, especially after the technology boom. American employers have benefited from hiring foreign talent for STEM occupations. Despite the mandatory prevailing wage regulations, temporary skilled immigrants have been criticized for their *willingness* to work for lower wages. This integrated literature review aims to clarify the wage gap between skilled immigrants and natives in STEM occupations. This research design utilized a systematic literature review to identify relevant studies, collect data, and analyze data using thematic coding. Findings included two major themes: the wage gap as a *myth* and the wage gap as a *reality*. Practical and policy implementations will be discussed based on the findings of this integrated literature review.

Keywords: skilled-immigrants, STEM, wage gap

The United States of America has been one of the top destinations among skilled workers for decades, thanks to a strong economy and a good reputation for entrepreneurship (Batalova et al., 2016; Carnevale et al., 2011). Similar to other developed countries, the United States expands its skilled workforce through immigration (International Migration Outlook, 2015), especially in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (Depew et al., 2017; Hanson & Slaughter, 2016; Tong, 2010). Temporary work visas that bring skilled workers to the United States have been heavily criticized due to a negative effect on local workers (Hira, 2010b; Matloff, 2004; Mithas & Lucas, 2010). Opponents argue that foreign workers are *less expensive*, and U.S. companies hire cheap and immobile labor to replace the native employees (Hira, 2010a), which may lower the wages of natives (Huang, 2010). Previous studies (Hanson & Slaughter, 2016; Lowell & Avato, 2014; Matloff, 2004; Tong, 2010) indicate that temporary workers earn less than natives despite the prevailing wage regulations. Therefore, a need for reform and enforcement of employment and immigration regulations are required (Lowell & Avato, 2014; Steigleder & Sparber, 2017).

The purpose of this integrated literature review is two-fold: (a) to review the existing literature to clarify the wage gap between skilled immigrants and natives in STEM occupations and (b) discusses whether skilled immigrants earn less compared to their native counterparts. This research design used a systematic literature review to identify relevant studies, collect data, and analyze the data using thematic coding. The guiding questions for this integrated literature review follow: What is the perceived reality regarding the wage gap between skilled immigrants and natives in STEM occupations? What is the impact of the "legal status acquisition" on the earnings of the temporary skilled immigrants in STEM occupations? Above mentioned questions guided this integrated literature review along with the research design.

Background

The wage difference between natives and foreign-born workers is a central concern in the public debate (Hanson & Slaughter, 2016). The most common argument is foreign workers' willingness to work for lower wages (Aobdia & Srivastava, 2018; Hira, 2010a), and employers' inclination to substitute higher-wage U.S. professionals with lower-paid foreign workers (Mithas & Lucas, 2010; Ottman, 2017). The reason skilled immigrants might agree to a lower salary could be explained by comparing their U.S. wages to those back home and/or a possibility of being sponsored on their temporary visa, which they view as a pathway to a legal permanent residency (Lowell & Avato, 2014). There is a concern that firms in the United States practice monopsony power over temporary workers, which reduces their bargaining power and leads to lower wages and poor working conditions (Hunt & Xie, 2019). Monopsony power often refers to a monopsony employer who has market power in hiring workers (Muehlemann et al., 2013). Therefore, skilled workers with temporary visa are more likely to suffer from a disadvantage in terms of benefits and job stability (Luthra, 2009). The practice of monopsony is also believed to decrease the demand for native workers (Matloff, 2013). However, several studies (Alarcon, 1999; Campbell et al., 2018; Hanson & Slaughter, 2016) claim that foreign-born professionals were more likely to be employed and have higher annual earnings than their local counterparts in science and engineering fields. Time spent in the workforce and upgrading immigration status have also been shown to increase the earnings of foreign-born STEM professionals (Lowell & Avato, 2014), whereas male immigrants earned more than females and had more flexibility to quit the job if desired (Ransom & Sims, 2010).

Research Design of Systematic Literature Review

An integrative literature review is a distinct form of research that reviews, criticizes, and synthesizes previously published literature on a specific topic and aims to generate new frameworks and perspectives (Torraco, 2005). The inclusion criteria for this integrated literature review were peer-reviewed journal articles that focused on the wage gap between skilled immigrants and their local counterparts in STEM occupations and were published during the last two decades in English in ERIC and Google Scholar. The initial search resulted in 360 articles, but after omitting the duplicates and studies that did not meet the inclusion criteria, 49 articles were selected as suitable for this paper. This integrated literature review utilized a mixed-research technique by collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data. The matrix model was used for the data collection using an Excel spreadsheet to systematically record the data (Gerrard, 2014), where each article was summarized using rows and columns. For data analysis, the selected articles were reviewed individually again, and the author coded each article and identified major findings (Creswell & Poth, 2016). To assure the reliability and validity, the author repeated the coding process several times, read the articles, finalized coding, and identified key outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

Segmented labor market (SLM) theory was selected as a framework to guide this integrated literature review. Originally developed by Piore in 1971, this approach divides the dual labor market into a primary and secondary market. Primary jobs possess high earnings, better working conditions, stability, equality, and due process in work rules (Dickens & Lang, 1988), whereas

secondary (nonstandard) jobs have lower wages, poor working conditions, less stability, less likely to provide benefits (Kalleberg et al., 2000). The high demand for low-wage immigrant workers is theorized under the SLM theory. SLM creates a capital-intensive sector to meet the ongoing demand and a labor-intensive sector to satisfy the demand associated with economic cycles that constantly fluctuate (Massey et al., 1993). Hudson (2007) asserts that the American labor market is sharply divided between good and bad jobs. An increase in the number of immigrants into the United States has caused the labor market to become increasingly stratified based on national citizenship (Ehrenreich, Hochschild, & Kay, 2003).

This current integrated literature review seeks to determine the perceived reality regarding the wage gap between skilled immigrants and natives in STEM occupations and the impact of the legal status acquisition on earnings. From the SLM theory perspective, primary jobs should possess high earnings, stability, and equality. Considering that temporary work visas (H-1 and L-1) are granted to highly skilled and educated immigrants for STEM jobs that require years of expertise. Therefore, temporary skilled immigrants should be part of the primary job market with high earnings regardless of immigration status.

Findings

Prior studies that focused on wage differences between foreign-born STEM professionals and native workers found mixed evidence (Alarcon, 1999, Aobdia & Srivastava, 2018, Matloff, 2008). To better understand the wage gap, it is important to draw attention to the temporary worker visas and the limitations they possess for the temporary skilled workers. Temporary workers are restricted to the particular employment and time period (may range from one to six years) for which they are authorized and may have degree requirements (Temporary Work Visas, U.S. Department of State, n.d.). For example, H-1 temporary work visas are awarded to a certain foreign professional for specialty occupations for a period of up to three years with the possibility of extension for up to six years maximum (Butler, 2012). L-1 temporary work visas are awarded to foreign nationals for the length of an initial stay of one year, but companies may request an extension for a total of five years. For the L-1 visa category, sponsoring employers are not required to pay a prevailing salary, and temporary workers are not allowed to change their company and transfer their visa to a new employer (Hunt & Xie, 2019).

Some temporary work visas require the prospective employer to file a petition with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and the visa will be available only after the petition is approved. American employers who wish to hire foreign talent must attest to the Department of Labor that they will pay wages at least equal to the actual wage paid to other employees with similar skills and qualifications or the prevailing wage for the job in the area of intended employment--whichever is greatest (Miano, 2005). Although there are 11 employment-based nonimmigrant visas for foreign nationals, American employers are more likely to utilize the H-1B and L-1 visa categories for STEM-related jobs than for other occupations due to the high demand for skilled workers in the STEM field (Rothwell & Ruiz, 2013).

Wage Gap as a Myth

Previously published studies (Alarcon, 1999; Campbell et al., 2018; Loftstrom & Hayes, 2011) were examined to answer the first research question. The studies that focused on earning equality among foreign-born STEM professionals and native workers found evidence that not only foreign professionals made more money (Campbell et al., 2018), but also increases natives' employment opportunities because of the productivity gains associated with immigrant scientists, and even had a positive effect on wages of natives by 7-8% (Peri et al., 2014). Mithas & Lucas (2010) surveyed 57,000 IT professionals and revealed that H-1B temporary work visa holders earned a salary premium when compared with U.S. citizenship in IT occupations. Loftstrom & Hayes (2011) study was consistent with Mithas & Lucas's (2010) study by stating that H-1B visa holders were in earning advantages compared to their U.S. born counterparts. In their sample, H-1B visa holders made on average about $78,200, which was 10 percent higher than the average annual earnings of their sample of US- born workers ($71,200). According to Hanson & Slaughter (2016), although the wage gap did exist between skilled immigrants and natives two decades ago in 2012, foreign-born earnings have exceeded the wages of native workers. Their study also mentioned that foreign-born professionals have better chances to reach the earning parity in STEM occupations compared to their counterparts in non-STEM jobs. Alarcon (1999) interviewed 20 skilled immigrants in Silicon Valley, and none of the participants complained about the wage parity. When examining wage differences among skilled immigrants and natives in STEM occupations, it is notable to mention that several factors such as immigration status, degree origin, the region of birth, gender, marital status directly affects the wages of the skilled immigrants. Lowell & Avato's (2014) study indicated that male immigrants made more money compared to females, whereas married immigrants had better income compared to singles. Additionally, skilled immigrants from Asia and Europe had better earnings compared to other immigrant groups. His study also claimed that employers are more willing to pay the prevailing salary to the skilled immigrants hired directly from overseas versus the recent graduates of the U.S. Universities.

Wage Gap as a Reality

Several studies (Lowell &Avato, 2014, Miano, 2005; Matloff 2008) yielded controversial results regarding the wage gap between skilled immigrants and natives. Matloff (2008) argued that in the IT field, companies pay to the H-1B holders approximately 15% to 33% less than the prevailing wage, and most tech companies hire average talented immigrants, especially from Asia. According to Hanson & Slaughter (2016), recently arrived foreign professionals in STEM jobs earned 5.7 percent less compared to natives, but in less than a decade, foreign professionals close this gap. Lowell & Avato (2013) revealed that H-1B earn significantly less on average compared to natives in STEM jobs as they may accept lower wages to improve their chances of being sponsored on the H-1B visa and potentially apply for a legal permanent residency. Miano (2005) argued that H-1B workers earn significantly less in computer occupations as well compared to their American counterparts. Loftstrom & Hayes (2011) also experienced an initial earning deficit of about 9% for newly hired H-1B visa holders for math and science occupations. There mentioned studies claimed that temporary skilled immigrants in STEM jobs earn less compared to the native workers, and the local companies do not offer the prevailing salary as mandated by Congress.

Legal Status Acquisition

Previously published studies were examined to answer the second research question: What is the impact of the "legal status acquisition" on earnings of the temporary skilled immigrants in STEM occupations? Previous studies (Lowell & Avato, 2014; Steigleder & Sparber, 2017) have focused on the legal status acquisition and its impact on the earnings of skilled immigrants in the United States. Lowell & Avato's (2014) study showed that upgrading the immigration status from temporary to permanent has a positive impact on the earning trajectories of the immigrants in STEM occupations. According to Mukhopadhyay and Oxborrow (2012), green card holders earn 25.4 percent more compared to the temporary worker visa holders that reflect lower bargaining power and limited mobility for the skilled immigrants (Hunt & Xie, 2019). Kandilov's study (2007) was also consistent with the previous studies, revealing that employer-sponsored immigrants experienced a significant increase in earnings following adjustment to permanent residency. Reviewing these studies revealed that immigration status does play a crucial role when it comes to the median wage for immigrants. Legal status (green cards) carries additional advantages such as higher job mobility, better bargaining power, no educational restrictions, or visa sponsorship compared to the temporary worker visas.

Discussion

Several policy implementations will be suggested based on this integrated literature review. The current immigration policy that regulates temporary skilled immigration should be revised in order not to link temporary immigrants to their employers. Dependency from employers may lower temporary immigrants' bargaining power and job mobility. Future studies should investigate whether skilled-immigrants earnings are consistent with prevailing salary requirements set by Congress. More studies should focus on the earning gap between skilled immigrants and the natives in STEM occupations as the previous studies yielded inconsistent results.

In practice, the results of this study can be utilized not only in the formation of future policies but also as a tool for workplace training and awareness. HRD professionals, policymakers, and employers can greatly benefit from the critical aspect of this training to bring more internal pay equity into the HRD practice. HRD professionals, stakeholders, and employers can work together to achieve internal pay equity, where employees feel they are being compensated fairly based on performance and skills regardless of their current immigration status. It is important for HRD professionals to understand the legal obligations of pay equity to assess the lawfulness of their organization's pay practices and take obligatory corrective action.

References

Alarcon, R. (1999). Recruitment process among foreign-born engineers and scientists in Silicon Valley. *American Behavioral Scientist, 42*(9), 1381-1397. https://doi.org/10.1177/00027649921954958

Aobdia, D., & Srivastava, A. (2018). *Do US corporations hire us educated skilled immigrants to lower their labor costs? Evidence from the audit industry.* http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3002004

Butler, E. W. (2012). The h-1b visa immigration program: Analysis and comments. *International Journal of Business and Social Science, 3*(9), 21-29. http://ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_9_May_2012/4.pdf

Batalova, J., Fix, M., & Bachmeier, J. D. (2016). *Untapped talent: The costs of brain waste among highly skilled immigrants in the United States*. Migration Policy Institute. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/untapped-talent-costs-brain-waste-among-highly-skilled-immigrants-united-states

Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., & Melton, M. (2011). *STEM: Science technology engineering mathematics*. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/stem-complete.pdf

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.

Campbell, T. A., Adamuti-Tranche. M., & Bist, K. (2018). Employment and earnings of international science and engineering graduates of U.S. universities: A comparative perspective. *Journal of International Studies 8*(1), 409-430. https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v8i1.172

Dickens, W. T., & Lang, K. (1988). The reemergence of segmented labor market theory. *The American Economic Review, 78*(2), 129-134. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1818110

Depew, B., Norlander, P., & Sørensen, T. A. (2017). Inter-firm mobility and return migration patterns of skilled guest workers. Journal *of Population Economics, 30*(2), 681-721. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-016-0607-y

Ehrenreich, B., Hochschild, A. R., & Kay, S. (2003). *Global woman: Nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy*. Macmillan.

Garrard, J. (2014). *Health sciences literature review made easy* (4th ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Hudson, K. (2007). The new labor market segmentation: Labor market dualism in the new economy. *Social Science Research*, *36*(1), 286-312. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2005.11.005

Huang, Z. (2010). The study on the gender wage differential among rural-urban migrants. *Issues in Agricultural Economy, 8*, 44-51. https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2019.1660906

Hira, R. (2010a). *Bridge to immigration or cheap temporary labor? The h-1b & L-1 visa programs are a source of both*. https://www.epi.org/publication/bp257/

Hira, R. (2010b). *The h-1b and L-1 visa programs: Out of control*. https://www.epi.org/publication/bp280/

Hanson, G., & Slaughter, M. (2016). *High-skilled immigration and the rise of STEM occupations in U.S. employment*. NBER Working Paper Series. https://doi.org/10.3386/w22623

Hunt, J., & Xie, B. (2019). How restricted is the job mobility of skilled temporary work visa holders? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 38*(1), 41-64. https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22110

Kalleberg, A. L., Reskin, B.F., Hudson, K. (2000). Bad jobs in America: Standard and nonstandard employment relations and job quality in the United States. *American Sociological Review 65*, 256–278. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2657440

Kandilov, A. M. G. (2007). *The value of a green card immigrant wage increases following adjustment to US permanent residence*. Department of Economics, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Kerr, S. P., & Kerr, W. R. (2013). Immigration and employer transitions for STEM workers. *American Economic Review 103*(3), 193-197. https://doi.org/10.1257/aet.103.3.193

Luthra, R. R. (2009). Temporary immigrants in a high-skilled labour market: A study of h-1bs. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 35*(2), 227-250. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830802586237

Lofstrom, M., & Hayes, J. J. (2011). *H-1Bs: How do they stack up to US born workers?* https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1981215

Lowell, B. L., & Avato, J. (2014). The wages of skilled temporary immigrants: Effects of visa pathways and job portability. *International Migration, 52*(3), 85-98. https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12133

Massey, D. S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kauaouci, A., & Taylor, J.E. (1993). Theories of international migration: A review and appraisal. *Population and Development Review, 19*(3). 431- 460. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2938462

Matloff, N. (2004). Globalization and the American IT worker. *Communications of the ACM, 47*(11), 27-29. https://doi.org/10.1145/1029496.1029516

Miano, J. (2005). *The bottom of the pay scale*. Backgrounder Center for Immigration Studies. https://www.heartland.org/publications-resources/publications/the-bottom-of-the-pay-scale-wages-for-h-1b-computer-programmers

Matloff, N. (2008). *H1-Bs: Still not the best and brightest*. https://cis.org/Report/H1Bs-Still-Not-Best-and-Brightest

Mithas, S., & Lucas, H. C., Jr. (2010). Are foreign IT workers cheaper? US visa policies and compensation of information technology professionals. *Management Science, 56*(5), 745-765. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1100.1149

Mukhopadhyay, S., & Oxborrow, D. (2012). The value of an employment-based green card. *Demography, 49*(1), 219-237. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41408226

Matloff, N. (2013). *Are foreign students the best and the brightest? Data and implications for immigration policy*. https://www.epi.org/publication/bp356-foreign-students-best-brightest-immigration-policy/

Muehlemann, S., Ryan, P., & Wolter, S. C. (2013). Monopsony power, pay structure, and training. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review, 66*(5), 1097-1114. https://doi.org/10.1177/001979391306600504

OECD (2015). *International migration outlook*. OECD. https://doi.org/10.1787/migr_outlook-2015-en.

Ottman, E. K. (2017). It's time to open up the l-1b: How the emergence of open source technology will impact the l-1b visa program. *Catholic University Law Review, 66*(4), 907-932. https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/cathu66&i=937

Peri, G., Shih, K., & Sparber, C. (2014). *Foreign STEM workers and native wage and employment in U.S. cities*. NBER working Paper. https://www.nber.org/papers/w20093

Ransom, M. R., & Sims, D. P. (2010). Estimating the firm's labor supply curve in a "new monopsony" framework: Schoolteachers in Missouri. *Journal of Labor Economics, 28*(2), 331-355. https://doi.org/10.1086/649904

Rothwell, J., & Ruiz, N. (2013). H-1B visas and the STEM shortage: A research brief. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2262872

Steigleder, Q., & Sparber, C. (2017). The effect of legal status on immigrant wages and occupational skills. *Applied Economics Letters, 24*(2), 80-84. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504851.2016.1164811

Torraco, R. J. (2005). Writing integrative literature reviews: Guidelines and examples. *Human Resource Development Review, 4*(3), 356-367. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484305278283

Tong, Y. (2010). Place of education, gender disparity, and assimilation of immigrant scientists and engineers earnings. *Social Science Research, 39*(4), 610-626. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2010.02.004

U.S. Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs. (n.d.) *Temporary worker visas*. https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/employment/temporary-worker-visas.html

Reactions to COVID-19: A Public Health Critical Race

Joanna H. Ellis, Kris Hollingsworth, Marcy May, Courtney McElhaney Peebles, and Lisa M. Baumgartner
Texas State University

Abstract: Since the spring of 2020, the pandemic has dominated public discourse. Using a public health critical race praxis research approach, our team interviewed a diverse group of individuals to elicit stories about their knowledge, attitudes, and responses to COVID-19. We used health belief model constructs and critical race theory tenets to evaluate race and ethnicity's influence and implications in reactions to the pandemic. Findings include the ordinariness of racism and colorblindness in assessing the susceptibility and severity of COVID-19 and its risk factors. Including social determinants of health in the core curriculum of cross-disciplinary education programs emphasizes the impact of public health disparities and may reduce colorblindness and ordinariness.

Keywords: COVID-19, community health education, public health critical race praxis, health belief model, critical race theory, social determinants of health

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that as of November 1, 2020, almost 1.2 million people worldwide have died from SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 worldwide, with 19.1% of recorded deaths occurring in the United States (WHO, 2020). The Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that American Indian, Alaska Native, and Hispanic people are 2.8 times more likely to be infected and approximately five times more likely to be hospitalized due to COVID-19 than non-Hispanic Whites (CDC, 2020c). Non-Hispanic Black or African Americans are 2.6 times more likely to contract the virus, 4.7 times more likely to be hospitalized, and 2.1 times more likely to die of COVID-19 related illnesses (CDC, 2020c). Individuals with underlying obesity conditions, diabetes, and hypertension have higher morbidity and mortality rates (CDC, 2020d). Non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic populations have higher prevalence rates in each of these comorbidities (CDC, 2020a, 2020b; Fryar et al., 2017). The purpose of our study is to evaluate the impact of race and ethnicity on individuals' knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors during the pandemic; therefore, our research questions follow:

1. How does race/ethnicity impact the choice of sources and how individuals receive information about COVID-19?
2. What is their interpretation of the information learned about COVID-19?
3. How does race influence respondents' experience or the perception of others' experiences during the pandemic?

Conceptual Framework

Ford and Airhihenbuwa (2010) describe public health critical race praxis (PHCRP) as a semi-structured research approach that informs the racialization of public health conventions such as modes of knowledge production. We used PHCRP as a guide to create our conceptual framework. To assess the public health implications of reactions to the pandemic, we used health

belief model (HBM) constructs such as perceived susceptibility and severity of COVID-19 and perceived barriers to positive behavior changes. As Closson (2010) suggests, we used critical race theory (CRT) as part of our framework to "cast light on aspects of the dialogue on race in the field that have been left out of earlier discussions" (p. 280). In our combined conceptual framework, visualized in Figure 1, we sought to find CRT tenets (shown in the upper right corner) that influenced HBM constructs (seen within the brackets). PHCRP includes transparent researcher positionality and encourages scholars to address identified racial hierarchies in health disparities (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). Therefore, CRT's central tenets are presented as an exponent to raise our 'study's findings to the power of CRT.

Figure 1: *Study Conceptual Framework*
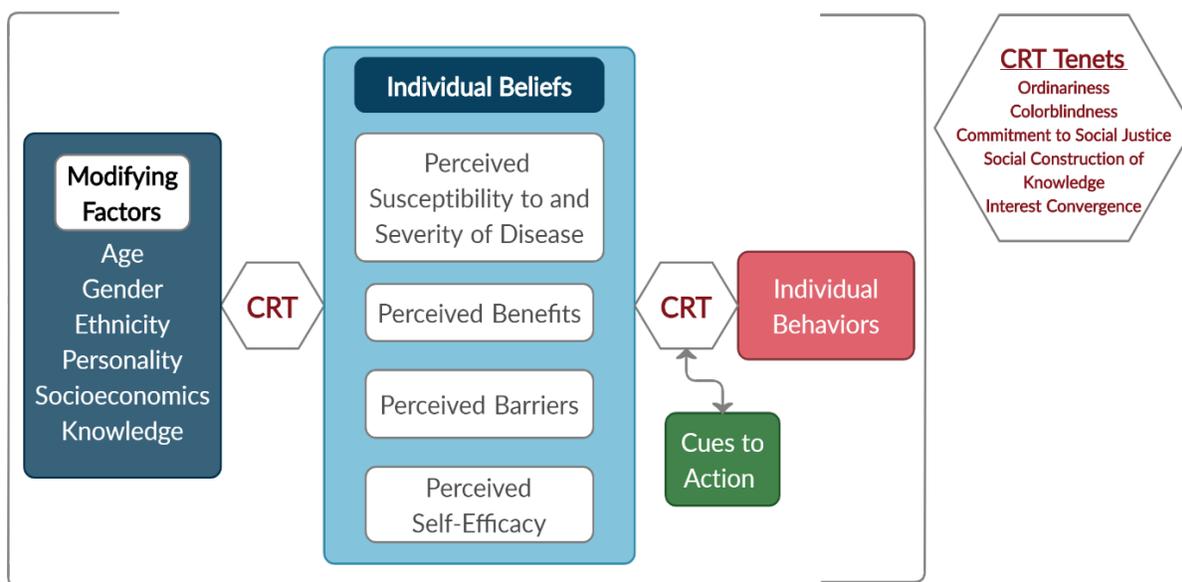
Methods

Study Design and Sample Selection

This is a basic qualitative inquiry. We used the constant comparative method to analyze our data. We conducted semi-structured interviews to solicit information on participants' knowledge about COVID-19 using questions designed to elicit HBM constructs of perceived susceptibility, severity, benefits, barriers, and cues to action (Glanz et al., 2008).

We recruited participants using purposeful and snowball sampling through social media. In keeping with CRT's focus on including narratives from people of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998), we recruited racially and ethnically diverse participants. Study participant demographics are seen in Table 1. In addition, we sought participants of various ages and educational backgrounds. Participants were aged 18-75 with education levels ranging from high school to doctoral degree, with the majority holding bachelor's degrees.

Table 1: *Study Participant Demographics*

Gender	Non-Hispanic Black/African American	Non-Hispanic Asian	Hispanic/Latino White	Non-Hispanic White
Female (n=16)	1	3	6	6
Male (n=12)	1	2	5	4

Data Collection and Analysis

We conducted interviews in April 2020 (n=14) and June-July 2020 (n=14) by phone or through Zoom, a video conferencing platform, and recorded with participants' permission. Follow-up questions were asked during the interview to solicit clarifying information when appropriate. We Interviews were transcribed. To ensure credibility, we engaged in peer review of the findings and adequate engagement in data collection. We used the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1990) to look within and between transcripts for themes aligned with HBM constructs or CRT tenets.

Findings

As seen in Figure 2, the HBM constructs most influenced by CRT tenets were perceived susceptibility and severity of disease and perceived barriers. We identified the following CRT themes: colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2015), ordinariness (Bowman et al., 2009), structural/systemic racism (Ladson-Billings, 1998), social construction of knowledge (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010), and interest convergence (Bell, 1980).

Race and Information

Individuals learned behaviors such as mask-wearing and social distancing from major media sources, including networks like ABC, CNN, and local news affiliates. Many participants noted the importance of receiving information from established media sources they perceived to be reliable and legitimate. When trusted, these instructions fell within the HBM construct of cues to action. The reach of public health messaging across racial and ethnic groups to prevent the spread of this disease appeared to mitigate the critique of the HBM that assumes messages are widespread and equitably distributed (LaMorte, 2019); however, lack of representation in newsrooms limits or excludes counter-narratives of communities of color (Greico, 2018). A structural change is necessary to adequately represent these stories.

Misinformation that included conspiracy theories and mixed messages were among the most common themes in the HBM construct of perceived barriers. The importance of "mainstream" media sources during a pandemic was made clear during our interviews. Changing recommendations and elected officials openly questioning these outlets' legitimacy presents a perceived barrier to positive behavior changes. All participants mentioned their distrust of the government except for non-Hispanic White males, who overwhelmingly indicated high levels of trust in government at all levels. Respondents of color relied heavily on the social construction of knowledge, demonstrating higher levels of trust in community members' experiences and information than the government.

Figure 2: *Conceptual Framework with Study Themes*
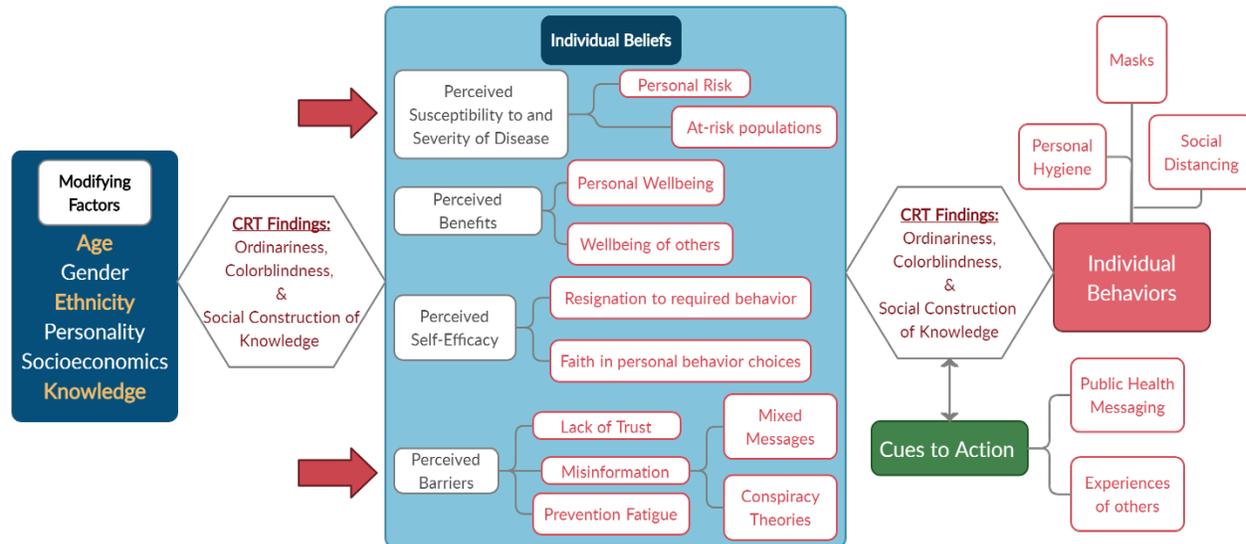
Race and Experience

Regardless of their race/ethnicity, most participants (75%) did not state the differential impact of this disease on racial and ethnic groups. When asked about populations most at risk for COVID-19, respondents overwhelmingly echoed public health messaging talking points, identifying the elderly and those with pre-existing or underlying health conditions at greatest risk. In comparison to non-Hispanic White participants, the people of color in our study indicated a lower perceived susceptibility and severity despite widespread news coverage of COVID-19 outcome disparities in non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic populations. Only two individuals indicated awareness of people of color as higher risk, one of whom stated, "it is interesting that the Black population is more impacted with severe infections because of higher rates of hypertension and diabetes." Obesity and diabetes were mentioned 29 times but only once in conjunction with race despite the higher prevalence rates of both conditions in Black and Hispanic populations. No person of color mentioned the racial disparity in these comorbidities. It is possible that individuals are socialized to expect poorer health outcomes among people of color. If examined at all, these poor outcomes are often attributed to the social determinants of health (SDOH), ignoring their link to structural racism (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). This is a crystallization of the CRT tenet of ordinariness (normal and integral) nature of racism in the United States (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). A virus may not discriminate, but people and societal systems do.

When asked about how their race impacted their experiences during the pandemic or how those from other races might have different experiences, most participants used phrases such as "lesser means," lack of resources," and "less access to care. One participant mentioned "systematic oppression . . . White people have a bit of a leg up"; however, most indicated that they did not feel that race would make a significant difference in the experiences of people during the pandemic. One participant stated, "COVID sees no race; that's how I see it. We all bleed red. On the inside, we all bleed red." Intentional deviance from using racial terminology is an indicator

of the CRT tenet of colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Closson (2010) asserts, "Society is structured with systemic racism. . . . We accept that everyone is infected with a disease to greater or lesser degrees. . . . To claim to be colorblind allows the disease to spread unchecked" (p. 279).

Limitations

To protect participants and interviewers' health and safety alike, the Institutional Review Board prohibited recruiting or interviewing participants in person; therefore, it was difficult to recruit participants through personal social media from a variety of backgrounds with a high school education or less. Further, when discussing how identity influenced their experience with the pandemic, we, like Cunningham and Scarlato (2018), found "race did not organically emerge in the discussion" (p. 237). Although we centered our study in the margins, as White and Hispanic female recruiters and interviewers, we struggled to recruit adequate non-Hispanic Black or African American participants and observed difficulty eliciting an organic discussion of racial implications. Additionally, COVID-19 is an unprecedented occurrence. The ever-evolving nature of public health guidance and local and federal direction related to preventing the disease presented a challenge when comparing responses over time.

Conclusions and Implications

Unlike other health issues impacting the United States, the ease of transmission and severity of infection with the virus makes dissemination and accessibility of information critical for public health. The CRT tenet of interest convergence asserts that the interests of communities of color are addressed when they converge with the interests of Whites (Bell, 1980). Closson (2010) posits that "interest convergence both explains a racial reality and offers a strategy for surmounting racial obstacles" (p. 273). The messages of hand-washing and social distancing recommended by the CDC have been repeated by major news outlets, permeating the collective consciousness. Based on interview responses, this was determined to be an area of interest convergence as all study participants reported making at least one behavior change. The CRT implications of interest convergence indicate that educators must acknowledge this hegemonic hierarchy of interests and proactively intercede to address marginalized groups' needs before it serves the dominant group.

To reduce the ordinariness and colorblindness in health disparities, educators in all disciplines should be aware of the racial impact of SDOH on their learner population. A person's health affects every aspect of their life. Hence, SDOH will make an impact on learning across disciplines. We recommend that all educators familiarize themselves with the five critical elements of SDOH: economic stability, education, social and community context, health and health care, and neighborhood/built environment. With knowledge of the racial aspects of SDOH, educators can create curricula that are appropriate across disciplines with applications in a variety of programs. Educators from different backgrounds should introduce SDOH in communities of color into their professions' dialogue through guest speakers, SDOH training, professional conference presentations, and interprofessional research.

References

Bell, D. (1980). *Brown* and the interest-convergence dilemma. In D. Bell (Ed.), *Shades of Brown: New perspectives on school desegregation* (pp. 90-106). Teachers College Press.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2015). The structure of racism in color-blind, "post-racial" America. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 59(11), 1358-1376.

Bowman, L., Rocco, T. S., Peterson, E., & Adker, W. A. (2009, June 6-9). *Utilizing the lens of critical race theory to analyze stories of race* [Paper presentation]. Adult Education Research Conference, Chicago, IL, United States. https://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2009/papers/7

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020a). *National diabetes statistics report, 2020*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/data/statistics/national-diabetes-statistics-report.pdf

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020b). *Adult obesity facts*. https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020c). *COVID-19 hospitalization and death by race/ethnicity*. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020d). *People with certain medical conditions.* https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html.

Closson, R. B. (2010). Critical race theory and adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly, 60*(3), 261-283.

Cunningham, B. A., & Scarlato, A. S. M. (2018). Ensnared by colorblindness: Discourse on health care disparities. *Ethnicity & Disease*, *28*(Supplement 1), 235–240.

Ford, C. L., & Airhihenbuwa, C. O. (2010). Critical race theory, race equity, and public health: Toward antiracism praxis. *American Journal of Public Health*, *100*(S1), S30-S35.

Fryar, C. D., Ostchega, Y., Hales, C. M., Zhang, G., & Kruszon-Moran, D. (2017). *Hypertension prevalence and control among adults: United States, 2015–2016* (Report No. 289). National Center for Health Statistics. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db289.pdf

Glanz, K., Rimer, B. K., & Viswanath, K. (2008). *Health behavior and health education: Theory, research, and practice* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Greico, E. (2018, November 2). *Newsroom employees are less diverse than U.S. workers overall.* Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/02/newsroom-employees-are-less-diverse-than-u-s-workers-overall/

Ladson-Billings, G. (1998). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a nice field like education? *Qualitative Studies in Education, 11*(1), 7-24.

LaMorte, W. W. (2019, September 9). *Behavioral change models* [PowerPoint slides]. Boston University School of Public Health. https://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/MPH-Modules/SB/BehavioralChangeTheories/BehavioralChangeTheories2.html

Futures Learning Strategies for Social Transformation and Lifelong Learning

M. Jayne Fleener and Susan J. Barcinas
North Carolina State University

Abstract: This paper explores futures learning strategies enacted by ecosystem building futurists working with organizations and communities for social transformation and adaptation to uncertain futures. The research is based on interviews with futurists who work as ecosystem builders to understand the *what*, *how*, and *why* of their work. In so doing, the *where* of their passions is unveiled, especially as it relates to personal transformation and lifelong learning that includes openness to new and diverse ideas, interdisciplinary learning, and active exploration of and connections with systems relationships, chaos and complexity. Results of this research point to the importance of and need for futures learning strategies for all as we shift individualized goals to socially significant, ecosystem building visions to thrive in post-normal, post-pandemic times.

Keywords: futures learning, lifelong learning, social transformation, ecosystem builders, futurists

Futures studies explore how individuals and groups of individuals come together to engage and enact plausible, possible, probable and emergent futures and the role futurists can play in helping them recognize underlying epistemological and ontological assumptions about their relationship with the future to create the kinds of futures they want. Research by futurist Jim Dator (2020) suggests four archetypical relationships we have with the future with orientations and expectations for growth, collapse/decay, obedience, and transformation. In post-pandemic, post-normal times (Sardar, 2010), adult educators have a role to play in supporting society's needs to define and enact the kinds of futures we need to create more fair, just, and sustainable societies. We have a lot to learn from futures strategies and thinking. As researchers, we were interested in exploring how a unique group of ecosystem-building futurists described their approaches to futures work to inform our considerations of adult educators' potential challenges, opportunities, and strategies.

Research Procedures

At the risk of oversimplification, the futures field consists of pragmatic, client-oriented futurists, academic-theoretical futurists, and community activist, ecosystem building futurists. While the futures field has a long history (Gidley, 2017), since World War II, futurists have focused their work on humanistic, democratic approaches to futures studies (Gidley, 2020). Within that, only a small and emerging group of futurists consider themselves ecosystem building futurists (Bennett, 2019). Ecosystem building futurists work collaboratively in community settings to increase new social ecosystems. Recently, thirty-five ecosystem building futurists participated in a two-day gathering to explore communities of the future (Smyre & Richardson, 2016) strategies and collaborations. Most of the participants at this convening also participate with the Kauffmann Foundation ecosystem building initiative (Hwang, 2020). Fifteen of the attendees agreed to be interviewed for this study. The 15 participants in this study ranged in age from mid-30's to 70's.

Their job descriptions included: city manager, futures consultant (2), CEO of a futures organization or network (2), community activator (3), co-starter entrepreneur, development fundraiser (2), global network organizer (2), and organizational/strategic management firm principal (2).

Participants were individually interviewed via Zoom. Interviews lasted between 60 and 75 minutes. An open-ended semi-structured question protocol asked them to define futurist and describe their personal development as a futurist, their approaches to lifelong learning, innovation, creativity and visions, a personal transformational experience, and their commitment to community transformation. Grounded theory (Creswell & Poth, 2016) was used to guide an analysis of their futures orientations to address *what*, *how*, *why*, and *where* questions about their futures work as ecosystem builders. Grounded theory is especially valuable for exploring evolving themes and relationships in complex and emerging fields. Since there was no existing research, we could find on ecosystem building futurists as a special group of futurists, grounded theory provided opportunities for categorical convergences through our inductive explorations and provided perspective of their overall understandings of ecosystem building.

Findings and Discussion

What do Ecosystem Building Futurists Do?

We identified four major categories that distinguished their work. While three of the categories are typical of most futurists who work with clients in business, organizational, political or social settings, it was the fourth category that distinguished this group as ecosystem builder futurists. As they defined themselves and their work, they discussed (a) making connections to help solve complex problems about unforeseen realities, (b) identifying "weak signals" and emerging trends to prepare for and create the future, and (c) tapping into the potential for foresight, creativity and adaptive responses to uncertainty. Several of the participants worked in traditional settings and described their approach as ecosystem building futurists as something above and beyond their traditional work as a futurist.

The fourth category describing their work as ecosystem builders was (d) working for organizational and community transformation. Notably, those who worked in community entrepreneurial ecosystem building projects or social activism conveyed a deeper, more connected approach to social and ecological framing of their work as transforming society to create new orders, relationships, systems, models, or understandings. They were driven by a vision of social transformation to address many deeply seeded social challenges.
The goal of social transformation focuses ecosystem building futurists' work in what Miller (2011, 2017) and Cowart (2020) describe as emergentist futures and presencing. Their focus on creating and shaping potential futures rather than preparing for "a future" oriented their work as ecosystem building futurists to bring about new possibilities and unforeseen futures at a social level.

The Why of Ecosystem Building Futures

To explore the underlying reasons this group of futurists engaged in ecosystem building futures

work, we examined the metaphors they used in describing and making sense of their work to explore underlying values and worldviews. The metaphors participants used to describe their work came from complex adaptive systems, biological systems theories, dynamical and chaotic systems theory, environmental ecosystems, and electro-magnetism. Their metaphors emphasized relationships, ecosystems such as rainforests, and emergence as key unique goals of their work. Descriptions of these metaphors included underlying values for relationship, interconnectivity, interdependence, process over product, sustainability, care, trust, and compassion. Over-arching strategies and perspectives that supported these values included the importance of *seeding* the conversation rather than dictating it, creating safe environments for open and diverse conversation and storytelling, supporting holistic thinking to include all STEEP (social, technological, economic, environmental, and policy) dimensions of social impact, and helping their clients or the communities in which they worked strive for coherence across social systems. They emphasized emergence, newness, and creation as important outcomes of their work. And in several cases, the participants saw their role as a disruptor to create the right amount of tension to push the system forward. As they expanded their descriptions to describe their "domain of work" (Bishop & Hines, 2012) as community and social transformation, their language revealed what Slaughter (2020) describes as an integral futures (IF) perspective with a focus on ecological holism and interconnectedness.

The Where of Ecosystem Builders' Futurist Passions

From an IF perspective (Slaughter, 2020), the where of futures work explores the depth of commitment, vision, and underlying myths and metaphors for work as a futurist. Ideas about where their ecosystem building passions came from were addressed through questions about their approaches to lifelong learning, their family relationships and education, and the metaphors they used that revealed and explained their underly values for ecosystem building.
As described above, many of the metaphors and language the ecosystem building futurists used reflected back to aspects of the new sciences (Capra, 1982; Gleick, 1987; Waldrop, 1992) of systems, chaos and complexity with interconnectedness, uncertainty, nonlinear impacts and emergence as key characteristics. Their passion came from recognizing traditional ways of approaching business or social change were steeped in mechanical paradigms that did not accommodate these dynamic relationships and potential for emergence. Their passion was to bring these more organic approaches to their work in creating new social structures and dynamics.

When asked about their approaches to lifelong learning, all described what Clardy (2000) defines as *scanning* approaches to self-directed learning as they continuously sought out new learning and individuals with backgrounds and experiences different from them. They exhibited what Caffarella (2000) describes as emancipatory goals supporting social justice and social transformation. Several included metaphors of the heart and soul to describe their work, emphasizing their passions to learn and create as holistic and integrated (Dirkx, 2012). Family impact was described as supportive and encouraging of their "eclectic" approach to learning and sensemaking. As one person reflected, "I've always been a unicorn!"

The How of Ecosystem Futuring

When asked to describe their approaches to ecosystem building, all participants referred in some way to going beyond "strategic planning" to include STEEP (Social, Technological, Economical, Environmental, and Policy) perspectives. They described extending traditional futures approaches (Bishop & Hines, 2012) such as backcasting, economic projections, DELPHI, forecasting, and trend analyses to elicit deeper metaphors and values orientations (Inayatullah, 2008). They used both/and approaches to meet the needs of their clients for traditional forecasting information and to push their clients and communities in which they worked forward to explore underlying values and clarify goal assumptions and needs. They used Master Capacity Building strategies (Smyre & Richardson, 2016) to listen to and shape conversations and decolonize futures (Bisht, 2020). They helped their clients explore weak signals and wild cards (Hiltunen, 2020) and become comfortable with uncertainty. They didn't dictate outcomes and were especially attentive to building and sustaining trust. Their *how's* of ecosystem building placed their work in the field of aspirational futures (Bezold, 2020).

Conclusions

As Miller (2017) described, emergentist approaches to futures work are guided by "futures unimagined and hence a present that does not yet make sense" (p. 25). The ecosystem building futurists in this study were especially driven to create and impact communities for social transformation. In adult education terms, they understood what Freire (2000) described as the ontological conditions of the future as emergent, unfinished, and uncertain (Fleener & Prefonatine, in press) and were driven by an ethic of the heart-work of futuring (Cowart, 2020) that "creates the futures we desire" (Inaytullah, 2008, p. 6). Uncovering the "futures in the present" to "discover and invent and construct the world around us" (Miller, 2011, p. 23) for "revealing and managing uncertainties … [and] remov(ing) the illusion of certainty or determinism" (Bishop & Hines, 2012, pp. 216-217) were goals that were supported through processes and approaches to their futures work that engaged them and their audiences in an approach to learning that included searching for new meanings (Clardy, 2000) and lifelong learning (Jarvis, 2004).

Aligned with adult education, the ecosystem builder futurists in this study were committed to developing capacities within the communities they served as a social learning system. They thus took on roles of educator versus conveyor, facilitator versus sage, vision producing versus visionary, listener versus speaker, coordinator versus manipulator, and dance partner versus dance instructor. Importantly, they viewed their work as *heart* work and as a change catalyst rather than change agent. As ecosystem builder futurists, they strived for collaboration versus competition, and connectedness rather than individual advancement for either themselves or their clients.

As we explored the work they did, the alignment of the skills, practices, and underlying ethics and metaphors they used provided a model for adult learning for social transformation became increasingly obvious. As we considered their reported impacts in communities and social settings, we have come to recognize the value in and need for an approach to futures studies that instills in all citizens an approach to futures learning to embrace, create and transform society in

holistic, meaningful and caring ways. As David Rock (2020), Forbes contributor, espoused: *The key is to think like a futurist*. We conclude with our own advocacy for an ecosystem, futures-building, Futures Adult Learning for All (FALA).

References

Bennett, J. (2019, January 24). Ecosystem building and ecosystem builders: What is it? Who are they? Medium. https://medium.com/costarters-intersections/ecosystem-building-and-ecosystem-builders-what-is-it-who-are-they-b834d5b6b5e1

Bezold, C. (2020). Aspirational futures. In R. Slaughter & A. Hines (Eds.), *The knowledge base of futures studies 2020* (pp. 98-108). Association of Professional Futurists.

Bishop, P. C. & Hines, A. (2012). *Teaching about the future*. Palgrave McMillan.

Bisht, P. (2020). Decolonizing futures: Finding voice and making room for non-western ways of knowing, being and doing. In R. Slaughter & A. Hines (Eds.) *The knowledge base of futures studies 2020* (pp. 216-230). Association of Professional Futurists.

Caffarella, R. S. (2000). Goals of self-directed learning. In G. A. Straka (Ed.), *Conceptions of self-directed learning: Theoretical and conceptual considerations* (pp. 37-48). Waxmann.

Capra, F. (1982) *The turning point: Science, society and the rising culture*. Bantam Books.

Clardy, A. (2000). Learning on their own: Vocationally oriented self-directed learning projects. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 11*(2), 105-125.

Cowart, A. (2020). Presencing: The Theory U Framework as Foresight Method. In R. Slaughter & A. Hines (Eds.) *The knowledge base of futures studies 2020* (pp. 98-108). Association of Professional Futurists.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.

Curry, A. & Hodgson, A. (2008). Seeing in multiple horizons: Connecting futures to strategy. *Journal of Futures Studies,13*(1), 1–20.

Dator, J. (2020). The Manoa School's four futures. In R. Slaughter & A. Hines (Eds.) *The knowledge base of futures studies 2020* (pp. 109-119). Association of Professional Futurists.

Dirkz, J. M. (2012). Nurturing soul work: A Jungian approach to transformative learning. In E. W. Taylor & P. Cranton (Eds.), *The handbook of transformative learning* (pp. 116-130). Jossey-Bass.

Fleener, M. J. & Prefonatine, I. (in press). A futures perspective for an andragogy of hope. In R. Lake, E. Stein, & T. Kress (Eds.), *Radically dreaming: Illuminating Freirean praxis and emerging from dark times*.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of freedom*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Gidley, J. (2020). Yesterday's futures over three millennia. In R. Slaughter & A. Hines (Eds.) *The knowledge base of futures studies 2020* (pp. 7-23). Association of Professional Futurists.

Gidley, J. (2017). *The future: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Gleick, J. (1987). *Chaos: The making of a new science.* Viking Press.

Hiltunen, E. (2020). Wild cards and weak signals. In R. Slaughter & A. Hines (Eds.) *The knowledge base of futures studies 2020* (pp. 171-184). Association of Professional Futurists.

Hines, A., & Bishop, P. C. (2013). Framework foresight: Exploring futures the Houston way. *Futures, 51*(1), 31-49.

Hwang, V. (2019). *Entrepreneurial ecosystem building playbook, 3.0*. Kauffman Foundation. https://www.kauffman.org/ecosystem-playbook-draft-3/#

Inayatullah, S. (2008). Six pillars: futures thinking for transformation. *Foresight, 10*(1), 4-21.

Jarvis, P. (2004). *Adult education and lifelong learning: Theory and practice*. Routledge.

Makridakis, S., Wheelwright, S. C., & Hyndman, R. J. (2008). *Forecasting methods and applications*. John Wiley & Sons.

Miller, R. (Ed.) (2017). *Transforming the future: Anticipation in the 21st century*. Routledge.

Miller, R. (2011). Futures literacy: Embracing complexity and using the future. *Ethos, 10*(10), 23-28.

Rock D. (2020). Think like a futurist: How to chart your organization's course amid crisis. *Forbes.* https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidrock/2020/06/08/think-like-a-futurist-how-to-chart-your-organizations-course-amid-crisis/#750923181b44

Sardar, Z. (2010). Welcome to postnormal times. *Futures, 42*(5), 435-444. https:/doi:10.1016/j.futures.2009.11.028

Scharmer, O. (2016). *Theory U: Leading from the future as it emerges.* Berrett-Koehler.

Slaughter, R. (2020). Integral futures: Theory, vision, practice. In R. Slaughter & A. Hines (Eds.) *The knowledge base of futures studies 2020* (pp. 98-108). Association of Professional Futurists.

Smyre, R. & Richardson, N. (2016). *Preparing for a world that does not exist--yet.* Changemakers Books.

Campus Climate: College Students' Attitude towards Homosexuality in Taiwan

Jannette Wei-Ting Wang Gutierrez
Tamkang University

Abstract: All people should have equal rights. Educators must make sure that everyone is included and is treated fairly. Higher education institutions are considered more liberal and tolerant, yet there are marginalized students, such as those from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. In November 2018, the Taiwanese electorate passed referendums to prevent recognition of same-sex marriages in the Civil Code and to restrict teaching about LGBT issues. We witnessed the heartbreaking results of a referendum on the question, in which a majority of Taiwanese people voted against same-sex marriage. This study is to investigate to understand people's attitudes toward the LGBT community on campus, analyze the attitudinal factors and seek to make the campus environment more LGBT friendly in a College in Taiwan.

Keywords: university campus climate, homosexuality, higher education

All people should have equal rights. Educators must make sure that everyone is included and is treated fairly. Higher education institutions are considered more liberal and tolerant, yet there are marginalized students, such as those from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. In 2017, the constitutional court ruled that it was unconstitutional that the civil code had failed to recognize the right of same-sex marriage. It gave the legislature two years to pass a law recognizing same-sex marriage and gave us hope that we would finally see change. In November 2018, the Taiwanese electorate passed referendums to prevent recognition of same-sex marriages in the Civil Code and to restrict teaching about LGBT issues. We witnessed the heartbreaking results of a referendum on the question, in which a majority of Taiwanese people voted against same-sex marriage. Before the vote, Taiwanese society had been torn apart by anti-LGBT rumors, biases, and discrimination. Members of the LGBT community were disappointed. For many LGBT people, discrimination and marginalization have increased thereafter.

Higher education institutions are microcosms of the larger society, which continues to struggle with bias, mistrust, misunderstanding, and intolerance of individuals who do not fit the norm (Medley, 2005). While the common perception of today's campuses is that they are relatively accepting and supportive of gays and lesbians, it was not so long ago that students who identified as gay or who were even simply rumored to be gay faced instant exclusion. Dilley (2002) traced the history of higher education from 1945 through to the 1960s and found that the on-campus climate tended to mirror the larger cultural and social trends that criminalized, demonized, and then pathologized gay identity and behavior. From the 1970s through to the 1990s, some institutions still sought to restrict gay student associations on and off-campus and denied the recognition and funding of student groups supportive of gay social or political activities.

Tamkang University Lanyang Campus is a branch of Tamkang University and has a small residential campus in Jiaoxi Township, Yilan County. Everybody, including teachers and staff,

must live on campus, and most students share a room with another student. As with most campuses around the world, there is a small LGBT community. Generally, it is considered that more highly educated people are more likely to have a liberal perspective. Previous studies have shown that more highly educated students tend to more easily accept the LGBT community than first- or second-year students (Schott-Ceccacci et al., 2009). However, researchers have been pondering as to whether there are gaps between this theory and the real community. To investigate these gaps between theory and the real college climate, this research was conducted with the following objectives:

- to understand people's attitudes toward the LGBT community on campus,
- to analyze the attitudinal factors, and
- to seek to make the campus environment more LGBT friendly.

Literature Review

Campus Climate

Garvey et al. (2017) examined campus climate perceptions from alumnx across 3121 LGBT undergraduate students who graduated from 1944 through 2013 and found differences in LGBT student campus climate perceptions across generations. Their results highlighted key academic experiences, co-curricular experiences, and institutional environments as influential to LGBT student climate perceptions, and empirical evidence that demonstrated generational progress and improved perceptions of campus climate for LGBT students. Studies about LGBT campus climate perceptions have continued to center on three areas: perceptions and experiences of LGBT people, perceptions about LGBT people and their experiences, and the status of policies and programs designed to serve LGBT collegians (Renn, 2010).

Consistent with Rankin and Reason's (2008) transformational tapestry model, two key environmental influences have been heavily studied among higher education scholars examining LGBT students: university policy/services and curriculum/pedagogy. Numerous scholars have documented the negative experiences of LGBT college students in academic environments (Billimoria & Stewart, 2009; Gortmaker & Brown, 2006; Linley & Nguyen, 2015; Patridge et al., 2014; Sevecke et al., 2015). Academic disciplines have a great influence on LGBT student outcomes because they are a critical microclimate of students' college environments (Vaccaro, 2012). Negative academic experiences may lead LGBT students to feel silenced and detached from classroom dynamics (Renn, 2010). These students may feel invisible as they do not see their experiences or identities represented in curricula (Gortmaker & Brown, 2006; Linley & Nguyen, 2015; Patridge et al., 2014; Renn, 2010).

Gender

Among the demographic characteristics, research regarding gender has been the most common. Many previous studies have found that gender is significantly related to a negative attitude toward LGBT people. In particular, men have been found to have a more negative attitude toward the LGBT community (Arndt & Bruin, 2006; Herek, 2002, Herek & Capitanio, 1999, Johnson & Greeley, 2007, Medley, 2005). In these gender studies, the gap between male and female attitudes has often been significant. Herek (2002) found that 48.8% of men felt *somewhat*

or *very uncomfortable* being around a man who is homosexual, while only 28.8% of women felt the same way. On the other hand, 35.6% of men felt uncomfortable with lesbians, compared with 42.7% of women. These results implied that many respondents were not supportive of homosexuals of the same gender as themselves; in other words, males were less supportive of gay men than females and females felt more uncomfortable with lesbians than males. However, some research found that the gender gap had less influence on LGBT attitudes

Method and Procedures

Tamkang University Lanyang Campus has been striving for internationalization and globalization by adopting the British educational system and the concept of holistic education originating from the prestigious Oxbridge universities. Student enrollment began in 2005 and all course instruction is English based. Furthermore, the Junior Abroad Program for all third-year students at specific sister universities as well as residential colleges where students and teachers share on-campus accommodation was adopted to strengthen life and academic tutoring to cultivate holistic talents. In recent years, the recruitment of international students has grown more active to introduce globalization into the campus. The arrangement of residential colleges is such that students are not allowed to leave the campus during the week without leaving. Thus, aside from daytime classes as well as college activities and a wealth of social activities in the evenings, the interpersonal interactions of the students are limited to less than 600 people on an exclusive campus, particularly because the accommodation arrangement is two to a room. Therefore, to homosexual students, the campus is an important part of their lives, while students' attitudes towards homosexuality and their interpersonal relationships will affect the self-identity of homosexual students and the friendliness of the student population towards them (Liu, Cheng, & Liu, 2004). Are students with minority sexual orientations widely accepted or more fearful of self-expression in such a confined context as the Lanyang Campus? To establish a friendly campus and a gender-equal educational environment, this study investigates the views on groups with minority sexual orientations in the Lanyang Campus. There are 972 people at Lanyang Campus, including professors, staff, and students from the different majors of global politics and economics (GPE), innovative and information technology (IIT), international tourism management (ITM), and English language and culture (ELC). The instrument used in this study is Attitudes toward Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender on University Campus. This questionnaire consists of demographic data questions and an Attitudes Toward Lesbian and Gay Men (ATLG) scale (Herek G. M., 1997), which was modified by the author to fit this study.

Results and Discussion

The study found that there was an attitude difference between males and females at Lanyang Campus, with females having a higher LGBT acceptance than males. This result is consistent with previous studies (Arndt & Bruin, 2006; Medley, 2005). In the regression model, the dummy variable *male* showed a negative relationship between being male and LGBT attitude for almost all statements. Furthermore, the regression results showed that males tend to have a more negative attitude to gay males than to lesbians. In this study, the lower the score, the more LGBT friendly this group is. The average score of men at ATL was 1.890 higher than that of women at 1.655. Similar results were observed at ATG. The t-value of RUN in a paired Sample T-test was < 0.05, indicating that the attitude difference between men and women was statistically

significant. Therefore, female college students are generally more LGBT-friendly than male college students. Comparing college students' attitudes towards ATL and ATG, the average score of both men and women in ATL was lower than that in ATG, which indicated that both men and women held a more friendly attitude towards Lesbian than gay.

From previous studies, it has been shown that several demographic characteristics influence attitudes towards the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. This paper's main purpose was to investigate attitudes towards the LGBT community at Tamkang University's Lanyang Campus from several demographic aspects: gender, occupation, political views, religion, and major. All these variables indicated an impact on LGBT attitudes. This section compares our findings with those of previous studies. This study was conducted to investigate the attitudes toward the LGBT community at Tamkang University's Lanyang Campus and to find which factors were correlated with a negative LGBT attitude. The results indicated that LGBT prejudice was quite low, and most participants had high LGBT acceptance. Even though the prejudice was low, several factors correlated with a negative attitude towards the LGBT community, such as having a conservative political view and being Christian. In the future, to ensure a more tolerant LGBT campus, we should foster a greater understanding of the LGBT community on campus and improve the climate on campus. We hope that this study is useful in understanding the campus climate and for promoting a more tolerant campus attitude towards the LGBT community.

The overt climate of fear that existed on US college campuses before the 1990s still lingers today and thus negatively shapes the experiences of LGBT students (Renn, 2010). Additionally, this retrospective underscores the reality that mere visibility will not address the oppressive settings present for LGBT communities in higher education settings.

References

Arndt, M., & Bruin, G. d. (2006). Attitudes toward lesbians and gay men: Relations with gender, race and religion among University Students. *PINS, 33*(1), 16-30.

Dilley, P. (2002). *Queer man on campus: A history of non-heterosexual college men, 1945-2000*. Routledge Falmer.

Garvey, J. C., Sanders, L. A., & Flint, M. A. (2017). Generational perceptions of campus climate among LGBTQ undergraduates. *Journal of College Student Development, 58*(6), 795-817. http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/csd.2017.0065

Gortmaker, V. J., & Brown, R. D. (2006). Out of the college closet: Differences in perceptions and experiences among out and closeted lesbian and gay students. *College Student Journal, 40*(3), 606–619.

Linley, J. L., & Nguyen, D. J. (2015). LGBTQ experiences in curricular contexts. In D. Stewart, K. A. Renn, & G. B. Brazelton (Eds.), *New Directions for Student Services: No. 152*. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer students in higher education: An appreciative inquiry (pp. 25–39). Jossey-Bass.

Medley, C. L. (2005). Attitudes towards homosexuality at private colleges [Master thesis] Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/34659

Patridge, E. V., Barthelemy, R. S., & Rankin, S. R. (2014). Factors impacting the academic climate for LGBQ STEM faculty. *Journal of Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering, 20*(1), 75–98.

Rankin, S. R., & Reason, R. D. (2005). Differing perceptions: How Students of Color and White students perceive campus climate for underrepresented groups. *Journal of College Student Development, 46*(1), 43-61.

Renn, K. A. (2010). LGBT and queer research in higher education: The state and status of the field. *Educational Researcher, 39*(2), 132–141. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X10362579

Schott-Ceccacci, M., Holland, L., & Matthews, T. L. (2009). Attitudes toward the LGBT community in higher education. *Spaces for Difference: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 2*(1), 36-47. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6gz7q7tz

Sevecke, J. R., Rhymer, K. N., Almazan, E. P., & Jacob, S. (2015). Effects of interaction experiences and undergraduate coursework on attitudes toward gay and lesbian issues. *Journal of Homosexuality, 62*(6), 821-840. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2014.999493

Vaccaro, A. (2012). Campus microclimates for LGBT faculty, staff, and students: An exploration of the intersections of social identity and campus roles. Journal of Student *Affairs Research and Practice, 49*(4), 429–446.

Discovering Unknown Reflection: Exploring Sentimental Intentions of Online Teaching Evaluation in Adult Technology Education

Yankun He, Kenan Xiao, and Yuewei Shi
Auburn University

Abstract: Sentiment analysis (SA) is the process of identifying and classifying users' opinion from a piece of text into different sentiments. Student's evaluation of teaching is one of the common and necessary measures to assess the teaching quality of course instructors in a college setting. Traditionally, student evaluations are administered towards the end of the semester using a paper-based survey. However, recently online evaluations, such as RateMyProfessor.com (RMP) are becoming popular. This study collected 490 comments of professors in the Computer Science and Software Engineering department at Auburn University that meet the selection criteria from RMP. The research utilized a textBlob Python package to analyze sentiments of students' comments from different class standings.

Keywords: sentiment analysis, students' evaluation, RateMyProfessor

Student evaluations of teaching (SET) is one of the joint and necessary measures to a teaching quality of course instructors in a college setting. Besides, SET is also regarded as a significant consideration for promotion, tenure, and merit at most higher education institutions (Otto et al., 2008). Coladarci and Kornfield (2007) pointed out that SET can be an essential source of information for improving teaching and informing personal decisions when instruments are appropriately conducted, and the resulting data are thoughtfully considered. Different evaluation designs exist to conduct SET, and the most often SET survey instrument consists of plenty of fixed-ended questions on which students evaluate their instructors (Brockx et al., 2012). Some researchers used the scores on fixed-ended questions to generate a statistical report. For example, Diseth (2007) used evaluation scores conducted by 248 undergraduate psychology students to analyze the relationship between their evaluation perception and academic achievement. These fixed-ended questions contain both standardized questions rated on a Likert scale and open-ended questions, which complement standardized questions. Open-ended questions, which capture students' opinions, are not covered by the standardized questions and give greater freedom of expression (Baddam et al., 2019).

Traditionally, SET is administered by paper-based surveys, and students are usually asked to finish the evaluation on their instructor at the end of the semester. In recent years, online evaluation websites are growing up and becoming famous. Students comment about their educational experience in online forums or teacher review sites such as RateMyProfessors (RMP), Uloop, and Teacher Complains. These websites allow students to anonymously rate their professors and share their educational experience with great freedom. More importantly, these online comments open to the public. These feedbacks yield valuable insights for university administrators and help students clarify which universities to attend or courses to take (Abdelrazeq et al., 2015).

Sentiment analysis (SA) identifies and classifies users' opinions or attitudes from a piece of text, such as positive, negative, or neutral sentiments and different emotions like delighted, dismal, excited, or angry. SA plays a significant role in many areas like consumer feedbacks, social media monitoring, product analysis and so forth. Moreover, in the education community, SA can be applied to analyze the text written by students, whether in formal course surveys or informal comments from online platforms (Rani & Kumar, 2017). In this way, researchers have an approach to determine students' interest and preference in a class and figure out, which areas should be improved through corrective actions or methods.

This study uses the sentiment analysis method to analyze students' sentiments in different class standing (freshman year, sophomore year, junior year, and senior year). We collected 620 students' comments from RMP of the Computer Science and Software Engineering Department at Auburn University by using the Python Scrapy package. 490 comments met the selection criteria and contained complete information, including the professors' names, students' comments, the rate scores, etc. Moreover, for the sentiment analysis, we used the textBlob package, which takes in a piece of text, and returns the polarity and subjectivity of the text.

Literature Review

Several previous researchers focused on the bias evaluation of online SET and the validity of online SET as a measure of student learning. Online faculty rating sites are disputed because data from these websites are characterized by biases such as instructors' teaching styles, personal charisma, sense of humor, and grading leniency (Liaw & Goh 2003). In fact, these biases are not as valuable as a measure for either faculty performance or student learning. Feeley (2002) found that RMP ratings were affected by a halo effect so that it cannot reflect student learning. In this situation, instructors who have decent appearances or show leniency towards students' grades tend to achieve overall positive ratings. Moreover, online ratings may be entered by anyone, and at any time, they may be affected by emotion. Some students may have potential bias when rating their professors online (Otto et al., 2008). However, some researchers also stated that it is possible that online ratings may not be biased. Students who post ratings and comments on the websites did have experience with the professors. From this point of view, online ratings may be representative. Furthermore, Hardy (2003) pointed out that if some students give biased ratings, these comments are balanced between positive ones and negative ones.

Online student ratings could improve both student learning and instructor performance. Students can read previous rating information to choose instructors who are best suited to their learning preferences. For instructors, they can learn from online comments to improve their teaching performance. It is no doubt that these improvements are dependent on the validity of the rating as a measure of student learning. Previous studies created several models to examine the validity of SET. The research findings hold that learning is positively associated with instructors' clarity and instructors' helpfulness, while course difficulty is not linearly associated with student learning. Students could not learn best when courses are too difficult or too easy, and they will have better learning outcomes when the difficulty level is moderate and between these extremes (Centra, 2003; Harrison et al., 2004). Otta et al. (2008) used those models to examine whether the ratings reflect a halo effect or student learning. Their study showed that statistical support for RMP ratings reflect student learning.

In recent years, researchers have begun to apply sentiment analysis (SA) to the education areas. Ortigosa et al. (2014) proposed a SA approach for the e-learning environment using a combined method of Spanish lexical based and machine learning techniques. Rani and Kumar (2017) used natural language processing and machine learning to analyze student feedback, collected from both course surveys and online comments. Through these methods, they identified sentiment polarity and the emotions expressed. Baddam et al. (2019) analyzed sentiments from different class standing in the business department using text mining. These researchers helped university administrators and instructors to address problem areas in teaching and learning.

Methodology

This study aims to use the sentiment analysis method to analyze students' sentiments in different class standing. For the data collection step, we collected 620 students' comments from RMP of the Computer Science and Software Engineering Department at Auburn University using the Python Scrapy package. Four hundred ninety comments met the selection criteria and contained complete information: professors, courses, comments, quality scores, and difficulty scores. We used a textBlob package for the sentiment analysis, which takes in a piece of text and returned the text's polarity and subjectivity.

Results

Overall, students from different class standings show moderately positive sentiments about their professors. The negative sentiments about the professors reach the peak during sophomore year. In terms of students in their third and fourth years, they show relatively satisfaction with their professors and give positive comments. The results also show that graduate students mostly leave positive comments on their professors (see Table 1.)

Table 1. *Sentiment Results*

Category	Subcategory	Very negative	Moderately negative	Moderately positive	Very positive
Class Standing	Freshman	2.50%	38.75%	53.13%	5.63%
	Sophomore	1.79%	42.86%	48.21%	7.14%
	Junior	0.00%	25.87%	68.53%	5.94%
	Senior	0.00%	18.29%	69.51%	12.20%
	Graduate	4.44%	28.89%	57.78%	8.89%

Figure 1 demonstrates the word cloud that includes the most frequently used words that might reveal sentiments in these comments.

Discussion

This study had two limitations. First, the RMP's online comments were only collected from the Computer Science and Software Engineering Department at Auburn University, so the data was relatively small. Secondly, the dataset lacked details about students' information since a secondary source provided it. In this case, we identified students' class standing by courses rather than their actual class standings.

Figure 1. *Words Cloud of Graduate Student Comments About Professors*

In the future study, we will design a model to examine the new version of RMP's validity. In previous studies, researchers used three models to examine the validity of online SET. They found that learning is positively associated with instructors' clarity and instructors' helpfulness, while course difficulty is not linearly associated with student learning. However, the RMP website had modified the evaluation scales after 2016. They changed helpful and clarity scales into overall quality and added the question: "would you take again?". We should focus on building up a new model to adapt to the new version of RMP for further study. Moreover, we will also design a study to explore the reasons that cause sentiment change among different class standings. Besides, we will provide a path for adult educators to discover the sentiments of learners and improve instructors' teaching effectiveness.

References

Abdelrazeq, A., Janßen, D., Tummel, C., Jeschke, S., & Richert, A. (2016). Sentiment analysis of social media for evaluating universities. In S. Jeschke, Isenhardt, I., Hees, F., & Henning, K, *Automation, Communication and Cybernetics in Science and Engineering 2015/2016* (pp. 233-251). Springer.

Aung, K. Z., & Myo, N. N. (2017, May 24-26). Sentiment analysis of students' comment using lexicon-based approach. *Proceeding of the IEEE/ACIS 16th International Conference on Computer and Information Science (ICIS)*. https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/7959985

Baddam, S., Bingi, P., & Shuva, S. (2019). Student evaluation of teaching in business education: Discovering student sentiments using text mining techniques. *The e-Journal of Business Education & Scholarship of Teaching, 13*(3), 1-13.

Brockx, B., Van Roy, K., & Mortelmans, D. (2012). The student as a commentator: students' comments in student evaluations of teaching. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2012*(69), 1122-1133.

Centra, J. A. (2003). Will teachers receive higher student evaluations by giving higher grades and less course work? *Research in Higher Education, 44*(5), 495-518.

Coladarci, T., & Kornfield, I. (2007). RateMyProfessors.com versus formal in-class student evaluations of teaching. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation, 12*(1), 1-15.

Diseth, Å. (2007). Students' evaluation of teaching approaches to learning, and academic achievement. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 51*(2), 185-204.

Hardy, N. (2003). Online ratings: Fact and fiction. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 2003*(96), 31-38.

Harrison, P. D., Douglas, D. K., & Burdsal, C. A. (2004). The relative merits of different types of overall evaluations of teaching effectiveness. *Research in Higher Education, 45*(3), 311-323.

Hugh Feeley, T. (2002). Evidence of halo effects in student evaluations of communication instruction. *Communication Education, 51*(3), 225-236.

Liaw, S. H., & Goh, K. L. (2003). Evidence and control of biases in student evaluations of teaching. *International Journal of Educational Management, 71*(1), 37-43*.*

Rani, S., & Kumar, P. (2017). A sentiment analysis system to improve teaching and learning. *Computer, 50*(5), 36-43.

Ortigosa, A., Martín, J. M., & Carro, R. M. (2014). Sentiment analysis in Facebook and its application to e-learning. *Computers in Human Behavior, 31*(1)*,* 527-541.

Otto, J., Sanford Jr, D. A., & Ross, D. N. (2008). Does RateMyProfessor.com really rate my professor? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 33*(4), 355-368.

Practical Guidance in Identifying, Recruiting, and Interviewing International Key Informants in Adult Education Research

Abigail Helsinger[1], Nytasia Hicks[2], Roberto J. Millar[3],
Laura M. Girling[4], Phyllis A. Cummins[1], and Takashi Yamashita[4]
[1]Scripps Gerontology Center, Miami University
[2]U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital, Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center
[3]The Hilltop Institute, University of Maryland, Baltimore County
[4]Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Public Health, Center for Aging Studies, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Abstract: Cross-cultural qualitative research is essential to develop practical approaches to promote adult education and training in diverse societies. Yet, little systematic guidance is available to successfully conduct a large-scale cross-national qualitative inquiry in general, and in virtual settings in particular. The purpose of this study is to identify challenges and effective strategies in virtual qualitative interviews with international key informants. We used a focus group of five researchers to identify challenges and strategies associated with five key domains of qualitative interviews with informants: identification, recruitment, preparation, conducting interview, and follow-up. Deductive thematic analytic methods and content analysis revealed nuanced tactics related to challenges and strategies. These findings provide practical guidelines for adult education researchers conducting interviews with international key informants.

Keywords: key informant interviews, adult learning, programs and policies, virtual interviews

Lifelong learning and skill upgrading over the life course is needed to ensure adults have the skills desired in the current global labor market. Job automation, advanced technologies, and demographic changes (e.g., longevity) require the availability and accessibility of educational programs for the workforce to remain competitive in a national as well as global economy (Desjardins & Rubenson, 2013; OECD, 2017; OECD, 2019). There is little cross-cultural research regarding lifelong learning and workforce education policies implemented across nations. This gap in understanding represents an important barrier to developing culturally sensitive lifelong education policies and programs.

Background

The research discussed here is part of a larger mixed methods study that sought to gain a better understanding of associations among skill proficiencies (i.e., literacy, numeracy, and problem solving skills), lifelong learning, and employment among adults in the US and selected Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries. For the qualitative portion of the research, 60 key informants in 11 countries were interviewed to gain a better understanding of policies and programs intended to facilitate opportunities for adult learning. The purpose of this study is to provide practical guidelines by identifying and

summarizing challenges and effective strategies in interviewing international informants on lifelong learning policies.

Methodology

We used purposive sampling to recruit five researchers who were involved with our mix-methods international research of adult educational and training (AET) opportunities. Only researchers involved with qualitative interviews of international key informants, hereafter KIs, were invited to participate in a virtual focus group. The participants were all female between the ages of 25 and 67. The study participants had 4-to-15 years of research experience. All participants had completed graduate-level research training, and two were pursuing doctoral degrees at the time of the research project. We distinguish researchers who were a part of the focus group by referring to them as *participants* or *focus group participants* from individuals interviewed for the qualitative portion of the mixed methods research by calling them *key informants*, *KIs*, or *interviewees*.

Based on the interviews with 60 KIs, which took place between November 2018 and June 2020, we focused on five key areas of interest for preparing and conducting qualitative interviews with KIs, including: (a) identification, (b) recruitment, (c) preparation, (d) conducting interview, and (e) follow-up. Of the 60 KI interviews, 18 took place after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 in the US. We led a one-hour focus group in which participants were asked to explore facilitators and barriers associated with the five key areas. The focus group was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim via an online service—www.Rev.com. Transcripts were manually reviewed for accuracy.

Focus group data were imported into NVivo (QSR International, 2020), an analytic program that assists evaluation of unstructured text data. Three researchers independently applied 10 broad coding categories (see Table 1) to the transcript line by line in NVivo. This process was followed by paired review to reconcile discrepant coding.

The coded data were explored using content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Using NVivo, line-by-line data classified into each of the 10 broad codes (Table 1) were individually retrieved, iteratively open-coded for underlying themes, and then distilled into sub-categories. To ensure methodological rigor and establish data trustworthiness, codes and emerged themes were reviewed for accuracy by the focus group participants, and further adjustments were made according to their feedback (Krefting & Krefting, 1991). The consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ) (Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007) was utilized to report essential research processes.

Results

Focus group participants reported several effective strategies and barriers associated with each of the five key steps: (a) identification of KIs, (b) recruitment, (c) interview preparation, (d) conducting the interview, and (e) follow-up. Below we present challenges and effective strategies in each of these five areas. Quotes were selected as exemplars, portraying the nuanced statements relating to effective strategies and challenges.

Table 1. *Codes, Sub-codes, and Definitions in Study*

Code	Sub-Codes	Definitions
Identification	Effective Strategy	Successful identification of KIs with relevant experience on lifelong learning and labor market policies.
	Challenge	Identification of challenges and barriers pertaining to the successful identification of KIs.
Recruitment	Effective Strategy	Successful recruitment efforts in which KI agrees to participate in the research.
	Challenge	Barriers experienced during the process of extending a formal invitation to participate.
Preparation	Effective Strategy	Successful efforts in preparing for the interview with the KIs.
	Challenge	Barriers associated with the development of an interview protocol and arranging the interview setting.
Conducting Interview	Effective Strategy	Strategies related to the successful interviewing of the KIs by the research team.
	Challenge	Unsuccessful strategies during the interview process.
Follow-up	Effective Strategy	Successful post-interview process of data organization, extraction, and resuming contact with the KIs.
	Challenge	Barriers associated with the post-interview process of data organization, extraction, and resuming contact with the KIs.

Note: KIs = Key informants

Regarding the first step, identification, challenges included unfamiliarity with online platforms and the expertise of KIs, while effective strategies included conducting literature reviews, utilizing an advisory board, maintaining a master list, attending professional conferences, using chain referrals, and being open to different KI expertise areas. Regarding the expertise of KIs, a researcher shared, "Sometimes people would give us names and then we would have to do due diligence to find out if they really were a good key informant. Sometimes we found they were not." Even with those challenges, researchers shared the effectiveness of using chain referrals and being open to different areas of expertise:

> I think I was surprised by some of the people that were identified, like [organization] and then [organization]. In terms of recruiting, sometimes you'll get unexpected people identified that you wouldn't even think of, and then that might cause you to also look in a different direction to recruit.

In terms of the second domain, recruitment, challenges included outdated contact information and competing circumstances, while strategies included use of email tactics (i.e., emails tailored to KI expertise, use of read receipts, and suggesting specific times for an interview), highlighting KIs' expertise in the initial email outreach, referencing professional networks, using online networking sites, and re-visiting invitations that were previously declined. Regarding the use of read receipts, researchers shared:

> I think one strategy is the use of read receipt on email, so that we know whether someone has opened that email. At least that way if we are not hearing from them, we know it is

not because they are not seeing our messages, but simply because maybe they are not interested [in being interviewed].

Researchers indicated that competing priorities, impacted recruitment. In some instances, researchers simply did not have time, and early in the pandemic, individuals were still adjusting to their new work and social situations. As potential KIs adjusted to their new environments, this allowed for an opportunity:

I pulled a list of all of our key informants that had declined previously, specifically for the reason of not having enough time. . . . Although we know that our lives might be more convoluted now [during the COVID-19 pandemic], in some cases folks had a little bit more flexibility in the work and their priorities, because some things are not possible to move forward with working remotely. [Principal Investigator] drafted a message to send to several of those folks who had previously declined.

Preparation, the third step in the interview process, included challenges related to structural differences in national policies:

For certain countries, education is free. That is not necessarily that situation in all countries so we had to go in and craft the interview guide to be specific to their experience because if we did not, [the interview] would not go anywhere.

Strategies for preparation included familiarizing the research team with the KIs' work, tailoring the interview guide to the KIs, scheduling congruencies, and the flexibility of interviewing platforms (e.g., Skype, Zoom):

Every time we were getting prepared to do the interview, [researcher] would send everybody the agenda, the interview guide, and there will be always some information about the person and their work. Instead of going and looking for that person myself, just what is already been prepared by [researcher] or just look at those resources and learn more about [the KI], so you feel like you know them a little bit before the interview starts.

Scheduling congruencies were important since researchers were managing multiple time zones, including daylight savings time differences, as well as varying national holiday calendars. Researchers used online apps to manage these challenges.

For the fourth step, conducting the interview, researchers identified the setting of the interview, technical difficulties, language barriers, and the unrelated expertise of the KIs as challenges. Regarding language barriers, researchers shared, "I would say there were times when we had to rephrase the question in a different way or use different words because they weren't familiar with specific terminologies." Also, when discussing the expertise of the KIs, researchers indicated, "There were instances where . . . their work wasn't necessarily aligned [with the research]." Strategies included introducing mutual research, being flexible in interview content and format, allowing the KI to lead, sharing personal experience, adopting video conferencing (verses just telephone interviewing), limiting the length of the interview, and exchanging research. Related to both flexibility and allowing the KI to lead, researchers shared:

> We did not always stick to the interview guide. We sort of let the person we were talking with, if he or she brought up a topic that really was not in the guide, we would really go with that and delve deeper into that.

The challenge in the fifth and final step, follow-up, was related to the language in the transcripts while strategies included revisiting identification (chain referrals), exchanging resources, peer debriefing, and organizing data. Researchers shared, "I had to read and reread [the transcript] several times to make sense out of it because it's not the English used in the United States." In terms of the strategy related to chain referrals, researchers indicated:

> If [the KIs] have referred us or given us names of other individuals, that is when we start the process of going back to the identification process so that we can see is this name that they gave us really going to be a good fit for our work.

Discussion

There is little research regarding differences in lifelong learning policies across multiple countries. This gap represents an important barrier to developing effective lifelong learning and in turn, workforce education policies and programs to improve adults' employment prospects in a rapidly changing labor market. The purposes of this study were to describe lessons learned from a qualitative research project with 60 KIs from 11 countries, and to summarize challenges and effective strategies when preparing and conducting virtual interviews with international KIs.

This study is not without limitations. First, due to the specific focuses (e.g., lifelong learning, workforce education) of this study, we advise caution in generalizing these results. There is no unidimensional approach to identifying, recruiting, and conducting interviews with international key informants in virtual settings. Second, the focus group was conducted with KIs from 11 countries. The insights that emerged from the focus group data are most likely not exhaustive from sociocultural perspectives.

Our lessons learned from a unique international research project can be useful guidelines for ongoing as well as future qualitative research that involves KIs from multiple countries in virtual settings. Researchers may benefit from implementing our suggested strategies that allow flexibility in each area as well as emphasize a collaborative approach allowing space for a shift in power. We also assert the importance of efforts to mitigate challenges such as time differences, language barriers, and securing multiple web-based interviewing platforms. As a next step, future research should expand the scope of international context beyond 11 countries, and cross-examine this study's findings from KIs' perceptions to refine the guidelines for cross-national qualitative interviews, and to evaluate strategies to overcome barriers to participating in international virtual interviews.

Acknowledgment

References

Desjardins, R., & Rubenson, K. (2013). Participation patterns in adult education: The role of institutions and public policy frameworks in resolving coordination problems. *European Journal of Education, 48*(2), 262-280.

Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 62*(1), 107-115.

Krefting, L., & Krefting, D. (1991). Leisure activities after a stroke: An ethnographic approach. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *45*(5), 429-436.

OECD. (2017). *Getting skills right: Skills for jobs indicators*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264277878-en

OECD. (2019). *Getting skills right: Future-ready adult learning systems*. http://www.oecd.org/fr/publications/getting-skills-right-future-ready-adult-learning-systems-9789264311756-en.htm

QSR International. (2020). *NVivo qualitative data analysis software* (Version 12). https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home

Tong, A., Sainsbury, P., & Craig, J. (2007). Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): A 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, *19*(6), 349-357

Crash the Discord: Creating a Learning Environment that Bolsters Value Appreciation and Respect through Civil Discourse

Regina Henry and Catherine McBride
Strayer University

Abstract: Graduates must know how to navigate social, cultural, and global issues, using civil discourse to elevate understanding, bring concerns to light, and to find solutions to business, national and international challenges. Institutions of higher education continue to struggle with the diversity of students, faculty, and administration while encouraging civil discourse internally as well as throughout the student body. Universities are in a unique position to educate and prepare adults, across the globe, to provide positive contributions to the world around them. This responsibility goes beyond simply imparting technical skills. Today's graduates must be equipped to solve complex problems and to create solutions. Transformative learning theory provides tools to support learners with engaging in civil discourse. This article proposes a model for educators to facilitate civil discourse in the classroom, teaching skills that are transferable to business and society.

Keywords: civil discourse, discussions, transformative learning, learning transformation, adult learning theory

The world has become a global marketplace. Gone are borders and barriers to commerce and communication. Cooperation between business professionals, both within the United States as well as in different countries, is required. Today's workers must be capable of comfortably interacting with a wide variety of people, from numerous countries and a myriad of social and cultural backgrounds (Riviera, 2019). Graduates must know how to navigate social, cultural, and global issues, using civil discourse to elevate understanding, bring concerns to light, and to develop solutions to national and international challenges. Universities are in a unique position to educate and prepare learners, across the globe, to provide positive contributions to the world around them. This responsibility goes beyond simply imparting technical skills. Today's graduates must be equipped to solve complex problems and to create solutions (Riviera, 2019).

Importance of Civil Discourse

Professional success requires strong people-related skills. Future leaders will work with a diverse group of individuals. If allowed, these multifarious individuals will enrich the quality of business suggestions and solutions (Windchief, 2019). However, squelching civil discourse will circumvent the benefits of this sundry population. Higher education is the ideal platform to teach students how to listen to people with controversial ideas, and to engage in difficult conversations, in the face of dissent (Gose, 2018). Today's universities must produce graduates who are prepared to take their place in business and society. They must be ready to rise to the level of managers, who will lead an ethical and diverse workforce, sharing ideas and developing best practices through civil discourse.

Students come to the classroom with a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Of all the gifts education will bring, the greatest is learning how to think and work together. Critical thinking and the ability to have open, honest, respectful dialog is necessary for each person to achieve their full potential, inside and outside of the classroom. Not only are educators responsible to the student, but they are also responsible to society because they are teaching learners how to interact and solve problems that affect communities and businesses. Professional and personal success requires critical thinking. The courage to listen carefully to others, consider the value in others' thoughts, and to speak one's truth, tactfully and clearly, bolsters value, appreciation, and respect.

Critical thinking skills, the first step in civil discourse, can be taught and practiced, within the learning community, with very low risk. Institutions of higher education have the responsibility to prepare learners to be successful in life. In turn, our students have a responsibility to society. They will take what they learn in the classroom and use those skills to create positive change. The purpose of this paper is to provide tools for teaching learners how to think critically and how to engage in the civil discourse necessary to evolve the way learners tackle problems and issues. Civil discourse involves listening, critically-thinking, and clearly expressing one's thoughts and views. The ability to engage in civil discourse is required to evolve the ability to think globally.

Civil discourse is the cornerstone of an inclusive and conducive learning environment (Alger & Piper, 2019). Academic freedom has been a foundational aspect of higher education, and it must remain a key player in the academic process. It is equally important that students learn how to have difficult and controversial conversations, from a point of professionalism and tolerance for others' views. Often activism is uncivil, employing disruptive and violent protests (Binder & Kidder, 2019). It is a prerequisite that faculty model civility and address these challenging topics in the classroom. Providing a forum for students to be heard, while maintaining civility, is a vital key to building a culture where civil discourse is the norm (Panke & Stephens, 2018). Civil discourse is necessary for both understanding differences, as well as for finding the optimal solutions for the most challenging problems. Intentionally inviting civil discourse, in a controlled environment, prepares students to tackle the adult and professional arena where they will soon be influential members, if they master the art of civil discourse.

Barriers to Civil Discourse

There are many barriers to civil discourse. Civil discourse often fails because the way information is communicated creates dissension. Effective civil discourse requires both listening and communicating. Often failing to listen with an open mind will adversely affect the sharing of thoughts and ideas because the speaker may feel they are not being heard, which causes them to stop sharing potentially valuable ideas. For others, feelings of defensiveness take over when ideas very different from one's own are expressed. Other barriers to civil discourse include being uncomfortable with conflict, having a limited worldview, poor listening skills, an unwillingness to explore differing perspectives, as well as simply following cultural norms.

To understand how to cultivate civil discourse in the classroom, it is essential to fully understand online learners. Adult learners come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Some have children and are single parents. Some are young and living with friends. Many have full-time or

multiple jobs. Others are unemployed. The classroom simulates the outside world, with all its diversity and challenges. Learners come into the classroom with predeveloped worldviews and lived experiences, which shape how they think, communicate, and behave. Learners have the opportunity, through course engagement, to learn critical thinking and communication strategies for engaging in civil discourse. Educators must be prepared to welcome the diverse student experiences and knowledge into the classroom, for all to share and cultivate. The richness of student diversity provides the perfect landscape for transformation. The burning question is how does one create a transformative learning culture?

Transformative Learning

A transformational learning culture is a way to support civil discourse. Transformative learning is applicable for adult learners because it encourages students to examine and compare views that are held about the world against new materials and ideas presented in class. The transformative learning community will afford learners the ability to engage in an exchange of researched content to challenge what the learner believes. The learner will have a chance to listen and reflect on the content presented. Transformative learning supports students in developing new meaning schemes, guiding future decisions and actions.

When engaging in a classroom or online learning community, the educator is presented with an opportunity to present debatable and controversial content to learners. The learners should be encouraged to reflect deeply on how the content aligns or is disparate from personal beliefs. Examining how their own views are dissimilar to the content presented to them results in cognitive dissonance or a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1997). Oftentimes, learners find it necessary to make a paradigm shift to reframe perceptions, thoughts, and personal intentions by critically assessing one's current beliefs to make positive transformations in thought. Civil discourse is instrumental in creating a learning culture where the learner reflects on his or her worldviews. Additionally, the learner must be willing to adjust personal beliefs when learning new materials that conflicts with prior knowledge. Figure 1 describes how the learner may likely experience learning transformations.

How to Support Learning Transformations

Transformative learning brings the educational experience within the learner's frame of reference, including lived experiences and worldviews (Mezirow & Associates, 2000). To facilitate transformative learning the educator asks open-ended questions that require critical thinking. Learners are expected to actively engage in discussions in the learning community. Educators should demonstrate a willingness to support learners in stretching their thinking, meaning learners will examine how the learning resources support or oppose their own understanding. This makes it possible for the learner to engage in reflective practices to impact future thinking and action (Henry, 2008; Mezirow & Associates, 2000; King, 2005).

Transformative learning is a process where the learner recognizes a change in thinking is needed. Transformative learning thrives in environments where learners are encouraged to investigate personal background knowledge and to research how the historical views held by the learner or peers are supported or refuted by new information presented (Henry, 2008). When the learner is

encouraged to reflect on differing views, the learner is positioned to revise deeply held belief systems. The learning community expectations set the tone for learning transformations to occur. (Henry, 2008; Mokhtarian; 2020)

Figure 1. *Learning Transformation*

Educators must establish rules for engagement in the learning community to avoid civil discord. A guideline every learner should be expected to follow is supporting the position purported with research. Learners should both listen and research, to develop more rounded understanding, rather than automatically reacting with agreement or disagreement. The educator should model how to share opposing views, including supporting research. Learners will become comfortable with sharing the pros and cons, limiting learner bias (John, 2016). The instructor must hold learners accountable for examining the ideas presented by others. Additionally, the learner must be encouraged to support the ideas advanced by a peer or engage in research to share differing views. Ultimately, the new or revised meaning schemes that evolve when engaging in the discussions should be shared by all learners (John, 2016).

Effects of Transformational Learning

By design, adult learners are empowered to engage in self-directed learning in a transformative learning community. Learners are engaged in collaborative listening and personal reflection. Scholars are afforded the space to synthesize the content presented (Mokhtarian, 2020). The educator presents the learner with the chance to examine personal assumptions and values while providing a safe environment to share their understanding of the content. The learner will be responsible to minimize discord by determining if the viewpoint offered is a pro or a con. Peers may add to the learner's thoughts or present ideas that may oppose the viewpoint of the peer (Henry, 2008; King, 2005; Mokhtarian, 2020). Figure 2 demonstrates that learners are more likely to shift thinking when they believe the new viewpoint will enhance physical health, physical safety, social relationships, family relationships, professional relationships, professional decision making, actions and emotions (King, 2005, p.107)

Figure 2. *Impacts of Transformational Learning on Learners*
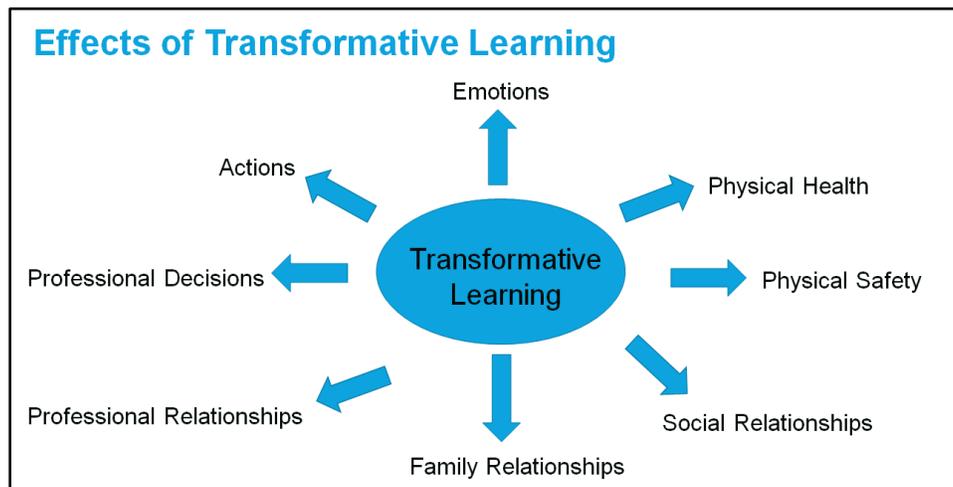
Potential Tool to Facilitate Civil Discourse

Online tools aid educators in increasing active engagement and reflective practices in the learning environment. Kialo (2020 is a free online tool. This application is conducive to supporting learners with engaging in civil discourse. Kialo (2020) provides a framework for participating in thoughtful debate. This tool supports constructive discussions by prominently displaying the topic or issue, supporting learners with remaining focused on the topic of discussion. Learners post to an organized thread that establishes discussions around the pros and cons of controversial issues. Kialo is structured to position the strongest arguments first, allowing students to sequentially follow other arguments that are for or against the topic (Leverton, n.d.). Kialo provides a platform to challenge the learners thinking and to share research ideas that support or disagree with others in a non-threatening manner. Kialo (2020) is a tool that supports civil discourse and learning transformation.

Conclusion

Civil discourse is the cornerstone of developing an inclusive learning environment that is conducive to promoting a learner to adopt new or revised practices. The time is now to teach our learners how to listen and to think critically when opposing views are presented. The educational setting provides a platform to teach learners how to approach opposing views as well as a process to grow as a learner and a professional. This research aims to provide guidelines to support learners with how to engage in civil discourse and to adopt new worldviews. Once embraced, learners may likely perceive the benefits of change.

References

Alger, J., & Poper, M. (2019). Administration, faculty, and the hard free-speech questions. *Academe, 105*(1). 1-7.
Binder, A., & Kidder, J.L. (2019). Student activism is often uncivil. We can change that. *Chronicle of Higher Education, 66*(4), 1-3.

Gose B. (2018). Don't stop inviting controversial speakers. Just prepare prudently. *Chronicle of Higher Education, 65*(6), 1-5.

Henry, R. (2008)*. Hybrid learning environments in higher education can transformational learning outcomes be achieved* [Doctoral dissertation]. Trevecca Nazarene University. https://www.learntechlib.org/p/121668/.

Kialo (2020). *A unique tool for teaching critical thinking*. https://www.kialo-edu.com/

King, K. (2005). *Bringing transformative learning to life*. Krieger.

John, V. M. (2016). Transformative learning challenges in a context of trauma and fear: an educator's story. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning 56*(2), 268-288.

Leverton, D. (n.d.). Kialo debate assignment [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/Y4HuE_dMKk

Mezirow, J., & Associates. (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical Perspectives on a theory in progress.* Jossey-Bass.

Mokhtarian, K. H., *Analyzing the occurrence of transformative learning in faith-based, postsecondary adult degree completion program utilizing the learning activities survey* [Doctoral dissertation]. Kansas State University. https://krex.k-state.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2097/40524/KevinMokhtarian2020.pdf?sequence=1

Panke, S., & Stephens J. (2018). Beyond the echo changer: Pedagogical tools for civic engagement, discourse, and reflection. *Educational Technology & Society 21*(1), 248-263.

Rivera, C.A. (2019). How can we empower a new generation of business leaders through ethical management education? *Journal of Character Education 15*(1), 39-52.

Windchief, S. (2019). Providing access, serving programs, and strengthening inclusiveness: A tripartite model for graduate schools. *International Journal of Multicultural Education 21*(2), 64-80.

What Does It Take to Live a Profound Life?

Laura B. Holyoke, Katie Wilson, Ali Threet, Laila Cornwall, and Shawna Bertlin
University of Idaho

Abstract: The purpose of this literature review was to develop the profound living concept through a synthesis of themes extracted from scholarly literature. The problem encountered was a lack of theory and depth in the concept of profound living. The methods used in this study were a thorough literature review in which concepts were extracted from related theories and ideas related to profound living. Ego development theory was utilized as a framework to guide the exploration of living profoundly. This resulted in a conceptualization of profound living that integrates ideas from life narratives, eudaimonia, and wisdom. This cogent conceptualization of profound living should guide future empirical research on this topic.

Keywords: profound living, values virtues perspectives, eudaimonia, wisdom, narratives

This literature review develops a conceptualization of profound living utilizing the frame of profound learning. Well-known concepts in adult learning involve transformative learning, contextual learning, experiential learning, and the learning environment. These concepts tend to provide episodic profundity or even deeply meaningful moments but do not account for sustained depth over time. Kroth (2016) described a profound learner as "someone who pursues deeper knowledge regularly over time" (p. 29) making it primarily proactive and ongoing. Analogous to research found on profundity and profound learning (Carr-Chellman & Kroth, 2019), the profound living research is limited. The research team explored ideas similar to profound living, such as flourishing, flow, transformational, and the "good life," well known in areas such as positive psychology. However, we found the ideas lacked a holistic view of development in adulthood and ongoing continuous elements we believe are encompassed in profound living.

Background

Through their profound learning exploration, Carr-Chellman and Kroth (2019) identified a lack of empirical research on profundity in general, and more specifically, lack of ongoing comprehensive theory-building regarding profundity or profound learning. The overall perception that continues to emerge is that profound learning engages a process of continually going deeper. Profound learning involves an increased openness to additional and never-ending knowledge attainment on a continuous basis rather than identified instances of transformative enlightenment. This level of profundity involves action and intentionality that we argue in our conceptualization for profound living.

In addition to utilizing the concept of profound learning, we searched for a theoretical framework to guide our conceptualization of profound living. We reviewed related theories including those developed by Loevinger, Maslow, Erickson, Piaget, and Freud. We chose Loevinger's (1976) ego development theory (EDT) as an ideal framework for the conceptualization of profound

living. The framework informed a deeper understanding of human potential and the concepts of wisdom, perspective, values, eudaimonia, and narrative.

Loevinger identified nine stages of ego development—or understanding of self—that are considered key to human development potential towards deeper understandings and ways that self-identity evolves over time. The stages are in sequential order ranging from simple to complex and determine what individuals notice and become aware of (human consciousness). Stages are descriptions of individuals' ideal perspectives representing an integration of their inner and outer worlds. EDT primarily focuses on stages of adult development based on the constructivist perspective that individuals actively create their own reality through their relationship to challenges in life (Loevinger, 1976). EDT is also deemed a theory of meaning making, which is considered a fundamental drive of humans where the ego functions continuously to interpret and make logical sense of experiences.

Most commonly, individuals span three or four stages of ego development simultaneously, yet their levels of integration tend to be centered in one stage, termed *center of gravity* (Cook-Grueter, 2013). Center of gravity represents the ego maturity stage that an individual can reliably access. Growth happens most often within a stage, resulting in a broadening and depth of skills, information, and knowledge. Advancing to higher stages is less common and takes intentional, sustained effort. Individuals can also regress in stages, which can happen due to adverse circumstances or events.

This paper is organized as follows: the research approach and supporting framework; explanation of values, virtues, perspective, eudaimonia, wisdom, and narrative related to profound living; discussion conceptualizing profound living; and recommendations for future study.

Approach

From the literature reviewed, mind maps were generated, connecting concepts of profound learning to profound living. Through collective consensus, we curated the concepts down to four pillars that recurred in the scholarly literature and we deemed essential to conceptualize profound living. These pillars include wisdom, eudaimonia, narrative, and value perspectives. Individual pillars identified remained consistent throughout our research with those identified in profound learning. The pillars dovetailed with stages of ego development aiding to explain human and adult development in relation to intentional becoming.

The depth of profound learning beckoned us to focus on a deeper exploration of concepts that related to profound living. This examination led to narrowing the four pillars down to three (eudaimonia, wisdom, narrative). Value perspectives was expanded into values, virtues, and perspectives and emerged as the foundation of our conceptualization. In light of profound living, a strong foundation provides the means for an individual to integrate the pillars and fluidly move through stages of ego development; thus, allowing for adaptation of intentional practices and living a life of profundity.

Major Themes

The foundation of profound living is made up of a person's values, virtues, and perspectives. Although these may change throughout a person's life, we recognized a strong foundation in these areas as vital to progress toward profound living. Having a good sense of values, virtues, and perspectives directly connects to the three pillars (being) of profound living (see Figure 1). Through EDT, we understand that a person continuously develops, introducing a sense of fluidity to the conceptualization.

Figure 1. *Profound Living Conceptualization*
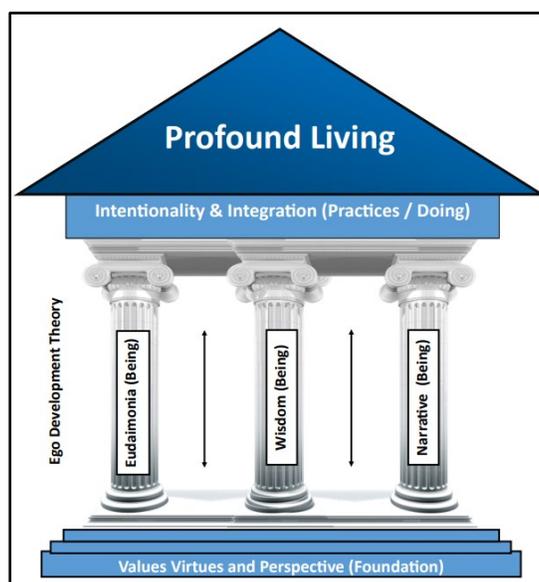
Values, Virtues, and Perspectives

Values are basic and fundamental beliefs that guide or motivate attitudes or actions. In the Aristotelian sense, virtues are habits consisting of consciously choosing the golden mean between extremes (Hall, 2020). Perspective is a particular attitude toward or way of regarding something. Values, virtues, and perspectives tend to influence every aspect in life. They often motivate action and are essential in helping individuals navigate life and fully explore, challenge, and discover their own values, virtues, and perspectives. This complex and difficult journey oftentimes leads to an individual questioning what they have been taught as a child or challenging long-held beliefs. It refines and helps them move up the pillars and progress through the stages of EDT. A strong foundation of values, virtues, and perspectives deals with degrees of structural complexity and integration of personal meanings (Bauer et al., 2018).

Eudaimonia and Profound Living

The philosophical concept of eudaimonia originated from Aristotle, whose aim was to answer a fundamental question of human existence, which was "how should we live?" Aristotle stipulated that eudaimonia was not simply a search for happiness or achieving pleasure, rather it is the highest of all human goods and deemed activity of the soul in accordance with virtue; this, to

Aristotle was the heart of eudaimonia (Ryff, 1989). "Aristotle's eudaimonia is thus characterized as living well, and entails being actively engaged in excellent activity, reflectively making decisions, and behaving voluntarily toward ends that represent the realization of our highest human natures" (Ryan et al., 2006, p. 145). Eudaimonia can be described as a human's potential to flourish, going beyond matters of happiness (Sheldon, 2018).

Eudaimonia goes beyond "good living" or simply "living the good life." It is the continuous process of living, changing, and growing with a sense of choice and freedom (agency). A good life embraces comfort and an overall sense of wellbeing, while eudaimonia contributes to profound living by embracing human thriving. Thriving includes individuals who push to do the difficult work of becoming their best, which involves self-awareness about their gifts and talents (McMahan & Estes, 2010) and understanding their role in the world (Ryan et al., 2006) while contributing to the greater humanity. Eudaimonia increases one's capacity for perspective-taking and focuses on increasingly interdependent identity and universal-minded ethical reasoning (Bauer et al., 2018).

Wisdom and Profound Living

Wisdom is a deeper kind of knowledge that can only be gained through experience (Stulberg, 2018) and requires thinking complexly and deeply about life. It is a personality quality developed in life acquired through experiences—both good and bad—although not all experiences lead to wisdom. Knowledge becomes wisdom only after a person internalizes it (Ardelt, 2003). Wisdom development is determined by a person's capability to utilize their advanced cognitive and emotional skills along with the ability to reflect on and integrate knowledge with experiences in a way that transcends "their self-centered interests to promote common good" (Ardelt et al., 2019, p. 145). Practicing wisdom means making conscious ethical choices through a deeper understanding of life that can only be gained through experience of incorporating complex thinking about oneself and others.

Bauer and colleagues argue that meaning making (capturing those things that are of critical relevance and value to the individual person) creates wisdom; and only through wisdom can one adjust objectively to difficult situations in life (2018). Wisdom is the process of profoundly contributing to the larger good for everyone and help create balance in the universe (Edmondson & Woerner, 2019) and encompasses an acute awareness and deep knowledge of self that results in objective and complex levels of nonjudging behavior and thought processes. Wisdom embodies an ability to cognitively understand life, reflect on experiences while taking different perspectives, and practicing compassion (Ardelt, 2003). Wisdom contributes to profound living through "knowing how to navigate one's life (i.e., making choices, taking actions, interpreting actions) in ways that facilitate meaningfulness and psychological well-being for both the self and others" (Bauer et al., 2018, p. 93).

Narrative and Profound Living

Narrative is a conceptualization and creation of meaning through lived experiences. It is often thought of as a person's life story and associated with the understanding of identity. "Narrative identity is a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and

imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose" (McAdams & McLean, 2013, p. 233). This act of creating meaning from lived experience represents a crucial dimension in profound living and is developed over a lifetime curated by stories conceptualized or told by an individual. Beginning in adolescence, people form and internalize their life stories (McAdams, 2001) and as stories accumulate, narrative identity is reinforced or evolves. These stories create an understanding of self, which creates awareness about how one fits within the world.

An individual's choices and behavior are informed by their narrative and significantly impacts quality of life. Durrant and Ward explain:

> Narrative identity is based on individuals' conception of their lives and core commitments, and the implications this has for future lifestyle and actions. It essentially shapes persons' lives, and by doing this, informs them of what characteristics they should cultivate, how to act, and what goals to strive for. (2015, p. 255)

Like any familiar story, chronicling life experiences allows for themes or patterns to emerge. Two themes relevant to profound living are growth stories and redemption narratives. A growth story is "a personal narrative that showcases one's development or developmental processes" (Bauer et al., 2006, p. 86). Similarly, "in a redemption sequence, an emotionally negative life scene turns positive; the bad is salvaged or redeemed by a positive outcome" (Bauer et al., 2006, p. 85). Both growth stories and redemption narratives exemplify a process of "becoming" and therefore align with our conceptualization of profound living as "continuous creative integration," or the process of "becoming."

Discussion—Conceptualizing Profound Living

Using EDT as a framework helped anchor meanings from the pillars identified and contributed to sensemaking of adult development moving through different ego development stages. Each pillar was also identified as being present in the upper stages of EDT. No one pillar could explain or support profound living alone, yet each provided critical support towards the conceptualization of living profoundly.

Our conceptualization of profound living entails a continuous and creative integration of "doing" and "being." "Doing" refers to our intentional actions or practices with self and others, while "being" refers to our personhood or personal identity (Koterski, 2001). Another way to look at the integration of "doing" and "being," is the weaving of internal processes with external behaviors (the same idea of what is captured by identifying stages in ego development). As individuals continue to integrate eudaimonia, wisdom, and narrative (being), they adopt intentional practices (doing) into their life and their interactions with others. This process leads to living a truly profound life.

Profound living is an activity, not a destination. It is a trajectory of becoming. This is not a static state and individuals can fluidly move back and forth through the process. If their values, virtues, and perspectives change, they may start the process anew. Resembling profound learning, profound living stands as a *way of life* continually going deeper. Likewise, profound living

provides a level of continual depth, understanding, and further implementation to the fields of adult learning and positive psychology.

Next Steps

In this literature review, we identified concepts that reflected living deeply with intention, that combined with profound learning and EDT, we presented a conceptualization of profound living. We plan to continue exploring the concept of profound living by conducting empirical research using the profound living conceptualization introduced here. These studies will focus on interviewing individuals through narratives or life stories who demonstrate profound living and will allow us to explore and further refine the concept of profound living. It is our hope that this research will be of value to the field and invite study around the idea of living a profound life.

References

Ardelt, M. (2003). Development and empirical assessment of a three-dimensional wisdom scale. *Research on Aging, 25*(3)*,* 275-324. https://doi.org/10.117/164027503025003004

Ardelt, M., Pridgen, S., & Nutter-Pridgen, K. (2019). Wisdom as a personality type. In R. Sternberg & J. Glück (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of wisdom* (pp. 144-161). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108568272.008

Bauer, J. J., King, L. A., & Steger, M. F. (2018). Meaning making, self-determination theory, and the question of wisdom in personality. *Journal of Personality, 87*(1), 82-101. https://doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12381

Bauer, J. J, McAdams, D. P, & Pals, J. L. (2006). Narrative identity and eudaimonic well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *9*(1), 81–104. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9021-6

Carr-Chellman, D. J., & Kroth, M. (2019). Public school teachers' experiences of profound learning. *Andragoška Spoznanja, 25*(3), 107-123. https://doi.org/10.4312/as.25.3.107-123

Cook-Greuter, S. (2013). Nine levels of increasing embrace in ego development: A full-spectrum theory of vertical growth and meaning making [Unpublished Manuscript].

Durrant, R., & Ward, T. (2015). *Evolutionary criminology.* Elsevier. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-397937-7.00001-x

Edmondson, R., & Woerner, M. (2019). Sociocultural foundations of wisdom. In R. Sternberg & J. Glück (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of wisdom* (pp. 40-68). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108568272.004

Hall, E. (2020). *Aristotle's way: How ancient wisdom can change your life*. Penguin.

Koterski, J., & Teaching Company. (2001). The ethics of Aristotle (J. Koterski, Narr.) (Great courses [Audiobook]). Teaching Company.

Kroth, M. (2016). The profound learner. *Journal of Adult Education. 45*(2), 28-32. https://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2019/papers/23

Kroth, M., & Carr-Chellman, D. J. (2018). Preparing profound learners. *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development, 30*(3), 64-71. https://doi.org/10.1002/nha3.20224

Loevinger, J. (1976). *Ego development: Conceptions and theories*. Jossey-Bass.

McAdams, D. P. (2001). The psychology of life stories. *Review of General Psychology*, *5*(2), 100-122. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.5.2.100

McAdams, D. P, & McLean, K. C. (2013). Narrative identity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science: A Journal of the American Psychological Society*, *22*(3), 233-238. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721413475622

McMahan, E. A., & Estes, D. (2010). Hedonic versus eudaimonic conceptions of well-being: Evidence of differential associations with self-reported well-being. *Social Indicators Research, 103*(1), 93-108. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11205-010-9698-0

Ryan, R. M., Huta, V., & Deci, E. L. (2006). Living well: A self-determination theory perspective on eudaimonia. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 9*(1), 139-170. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9023-4108

Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. J*ournal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *57*(6), 1069-1081. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069

Sheldon, K. M. (2018). Understanding the good life. In J. P. Forgas & R. F. Baumeister, *The Social Psychology of Living Well* (pp. 116-136). Taylor & Francis.

Stulberg, B. (2018). An ode to being old. *Outside Online.* *https://www.outsideonline.com/2339366/benefits-getting-older-health-fitness-aging*

Let's Connect: Diversity, Inclusion and Career Development of Veterans Within the Civilian Workforce

Yvonne Hunter-Johnson[1] and Ahmed Al-Asfour[2]
[1]North Carolina A & T State University (Greensboro) and [2]Southern Illinois University (Carbondale)

Abstract: Career transition can be stressful. This stress level is intensified for veterans who are transitioning between not only careers but also, what is perceived to be, transitioning between worlds, military world to the civilian world. Within a civilian workforce, veterans are often misunderstood and stigmatized, that results in misconceptions and misinterpretation regarding transfer of professional experience and training. Subsequently, creating employment challenges, exclusion, and minimal career development of veterans within the civilian workforce. On this premise, this theoretical paper, utilizing the workforce adjustment theory as an underpinning, discusses: (a) transitional challenges of veterans to the civilian workforce,(b) strategies for promoting diversity and inclusion of veterans, and (c) career development of veterans within the civilian workforce.

Keywords: transitional challenges, diversity, inclusion, career development, veterans

There has been a rapid increase in the number of veterans in the United States of America. As of 2018, there were approximately 18.2 million veterans in the United States of America, with an anticipated increase each year (The Department of Veterans Affairs Fast Facts, 2018). Stern (2017) projects that by the year 2020, more than five million veterans are expected to reintegrate into the community and, by extension, the civilian workforce. Stern (2017) also suggest that veterans' connections to the labor force, which in this instance is a civilian labor force, affords the quickest opportunity for transition. However, veterans, in comparison to their civilian counterparts, encounter a multiplicity of transitional challenges that can impede or limit their employment opportunities within the civilian sector. Holland, Malott, and Currier (2014) echoed this sentiment and concluded that veterans often battle stressors as they attempt to gain marketable skills required by employers. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) report (2015), 53% of veterans separating post 9/11 encounter unemployment when initially discharged from the military. To secure what is considered suitable employment by the veteran after separating from the military often requires time and a great effort on the part of the veteran (Loughran, 2014). To counteract this unemployment and in an effort to better equip themselves for the civilian workforce, veterans often utilize higher education as a transitional tool (Hunter-Johnson, 2018). This coupled with transitional programs, whether extended by the military, federal, or at the state level, provides an opportunity for a smoother transition of veterans. However, veterans still encounter transitional challenges when seeking employment within the civilian workforce despite such personal initiatives but encounter negative stereotypes, misconceptions, exclusion by potential employers and colleagues. On this premise, the purpose of this paper is three-fold. First, the paper will discuss the challenges that veterans encounter when transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce. Second, it will suggest strategies

and best practices that can be adapted by Human Resource Development (HRD) Specialists within the civilian workforce, specifically regarding veterans. Third, it will suggest best practices and strategies that can be adhered to by HRD specialists with the career development of veterans. The theoretical framework that serves as the foundational platform for this paper is the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). This paper is significant because it addresses the gap in the literature as it relates transitional strategies of veterans, a marginalized group. It also provides strategies that can be considered to promote diversity and inclusion of veterans within the civilian workforce. Further, it not only complements the literature regarding career development of veterans but also provides insight that can be adopted by HRD professionals within civilian organizations that can possibly positively contribute to recruitment, retention, satisfaction, and engagement of veterans within a civilian workforce.

Theory of Work Adjustment

There are several career development theories that have been introduced over the past years. These theories were the lens by which researchers have been able to navigate their studies. Researchers have identified several theoretical frameworks to utilize, among which are social-cognitive career theory (Bandura, 1986), career construction Savickas (1997), the theory of work adjustment (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), life-span life-space theory career theory (Super, 1984), and much more. Each of these theories has been utilized depending on the scope and purpose of research. As the world is an ever-changing work, it is critical for researchers, scholars, and practitioners to understand the difference in career development theories, when, and how to apply such theories. On this premise, the theory of work adjustment (TWA) is utilized as the underpinning for this paper. Originally developed by Dawis and Lofquist (1984), TWA's intent was for vocational rehabilitation, but its application has been widely used in adults' career decisions and work adjustments (Woods et al., 2019). Taking into consideration there is a constant transition of employees between careers; it is paramount for employers to develop mechanisms by which there is a smooth adjustment process. This is especially critical for employees who serve in the public sector for a long period of time and then transition to the private sector. Hence, within this paper, veterans transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce. Such a transition would often result in an array of challenges. Such transitional challenges should be taken into consideration by HRD professionals with the view of providing the relevant support systems as an underpinning for adjustment to the workforce. The TWA can assist with comprehending such challenges that veterans encounter when transiting to the civilian workforce as it describes the relationship between individuals and their work environment (Dawis, 2005). Although the professional duties and responsibilities differ within the military, the skillset of veterans in most instances are transferable to the civilian workforce with a level of adjustment to the new work environment. The TWA further explains that individuals and work environments are considered complementary to one another, which is critical not only as it relates to institutional diversity and inclusion but also the career development of employees. Within the assumptions of TWA, a high level of correspondence means that individual and work environment continue to be each other's needs to ensure satisfaction.

Background

Transitional Challenges of Veterans

One of the greatest challenges veterans encounter is securing employment after separating from the military (Hunter-Johnson, 2020). This challenge is to intensify if the veteran received a dishonorable discharge, which would result in them being ineligible for benefits and access to Veteran Affairs (Collins, 2012). Transitional challenges for veterans from the military to the civilian workforce can be attributed to a multiplicity of factors. For example, limited experience and professional development prior to and while enlisted in the military. Clemens and Milsom (2008) state that those individuals who may have enlisted into the military only equipped with a high school diploma, not required to earn a college degree for professional advancement (promotions) within the military, and their work experience within the military is limited to their respective branch or unit creates a greater hurdle for transitioning careers. Such individuals may be considered as not being adequately prepared with the necessary skillset and transferable professional experience to transition to their career of choice.

Physical, psychological, and health challenges is another major factor that contribute to and or minimize employment opportunities for veterans when transitioning from the military to the civilian workforce (Faberman & Foster, 2013). Such physical and mental challenges include but are not limited to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Kukla et al., 2015), mental and medical challenges and substance abuse problems (Humensky et al., 2013). There are some instances when employers are of the belief that such challenges can be an institutional financial drain and negatively impact performance and productivity of veterans within the civilian workplace (Kleylamp, 2013; Rudstam et al., 2012).

Negative stereotypes and misconceptions also serve as an underlying inhibitor specific to veterans transitioning to the civilian workforce. This particular challenge can be explored through the lens of both the potential employer and the veteran as a potential employee. According to Davis and Minnis (2017), there is a misconception of employers that veteran employees exhibit traits of inflexibility or rigidity while veterans struggle to demonstrate their skill set to their employers. Minnis (2017) further elaborated that there is a misconception regarding the training and experiences veterans would have received while in the military. Even further, the inability and/or challenge to interpret the training and experiences of veterans when presented on a resume.' This often serves as a barrier as it relates to HRD professionals when presenting innovative strategies and a work environment that lends to transfer of training, strategic career development, engagement, and diversity and inclusion initiatives. It also serves as a barrier for the recruitment of veterans to the civilian workforce. Specifically, at an institutional level, negative stereotypes pertaining to veterans often result in exclusion and non-acceptance of veterans, whether intentional or nonintentional, by colleagues.

From the veteran perspective, it is often a challenge for veterans to effectively communicate and/or articulate skills, qualifications, and experiences obtained in the military to their resume' in a manner that can be effectively understood by their potential employers (Sargent, 2014; Hunter-Johnson, 2020). This not only serves as a barrier to the recruitment and selection process but, if

successful at that stage, can impose a challenge as it relates to transfer of training, diversity and inclusion, and career development of veterans.

Strategies for Promoting Diversity and Inclusion of Veterans

Within recent years, there has been an increase in the literature as it relates to diversity and inclusion. However, there is still an evident gap as it relates to the literature on diversity and inclusion of veterans to the civilian workforce (Hunter-Johnson, 2020). Organizations opting to focus on diversity management can yield a vast amount of institutional benefits. Such benefits can include, but are not limited to, competitive advantage (Foster & Harris, 2014), creativity (Abaker et al., 2019), and a diverse employee pool (Hunter-Johnson, 2020). Veterans as potential employees are unique individuals who are often equipped with a distinctive skill set, leadership abilities, team concept, disciplined, and who, once properly utilized can create a competitive advantage. Utilizing such benefits as an underpinning, it is critical that organizations focus on diversity and inclusion initiatives specifically regarding veterans. There is often an underlying perception that diversity and inclusion are one and the same and there is no distinct difference. However, as stated by Sherbin and Rashid (2017), "In the context of the workplace, diversity equals representation. Without inclusion, however, the crucial connections that attract diverse talent, encourage their participation, foster innovation, and lead to business growth won't happen" (p.2). Sherbin and Rashid (2017) further eluded to the fact that organizations focusing on diversity but do not inform or promote inclusion, and the elimination of inclusion often results in a diversity backlash. Utilizing this information as a foundational platform, the following strategies are suggested for promoting inclusion and diversity of veterans within the civilian workforce.

First, recruitment and selection process should reflect an organization that promotes diversity and inclusion of veterans. This should be represented in the articulation of vacancy notices, during the interview process and organization marketed as one that promotes diversity and inclusion of veterans. After the selection process of veterans, institutions should ensure that employee socialization and orientation process; employee-related programs such as mentoring, counselling and wellness; career development practices all reflect an organization that is promoting diversity and inclusion (Hunter-Johnson, 2020)

Second, an organization representing inclusive leadership is indicative of an organization promoting diversity and inclusion. According to Sherbin and Rashid (2017), inclusive leadership "…is a conglomeration of six behaviors: ensuring that team members speak up and are heard; making it safe to propose novel ideas; empowering team members to make decisions; taking advice and implementing feedback; giving actionable feedback; and sharing credit for team success" (p.3). This type of environment can be demonstrated within the workplace with a focus to include veterans by ensuring that the work environment is one that lends to these expected leadership behaviors. To ensure institutional leaders demonstrate such behaviors, it is paramount that HRD professionals provide adequate training and development of leaders at all levels. There should be provisions for feedback and/or evaluation of leadership in this regard on a continuous basis. Additionally, institutional policies and practices should reflect diversity and inclusion.

Strategies for Promoting Career Development of Veterans

Career development is a distinct concept that refers to the process in which employees and employers work together to develop certain goals to help employees develop their skills (Zacher et al., 2019). Specifically, regarding the career development of veterans, there is a paucity of research aimed at helping veterans' career development needs (Robertson & Hayden, 2018). Veterans have unique and rich experiences, that if utilized and tailored according to the needs of organizations, can have a positive impact. While veterans often are thanked for their service, remembered for the sacrifices they made, and regarded as heroes, organizations must develop strategies to accommodate this segment within the population. This is especially for organizations that want to classify as military-friendly organizations (Kirchner & Minnis, 2018). It is also critical for organizations that promote social responsibilities to do their part and provide the tools needed to help veterans. Some of the initiatives that organizations can include can be veterans' preferences for hiring, training, development for new skillsets, and working hours that meet their needs. Career development practitioners working with veterans need to be provided with the tools to help this population of the workforce to achieve career development goals.

Training and development initiatives. Organizations need to encourage potential veteran employees to self-identify and define the skills that they wish to possess as part of the hiring process if they wish to develop themselves within an organization. Once the skills are identified, then organizations can provide training which can be part of their career development plan. Employees can then match the veterans' skills with potential job opportunities to provide the training and development skills to these veterans. The alignment with the skills needed by the organization and veterans is critical for both. The theory of work adjustment has several assumptions; among them, Dawis and Lofquist (1984) explain employees and employers need to work together to meet each other's needs. Meeting each other's needs builds good rapport and help present the organization as a military-friendly and socially responsible organization.

Mentor program. A mentor can help veterans bridge the gap between their skillsets and the organizational skills needed (Hunter-Johnson, 2020). Also, it can assist veterans to understand organizational culture, which can be vastly different. A mentoring program can contribute to the career development of veterans. This can be accomplished by conducting a self-assessment of the skills that a veteran has and the needed skills by an organization to align a mentor who can best guide for career development. A mentoring program also provides networking opportunities for veteran employees. The benefit of a mentoring program can be vast, which includes easing transiting into a new career, enhancing skills, finding new ways to complete certain tasks, reducing turnover, and other benefits (Kirchner & Minnis, 2018). Within the organizational mentoring program, organizations can use previously hired veterans to mentor new employees as they are well-informed from their past experiences of the challenges and hurdles that new veterans face. Taking this into consideration, organizations can develop a team of veterans that can help create strategies to address the needs and career development of themselves and newly hired veterans. This can allow career development plans to grow organically from within the organizations.

Conclusion

While it is paramount for most organizations to meet the needs of its shareholders, it is also critical to strive to meet the needs of its stakeholders. Giving back to the community not only provides a good reputation for an organization but makes it an inviting place to work. Veterans are viewed as heroes. As such, individuals have respect for organizations that honor them. Hiring, training, developing, and promoting the inclusion of veterans can be extremely advantageous to an organization (Hunter-Johnson, 2020). The career development and promotion of diversity and inclusion initiatives for veterans with the view of promoting retention, satisfaction, and engagement of veterans can result in both internal and external organizational rewards.

References

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Prentice-Hall.

Davis, V. E., & Minnis, S. E. (2017). Military veterans' transferable skills: An HRD practitioner dilemma. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 19*(1), 6-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422316682961

Dawis, R.V. (2005). The Minnesota theory of work adjustment. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 3–23). John Wiley & Sons.

Dawis, R. V., & Lofquist, L. H. (1984). *A psychological theory of work adjustment*. University of Minnesota Press.

Department of Veterans Affairs. (2015). *2015 Veteran economic opportunity* report. https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/docs/veteraneconomicopportunityreport2015.pdf

Faberman, R. J., & Foster, T. (2013). Unemployment among recent veterans during the great recession. *Economic Perspectives, 37*(1), 1-13.

Holland, J. M., Malott, J., & Currier, J. M. (2014). Meaning made of stress among veterans transitioning to college: examining unique associations with suicide risk and life-threatening behavior. *The American Association of Suicidology*, *44(*2), 218-231.

Hunter-Johnson, Y. (2018). Promoting veterans in higher education: Motivation and adjustments to learning environments. *International Research Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy, 4*(1), 66-79.

Hunter-Johnson, Y. (2020). Veterans should be included too: Strategies for promoting diversity of veterans in organizations. In C. Hughes (Ed.), *Implementation strategies for improving diversity in organizations* (pp. 311-334). IGI Global.

Kirchner, M., & Minnis, S. (2018). Engaging military friendly in organizations: An empirical-based definition. *Journal of Veterans Studies, 3*(2), 94108. https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v3i2.49

Kleylamp, M. (2013). Unemployment, earnings and enrollment among post 9/11 veterans. *Social Science Research, 42*(3), 836-851. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2012.12.017

Kukla, M., Rattray, N. A., & Salyers, M. P. (2015). Mixed methods study examining work reintegration experiences from perspectives of Veterans with mental health disorders. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development*, *52*(4), 477–490. https://doi.org/10.1682/JRRD.2014.11.0289 PMID:26348934

Loughran, D. S. (2014). *Why is veteran unemployment so high?* National Defense Research Institute. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR284.readonline.html

Minnis, S. E. (2017). Preface: Veterans in career transition and employment. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *19*(1), 3-5.

Robertson, H. C., & Hayden, S. C. (2018). Serving all that served: Career development among at-risk veterans. *Career Planning & Adult Development Journal*, *34*(4), 54-65.

Rudstam, H., Strobel Gower, W., & Cook, L. (2012). Beyond yellow ribbons: Are employers prepared to hire, accommodate and retain returning veterans with disabilities? *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 36*(2), 87-95.

Savickas, M. L. (1997). Career adaptability: An integrative construct for life-span, life-space theory. *Career Development Quarterly, 45*(3)*,* 247-250. https://doi.org/10.1002/j/2161-0045.1997.tb00469.x

Sherbin, L., & Rashid, R. (2017, February 1). Diversity doesn't stick without inclusion. *Harvard Business Review.* https://hbr.org/2017/02/diversity-doesnt-stick-without-inclusion

Stern, L. (2017). Post 9/11 veterans with service-connected disabilities and their transition to the civilian workforce: A review of the literature. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *19*(1), 66-77. https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422316682928

Super, D. E. (1984). Career and life development. In D. Brown, L. Brooks, & Associates (Eds.), *Career choice and development: Applying contemporary theories to practice* (pp. 192-234). Jossey-Bass.

Zacher, H., Rudolph, C., Todorovic, T., & Ammann, D. (2019). Academic career development: A review and research agenda. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 110*(2), 357-373. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.08.006

Understanding Chinese International Doctoral Students Develop Critical Thinking in a Cross-cultural Learning Setting

Shuaipu Jiang and Qi Sun
University of Tennessee

Abstract: This paper explores the experience of how Chinese international doctoral students develop critical thinking. Narrative interviews are conducted. Narrative thematic analysis is adopted. Four big themes are generated, which are understanding of critical thinking, comparison and contrasts, factors contributing to development of critical thinking and improvement in critical thinking. There are several categories in each theme. Direct quotations of the participants are presented as evidence under each theme. The implications and future research are presented as well.

Keywords: narrative research, narrative inquiry, narrative thematic analysis, critical thinking

In this age and time where globalization and internationalization are unavoidable trends, cross cultural learning and traveling become prevalent and norm. In higher education setting nowadays, it is common to have large numbers of international students from various countries as well as faculties with international backgrounds. Among all these international students, students from China consist of the largest percentage (CIE). Education in China has been viewed as exam-oriented, teacher-centered, and memorization-stressed while education in the US has been regarded as quality-oriented, student-centered, and critical thinking stressed. In addition, China and US have different ideology, culture, and political systems. All these differences might lead to some difficulties for Chinese international students studying in U.S. higher institutions. And among all the difficulties that Chinese international students face, trying to think critically as their US peers receives a lot of attention.

Critical thinking has long been stressed in education, though there has never been a universal consensus regarding the definition of the term. However, there are some overlapping understanding of critical thinking. For instance, Moore (2013) summarized seven definitional strands of critical thinking: judgement, skepticism, simple originality, sensitive readings, rationality, activist engagement with knowledge, and reflexivity (Moore, 2013, cited in Luca, 2018). Several other authors have defined critical thinking as a set of cognitive skills such as interpretation, analysis, inference, and evaluation and dispositions such as being open-minded, inquisitive, far-minded (Luca, 2018). There is a debate on critical thinking of international students, especially Chinese students in U.S. universities. Some perceive Chinese international students as lacking and deficient in critical thinking due to teacher-centered classroom instructions and exam-oriented educational system in China (Badger, 2019; Heng, 2018). Yet, others believe that Chinese international students are not deficient in critical thinking and that the reasons that U.S. faculties and peers' perceptions of otherwise are due to Chinese international students' challenges in language skills and communication styles, differences in culture and thinking modes, and unfamiliarity with educational environment and general social cultural environment in the US. (Heng, 2018; Lu & Singh, 2017). Despite the debate, there are some

Chinese international doctoral students who have demonstrated their critical thinking capability and dispositions by achieving academic success in U.S. higher education institutions.

The purpose of this study is to understand how Chinese international doctoral students perceive critical thinking while studying in the US. Specifically, the study attempts to explore their experiences of reflecting and developing critical thinking processes:
1. What are Chinese international doctoral students' experiences of critical thinking studying and living in the US?
2. How Chinese international doctoral students recall, reflect, and narrate their development of critical thinking?

Methodology

Data Collection Process and Procedures

This is a pilot study, so the researcher conducted narrative interviews with only two Chinese international doctoral students. One participant is an electrical engineer Ph.D. student and the other is a mechanical engineer Ph.D. student. Both acquired their master's in China and came to the US to pursue a Ph.D. Pseudo-names were assigned at the participants' preference. After the researcher explained the research project to the participants, the participants signed the consent forms and volunteer to participant. The interviews followed semi-structured structures but ensured free narration of participants. The researcher attentively listened to the participants and did not interrupt when the participants narrated. After the narration is done, the researcher asked follow-up questions to clarify the unclear areas or develop further from the narration. After the official interviews, the researcher and the participants collectively reflected the interview experience.

Data Analysis Process and Procedures

Oliver et al. (2005) proposed the range of transcription practices with naturalism at one end and denaturalism at the other. Denaturalism is a practice where for example, "stutters, pauses, nonverbal and involuntary vocalizations are removed" (Oliver et al., 2005, pp. 1273-1274). The researcher used denaturalism when transcribed the interviews. The researcher did two rounds of coding and adopted what Braun and Clarke's (2016) proposed, which is the six phases of thematic analysis to analyze the data. The first step is to read the data from the beginning to the end. The second step is to generate initial codes, grouped and summarized data, and took notes and wrote down the main points of clustered data that expressed the same meaning. The third step is to search for categories. The fourth step is to search for patterns. The fifth step is to name categories and provide extracts to support definitions and names. And the final step is to provide re-presentation of analyzed data, categories, and overarching theme.

Findings

Four themes generated from the data, understanding of critical thinking, comparison and contrast of critical thinking training between China and the US, what helped develop critical thinking,

and improvement in critical thinking. Within each theme, there are several categories, within which there are codes and quotations to support them. The specific findings are presented below.

Understanding of Critical Thinking

One participant, Xiaoming was not so sure what I mean when I said critical thinking whereas the other participant, Shawn smoothly answered my question after I mentioned critical thinking, which showed that he is certain of what I mean when I said critical thinking. Later, Xiaoming told me that he first heard of the concept of critical thinking in the domain of philosophy and deemed it a philosophical concept.

Critical thinking is using evidence to reach justified and reasonable argument. As Shawn stated: "critical thinking is making justified, objective and fair argument." Similarly, Xiaoming said: "we need justification and using sufficient powerful evidence to form opinions" and "we should have justified argument and evidence to defend." Debating is an important way to train critical thinking according to both participants because it provides a platform to practice justified reasoning.

Critical thinking is the ability to remedy or improve theories and hypotheses. In electrical engineering, students often need to come up with hypotheses and theories, test them and remedy them. Thus, it is vital for them to have the critical thinking level that is enough to detect areas to improve or remedy. As Shawn said: "we need critical thinking to be able to remedy and improve the theories or hypotheses."

Critical thinking is skeptical thinking and creative thinking. Xiaoming said that "authorities are not always right, if the teacher said something wrong, I could bring it up." Shawn said: "skeptical thinking and creativity are critical thinking" and "without critical thinking, there is no creativity and innovation. Critical thinking is important to do Ph.D."

Critical thinking means different perspectives. Xiaoming stated: "critical thinking is everywhere as long as people have different opinions." Shawn stated: "different angles and perspectives demonstrate critical thinking."

Both participants agree that critical thinking is generalizable and applicable to various fields. As Xiaoming said, "things all have something in common, you learned critical thinking here and you can apply it somewhere else."

Comparison and Contrast of Critical Thinking Training between China and the US

The comparison and contrast are bounded within these two participants' experiences and not applicable to broader context or population. What I found from these two participants' experience is no distinguishing differences in terms of critical thinking training between their experience in China and the US except the environmental and cultural differences. Xiaoming said:

> We cultivate critical thinking in China but we just don't mention this term" and "even earlier when we were in elementary school, we began to divide the work of cleaning up

the classroom among the group members. We have to assign the tasks to different people. Critical thinking is involved.

Shawn also said: "we cultivate critical thinking since junior and senior year in college in China" and

> There is no difference between China and America in terms of critical thinking training except here in America classroom atmosphere is more active, They encourage to express yourself vocally but in China, we have the ideas but we don't say them, however, we can write them down.

In this light, it feels more like a continuity for both participants to continue their studies in higher degree level instead of a huge gap in between master's and doctoral level for them to jump. Yet, they did mention minor differences such as in China, the exams they take have single correct answer while in the US they can have multiple correct answers and in China, they suffer from limited teacher-resources per student.

What Helps Develop Critical Thinking

In their learning experience in doctoral programs in the US, there are some factors contributing to their development of critical thinking, which are lab group meeting, doing projects, solid foundation and accumulating understanding of the field, and communication and cooperation.

Lab Group Meeting

Both participants have weekly lab group meetings and comment that they help develop critical thinking. Shawn stated: "we debate to reach reasonable and justified conclusions in lab weekly group meetings." Xiaoming explained in more details of what they do in lab weekly group meetings:

> We do formal presentations. We have to review things, find out the advantages and disadvantages of things we reviewed. Everyone in the group has to present each week of what we have read in this week. It requires critical thinking from both sides. The presenters have to have critical thinking. The listeners also have to have critical thinking to critique and provide suggestions and advices for the presenters. This lab group presentations offer a change to formally discuss the research. Everyone listens carefully and offers constructive feedback. Presenters take time to prepare and have to present systemically. In China, we also talk about research, but no one will pay attention to your research, let along providing feedbacks. They don't care about your research. Only your advisor cares about your research in China. It is really good to have this formal format here to present. It fosters systemic thinking to present and critiquing skills to listen. And when I hear something good from other presenters, I will learn and imitate. Next time when I present in the meetings or even when I go to conference, I can apply it to my own presentations. And when critiquing others' work, try not say useless things. There are two reasons that contribute to saying useless things. One is that the presenter doesn't express his ideas correctly or clearly, the other is the commentator just is an amateur and non-expert so that he just randomly commented something wrong.

Lab weekly group meetings becomes a vital way for engineers to share their readings, their own research ideas, comment on each other's work, foster systemic thinking and critiquing skills, thus helping them develop their critical thinking.

Doing Projects

Doing projects is another commonality between the two participants regarding things to help develop their critical thinking. Also, doing projects is a distinguishing assignment they have in the US, which is different from their experience in China. Shawn said: "project is a way to train and demonstrate critical thinking" and "open-ended questions can foster critical thinking better." Similarly, Xiaoming said: "Project is a distinguishing assignment in US and it demonstrates critical thinking" and "the process of doing a project resemble real life scenarios of engineers." He further narrated his experience of doing a long-term project:

> We were designing mechanical arm as part of the mechanical design. We divide the whole project into different phases. For example, develop the bottom first then the middle part, then the top. After each phase, we will meet together and review and discuss it. Various parties will participate in the review session, such as the advisor, project leader, experienced engineers and we will even do role play to act like the party A in the contract who propose the requirement. Some of them will act as non-expert to propose ideas from the perspective of a customer with no background knowledge of the field. This is party B from the contract to propose requirement. Each member will talk about the project from different angles and perspectives of different stakeholders. But some advices and suggestions are junky and useless, but most suggestions and critiques are helpful.

By taking the position of various stakeholders, they learned the issues from fresh angles, thus helping them identify new problems and ways of solving them. This process resembles the real working process of professional mechanical engineers and is both the manifestation and fostering of critical thinking.

Solid Foundation and Accumulating Understanding of the Field

Both participants stress the importance of the establishing a solid foundation of the field to developing critical thinking. Reading and doing can help accumulate the knowledge and understanding of the field. As Xiaoming stated, "the more you read, the more you can remedy, or even overthrow others' ideas" and "experience is important. Through doing and experiencing, you accumulate and build a solid foundation of the field." In a similar vein, Shawn stated: "a solid foundation of the field is the premise of critical thinking.

Communication and Cooperation

Both participants show the importance of communicating with others, learning from others and building strong connections. Shawn said: "we speak up in class and can hear different angles and perspectives in classroom. There is no one single standard answer here." He also said: "we cooperate and collectively create models. I can learn from more experienced colleagues and professors. I have the chance to be exposed to different perspectives. It really helped me develop critical thinking." Xiaoming echoes as "communicating with others is an important way for me to develop critical thinking." As an outlier, he thinks of watching news as a way of fostering critical thinking because news reflects the biased positions and standpoints of the source origins.

Improvement in Critical Thinking

Both participants achieved progress and improvements in critical thinking during the experiences of studying in doctoral programs in the US. Shawn said: "I can think more systemic and holistic now. Establishing solid foundation of the field is vital. Now as I have accumulated more, I can think more critically. Xiaoming said: "Initially, I struggled because I didn't know the grading criteria. But later I found out that the grading criteria here is good that hard working is given credit" and "another difference from the initial stage is now I have skeptical thinking and I question the authority." Further, he gives examples of questioning authorities:

> For example, a certain type of screw, the number one in the industry, due to some other considerations, compromised and didn't use the best screw. But when you do it, you should think of a way to solve the problem that caused the compromise instead of just following the authority and using the unreliable screw. Also, when having lab group meeting, I can question my advisor now. I used justified evidence to defend my opinion and the advisor was persuaded and changed his original critique. The advisor may be more well-rounded and know broader in the field but he is not doing the project and the student who actually does the project knows more details about the project and is a better expert in term of the particular project.

Conclusion

Chinese international doctoral students have grown into more systemic and skeptical thinkers after studying in U.S. Ph.D. programs. Lab meetings, doing projects, collaboration and corporation, and building a solid foundation of the subject helped develop critical thinking. Such findings add to the knowledge base and inform the students, educators, and the public. Further research with broader and varied sample is necessitated.

References

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101. http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/11735

Clandinin, D. J. (Ed.). (2007). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology.* Sage.

Heng, T. T. (2018). Different is not deficient: Contradicting stereotypes of Chinese international students in US higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, *43*(1), 22-36.

Mertova, P. & Webster, L. (2020). Using narrative inquiry as a research method: *An introduction to critical event narrative analysis in research, teaching and professional practice* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Isolation Squared? An Autoethnography Study of the Comprehensive Examination During the COVID-19 Outbreak

Xiaoying Jiang
Pennsylvania State University

Abstract: The purpose of this study was to employ autoethnography as a methodology to examine my doctoral comprehensive exam experience in the context of COVID-19. It was a special period of "isolation squared" with both the take-home exam and the stay-at-home order enforced. Through diary entries, I recorded my complex feelings of overwhelming, anxiety, fears, and guiltiness during the exam process. Drawing on the lens of situated learning, I interpreted my self-reflective experience as an effort to move from a novice researcher to full participation. Situating my learning in a wider context, I obtained a deeper understanding of myself, my relationship with others, and the socio-cultural context.

Keywords: autoethnography, comprehensive examination, doctoral education, COVID-19

The comprehensive examination or the qualifying exam is a pivotal milestone in the doctoral study process. It is normally regarded as a process of isolating oneself from the outside world and taking exams independently. Recently, with the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, most universities around the globe switched to remote learning. Almost all students were experiencing isolation from the community to keep safe and protect others in the spring of 2020. As a third-year Ph.D. student in an adult education program at a US institution, I took the comprehensive exam during the coronavirus outbreak from March to April 2020. Faced with the rapid shift of the learning environment, I situated my exam process as an "isolation squared", which was filled with complex feelings of isolation, anxiety, and being overwhelmed. In this paper, I adopted an autoethnographic approach to reflect on my comprehensive exam experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Literature Review

There is not much literature focused on the feeling of isolation among doctoral students in the study process. Ali and Kohun (2016) examined isolation feeling across four stages of the doctoral program, with a specific focus on the reasons for students' drop-out and the countermeasures. Wang and DeLaquil (2020) shared their reflective experience related to peer support, faculty mentorship, and research participation to address the issues of isolation of doctoral education in the times of COVID-19. Autoethnographic research reflects the doctoral study experience in numerous studies. Some scholars used autoethnography to reflect on their experience of a specific stage of the doctoral study process, such as taking a comprehensive exam (Kelley, 2014), completing a one-year doctoral thesis experience (Lake, 2015), and turning the dissertation into a publication (Merga, 2015). Kennedy (2020), in particular, discussed the inherent vulnerabilities of doctoral students as novice researchers in terms of uncertainty, self-doubt, and insecurity by presenting memos in her conversation with advisors and other peer

students. Some other studies focused on student-faculty mentorship. Gurvitch, Carson, and Beale (2008) explored the mentoring relationships through reflecting on their respective doctoral study experience. Trahar (2013) as an instructor and a supervisor, discussed the negotiations among students and faculty in in-class teaching and supervisory interactions. Autoethnography can also be collective work. In Miles, Creely, and Pruyn's (2019) research, Miles (the first author) shared her experience of transforming from a dropout student at a young age to a doctoral candidate over four decades later; and then Miles collaborated with two colleagues of Creely and Pruny to present an alternative path of doctoral education through the lens of transformative learning and critical discourse analysis. Among all these studies, scholars tend to follow the chronology of pivotal events in different stages of the doctoral study process. Through critical self-reflexivity, they provided a detailed description of vignettes, conversations, email correspondence, and journal entries; and they sought to understand the meaning-making and cultural phenomena embedded in conflicts and negotiations.

Theoretical Framework

Most of the existing research on doctoral education tends to focus on the efforts of competency and knowledge construction among doctoral students. It should be noted that doctoral education is not only about generating individuals' knowledge, but it is also closely related to social participation in the academic community, moving from novice researchers to fully engaged masters. To better reflect on my doctoral comprehensive exam experience, I followed Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory, which consists of two components: Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) and Community of Practice (CoP). LPP is a process of how a learner gains competence through engaging in the activity of a sociocultural practice. *Legitimate* refers to the permission of belonging to a social organization and of controlling its resources, and *Peripheral* is used to distinguish between novices and experts. Moving toward participation in practice involves not only more access to resources and broader responsibilities within the community but also an increasing sense of identity as a master practitioner (Lave & Wenger, 1991). CoP is an evolving concept. It is initially a way of describing groups of people with common interests who work together to accomplish some activities in a community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In general, CoP can be regarded as the basic building blocks of a social learning system that facilitates learning through interactions with others (Wenger, 2010).

Methodology: Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a qualitative research approach. Ellis and Bochner (2000) defined the term autoethnography as "an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (p. 733). *Auto* represents self, *enthno* means culture, and *graphy* implies the narrative interpretation. Through a reflexive self-narrative, the author uses personal experience to generate a thick description of cultural experience that facilitates the understanding of a wider social context. The main difference between autobiography and autoethnography is that the former just illustrates a self-narrative story, while the latter incorporates cultural phenomena into the nuances of self-experience (Ellis, 2016). "Autoethnography is not simply a way of knowing about the world; it has become a way of being in the world, one that requires living consciously, emotionally, and reflexively" (Ellis, 2016, p.10).

To contextualize my exam experience, I will first give a brief introduction to the doctoral program I am involved in and my learning situation. I am a doctoral student in Lifelong Learning and Adult Education at Penn State. The program generally includes three years of coursework, which ends with a comprehensive examination and is then followed by a dissertation proposal; finally, the last stage of dissertation writing and defense lasts for another two to four years. The comprehensive examination is a four-week take-home exam. Students are required to accomplish a sixty-page essay to answer three to four exam questions that are related to their research interests. Meanwhile, I am an international student from China, where the COVID-19 virus was firstly observed; and I am a mother with a son who was one year old when the exam took place. During the comprehensive exam process, I kept a journal of my exam experience, my encounters with others, and my observation of the changing social context. I finally collected twenty-one diary entries from March 27th to April 24th, 2020. I shared those entries in their original form, to first make known my feelings during the exam process; then I situated my learning experience in a wider socio-cultural context to better understand the nuanced cultural phenomena.

Overview of the Comprehensive Exam in the Context of COVID-19

I received my three exam questions on the morning of March 27, 2020, and then started the four-week exam journey. The exam dates were determined long before the coronavirus outbreak. I didn't expect the dramatic shift of learning environment of no open libraries and no on-site classes on campus in mid-March. The small desk in my bedroom is the only space I could choose to accomplish my essays; and my family can only stay at our apartment for months to keep them safe from COVID-19. Drawing from my diary entries, I presented complex feelings of isolation, anxiety, and being overwhelmed during the exam process.

Overwhelmed in the exam process. I received three exam questions. They covered a wide scope of historical development, philosophical foundations, methodologies, and research designs. I intended to accomplish each one in nine days, but the process was not as smooth as I planned. The quotes I listed below reflected my struggles in the written process.

> *It is 1:30 am. Another long day, today I have very little progress. I downloaded more articles to read instead of writing today. I am still debating what to write and how to express them properly. Low efficiency today. Sad:((March 31, 2020)*

> *Today my laptop didn't work several times. Maybe I overuse it these days, and even my laptop "strikes". (April 3, 2020)*

> *It is 1:30 am, the ninth day, I planned to finish my first question today, but sadly it lacks one session. I started with an easy question, but still didn't accomplish in 9 days, how could I finish the other difficult ones in 19 days. Time is really tight. I need to work harder. (April 4, 2020)*

> *After lunch, I am quite tired, but my head kept running and I couldn't fell asleep. It has been a couple of days that I didn't take naps. I keep thinking of what I read and how should I organize my third question. So exhausted. (April 18, 2020)*

Anxiety in COVID-19 isolation. During the exam process, I checked the positive cases of COVID-19 in our neighborhood and all over the US every day. Witnessing the rising number was very stressful. I only went out to the grocery store three times during this period but still feel anxious about the spread of the virus.

> *The COVID-19 number in the US is still increasing sharply. In Center County, we already have 24 contracted positive cases. To protect ourselves and others, we should stay at home. (March 30, 2020)*

> *Today, we witness an increase of almost 30,000 in the US (April 2, 2020)*
> *No fruits at home. All milk and vegetables will run out soon. Today, I should go to the grocery. I haven't been outside for 10 days since my comps begin. (April 5, 2020)*

Fear of being a Chinese student. COVID-19 was first found in China. It soon spread around the globe, especially in Europe and in the US. I read news about debates on wearing masks in western countries. It was the first time I felt fear that I may get attacked because I am Chinese.

> *I read the news today that experts in the US may recommend people wear masks outside. It is a really big concern for me. In China, the government stresses the importance of masks for self-protection and protecting others. But it is not recommended in the US and European countries. (March 31, 2020)*
> *To avoid the crowd, I went out (to grocery stores) after breakfast and wear a mask. At the grocery, the fruits, meat, and vegetables are well provided. I am quite nervous that people will stare at me as I am an Asian and wear a mask, but I do see more local people also wear masks. Such a relief. It is a good signal; I am not the only one. (April 5, 2020)*

Guilty of not being an adequate mother and daughter. In my exam process, my family sacrificed the most. I did not talk to them much and mainly remained in my room for study. They had to keep staying at home, but I cannot do my duty because of the exam.

> *Today, I have an online class from 8 am to 11 am. I had a 5-minute break and went to the living room for drinks. My baby wanted me to hug him, I embraced him for a while and put him back to the floor again. He started to cry, but I have to return to the zoom class soon. I know because of my study and also because of the stay home order, I haven't brought him to the YMCA for swimming, to the children's library for story-time activities and to socialize with other kids. I really feel sorry for him and also my parents. They have to keep social distancing and I couldn't help them more due to my comps exam. So Sorry! (April 9, 2020)*

Discussion

The journey of doctoral education could be regarded as the process of moving from novice and expert in academia. After passing the comprehensive exam, doctoral students change their titles to doctoral candidates, and then later become PhDs after graduation. The process of participation

represents a trajectory from the peripheral (novice) towards full participation (master). It demonstrates the capacity building of self-acknowledgement and self-confidence.

> *Another long day for reading and writing, I have written 12 of 60 pages of my comps paper, it is big progress! . . . Before I start my comps at home, I never thought I could study as efficiently as at school. So far it goes well! (March 30, 2020)*

> *Whenever I review books or articles, I felt I return to the classroom again, the past three years' experience of the nervousness the excitement, the achievement and failure all come back to my mind. The exam is so challenging, but at the same time, it is a good opportunity for me to summarize and reflect on what I have learned in the past years. (April 17, 2020)*

The participation also entails a sense of belonging in the community. During the exam process, I not only concentrated on my exam, but I also took classes and attended graduate assistant meetings virtually. As a doctoral student, I obtained peer support from friends' greetings, virtual program meetings, and zoom classes. In the mentorship relationships, I was encouraged by my committee members and my graduate assistant supervisor. Because of their support, I did not have a sense of loneliness and helplessness in the isolation status.

> *I ask each of my committee members about the change of format (oral exam). They all reply back to me very quickly to show their support. I am very appreciated. I know that lots of things changed because of the spread of the virus around the globe, but more things remain as they are. (April 2, 2020)*

> *This morning, in the GA zoom meeting, my GA supervisor shared a video of fireworks to celebrate my accomplishment of the written exam. In the afternoon, I had a zoom meeting with my friends for about an hour. I feel so warm that I have their support. (April 24, 2020)*

In the meantime, when situating my own learning in a wider socio-cultural context, I witnessed the increased ethnic and racial tensions in the context of COVID-19, which is another "virus" in society. My memos indicated that although people argue for a diversified and inclusive environment, the virus seems to deepen social inequality and put Asian groups into the spotlight of victims of racism.

> *A higher percentage is shown among African American and Latin American people. Every day, we track the updates of the coronavirus case. We all perceive that the spread of the virus is equal to everyone, no matter you are rich or poor, young or old. But unfortunately, it does reflect social inequality. (April 7, 2020)*

> *I saw the news about an Asian girl in New York went out to throw garbage but got attacked by a guy with sulfuric acid. So awful! It reminds me of my cousin's experience recently. He studied in Chicago, and one day when he was waiting for*

an elevator in the building, one person passed by coughed at him intentionally.
He felt insulted. (April 8, 2020)

Conclusion

In this paper, I reflected on my comprehensive exam experience in the pivotal moment for my life and for most others in 2020. Through an autoethnographic approach, the interpretation of a special experience conveys meaning-making. In the research process, I obtained a deeper understanding of myself, my relationship with others, and the socio-cultural context. My self-reflective experience signifies the issues of belonging and its relationship to the nuanced cultural phenomena. I finally passed the comprehensive exam successfully and became a doctoral candidate. I cannot think of a better way to record the experience lived as a novice researcher in a particular historical moment. It's a unique gift for myself, and at the same time, it will also resonate in others' hearts who have gone through a difficult time together with love, faith, support, and confidence.

References

Ali, A., & Kohun, F. G. (2006). Dealing with isolation feelings in IS doctoral programs. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, *1*(1), 21–33. https://doi.org/10.28945/58

Ellis, C. (2016). Preface: Carrying the torch for autoethnography. In S. H. Jones, T. E Adams, & C. Ellis (Eds.). *Handbook of autoethnography* (pp. 9-12). Routledge.

Ellis, C, & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 733-768*).* Sage.

Gurvitch, R., Carson, R. L., & Beale, A. (2008). Being a protégé: An autoethnographic view of three teacher education doctoral programs. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, *16*(3), 246-262. https://doi.org/10.1080/13611260802231625

Kelley, A. (2014). Layers of consciousness: An autoethnographic study of the comprehensive exam process. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, *9*(1), 347–360. https://doi.org/10.28945/2079

Kennedy, L. M. (2020). Confessions of a novice researcher: An autoethnography of inherent vulnerabilities. *Qualitative Report*, *25*(6), 1526–1539. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol25/iss6/7

Lake, J. (2015). Autoethnography and reflective practice: Reconstructing the doctoral thesis experience. *Reflective Practice*, *16*(5), 677-687. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2015.1071247

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press.

Merga, M. K. (2015). Thesis by publication in education: An autoethnographic perspective for educational researchers. *Issues in Educational Research*, *25*(3), 291-308. http://www.iier.org.au/iier25/merga.pdf

Miles, J. K., Creely, E., & Pruyn, M. (2019). From 'year 9 dropout' to doctoral candidate: An autoethnographic journey of becoming (with friends). *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *38*(6), 602-614. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2019.1678690

Trahar, S. (2013). Autoethnographic journeys in learning and teaching in higher education. *European Educational Research Journal*, *12*(3), 367-375. https://doi.org/10.2304/eerj.2013.12.3.367

Wang, L., & DeLaquil, T. (2020). The isolation of doctoral education in the times of COVID-19: recommendations for building relationships within person-environment theory. *Higher Education Research and Development, 4*(2), 1-5. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2020.1823326

Wenger, E. (2010). Communities of practice and social learning systems: the career of a concept. In C. Blackmore (ed.) *Social learning systems and communities of practice* (pp. 179-198). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-84996-133-2_11

Community College Adult Learner Experiences With a Student Success Environment

Tracy A. Kachur and Susan J. Barcinas
North Carolina State University

Abstract: This paper presents findings from a qualitative case study that investigates how adult learners experience a student success-rich culture within a community college. The data includes 14 semi-structured interviews with ten adult learners and four institutional-academic representatives, in addition to supporting document analysis of national, state, and intuitional student success initiatives and practices. Two findings are presented suggested that there is a divergence in how community college professionals and adult learners perceive and define student success, and that institutional success structures may present barriers to supporting unique adult learner needs.

Keywords: adult learner, postsecondary, adult learner-friendly/focused, community colleges, student success, persistence

Over recent decades, community colleges have increasingly embedded student success initiatives into the fabric of the campus environment and culture (Bailey, 2016). At the same time, the postsecondary adult learner research has not examined adult learner experiences within this evolving context. This paper presents findings from a study that offers an opportunity to analyze student success contexts as they align with adult learner needs, and to better understand the influence that student success approaches may have on adult learner educational experiences.

A significant proportion of postsecondary adult learners choose to attend community colleges. For the 2017-2018 academic year, 39% of students ages 22 and older, and 10 percent of students over age 40 attended community colleges, which indicates nearly half of community college students, as defined by age, are adult learners (American Association of Community Colleges, 2019).

Andragogy theorizes adult learners are self-directed, bring prior experiences, desire relevance, prefer applicability, prefer problem-centered approaches to learning, and exhibit a high degree of intrinsic motivation (Knowles, 1984, Merriam et al., 2012). Tinto's (1987)'s interactionist theory quantitatively predicts persistence through a combination of variables, such as a student's background, socioeconomic status, academic preparation, and a commitment to a goal with a student's level of academic and social engagement with an institution (Chaves, 2006). The student and the institution continuously engage in both an educational and social context, where persistence "hinges on the construction of educational communities in colleges, programs, and classroom levels which integrate students into the ongoing social and intellectual life of the institution" (Tinto, 1987, p. 188).

Building on Tinto (1987), Bean and Metzner (1984) developed the nontraditional undergraduate student attrition model, which theorizes that social interaction is a necessary but insufficient factor for analyzing adult learner persistence. The model posits that attrition, intent to leave,

student background, and environmental variables and the interactions among these variables hold more significance on adult learner persistence than the effect of academic and social integration (Oden, 2011). Additional research holds that if the academic and environmental factors are positive, an adult learner will persist; when both are negative, they will not (Burns & Durojaiye, 2017; Crawford-Sorey & Duggan, 2008). When academics are positive, but the environment is negative, the adult learner will not be as persistent. Finally, if the environment is positive, but the academics are negative, the adult learner will be more likely to persist because support is in place to guide completion (Burns & Durojaiye, 2017; Crawford-Sorey & Duggan, 2008).

When an adult learner experiences certain types of stress or barriers, she/he will not persist even with a high GPA, though with positive institutional support he/she will persist (Burns & Durojaiye, 2017; Capps, 2012; Garner, 2019). Poor academic performance does not necessarily impact persistence if the adult learner feels supported (Capps, 2012; Garner, 2019). Clark (2012) examined adult learner persistence at a community college. Building upon Schlossberg's (1989) theory of marginality and mattering and Rendon's (1994) theory of validation, Clark (2012) explored adult learners' self-perceptions of factors that positively impact their persistence. The study concluded that an adult learner is likely to persist when faculty and staff demonstrate that the adult learner's presence and contributions mattered, which is consistent with Schlossberg's (1989) theory.

For the past decade, a dramatic shift has redefined commitment to access and equity to support underrepresented populations, align programs with 21st-century careers, and increase institutional transparency (Bailey, 2016). This movement, referred to as *student success*, is characterized by a data-driven culture that is measured and evidenced by degree or credential completion rates, clearly designed pathways, and labor market outcomes (Bailey et al., 2005; McClenney, 2013: Wyner, 2014).

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning's (CAEL, 1999) benchmarking study identified best practices used by colleges and universities that effectively focused adult learners. Currently, CAEL's (2020) Ten Principles for Effectively Serving Adult Learners serves as a vital resource framework. Framework principles provide a consistent and understandable structure that shapes adult learner experiences and institutional response to adult learner needs, as well as adult learner success and completion. Other initiatives such as CAEL's (2018) Adult Learner 360 help institutions assess whether their environment exemplifies AFLI and offers tools and best practices to implement ALFI principles. That said, few institutions engage in this benchmarking, even those who self-identify as welcoming to adult learners (Erisman and Steele, 2015). The reasons for this are complex, with Erisman and Steele (2015), suggesting there is a lack of general awareness of resources and research regarding adult learner importance and this leads to reduced leadership buy-in.

The student success environment builds upon an assumption that consistently offered wrap-around strategies will ensure success and completion for all students (Bragg & Durham, 2012). This presumes that all students, including adult learners, seek completion of a specific subset of credentials, learn at the same pace and in the same manner, or if not, will nonetheless benefit from the supports. At present there is no empirical or best practices data which focuses on the nature of adult learner experiences within a student success community college context.

Research Design

An instrumental case study is appropriate when the research seeks to understand more than just the case or something that is not obvious to the researcher as an observer (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995; Tellis, 1979). The research question follows: How do adult learners uniquely perceive their student experiences at a community college immersed in a student success culture?

The site met the following criteria as a community college that, (a) self-identified as student success focused; (b) had evidence of student success initiatives, policies and practices (consistent with state and national definitions); and, (c) immersed in student success goals and methods for a minimum of three years. Southeastern Community College (SCC) is a medium-sized community college that serves two rural counties in a southeastern state. In addition, SCC was an early adopter and participated in numerous funded national student success initiatives and has cultivated a culture based on an explicit student success driven climate.

SCC's demographics included students with an average student age of 24. Adult learners, students over the age of 25, represent 38% of enrollment (SCC, 2018). When disaggregated, the enrollment at SSC presented a lower average age because students under age 24 consisted of traditional-age learners (18-24 years) and of early college/career learners who were under age 18. SCC has 170 curriculum and continuing education programs.

The data collection included 14 semi-structured interviews, 10 with adult learners and four with academic student success professionals and document analysis of strategic vision, policy, advising, and student success indicator data. A priori and open coding phases were completed, and this paper presents two of the study findings.

Finding #1: Community College Professionals and Adult Learners Define and Operationalize Student Success Definitions in Divergent Ways

During the interviews, community college professionals defined student success in structured, normative ways that aligned with the national student success movement. Their responses reflected the institutional definitions of students acquiring or completing a credential within a specified timeframe, the avoidance of swirling patterns, and the implementation of specific uniform institution-wide strategies such as guided pathways, or student success courses. The community college professionals who are in direct contact with adult learners grappled with pressure. They wanted to recognize and support an adult learner's desire to set their own goals and were required to prioritize institutional expectations. Academic representative #1 described how sometimes the adult learner's goal is minimalized and replaced by SCC's goal for student success.

> I think we have student success when the student meets their goal. That doesn't always match up with we're measuring as being successful at a community college. *Sometimes student success, they might get their goal, but it wasn't their goal to begin with*. On some levels, we are seen as the student is not successful. *We have students who leave without completing a credential, but that was their goal. I thought we were successful with the student if they met their personal goal* [emphasis added].

In contrast, the adult learner participants defined their student success as the meeting of an individual goal and achieving a balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Swirling patterns were viewed as 'okay' as long as they were a means of balancing professional and personal goals. The adult learners defined success *as meeting their individual goals for their betterment or benefiting their careers as measured against what was before their enrollment at SCC*. Coley, a retired and disabled military veteran, used his 9/11 education benefits to pursue lifelong learning for his benefit.

> After being retired from the military, I was able to use my 9/11 GI bill [educational benefit]. These [degrees] are just for me. It's knowledge. It was interest. I was able to take, with general education especially, a lot of political sciences, histories, biologies, lots of stuff that I had been interested in or that I hadn't been able to do before.

Finding #2: The Student Success Practice of Student Identity as "Alike" and the Uniqueness of an Adult Learner are Somewhat in Conflict.

The data suggested that for academic student success professionals, there was institutional buy-in that it was important to follow the recommended priority categories of analysis to guide their policies and practices. While some categories, such as tracking completion patterns and benchmarks of success for students of color were disaggregated, in general students who were adult, first generation or unique in other ways were categorized and labeled within a larger category of nontraditional. While on the surface, this makes logical sense and is a small change, it created a sense of environmental pressure to disregard or consider unique adult learner identity, characteristics and needs as a part of the prioritization of a uniform larger nontraditional category. For adult learners, they had a keen awareness or feeling associated with not being recognized at the institutional or classroom level as adult learners. The importance of this label was significant – it meant that adult learners bumped into moments where their presence and needs were set aside or unacknowledged, or at times, acknowledged but not addressed.

This working culture also surfaced in terms of mandatory institutional success supports – for instance, student success first year courses or tutoring services, inadvertently serving as one more barrier for adult learners who were already balancing multiple work, family and professional demands in addition to their student role. Psychologically, the adult learner participants shared that it also was a subtle reminder that their unique needs, which they recognized as important, were not viewed as important by the community college.

Discussion

The study findings signal that well intentioned student success strategies which are especially at the forefront in community colleges may in fact lead to unintended consequences. Adult learners in this study were caught in a dynamic tension about meeting individual needs and fitting into evolving college priorities and metrics that moved them further rather than closer to an adult learner optional environment. The adult learner participants in this study clearly appreciated the availability of support structures and were aware of student success language, initiatives and climate. Just as the learners suppressed elements of their adult learner identity, the institutional professionals also described an awareness and a concomitant suppression or bracketing of adult learner presence and expectations or needs as a direct response to student success culture.

Frontline faculty and staff play a pivotal role as facilitators, mentors, and a person-to-person touchpoint for academic and support services.

References

American Association of Community Colleges. (2019). *Fast facts, 2019*. https://www.aacc.nche.edu/research-trends/fast-facts/

Bailey, T. (2016). The need for comprehensive reform: From access to completion. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, *2016*(176), 11-21. https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20218

Bailey, T., Jenkins, D., & Leinbach, T. (2005). Is Student Success Labeled Institutional Failure? Student Goals and Graduation Rates in the Accountability Debate at Community Colleges. CCRC Working Paper No. 1. *Community College Research Center, Columbia University*. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED489101

Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, *13*(4), 544-559. http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss4/2

Bean, J. P., & Metzner, B. S. (1985). A conceptual model of non-traditional undergraduate student attrition. *Review of Educational Research*, *55*(4), 485-540. https://doi.org/10.3102%2F00346543055004485

Bragg, D. D., & Durham, B. (2012). Perspectives on access and equity in the era of (community) college completion. *Community College Review*, *40*(2), 106-125. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0091552112444724

Brint, S. & Karabel, J. (1989). *The diverted dream: Community colleges and the promise of educational opportunity in America, 1900-1985*. Oxford, UP. 23-66.

Burns, B., & Durojaiye, A. (2017). *The long road: Adult student retention at a rural community college: A case study* [master's capstone]. Vanderbilt University Repository. https://ir.vanderbilt.edu/handle/1803/8450?show=full

Capps, R. (2012). Supporting adult-student persistence in community colleges. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, *44*(2), 38-44. https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2012.655218

Clark, L. (2012). When non-traditional is traditional: A faculty dialogue with graduating community college students about persistence. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 36*(7), 511-519. http://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2012.664090

Community College Research Center & American Association of Community Colleges Pathways Project (2016). *The movement toward pathways*. AACC Pathways Project. https://www.aacc.nche.edu/programs/aacc-pathways-project/

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, (1999). *Serving adult learners in higher education: Findings from CAEL's benchmarking* study. https://digital.hagley.org/08150035_2020_S19_002_24_Serving

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning. (2018, July). *Adept at adapting: Adult learner 360 case studies on how institutions listen to students, faculty, and staff to redesign S\services for adult learners*. https://www.cael.org/publication/adultlearner360casestudies

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, (2020). *Ten principles for effectively serving adults*. https://www.cael.org/higher-education-ten-principles?hsCtaTracking=ec52a84a-ddb3-45e0-bd8c-d69e7b5c4959%7Ca0c93926-68cc-4c4f-b318-23964ad28d2e

Crawford-Sorey, K., & Harris-Duggan, M. (2008). Differential predictors of persistence between community college adult and traditional-aged students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, *32*(2), 75-100 . https://doi.org/10.1080/10668920701380967

Erisman, W., & Steele, P. (2015). *Adult college completion in the 21st century: What we know and what we don't*. Higher Ed Insight. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2622629

Garner, C. J. (2019). *Academic success advising: The impact on non-traditional undergraduate adult learners* (Order No. 13862064). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2240083480). https://proxying.lib.ncsu.edu/index.php/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.prox.lib.ncsu.edu/docview/2240083480?accountid=12725

Knowles, M. S. (1980) *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy*. Englewood Cliffs.

McClenney, B. N. (2013). Leadership matters: Addressing the student success and completion agenda. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, *2013*(164), 7-16. https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20076

Oden, L. M. (2011). *Factors affecting persistence of non-traditional students enrolled in two-year colleges* (Order No. 3465700). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; Social Science Premium Collection. (884224187). http://proxying.lib.ncsu.edu/index.php?url=http://search.proquest.com.prox.lib.ncsu.edu/docview/884224187?accountid=12725

Rendon, L. I. (1989). The lie and the hope: Making higher education a reality for at-risk students. *AAHE Bulletin, 41*(9), 4-7. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED308747

Schlossberg, N. K. (1989). Marginality and mattering: Key issues in building community. In D.C. Roberts (Ed.), *Designing campus activities to foster a sense of community, New Directions for Student Services* (Vol. 48; pp. 5-15). Jossey-Bass. http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.842.3826&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage.

Tellis, W. M. (1997). Application of a case study methodology. *The qualitative report*, *3*(3), 1-19. http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol3/iss3/1

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. University of Chicago Press.

Wyner, J. (2014). *What excellent community colleges do*. Harvard Education Press.

Drawing from Mysticism in Monotheistic Religious Traditions
To Inform Profound and Transformative Learning

Michael Kroth[1], Davin J. Carr-Chellman[2], and Julia Mahfouz[3]
[1]University of Idaho--Boise, [2]University of Dayton, and [3]University of Colorado-Denver

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to introduce the processes and practices of mysticism found within the monotheistic traditions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, in an attempt to identify areas where these might inform, elaborate, and deepen our understanding of profound and transformative learning theory and practice.

Keywords: monotheism, mysticism, profound learning, transformative learning theory

> *"Mysticism has been called 'the great spiritual current which goes through all religions.'"*
> ~Annemarie Schimmel (2011, p. 4)

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the processes and practices of mysticism within the monotheistic understandings of mysticism in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in an attempt to identify areas where these might inform, elaborate, and deepen our understanding of profound and transformative learning theory and practice. This article will briefly propose: 1) connections between mysticism, profound and transformative learning; and 2) examine the underpinnings of mysticism as both an experience and a process to inform transformational and profound learning theory. For this initial discussion, we have primarily drawn from some of the key texts and thinkers which have interpreted mysticism from the perspectives of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

By examining mysticism through three examples from monotheistic religions, this paper suggests that mysticism as an experience and process is strongly linked with profound and transformational learning and could be used to unpack ideas of transformative learning and also to help explicate the relationship of profound learning to transformative learning. This is highly relevant to adult education; by theorizing the relationship between mysticism and these theoretical learning perspectives, this prefaces a more in-depth investigation into previously unconsidered and unique understandings of the deep and substantive learning that can inform the development of adult and lifelong education theory and practice.

Mysticism has been extensively studied and written about (Egan, 1984; Kushner, 2001; McGinn, 1991, 2006; Scholem, 1995; Shah, 1969; Underhill, 1999). It has a rich history in a variety of spiritual traditions including Christianity, Shamanism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, and others (Teasdale, 1999), spanning centuries. Mysticism, which has had varied definitions, today is generally considered to be the development of a direct relationship between a person and the divine. James (1997) said that "In mystic states we both become one with the Absolute and we become aware of our oneness" (p. 419).

Transformative learning, arguably the predominant contemporary adult learning theory, has been around a relatively short time, beginning in the late 1990's. Transformative learning theory, first introduced in the late 1970's (Mezirow, 1978) was elaborated over the next decade into a more comprehensive theory (Mezirow, 1991), and continues to be the focus of robust research and development, as demonstrated through the publication of a handbook (Taylor & Cranton, 2012) and the Journal of Transformative Education, conferences, and more. Transformative learning theory is a change theory, about how "taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mindsets)..[become] more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7). Hoggan (2016), taking a thoughtful look at how the now extensive scholarship could be considered, offered a metatheory of transformative learning, explaining it as "processes that result in significant and irreversible changes in the way a person experiences, conceptualizes, and interacts with the world" (p. 71). Further, he suggested depth, breadth, and relative stability as three criteria required to define learning as transformative. Without these, he says, learning outcomes cannot be considered transformative.

Profound learning has been even more recently conceptualized, and it is at the very earliest stages of development. Profound learning revolves around rich, deep, durable, and meaningful experiences, and recognizes that people can learn and cultivate these kinds of experiences. Theoretically, these qualities can become a learning disposition, developed over time through practices. Profound learning emphasizes depth of growth occurring over a lifetime through both transformative change-experiences that result in new perspectives and intentional ongoing explorations that seek ongoing deepening through practices or disciplines.

Mysticism is an experience and a process (Teasdale, 1999). The marks of a mystical experience, according to James (1997), are that it is ineffable, noetic, transient, and passive. In other words, it cannot be explained, gives great insight into truth, cannot be sustained for long, and holds the individual in its power. A mystical experience appears to have at least some qualities of the epiphanal transformation Mezirow (2000) referred to as "epochal" (p. 21). Once an individual has had a mystical experience, they may continue to move intentionally toward a relationship with the Absolute through a process which has been described as purgation, illumination, and unification (James, 1997), with associated practices, most notably contemplation and prayer.

Mystical experiences "are frequently only the surface manifestation of a deeper, permanent part of life that slowly transforms the mystic's entire being and consciousness" (Egan, 1984, p. 7). This process may last a lifetime. It becomes, moreover, "a way of living" (Egan, 1984, p. 7) and what Underhill views as a "complete system of life". Mysticism *as a process* seems to align with the steps taken in transformative learning, and thus unpacking the nature of mysticism could provide a deeper understanding of transformative learning theory. Mysticism *as a practice* seems to align with the agentic, intentional nature of profound learning disciplines which move an individual into deeper realms of learning over a lifetime (Carr-Chellman & Kroth, 2017; Kroth & Carr-Chellman, 2018). Together, these two perspectives of learning, transformative and profound, like mysticism, begin to expand our understanding of learning as an ongoing, holistic, process of formation, experienced in the present moment (de Caussade, 1982).

The Necessity of a Phenomenological Framework

From traditional epistemological perspectives, especially those remaining most influential in the philosophy of science and the foundations of social research, it is difficult to take mysticism seriously as a phenomenon worthy of exploration in terms of its relevance for learning. A useful approach to characterizing this traditional epistemological perspective is through the process of human perception. Perception gets us in touch with the world and, hence, is foundational to much of our knowledge (Gibson, 1959). The representational epistemological approach measures the accuracy of one's perception on its ability to truly represent the external world, enabling us to, for example, walk without tripping. On this view, perception must generate accurate epistemic contact with the world outside the perceiver's skin, producing objective knowledge about the experienced, external world, and grounded in a dualistic ontology with a sharp distinction between subject/object and knower/known (van Dijk et al., 2018). Since epistemic contact with mystical experience is idiosyncratic and not easily controlled or repeated, these experiences are easily dismissed within this traditional representational epistemological approach. Mystical experience can be studied as relevant to human learning, however, from a phenomenological perspective.

The phenomenological perspective doesn't reject the efficacy of dualistic representational epistemology. Rather, it rejects the privileging of epistemic contact as the primary foundation of accurate knowledge. Rejecting this privilege, phenomenology embraces a relational epistemology grounded in a non-dualistic ontology. Experience is misrepresented when it ignores the essential relational aspect of the epistemic encounter between subject and object. Experience is synthetic, temporal, and interpretive, and neither the knowing subject nor the known object ". . .holds its identity simply present within itself alone. . ." (Russon 2003, p. 18). Epistemic contact producing accurate representation is one aspect of knowing, but not the only aspect. The phenomenological perspective highlights individual subjectivity as prior to and partially constituent of the nature of the object. In this way, phenomena disregarded by traditional epistemological perspectives become deeply significant.

Defining Mysticism

Many theologians and philosophers throughout history have tried to capture the definition of mysticism (Jantzen, 1989; Borchert, 1994). While the mystical experience is dependent on the mystics' personal experience, traditions and environments, and their religion or backgrounds that play a role in shaping their mystical experiences (constructivists), many scholars, like essentialists, maintain that there is a common core in all the mystical experiences regardless of its external form (Zarrabi-Zadeh, 2008). Thus, mysticism can be described in terms of the perceptions of mystics of various religions as they go into the deep heart of mysticism and what they describe is a universal movement of the heart that could also go beyond any religious tradition (Teasdale, 1999). In that sense, mysticism is not one phenomenon, but multiple phenomena with several dimensions based on the various religions and experiences one undergoes. McGinn (1991) the great chronicler of the history of western Christian mysticism, avoids defining it, claiming "any simple definition of such a complex and controversial phenomenon seems utopian" (p. xv). Instead, he shares his understanding of what it means in three parts, "mysticism as a part or element of religion; mysticism as a process or way of life;

and mysticism as an attempt to express a direct consciousness of the presence of God" (p. xvi). Similarly, while we acknowledge the complexity of defining or boxing mysticism into one definition, we will try to define mysticism in relation to its dimensions described by many theologians and philosophers in broader terms of the mystical experiences and practices.

An Experience and a Process

"We can also distinguish between mysticism as an experience and mysticism as a process of spiritual life. The former is very common, while the latter requires an ongoing commitment, regardless of the tradition"

~ Wayne Teasdale (1999, p. 22)

Mysticism is holistic and can encompass the entirety of an individual. Tuttle emphasized that mysticism is more than one-time, or several experiences. "It is the character of the mystic to emphasize progression; holiness is achieved only through the perpetual acquisition of knowledge" (Tuttle, 1989, p. 23).

Dimensions of Mysticism

Mysticism as a part of religion. Mysticism, McGinn says, typically exists within the container of, and is a part of, a larger religion. "No mystics", he says, "(at least before the present century) believed in or practiced 'mysticism'. They believed in and practiced Christianity (or Judaism, or Islam, or Hinduism), that is, religions that contained mystical elements as part of a wider historical whole" (p. xvi). Similarly, Teasdale (1999), explains that mysticism is experienced based on one's religion, "mysticism means direct, immediate experience of ultimate reality. For Christians, it is union and communion with God. For Buddhists, it is a realization of enlightenment" (p.20).

Mysticism as an experience to express a direct consciousness of the presence of God. Mysticism is described as occurring when consciousness becomes transformed into the idea of deep knowing—being in a state where one has a direct experience with the divine truth, with God, being in the presence of God and so it is disclosing an extra sensory dimension of reality. It is, perhaps, like knowing before words, about what is unspeakable that no words can explain. Mystical experiences are ineffable, beyond words, and are unique to the experiencer. In other words, it is a human experience that could be a transformational state of consciousness or an awakened mind. Mystical knowledge of God is experiential knowledge of God that is not simply textbook knowledge or seminary phrases one is taught but is something one experiences. Therefore, this phenomenon is not something merely to think about but also something to be encountered. When the phenomenon of mysticism occurs, the experience is found to be mysterious, awesome, urgent, and fascinating, with a sense of ecstasy. However, the experience is thought to be short-lasting, feels immensely meaningful and profound, and shatters some of one's preconceptions, but it is episodic.

Mysticism as a process or way of life. As a process or a way of life, mysticism not only includes the goal of meeting and developing a relationship with the Absolute, but also everything

that leads up to that and continues afterwards. Union, or absorption into God, is less descriptive of that relationship for most mystics and mystical experiences than the word "presence". For example, preparing for, being conscious of, and reacting to "what can be described as the immediate or direct presence of God" (McGinn, 1991, xvii) is the "mystical element" (McGinn, 1991, p. xvii) in Christianity. Here, mysticism is considered not only as an experience but as a process of episodic mystical experiences, and the mystical relationship could be achieved through practices exercised over time. It is, in this sense, a process of self-transformation that requires commitment. It passes through stages and could embody experiences that entail love and suffering and profound learning.

From the perspective and container of whatever religious tradition it is in, mysticism could be considered as the path of deep interior life—as an experience or process—that leads one to establish awakening or becoming one with the divine, in the presence of God or losing oneself and become one with one's surrounding or outside world or with all reality, with the divine. One's sense of individuality transcends, leading to a kind of human transformation.

Next Steps

Breaking down the processes and qualities of mystical learning for purposes of analysis will be necessary to fully bring mysticism to bear on transformative learning and profound learning. It is worth noting that the classic steps of mystical awakening are only one way to regard what occurs. As Starr (2019) says, for example, "Contemplative life flows in a circular pattern: awe provokes introspection, which invokes awe" (p. 9). As in transformative learning, mysticism involves a process of change. Sometimes this begins with a "disorienting dilemma" and sometimes it is the result of years of practicing contemplation. This interaction between transformation (sporadic) and formation (continual, disciplined work) represents the relationship of transformative learning to profound learning.

References

Borchert, B. (1994). *Mysticism: Its history and challenge*. Weiser Books.

Carr-Chellman, D. J., & Kroth, M. (2017). The spiritual disciplines as practices of transformation. *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology*, *8*(1), 23-35.

Caussade, J. P. D. (1982). *The sacrament of the present moment.* Harper & Row.

Egan, H. D. (1984). *Christian mysticism: the future of a tradition.* Pueblo Pub. Co.

Gibson, J. J. (1959). *Perception as a function of stimulation*. In S. Koch, *Psychology: A study of a science* (Vol. 1; pp. 456-501) McGraw Hill.

Hoggan, C. D. (2016). Transformative learning as a metatheory: definition, criteria, and typology. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *66*(1), 57-75. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713615611216

James, W. (1997). *Varieties of religious experience.* Touchstone.

Jantzen, G. M. (1989). Mysticism and experience. *Religious Studies*, *25*(3), 295-315.

Kroth, M., & Carr-Chellman, D. J. (2018). Preparing profound learners. *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, *30*(3), 64-71.

Kushner, L. (2001). *The way into Jewish mystical tradition.* Jewish Lights Publishing.

McGinn, B. (1991). *The foundations of mysticism*. Crossroad.

McGinn, B. (2006). *The essential writings of Christian mysticism*. Modern Library.

Mezirow, J. (1978). Perspective transformation. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *28*(2), 100-110. https://doi.org/10.1177/074171367802800202

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (2000). *Learning as transformation: critical perspectives on a theory in progress.* Jossey-Bass.

Russon, J. (2003). *Human experience: Philosophy, neurosis, and the elements of everyday life*. SUNY Press.

Schimmel, A. (2011). *Mystical dimensions of Islam (35th anniversary ed.)*. UNC Press.

Scholem, G. (1995). *Major trends in Jewish mysticism.* Schocken Books.

Shah, I. (1969). *The way of the Sufi*. Dutton.

Starr, M. (2019). *Wild mercy: Living the fierce and tender wisdom of the women mystics.* Sounds True.

Taylor, E. W., & Cranton, P. (2012). *The handbook of transformative learning: Theory, research, and practice*. Jossey-Bass.

Teasdale, W. (1999). *The mystic heart: discovering a universal spirituality in the world's religions*. New World Library.

Tuttle, R. G. (1989). *Mysticism in the Wesleyan tradition*. F. Asbury Press.

Underhill, E. (1999). *Mysticism: The nature and development of spiritual consciousness* (12th ed.). Oneworld Publications.

van Dijk, L., & Myin, E. (2019). *Reasons for pragmatism: affording epistemic contact in a shared environment. Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences, 18*(5), 973-997.

Zarrabi-Zadeh, S. (2008). Defining mysticism, a survey of main definitions. *Transcendent Philosophy*, *9*(1), 77-92.

Self-Directed Learning and Self-Regulated Learning: What's the Difference? A Literature Analysis

Holley Marie Linkous
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Abstract: Self-directed learning (SDL) is widely associated with adult learning but is occasionally misunderstood. As a result, the term self-regulated learning (SRL) has been used interchangeably with SDL in literature. Based on a content analysis, this paper explores the difference between techniques of SDL and SRL and provides a basic interpretation of the results found in foundational literature in both areas. This paper outlines the definitions used for understanding the theories, a discussion of the connections between SDL and SRL, and implications for practice and future research.

Keywords: self-directed learning, self-regulated learning, learning strategies

Self-directed learning (SDL) and self-regulated learning (SRL) are similar in numerous ways, but it is imperative to acknowledge the divide between the two learning concepts. Some scholars argue that the difference lies in influential strength; as SRL exhibits strengths in "cognitive and motivational features of learning, while the strength of SDL is its external control features" (Pilling-Cormick & Garrison, 2007, p. 29). Other scholars argue that the link between the two is less clearly defined and cite usage of the terms interchangeably (Saks & Leijen, 2014). This ambiguity leads to confusion among scholars and practitioners, which in turn leads to improper instruction and transmission to students (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991).

Educating adults in a way that promotes autonomous learning is a growing need in a fast-paced world. By establishing clear differences between adult learning techniques, educators and learners alike are better equipped to manage learning challenges at any level. There is a lack of understanding in the difference between self-directed learning (SDL) and self-regulated learning (SRL). Though both theories have been found as important learning processes for achieving learning goals, there is little evidence to identify how the two directly compare. This paper will have three sections. First, I will offer a brief introduction on self-directed learning and self-regulated learning. Second, I will discuss how the components are different, while also highlighting some similarities. Finally, I will conclude with implications for practice and future research.

Literature Review

This argument is largely situated on a direct understanding of the terms. Therefore, it is important to clarify the definitions I will be using for discussion. The following definitions guided my analysis of the literature. This section also provides some of the foundational literature that guided my understanding of the concepts, giving context to the definitions. By considering how the terms were used, and to what learning instances the terms referred, I was able to focus the terms into a story that provided substantial information on the similarities and differences.

Foundational Text of SDL

The following two definitions from Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) provided the guide for analysis of literature regarding SDL. I believed it was important to understand self-directedness first, to best understand SDL.

Self-directedness. Self-directedness, or learner self-direction, refers to an individual's internal learning and growth process as well as the external influences experienced through instruction (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991).

Self-directed learning. Self-directed learning is defined as both a process of learning in which the individual establishes elements of control over their own learning, and characteristics of learners including self-efficacy and motivation (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Hiemstra & Brockett, 2012; Ruttencutter, 2018; Stockdale, 2003).

SDL "refers to both the external characteristics of an instructional process and the internal characteristics of a learner, where the individual assumes primary responsibility for a learning experience" (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991, p. 24). It is a process in which the learner plans, implements, and evaluates personal learning (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). Internal characteristics may include self-discipline, love of reading, and curiosity (Guglielmino, 2013; Tredoux, 2012). The successful ability to set learning objectives, create a learning plan, and develop motivational techniques as needed for individuals high in SDL capacity (du Toit-Brits & van Zyl, 2017)

Foundational Text on SRL

The definitions I used from Baumeister and Vohs (2007) allowed a clarity of self-regulation and SRL. As was the case with SDL, I believed understanding the theory of self-regulation needed to predicate the analysis of SRL as a learning approach.

Self-regulation. Self-regulation is a mental state and process in which individuals focus on goal attainment, including control over feelings and thoughts, and being proactive and reflective about self-monitoring (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Peterson, 2006; Zimmerman, 2000).

Self-regulated learning. SRL is a process of learning that is self-directed in nature, employing tenants of forethought, monitoring, control, and reaction in a learning transaction (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Panadero, 2017; Pintrich, 2000).

Self-regulation theory consists of four basic components: Determine a standard, monitoring, willpower, and motivation (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). SRL indicates a presence of "personal initiative, perseverance, and adoptive skill" (Zimmerman, 2011, p. 70). It is a multi-dimensional consideration of where, why, and how some learners employ self-regulation in their learning experiences, while others do not (Zimmerman, 2011).

Discussion

Following the delineation of each approach to learning, the comparison began. Through somewhat murky investigation, the definitions proved to be connected but not identical. This section provides an examination of the two concepts in relation to each other in learning contexts. Many of the texts specifically stated a connection between the two terms, ultimately leading to the conclusion that the constructs were, in fact, separate.

Perhaps one of the most concrete examples of distinction comes from a prominent scholar of social cognitive theory. According to Bandura (1986) "self-directedness is exercised by wielding influence over the external environment as well as enlisting self-regulatory functions" (p. 21). This statement illustrates the collaboration between SDL and SRL to function within a fluid learning environment. These are two different areas in which a learner exerts control and to create an effective learning arena to reach a singular goal for educational purposes. The predetermined standard requires the initiation of specific and individualistic plans based on topic, tools, and study environment, additionally influenced personal characteristics and tendencies of social context.

Self-direction in self-regulated learning is often inspired by a flexible view of intelligence, as this belief provides the learner a sense of self-efficacy when adapting learning processes (Dweck & Master, 2008; Hidi & Ainley, 2008; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011). What is unique about this specific approach is the view of intelligence, suggesting that the learner can manipulate one's perception of intelligence to meet the determined standard. Whether the individual knows what they need to know, still has more to learn, or somewhere in between, the experience can prove fruitful in accomplishment of the result. Self-efficacy exists in the learner's personal approach to meeting the goal, from plan development, start to finish, and beyond.

Conclusion

In summation, the most substantial difference found from this literature analysis is that many scholars have found SDL to be a control over the external learning environment, with the focus of SRL to be internal. Drawing strongly from the roots of social cognitive theory, again the central distinction of SRL is the focus of behavioral control. Considering the difference has been outlined in texts for decades (see Bandura, 1986), the ambiguity in the field suggests that more clarity is needed in the definitions of the two terms. This leads to the implication of more research directly comparing SDL and SRL in various formal and non-formal learning situations. One such example would be the analysis of an individual's learning experience in a home improvement project compared with an educational endeavor such as returning to school.

My intention of this piece is to encourage more deliberate use of the correct terms, and the utilization of techniques of both SDL and SRL in the realm of adult education. Incorporation of such techniques into adult education makes sense, as SRL can be indicative of academic performance. SRL exists differently among different levels of education (Panadero, 2017). Likewise, all learners have different levels of SDL (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). As educational experience increases, the need for metacognitive strategies becomes more necessary. However, according to Moos and Ringdal (2012), higher education instructors tend to focus more on

course content than learning opportunity for SRL. As SRL skills and strategies improve over time with practice and reflection, adult educators can inspire learners to use such techniques to promote a more successful and positive learning experience (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2005).

References

Baumeister, R. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2007). Self-regulation, ego depletion, and motivation. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 1*(1), 115-128. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2007.00001.x

Brockett, R. G., & Hiemstra, R. (1991). *Self-direction in adult learning: Perspective on theory, research, and practice*. Routledge.

du Toit-Brits, C., & van Zyl, C. M. (2017). Self-directed learning characteristics: Making learning personal, empowering and successful. *Africa Education Review, 14*(3–4), 122–141. https://doi.org/10.1080/18146627.2016.1267576

Dweck, C. S. & Master, A. (2008). Self-theories motivate self-regulated learning. In D. H. Schunk & B. J. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Motivation and self-regulated learning: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 31-51). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Guglielmino, L. M. (2013). The case for promoting self-directed learning in formal educational institutions. *SA-eDUC Journal, 10*(2), 1–18.

Hiemstra, R., & Brockett, R. G. (2012, June 1-3). *Reframing the meaning of self-directed learning: An updated model* [Presented paper]. Adult Education Research Conference, Saratoga Springs, NY, United States. http://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2012/papers/22

Hidi, S., & Ainley, M. (2008). Interest and self-regulation: Relationships between two variables that influence learning. In D. H. Schunk & B. J. Zimmerman (Eds.), *Motivation and self-regulated learning: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 77-109). Lawrence Erlbaum.

Moos, D. C., & Ringdal, A. (2012). Self-regulated learning in the classroom: A literature review on the teacher's role. *Education Research International, 2012*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1155/2012/423284

Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. Oxford University Press.

Pintrich, P. R. (2000). The role of goal orientation in self-regulated learning. In M. Boekaerts, P. R. Pintrich, and M. Zeidner (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp. 451-502). Academic Press.

Ruttencutter, G. S. (2018). *Getting gritty with it: An examination of self-directed learning and grit among doctoral students* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.

Stockdale, S. L. (2003). *Development of an instrument to measure self-directedness* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.

Panadero,E. (2017). A review of self-regulated learning: Six models and four directions for research. *Frontiers in Psychology, 8*(1), 1-28. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00422

Tredoux, C. (2012). *The potential of a learning management system to enhance self-directed learning* [Master's thesis]. North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa.

Zimmerman, B. J. (2000). Attainment of self-regulation: A social cognitive perspective. In M. Boekaerts, P.R. Pintrich, & M. Zeidner (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp. 13-39). Academic Press.

Zimmerman, B. J. (2011). Motivational sources and outcome of self-regulated learning and performance. In B. J. Zimmerman & D. H. Schunk (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation of learning and performance* (pp. 49-64). Routledge.

Zimmerman, B. J., & Kitsantas, A. (2005). The hidden dimension of personal competence: Self-regulated learning and practice. In A. J. Elliot & C. S. Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of competence and motivation* (p. 509–526). Guilford Publications.

Zimmerman, B. J., & Schunk, D. H. (2011). Self-regulated learning and performance: An introduction and overview. In B. J. Zimmerman & D. H. Schunk (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation of learning and performance* (pp. 1-12). Routledge.

Latino Male Students' Perceptions of Writing in First Year College Writing Courses

Miranda A. Livingston and Elizabeth V. Peña
Texas A&M University

Abstract: Writing skills are vital to college and career success; therefore, students who do not succeed in writing will likely struggle in their subsequent coursework. Latino male college students are the most at-risk group. Following a single case study approach, this qualitative study examines the writing perceptions of three Latino males in their first-year college composition course at a community college in Houston, Texas. Using a LatCrit theory framework, the study provides counterstories regarding the relationship between prior writing experiences and relevant racial issues in higher education.

Keywords: community college, Latino male students, first-year writing, LatCrit

Writing skills are vital to college and career success; therefore, students who do not succeed in writing will likely struggle in their subsequent coursework. According to the most recent report from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating board (2018), 58.3% of students entering Texas community colleges "do not meet the Texas Success Initiatives (TSI) standard for college readiness" (p. 7), with 45% of them below minimum standards for writing. Among those students most at-risk are Latino males (Hall & Rowan, 2001). For the past several years, data documented this population's declining success rates. According to *Excelencia in Education* (2019), Latino males had the lowest level of degree attainment (21%) compared to White (46%), Asian (60%), and Black (29%) male students; their female counterparts also surpass them in degree attainment (27%). Their success in future courses is largely dependent on learning how to write at an academic level.

Although researchers are studying Latino college success, gaps remain. Ceja (2016) notes that "how Latino males envision and come to understand their postsecondary opportunities remains largely unexplored" (p. 192). Quantitative data has established disparities between Latino students' and other ethnic groups' success, but educators and researchers now yearn to understand *why* those disparities exist. To solve the problem, "we must understand more clearly what hybridity and difference mean for students, how they interpret their lives and experiences, and how these perceptions impact persistence, resilience, and self-efficacy at the individual human level" (Pyne & Means, 2013, p. 196). The purpose of our study is to research the perceptions of Latino students about writing who are currently enrolled in corequisite ENG 1301courses. Two research questions guided our study: How have their previous experiences with writing shaped their perceptions? What internal and external factors contributed to their perceptions of writing?

Theoretical Framework

Latinx critical race theory (LatCrit) (Valdes, 1996) framed our study. This theory is best suited for our study because our participants all identify as Latino and are currently in their first-year

composition course, widely acknowledged as a gateway course to their success in college. In recent years, educational researchers have used LatCrit as a lens to study the systemic challenges facing the Latinx population that critical race theory does not (Bernal, 2002; Pyne & Means, 2013). According to Villalpando (2004), there are five defining elements that form the basic assumptions of LatCrit: race and racism on the different dimensions of their identities, contest dominant ideology, social justice to achieve educational equality, recognize experiential knowledge, and lastly, a focus on the historical context of their educational experiences.

Methodology

Among the many approaches to qualitative research, we chose to follow a single case study approach, using emergent design (Schwandt, 1997) to address the research questions. Creswell and Poth (2018) defined case study as a "qualitative approach in which the investigator explores real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) . . . over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information . . . and reports a case description and case themes" (pp. 96-97). This case study is bounded within a specific institution (Lone Star College-University Park), a specific course (first-year composition), and specific ethnicity and sex (Latino male). We conducted formal interviews with three participants, Daniel, Mark, and Luis, to gain a clearer picture of their perceptions of writing.

Findings

The prominent themes we identified in the data are supported by direct lines spoken by the participants. While our larger study identified three major themes, we will share only one in this paper: Previous Experiences with Writing. All three participants acknowledged that their perceptions of writing were shaped early-on in their lives. Luis recalls his mother, whose first language is Spanish, prompting him to write in Spanish "[at] maybe five or six [years old]":

> At the time, I spoke more Spanish than English, so it came easier to me. But later, . . . it flipped. I knew more English than Spanish, and I had to work on my Spanish more to get it even, I guess. That's one of my earliest memories of writing in Spanish.

He later shared his memories with writing in English: "When it comes to [writing in] English, I remember . . . at first I didn't like it because I had to think a lot about it. Obviously, you're small—you're just learning at the moment." Luis appeared to have two separate experiences with writing: one experience with Spanish and one experience with English. Daniel also recalled his first experience with writing in elementary school: "My teacher told me, like 'Hey, you're a good writer,' and I felt really good about that. So, I got more confident and started to like writing more, you know?" Daniel's first experience learning about writing early in his school years seemed to establish a positive foundation for his writing skills.

Unlike Daniel, Mark's early experiences with writing were not positive: "I was a bookworm when I was in elementary school. That's the funny part because I didn't like writing, but I was a bookworm." Interestingly, Mark's love of reading did not extend to a love of writing. In high school, Mark's view of writing changed for the better and raised his confidence level when he received high marks: "It got me excited that I never gotten a four on an essay, and once I started seeing fours stack up, like, damn, you know?" Mark credits his improved grade with a change in his attitude during high school: "It happened in junior year that I probably didn't like writing as

much, either. But I started toward the end of the year, [thinking] I need to actually try in writing and so I did." Mark recognized that his attitude needed to change and that it was within his ability to improve his writing skills. Luis also shared his memories of writing as he grew older: "It got easier to me. . . . [I] actually liked writing, but when it came to, like, assignments, I wouldn't like it." Luis revealed that he did not perform well when writing required a predetermined structure.

All three participants shared vivid memories, not only of their experiences with writing, but also their positive and negative experiences with writing teachers. Daniel's elementary teacher seemed to positively influence his view of writing: "She was the one who always helped me with my writing to improve more every day." Daniel's positive interactions with teachers occurred in high school as well: "She would tell me, 'Hey, just work on this and this and this—but other than that, you're doing great'". Daniel seemed to respond well to constructive feedback from his teachers about his writing. Mark recalled that he was so surprised by his first high essay score in high school that he questioned his teacher: "I went up to her and was like, 'Hey, are you sure you graded this right?' And she was like, 'Yeah, that was a good essay.' And I was pretty surprised." Both Daniel and Mark felt their writing skills improved and their confidence grow because of their positive interaction with their teachers.

Unlike Daniel and Mark, Luis's recollection about his teachers was mostly negative. Luis had his most memorable negative encounter in his junior year of high school: "She wasn't well-known for being the nicest teacher. She critiqued a lot about the essays. The essays…they would be very personal, I guess, so when she critiqued them, [her comments] felt kind of personal, right?" While Luis could not remember specific comments this teacher made, his overall impression of her was not positive. He summed up how his interaction with his teacher changed him:

> You know Gordon Ramsay, the chef? . . . So, she would be like that way for writing. And I felt kind of out of place because most of the kids there, they would generally get better scores. That experience made me have a really bad view with writing. I didn't want to write at all after that year. I know senior year, I kind of gave up on writing because that kind of just ruined it for me. But up until then I had a pretty good experience with writing essays.

Luis expressed some introspection when he stated, "that one negative experience really ruined it for me, I guess." Luis found writing to be a deeply personal exercise and was permanently affected by the harsh and critical feedback he perceived from his teacher.

Discussion

When viewed through the LatCrit lens, the participants' distinct memories involving writing reveal significant counterstories to the dominant narrative. Luis indicated the difficulty he had when he was required to write in English in school after first learning and using Spanish at home. Research on Latino culture and education found "that writing in mainstream English could be difficult cognitively and emotionally for students who speak different home languages" (Kennedy, 2006, p. 185). The English-only instruction at schools, though, afforded all participants with more English writing fluency than Spanish writing fluency. Luis and Mark acknowledged that they struggled more with Spanish grammar as they grew up, which is a consequence of many first-generation Latino-Americans.

Notably, the influence of their teachers greatly impacted the participants' perceptions of writing. The importance of teachers in students' success is established by research conducted by Alfaro et al. (2006) who note, "that teachers' academic support was significantly and positively related to boys' academic motivation" (p. 287). Mark and Daniel both had positive experiences with their teachers from whom they felt supported but not necessarily challenged. The positively biased praise that Mark and Daniel received about their writing in K-12 did not, however, prepare them for the rigors of college writing. Harber et al. (2012) support that assertion: "Minority students who chronically receive positively biased feedback may be misled about where, and how ardently, to exert their efforts. . . . Unduly positive feedback demoralizes all students, causing them to regard praise as a consolation for deficient ability" (p. 1149). It is likely that Mark and Daniel's teachers viewed their writing with positive bias, elevating their scores and giving them a positively false sense of their writing ability.

Within the context of LatCrit research, this practice is a form of racism. Latino students are held to a lower standard than other students because educators do not think that they are capable of reaching a high standard. A study by Tenenbaum and Ruck (2007) found that "in general, … teachers hold more positive expectations for European American children than for African American and Latino/a children" (p. 267). Sadly, the teachers may think that they are doing the Latino student a favor with a positive bias when, in reality, they are setting the student up for future failure. Conversely, teachers' unconscious biases sometimes hold Latino students to an unattainable standard, such as the case with Luis and his "Gordon Ramsey" teacher: "Research illustrates that some teachers believe that some Latina/o students do not possess the ability to succeed" (Cavazos & Cavasos, 2010). We argue that when viewed through the LatCrit lens, the data from our participants reveal potential racist tendencies or prejudices of teachers toward these Latino male students.

Luis's negative experiences with writing colored his outlook about writing and his own abilities in the subject. This is in accordance with the work of Strambler and Weinstein (2010) who reported: "Students who perceived that their teachers gave them negative feedback also devalued academics more" (p. 163). Such findings support the thought that teachers are highly influential when it comes to student perceptions; therefore, teachers must be mindful of their comments and interactions with students and student work. Luis had already taken and failed the first-year composition course at the time of the interview. Each of his experiences with failure in writing classes reinforces his perception that he is just not any good at it.

Luis reacted deeply to his teacher's comments, taking each piece of feedback personally, because his writing was deeply personal to him. Research on instructor feedback establishes that "comments can promote confidence and may even communicate to students that they belong in college" (Calhoon-Dillahunt & Forrest, 2017, p. 321). Feedback from the teacher is a fundamental part of writing instruction and development, but many teachers may not realize how powerful their feedback is for students and what their comments are unconsciously communicating to students. LatCrit research by Quiroz (2001) underscored the impact of negative teacher perceptions by students, "with the most notable and poignant narrative aspect being the tendency of [students] to look to themselves as the primary cause for failure in school" (p. 344). The findings by Quiroz perhaps help to explain why Luis continued to struggle in his

education and turn to what he saw as non-academic subjects such as art and music for personal validation.

Despite their usefulness, "student narratives are uncollected data because they remain undervalued, underutilized, and readily dismissed by the institution because institutional racism is almost always narrowly viewed as a student of color problem rather than a campus-wide problem" (Figueroa, 2016, p. 54). Latino males are failing in college at alarming rates; qualitative data collection and analysis is one of the most effective approaches to find ways to combat this trend. Indeed, "counter storytelling can also serve as a pedagogical tool that allows one to better understand and appreciate the unique experiences and responses of students of color through a deliberate, conscious, open type of listening" (Bernal, 2002, p. 116). The participants were willing to share their experiences and appreciated the opportunity to relate their perceptions, contributing valuable data to LatCrit research.

Latino male failure in college is not inevitable, but neither is student success a one size fits all approach. Using student narratives is an effective method to determine the specific interventions each student needs, according to their individual needs. LatCrit theory, when used in conjunction with qualitative research methods, contributes significantly to developing ways to improve the success rates of Latino male students in college. This study contributes to a better understanding of the writing perceptions of Latino male students in an urban community college. We found that these students hold significant memories associated with writing; yet writing at the college level poses unique challenges for them. Future research should examine best practices from college instructors spanning a variety of disciplines who engage in writing projects with academically underprepared students.

References

Alfaro, E. C., Umaña-Taylor, A. J. and Bámaca, M. Y. (2006). The influence of academic support on Latino adolescents' academic motivation. *Family Relations, 55*(), 279-291. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2006.00402.x

Bernal, D. D. (2002). Critical race theory, Latino critical theory, and critical raced-gendered epistemologies: Recognizing students of color as holders and creators of knowledge. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *8*(1), 105–126. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800107

Calhoon-Dillahunt, C., & Forrest, D. (2017). Conversing in marginal spaces: Developmental writers' responses to teacher comments. In P. M. Sullivan & C. Toth (Eds.), *Teaching composition at the two-year college* (pp. 307-326). Bedford/St. Martins.

Cavazos, A. G., & Cavazos, J., Jr. (2010). Understanding the experiences of Latina/o students: A qualitative study for change. *American Secondary Education*, *38*(2), 95-109.

Ceja, M. A. (2016). What can we learn from research on Latinas? In V. B. Saenz, L. Ponjuan, & J. L. Figueroa (Eds.), *Ensuring the success of Latino males in higher education: A national imperative* (pp. 192-208). Stylus.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.

Excelencia in Education. (2019). *Latinos in higher education: Compilation of fast facts*.

Figueroa, J. L., Perez, P. A., & Vega, I. I. (2016). (Re)constructing masculinity. In V. B. Saenz, L. Ponjuan, J. L. Figueroa (Eds.), *Ensuring the success of Latino males in higher education: A national imperative* (pp. 60-74). Stylus.

Harber, K. D., Gorman, J. L., Gengaro, F. P., Butisingh, S., Tsang, W., & Ouellette, R. (2012). Students' race and teachers' social support affect the positive feedback bias in public schools. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *104*(4), 1149–1161.

Hall, R. E., & Rowan, G. T. (2001). Hispanic-American males in higher education: A descriptive/qualitative analysis. *Education*, *121*(3), 565.

Kennedy, E. (2006). Literacy development of linguistically diverse first graders in a mainstream English classroom: Connecting speaking and writing. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, *6*(2), 163–189.

Pyne, K. B., & Means, D. R. (2013). Underrepresented and in/visible: A Hispanic first-generation student's narratives of college. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 6*(3), 186–198. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034115

Quiroz, P.A. (2001). The silencing of Latino student "voice": Puerto Rican and Mexican narratives in eighth grade and high school. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *32*(3), 326-349.

Schwandt, T. A. (1997). *Qualitative inquiry: A dictionary of terms*. Sage.

Strambler, M. J., & Weinstein, R. S. (2010). Psychological disengagement in elementary school among ethnic minority students. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *31*(2), 155-165.

Tenenbaum, H. R., & Ruck, M. D. (2007). Are teachers' expectations different for racial minority than for European American students? A meta-analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *99*(2), 253-273.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2018). *Developmental education update and 2018-2023 statewide plan for supporting underprepared students.* https://reportcenter.thecb.state.tx.us/agency-publication/miscellaneous/developmental-education-update-and-2018-2023-statewide-plan-for-supporting-underprepared-students/

Valdes, F. (1996). Foreword: Latina/o ethnicities, critical race theory, and post-identity politics in postmodern legal culture: From practices to possibilities. *La Raza Law Journal*, *9*(1), 1-31.

Villalpando, O. (2004). Practical considerations of critical race theory and Latino critical theory for Latino college students. *New Directions for Student Services*, *2004*(105), 41-50.

Opening a Space for Collaboration and Support in Ph.D. Programs

Amy Migura, Ann K. Lee, and Marc Gilbert
University of the Incarnate Word

Abstract: Research can be a very isolating experience for Ph.D. students. We created a forum for discussion among Ph.D. students to discuss the doctoral experience and generate ideas surrounding collaboration and dialogue using open space methodology. This paper explores isolation as an element of the social and community aspect of learning in a Ph.D. program. The onset of COVID-19 broadened the scope of our exploration and necessitated new adaptations for discussion and interaction.

Keywords: Open Spaces, dialogue, support, collaboration, isolation, COVID-19

As doctoral students nearing the completion of our programs, we began to reflect on our individual journeys, especially in the context of mentoring students who are at an earlier stage of their doctoral odysseys. What we each found (primarily through anecdotal probing) was that the most common barriers to a more robust and fulfilling doctoral experience was a lack of time and an encroaching sense of isolation.

Research can be a very isolating experience for Ph.D. students, given their outside commitments to work and family. However, because we recognize that research—as a component of self-directed learning—is also social and collaborative, we desired to focus on the community aspect of learning in a Ph.D. program. Using Open Space methodology to create a forum for discussion among Ph.D. students, this project addresses the issues and generates ideas through collaboration and dialogue. Doctoral students can benefit from the social support of peer collaboration—students helping students—learning from the lived experiences of others and using collaborative education to support, to mentor, and to empower each other.
The purpose of this project is to find ways to overcome known barriers to participation, including isolation and lack of time (Tinto, 2012), to create a supportive and collaborative community of learners in the Ph.D. program.

Background

The doctoral experience can be viewed as a type of self-directed learning (SDL), but self-directed learning does not equate to learning in isolation (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). The nature of the Ph.D. program and the general busy-ness of students' lives can impact the doctoral student's participation in the program, which Tinto (2012) addresses in his longitudinal model of doctoral persistence. Tinto's model of doctoral persistence examines the factors that contribute to student success and engagement in doctoral programs. While there are many issues that impact persistence, we are choosing to focus on the social system Tinto describes: that of peer and faculty relations and how that aligns with collaboration and support.

Feelings of isolation and doubt are often the result of a lack of connection with peers, which is unfortunate given that much of the learning in doctoral programs is enhanced by collaboration. Hill and Conceição (2020) noted that "Fostering a community of practice among students may

stimulate the exchange of ideas, sharing of challenges, tips and coping strategies; provision of emotional and social support for one another; and offset the loneliness of the doctoral journey" (p. 40). Therefore, creating a collaborative learning community facilitates the social phenomenon of learning, allowing students to become more self-directed and empowered to learn.

Methodology

Developed by Harrison Owen in 1997, Open Space methodology provides opportunities for participants to discuss what is most important to them in a meaningful and organized way. This process allows them to take ownership of the issues and develop solutions to problems that work for them. Our project explored using an Open Space methodology to create a forum for discussion among Ph.D. students, with the purpose of finding ways to overcome the barriers to participation as identified by the participants throughout various discussions.

Open Space

There are four basic requirements for holding an open space discussion: You need a clear and compelling question or theme, an interested and committed group, a time and a place to meet, and someone to facilitate the session. Within open space, there are four guiding principles and one law: First, whoever comes are the right people. Essentially, whoever is there is who should be there. Second, whenever it starts is the right time. There is a general schedule, but time is flexible. Third, whatever happens is the only thing that could have. The discussions that happen are the ones that are meant to have happened in that particular time and space. Fourth, when it's over, it's over. There's no need to prolong a conversation that has ended. And finally, the one law: known as the "law of two feet", this frees the participants to leave a conversation when it no longer interests them and allows them to join any other conversation at will.

Compelling Question

Anecdotally, we've discovered that sharing experiences regarding research, publishing, preparing for the qualifying exam, and writing the dissertation is of great interest to those students who lack experience in these areas and want to know more. Consequently, to better understand the collaborative potential of the Ph.D. program, our project settled on the compelling question: How can students form positive, supportive, and collaborative relationships with one another while participating in the Ph.D. program? Just as we began to get these conversations underway, COVID-19 struck, and our doctoral student association-sponsored gatherings had to transition to Zoom. We decided to experiment with facilitating an open space discussion in a virtual format.

First, we shared our compelling question and a Zoom link with the doctoral student community, inviting them to participate in this conversation. We then organized the first plenary session where participants could submit and choose topics of discussion. Utilizing the breakout-room feature, we met in small groups for two rounds of conversation. If someone decided to exercise the law of two feet, they could leave the breakout room and ask the facilitator to be placed in a different group. At the end of two rounds, a second plenary session was held to summarize the discussions that took place. Following the entire open space meeting, exit tickets (as Google

Forms) were sent to each of the participants as a follow up, asking about their experience with this process and to generate future topics of discussion.

Major Themes

Because one of the cornerstones of open space is that the participants themselves identify the issues and then discuss ways to address them (Owen, 2008), the next step in this study would be to analyze the data that comes out of the open space sessions. Part of our process in trying to understand the student perspective toward the issues and challenges of participating in a doctoral program has been to listen to the students themselves.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 interrupted our project, making the adaptation of the open space forum to a virtual setting a necessary task. Harnessing technology to continue vital conversations and maintain connective relationships with our peers was a shift for which none of us was prepared. The goal changed: not only was it important to find ways to continue the conversations but it was also important to acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 on the whole doctoral experience.

This project is a work in process: the initial open space session was held quite near the end of the spring semester, just before summer break. We would like to resume this practice, to continue the conversations and to build collaborative and supportive opportunities for our peers, especially during this time of virtual interaction.

Discussion

Creating a collaborative community means taking advantage of organic opportunities in the Ph.D. program to engage in meaningful learning beyond course and assignment completion, to create opportunities for co-creation with multiple purposes. For example, diversification of the student population--joint discipline classes, a mix of masters and doctoral students together in all tracks, course opportunities for joint publications—all enrich the Ph.D. experience in both practical and meaningful ways.

Initially, our project was aimed at understanding the challenges doctoral students face when it comes to collaboration and support, notwithstanding the lack of extra time and the sense of isolation that comes from participating in such a program. However, COVID-19 forced a literal state of isolation on students across the board, eliminating in-person class meetings and other opportunities doctoral students might have to get together. The implications of this involuntary state of isolation on the students' capacity to engage with their studies and with others is something to be explored. More research is needed to understand the implications of this pandemic on students' mental health, sense of motivation and persistence, and overall mindset as they attempt to pursue the Ph.D. during this season of COVID-19.

We found that the open space methodology worked for us in the initial stages, both in identifying the issues and in collaborating with others to address them, and we feel this process could be applied to a variety of doctoral and graduate programs. Additionally, analysis of data generated by this process could yield specific information about the needs and experiences of the students

in any doctoral program, allowing for issues to be addressed, problems to be solved, and challenges to be overcome in collaborative and supportive ways. Ultimately, though, we feel that during this new paradigm of teaching and learning, it is more important than ever, especially in this time of COVID-19, to continue building connections with one another and supporting our peers through their participation in the Ph.D. program.

References

Hill, L. H., & Conceição, S. C. O. (2020). Program and instructional strategies supportive of doctoral students' degree completion. *Adult Learning, 31*(1), 36-44. https://doi.org/10.1177/1045159519887529

Owen, H. (2008). A brief user's guide to open space technology. http://www.chriscorrigan.com/parkinglot/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/Original-Users-Guide-smaller.pdf

Merriam, S. B., & Bierema, L. L. (2014). *Adult learning: Linking theory and practice*. Jossey-Bass.

Tinto, V. (2012). Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition. University of Chicago Press.

The Worsening Political Divide: Adult Education as Part of the Cure

Lee W. Nabb, Fujuan Tan, and Daryl R. Privott
Morehead State University

Abstract: The US is experiencing extreme social and political polarization not seen since the Civil War. This divisiveness is causing civil unrest and governmental dysfunction which threatens the stability of the nation. Four major causes of the current state are party realignment, the deregulation of news broadcasting, algorithmic personalization of electronic information, and an unknowing public. Adult education can and should be part of the remedy reducing or eliminating harmful polarization. Knowledge of authoritative systems is key to the solution. To promote such knowledge, adult educators can create practical and theoretical learning experiences about authoritative systems and incorporate such knowledge into existing courses and programs. Breadth of the field should produce myriad ways to do so particular to each educator's practice.

Keywords: social polarization, political polarization, adult education, civic Engagement, partisan divisiveness

The US is experiencing extremes in social and political divisiveness not seen in over 100 years (Aschwanden, 2020; Associated Press, 2016; Boxell et al., 2017; Campbell, 2016; Gallagher, 2020; Simas et al., 2020). Worsening polarization has given rise to various forms of social unrest that threaten democratic stability (Entman & Usher, 2018). Moreover, increasing political polarization has resulted in dysfunctional government (Entman & Usher, 2018; Hutchens et al., 2019). Reasons for this widening rift are the subject of numerous investigations. A review of relevant literature reveals some prominent causes of this polarization and prompts questions and suggestions of what adult educators can do to remedy the overall situation.

Background and Literature

Polarization is "a sharp division, as of a population or group, into opposing factions" (Dictionary.com, 2020). Social polarization occurs when society endures a split in attitude or perspective and its members move toward opposite ends of the associated spectrum (Oxford Reference, 2020; Psychology Research and Reference, 2020). Political polarization occurs when "partisans become more ideologically distinct across groups while becoming more ideologically similar within groups" (McLaughlin, 2018, p. 41). Social and political polarization in the US has been worsening in recent decades (Boxell et al., 2017; Hutchens et al., 2019; Simas et al., 2020) to levels not seen since the Civil War (Aschwanden, 2020; Associated Press, 2016; Campbell, 2016). This divisiveness –which occurs on general and specific aspects of issues such as climate change, immigration, police action and reform, the handling of COVID-19 19, Supreme Court Justice and other governmental appointments, and the 2020 election--has led to civil rights violations, job discrimination, demonstrations, fights, riots, partisan gridlock, delayed government action, and even government shutdown with functionaries unable to agree on how to handle even the most pressing issues (Associated Press, 2016, Hutchens et al., 2019; Simas et al., 2020).

The literature shows a substantial amount of research undertaken to understand the causes and effects of current polarization. As studies parse out ideas and adjust and sharpen investigatory foci, general prominent factors leading to divisiveness become evident. Four of the more prevalent factors identified in the literature by this paper's authors are political party realignment, deregulation of news broadcasting, algorithmic personalization of electronic information and an unknowing public.

Party Realignment

Party realignment, or substantial shifts in ideologies and power bases within and between political parties, has occurred about six times in the history of the Country. The most recent realignment took longer than those before it, occurring over more than three decades. Beginning in the early 1960s, this realignment was initiated by a party dealignment. By this time, the two major political parties had become indistinguishable from each other. Both contained members representing a broad range of ideologies, including liberals and conservatives. Lack of differentiation was noticeable enough to generate published commentary suggesting and predicting the discontinuation of the two-party system. As this dealignment continued, liberal democrats were elected into state and federal offices and began to take action in accord with various social (e.g., Civil Rights, Anti-War, Women's Rights) movements, which in turn attracted more liberal followers, and prompting liberal Republicans to switch to the Democratic party and pushing the Democratic party platform further and further to the left. These events motivated a Republican response known as the *Southern Strategy*, in which the party began to adjust its platform to recoup and maintain its balance of power by attracting disassociated White Southern conservative Democrats. It continued adjustments to attract other conservatives, which continued to push the Republican platform further to the right. This realignment along liberal and conservative ideological lines was apparent by the early 1990s, with the Democratic party identifying as liberal, and the Republican party identifying as conservative (Campbell, 2016). Party movement in opposite directions in this respect has both primed and fed the current polarization of people and their representation.

Deregulation of News Broadcasting

Working in tandem with party realignment to foster the current situation has been the deregulation of news broadcasting, which occurred with the repeal of the Fairness Doctrine. Put into effect by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1949, this doctrine required broadcasters (those holding broadcasting licenses) devote a reasonable amount of time to presenting controversial issues of public importance in an honest, fair and balanced way, allowing reasonable opportunity for opposing views to be expressed (Clogston, 2016; Hentoff, 2015; Pickard, 2018). The doctrine was repealed in 1987, which enabled, initially, mainly conservative talk radio to flourish (Clogston, 2016; Pickard, 2018) followed by reactionary liberal programs to follow suit. Indeed, AM "informational radio formats, including talk and public affairs" rose from 7% of programming in 1987 to 28% in 1995 (Clogston, 2016, p. 376). Contrary to popular misconception, the repeal of the Fairness Doctrine most likely had nothing to do with the advent of the popular Fox News cable television station and subsequent liberal cable outlets like MSNBC, as the doctrine reached only broadcast, not cable, television; and the FCC likely would have not extended its reach. At any rate, from 1987 to present, the public is

receiving biased and partisan "news" from radio and (some) television broadcasters, which feeds and provokes the worsening social and political divide.

Algorithmic Personalization of Electronic Information

Beside broadcasting, the public has become even more affected by the internet and social media. As providers compete for the attention of users--the public--to increase revenue through more exposure to advertising, they have invented, and maximized use of, means proving to have adverse effects. The more direct of these is the unscrupulous posting of biased information, misinformation, or even disinformation, to attract users to particular sites, thereby increasing exposure to certain sites or products and boosting its advertising and revenue value. While the immediate goal is to make money for those who do the posting, the collateral effect is to bias, misinform, or disinform, the public, and unduly influence public perceptions. This tends to work in tandem with what has proven to be the more insidious means of holding and directing user attention, which is using algorithms to personalize individual consumption of whatever material is electronically published. Simply put, the algorithms track what links and sites each user "clicks on" and gives him or her more of the same. Very soon, users are exposed to only the kind of sites and material the algorithms determine they want (Bessi et al., 2016; Boxell, 2017; Entman & Usher, 2018; Kim, 2017; LaFrance & Carlson, 2017; Praiser, 2011; Sunstien, 2017). This creates information silos and "echo chambers," or groups of like-minded people where views are continuously further polarized. (Bessi et al., 2016; LaFrance & Carlson, 2017; Praiser, 2011; Sunstien, 2017). Moreover, the continued absence of opposing views in the material they consume narrows perspective and increases the inability see or understand how anyone could hold a different view. The result of these means to increase advertising effectiveness, sales and revenue is a growing and ever increasingly polarized public.

An Unknowing Public

Unfortunately, an unknowing public enables the factors discussed above, not only to effect polarization, but to do so with maximum effectiveness. Used here, the term *unknowing public* means a public that lacks knowledge about the authoritative systems running its society. Terms like an uneducated or uninformed public are purposely avoided because they may be loaded with undesirable and debatable assumptions giving rise to perceptions of the same ilk. *Authoritative systems* is a term developed by this paper's authors to encompass a litany of less comprehensive but related system descriptors—government, civics, politics, policy, public affairs, public administration, and the like—without the undesirable, negative connotations conjured by a term such as law, which, in its broadest definition, would also suffice. Authoritative systems, then, are systems within a society, recognized as legitimate, or sovereign, or official, or otherwise understood to have the power, or authority, to manage—i.e., to maintain stability, or bring about change within—that society.

Simply put, as authoritative systems become ever more complex and pervasive in people's lives, knowledge of them continues to decline (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2016; Carcasson & Sprain, 2012; Cavanagh, 2017; Delander, 2014; Gastil, 2004; Goldstein, 2008; Hallenberg, 2016; Levinstein & Sisco, 2016; Malin et al., 2017; Rowell, 2019). Including exacerbating polarization, this decline in knowledge has resulted in declining civic engagement (Carcasson & Sprain, 2012;

Hayes & Lawless, 2015; Hayes & Lawless, 2017) and low participation in elections. Excluding the 202 cycle, eligible voter turnout in federal elections has ranged from 45% to 63% over the past 70 years (Ballotpedia 2018, Bureau of the Census, 1991; Statista, 2020).

Adult Education as Part of the Cure

Adult Education can be part of the cure or remedy of the current debilitating social and political polarization. Indeed, adult educators ought to be concerned and motivated to do so. After all, the field has always espoused democratic ideals, civic engagement, and social justice, none of which can occur without an informed and functioning populous. Knowledge of authoritative systems and processes can prevent undue influence of bias, misinformation and disinformation, as it effects an understanding of how things actually work, and how to quickly and efficiently find out what is really going on, by vetting and using accurate, non-biased and responsible sources of information.

The field is much too broad for any group small of theorists or practitioners to attempt a thorough treatment of the topic on its own. Notwithstanding, the paper's authors offer some basic suggestions. First, adult educators at all levels should learn authoritative systems--with a focus on processes--well enough to instill them in all activities (program planning, instructional design, teaching, research, administration, support and public services, etc.). They then can build new course focused on various aspects of authoritative systems; or they can incorporate information into existing courses or lessons. As an example, an Adult Basic Education math teacher can use school or voter districting, legislative elections, and such as contexts for problems and equations. Another example would be to use combine historical contexts (e.g., the activity of Myles Horton and Paulo Freire) with current events, promoting discussion and learning about identifying issues and taking effective action--which overwhelmingly would benefit from the use of authoritative systems to solve them. In this latter vein, those so inclined could actually teach through experiential learning by allowing for or actually utilizing or navigating authoritative systems for social change at some level. An example would be to require some kind of civil engagement (e.g., volunteering as an election official or an environmental monitor) for credit in a course, or to undertake or immerse in a larger scale project (e.g., creating a bill and seeing it through the legislature, or pursuing administrative action concerning placement of public works facilities) as a whole course--action research. Such projects can be non-partisan, collaborative and inclusive. Finally, going along with getting involved in action, adult educators can set examples by acting with respect to their field. They could initiate and take part in adult education policy discussion and development and promote activity on the part of their professional organizations. One of those activities might be to advocate for a law or policy regarding the restrictions of internet and social media algorithms to reduce polarization. For example, algorithms might be used only to narrow the focus of topics but not perspective or bias in information consumed; and they could be prevented from affecting the intake of major news events. If one needs a more basic subject for involvement, how about the protection of personal information from being electronically collected, bought and sold (also done with the use of algorithms)?

Conclusion

The message herein is simple, its implications important and its opportunities for implementation broad. Without action, polarization will only remain and increase, further crippling the ability of the nation to function. Authoritative systems knowledge is key to reducing or eliminating current polarization. Adult educators can and should act as an important part of the solution to reduce or eliminate harmful divisiveness and promote constructive discussion, debate, and activity. To do this, they must investigate, learn, and teach knowledge of authoritative systems. This paper is meant to stimulate ideas and action on the part of adult educators on reducing or eliminating the crippling divide with respect to their area of practice or theory.

References

Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. (2016). *America's knowledge of the branches of government is declining.* https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/americans-knowledge-of-the-branches-of-government-isdeclining/#:~:text=Americans'%20Knowledge%20of%20the%20Branches%20of%20Government%20Is,a%20new%20survey%20on%20civic%20knowledge%20has%20found.

Aschwanden, C. (2020). *Why hatred and 'othering' of political foes has spiked to extreme levels. In scientificamerican.com.* Scientific American. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-hatred-and-othering-of-political-foes-has-spiked-to-extreme-levels/

Ballotpedia. (n.d.). *Voter turnout in United States elections.* https://ballotpedia.org/Voter_turnout_in_United_States_elections

Boxell, L., Gentzcow, M., & Shapiro, J. (2017). Greater internet use is not associated with faster growth in political polarization among U.S. demographic groups. *PNAS*, *114*(40), 10612-10617.

Bureau of the Census. (1991). "The Decline in American Voter Turnout" U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census. https://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/SB91-23.pdf.

Campbell, J. (2016). *Making sense of a divided America.* Princeton University Press.

Carcasson, M., & Sprain, L. (2012). Deliberative democracy and adult civic education. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, *2012*(135), 15-23.

Cavanagh, C. (2017). What they don't know can hurt them: Mothers' legal knowledge and youth re-offending. *Psychology, Public Policy and Law, 23*(1), 141-153.

Delander, B. (2014). *States address civics with mandated task force.* Education Commission of the States: National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement. https://eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accn=ED561924

Dictionary.com LLC. (2020). *Polarization.* https://www.dictionary.com/browse/polarization?s=t

Entman, R., & Usher, Nikki. (2018). Framing in a fractured democracy: Impacts of digital technology on ideology, power and cascading network activation. *Journal of Communication, 68*(2), 298-308.

Gastil, J. (2004). Adult civic education through the national issues forums: Developing democratic habits and dispositions through public deliberation. *Adult Education Quarterly, 54*(4), 308-328.

Goldstein, B. (2008), Lost in translation? Some brief notes on writing about law for the layperson. *New York Law School Review, 52*(3), 373-384.

Hallenberg, P. (2016, November 7). Knowledge of how government works is declining, prompting talk of civics education, voter tests. The Spokesman Review. https://msu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search. ebscohost.com /login.aspx?direct=true&db=nfh&AN=2W62956986449&site=ehost-live

Hayes, D., & Lawless, J. (2015). As local news goes, so goes citizen engagement: Media, knowledge, and participation in U.S. house elections. *The Journal of Politics, 77*(2), 447-462.

Hayes, D., & Lawless, J. (2018). The decline of local news and its effects: New evidence from longitudinal data. *The Journal of Politics*, *80*(1), 332-336.

Hentoff, N. (2015, September). The Fairness Doctrine was anything but. *USA Today*, 52-53.

Hutchens, M., Hmielowski, J., & Beam, M. (2019). Reinforcing spirals of political discussion and affective polarization. *Communication Monographs, 86*(3), 357-376.

Gallagher, G. (2020). *Think the US is more polarized than ever? You don't know history*. The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/think-the-us-is-more-polarized-than-ever-you-dont-know-history-131600

Levenstein, R., & Sisco, M. (2016). Crisis of knowledge: The importance of educating the public about the role of fair and impartial courts in our system of government. *The Florida Bar Journal, 90*(5), 34-37.

Malin, H., Han, H., & Liauw, I. (2017). Civic purpose in late adolescence: Factors that prevent decline in civic engagement after high school. *Developmental Psychology, 53*(7), 1384-1397.

McLaughlin, B. (2018). Commitment to the team: Perceived conflict and political polarization. *Journal of Media Psychology, 30*(1), 41-51.

Oxford Reference. (2020). *Social polarization*. https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199599868.001. 0001/acref-9780199599868-e-1721/acref-9780199599868-e-1721

Psychology Research and Reference. (2020). *Polarization process*. In *sychology.iresearchnet.com*. Retrieved November 2, 2020 from https://psychology.iresearchnet.com/social-psychology/attitudes/polarization-processes/

Rowell, A. (2019). Legal knowledge, belief and aspiration. *Arizona State Law Journal*, *51*(1), 225-290.

Statista. (2020). Turnout rates among the voting-eligible population in United States presidential and midterm elections from 1789 to 2018. https://www.statista.com/statistics/1139251/voter-turnout-in-us-presidential-and-midterm-elections

It's Never Tech Late to Learn: Promoting Digital Literacy and Social Connection Among Older Adults

Jess Oest and Jacqueline McGinty
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Abstract: Social isolation and loneliness are important issues for older adults. This paper discusses a program called NeverTechLate (NTL) that was created to combat these issues by providing digital literacy education and by promoting the use of tablets and video conferencing technology to empower older adults. This program involved using the feedback from a focus group to develop a pilot project of eight 1-hour lessons which were delivered to residents of an independent living facility. The results of focus groups after the pilot project concluded provided insight into future directions for the curriculum and training.

Keywords: older adults, digital literacy, curriculum, training development, technology

Social isolation and loneliness have been issues facing older adults even before the tumultuous days of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Cacioppo and Cacioppo (2018), "loneliness is a unique condition in which an individual perceives himself or herself to be socially isolated even when among other people." Rubin (2017) also notes that loneliness is linked to troubling health concerns such as cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's disease, and stroke. Vaportis et al. (2017) conducted focus groups with older adults whose results suggested that while they were apprehensive about a perceived lack of clear instructions and support, most participants were excited to learn new technology and were willing to learn to use a tablet. NTL, a program founded in 2019, seeks to empower older adults by providing digital literacy education and by promoting social connections through use of tablets and video conferencing technology. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the background of NTL, the approach to the curriculum design and pilot project, and discuss the results of the follow-up focus groups.

Background

NTL was founded by Florence Mauchant based on several observations of older adults and society but was truly inspired by her mother. Her mother left school at age 14 and was never able to catch up with education, let alone with technology. Mauchant wanted to give the growing population of older adults a chance to learn about technology and how it can be used to fight loneliness and social isolation.

The NTL program was developed in consultation with Dr. Jacqueline McGinty, Assistant Professor in the Department of Professional Studies in Education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. A research study was conducted to design a digital literacy curriculum and training program (McGinty, 2020).

Approach

The development of a curriculum to teach older adults about digital literacy and encourage connecting with friends and family through the use of video conferencing began by conducting a needs assessment at an independent living facility in Pennsylvania (McGinty, 2020). Feedback on experiences, interests, and concerns about using technology was collected from a focus group of ten residents from this facility, and this was used to create the pilot project curriculum (McGinty, 2020). The curriculum consisted of 8 1-hour lessons, delivered weekly, and each lesson included technology information, games, vocabulary, homework assignments, and time for student questions (McGinty, 2020).

Graduate student volunteer "coaches" were recruited from an instructional design program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania to deliver the instruction. These coaches were provided lesson materials and trained to deliver the lessons while being mindful of delivery speed, volume, and concept repetition (McGinty, 2020).

The pilot project consisted of two groups made up of eight students each. The lessons covered topics such as technology vocabulary terms, exploring the tablet features, connecting to others, and internet safety. Each student was provided with a Lenovo tablet computer in lesson 4 to use for the duration of the pilot project. They were taught to use this tablet and how to connect with others using the Zoom Video Communications app. The students were able to keep the tablets for as long as they live at the independent living facility. As of November 2020, all 16 of the students continue to use the NTL tablets, 10 months after pilot project completion (McGinty, 2020).

Discussion

After the pilot project concluded, a focus group was conducted with the students. They indicated that they had positive experiences with the NTL lessons (McGinty, 2020). They emphasized the community-building aspects of the experience and that they enjoyed working together to meet their goals (McGinty, 2020). One student noted that he was able to use the skills he learned to organize a surprise video conference birthday party for his wife. He was able to connect more than a dozen family members in six states to sing "Happy Birthday" and celebrate the day in a way that would not have been possible before his NTL experience.

An additional focus group was conducted with the coaches to collect feedback on the curriculum. The coaches noted that the students' experiences and comfort with technology at the beginning of the pilot project varied (McGinty, 2020). This led to some students needing more one-on-one instruction, particularly during more technical lessons. Coaches also noted that their training would have been improved by more extensive tablet practice and additional video conference training (McGinty, 2020). Overall, the coaches had positive experiences participating in the NTL pilot project.

The results of these focus groups were used to create an updated version of the curriculum. In future iterations of this project, students will be given the tablets earlier in the course so that they

have more time to practice using the tablets with the coaches. More step-by-step instruction combined with this time for practice will help the students become familiar with the technology.

Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, future iterations of this project will have the unique complication of needing to be delivered remotely to students. Currently, NTL is developing a remote Train-the-Trainer (TT) program to educate future coaches about topics including the history of NTL, the curriculum, the role of the trainer, technology and the older adult, training and the older adult, the Zoom Video Communications app, the Lenovo tablet, and, importantly, delivering instruction remotely to older adults. This TT program will involve a *master class* to cover this material as well as *shorter meetings*, prior to each of the eight lessons, during which coaches will review the lesson material in detail.

Future research will involve focus groups and feedback to make necessary adjustments to the course curriculum. This research and subsequent adjustments will benefit not only the residents of one independent living facility but hopefully allow for program growth and expansion to improve the lives of older adults throughout the United States.

References

Cacioppo, J. T., & Cacioppo, S. (2018). The growing problem of loneliness. *The Lancet, 391*(10119), 426. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)30142-9

McGinty, J. M. (2020). Developing a training program for digital literacy coaches for older adults: Lessons learned from the train-the-trainer program. *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 8*(11), 62-69.

Rubin, R. (2017). Loneliness might be a killer, but what's the best way to protect against it? *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association, 318*(19), 1853.

Vaportzis, E., Clausen, M. G., & Gow, A. J. (2017). Older adults perceptions of technology and barriers to interacting with tablet computers: A focus group study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *8*(1), 1687-1697. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01687

The Effect of Academic Coaches on Non-Traditional Student Performance in an Intensive Online Learning Program

Sunyoung Park and Petra A. Robinson
Louisiana State University

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine how academic coaches impact non-traditional student performance in a time-intensive online learning program for pursuing a master's degree in a public university. By adopting the analysis of variance (ANOVA) technique, we compared the academic performance of students in three courses with different numbers or styles of academic coaches. The findings indicated that the average score of students was higher when students received more feedback from an academic coach, and they had an academic coach in class.

Keywords: academic coach, intensive online program, non-traditional student performance

As higher education institutions react to market and other impactful forces to increase their online offerings, they will need to pursue and develop systems that will support their students. One such way to support online students and to enhance their performance is to adopt academic coaches to provide additional academic and instructional support. Academic coaches play an important role in student success and retention by paying attention to students' personal and professional goals, supporting their academic planning, as well as establishing and helping completion of the degree (Capstick, Harrell-Williams, Cockrum, & West, 2019). Academic coaches can also help students acquire the skills necessary to succeed in a competitive postsecondary environment (Field, Parker, Sawilosky, & Rolands, 2013). Moreover, while supporting online students, academic coaches also serve as a resource for faculty and other instructors of record. This indirect support structure allows faculty the opportunity to direct their efforts on the ultimate goal of providing high-quality instruction and support for student success.

Previous studies have provided useful information about the characteristics and effectiveness of academic coaches in specific contexts such as nursing and special education programs (Capstick et al., 2019; Cipher et al., 2018). However, to date there is little research on academic coaches in time-intensive online degree programs. Specifically, few scholars have examined the effect of academic coaches on non-traditional student performance by comparing multiple academic coach interventions (e.g., comparing student performance when the class has no academic coach compared to having one coach and one coach compared to having three academic coaches) particularly at the graduate level.

The purpose of this study is to examine how academic coaches impact non-traditional student (hereafter student) performance in a time-intensive online learning program for pursuing a master's degree in a research-intensive public university in the Southern United States. By comparing three courses with different numbers of academic coaches, this research assesses the performance of students enrolled in online degree programs and examines the effect of academic coaches on student performance. The three research questions guiding this study are: 1) Does an

academic coach have an impact on non-traditional student performance? 2) Does the number of academic coaches have an impact on non-traditional student performance? And 3) Does the feedback style of academic coaches have an impact on non-traditional student performance?

Literature Review

Literature related to student access and support documents the role of academic coaches in traditional learning environments. The primary expected benefit of this kind of academic coaching is through the development of rapport (Strange, 2015) and relationships with students (Barkley, 2011) to increase learning, which Tinto (1999) posits is the key to student retention. The main purpose of academic coaches in online learning contexts is to meet the needs of students, and as such, they play a variety of roles. These roles include grading assignments and discussion forums, proctoring examinations, providing feedback to students, and facilitating instruction, and clarifying course content (Broussard & White-Jefferson, 2018). In this study, an academic coach is regarded as a highly qualified and experienced practitioner in the field with a doctoral degree who supports both faculty and students in online learning courses (Instructional Connections, 2012).

Methods

Three courses were selected in the master's program. In course A (Principles of Adult Education, we compared student performance across years to see if students perform better when they have an academic coach. In course B (Research Methods), we compared any differences in student performance when the course had a different number of academic coaches. In course C (Performance Analysis), we examined if the feedback style of academic coaches would affect student performance. One instructor taught both course B and C and another instructor taught course A. The total number of participants for this study consisted of 435 graduate students who enrolled in the program and each completed the three courses.

Results

Descriptive analysis was performed, including mean and standard deviation of student performance for each course (Table 1).

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics of Student Performance by Course*

Course	Settings	Mean	Standard deviation	Variance
Course A: Adult education	One coach	99.083	1.222	9.236
	No coaches	93.705	3.039	1.494
Course B: Research methods	Three coaches	92.250	6.358	40.427
	One coach	91.051	4.864	23.654
Course C: Performance analysis	More comments	96.133	2.842	8.076
	Fewer comments	93.950	5.624	31.633

As seen in Table 2, the ANOVA results showed that academic coaches play a significant role in non-traditional students' academic performance ($p < .05$). When students had an academic coach in the Principles of Adult Education course, their performance was higher (average score 99.083) than when they did not have a coach (93.705). The average student score was higher in the Performance Analysis course when students received more feedback and comments from an academic coach than when they received fewer feedback and comments (96.133 and 93.950, respectively). However, there was no significant difference in academic performance when students had one academic coach (91.051) compared to having three coaches (92.250).

Table 2. *ANOVA Results*

Course	Groups	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F-value	*P*
Course A: Adult education	Between groups	598.147	1	598.147	106.737*	.000
	Within groups	453.92	81	5.604		
	Total	1052.067	82			
Course B: Research methods	Between groups	62.428	1	62.428	1.931	.166
	Within groups	5561.321	172	32.333		
	Total	5623.749	173			
Course C: Performance analysis	Between groups	210.788	1	210.788	10.510*	.001
	Within groups	3509.937	175	20.057		
	Total	3720.725	176			

*Note. * $p < .05$

Discussion and Implications

We found that student performance was higher when students had an academic coach than when they did not have a coach. This result is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Capstick et al., 2019; Lehan et al., 2018). It implied that academic coaches can play an important role in student performance by supporting students. Specifically, in a time-intensive online degree program, it is critical for students to receive appropriate guidelines and correct instructions, obtain support for different activities in class, and secure a positive learning experience in efficient and effective ways and in a timely manner. By identifying improvement areas and providing timely responses and feedback, academic coaches could help students perform better in their discussions, assignments, , and the overall course. To maximize these supportive functions of academic coaches in online learning, training and developmental opportunities should be provided to coaches to learn new coaching skills and techniques related digital technology to effectively motivate and guide students in their learning process. However, the results indicated that student performance was not significantly different when students have either one or three academic coaches. Thus, out X hypothesis was not supported as the finding showed that the number of academic coaches did not affect student performance.

Overall, the results of this study implied the need that the presence and role of academic coaches be examined differently based on the content features, class context and students' needs, even though academic coaches can support students for their academic performance in an intensive online program. For instance, academic coaches in research methods courses need to provide

more examples and practical guidelines to correct students' misunderstanding and advance their knowledge as research methods courses emphasize the combination of theory, procedures, and practical skills and have been regarded as a demanding and challenging for students (Kilburn, Nind, & Wiles, 2014; Lewthwaite & Nind, 2016). In particular, when teaching research methods in online environments, it is important to understand students' learning process of translating scientific evidence into practice through better instructional approaches (Chilton, He, Fountain, & Alfred, 2019). Accordingly, how academic coaches can provide research process-oriented, elaborated and detailed guidance and support to students could be more important than how many academic coaches support students in research methods courses.

Finally, out results showed that student performance was higher when students received more feedback and comments from an academic coach than when they received fewer feedback and comments, which supported by previous studies (Barkley, 2011; Broussard & White-Jefferson, 2018; Cox-Davenport, 2017). To provide stronger support for students' academic success, academic coaches need to be proactive in providing appropriate feedback and comments to students for improving their performance, rather than passively grade and review submitted assignments. Appropriate and continuous feedback from academic coaches can play a crucial role in students' academic progress and achievement as coaches help students engage more in learning process and activities, and foster their goal setting, responsibility, and reflection in class and academic exercises (Pechac, & Slantcheva-Durst, 2019; van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). In time-intensive online learning environments with relatively large size classes (e.g. 90 or more students), academic coaches and instructors should consider instructional strategies such as providing weekly feedback with high quality and details in a consistent way.

From a theoretical perspective, this study highlighted the role of academic coaches for non-traditional student performance in a time-intensive online degree program. By comparing the three courses, we examined if different settings related to academic coaches can affect student academic performance. Specifically, we enriched the discussion related to the role of academic coaches in terms of their presence, number, and feedback styles as they impact student performance. In particular, this study expanded the scope and category of students and learning contexts related to academic coaches by emphasizing non-traditional students and time-intensive online environments. Scholars could further examine how academic coaches can enhance their role and develop their feedback skills and techniques to improve student performance in different courses and contexts.

From a practical perspective, our findings will help instructors and professionals in the field better understand the important role of academic coaches in online learning environments. By maximizing the advantages of online learning including the flexibility, accessibility, and convenience, practitioners can provide well-designed online learning programs that enhance student and faculty support through the use of academic coaches. To clarify expectation and efficient communication, instructors can work with academic coaches to establish the guidelines for providing feedback and comments to students according to assignments, available resources, and evaluation criteria. Practitioners can also identify the different roles of academic coaches, based on the features of contents and students, class size, and course schedule, to build supportive learning environments and provide effective support to students.

References

Barkley, A. (2011). Academic coaching for enhanced learning. *NACADA Journal, 55*(1), 76-81.

Capstick, M. K., Harrell-Williams, L. M., Cockrum, C. D., & West, S. L. (2019). Exploring the effectiveness of academic coaching for academically at-risk college students. *Innovative Higher Education*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-019-9459-1

Cipher, D. J., Urban, R. W., & Mancini, M. E. (2018). Characteristics of academic coaches in an online RN-to-BSN program. *Journal of Nursing Education, 57*(9), 520-525. https://doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20180815-03

Chilton, J., He, Z., Fountain, R., & Alfred, D. (2019). A process for teaching research methods in a virtual environment. *Journal of Professional Nursing, 35*(2), 101-104. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.profnurs.2018.10.002

Cox-Davenport, R. (2017). "The five-minute check in" intervention to ease the transition into professional education: A descriptive analysis. *Nurse Education Today, 50*(1)*,* 25-28.

Field, S., Parker, D. R., Sawilowsky, S., & Rolands, L. (2013). Assessing the impact of ADHD coaching services on university students' learning skills, self-regulation, and well-being. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, 26*(1), 67-81.

Ginder, S. A., Kelly-Reid, J. E., & Mann, F. B. (2017). *Enrollment and employees in postsecondary institutions, Fall 2016; and financial statistics and academic libraries, fiscal year 2016*. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

González, C. (2010). What do university teachers think eLearning is good for in their teaching? *Studies in Higher Education*, *35*(1), 61-78.

Harris, G. Froman, J., & Surles, J. (2009). The professional development of graduate mathematics and graduate teaching assistants. *International Journal of Math Education, Science and Technology, 40*(1)*,* 157-172.

Instructional Connections (2012). *Being an academic coach*. http://www.instructionalconnections.com/index-3.html

Kilburn, D., Nind, M., & Wiles, R. (2014). Learning as researchers and teachers: The development of a pedagogical culture for social science research methods? *British Journal of Educational Studies, 62*(2), 191–207. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2014.918576

Licona, M. M. (2011). Online multicultural education: Asynchronous discussions in online multicultural education. *Multicultural Education, 19*(1), 2-8.

Mills, K. (2002). Distance learning online education has become part of the landscape. *National Crosstalk,10*(1), 8-10.

Morris, A., & Miller, M. (2007). Advising practices of undergraduate online students in private higher education. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 10*(4), Article EJ1065638. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1065638

Nolan, K. (2013). Online Advising Pilot at the Community College of Vermont. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 17*(1), 47-51.

Pechac, S., & Slantcheva-Durst, S. (2019). Academic coaching factors influencing community college student success. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*. Advance Online Publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/1521025119869849

Strange, M. (2015). Chancellor's college success coach initiative: A formative program evaluation of the Virginia community college system's initiative from the success

coaches' perspective [Doctoral dissertation]. College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database.

Tinto, V. (1999). Taking retention seriously: Rethinking the first year of college. *NACADA Journal, 19*(2), 5-9.

van Nieuwerburgh, C. (Ed.) (2012). *Coaching in education: Getting better results for students, educators and parents*. Karnac.

Language Used as a Form of Power, Privilege, and a Force

Esther Pippins, Abbie Salcedo, Chelsea Toler-Hoffman, and Rachael Weldon-Caron
Texas State University

Abstract: For centuries, language has been used by the dominant culture both as a means of constructing power and as a way of maintaining it. Race, language, gender, and sexuality can all contribute to reinforcing one's identity as an *other*. In doing so the dominant culture can create and reinforce blame and the perpetuation of minority groups as the "others" using language. Using the method of structuralism, this study aims to demonstrate the social construct in which language used by dominate culture validates the power, privilege, and force of dehumanizing language in the form of *othering*.

Keywords: dehumanizing language, structuralism, othering, identity

Woven into the fabric of the American cultures are the basic concepts of structuralism, particularly structural linguistics, where the structure of language has been constructed and used as a form of power, privilege, and a force. Milner (1991) suggests that structuralism are methods of structured linguistics that can be universally applied successfully to all aspects of human culture (as cited in Crotty, 1998, p. 199). A French linguistic, Ferdinand de Saussure, founder of structural linguistics posits language is an institution; word is an event, making the distinction that language (langue) is a system shared by all speakers of a certain language and word (parole) is the individual speech-act in which language-as-a-system is expressed and embodied (Crotty, 1998). For the purpose of this project, the researchers employ the method of structuralism is to demonstrate the social construct in which language used by dominate culture validates the power, privilege, and force of dehumanizing language in the form of "othering."

The term "Othering" is used to describe how social group oppositions ("Us" vs "Them") are represented in language and becomes the source of meaning for the structuralist" (Crotty, 1998, p. 199). The structuralist in this project will be referred to as the dominant culture, primarily White, sis, heterosexual, male. For centuries, language has been used by the dominant culture both as a means of constructing power and as a way of maintaining it. Perceived and experienced difference perpetuated by the concept of "otherness" negates identity and establishes a motive for potential discrimination (Staszak, 2009). Race, language, gender, and sexuality can all contribute to reinforcing one's identity as an "other" (Jackson II & Hogg, 2010). In doing so the dominant culture can create and reinforce blame and the perpetuation of minority groups as the "others" using language.

Methodology

Nine individuals ranging in age from twenty-two to sixty-seven participated in interviews and were recruited according to preselected criteria relevant to the proposed research questions. There was a specific emphasis on selecting individuals who have experienced a system of language that is either wrapped within or organized around one or more dimensions of an individual or group-based difference. Interviewers were collecting qualitative data only from

participants that other team members nominated. Further, to help eliminate bias interviewers made sure to collect data from participants they did not previously know.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the analysis. Although there was a potential for limitations such as researcher bias, it offered a sampling process that made it possible to select individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds that were relevant to the issues being studied. The sampling design also offered researchers an opportunity to develop critical insight by which language could be examined through a structural lens. Milner (1991) explains that as an approach structuralism focuses its "search on constraining patterns or structures that claim individual phenomena have meaning only by virtue of their relation to other phenomena as elements within a systematic structure" (as cited in Crotty, 1998, p. 197). As such, the possible effect that any limitation such as researcher bias is minimal given that individuals are subject "to conform to a system of social meaning embedded in language rather than account for reality in any true sense" (Crotty, 1998, p. 199).

Interview Protocol

Researchers used a semi-structured interview protocol for interviews with participants. The following questions and prompts were included:

1. As it relates to your own interactions with others and as it pertains to language, do you prefer to treat others as you would have them treat you or treat others as they would want to be treated? Explain your preference and why you think it helps in your daily interactions with others.

2. Do you think your use and understanding of language is different from someone who may identify themselves differently from you? Explain how it may differ or how it may be the same.

3. How do you identify (what identity do you use to describe who you are in the world today?

4. What word do you dislike the most that is associated with your identity and why?

5. Did this language increase self-hate, hurtful ideas about yourself? If so, how do you view your identity?

6. What is the most effective way to educate people on how to develop a deep, critical, and inclusive understanding of others' identities? Why?

7. How does language play a role within the university setting?

8. How does language shape your ability to learn and feel included in educational settings?

9. Can you think of a time when language was used to reinforce power structures within learning environments as an adult and how did this impact future learning gatherings?

10. How can minority groups protect their identity and culture in the face of increasing social globalization?

11. This is an election year, so what advice would you give the political candidates in addressing issues of race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality in the United States?

Researchers utilized a structured interview protocol to ensure that participants' answers could be reliably collected and that comparisons could be made with confidence between participants or between different interview sessions. Participants were recorded in two formats: audio-only and visual using Zoom Video Communication technology. All nine audio recordings were transcribed and reviewed by researchers in preparation for data analysis.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this project was performed using a thematic structural analysis; by extracting the themes from the participant interviews and analyzing the words and sentence structures (Medelyan, 2020). The coding is aligned with the tenets of structuralism where the components of language are interrelated to one another and get their meaning from that relationship especially as it pertains to epistemes which are systematic frameworks that define their own truths criteria which are embedded in and imply particular institutional arrangements (Crotty, 1998, p. 201). The researchers coded the interviews to identify themes. A theme can be described as a recurring aspect of the participant's accounts detailing their experiences and perspectives that are deemed relevant to the research questions (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). The researchers sought themes of dehumanizing language as it pertains to identity, race, ethnicity, gender, oppression, discrimination, marginalization, as evidence of othering concerning the power, privilege, and force of language used by the dominant culture. Thus, the basis of structural analysis involves the fundamental rule that basic data and analytic procedures of sociology must focus on social reform (Fararo & Skvoretz, 1986).

Interpretation

Based on the data gathered from this project, the researchers observed how language can be used to facilitate and perpetuate the process of othering in which dominant in-groups construct one or many dominated out-groups by stigmatizing a difference (Staszak, 2009). It especially highlighted discussions among researchers and participants as to how language is used to reinforce power structures within adult learning environments and how it affects future learning gatherings. One participant said, "Most of my graduate and undergraduate experience at the same institution was learning what power and privilege looks like as facilitated through the curriculum. My own identity as a POC was being restricted and so I became more conscious where, how I inadvertently or oftentimes willingly participated in power structures in the learning environment." Another theme that resonated to both researchers and participants was the idea of identity. Participants shared how they self-identify and their perceptions of how that identity is perceived. One participant said, "although I am gender fluid . . . believe that gender

fluid is a social construct, . . . identify as a female, . . . White passing . . . queer woman, educator, those are all different parts of my identity."

Discussion

Data collected from interviews aligned with the selected literature of Structuralism. "Structuralism is the methodology that implies elements of human culture must be understood by way of their relationship to a broader, overarching system or structure" (Wikipedia, n.d.). Historically, structural linguistics, one method of structuralism, continues to perpetuate dehumanizing language as in the use of the word *nigger*, a key word in the lexicon of race relations and thus an important term in American politics (Kennedy, 2001). Social institutions and structural features can shape group-based inequality. Privilege influences power and force of language through the elevation of inequalities within our society. Language is a force illustrated through the story of Sojourner Truth as it reimagines Crotty's (1998) posit that language influences the reality we perceive. Language informs our structures of identity utilizing actual audio clips of respondents in their own voices.

Implications for Future Research

This project explicated the nuances in how language can be structured to either empower to disenfranchise. Language can be structured in a way that formulates a reality that promotes dominance and privilege for some groups while othering or minimizing the experiences of groups considered a minority. Given the social discourse surrounding contemporary social justice movements such as Me Too and Black Lives Matter, it was important for this study as well as future studies to examine how language is weaponized through its use and structure. This project represents a careful and thoughtful exploration of how to appraise the potency of language.

For practice, the analysis provided a glimpse as to how adult educators might engage adult learners in their own examinations of the fundamental function of language as the compulsory medium of communication, intelligibility, and rationality. This analysis seeks a better understanding of how language is shaped and language in its multiple complex connectivity. This analysis illuminates the role of language and possible steps for composing language that is more inclusive to diverse audiences. As practitioners, it is crucial to examine the forms of language and what these forms may or may not bring to those participating in social discourse.

Conclusion

Overall, our project linked nicely to the studied epistemological perspective and themed topic; however, if there was one area for improvement, it would be adding additional time to further explore how respondents uniquely experienced or witnessed the act of othering perpetuated through language. Language is often thought of as a helpful tool that enables communication and thoughtful connection. However, when analyzed within the framework of structuralism, language serves as a powerful system capable of exposing the racism, sexism, or any other discriminant universal truth running rampant in our society. Structural linguistics demonstrating the duality of systems where language can create positive or negative impacts depending on the positioning and the power, privilege, and force associated with the implementer of the system.

References

Bernard, H. R., & Ryan, G. W. (2010). *Analyzing qualitative data: Systematic approaches*. Sage.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage.

Fararo, T. J., & Skvoretz, J. (1986). E-State structuralism: A theoretical method, *American Sociological Review*, *51*(5), 591-602.

Jackson, R. L., II, & Hogg, M. A. (Eds.). (2010). *Encyclopedia of identity* (Vol. 1). Sage.

Medelyan, A. (2020). Coding qualitative data: How to code qualitative research (Updated 2020). https://getthematic.com/insights/coding-qualitative-data/

Milner, A. (1991). *Contemporary cultural theory—An introduction*. Allen and Unwin.

Staszak, J. (2009). *Other/otherness.* In R. Kitchin & N. Thrift (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of human geography* (pp. 43–47). Elsevier.

The Unity Council (n.d.). *What is the census?* https://unitycouncil.org/2020census/census-qa/

Wikipedia. (n.d.). *Structuralism*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Structuralism

The Academic Advising Experiences of Adult Learners:
Preliminary Findings from One Department

Noreen Powers and Russell Wartalski
Northeastern Illinois University

Abstract: Supporting the academic advising needs of adult learners is essential in postsecondary education. Research suggests that the faculty advisor's role is pivotal for ensuring a student's academic progress. The faculty advisor supports adult learners in achieving their professional goals and providing resources to ensure their academic success. However, junior faculty are not always aware of the practices that suit the needs of adult learners. To address a gap in the literature, the researchers are currently conducting a qualitative case study that explores the advising experiences of adult learners with their faculty advisors. The researchers present preliminary findings from their ongoing study to participants at the annual AAACE conference.

Keywords: adult learners, student advising, junior faculty, higher education

Ensuring the unique needs of adult learners is vital for postsecondary education. Adults have been a growing student population for the last few decades (Hussar & Bailey, 2013). As enrollment of adult learners continues to increase, faculty play a more critical role in this student population's retention and success efforts through academic advising (Schroeder & Terras, 2015). Addressing adult students' advising needs and the appropriate practices necessary to ensure their success is an important consideration for junior faculty members who are embarking on new teaching roles within academia and balancing multiple work responsibilities.

The literature is clear that advising plays a vital role in the development of traditional-aged college students. Advisors are typically the first point of contact for students pursuing their studies at a new institution and become an important resource for the learner (Karr-Lilienthal, Lazarowicz, McGill, & Menke, 2013). One might believe that academic advising would then be just as beneficial for adult students. Noel-Levitz (2008), however, indicated that academic advising for adults was a source of displeasure. What does that mean then for the junior (new) faculty members tasked with advising adult learners?

The faculty advising model is used in many colleges and universities (Karr-Lilienthalet al.). Nevertheless, contemporary graduate programs preparing future faculty for teaching roles omit training that addresses student advising. The lack of training focused on student advising in graduate education can create problems for junior faculty members navigating their new teaching roles while attempting to connect with adult learners in the process. Some scholars have indicated a need for new research focused on learners' academic advising perceptions (Karr-Lilienthal, Lazarowicz, McGill, & Menke, 2013). Others have indicated a need for further studies examining adult learners' advising needs at the graduate and undergraduate levels (Schroeder & Terras, 2015). As such, the researchers of this ongoing study, both junior faculty members teaching at a regional public university, are conducting a qualitative investigation focused on adult students' advising experiences with their junior faculty advisors.

Literature Review

Student Advising

Studies that have been published on academic advising place considerable emphasis on the history of the field and the practices for advising first-time, traditional-aged students within undergraduate contexts (Cook, 2009; Larson, Johnson, Aiken-Wisniewski, & Barkemeyer, 2018). The interactions learners have with faculty and staff significantly influence retention (Pike & Kuh, 2005; Tinto, 1987). Advising has become an integral component in the retention and success of students. Additional research underscores the imperative that "solid academic advising" (Drake, 2011, p. 9) is an important support that ensures student success.

Regional Public Universities

Regional public universities (RPUs) typically recruit students from the region where they live and focus on enrolling a broad range of learners, including adults and older students, minorities and other underrepresented groups, and veterans (Zach, 2018). RPUs typically recruit adults, older students, minorities, and other underrepresented groups, and veterans (Zach, 2018). As RPUs have typically focused their efforts on student access and success, such efforts have influenced the faculty role. Notwithstanding their beginnings, RPUs focus on providing educational access for a variety of learners.

Junior Faculty

Tenure-track and tenured faculty engage in many projects and tasks related to their work, which may include creating student-centered courses, conducting scholarly (discipline-specific) research, and coaching students individually or in small groups (AAUP). At RPUs, Henderson (2007) declared that faculty "spend less time on research and more in direct contact with students than those at research universities . . . [and] have higher teaching loads and fewer research facilities" (p. 9). With junior faculty members' teaching and service requirements in mind and awareness that their doctoral education provides anything "about advising students" (Schroeder & Terras, 2015) in their terminal degree programs, junior faculty teaching at RPUs must find ways to efficiently and effectively work with their adult student advisees.

Adult Learners

The definitions and characteristics used to describe adult learners have been discussed extensively in the literature from a variety of vantage points (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Brown, 2002; Choy, 2002; Cross, 1981; Hardin, 2008; Horn, 1998; O'Donnell & Tobbel, 2007; Snyder & Dillow, 2013; Soares, 2013; Zach, 2018). While no standard definition exists, some elements that describe adult learners appear in the literature. Some commonalities include being at least 25 years of age or older (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Snyder & Dillow, 2013), working full or part-time (O'Donnell & Tobbell, 2007; Soares, 2013), sustaining themselves financially (Soares, 2013), and having other personal and professional obligations to address (Cross, 1981; Horn, 1998; Soares, 2013). Zach (2018) notes, adult learners primarily pursue their education at regional

public universities because the curriculum and support at such institutions are often "related to their job or career aspirations" (p. 13).

Methodology

This study's potential impact is a focal point for engaging in the research, especially for junior faculty who are responsible for advising adult learners. As such, the research question guiding this interpretive study follows: How do adult students perceive their advising experiences with their junior faculty advisors?

The researchers are interested in understanding students' perceptions of academic advising with junior faculty advisors. Thus, a qualitative research design is being used for this study. The researchers regularly advise students and reflect on how such interactions influence program retention and, more importantly, academic, and professional success. The researchers are employing the particularistic case study method for this research (Merriam, 2009).

Site & Sample Selection

This study is being conducted at a medium-sized university located in the Midwestern region of the US. This study utilizes purposeful sampling, and 13 research participants have participated in this study. The participants are currently enrolled in one of two academic programs--either in an Educational Leadership (Principal Preparation) graduate program or a Human Resource Development undergraduate program. Presently, the majority of research participants have self-identified as women.

Data & Data Analysis

The researchers are collecting several types of data for this qualitative case study. The first type of data being collected comes in the form of individual interviews. The researchers are conducting individual interviews that are approximately 60-90 minutes in length. Miles et al. (2014) suggest that researchers engage in the data analysis process "concurrent with data collection" (p. 70). Utilizing Glaser & Strauss' (1967) constant comparative method, the researchers have already begun analyzing the data. The researchers have organized current data into preliminary, relevant, yet these may change with additional data collection.

Findings

In this ongoing study, the researchers continue to elicit the perceptions of advising practices of adult learners with their junior faculty advisors. While this paper addresses the preliminary findings of 13 research participants, the researchers have already begun to identify their unique vantage points and historical perspectives concerning their advising experiences. So far, the three emerging themes that have surfaced include (a) cultivate trust, (b) comprehensive communication, and (c) clear program documents.

Cultivating trust and maintaining is the first preliminary finding. Specifically, trust allows adults to grow as both learners and practitioners within their respective fields. Trust is the main

element, so far, that is established in relationships. Creating trust is typically demonstrated by junior faculty advisors through robust interpersonal abilities. It appears that regular meetings (in-person and virtually) help cultivate this important ingredient in successful advising relationships. Advisors need to understand their students' challenges and responsibilities. Research participants are also indicating that they want some level of autonomy in the advising process. In essence, they want to have space to voice their concerns and guide their path to success.

Comprehensive communication is the second preliminary theme for this study. Junior faculty advisors who communicate competently and effectively with advisees appear to sustain relationships more quickly than those who do not. In the relationship-building process, research participants indicate a need for space to understand critical information that impacts learners' academic and professional success. In particular, comprehensive communication helps students navigate academic programs, understand specific roles in the workplace, and clarify potential career trajectories. Students noted specific content, various mediums of communication, and the frequency in which junior faculty advisors communicated with advisees was critical to success.

Clear program documents are essential to successful student/faculty advising relationships, highlighting the third preliminary theme for this study. In particular, participants are noting good relationships are predicated on the program plan, which provides information on individual courses, the sequence in which courses are to be taken, and other pertinent information about college and university requirements. The program plan is typically the first document provided to students at the beginning of their respective programs. The research participants discuss the importance of referring to program documents throughout their time in their programs.

Conclusion

This ongoing research study focuses on adult learners' advising experiences with their junior faculty advisors at one regional public university. The study emphasizes students' advising experiences at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Although three themes have already begun to emerge, the researchers will continue to collect data there are repeating themes (Creswell, 2007). The final results will be published in a peer-reviewed manuscript.

References

Bean, J. P., & Metzner, B. S. (1985). A conceptual model of non-traditional undergraduate student attrition. *Review of Educational Research, 55*(4), 485-540.

Brown, B. L. (2002). Strategies that contribute to non-traditional/adult student development and persistence. *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning, 11*(1), 67-76.

Choy, S. P. (2002). *The condition of education 2002: Special analysis: Nontraditional undergraduates*. Institute of Education Sciences. http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2002012

Cook, S. (2009). Important events in the development of academic advising in the United States. *NACADA Journal, 29*(2), 60-70.

Cross, P. K. (1981). *Adults as learners: Increasing participation and facilitation learning.* Jossey-Bass.

Drake, J. (2011). The role of academic advising in student retention and persistence. *About Campus 16*(3), 8-12.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Aldine Press.

Hardin, C. J. (2008). Adult students in higher education: A portrait of transitions. In B. O. Barefoot (Ed.), *The first year and beyond: Rethinking the challenge of collegiate transition* (New Directions for Higher Education, No. 144, pp. 49-57). Jossey-Bass.

Henderson, B. (2007). *Teaching at the people's university: An introduction to the state comprehensive university*. Anker Publishing Company.

Horn, L. (1998). *Stopouts or stayouts?: Undergraduates who leave college in their first year*. Washington, DC: USDOE, NCES.

Hussar, W. J., & Bailey, T. M. (2013). *Projections of Education Statistics to 2022* (NCES 2014-051). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. U.S. Government Printing Office.

Karr-Lilienthal, L. K., Lazarowicz, T., McGill, C. G., & Menke, D. (2013). Faculty advisors' attitudes towards undergraduate advising in a college of agriculture and natural sciences: A non-experimental study. *NACTA Journal, 57*(2), 35-44.

Larson, J., Johnson, A., Aiken-Wisniewski, S. A., & Barkemeyer, J. (2018). What is academic advising? An application of analytic induction. *NACADA Journal, 38*(2), 81-93.

Merriam, S. B. (2009) *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Noel-Levitz. (2008). *National adult student priorities report*. Ruffalo Noel Levitz. https://www.ruffalonl.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf/ASPSReport08.pdf

O'Donnell, V. L., & Tobbell, J. (2007). The transition of adult students to higher education: Legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice? *Adult Education Quarterly, 57*(4), 312-328.

Pike, G., & Kuh, G. D. (2005). First- and second-generation college students: A comparison of their engagement and intellectual development. *The Journal of Higher Education, 76*(3), 276-300.

Ruffalo, N. L. & Lumina. (2019). *2019 National adult student satisfaction and priorities report*. Ruffalo Noel Levitz. https://learn.ruffalonl.com/rs/395-EOG-977/images/2019_National_Student_Satisfaction_Report_RNL-005.pdf

Schroeder, S. M., & Terras, K. L. (2015). Advising experiences and needs of online, cohort, and classroom adult graduate learners. *NACADA, 35*(1), 42-55.

Snyder, T. D., and Dillow, S. A. (2013). *Digest of education statistics 2012* (NCES 2014-015). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2014015

Soares, L. (2013). *Post-traditional learners and the transformation of postsecondary education: A manifesto for college leaders*. American Council on Education. https://www.acenet.edu/Documents/Post-traditional-Learners.pdf

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. University of Chicago Press.

Proposing a New Research Method: Convivencia Testimonial

Jessica M. Quintero[1] and Cindy Peña[2]
[1]Our Lady of the Lake University and *[2]Texas State University*

Abstract: Convivencia testimonial is a subaltern method for conducting research among Chicana/Latina researchers and participants. Its underpinnings are grounded in Chicana feminist epistemology (CFE). CFE offers an alternative way of doing critical qualitative research. Methodologies stemming from CFE can also offer innovative methods grounded in subaltern epistemes for adult educational research.

Keywords: decolonizing methodologies, chicanx/latinx feminist epistemology, adult education critical research, convivencia testimonial

Convivencia testimonial (CvT) is an innovative method, produced to conduct research with underpinnings in Chicana/Latina feminist epistemology. It is a critical research tool that can describe, collect, and identify valuable indigenous knowledge, such that it decolonizes traditional methodologies. Convivencia testimonial or CvT provides Chicanas/Latinas in the field of adult education some key concepts and possible benefits when a subaltern methodology is used. For example, when we as Chicana/Latina researchers embrace our own subjectivity and challenge hegemonic traditional methodologies, we can embody, empower, and voice ourselves.

Background

The proposal of this unique new research method we coined, *Convivencia Testimonial* (CvT), was created out of a need for proper tools that could represent Chicanas and Latinas as researchers, doctoral students, scholar-activists and participants in adult education research studies. It was crafted to offer a subaltern method that challenges and resists androcentric Western traditional educational research by decolonizing how a Chicana/Latina's knowledge is justified and validated. The goal of this method is to disrupt the traditional instruments of educational research. Our goal is also to embed theoretical concepts such as Chicana feminist epistemology (CFE), and *testimonios*, that are umbrellaed under critical race theory (CRT) and Latino/a critical theory (LatCrit; Huber & Villanueva, 2019). Key terms and definitions can be found in Table 1.

Chicana feminist epistemology (CFE) in adult educational research is a conceptual framework that allowed us to question and innovate methods that were designed to decolonize methodologies. A Chicana researcher must find the right tools and concepts that fit your needs and goals. The experiences that we, as Chicanas, have lived cannot compare nor be shared by an androcentric ideology of social research. With a Chicana feminist consciousness, we can claim our identity as Mexican American or second-generation immigrant women. We can choose to research through a Chicana perspective to produce previously ignored *herstories* and validate subjective knowledge. Because we as Chicana/Latinas were not written into the traditional structure of research methodologies, we were, and still are, the women of color colonized and researched through continued marginalization and dehumanization.

Table 1. *Definition of Key Terms*

Key Term	Definition
Vivencias	What we experience as lived realities.
Convivencia (coexistence)	Transcends the objective self-other divide and promotes transborder praxis.
Autoherteorias	Concept that Chicanas/Latinas and Women of Color embed their writing with abstract ideas and personal history as well as the history of their community.
Subaltern	Concept rooted in issues of oppression, marginalization and political concern that resists the hegemonic ideologies to create an alternative reality for marginalized groups.
Decolonization	Deconstructs traditional Western research by humanizing the indigenous people (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012).
Testimonio	Methodology or method that supports marginalized individuals, usually silenced in mainstream stories, to bring forth their witnessed testimonies and create counternarratives (Delgado Bernal, 2012).

Therefore, testimonios, as a method, was born to resist the stereotypical narratives depicting Chicanos/as and Latinos/as as second-class citizens in the United States. Yet, testimonios in CFE can also be utilized as a methodology, and as such, for the purpose of our proposed method, CvT, we defined it as both. As a methodology, its framework guided our creation of CvT because it allows for the researcher and participants to co-construct knowledge instead of only the researcher holding the power of producer. It employs testimonios, as a method, to bring oppressive themes from participants' lived experiences to the surface and features first-hand knowledge of their life histories and struggles.

As Chicana/Latina researchers, we engaged other elements to deconstruct traditional focus groups and considered how participants form bonds or comfort each other when speaking on vulnerable topics. *Convivencia* added the extra oomph, or *sazon* (seasoning), that is needed in a communal space (Villenas, 2005). Author Ruth Trinidad Galvan (2011), explained, *vivencias* are our everyday life encounters, our realities, therefore we are in our right to create *autoherteorias,* that conceptualizes our ideologies, life histories, experiences and relationships. Her concept of convivencia led us to decolonize focus groups and thus emerged a new method. See Figure 1, convivencia testimonial framework, for an additional visual explanation of our conceptual framework.

Figure 1. *Convivencia Testimonial Framework*

Convivencia Testimonial Framework
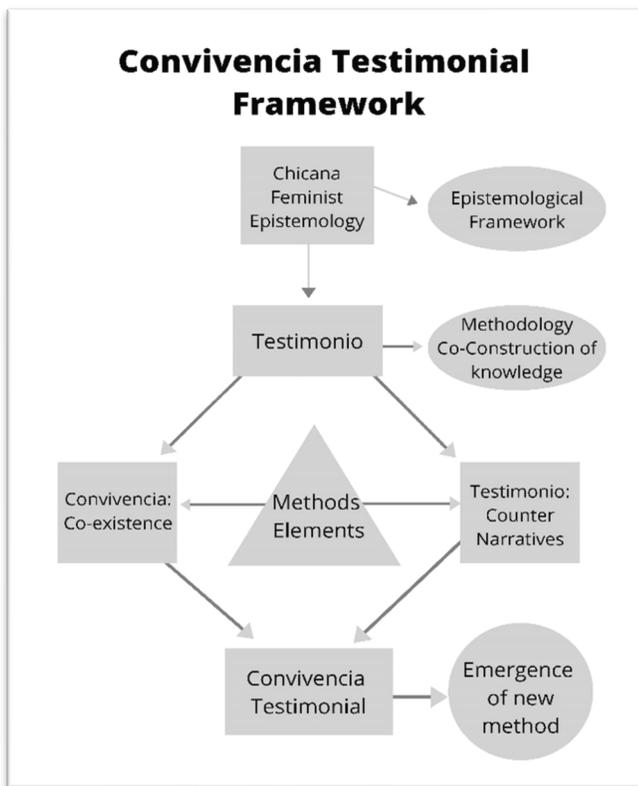
Methodology

We propose a subaltern innovative method in adult education research coined convivencia testimonial. We used Ruth Trinidad Galvan's (2011) definition of convivencia in our own concept and define it as a group of people that are co-existing. This tool can be used in testimonios, an ingenious methodology that creates counternarratives by first-hand witnesses of oppressive accounts (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2012). Our methodological tool of convivencia testimonial, therefore, will involve the social gathering of participants that previously shared a communal space— ESL classroom, work environment, or etc. The underpinnings of this methodological tool stem from Chicana feminist epistemology (CFE).

Chicana feminist epistemology is a theoretical paradigm that conceptualizes the unique experiences of Chicanas/Latinas through an intersectional feminist lens (Peña et al., 2020). It creates an episteme that attempts to create critical research inclusive to indigenous, marginalized and gendered groups. Its historical significance derived from Chicana/Latina feminists who fought to create their own feminist movement independent from the U.S. American movement of the 1960s. In the present time, new subaltern methods are needed because adult education is lacking the methodological tools for its growing ethnic populations.

Consequently, CvT was born to create a communal space of shared racialized class and gendered experiences through a vulnerable sisterhood or, *hermandad,* where themes can innately appear and collectively bring attention to social injustices. Participants are encouraged to share in food and drink, and congregate before, during and after the research topic is discussed. Questions may guide but do not structure the meeting. The researcher is also encouraged to share their own answers to be part of the collective as a co-creator of knowledge. See Figure 2, decolonizing methodologies, for additional visual information about the hybridization of convivencia and testimonio to produce CvT.

Figure 2. *Decolonizing Methodologies*
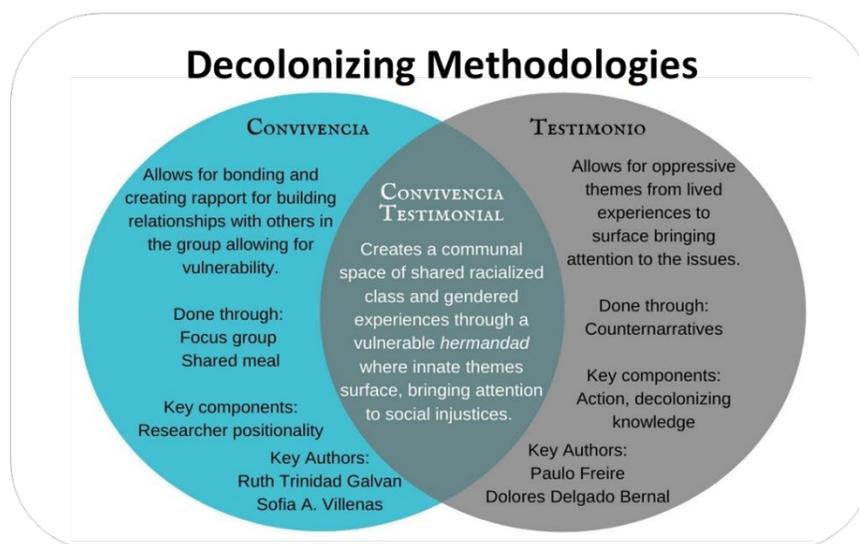
Wherein a focus group, the researcher asks direct questions to the participants and a direct answer is given, a convivencia testimonial promotes the sharing of informal stories. It is a subaltern method that is not defined by responding to focus group-type questions. Instead, it nurtures an experience that has meaning to all parties involved.

Major Themes

Convivencia testimonial is unique because its key features distinguish it from traditional focus groups in three ways: (1) Researcher positionality; (2) Validity of indigenous knowledge; and (3) Human collectivity. Each are important to make CvT applicable as a method. They are briefly discussed in the following sub-sections.

Researcher Positionality

Convivencia testimonial researcher positionality has the researcher act as a facilitator, engage participants by sharing their lived experiences and close the discussion with group reflection and contribution of overarching themes they observed. In other words, they are acknowledged as co-creators of knowledge, by sharing their own reflective pieces and discussions. By acting as co-creator, researchers do not subjugate their participants into a hierarchical rank.

Validity of Indigenous Knowledge

Social sciences and adult education research are rooted in androcentric Western research methodologies. The vivencias of the colonized were not justified as viable realities and truths. CvT on the other hand, validates our Chicana/Latina subjective knowledge as our truth and reality; thus, we become *agents of knowledge* (Harding, 1987). Our subjugated consciousness is then understood as unique and value-laden in adult educational research.

Human Collectivity

As a collective group of *hermanas*, we share similar experiences enhanced and identified through the energy created in vulnerable spaces. Vulnerable spaces are conduits to human connection by humanizing women of color (Huber & Villanueva, 2019). It also provides *empowerment* through their sharing of culturally rich space, food, time and conversations. Human collectivity, which values human connection, fosters a holistic concept and research strategy (Derocher, 2018; Huber & Villanueva, 2019).

Discussion

Convivencia testimonial is rooted in Chicana/Latina feminist research. It can also serve as a new wave of disruptive research in adult education. As more and more colonized researchers enter the field of adult education, whether acknowledged or not, they will search for concepts, methods and methodologies that do not exist for women of color. Critical research is at its highest need; we must evolve to become innovative in how we conduct adult educational research. Everyone should heed the call to do more research in CRT, LatCrit, and CFE. If we begin with these theoretical underpinnings, it can guide CvT into a methodology to give other women of color researchers, the necessary tools needed to transform critical adult educational research into being truly *critical*. Because "more than tools for obtaining data; methodologies are extensions of ways of knowing and being, thus they are essential to the way we embody and perform research" (Saavedra and Salazar Pérez, 2014, p. 78).

References

Blackmer Reyes, K., & Curry Rodriguez, J. E. (2012). Testimonios: Origins, terms, and resources. *Equity and Excellence in Education, 45*(3), 525-538. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2012.698571

Delgado Bernal, D., Burciaga, R., & Flores Carmona, J. (2012). Chicana/Latina testimonios: Mapping the methodological, pedagogical, and political. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 45*(3), 363-372.

Derocher, P. (2018). *Transnational testimonio: The politics of collective knowledge production.* University of Washington Press.

Galván, R. T. (2011). Chicana transborder vivencias and autoherteorías: Reflections from the field. *Qualitative Inquiry, 17*(6), 552-557. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800411409888

Harding, S. (1987). Introduction: Is there a feminist method? In S Harding (Ed.), *Feminism and methodology* (pp. 1-14). Indiana University Press.

Huber, L., & Villanueva, B. (2019). Testimonio. In P. Atkinson, S. Delamont, A. Cernat, J. W.

Sakshaug, & R. A. Williams (Eds.), *SAGE research methods foundations*. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526421036782944

Peña, C., Quintero, J. M., Castaneda, E., & Lopez, R. (2020, June 4-7). *Chicana feminist epistemology in adult education: A literature review*. Proceeding of the Adult Education in Global Times (AEGT) Conference, Virtual. https://edst-educ.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/06/aegt_proceedings_upload.pdf

Preuss, C. L. & Saavedra, C. M. (2014) Revealing, reinterpreting, rewriting mujeres. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 27*(7), 901-921, https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2013.808775

Reyes, K. B., & Rodríguez, J. E. (2012). Testimonio: Origins, terms and resources. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 45*(3), 525-538.

Saavedra, C. M. & Salazar Perez, M. (2014). An introduction: (Re)envisioning Chicana/Latina feminist methodologies. *Journal of Latino/Latin American Studies, 6*(2), 78-80. https://doi.org/10.18085/llas.6.2.0645634738372v66

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous people* (2nd ed.). Zed Books.

Villenas, S. A. (2005). Commentary: Latina literacies in convivencia: Communal spaces in teaching and learning. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 36*(3), 273-277.

Low Stakes Quizzing: A Tool for Practice not Assessment

Thomas Rausch and Kelly McKenna
Colorado State University

Abstract: Quizzing can be beneficial as a tool for learning and practice instead of its traditional use as an assessment. Specifically, the use of low stakes quizzing (LSQ) can aid in (a) retention, (b) subsequent learning (c) corrective feedback (d) improved metacognition and (e) study habits. Best practices for utilizing quizzes are discussed, including introducing forgetting and rehearsal strategies.

Keywords: low stakes quizzing, retention, metacognition, study habits

Assessments are common methods utilized by educators to assess how well students are reaching their learning goals. Quizzing, in particular, is used as a formative assessment tool to track students' progress. However, research into the effect of quizzing has shown promise in helping students to retain information and has been cited as a tool for learning (Walck-Shannon et al., 2019). All educators want students to remember and retain what they learned from their instruction beyond the course; incorporating a low-stakes quiz (LSQ) can be used as a tool for practice, not assessment.

Benefits of Quizzing as Practice

When learning is 'lost' and neither retained nor utilized by the student, learning scrap occurs (Berk, 2008). Previous research has indicated the rate at which learning scrap occurs is troubling. Sousa (2017) wrote, "70 to 90 percent of new learning is forgotten within 18 to 24 hours after the lesson" (p. 80). A study by Silverman (2012) determined learners have forgotten 90% of learning content after a year, posing a serious problem in regard to educational outcomes.

Retention

Incorporating an LSQ to instruction can fight learning scrap and bolster retention. Sousa (2017) stated, "retention refers to the process whereby long-term memory preserves learning in such a way that it can locate, identify, and retrieve it accurately in the future" (p. 97). For this to occur, learning must be stored and then retrieved when needed. According to Bjork and Bjork (2011) storage strength "reflects how entrenched or interassociated [sic] a memory representation is with related knowledge and skills, whereas retrieval strength reflects the current activation or accessibility of that representation and is heavily influenced by factors such as situational cues and recency of study or exposure" (p. 4). Using a low-stakes quiz primarily helps students retrieve learned material. However, Bjork and Bjork note storage strength also plays a role by reducing rates of forgetting and enhancing subsequent relearning.

Increased Learning in Subsequent Modules

While a majority of the literature has focused on the use of quizzing to retain information after a learning event, such quizzes can be implemented before as an introduction to the material. The timing of utilizing a quiz as practice can be beneficial for an introductory module before subsequent studying or reading has taken place (Bjork & Bjork, 2011). By utilizing quizzing to help students learn and study, instructors can use their subject matter expertise to guide students to important points to remember. Quizzes created by the instructor emphasize important points for learning.

Corrective Feedback

While an LSQ can help students retain information, the effect is bolstered by students receiving feedback on their responses. According to Roedinger III and Butler (2011) "Correct answer feedback usually produces robust gains on a final criterion measure" (p. 20). Taking part in a LSQ helps both instructors and students to understand whether learning has been understood or not and can be far more effective than a student re-examining a chapter or text to probe for areas of improvement (Bjork & Bjork, 2011).

Metacognitive Benefits

According to Kornell and Bjork (2007) "self-regulated study involves, in the main, decisions students they make while they study on their own away from a teacher's guiding hand" (p. 219). When students engage in self-regulated study, they must make metacognitive judgements regarding their learning process and whether or not their study strategy is effective. Use of an LSQ can help to guide this process. When students struggle to answer questions provided by the instructor, this can send a clear signal further attention is required by the student on a particular area of interest (Kornell & Bjork).

Improved Study Habits

Many students engage in a "binge and purge" approach to assessments by massing their studying believing it to be both an efficient use of time and useful to pass the next test (Bjork & Bjork, 2011; Wright, 2001). This massed studying practice, more commonly known as cramming, is quite susceptible to result in learning scrap over the long term (Sousa, 2017). A study by Scharff et al. (2017) asked students about their primary consideration in selecting a learning strategy. Fifty-five percent of first year undergraduate students indicated their learning strategy was selected to "help me learn to pass the next test." A study conducted by Kornell and Bjork (2007) found similar study patterns by students, with 59% indicating they primarily studied "whatever's due soonest/overdue" (p. 222). The emphasis on passing an assessment instead of selecting a study strategy which fosters learning which is lasting is troublesome. Sustained use of an LSQ gives students the opportunity to engage in learning which is lasting rather than used perform well on the assessment, then forgotten. When student engage in studying, they must decide on whether they have reviewed the material to the point they can remember it. Participation in a LSQ

can give students immediate feedback on whether they have retained or mastered material to an appropriate extent (Kornell & Bjork). Students may even begin to engage utilize LSQ's as a study tool on their own in other courses in the absence of instructor provided quizzing.

Best Practices

Utilizing quizzing for learning practice instead of assessments has a multitude of benefits. However, educators, instructors, and teachers can implement specific strategies in using an LSQ to bolster their effectiveness.

Rehearsal

The continual processing and reprocessing of information is known as rehearsal and is a critical technique to transfer learning to long term storage (Sousa, 2017). Using an LSQ is an effective way to help students engage with rehearsal. Brain scans of learners have shown the frontal lobe is actively involved in both rehearsal practices as well as long term memory formation (Roediger III & Butler; 2011, Sousa).

Rote and Elaborative Rehearsal

Rehearsal has two types of forms: rote and elaborative. In rote rehearsal, the learner is tasked with remembering precisely what is taught for future replication. Rote rehearsal is often associated with closed based skills; as the name suggests, learners are expected to reproduce learning as a matter of rote and routine and is often useful for fact and data acquisition. In elaborative rehearsal, learners are not directed to precisely reproduce learning, but rather to "associate new learnings with prior learning to detect relationships" (Sousa, 2017, p. 98). Elaborative rehearsal is critical for fostering open based skills, where the learner discovers underlying principles and techniques for creative application in the future. Elaborative rehearsal is best suited for analysis and reflective outcomes (Sousa, 2017).

Both rote and elaborative rehearsal have merit; however, the decision to include one or both in the learning design depends on the desired outcomes of learning. Many skills-based trainers favor rote rehearsal, while learning sessions that require higher-order thinking are best suited for elaborative rehearsal, as it compels learners to deeply understand the concepts, their relation to one another in a variety of settings (Sousa, 2017).

When incorporating elaborative rehearsal as a part of an LSQ (Sousa, 2017) recommended several practices to help students engage with rehearsal:

- Help students understand the difference between rote and elaborative rehearsal and their connection to outcomes
- Ensure rehearsal question types are relevant for students which foster meaningful connections to prior learning
- For elaborative rehearsal outcomes, questions should be open-ended. By asking

students to write responses in their own words, retention is enhanced
- The use of summarizing (called closure) can help students attach sense and meaning making to their learning at the end of a lesson.

Desirable Difficulties

If instructors and educators wish to create learning outcomes that are lasting, the conditions in which recall takes place should be onerous to the learner. Put another way, the more learners struggle to remember key content, the more likely information will be retained for future use. Bjork and Bjork (2011) refer to this as creating desirable difficulties for students. Researchers have discovered memory pathways are strengthened when forgetting has occurred; recall conditions in which students struggle to remember boosts retention (Sousa, 2017). In regard to using quizzes as a practice tool rather than an assessment, the quizzes should feature the desirable difficulties and challenges described below.

Forgetting

One of the best ways to help students retain what they learn is to help them to forget (Bjork & Bjork, 2011). Forgetting, as it pertains to recall and retention, is a desirable condition for students. According to Souza (2017) "forgetting is viewed as the enemy of learning. But, on the contrary, forgetting plays an important role in promoting learning and facilitating recall" (p. 129).

The Generation Effect

The generation effect, which refers to the long-term benefit of generating an answer, solution, or procedure versus being presented that answer, solution, or procedure has been shown to boost retention (Bjork & Bjork, 2011). Closely associated with elaborative rehearsal outcomes, when students are asked to answer questions by summarizing their learning in their own words, as opposed to answering forced-choice quiz items, retention is bolstered. Roediger III and Butler (2011) noted, "the act of calling formation to mind rather than rereading it or hearing it…produces an effort from within to better induce retention" (p. 20).

Spacing

"The spacing effect is one of the oldest and best documented phenomena in the history of learning and memory research" (Bahrick & Hall, 2005, p. 566). Quizzing should be spaced to allow forgetting to occur (Bahrick & Hall; Howard-Jones, 2014). In other words, engaging with LSQ's should take place far enough apart that learners cannot readily remember the answers and must make an effort to recall them. When learners struggle to remember the correct answer, they are actually developing their ability to recall. According to Thalheimer (2006):

> Research suggests that spaced retrieval practice can generate learning by first prompting retrieval failure. When learners fail to retrieve information from memory

that failure can serve as a warning. Subsequent opportunities to learn information related to the previous failure generate more vigorous and constructive learning behaviors. (p. 21)

The amount of time between each LSQ should be determined by how well students remember. The easier the recall, the instructor should lengthen the time between LSQ's.

Interleaving

Repeated rehearsal enhances retention. However, retention is further bolstered when the order in which the items on a LSQ are presented in a different order than the first attempt (i.e. abcbcacab v. aaabbbccc). This concept is known as interleaving. A study conducted by Taylor and Rohrer (2010) determined interleaving (distinct from spacing) doubled scores on a test given the next day. For adult educators and students, this means when students are repeated quizzed on material over the course of several weeks, the order in which the quiz questions are given should not be repeated from the previous quiz.

Overlearning

According to Bjork and Bjork (2011) "The basic problem learners confront is that we can easily be misled as to whether we are learning effectively and have or have not achieved a level of learning and comprehension that will support our subsequent access to information or skills we are trying to learn" (p. 3). This problem can be further exacerbated because students often underestimate how well they've learned and retained information (Driskell et al., 1992; Kornell & Bjork, 2007). To address the overestimation of how well students retain material, instructors should encourage the use of overlearning. According to Driskell et al. (1992), "overlearning refers to the deliberate overtraining of a task past a set criterion" (p. 615). Overlearning is especially important within the context of self-regulated study and metacognition because students must continue to quiz themselves well past the point they intuitively feel they have sufficiently remembered the concept.

Stimulus Variability

According to Bjork and Bjork (2011), "when instruction occurs under conditions that are constrained and predictable, learning tends to become contextualized" (p. 5). This can be a problem for recall, because it can be difficult to determine if lasting, transferrable learning is occurring or if learning is simply being reproduced on the basis of contextual and environmental cues (Bjork & Bjork; Roediger III & Butler, 2011; Sousa, 2017). Learners may only be able to retrieve information from long-term memory in the same conditions in which they learned and studied, making performance problematic (Bjork & Bjork). To enhance learning outcomes using an LSQ, instructors should vary the rehearsal strategies initiated by the instructor. This is known as stimulus variability and can enhance retention and transfer. For example, when prompted by the LSQ, have students both write and speak the answers (or mix them up). The prospects of long-term storage and retention are greatly enhanced when students are asked to both practice writing and speaking their responses (Sousa). Bjork and Bjork also suggested having learners complete LSQ's in differing

environments, so they do not become accustomed to relying on environmental cues for retrieval.

Conclusion

Utilizing quizzes as a tool for practice can be beneficial for students. Areas subject to benefit include, but are not limited to improved retention, enhanced performance on future learning, corrective feedback, and bolstered metacognition and study habits. By utilizing rote and rehearsal strategies, as well introducing desirable difficulties in learning and remembering, quizzing can be an effective learning tool to help students reach their goals.

References

Bahrick, H. P., & Hall, L. K. (2005). The importance of retrieval failures to long-term retention: A metacognitive explanation of the spacing effect. *Journal of Memory and Language*, *52*(4), 566-577.

Berk, J. (2008). The manager's responsibility for employee learning. Chief Learning Officer. https://www.chieflearningofficer.com/

Bjork, E. L., & Bjork, R. A. (2011). Making things hard on yourself, but in a good way: Creating desirable difficulties to enhance learning. In M. A. Gernsbacher, R. W. Pew, L. M. Hough, & J. R. Pomerantz (Eds.) & FABBS Foundation, *Psychology and the real world: Essays illustrating fundamental contributions to society* (pp. 56-64). Worth Publishers. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284097727_Making_things_hard_on_yourself_but_in_a_good_way_Creating_desirable_difficulties_to_enhance_learning

Driskell, J. E., Willis, R. P., & Copper, C. (1992). The effect of overlearning on retention. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 77*(5), 615-622.

Howard-Jones, P. (2014). Neuroscience and education: A review of educational interventions and approaches informed by neuroscience. The Education Endowment Foundation. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/evidence-reviews/education-and-neuroscience/

Kornell, N. & Bjork, R. A. (2007). The promise and perils of self-regulated study. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, *14*(2), 219-224.

Roediger, H. L., III, & Butler, A. C. (2011). The critical role of retrieval practice in long-term retention. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, *15*(1), 20-27.

Scharff, L., Draeger, J., Verpoorten, D., Devlin, M., Dvorakova, L. S., Lodge, J. M., & Smith, S. (2017). Exploring metacognition as support for learning transfer. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiEprTxtabtAhWPG80KHa9sAE4QFjACegQIAxAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fjournalhosting.ucalgary.ca%2Findex.php%2FTLI%2Farticle%2Fdownload%2F57464%2F43232%2F&usg=AOvVaw2ZcruOSkMx6jM6AvNzT7d-

Silverman, R. (2012, October 26). *So much training, so little to show for it*. Wall Street Journal. https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970204425904578072950518558328

Sousa, D. A. (2017). How the brain learns. (5th ed.). Corwin.

Taylor, K. & Rohrer, D. (2010). The effects of interleaved practice. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *24*(6), 837-848.

Thalheimer, W. (2006). Spacing learning events over time: What the research says. www.work-learning.com

Walck-Shannon, E. M., Cahill, M. J., McDaniel, M. A., & Frey, R. F. (2019). Participation in voluntary re-quizzing is predictive of increased performance on cumulative assessments in introductory biology. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, *18*(2), 1-13.

Wright, G.B. (2011). Student-centered learning in higher education. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, *23*(3), 92-97.

Reconceptualizing Learning Transfer: A Preparation for Future Learning

Thomas A. Rausch and Leann M. R. Kaiser
Colorado State University

Abstract: This paper examines current views and definitions of learning transfer as well as their dominant characteristics. An alterior way to view learning transfer as preparation for future learning (PFL) is presented along with its defining features. This paper is divided into five sections: (a) what comprises learning transfer, (b) the conventional views and characteristics of learning transfer (c) PFL learning theory and its assumptions (d) sought after transfer outcomes (e) and how a reconceptualization can help adult and continuing educators.

Keywords: direct application, sequestered problem solving, situated learning, continuous learning, integrative learning

All educators want learning to have an impact beyond the exact conditions of initial learning (Bransford & Schwartz, 1999) and the ultimate goal of participating in a workshop, class, or other educational pursuit is to transfer learning (Kaiseret al., 2013). According to Haskell (2001) "Transfer of learning is our use of past learning when learning something new and the application of that learning to both similar and new situations. … Transfer of learning … is the very foundation of learning, thinking, and problem solving" (p. xiii). Researchers refer to learning which extends beyond initial learning and is utilized in the future as learning transfer. However, many of the assumptions of educators, practitioners, and researchers which underlie learning transfer are inconsistent with the reality and needs of adult and continuing education students.

Because learning transfer has previously been understood in contexts outside of higher education, many of the underlying assumptions regarding learning transfer have pervaded into understanding learning transfer in higher education. Despite the need for universities to reconceptualize learning transfer to align with the ways it operationalizes in higher education, many academics, researchers, and scholars still cling to old ways of measuring learning transfer, creating a potential for misalignment between the goals of learning transfer in the aforementioned scenarios compared to many adult and continuing education students.

A reconceptualization of learning transfer to a new way of thinking, known as a preparation for future learning (PFL), can help educators, practitioners, and researchers in adult and continuing education to meet the needs of their populations.

What is Learning Transfer?

"Learning transfer, simply stated, is the ability to a learner to apply skills and knowledge learned in one situation or setting to another" (Kaiser et al., 2013, p. 1). Learning transfer, in a broad sense, covers the transfer of what is learned in one setting to another. Instances of learning transfer can include transferring learning to the home or to the community (Broad, 1997). Burke

and Hutchins (2007) describe learning transfer via three components: learning transfer must be generalized to a lived context, successfully applied to that context, and maintained over a period of time. Barak et al. (2016) described learning transfer as "a process in which the learner is able to function in a new situation (answer questions, solve problems, carryout assignments), according to what s/he learned in a previous situation" (p. 2).

Classic Views of Transfer

Learning transfer has often been measured in the form of skills transfer from workplace training to the job, especially in the corporate and HRD environments (Merriam & Leahy, 2005). According to Kaiser et al. (2013), "the vast array of other adult learning settings to which the learning may be transferred has not been well documented in the literature" (p. 6). However, learning transfer is found in a variety of fields and can take multiple forms. Bransford and Schwartz (1999), stated discussions around learning transfer often fall into two camps: the traditional practice of training for specific and final tasks or teaching broad skills which emphasize continuous learning, with the former dominating how most conceptualize learning transfer.

Preparation for Future Learning

Bransford and Schwartz (1999) called for a new way to measure transfer. Critical of the way most researchers view transfer outputs, they rejected many of the assumptions which underlie learning transfer outcome such as:
- Direct application
- Sequestered problem solving
- Course-centered learning objectives
- Carrying over of knowledge and skills
- Static and "snapshot" measurements

In contrast to the above assumptions, Bransford and Schwartz reconceptualized learning transfer as "assessments of people's abilities to learn in knowledge-rich environments" (p. 68) and sought to "reconceptualize transfer to directly explore people's abilities to learn new information and relate their learning to previous experiences" (Bransford & Schwartz, p. 69). Though not the first to suggest a shift to a preparation for future learning, Bransford and Schwartz explored reconceptualizing learning transfer as preparation for future learning.

Direct Application

Traditionally, many of the assumptions regarding learning transfer focus on direct application of learning to match transfer outcomes. Brandsford and Schwartz (1999) referenced Broudy (1977) who delineated three types of knowing: replicative, applicative, and interpretative. Replicative knowing centers on learners being able to directly reproduce what they learned into future transfer scenarios and has dominated most forms of learning transfer. Yet, replicative transfer is rarely a reality for learning in future transfer environments. Though much of the replicative knowing taking place in a classroom or training session is worthwhile and necessary, assuming the application of such material in a replicative sense to a future transfer environment is unrealistic. Rather than a replicative process, learning and training should be seen as necessary

building blocks for the future learning which takes place in transfer environments. The applicative and interpretative ways of knowing suggested by Broudy are more conducive to transfer outcomes which prepare a learner for future learning.

Sequestered Problem Solving

Many of the traditional ways to determine how well learning has transferred places students, trainees and the like into environments which are cut off from the environment. The assumption is students should possess the necessary learning and apply such learning as a result of their own learning without assistance. Yet, Bransford and Schwartz were critical of this practice because the sequestered environment used to measure transfer are not practical and therefore are unrepresentative of the pragmatic environments learners find themselves in. Notably, learners in sequestered environments are separated from practical resources which match future transfer environments, such as the following:

- Asking colleagues
- Consulting their notes ore texts from the course
- Trial and error
- Feedback from others
- Opportunities to revise (Leberman et al., 2006, p. 28).

The misalignment between the conditions learners are asked to perform under to demonstrate their transfer potential is often at odds with the practical resources offered to learners in their transfer environments.

Course Centered Learning Objectives

Rewriting learning objectives to acknowledge the role learning will play in future learning is an important aspect of reconceptualizing learning transfer. Many learning objectives are written within the context of the course without acknowledging the role learning will play in future transfer scenarios. A study conducted by Lightner et al. (2008) determined students may view learning objectives and course outcomes set by the instructor to be too idiosyncratic for transfer purposes. Thus, students see the learning gains they have made as being important to passing the course and not much else. When instructors explicitly state learning transfer as a course goal (and by extension its role in PFL), students can begin to make active connections between their learning and how it could affect future learning.

Situated Learning

Many of the dominant views of transfer view learning as a completed concept that can then be "carried over" to future or ulterior environments. Yet, learning theorists maintain learning does not cross environments without being affected by the circumstances of that environment (Hager & Hodkinson, 2009; Lave, 1998). According to Hager and Hodkinson (2009) "the successful move from one location to another, such as from school to work, is not a matter of knowledge transfer or of knowledge generalizability [sic]. It is an issue about learning" (p. 12). Hager and Hodkinson mean (and supported by Bransford and Schwartz) the successful transfer which happens when learners move environments is not a carrying over of key knowledge or skills but rather a preparation for the learner to learn in their future environments. Thus, learning is

situated in both the classroom/training environment, and again in the transfer environment.

Continuous Learning

Learning and subsequent transfer are constructions that are continually changing and redefining in context with learners in complex and diverse environments. Often in educational and training environments, the assumption is learning (or the learning material) are static concepts unchanging regardless of the place and timing of transfer environments. Hager and Hodkinson (2009) best captured the way learning transfer is understood via a preparation for future learning reconceptualization: "Rather than being the thing or substance … what is learnt is now a complex entity that extends well beyond the learner; a set of more or less complex practices; a social construction undergoing continuous change" (p. 7). When learners leave the classroom and begin to transfer their learning, what is learned is transformed; the contextual, cultural, unique circumstances at play affect the learning and change it from its origins and continues into the transfer environment.

Efficiency and Innovation in Transfer

Schwartz et al. (2005) suggested the best transfer outcomes must incorporate Broudy's (1977) three types of knowing: replicative, applicative, and interpretive. Each of the three represents degrees of efficiency and innovation in transfer, respectively. Efficiency in transfer is highly related to replicative transfer; people who are highly efficient can quickly and competently retrieve appropriate knowledge and skills to solve a problem (Schwartz et al.,). Most of the literature on learning and training transfer has focused on this outcome of efficiency (Schwartz et al.) While efficient outcomes are important and a necessity, outcomes with efficiency as the goal are best suited for environments with high degrees of routine with little variability.

Innovation in transfer is related to students understanding appropriate applicative situations for their learning and able to interpret when novel situations arise. Though distinct from efficiency, it should be noted many of the innovative transfer outcomes sought after rise from a high degree of content knowledge (Schwartz et al.). The best way to foster innovation as an outcome of learning transfer is to instill the belief continued learning is necessary for continued competency. Future environments, where transfer is operationalized, are rife with unpredictability in the form of changing scenarios, environments, major players, etc. In using innovation, "learners must reach beyond the immediately known …without knowing what the final goal state will look like at the outset" (Schwartz et al., p. 34).

PFL for Adult and Continuing Educators

PFL is an important reconceptualization for adult and continuing educators because the goal of learning transfer is to prepare students for future learning opportunities. Yet, according to Sousa (2017), "students' ability to apply knowledge to new situations is limited. Apparently, we are not doing enough in schools to deliberately make the transfer connections to enhance new learning" (p. 157). Naturally, such considerations emphasize if students possess the requisite knowledge to efficiently continue their learning in conjunction with an ability to further develop what is known? Reflection on this preparation requires the educator to consider both the "learning in" and "learning out" with PFL in mind (Schwartz et al., 2005).

Learning In & Learning Out

Understanding what students understand and possess in the way of knowledge is important (the transferring in) because it will profoundly affect what they learn (Schwartz et al., 2005; Sousa, 2017). Sousa (2017) stated, "The more connections that students can make between past learning and new learning, the more likely they are to determine sense and meaning and thus retain the new learning" (p. 157). Transferring out, when knowledge is used to engage in future learning and/or solve problems is important as well; as educators, the transfer out problems should be relevant and preparatory for students for their pragmatic future learning needs. The challenge is to prepare learners to transfer the necessary domain-specific knowledge as well as develop their capacity to interpret to new learning scenarios (Schwartz et al.).

Many formal education curriculums are predicated on the assumption students possess an appropriate knowledge base before joining a course (transfer in) and by the end of the course will be prepared to further engage in other coursework (transfer out). Yet, as is the case in most views of transfer, replicative information is expected to transfer out and less attention is paid to whether students can use an application to solve problems and practice interpretation in the interests of making good judgements. A greater emphasis on PFL, coinciding with Broudy's (1997) applicative and interpretive knowing, would prepare students for future learning in coursework, jobs, and communities.

Integrative Learning

Many students find the learning they complete in one instance can then applied to another course. A review of any curriculum in higher education reveals learning transfer is an integral component and expectation of the learning process (Sousa, 2017). Integrative learning outcomes are prevalent for many adult and continuing education students as they complete a course curriculum on their way to a degree or other educational pursuits. According to Sousa, when connections can be extended across curriculum areas, they establish a framework of associative networks that will be recalled for future problem-solving. Reconceptualizing learning transfer as PFL is highly conducive to fostering learning within curriculums.

Conclusion

Efficiency and innovation are two ways in which to measure the effectiveness of learning transfer. Many of the learning scenarios adult and continuing education students find themselves demand both replicative, applicative, and interpretative learning. Prior learning affects future learning as learning is continually built upon and developed. Reconceptualizing learning transfer outcomes to PFL helps students become continuous learners in preparation for the next learning challenge.

References

Barak, M., Hussein-Farraj, R., & Dori, Y. J. (2016). On-campus or online: Examining self-regulation and cognitive transfer skills in different learning settings. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher* Education, *13*(35), 1-18.

Bransford, J. D. & Schwartz, D. L. (1999). Rethinking transfer: A simple proposal with multiple implications. *Review of Research in Education, 24*(1), 61-100.

Broad, M. L. (1997). Transfer concepts and research overview. In M. L. Broad (Ed.), *Transferring learning to the workplace* (pp. 1-18). American Society for Training and Development.

Burke, L. A., & Hutchins, H. M. (2007). Training transfer: An integrative literature review. *Human Resource Development Review*, *6*(3), 263-296.

Broudy, H. S. (1977). Types of knowledge and purposes of education. In R. C. Anderson, R. J. Spiro, & W. E. Montague (Eds.), *Schooling and the acquisition of knowledge* (pp. 1–17). Erlbaum.

Hager, P. & Hodkinson. P. (2009). Moving beyond the metaphor of transfer of learning. *British Educational Research Journal*, *35*(4), 619-638.

Haskell, E. H. (2001). *Transfer of learning: Cognition, instruction, and reasoning*. Academic Press.

Kaiser, L. M. R., Kaminski, K., & Foley, M. J. (2013). Editors' notes. In L. M. R. Kaiser (Ed), *Learning transfer in adult education, New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* (No. 137; pp. 1-4)*,* Jossey-Bass.

Leberman, S., McDonald, L., & Doyle, S. (2006). The transfer of learning: Participants' perspectives of adult education and training. Gower Publishing Company.

Lightner, R., Benander, R., & Kramer, E. (2008). Faculty and student attitudes about transfer of learning. *Insight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching, 2008*(3), 58-66.

Merriam, S. B. & Leahy, B. (2005). Learning transfer: A review of the research in adult education and training. PAACE, *Journal of Lifelong Learning*, *14*(1), 1-24.

Schwartz, D. L., Bransford, J. D., & Sears, D. (2005). Efficiency and innovation in transfer. In J. P. Mestre (Ed.). *Transfer of learning from a modern multidisciplinary perspective* (pp. 1-51). Information Age Publishing.

Sousa, D. A. (2017). *How the brain learns*. (5th ed.). Corwin.

Andragogy of Hope and Learning Cities

Annalisa L. Raymer
Cornell University

Abstract: Addressing the worldwide challenges threatening humanity today, such as the global pandemic and climate change, requires learning and action at scales including and extending far beyond personal development. The concept of andragogy popularized by Malcolm Knowles focuses on the individual and does not attend to wider social contexts and collective learning. Achieving the necessary transformations to avert cascading collapses—and keeping up courage for the endeavor—necessitates a new conceptualization, an andragogy of hope. The Global Network of Learning Cities may be one of the best examples where key features of an andragogy of hope are already emerging.

Key words: andragogy of hope, learning cities, lifelong learning, sustainability

As soon as news of the corona virus began to circulate and communities started to organize local responses, the Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC) took stock. A program of UNESCO's Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL), the Global Network is a worldwide membership of localities who have made robust commitments to integrate lifelong learning for all into the infrastructure and life of the polis. To facilitate knowledge sharing and idea exchange among cities facing a common challenge, in March UIL launched "UNESCO learning cities' response to COVID-19," a series of webinars for interchange and problem-solving (2020). Through these sessions, participants not only practiced collective, lifelong learning for the common good, but in doing so, illustrated an andragogy of hope.

Background

In *Pedagogy of Hope*, Paulo Freire (1994) declares, "I am hopeful, not out of mere stubbornness, but out of an existential, concrete imperative" (p. 8). In this work, Freire revisits his more widely known *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and reflects on his earlier thinking. Placing hope front and center, Freire asserts that hope is key, but it is useful only when animated in action:

> … hope, as an ontological need, demands an anchoring in practice. As an ontological need, hope needs practice to become historical concreteness. That is why there is no hope in sheer hopefulness. The hoped-for is not attained by dint of raw hoping. Just to hope is to hope in vain.

> Without a minimum of hope, we cannot so much as start the struggle. But without the struggle, hope, as an ontological need, dissipates, loses its bearings, and turns into hopelessness. And hopelessness can become tragic despair. Hence the need for a kind of education in hope. Hope, as it happens, is so important for our existence, individual and social, that we must take every care not to experience it in a mistaken form, and thereby allow it to slip toward hopelessness and despair. Hopelessness and despair are both the consequence and the cause of inaction or immobilism (p. 9).

Other educators have written compellingly on the necessity of hope with regard to teaching, learning and pedagogy, including Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade (2009) and Giroux and Giroux (2006). Yet where is the *andragogy of hope*?

With acknowledgement of the Google N-gram limitations, the tool is nonetheless useful for identifying broad patterns within discourses over time. Entering the parameters for books published in English in the period of 1975-2019, a general upward trend emerges for works on *pedagogy of hope*. I have run this broad-stroke corpus analysis multiple times over the past two years and have yet to see any titles retrieved for *andragogy of hope.*

Approach

The late environmental educator, systems analyst and sustainability expert, Donella Meadows, was someone whose clear-eyed modeling of the human overreach beyond earth's capacities did not dampen her hopefulness. Among several books she authored and co-authored are notable works numerically detailing how human systems are patently unsustainable. The first of these was *The Limits to Growth* (Meadowset al, 1972), followed twenty years later by *Beyond the Limits* (Meadowset al, 1992). Meadows is also noted for her monogram, Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System (1999), which identified nodes in complex systems where interventions can render exponential impacts. At the time of her death in 2001, she and two of the original co-authors of Limits to Growth, Dennis Meadows and Jørgen Randers, were at work on a 30-year update; it was published a few years later (Meadowset al, 2004). In the preface, her colleagues remarked of her (using the name she favored, Dana):

> Dana was the unceasing optimist. She was a caring, compassionate believer in humanity. She predicated her entire life's work on the assumption that if she put enough of the right information in people's hands, they would ultimately go for the wise, the farsighted, the humane solution—in this case, adopting the global policies that would avert overshoot (or, failing that, would ease the world back from the brink) (2004, p. xvi).

This determined combination of inquiry, learning and hope is central to our prospects for easing back from the brink. The concept of learning cities—or as those of us in more rural areas might say, *learning localities* (Raymer, 2018, p. 201), serves well as a vehicle to frame and facilitate saving ourselves from ourselves; or put another way, to encourage transformative learning for reorienting our patterns of living toward sustainability.

After visiting a number of learning cities and becoming acquainted with members of the Global Network, I was inspired to provide students with opportunities to become familiar with the concept and to interact with people in communities creating their own versions of how to be a learning city. In designing a college course on lifelong learning, sustainability and learning cities, I drew upon Meadows' ideas, together with work by educators writing about hope, to illustrate the interplay of actionable hope and system change. Now in a second run of the course, I have settled on a handful of key elements. As emergent mutual aid efforts at the local level, and city-to city knowledge-sharing at the global level has shown, a network of affiliated learning ecosystems becomes a resource in itself; i.e. a ready means of mobilizing in the face of complex challenges such as a viral pandemic. In recognizing that zoonotic disease and climate change are

of a piece, individual learning cities and affiliated networks offer avenues for tackling complex matters at multiple scales.

Major Themes

With hope at the center, the Figure 1 represents the core concepts of the course.

Figure 1. Lifelong Learning for Just, Inclusive Sustainability
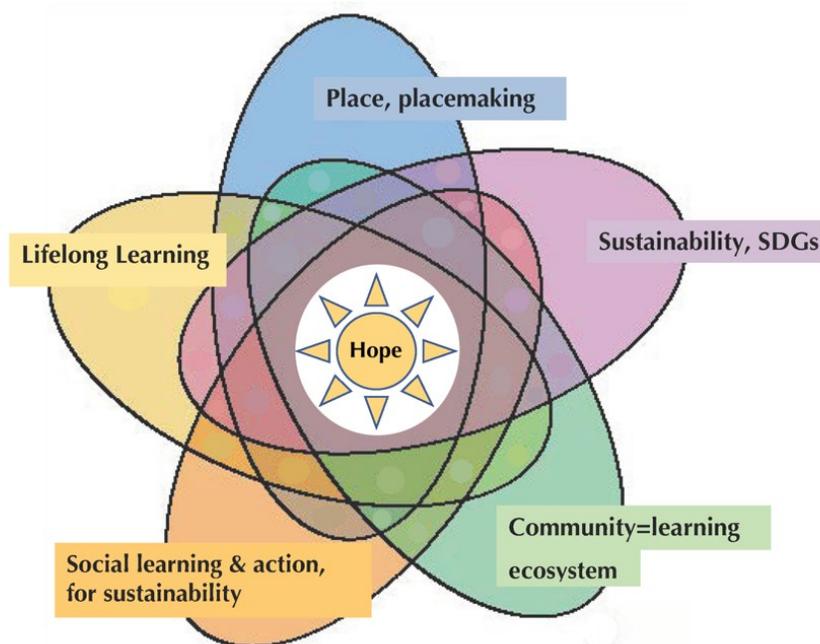
We start the semester with unlearning the circumscription most students bring to the course, that of equating learning with schooling. After unpacking the notion of unbounded learning in various forms and all venues, we begin turn our attention to the role of place in community and learning. We consider how the built environment is largely a product of an ongoing stream of decisions made at scales from the unexamined and incidental to the most deliberate and complex. As humans, our decision-making is grounded in values and objectives, whether consciously voiced or not, and our constructions and built environs reflect those aims and priorities. In a democratic society we might justifiably expect the value set informing design decisions to be one promoting human flourishing, sociability and civic life. We explore why this is too often not the case and review case studies illustrating how listening to diverse voices and more inclusive decision processes can yield better outcomes. Having accepted that place is amenable to human intent, we next apply that thinking and sense of agency to the project of more sustainable policies, practices and daily decisions at the local level. Key ideas here are Julian Agyeman's "just sustainabilities" (2013) and the United Nations' agenda for sustainable development (UN, 2015). Both of these move the concept of sustainability to a much more comprehensive frame than that of a solely environmentally green focus as well as purposeful awareness of international interdependencies. Next the course introduces UNESCO's Global Network of Learning Cities, in which a learning city could be described a community avowing to a set of principles and

commitments more than following a model or prescription. All learning cities are unique expressions arising from their own multi-faceted identities, cultures, and geographies.

At first the connection between sustainability and learning cities is not apparent. The transformative thinking necessary to foster sustainable and resilient cities and communities relies upon equally transformative modes of thinking and interacting among citizens/denizens, governments, leaders, universities, and educators of every context and setting. A sustainable city will be best realized as an ecosystem, an interconnected web of learning opportunities for individuals, groups, and the locality as a whole, and nested within learning regions. Introducing students to nested networks is one of the joys of the course, as are the opportunities to hear from residents of learning cities who generously interact with us across time zones. For these reasons, the final segment of the course returns to a focus on lifelong learning but with a deliberate shift to social, collective learning with emphases on collaborative inquiry, innovation and the fun of working together on things that truly matter.

Discussion

As popularized by Malcolm Knowles (1970) the concept of andragogy is a bit of a paradox. Not really a theory, and often subject to critique (for example, Hartree,1984), the idea nonetheless continues to serve pragmatic purposes. Primary among these, andragogy facilitates comparisons between teacher-centric education, i.e. what Freire called the banking model of education (2000, p. 73), and other approaches that recognize learners as complex humans replete with existing knowledge and experiences. Indeed, even the question that the notion of andragogy inevitably raises, namely—are the implications of andragogy applicable only to adults?— is in itself useful to anyone seeking to position learning as lifelong and not constricted to formal schooling. In some ways, it is perhaps unfortunate that it is Knowles' set of assumptions which gained prominence. As Norwegian educator Svein Loeng points out,

> Knowles ignored the relationship between the individual and society. In that sense, he did not consider how privileges and suppression attached to race, gender, and class influenced learning. This presupposed that all humans and cultures valued ideals such as individualism, self-realisation, independence, and selfdirection. Finger and Asun (2001) claimed that Knowles's andragogy failed to critically examine society and organisations and that his view on adult learning did not challenge the status quo and the norms and values of the American middle class (2018, p. 5).

Prior to Knowles, various proponents of andragogy envisioned the idea differently. Loeng notes the robust Nordic traditions of *popular culture* encompassed and negated a need for another term (p. 8), and he points to the concept of andragogy advanced by German philosopher Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, that of "a new kind of teaching, aimed at solving social problems and moving towards a better future (quoted in Loeng, p. 2). This differs from an andragogy for self-realization.

Addressing global pandemics and climate change takes collective learning and action at group, community and societal scales, as well as, at the individual level. In their thirty-year update to the original *Limits to Growth*, Meadows and her co-authors discuss the difficulty of talking about love in anything but a tightly delineated romantic sense. Yet, the three of them, with their decades spent in data analysis and systems modeling, include *loving* in their chapter on "tools for the transition to sustainability," along with visioning, networking, truth-telling and learning

(Meadowset al, 2005, p. 265-284). They write,

> Individualism and shortsightedness are the greatest problems of the current social system, we think, and the deepest cause of unsustainability. Love and compassion institutionalized in collective solutions is the better alternative. A culture that does not believe in, discuss, and develop these better human qualities suffers from a tragic limitation in its options. "How good a society does human nature permit?" asked psychologist Abraham Maslow. "How good a human nature does society permit?" (p. 281).

This resonates strongly with what I have experienced in Learning Cities in Ireland and with people active in the Global Network of Learning Cities in multiple countries—a ethic of kindness, care and, in many instances, delight. Knowles' concept of andragogy comprised a set of assumptions and following Knowles in shaping a set of assumptions or principles for an andragogy of *hope*, a principle of compassion tops my list.

Collaborators taking part in a transdisciplinary, future-focused process of dialog and discernment facilitated by UNESCO's Institute of Lifelong Learning would agree; they write, "…learning must be a collective process that acknowledges the value of peer and intergenerational learning. This social dimension emphasizes learning to care for each other, for different communities and for the planet" (2020, p. 8). In their resulting publication, *Embracing a Culture of Lifelong Learning*, additional candidates for an andragogy of hope emerge (2020).

Conclusion

As a starting point and invitation for discussion, below is a proposed set of principles for an andragogy of hope. The first and last are inspired by Meadows, the second is self-evident, and the remaining items either reflect or paraphrase ideas from the report mentioned directly above (p. 9). An andragogy of hope

- practices an ethic of compassion and care
- values learning across the spectrum of formal, nonformal and informal contexts
- activates and supports the community as both an ecosystem of learning and a learning ecosystem
- expects schools and universities to become both avenues and facilitators of lifelong learning
- recognizes lifelong learning as a human right for all, regardless of age or status
- operates from an assumption of, and appreciation for, the social and collective nature of learning
- considers networks to be vehicles of learning and action

This week the second annual meeting of the North American Alliance of Learning Cities took place. Buoyed by the presidential election results, participants were encouraged for the improved prospects of the US re-joining UNESCO, and thus making membership in the Global Network of Learning Cities possible for American communities. Students in my course took part in the convening, and I was quite taken with a question from one who noted with appreciation the climate in learning cities of inclusivity, interaction, and engagement. Turning his gaze back onto formal education, he asked, "How do we create learning cities in our schools?"

May an andragogy of hope serve to transform our classrooms as we seek to transform our world.

References

Agyeman, J. (2013). *Introducing just sustainabilities: Policy, planning and practice.* Zed Ltd.

Duncan-Andrade, J. (2009). Note to educators: Hope required when growing roses in concrete. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(2), 181-194. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.2.nu3436017730384w

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M.B. Ramos, Trans.). Continuum.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed 30th anniversary edition* (M.B Ramos, Trans.). Continuum.

Freire, P., & Freire A.M. (2004). *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed* (R. Barr, Trans.). Continuum.

Giroux, H. A., & Giroux, S. S. (2006). Challenging neoliberalism's new world order: The promise of critical pedagogy. *Cultural studies/Critical methodologies*, *6*(1), 21-32. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708605282810

Hartree, A. (1984). Malcolm Knowles' theory of andragogy: A critique. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *3*(3), 203-210. https://doi.org/10.1080/0260137840030304

Knowles, M. S. (1970). *The modern practice of adult education: Andragogy versus pedagogy*. Association Press.

Loeng, S. (2018). Various ways of understanding the concept of andragogy. *Cogent Education, 5*(1), e1496643. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1496643

Meadows, D. H. (1999). *Leverage points: Places to intervene in a system*. The Donella Meadows Project. http://donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system/

Meadows, D. H., Meadows, D. L., Randers, J., & Behrens, W. W. (1972). *The limits to growth. A report for the Club of Rome's project on the predicament of mankind*. Universe Books.

Meadows, D. H., Meadows, D. L., & Randers, J. (1992). *Beyond the limits: Confronting global collapse, envisioning a sustainable future*. Chelsea Green.

Meadows, D., Randers, J., & Meadows, D. (2004). *Limits to growth: The 30-year update*. Chelsea Green.

Raymer, A. (2018). Trying for a learning city before my country leaves UNESCO. In M. B. M. Avoseh (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Commission on International Adult Education of the 67th Annual Conference of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education* (pp. 195-206). https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED597561.pdf

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). (2020). *Embracing a culture of lifelong learning: Contribution to the Futures of Education initiative*. http://cradall.org/content/embracing-culture-lifelong-learning-contribution-futures-education-initiative-uil

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL). (2020). *GNLC Webinars: UNESCO learning cities' response to COVID-19*. https://uil.unesco.org/event/gnlc-webinars-unesco-learning-cities-response-covid-19

United Nations (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

Using Social Media Tools for Promoting Critical Literacy Skills in the Classroom

Zachary Z. Robinson[1] **and Petra A. Robinson**[2]

[1]*Liberty Magnet High School and* [2]*Louisiana State University*

Abstract: Technological and informational literacies, as described in the critical literacies advancement model are essential skills in today's technology-dependent society. In this paper, we illustrate how educators, by using social media (especially memes), can help students develop these and other literacies and thinking skills. These skills can lead to informed decision-making and actions that can advance equity and social justice and the ideals of global citizenship. The paper also discusses possibilities to foster student interest, enhance engagement, creativity, consumer consciousness, and emotional intelligence while creating opportunities for meaningful, challenging learning that invites dialog on difficult topics such as issues related to race, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, nationality, immigration status, family structure and so on.

Keywords: critical thinking, critical literacy, digital literacies, critical literacies advancement model (CLAM), global citizenship

There is a wide range of critical skills needed for individuals to function and thrive as well as to help them make informed decisions and take appropriate actions in today's dynamic, interconnected, globalized society. In our technologically dependent world, which depends on tools such as the internet and other digital innovations, there are multiple non-traditional literacies required for being a successful, critical-thinking, global citizen. One such set of literacies, as categorized by the critical literacies advancement model (see Figure 1, Robinson, 2020) are *technological and informational literaices*, of which digital literacies are a component. Without digital literacies, it is becoming increasingly challenging to navigate the hi-tech world (Wilson & Johnson, 2014) in which we must live, learn, and work. Digital literacies (note the use of the plurality of the term as it encompasses a broad range of literacies) as described by Leu et al. (2004) in trying to contextualize new literacies emerging from the prevalence of the internet and other digital innovations, represent the multiplicity of skills needed for managing information and communication in the rapidly changing and increasingly digital world.

As the benefit of using digital technologies and computer-related skills increases in educational environments (de Paula et al., 2018), educators are capitalizing on these technologies in the classroom, often in unique ways, such as through gaming. Not surprisingly, there is increasing evidence that video games can promote critical skills associated with scientific literacy (National Research Council, 2011), resulting in an increase in the need for game literacy, another *Technological and Informational* literacy listed in the CLAM (Robinson, 2020). Still, although technology use in educational environments is not new, it continues to provide innovative opportunities for educators to increase engagement and to connect with their students in ways that can help optimize their teaching and learning experiences. Teaching and learning in the 21st century continue to be greatly influenced by digital technological advancements, which can provide relatively easily accessible communication tools such as social media.

Figure 1. *Critical Literacies Advancement Model*

	Informed Behaviors and Actions					
	↑					
	Practical Skills					
	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	
Sample Literacies within each Category	Foundational Scientific Futures etc.	Global Mother Tongue Multilingual Cultural Intercultural etc.	Information Visual Aural Digital Computational Coding Game Cyber Security Data News Media etc.	Health Emotional Food Financial Ethical Environmental etc.	Human Rights Gender Racial Equity etc.	Sample Literacies within each Category
Literacy Categories	Foundational Literacies	Sociocultural Literacies	Technological & Informational Literacies	Psychosocial & Environmental Literacies	Social Justice Literacies	Literacy Categories
	↕	↕	↕	↕	↕	
	Critical Literacy					
	↑					
	Critical Theory					

Social media is a widespread technological tool that Bosman and Zagenczyk (2011) describe as a "phenomenon focused on connecting, sharing, and collaborating" (p. 3), illustrating various educational opportunities for using it in the classroom. Especially with the increase in popularity of online learning in K-12 and postsecondary education, social media provides opportunities for unique communicative methods; designing learning using social media can increase active participation, demonstrate value for students in the learning process, and provide a hybrid learning environment that can support many 21st century skills (Casey, 2013). Through social media, creating and sharing memes (a humorous image, video, piece of text that is copied usually with slight variations spread rapidly and widely across the internet) has become a seemingly ubiquitous cultural practice in today's society. This has given rise to *meme-ing* being described as a significant new literacy (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003). We define memes using the definition that Gatherer (1998) offers upon which he built from Benzon's (1996) definition, suggesting that a meme is "an observable cultural phenomenon, such as a behavior, artefact, or an objective piece of information, which is copied, imitated or leaned, and thus may be replicated within a cultural system" (Gatherer, 1998, p. 32). Additionally, we acknowledge that social media (including memes) are already used in teaching (Purnama, 2017) and in research (Veletsianos, 2013).

Various scholars have highlighted several practices as ways to incorporate memes into the classroom, such as for promoting mathematical discourse (Bini & Robutti, 2019), for teaching rhetoric (Beach & Dredger, 2017), as a means of preparing for final examinations (Underwood & Kararo, 2020), for explaining social and conceptual influences of student understanding about complex socio-scientific issues (Yoon, 2008), for promoting critical thinking in terms of political science (Wells, 2018), and for argumentation and engagement in the ESL classroom (Navera et al., 2019) in an effort to teach critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is widely accepted as a key skill for tertiary level learning (Vardi, 2013) as well as for workplace readiness (Fulham & Scott, 2014). We argue that using memes to promote critical thinking—that is higher order thinking--is directly related to critical theory and to critical literacy which provide the foundation of Robinson's (2020) critical literacies advancement model.

Literature Review

The critical literacies advancement model (CLAM) is a framework that organizes critical dimensions of literacy into five categories and it helps us to consider how the development of these individual and even categorical grouping of non-traditional literacies is interconnected. The model illustrates how this development can help promote positive social change, and although it does not provide an exhaustive list, the categories therein are broad so additional literacies could be subsumed under each. These categories include functional and global literacies, sociocultural literacies, human and social justice literacies, psychosocial and environmental literacies, and technological and information literacies. As Robinson (2020) argues, the development and application of interconnected non-traditional literacies in the context of today's globalized world, through critical thinking, which provides the learner with skills to offer social critique, can lead to increased understandings and informed actions and behaviors which can lead to the development of global citizens who promote equity and social justice. For the purposes of this paper, we focus specifically on the importance of technological and information literacies in the digital age.

Technological and Information Literacies and Today's Classroom

The CLAM specifies examples of some *technological and information literacies*, including information, aural, visual, computational, game, cyber security, media, coding, news literacy, and so on. These skills are highly adaptable skills that help us to leverage technical skill sets to be able to navigate technologies and interpret associated information. As we consider digital literacy as a meta-literacy, other emergent literacies come to mind, such as computer, multimedia, network, and web literacy. Digital literacy(ies) is not a new concept and we have seen the term evolve to take on broader meanings and conceptualizations. In light of the speed with which technological advancements occur, it is fair to assume that new technologies in the 21st century and beyond will likely influence further evolution of the definition and its use as well as likely re-shape the way we think about and navigate digital competencies. Further, scholars (see Bawden & Robinson, 2002; Kope, 2006; Martin, 2006; Williams & Minnian, 2007) have attempted to differentiate between digital literacy and other information-related literacies and while the CLAM groups these in one category it allows for them to be distinguished while drawing reference to their interconnectedness with each other in the same category and other literacies outside of the category.

We adopt the definition that suggests that digital literacy refers to the ability to use and produce digital media, information processing and retrieval, participation in a social network for knowledge creation and sharing, as well as wide range of other computing skills (UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education, 2011). Therefore, digital literacy is essential to acquiring and developing a wide variety of other skills and literacies. As suggested in the CLAM, there is interdependence and connection between digital literacies and other categories of literacies, further purporting that the development of skills in one literacy area may encourage and support the development of other literacy skills in the same or other categories (Robinson, 2020).

In centering on technological and informational literacies with more attention on social media usage in the classroom through the use of *meme-ing* as a new literacy (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003), there is an opportunity for educators to help students develop their critical thinking skills (Wells, 2018). Further, given the popularity of social media platforms (for example, there are over one billion registered accounts on Facebook alone), which is only expected to increase (Clement, 2020), and the ease with which educators and their learners alike can create memes relevant to current or historical events and a wide range of curricular content, this is a great tool for leveraging its potential to enhance the overall teaching and learning process. Social media and memes can not only enhance content delivery, collaboration and communication, and student engagement and interaction, but also help extend the scope of learning beyond the boundaries of the traditional classroom.

Discussion and Implications

Regardless of how much we try to keep up with revolutionary technology such as new apps, platforms, and devices, this may prove difficult. Further, it is important to consider that digital literacies are not simply about learning these technological skills or figuring out how to use the features of the newest iPhone or tablet, or even how to apply these in our teaching and learning opportunities. In contemplating how to get started with incorporating social media into teaching and learning, note that it does not require that educators stay abreast of all the newest innovations, but it requires commitment to have some familiarity with the general trends to stay connected and relevant to their learners' practices and needs. This will prove useful as educators seek to effectively integrate social media in their classrooms. As we usher in new styles of teaching and learning, social media and memes, in particular can foster just-in-time teaching-related strategies and help personalize and customize collaborative learning opportunities for every learner in an increasingly connected world.

The use of social media and memes in the classroom also provides an opportunity for researchers to further explore their use, effectiveness, and significance in the classroom to help increase research-informed practices. Admittedly, it can be a challenge to incorporate social media into classrooms, especially considering issues of accessibility, cyber security, and even creating guidelines to ensure appropriateness and digital citizenship. Nevertheless, there are currently resources available to support educators who seek to use social media and memes, in particular to help supplement their teaching and learning experiences. Various social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, for example, have dedicated blogs and publications to help guide the process (see *Facebook for Educators and Community Leaders Guide*; *Using Instagram in an Educational Context*; *The Educator's Guide to Instagram and Other Photo Sharing Apps* and so on). Moreover, there are free digital resources (https://imgflip.com/memegenerator) that one can use to create and customize resizable text to images to create one's own meme.

As educators gain more confidence and comfort with utilizing social media and humor in the classroom, they will find innovative ways through memes to foster student interest, enhance engagement, creativity, consumer consciousness and emotional intelligence. This can lead to innovative teaching and learning endeavors but also to developing critical thinking skills. Additionally, this will also allow for students and teachers to join in meaningful, challenging learning that invites dialog on topics that they might tend to avoid such as issues related to race,

ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, nationality, immigration status, family structure and so on. Ultimately, social media usage in the classroom can open the door for increasing critical thinking, critical literacy skills and furthering the development of other critical literacies. These developments can then lead to informed decisions and actions that have the potential to advance equity and social justice to lead to the ideals of global citizenship.

References

Bawden, D. & Robinson, L. (2002). Promoting literacy in a digital age: approaches to training for information literacy. *Learned Publishing*, *15*(4), 297-301, http://www.ingenta.com/content/alpsp/lp/2002

Beach, C. L., & Dredger, K. S. (2017). Living the YOLO lifestyle: The rhetorical power of memes in the classroom. In *Deconstructing the education-industrial complex in the digital age* (pp. 269-286). IGI Global.

Benzon, W. (1996). Culture as an evolutional arena. *Journal of Social and Evolutionary Systems, 19*(4)*,* 321-362.

Bini, G. & Robutti, O. (2019, February). Meanings in mathematics: Using internet memes and augmented reality to promote mathematical discourse. In U. T. Jankvist, M. Van den Heuvel-Panhuizen, & M. Veldhuis (Eds.), *Eleventh Congress of the European Society for Research in Mathematics Education* (No. 4). Freudenthal Group; Freudenthal Institute; ERME.

Bosman, L., Zagenczyk, T. (2011). Revitalize your teaching: Creative approaches to applying social media in the classroom. In B. White, I. King, & P. Tsang (Eds.) *Social media tools and platforms in learning environments* (pp. 3-15). Springer.

Casey, G. (2013). Social media in the classroom: A simple yet complex hybrid environment for students. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia, 22*(1), 5-24.

Clement, J. (2020). Number of social network users 2010-2023. Statista. https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/

de Paula, B. H., Burn, A., Noss, R., & Valente, J. A. (2018). Playing Beowulf: Bridging computational thinking, arts and literature through game-making. *International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction*, *2018*(16), 39-46. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijcci.2017.11.003

Fulham, M., & Scott, G. (2014). *Education plus*. NDLP.

Gatherer, D. (1998). Why the thought contagion metaphor is retarding the progress of memetics. *Journal of Memetics—Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission, 2*(2), 32.

Kope, M. (2006). Understanding e-literacy. In A. Martin & D. Madigan (Eds.), *Digital literacies for learning* (pp. 68–79). Facet Publishing.

Lankshear, C. & Knobel, M. (2003). *New literacies: Changing knowledge and classroom learning*. Open University Press.

Leu, D. J., Kinzer, C. K., Coiro, J. L., & Cammack, D. W. (2004). Toward a theory of new literacies emerging from the Internet and other information and communication technologies. *Theoretical models and processes of reading*, *5*(1), 1570-1613.

Martin, A. (2006). Literacies for the digital age. In A. Martin & D. Madigan (Eds.), *Digital literacies for learning* (pp. 3–25). Facet Publishing.

National Research Council. (2011). *Learning science through computer games and simulations.* National Academies Press.

Navera, J. A., Garinto, L. A. B., & Valdez, P. N. M. (2019). Teaching against the meme: politics, argumentation and engagement in an ESL classroom in the Philippines. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, *16*(1), 393.

Purnama, A. (2017). Incorporating memes and Instagram to enhance student's participation. *Language and Language Teaching Journal, 20*(1), 1-14.

Robinson, P.A. (2020). The critical literacies advancement model (CLAM): A framework for promoting positive social change. https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=shrewd_pubs

Underwood, S. M., & Kararo, A. T. (2020). Using memes in the classroom as a final exam review activity. *Journal of Chemical Education*, *97*(5), 1381-1386.

UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (2011). *Digital literacy in education.* UIITE Policy Brief.

Vardi, I. (2013). *Developing students' critical thinking in the higher education class*. Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia.

Veletsianos, G. (2013). Open practices and identity: Evidence from researchers and educators' social media participation. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 44*(4), 639-651.

Wells, D. D. (2018). You all made dank memes: using internet memes to promote critical thinking. *Journal of Political Science Education*, *14*(2), 240-248.

Williams, P., & Minnian, A. (2007). Exploring the challenges of developing digital literacy in the context of special educational needs communities. In S. Andretta (Ed.). *Change and challenge: Information literacy for the 21st century* (pp. 115–144). Press.

Wilson, C. & Johnson, M. (2014). Media literacy, digital technology and civic engagement: A Canadian perspective. In S. H Culver & P. Kerr (Eds.). *Global citizenship in a digital world* (pp. 95-106)*.* The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, University of Gothenburg.

Yoon, S. (2008). Using memes and memetic processes to explain social and conceptual influences on student understanding about complex socio-scientific issues. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching: The Official Journal of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching*, *45*(8), 900-921.

Joining the Evocative and the Analytical:
A New Format for Multivocal Sociocultural Qualitative Research

Carol Rogers-Shaw
University of Dayton

Abstract: This article shares my experiences writing an autoethnographic dissertation in a creative split-page format that presents both systematic scientific analysis and artistic storytelling. It joins the evocative and analytic styles of autoethnography. It analyzes my experiences as an adult with a disability in an ableist society, offering a counter-narrative of disability, and it explores the process I used as a qualitative researcher situating those experiences within a sociocultural context.

Keywords: autoethnography, split-page format, evocative and analytic, disability counter-narrative, sociocultural research

Autoethnography is a form of qualitative research where the researcher is the subject of the study. There are many types of autoethnography that fall along a continuum between evocative and analytic styles. Autoethnographers often encounter a predicament where they are "caught between two camps—hard social science and interpretive/imaginative/humanistic inquiry" (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 30); they must decide where on the continuum to position their work.

Finding a Place on the Continuum of Autoethnography

After I made the decision to research and write an autoethnographic dissertation on how my disability affected my identity, my marriage, my role as mother, my friendships, and my career, I had to choose how I wanted to situate my work as the nature of autoethnography has been thoroughly debated (Anderson, 2006; Denzin, 2006; Ellis & Bochner, 2006). Autoethnographic researchers "distinguish themselves from one another by separating evocative from analytic autoethnography. Analytic autoethnographers focus on developing theoretical explanations of broader social phenomena, whereas evocative autoethnographers focus on narrative presentations that open up conversations and evoke emotional responses" (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008, p. 445). While I am naturally drawn to creative storytelling (Bochner & Ellis, 2016), I recognized the need to establish my credentials as a researcher through analytic work (Anderson, 2006) in my autoethnographic dissertation. In examining my experiences of disability, I created a unique split-page format that joined evocative storytelling and analytic research. I wrote a layered account of embodied learning that related my lived experience of both disability and of the research process, contributing to the discourse on disability and lifelong learning; "I examined the culture that has shaped who I have become/am becoming as a disabled person, as a researcher, and as a writer" (Rogers-Shaw, 2020, p. 10). This method allowed me to use the techniques of both evocative and analytic autoethnography while examining the meanings of my narratives as they reflected the sociocultural context of my life.

As I began, I kept in mind Mitch Allen's comments on the uniqueness of a researcher's story: "Why is your story more valid than anyone else's? What makes your story more valid is that you

are a researcher. You have a set of theoretical and methodological tools and a research literature to use. That's your advantage" (Mitch Allen, personal interview, May 4, 2006, as cited in Ellis et al., 2011, p. 276). Evocative autoethnography appeals to me because I want to make my research accessible and emotional rather than depersonalized (Rogers-Shaw, 2020). I want to "sensitize readers to issues of identity politics, to experiences shrouded in silence, and to forms of representation that deepen our capacity to empathize with people who are different from us" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 274). Never completely neutral (Ellis et al., 2011), my research is based on my personal experiences, just as other scholars bring their own backgrounds to their work, and I acknowledge this through autoethnography. By including techniques of analytic autoethnographers rather than just evocative autoethnographers, I used my researcher tools to examine how my stories fit within a cultural context and discourse on disability, looking at the self more than examining others. Autoethnographers all along the continuum focus on "visibility of self, strong reflexivity, engagement, vulnerability, and open-endedness" (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 211), but researchers must decide for themselves how to meet the demands of both systematic, scientific study and good storytelling (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Rogers-Shaw, 2020). Layered accounts provide some researchers with a way to balance the pull of both sides.

It was important for me to construct a multivocal account of my disability experience. Ronai (1995) described layered accounts in contrast to academic writing that "force-feeds the reader a particular understanding of the world masquerading as *the* understanding of the world" (p. 396). I attempted to create a layered account that included not only my voice but also those of my family, my friends, my work colleagues, and disability scholars. By writing a multivocal text, I intended to offer readers "layers of experience so they may fill in the spaces and construct an interpretation of the narrative" (Ronai, 1995, p. 396). They can participate in a dialogue as they "contribut[e] their own thoughts, feelings, interpretations as they investigate their own meanings of the stories told" (Rogers-Shaw, 2020, p. 7). I also wanted to offer my story as a counter-narrative on disability by including the voices of others who are part of my life and can contribute to the understanding of what it means to live with a disability.

Scholars choose to write layered accounts for a multitude of reasons, including the desire to explore their own identity creation within a particular cultural context or as part of a specific social group to critique hegemony. Resisting the unjust social norms of an ableist society became a significant part of my story. Ferri (2011) argued that "a central defining feature of disability studies aims to dislodge the medical model of disability, replacing narrow and deficit-based understandings of disability with alternative knowledge claims grounded in disabled people's subjective and situated experience" (p. 2271). As I began my self-study of disability, I was conscious of Ferri's call for dismantling dominant, norm-centered discourses. By choosing autoethnography that "seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (Ellis et al., 2011, para. 1), I found my own way to undertake "a form of social action . . . to talk back to dominant scripts and point to a more embodied form of social critique" (Ferri, 2011, p. 2279). Sharing personal narratives also enabled me to "understand a self or some aspect of a life as it intersects with a cultural context . . . and invite readers to enter [my] world and to use what they learn there to reflect on, understand, and cope with their own lives" (Ellis, 2004, p. 46, as cited in Ellis et al., 2011). Through autoethnography, I could evoke empathy and contribute to understanding.

The Process

In my doctoral research, I felt a strong desire to tell my own story, and I recognized that I "live in the midst of multiple plotlines, which shape [my] research landscape" (Clandinin et al., 2015, para. 24). For me, the appeal of autoethnography is partly that it is not typical academic writing; it liberates the author from a constraining format of introduction, literature review, methodology, findings and discussion. It permits the exploration of deep emotion and vulnerability and can spark empathy as well as understanding (Rogers-Shaw, 2020).

I asked how does having a disability affect my family, friend, and work relationships? How does my embodied learning to live with a disability represent my becoming a person with a disability in an ableist culture? How are struggle and perseverance part of learning to live with disability? My autoethnography reveals my answers. Several methods were used to collect data. I wrote significant memories and poems of my experiences, I conducted semi-structured interviews and email exchanges with family members, friends, and work colleagues, and I reviewed photographs and mementos from my life. I created a comprehensive literature review on related disability topics. Then I thematically grouped the narratives and poetry, the interview and email transcripts, the artifacts, and the academic articles. The voices of friends, family, colleagues, and disability scholars were included to assure multivocality and relay the meanings that a variety of individuals attached to my lived experiences.

I used iterative thematic analysis of the data sources, determining single significant events and themes that would be written on separate pages in the split-page format. The process of dividing the story was an additional analytic step unique to this format as I had to consider the general themes, the story content, and an effective matching of the two that would express the meaning. Autoethnographers offer critical reflection and interpretation of life events as an internal dialogue, and readers can follow the same pattern as they interpret the narrative and draw their own connections to the topic. The presence of multiple voices provided readers with several avenues to access the material (Rogers-Shaw, 2020; Ronai, 1995). An important part of autoethnographic analysis is drawing together lived experiences and the emotions around them, what Ellis (1991) called systematic sociological introspection that

> acknowledge[s] the need not just to express emotions in a story but also to examine what those emotions are, why they surfaced in the story, and what they might indicate. . . . Am I angry or do I feel jealous or frustrated? What made me feel this way at this time in this situation? What does that emotion mean? In autoethnographies, layered accounts also examine the writing process: What emotions did I write about? Why did I choose a story that expresses those emotions? What does the appearance of these emotions in this story tell about me? What emotions arose as I wrote this story and what do they mean? (Rogers-Shaw, 2020, p. 7)

I used "I" poems to present an additional description of events and provide another means of analysis. As I composed and edited the poems, I examined "the significance of the abstracted phrases as they mirrored the essential meanings visible . . . allow[ing] me to re-examine themes that emerged through my reflection and analysis process" (Rogers-Shaw, 2020, p. 9). The following example of one page reveals the story of my diagnosis accompanied by reflection on longing, identity, and loss, themes developed throughout the dissertation (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. *The Diagnosis*

I remember the doctor's office. It was in the basement of his house, in the neighborhood where I had lived as a preschooler. I hadn't been back in a long time, and it was disconcerting, as I had moved on long ago. There was a sense of foreboding, like it would be better to turn around and go back up the stairs. In my recollection of that visit, the consultation room is incredibly white and bright, almost like it is in the movies when the main character has a near-death experience and there's a huge flash of light. For me, there was no walking through a tunnel or watching images from my life flash before my eyes. There was just the clinical room, the feeling of being totally alone, and a vague sense of fear, but no strong emotion, no immediate despair, no confusion, just the clarity of understanding that everything was different now. I had two thoughts immediately when I heard the diagnosis. First, I thought, OK, I can still live with this. And then I thought, Daddy's younger sister died in her twenties from diabetes. So, I wondered, what did I have to do before it was too late, and I died?

What stands out in my memories of the moment of diagnosis is the strong sense of the disconnection of longing that I felt, the "separation, isolation, interruption of life" (Pehler et al., 2014, p. 135). The feelings of being alone and recognizing that a significant change had occurred are foremost in my memory. Unexpected and tragic health events can alter one's life experiences, particularly during periods of intense transition such as the beginning of adulthood (Hendry & Kloep, 2010). With a diagnosis of chronic illness comes a loss of the self (Charmaz, 1983; Helgeson & Zajdel, 2017). In becoming a diabetic, I not only had to deal with the physical manifestations of the disease, but I also had to manage my emotional reaction to and my perception of the disease, including the contradictory thoughts that I could live with it or I could die from it. Helgeson and Zajdel (2017) described how "chronic illness alters an individual's sense of self, as the previously held healthy identity is replaced by an illness identity. . . . [I had to] learn how the sense of self can accommodate the illness" (p. 547). In the doctor's office, I felt the enormity of the diagnosis, yet I couldn't comprehend what this new life would hold for me, what I would become.

Note. From *Performing Disability: An Autoethnography of Persevering and Becoming*, by C. Rogers-Shaw, 2020, The Pennsylvania State University, The Pennsylvania State Electronic Theses and Dissertations for Graduate School, p. 18. https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/18264car348

I have often found layered accounts that use asterisks to separate personal narrative and theoretical analysis disrupt reading and understanding. I envisioned the story and the corresponding reflection as one unit as the analysis intimately reflected the experience. As a storyteller, I also wanted the reader to be able to read through the narrative on its own, and as an academic, I wanted the reader to be able to examine the analysis separately, although reading them together was a third option. I used a split-page employed by Brian Fawcett (1986) in his work, *Cambodia: A Book for People Who Find Television Too Slow*. While each page of his book was not a single unit, he wrote fictional stories across the top of the page and provided a subtext across the bottom in essay form. I wanted to enhance the connections between myself as the researcher and my readers, providing more accessibility through my stories and corresponding explanations, and contributing to the discourse on disability. My story of childbirth reflects experiences shared by many women, yet it is set within the medical risk

discourse encountered by mothers with disabilities (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Pregnancy & Childbirth*

Disability complications played out in both my pregnancies. When I think about my younger daughter's birth, it's no wonder that she went to Penn State and pursued a career in sports. By the end of my pregnancy, I looked like I could play defense for the Chicago Bears; anyone viewing the defensive line from a distance would have had trouble distinguishing me from Refrigerator Perry. I had gained over 60 pounds, and it showed in my huge blimp-like stomach, my bloated face, and my swollen feet. When my older daughter's godfather came for a holiday visit, I opened the front door to greet him. His jaw dropped and he blurted out, "Oh my God!" Just the kind of reaction every pregnant woman eagerly awaits. The baby wasn't due until the beginning of February, but complications required a rush to the hospital a few days after Christmas.

For women who are disabled, giving birth can change the way they view their bodies. Some women with disabilities have found that motherhood shifts their attention away from what is wrong with their bodies toward seeing their bodies as valuable (Grue & Laerum, 2002, p. 676). For me, though, pregnancy and childbirth led to added focus on what was wrong with my body because I couldn't do it the "normal" way. Mothers with disabilities often feel the need to strive for perfection. They can't take for granted that they will be good mothers; they "tend to be quite reflective . . . and they seem carefully to monitor their own performance in their role as mother[s]" (Grue & Laerum, 2002, p. 678). I knew the fear of becoming a "bad mother."

Thomas (1997) argued that concerns related to disablism, the mother's impairment, and health consequences all factor into childbearing decisions. I remember being told that I had to get pregnant sooner rather than later to avoid serious complications. After my first child's birth, I was told to wait at least five to seven years before having another one, and after my second child's birth, I was told another pregnancy would kill me. Those warnings from doctors placed me within a medical risk discourse that was disabling and increased the pressure on me to be a "good mother." This discourse also revealed negative attitudes from "we know best" healthcare personnel whose medical advice is rooted in cultural assumptions. According to Thomas (1997), "Despite its apparently 'scientific objectivity,' medical knowledge inevitably draws on deep-rooted cultural antipathy for, and prejudices about, people with 'abnormalities'" (p. 627). The attention was on my bodily deficits, not my mothering strengths.

Note. From *Performing Disability: An Autoethnography of Persevering and Becoming*, by C. Rogers-Shaw, 2020, The Pennsylvania State University, The Pennsylvania State Electronic Theses and Dissertations for Graduate School, p. 36. https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/18264car348

Conclusion

In my dissertation, I created my own format because I wanted to use the tools of both evocative and analytic autoethnographers. I tackled difficult subjects, like my own death, in a way that connected with my readers on an emotional level and added to their understanding of what it is

like to live with a disability (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. *A Near-Death Experience*

It did feel a bit like drowning, my near-death experience, although there was no image of my life flashing before my eyes, more of a desire to roll over and go back to sleep, sink into oblivion. As the EMTs revived me on the bedroom floor, I felt disoriented, recognizing indistinct voices and bright lights, staring at the wood beams across the ceiling, feeling the cold, hard floor beneath me. I thought it was a bad dream, and if I just concentrated for a minute, I could expunge the nightmare and drift into a calmer slumber. As I started to become more aware, I recognized I was on my bedroom floor, people were shouting at me, my head hurt, and my body trembled violently. Eventually, I realized I was being loaded onto a stretcher and wheeled to an ambulance; this wasn't the first time that I had headed to a hospital in an ambulance, but this time I didn't know why. I had not been aware when, in the middle of the night, my glucose level dropped to a near-fatal level, my body shaking so convulsively that I fell out of bed, crashing to the floor and cutting my forehead on the bedside table. Fortunately, my husband awakened and called 911. Only later would I think about what could have happened had he not been there: I would have lain on the floor unconscious after the seizure and eventually died.

It isn't easy writing about death, particularly one's own. . . . A 2017 Kaiser Family Foundation report on attitudes toward death revealed that 92% of Americans recognize their need and their desire to talk about death, yet only 32% have had such a conversation. Ellen Goodman, the founder of The Conversation Project, an organization designed to help people talk about death, said that we "enter into a conspiracy of silence [about death]. Parents don't want to worry their children. Children are reluctant to bring up a subject so intimate and fraught" (Goodman, 2012). . . . It's easier to talk about the near-death experience with my husband because I survived; it was a momentary experience with a happy ending, not a slow decline leading to inevitable sadness. What we do talk about in terms of a future death is the preparations and preventive measures to avoid the worst effects. We avoid the most painful parts.

Goodman (2012) argued, "We often comfort ourselves with the notion that doctors are 'in charge' and will make the right decisions," yet for me, a diabetic who has struggled to make my own decisions when doctors do not know the nuances of my body and my diabetes, this seems so wrong. After spending a lifetime opposing the medical model of disability that puts the power in the hands of medical professionals, I find it counterintuitive now to let the doctors decide how I will die. . . . By its very nature, disability brings about a loss of control over something. As an individual with a disability, I find that there is always this back-and-forth about control. For me, the lack of control, and the fear of losing even more control, has been one of the hardest elements of disability to accept. Personal control and family control are important. Telling the story of one's life can allow a person to assert control so maybe that's what I'm doing now. We may not be able to control the events of our lives, but we can control the meaning we attach to these events in the narratives we compose (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020; Clark & Rossiter, 2008).

Note. From *Performing Disability: An Autoethnography of Persevering and Becoming*, by C. Rogers-Shaw, 2020, The Pennsylvania State University, The Pennsylvania State Electronic

Theses and Dissertations for Graduate School, p. 61.
https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/18264car348

As I hoped to engage my readers, I gave them the following instructions:

> I invite you as the reader to wander through my story from beginning to end, reading the top of each page, finding your own connections between your experiences and mine. Or maybe you will choose to examine my reflections and analysis of what my story means and what it has been like to write my story by reading through the essay, point by point across the lower part of each page. Or maybe you will combine those endeavors and move with grace and intellectual curiosity between my story and my subtext, just as I moved back and forth between my experiences and my connections to a broader context through self- examination (Ellis, 2007). That's for you to decide. I hope my work can be recognized within the more evocative group of autoethnographers who endeavor to promote change by sharing their stories from their hearts. (Rogers-Shaw, 2020, p. 10)

So, in the end, I followed Denzin (2006), and I wrote my own version of autoethnography.

References

Anderson, L. (2006). Analytic autoethnography. *Journal of* Contemporary *Ethnography, 35*(4), 373-395. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241605280449

Bochner, A., & Ellis, C. (2016). *Evocative autoethnography: Writing lives and telling stories*. Routledge.

Clandinin, D. J., Caine, V., Estefan, A., Huber, J., Murphy, M. S., & Steeves, P. (2015). Places of practice: Learning to think narratively. *Narrative Works, 5*(1). https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/NW/article/view/23783/27556

Clark, M. C., & Rossiter, M. (2008). Narrative learning in adulthood. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 2008(*119), 61-70. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.306

Denzin, N. K. (2006). Analytic autoethnography, or déjà vu all over again. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 35*(4), 419-428. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241606286985

Ellingson, L., & Ellis, C. (2008). Autoethnography as constructionist project. In J. A. Holstein, & J. F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Handbook of constructionist research* (pp. 445-465). Guilford. https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/gender/34/

Ellis, C. (1991). Sociological introspection and emotional experience. *Symbolic Interaction, 14*(1), 23-50. https://doi.org/10.1525/si.1991.14.1.23

Ellis, C. (2007). Telling secrets, revealing lives. *Qualitative Inquiry, 13*(1), 3-29. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800406294947

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung, 12*(1), 273-290. http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095

Ellis, C. S., & Bochner, A. P. (2006). Analyzing analytic autoethnography: An autopsy. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 35*(4), 429-449. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241606266979

Fawcett, B. (1986). Cambodia: *A book for people who find television too slow*. Talonbooks.

Ferri, B. A. (2011). Disability life writing and the politics of knowing. *Teachers College Record, 113*(10), 2267-2282. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299016963_Disability_Life_Writing_and_the_

Politics_of_Knowing

Ronai, C. R. (1995). Multiple reflections of child sex abuse: An argument for a layered account. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 23*(4), 395-426. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124195023004001

Rogers-Shaw, C. (2020) *Performing disability: An autoethnography of persevering and becoming* (494) [Doctoral dissertation]. The Pennsylvania State University. The Pennsylvania State Electronic Theses and Dissertations for Graduate School. https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/18264car348

"Assume I Don't Know": Adult Degree Completer Perceptions of a Portfolio Experience

Tina Root, Shelli Henehan, and Micki Voelkel
University of Arkansas—Fort Smith

Abstract: In the fall of 2019, the University of Arkansas--Fort Smith enrolled an initial cohort of students in an adult degree completion program designed to combine previous college hours and current work experience that could be applied to additional college credit. The students were enrolled in a portfolio class in which they documented their prior learning toward one or more existing college courses within their degree plans. The researchers have identified strategies for eliminating barriers to instruction for returning students. This article will focus on the tools and techniques that have proven helpful in perceptual change within an eight-week adult degree completion portfolio course.

Keywords: prior learning assessment, PLA, adult degree completion, non-traditional students, barriers to learning

Adults 25 years and older who have a bachelor's degree earn $1,248 in median weekly earnings as compared to $746 in median weekly earnings for those with only a high school diploma. Unemployment rates are also higher for those with only a high school diploma (3.7%) as compared to adults with a bachelor's degree (2.2%) (Torpey, 2018). In Arkansas, only 23% of residents have achieved a bachelor's degree or higher as compared to 32% of Americans overall (TownCharts.com, 2020). In Sebastian County, Arkansas, the statistic is worse: only 19.69% of Arkansas have achieved a bachelor's degree or higher. Of Arkansans 25 and older, 23.8% have completed some college but failed to persist to degree completion (WorldPopulationReview.com, 2020).

University of Arkansas--Fort Smith (UAFS) is a regional comprehensive university with an enrollment of just under 7000. In 2019, UAFS created the Adult Degree Completion Program (ADCP) for adult students who had completed 30 credit hours of college previously, were age 25 or older, and had a minimum of five years of work experience. In addition, participants in the ADCP have life or work learning experiences that they can use to fulfill course objectives through a portfolio process. Students in the inaugural ADCP portfolio class completed coursework in which they identified and reflected on the barriers to degree completion they experienced.

The purpose of this study is to identify barriers that prevent adults from returning to school and/or become obstacles to degree completion once they are enrolled. The master research question is: What barriers do adult returning students perceive in both returning to college and/or persisting and completing degree requirements? Additional questions guiding the study follow:
- What barriers do adult returning students perceive to re-enrolling in college?
- What barriers do adult returning students perceive to persisting in the degree program once they are enrolled?
- What strategies do adult returning students use to overcome perceived barriers?

- How do the perceptions and attitudes of adult returning students change over time in an eight-week portfolio course?

Literature Review

Today's college student has changed dramatically over the last several years. According to the Lumina Foundation (2019), 37% of college students are 25 or older, and 46% are going to college for the first time. In addition, the Lumina Foundation states that 64% of college students work, with 40% of those students working full-time (2019). Adult learners have been defined as those over 24, with responsibilities such as work and family (NCES.ed.gov, 2019). Adult students returning to higher education institutions have often found barriers during this return process. "Previous research has found that two of the four biggest barriers that prevent adults from going back to school are time and money, the two others are family responsibilities and the scheduling of courses" (Klein-Collins, 2010, p. 43). Time management is challenging when taking on responsibilities of family, work and home (Colvin, 2012).

In addition, barriers such as concerns about their ability to succeed and negative past experiences with school are included in barriers to adult returning students. These barriers have been categorized by Ekstrom (1972) as institutional, situational and dispositional. Institutional barriers, according to Ekstrom, include admission practices, curriculum development, and financial aid. Situational barriers can include finance, transportation, childcare, family support, employer support, and significant life events (Eckstrom, 1972; Bergman, Cudney, Harding, He, & Saraiva, 2019). Intellectual activity concerns about the ability to succeed and fear of failure make up dispositional barriers, according to Eckstrom (1972).

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) has conducted extensive research into the various aspects of the adult learner's situation, as well as ways to transfer life experiences into college credit. In 2010, CAEL sponsored a study of the relationship between college credit-earning prior learning assessments (PLA) and the accompanying student outcomes. Findings showed adult PLA credit earners were 2.5 times more likely to have completed a college degree than adult learners with no PLA credit (Klein-Collins & Hudson, 2017).

According to Bergman, Olson & Associates (2019), adult learners who return to college have stories that highlight admirable qualities:

> The real story about returning adults includes strong and long-term performance in the workforce, strong familial connections and support systems, large networks, a laundry list of success and accomplishments in life, a self-directed approach to learning, and an achievement orientation and independence in the learning environment. (p. 12)

Providing opportunities for PLA credits that view the adult learner as a self-directed, motivated student will encourage deeper and more meaningful engagement throughout the coursework.

Methodology

The current research is a qualitative case study in which the authors examined the barriers to degree completion that adult students perceived. Students in an eight-week portfolio class completed course assignments in which they were asked about the barriers that kept them from returning to college and the barriers they were experiencing, now that they were actually enrolled in a program. In week two of the course, students were asked to identify barriers that prevented them from completing a degree. They also were asked to offer suggestions as to how UAFS can remove those barriers. In week seven of the course, students were asked to write a paragraph reflecting on each of the commonly identified barriers: time, cost, family responsibility, and course scheduling. Students were also asked to discuss if and how the portfolio class had helped reduce barriers, and about strategies they had used or planned to use to overcome barriers. The UAFS Institutional Review Board approved using the course work for the study; each participant completed an informed consent before written work was included in the dataset.

Nineteen students enrolled in the portfolio class; of those students, 15 participated in the study. Participants were adult students over the age of 25. Of the participants, 40% were male, and 60% were female. White participants made up 88% of the class, with 6% identifying as American Indian or Alaskan Native, and another 6% identify as African American or Black. All the participants worked full-time. Of the 15 respondents, 80% were married, and 20% were divorced. Ages ranged from 25to 35 (20%), 36 to 45 (47%), 46-55 (20%), and 56-65 (13%). Annual earning ranged from $25,000 to 34,999 (13%), $35,000 to $49,999 (20%), $50,000 to $74,999 (27%), and $100,000-$149,999 (13%). Students entered the program with varying numbers of exiting college credits; 7% of participants had 30 hours or less, 67% had between 31 and 60 hours, 13% had between 61 and 90 hours, and 13% had between 91 and 120 hours. First-generation college students made up 71% of the cohort.

Each of the three researchers independently coded the written assignments using emergent coding. The authors combined the individual coding schemes into a shared coding scheme.

Findings

Four themes emerged from the data: Sacrifice, Emotional Barriers, Juggling, and "Assume I Don't Know".

Theme 1: Sacrifice

Respondents discussed the ways in which personal sacrifices—of time, money, family, rest—were necessary to complete course work. One participant wrote: "Ultimately, my goal reaching self is hoping to influence my family members in a positive way by sacrificing my personal and family time to obtaining my degree." Another wrote: "I will make other sacrifices along the path to degree completion, but the benefits of having a degree outweigh the cost to completion in my eyes."

Theme 2: Emotional Barriers

Throughout written responses to assignments, respondents repeatedly used words indicating strong negative emotions such as *guilt*, *fear,* or *burden*. For example, a participant wrote, "The guilt of not being available when needed was just too much to bear," while a different respondent struggled with "the fear of missing some of my daughter's major milestones and achievements during her last two years of high school." Other responses mentioned fear of being in class with "young traditional students" or "fear of technology."

Theme 3: Juggling

Written responses used images of *balancing* or *juggling* to describe the experience of combining work, family, personal, and college responsibilities. One respondent wrote, "Basically, an adult student with a full-time job, a family, volunteer activities AND schoolwork is like a clustered-up mess sometimes and add to that all the various courses we have to take can be daunting, to say the least". A newly married student responded, "I just recently got married, and the past year has been hard for me to juggle going to school, working full time, and making sure my house and husband were taken care of." Another student responded, "I am currently typing this report in my car waiting on my grandson's ball game to start."

Theme 4: "Assume I Don't Know"

Participants also stated that they did not know concepts that faculty and administrators apparently expected them to know:

> Assume I don't know. I don't know some of the writing formats. I don't know how best to choose the syllabi to portfolio. It would be great if some of the learning opportunities we will encounter from week to week could be "called out" a bit more during class time. A quick point in the right direction would allow a motivated learner to utilize time more effectively, and a higher confidence level would be a direct result.

Another student suggested, "A higher education institution can reduce barriers to adult learners by being patient and guiding students through the different steps to find information and how to go about it in the library."

Recommended Strategies

In addition to the themes that emerged from the data, the data also included feedback from the students suggesting strategies that would help reduce barriers. These strategies included: Scheduling classes in eight-week terms, scheduling in-person classes at night, scheduling more fully online classes, focusing on processes, and providing multiple resources.

Discussion

The perceived barriers shared by the respondents in this study are congruent with previous research which categorized barriers as institutional, situational, and dispositional. The themes of

sacrifice and juggling are situational barriers—life situations that take precedence over or make difficult the work of returning to college. The emotional barriers theme identified in this study is similar to the concept of dispositional barriers, i.e. the negative emotions associated with a return to college. Finally, the "assume I don't know" theme aligns with the concept of institutional barriers (Eckstrom, 1972; Bergman, 2019).

In a survey of 100 non-traditional adult learners, similar themes emerged including, finance, family, work, time-management, psychosocial and institutional barriers with finance identified as the number one barrier (Hunter-Johnson, 2017). Emotional barriers such as fear and apprehension were identified in a study (Genco, 2007) of adult students reentering college:

> Some students stated they felt that age interfered with their ability to interact with traditional-aged students and affected their ability to be academically successful. Adult students are time conscious. College is only one of a myriad of time/role demands for the re-entry student. Work, family, and home responsibilities compete for time and energy. Returning students deal with these obstacles through family support, positive attitudes, faith, and the belief that education is a means to a better way of life. These re-entry students reported that orientation should address their concerns--one of the most pertinent being the anxiety and apprehension caused by returning to school as an older student. (p.51)

Another study found that psychological factors strongly influence how adults perceive their ability to succeed in education; factors such as self-esteem and locus of control may be barriers to adults improving employment and going back to school (Goto & Martin, 2009).

Hunter-Johnson (2017) described institutional barriers that are similar to the barriers assigned the theme of "Assume I Don't Know" that emerged in the current study; in his study 34% of participants identified instructional barriers that included course times, registration process, course availability, and institutional bureaucracy as significant factors.. The need for an appropriate orientation experience for returning adult students is supported by Fairchild (2003), who suggested that holding orientations for adult learners may help them balance the demands of family, work, and college.

Findings from the current study then are consistent with previous research and inspired some changes in how the portfolio class and the ADCP are run at UAFS.

Adjustments to the Adult Degree Completion Program

Based on research findings, the ADCP has eliminated several situational, institutional, and emotional barriers for adult students. By providing a portfolio mechanism to capture prior learning time to degree, time to completion, and expense have been reduced for UAFS students. Based on the comments from the respondents, modifications have included an assigned financial aid specialist for each student, eight-week and online courses scheduled specifically for degree completers and mentoring of students by those that have already successfully obtained credit through the portfolio process.

Students now receive a fully online orientation with assignments that are explicitly directed to removing barriers. In addition to reading assignments on APA style, additional assignment drafts, and the use of a template to create the portfolio have been adopted. Guest speakers have also been incorporated into the portfolio class, including visits from librarians to demonstrate library resources; additionally, a video tutorial has been launched for ongoing student use. Another innovation is the introduction of faculty members who teach in the programs of study so that students can begin to develop relationships with their instructors.

Based on innovations, the ADCP has increased the participation of returning students with more than 60 adult students pursuing degrees in Organizational Leadership or in General Studies. A new program for Early Childhood Education majors will become a part of the ADCP beginning in spring 2021.

Plans for future research include additional surveys of the adult degree completion program students to examine how program changes and adoption of best practices affect the perceived barriers for returning students. Future research should focus on persistence and retention of adult degree completers both at UAFS and nationally as well as more work on developing best practices for student services for this population.

References

Arkansas Education Data. (2020). *Towncharts*. https://www.towncharts.com/Arkansas/Arkansas-state-Education-data.html.

Bergman, B., Cudney, E., Harding, P., He, Z., & Saraiva, P. (2019). Global perspectives on quality in education. *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, *41*(4), 33-36.

Bergman, M., Olson, J., & Associates (2019). *Unfinished business: Compelling stories of adult student persistence.* Information Age Publishing.

Colvin, J. (2012). *Earn college credit for what you know.* Council for Adult & Experiential Learning.

Ekstrom, R. B. (1972). Barriers to women's participation in post-secondary education 1: A review of the literature. *ETS Research Bulletin Series*. Educational Testing Service.

Fairchild, Ellen E. (2003) Multiple roles of adult learners. *New Directions for Student Services*, *2003*(102), 11–16. https://doi:10.1002/ss.84

Genco, J. T. (2007). Adult re-entry students: Experiences preceding entry into a rural Appalachian community college, *12*(1), 47–61. https://doi.org/http://www.vccaedu.org/inquiry/inquiry-spring-2007/i-12-Genco.h

Goto, S.T., & Martin, C. (2009). Psychology of success: Overcoming barriers to pursuing further education, *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 57(1), 10-21. https://doi.org/10.1080/07377360902810744

Hunter-Johnson, Y. (2017). Demystifying educational resilience: Barriers of Bahamian nontraditional adult learners in higher education. *The Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, *65*(3), 175-186. https://doi.org/10.1080/07377363.2017.1275230

Klein-Collins, R. & Hudson, S. (2017). What happens when learning counts? Measuring the benefits of prior learning assessment for the adult learner. Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

Klein-Collins, R. (2010). Fueling the race to postsecondary success: A 48-institution study of prior learning assessment and adult student outcomes. Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

Luminafoundation.org. (2019). *Facts about today's students*. https://www.luminafoundation.org/resources/todays-student

NCES. (2019). Nontraditional undergraduates: Definitions and data. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs/web/97578e.asp [Accessed 2 Aug. 2019].

Sebastian County Arkansas Population. (2020). *Sebastian County, Arkansas population 2020.* World Population Review. https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/ar/sebastian-county-population/

Torpey, E. (2018). *Measuring the value of education*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2018/data-on-display/education-pays.htm?view_full

Expressive Writing and Community College Students: Making Meaning of Their Experiences in Life and Academics

Jeffrey A. Russell
Pellissippi State Community College

Abstract: Many college students face numerous academic, social, and economic obstacles that can affect their ability to succeed in their coursework. Expressive writing could be used to help college students overcome these obstacles and make meaning of their experiences to improve their academic lives. With expressive writing, community college students can learn from stressful events in their academic career, process their thoughts and emotions, reduce anxiety, and gain a new perspective on their goals through the process of reflection.

Keywords: community college, qualitative research, expressive writing, transformative learning

Community colleges are becoming an important option for college students due to rising four-year university costs, and more students are using community colleges as a pathway to a four-year university (Goldrick-Rab, 2010). Many community college students face numerous academic, social, and economic obstacles that can affect their ability to succeed in their coursework (Goldrick-Rab, 2010). Due to these obstacles, many students face circumstances ranging from limited income, domestic problems, health issues, and homelessness (Horton, 2015). Issues such as lack of support from family, cultural and racial differences, and financial stressors can also adversely affect the mental health of community college students (Horton, 2015). Since research on student pathways and outcomes in a community college setting is limited, positive interventions to improve community college student success are also limited (Goldrick-Rab, 2010). Given the challenges community college students face, expressive writing research is a low-cost intervention that could help students overcome obstacles in their academic and personal lives.

Expressive writing is a therapeutic writing technique that individuals can use to engage in the deep process of expressing one's emotion through the writing of a past traumatic experience (Bryan & Lu, 2016; Pennebaker & Beall, 1986). Many expressive writing studies have provided evidence of positive effects on physical and emotional health (Baikie et al., 2012; King & Miner, 2000). When using the expressive writing paradigm, individuals write about a stressful experience and their emotions about the event (Pennebaker & Beall,1986; Sloan & Marx, 2004). The writing is often done in consecutive days about one traumatic event or different events (Pennebaker & Beall,1986; Sloan & Marx, 2004).

Although there has been considerable empirical evidence that expressive writing can have a strong, positive effect on physical health as well as some evidence that there are benefits for mental health (Baikie & Wilhelm, 2005; Baikie et al., 2012; Hirai et al., 2012; Pennebaker & Beall, 1986;), there is a lack of knowledge of the experiences that individuals have when undertaking the expressive writing paradigm.

Furthermore, the expressive writing literature also lacks exploration of the expressive writing process in a community college setting.

The purpose of this study was to examine how community college students make meaning of their experience with the expressive writing process. By gaining a better understanding of the students' experience with using expressive writing, this research uncovers some of the strategy involved in how expressive writing works, and it gives an in-depth view of how expressive writing could be used at community and undergraduate colleges to improve retention, critical analysis, reflection, and motivation. This study also shows how the expressive writing process works through the eyes of the participant and discusses the connections between expressive writing and transformative learning. The research question guided the study: How do students make meaning of their experience with the expressive writing process?

Literature Review

Expressive writing was originally designed as an intervention to reduce stress and anxiety and to improve physiological and psychological health (Pennebaker & Beall, 1986). Some of the benefits included reducing post-traumatic stress disorder in female caregivers (Lepore & Greenberg, 2002), helping repair broken marriage and close relationships (Lepore & Greenberg, 2002), helping unemployed corporate businesspeople find jobs (Spera et al., 994), and lowering levels of stress for severe migraine headache patients (McKenna, 1997). Expressive writing was also convenient, mobile, adaptable, and simple for the participants (Lepore & Smyth, 2002). Although there still lies some uncertainty to how expressive writing works, four major theoretical perspectives have been used to explain the process: (a) disinhibition theory; (b) cognitive processing theory; (c) self-regulation; and (d) exposure theory. Also, previous studies on expressive writing have shown there are possible ties to writing and the positive transformative effects on the human body physically and mentally (Hudson & Day, 2012; Pennebaker & Chung, 2011). Overall, the literature suggests that expressive writing can be an effective tool to improve an individual's well-being and physical health yet their limited qualitative evidence to prove it is effective (King, 2001; Pennebaker, 2006; Sloan & Marx, 2004; Sloan et al., 2007; Smyth, 1998).

For this exploratory qualitative study, data were collected through an analysis of interviews and observation notes. Each participant completed two expressive writing exercises that focused on an academic obstacle. The prompt used for the expressive writing exercise was a variation of Pennebaker's original expressive writing prompt he used in his initial expressive writing study (Pennebaker & Beall,1986; Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999). Interviews following the second expressive writing session were conducted and recorded face to face with the participants using an open-ended interview approach. A comparative analysis approach was used to examine the interview data as a collective whole to find similar themes from the participants' answers (Charmaz, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Then, the highlighted words or phrases were coded to establish categories. Themes that emerged from the participants' interviews were identified, and the transcripts and highlighted common words, phrases, and ideas were reviewed. This data organization helped establish emerging themes.

Findings

Findings were identified as themes representing reflections about the participants' experiences with expressive writing exercises. The themes included affirmation of accomplishments, relief and relaxation, awareness of future, writing concerns, organization and chronological order of the writing process, and reflection.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis resulted in six main themes from the transcribed transcripts. The findings are discussed in relation to transformative learning theory and expressive writing theories.

Theme #1. Affirmation of Accomplishments

According to the cognitive-processing theory, the attempt to create a narrative and freely express one's ideas and thoughts on a stressful or difficult circumstance is part of the reason for the reduction of negative emotion and the increase in positive mental and physical health (Smyth, 1998; Lepore & Greenberg, 2002). Another possible connection to the cognitive-processing theory was that participants reported feelings of anxiety, stress, and anger, but the severity of these feelings lessened after they realized their strong accomplishments. For the participants of the study, they wrote about a current or recent obstacle in their learning experience. While they constructed a narrative and reflected on the experience, they not only recognized how they overcame an obstacle but also recognized their accomplishments. By using expressive writing, a learner can integrate, organize, and analyze the experience simply by focusing on the reconstruction of the learner's reality (Lyubomirsky, Sousa, & Dickerhoof, 2006; Mezirow, 1991). The simple act of writing creates an opportunity for questioning and considering other details or factors related to the disorienting dilemma (Lyubomirsky, Sousa, & Dickerhoof, 2006; Mezirow, 1991). By recognizing these details, expressive writing might be used to help individuals make positive connections from negative or stressful events, which may give some insight into how the participants recognize their accomplishments in a positive manner.

Theme #2. Relaxation and Relief

The participants described a calming effect that typically occurred during the writing exercises, while there was a great sense of relief after completing the two writing exercises. These data provide some insight to support that expressive writing has positive effects on physical and mental health, such as reducing stress and anxiety (Frattaroli, 2006; Lepore, 1997; Pennebaker & Beall, 1986; Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999; Stanton et al., 2002). This finding partially relates to the expressive writing disinhibition theory. Individuals during the expressive writing process can release emotional tension, which reduces the amount of intrusive, unwanted thoughts that can lead to lower levels of physiological and physical functioning (Lepore, 1997). The main connection between disinhibition theory and transformative learning theory is that the obstacle the participants discussed in their writing was their disorienting dilemma, and the action of questioning and reflecting on the disorienting dilemma created a sense of relaxation and relief. One possible explanation is that releasing negative thoughts by writing about them might help participants recognize positive goals and, thus, feel relieved.

Theme #3. Awareness of the Future

Participants reported that the expressive writing exercises made them feel positive about their futures, particularly when dealing with job possibilities and financial security. Although the participants reported having some anxiety and fear about their futures, the expressive writing exercises helped them realize how much potential they had to succeed in the future. The act of writing could have facilitated the process of transformation to build self-confidence with the participants, and through the process of reflection, the participants expressed feeling positive and ready to take on future challenges.

Although cognitive-processing theory and disinhibition theory may offer some explanation to their experiences of constructing meaning from their narratives, both theories mention nothing about recognizing future possibilities or gaining insight from reflection to look toward future possibilities. The act of writing could have facilitated the process of transformation to build self-confidence with the participants, and through the process of reflection, the participants expressed feeling positive and ready to take on future challenges. Expressive writing could help facilitate the later phases of Mezirow's transformative learning theory by providing the individual with the tools to find their own unity and purpose. Through discourse, exploration, and examination, an individual participating in expressive writing can transition into a course of action for future experiences (McAdams, 2001).

Theme #4. Grammar and Writing Concerns

This theme does not connect to any of the four major expressive writing theories, but the concern about grammar and punctuation in their writing does connect with the limitations in previous expressive writing studies. For many of the participants, the main issue was making sure that their writing made sense, and although good grammar and punctuation was not a requirement for the writing exercises, the participants did feel some anxiety and fear at the beginning of the exercise.

Theme #5. Organization and Chronological Order of the Writing Process

All participants reported that their experiences with expressive writing helped them organize emotions. Through the process of expressive writing, students can examine thinking patterns or belief systems in a structured way, which allows them to review the processes of their behavior (Hubbs & Brand, 2005). Since expressive writing is written and structured chronologically, the participants found it easier to reflect on how they felt about overcoming their obstacles. Sloan and Marx (2004) believed that expressive writing provides structure, organization, unity, and meaning to past traumatic or stressful experiences participants each reported that their experience with expressive writing helped them organize emotions. By using expressive writing, a learner can integrate, organize, and analyze the experience simply by focusing on the reconstruction of the learner's reality (Lyubomirsky et al., 2006). The participants believed that expressive writing helped them organize their thoughts, and because of this, they were able to recognize triggers and emotions they encountered throughout their stressful experiences (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009; Niederhoffer & Pennebaker, 2009).

Theme #6. Reflection

One of the most common ideas was that the exercises helped the participants reflect upon their previous academic stressors and having the time to reflect upon those previous experiences. This theme can be connected to the cognitive processing theory because the participants gained new positive perspectives on their goals and accomplishments through reflection (Pennebaker, 1989; Lepore & Greenberg, 2002). In this mode of self-reflection, the process may lead "to a new way of interpreting the world, and transformation has taken place" (Cranton, 1994, p. 730). For all the participants, reflection was the key to helping them recognize their goals and accomplishments while analyzing their thoughts and feelings during their experience. Overall, the participants reported having gained greater control over their stressful academic experience through the process of reflection, and by doing so, they gained a better understanding of the experience that could help them overcome future issues.

Implications and Future Research

This exploratory, qualitative study offers implications for practice and informs future research. Based on the results of this study, expressive writing could be used to help first-year students recognize their accomplishments and learn from past academic mistakes in a positive manner. Expressive writing could be used in the classroom to help students recognize goals for the class, their academic careers, or future employment. By understanding how they have overcome challenges in the classroom and beyond, students may feel more confident in their abilities to complete their coursework and plan for future opportunities. By providing a simple, low-cost tool such as expressive writing, college students can develop a course of action and discover their abilities through the process of reflection.

Incorporating expressive writing in the classroom also may be beneficial because it could help alleviate anxiety for community college students. Community college students may perform better on tests after completing an expressive writing exercise because of less anxiety and stress. This process could help improve problem-solving, confidence, retention, and academic success. The study also showed that expressive writing is a transformative experience because the participants reflect on an experience, learn from the experience, and recognize their accomplishments and goals for the future from the experience.

Expressive writing is a transformative experience because the participants reflect on an experience, learn from the experience, and recognize their accomplishments and goals for the future from the experience. Through reflection, students can gain a sense of purpose about their experiences in their coursework. By taking the time to think deeply about their issues and the purpose of their coursework, students may become more self-regulated in their approach to coursework, which could improve motivation, retention, and grades. These data provide qualitative support for the theoretical framework of expressive writing, and this data provides multiple perspectives of the experience to give a clearer picture of the mechanisms involved with the process of expressive writing. Overall, the analysis of the interviews shows that expressive writing helps students build confidence by recognizing their goals and accomplishments through the process of reflection. As a part of transformative learning, expressive writing not only can be used to provide meaning to a problem, but it can be used to help students make connections and create possible solutions to their issues.

Future research opportunities include more qualitative studies on community college and 4-year university students to compare the emerging themes. Another opportunity would be to analyze emotion and function words used in expressive writing studies to examine how these words may contribute to the expressive writing process. Another possibility for future research is to analyze different age groups to provide insight into the differences in life transitions and issues in the participants' lives. Additional research on expressive writing with a sample that varies in race, gender, socioeconomic status, and location is also needed. It could provide essential information that shows how social factors affect the expressive writing process. These recommendations for future research may help expand the knowledge of mechanisms that affect the expressive writing process and may provide additional information on why expressive writing can be beneficial in making meaning of traumatic experiences.

References

Baikie, K. A., Geerligs, L., & Wilhelm, K. (2012). Expressive writing and positive writing for participants with mood disorders: An online randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *136*(3), 310-319.

Baikie, K. A., & Wilhelm, K. (2005). Emotional and physical health benefits of expressive writing. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, *11*(5), 338-346.

Bryan, J., & Lu, Q. (2016). Vision for improvement: Expressive writing as an intervention for people with Stargardt's disease, a rare eye disease. *Journal of Health Psychology, 21*(5), 709-719.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Cranton, P. (1994). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide for educators of adults* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass

Goldrick-Rab, S. (2010). Challenges and opportunities for improving community college student success. *Review of Educational Research*, *80*(3), 437-469.

Hirai, M., Skidmore, S. T., Clum, G. A., & Dolma, S. (2012). An investigation of the efficacy of online expressive writing for trauma-related psychological distress in Hispanic individuals. *Behavior Therapy*, *43*(4), 812-824.

Horton, J. (2015). Identifying at-risk factors that affect college student success. *International Journal of Process Education*, *7*(1), 83-101.

Hudson, J., & Day, M. C. (2012). Athletes' experiences of expressive writing about sports stressors. *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, *13*(6), 798-806.

King, L. A. (2001). The health benefits of writing about life goals. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *27*(7), 798-807.

King, L., & Miner, K. (2000). Writing about the perceived benefits of traumatic events: Implications for physical health. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *26*(2), 220-230.

Lepore, S. J. (1997). Expressive writing moderates the relation between intrusive thoughts and depressive symptoms. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*(5), 1030-1037.

Lepore, S. J., & Greenberg, M. A. (2002). Mending broken hearts: Effects of expressive writing on mood, cognitive processing, social adjustment and health following a relationship breakup. *Psychology & Health*, *17*(5), 547-560.

Lepore, S., & Smyth, J. M. (2002). *The writing cure: How expressive writing promotes health and emotional well-being.* American Psychological Association.

McAdams, D. P. (2001). The psychology of life stories. *Review of General Psychology*, *5*(2), 100-122.

Lyubomirsky, S., Sousa, L., & Dickerhoof, R. (2006). The costs and benefits of writing, talking, and thinking about life's triumphs and defeats. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *90*(4), 692-708.

McKenna, M. H. (1997). Symptom as storyteller: Migraine headache and journal writing [Doctoral dissertation]. Pacifica Graduate Institute. *Dissertations Abstracts International*, *59*, 3112.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J., & Taylor, E. W. (2009*). Transformative learning in practice: Insights from community, workplace, and higher education*. Jossey-Bass.

Niederhoffer, K. G., & Pennebaker, J. W. (2009). Sharing one's story: On the benefits of writing or talking about emotional experience. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.), Oxford library of psychology, *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (pp. 621-632). Oxford University Press.

Pennebaker, J. W. (1989). Confession, inhibition, and disease. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *22*(1), 211-244. Academic Press.

Pennebaker, J. W., & Beall, S. K. (1986). Confronting a traumatic event: Toward an understanding of inhibition and disease. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *95*(3), 274-281.

Pennebaker, J. W., & Chung, C. K. (2011). Expressive writing: Connections to physical and mental health. In H. S. Friedman (Ed.), *Oxford Library of Psychology, The Oxford handbook of health psychology* (pp. 417-437). Oxford University Press.

Pennebaker, J. W., & Seagal, J. D. (1999). Forming a story: The health benefits of narrative. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *55*(10), 1243-1254.

Sloan, D. M., & Marx, B. P. (2004). A closer examination of the structured written disclosure procedure. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *72*(2), 165-175.

Sloan, D. M., Marx, B. P., Epstein, E. M., & Lexington, J. M. (2007). Does altering the writing instructions influence outcome associated with written disclosure? *Behavior Therapy, 38*(2), 155-168.

Smyth, J. (1998). Written emotional expression: Effect sizes, outcome types, and moderating variables. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *66*(1), 174-184.

Spera, S., Buhrfeind, E., & Pennebaker, J. (1994). Expressive writing and coping with job loss. *The Academy of Management Journal, 37*(3), 722-733.

The Effects of Bargaining Unit Status and Union Membership on Local Government Employee Public Service Motivation

Ty M. Ryburn
University of Arkansas

Abstract: A challenge public organizations face in motivating their workforces is the strong union influence. In 2018, the United States Supreme Court abolished agency fees in the public sector, changing the landscape of union membership. In examining the unique motivational factors of public sector employees, Perry and Wise developed a theory called public service motivation (PSM). Using PSM as the theoretical framework, the purpose of this study was to examine the effects of bargaining unit status and union membership on the PSM levels of employees. Results of this study provide insight into motivational factors of public service employees and provide implications and recommendations for practice and future research in the field of human resource development (HRD).

Keywords: Public Service Motivation, unions, bargaining unit, union membership, human resource development

Managing employees in the public sector requires a highly engaged workforce to ensure success, necessitating that leaders in the public sector understand and address the unique factors that make increasing engagement in the public sector challenging (Lavigna, 2014). These factors include economic competition for talent from the private sector, lower pay than the private sector, inadequate training budgets, pressures emphasizing productivity yet lacking incentives, and a cultural legacy of devalued work (Costick, 2006). Due to these challenging factors, understanding employee motivation is critical for public organizations to best recruit, develop, and retain highly motivated public employees.

To understand employee motivation in the public sector, it is important to understand the values of public employees. Perry and Wise (1990) began researching these values and found that a distinct public service ethos existed in public service employees, which was different from that of private sector employees. Public sector employees, more than private sector employees, value interesting work and have a stronger desire to help others, be useful to society (Frank & Lewis, 2004), and possess a special motivation to serve the public (Delgaauw & Dur, 2008). This unique sense of "public service motivation" developed into a formal theory called Public Service Motivation (PSM). PSM contains four specific motivational factors unique to the public sector: attraction to policy making, commitment to the public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice (Perry, 1996).

Because a prominent challenge public organizations face in motivating their workforces is a strong union influence (Lavigna, 2014), understanding the effects of bargaining unit status and union membership status on employee PSM are important considerations for human resource development (HRD) professionals in municipal government organizations. Understanding these effects can enable HRD professionals to implement training and development initiatives steering recruitment and hiring, employee motivation and retention, and career transitioning. These

training and development initiatives can be aimed at management, employees, as well as unions, to foster a more motivated workforce and increase knowledge pertaining to the motivation of public service employees.

The strong union influence in the public sector, which affords employees many protections, is one of the most prevalent challenges in motivating public service employees. More than 34% of public sector employees are in unions, which is more than five times higher than the private sector (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). Furthermore, on June 27, 2018, the United States Supreme Court in *Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)* affirmed the First Amendment rights of employees and abolished agency fees in the public sector. The *Janus* ruling is one of the most impactful labor rulings over the past 40 years and presents several new challenges in the relationship dynamics between employees, unions, and management. Because employees in bargaining unit positions no longer pay previously required agency fees (fair share), a financial burden is now forced upon unions and requiring them to work harder to prove their value to employees with less financial backing (Semuels, 2018).

The purpose of this quantitative survey study of local government employees in a city in New Mexico was to examine the effects of bargaining unit status and union membership on the PSM levels of employees. This study sought to find out how bargaining unit status and union membership status affected PSM levels of employees. For employees who are in bargaining unit positions, this study explored whether differences in PSM levels existed between union members and non-members. Results of this study provide insight into motivational factors of public service employees, thus informing the field of HRD and steering the training and development needs of public service organizations with the overall goal of providing the best possible services to citizens.

Research Design

Because this study sought to use quantitative analysis to describe attitudes and opinions of participants, a quantitative survey design was appropriate (Creswell, 2014). Utilizing a total population sampling technique, subjects included all non-first responder or public safety employees in a city in New Mexico, that is, all employees other than those in the police department, fire and rescue department, 911 communications, or municipal court. Subjects responded to a survey that consisted of the Perry (1996) PSM Measurement Scale, which was authorized for use by Perry. The Perry PSM Measurement Scale is a 24-item Likert-type scaled survey, and is the predominant instrument used to measure PSM (Belle, 2013). Bargaining unit status was divided into two groups, reflecting whether employees' jobs are in a bargaining unit. If employees were in a bargaining unit, they were asked whether they were dues paying members or not, reflecting their union membership status. The quantitative analysis results showed the variances between groups, revealing how the various groupings compared to each other, with the intent of generalizability to other similar populations.

Importance of the Study

Because one of the largest motivational challenges public organizations face is the influence of unions (Lavigna, 2014), understanding the motivation of employees in this regard is critical for public employers and specifically HRD professionals, but limited research has been done in these areas. Also, due to the U.S. Supreme Court's 2018 *Janus* decision's resulting in public sector bargaining unit employees' no longer being forced to pay agency fees, a blank canvas presently exists regarding how union membership status affects bargaining unit employees' PSM levels. Furthermore, additional research is needed examining PSM as a dependent variable, thus exploring its causal factors (Bozeman & Su, 2014). This study began to fill in the knowledge gaps that exist pertaining to the effects of bargaining unit status and union membership status on PSM levels of employees, especially given the recent *Janus* decision.

Finally, while the topics explored presented great opportunity to fill in research gaps and begin new lines of research, this study was also the only such study geared toward gleaning insight for HRD practitioners. While much PSM research claims to provide insight for human resources management (HRM) practitioners, there is no mention in the literature regarding how PSM can inform HRD practices. Thus, this study began to address ways in which knowledge of PSM can inform the HRD profession and the practices of HRD professionals, such as training and workforce development initiatives, which train employees, supervisors, and managers on the recruitment, retention, and career transitioning of public service employees.

Data Analysis and Results

Data were collected from all city departments in the organization, except for departments providing public safety. These included police, fire, and rescue; 911 communications; and municipal court. Electronic and paper surveys were used for employee participation, and 179 employees participated in the study.

Hypothesis 1 posited differences in employees' PSM levels based on whether their job existed in a bargaining unit or not. The null hypothesis that bargaining unit status does not affect PSM levels of local government employees in a city in New Mexico was rejected because a significant main effect existed between the two levels of bargaining unit status $F(1, 171) = 5.213, p < .05$. Bargaining unit employees had a mean of 3.382, while non-bargaining unit employees had a significantly higher mean of 3.552 (Sig. = .024, $p < .05$).

For employees in a bargaining unit, Hypothesis 2 posited differences in employees' PSM levels based on whether they were union members or not. The null hypothesis, in this case, could not be rejected because a significant main effect was not present between the two levels of union membership status $F(1, 106) = .334, p > .05$. Union members had a mean of 3.360, while non-union members had a higher mean of 3.423, showing that bargaining unit employees who are not union members reported higher levels of PSM than bargaining unit employees who are union members; however, the difference did not rise to a level of significance (p < .05).

Implications and Recommendations

Given that this study was the first to specifically address the effects of bargaining unit status on employees' PSM levels, it remains unclear if bargaining unit status itself is the driver of PSM levels, if it is the nature of the positions rather than bargaining unit status that affects PSM levels, or if a multitude of other organizational factors exist. The results of the current study indicate that bargaining unit employees have significantly lower PSM than non-bargaining unit employees. Furthermore, within a bargaining unit, although not significant, union members have lower PSM than non-members. The results of this study indicate that many questions remain regarding the drivers of PSM. Despite these lingering questions, the findings of this study had implications for HRD professionals.

Recommendations for Future HRD Practice

Taking the results of this study into account and understanding, it is important to maximize motivation throughout the career cycle of employees; several recommendations for future practice exist for HRD professionals. The first steps in maximizing PSM in public organizations are attracting, recruiting, and selecting the right employees. Attracting and selecting employees with high PSM levels harnesses the desired PSM qualities and places employees in environments where they can perform well (Christensen, Paarlberg, & Perry, 2017). HRD professionals can play an integral role in ensuring these processes are used to maximize PSM. Through training and development initiatives geared towards managers responsible for hiring new employees, organizations can bring in employees who possess the qualities and characteristics desired, including adequate or high PSM levels. Such training may consist of teaching hiring managers and supervisors how to develop job descriptions, ask interview questions targeting PSM values, conduct job interviews overall, administer pre-hire tests, and sell prospective employees on the attributes of the organization in ways that focus on the qualities of PSM.

With future research providing insight into the reasons why bargaining unit employees may have lower PSM than non-bargaining unit employees, HRD professionals can develop PSM in new bargaining unit employees through several initiatives. These can include new employee orientation programs that display how the work employees provide directly impacts the lives of the citizens they serve and explain how employees' work contributes to the mission of the organization. In addition, HRD can form alliances and collaborate with unions, and use bargaining unit employees within these training and development initiatives, which would serve to strengthen PSM levels in the employees assisting in conducting training, in addition to bolstering PSM in the new employees receiving the training.

Once employees with desired PSM levels are hired into an organization, maintaining PSM for all employees is important. Socialization in organizations plays a major role in fostering PSM in employees (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010), and managers can nurture PSM in employees through job design, rewards, and performance feedback (Gould-Williams, 2016). These methods should strategically align employee values and organizational ideologies, which will positively affect employee PSM levels (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010; Wright, 2007). Furthermore, initiatives and practices that do not foster PSM or negatively affect PSM, such as pay-for-performance programs fostering extrinsic motivation rather than the characteristic of intrinsic motivation present in PSM should be considered for removal.

HRD is critical to maintaining and fostering PSM within employees after they are hired into public organizations. Continuous training and development throughout employees' careers should be centered on how their work provides value to the citizens they serve and how their work is linked to and supports the organizational mission (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010). Additionally, HRD can also develop future and current organizational leaders by teaching them how to model and communicate desired public service values (Christensen, 2017).

Another strategy to nurture and maintain PSM throughout careers is for HRD to develop and deliver ongoing periodic training for employees, provide updates on current and future organizational projects and initiatives such as the organization's strategic plan, and communicate how all employees have a direct impact on the success of such projects and initiatives. Furthermore, bargaining unit employees can take prominent and active roles in these HRD initiatives by assisting in the delivery of training in efforts to foster, solidify, and maximize PSM across the organization and especially among bargaining unit employees.

Recommendations for Future Research

The current study was the first attempt at specifically addressing how PSM is affected by bargaining unit status and union membership status, and many questions are still to be answered. One of the largest challenges in PSM research is the fact that PSM has been used as an independent variable rather than as a dependent variable to understand the causes of PSM (Bozeman & Su, 2014). While this study addressed this gap in PSM research, more gaps exist, including more qualitative studies on PSM (Perry & Vandenabeele, 2015) and studies aimed at finding PSM's causal factors (Vandenabeele, 2011). To glean an understanding of PSM's causal relationships, more longitudinal research is needed because cross-sectional survey data provide information only on the direction of causality rather than on conclusions regarding causality (Vandenabeele, Brewer, & Ritz, 2004).

Qualitative research to understand the drivers of PSM in employees is also needed (Perry & Vandenabeele, 2015). Pertaining to the current topics, qualitative studies examining how bargaining unit status and union membership status affect PSM levels would be useful in continuing to fill knowledge voids pertaining to these PSM constructs. Understanding the reasons for these differences, including attitudes' towards unions by non-bargaining unit employees and bargaining unit employees, would work towards finding out if unions are responsible for these differences, perhaps based on their real or perceived protections of employees.

In addition to longitudinal and qualitative research, more research along the lines of the current study is needed to be able to generalize about the factors affecting PSM levels. Although the current study may be generalizable to the organizational population which was studied, further similar studies in other local government organizations in the region and country, in addition to other governmental organizations such as state and federal governments and non-governmental public organizations, would be valuable. Such research would allow cross-comparisons and allow conclusions to be further drawn in attempts to fill gaps in the knowledge regarding PSM and its causal factors.

References

Bellé, N. (2013). Experimental evidence on the relationship between public service motivation and job performance. *Public Administration Review*, *73*(1), 143-153.

Bozeman, B., & Su, X. (2014). Public service motivation concepts and theory: A critique. *Public Administration Review, 75*(5), 700-710. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12248

Christensen, R. K., Paarlberg, L., & Perry, J. L. (2017). Public service motivation research: Lessons for practice. *Public Administration Review, 77*(4), 529-542. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12796

Costick, W. (2006, January). Perceptions of public service and improving your city's image. *Michigan Municipal Review*. https://icma.org/sites/default/files/6150_.pdf

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.

Davis, R. S. (2013). Unionization and work attitudes: How union commitment influences public sector job satisfaction. *Public Administration Review, 73*(1), 74-84. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2012.02609.x

Delfgaauw, J., & Dur, R. (2008). Incentives and workers' motivation in the public sector. *The Economic Journal, 118*(525), 171-191. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0297.2007.02108.x

Frank, S. A., & Lewis, G. B. (2004). Government employees: Working hard or hardly working? *The American Review of Public Administration*, *34*(3), 36-51. https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074003258823

Gould-Williams, J. S. (2016). Managers' motives for investing in HR practices and their implications for public service motivation: A theoretical perspective. *International Journal of Manpower, 37*(5), 764-776. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-03-2016-0065

Lavigna, R. (2014). Why government workers are harder to motivate. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2014/11/why-government-workers-are-harder-to-motivate

Paarlberg, L. E., & Lavigna, B. (2010). Transformational leadership and public service motivation: Driving individual and organizational performance. *Public Administration Review, 70*(5), 710-718. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6210.2010.02199.x

Perry, J. L. (1996). Measuring public service motivation: An assessment of construct reliability and validity. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 6*(1), 5-22. doi:10.1093/oxfordjournals.jpart.a024303

Perry, J. L., & Vandenabeele, W. (2015). Public service motivation research: Achievements, challenges, and future directions. *Public Administration Review*, *75*(5), 692-699. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12430

Perry, J. L., & Wise, L. R. (1990). The motivational bases of public service. *Public Administration Review, 50*(3), 367-373. https://doi.org/10.2307/976618

Semuels, A. (2018, June). Is it the end of public-sector unions in America? *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/06/janus-afscme-public-sector-unions/563879/

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018). *Economic news release: Union members summary* (USDL Publication No. 18-0080). https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm

Vandenabeele, W. (2011). Who wants to deliver public service? Do institutional antecedents of public service motivation provide an answer? *Review of Public Personnel Administration, 31*(1), 87-107. https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X10394403

Vandenabeele, W., Brewer, G. A., & Ritz, A. (2014). Past, present, and future of public service motivation research. *Public Administration*, *92*(4), 779-789. https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12136

Wright, B. E. (2007). Public service and motivation: Does mission matter? *Public Administration Review, 67*(1), 54-64. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2018.1556004

Distance Learning in Modern Times: Challenges for Contemporary Solutions

Rose A. Santos
Texas A&M University

Abstract: This roundtable session explored engagement practices for practitioners and educators alike to meet the online needs of diverse learners. Classroom teaching has called for the need to be solely available online as a temporary solution. The purpose of this study is to explore the current role of effective distance learning practices in adult education and higher education, which has been forced center stage due to our ongoing global pandemic, known as COVID-19. Research data and faculty case stories related to personal and adult educational experiences will be highlighted. In particular, the study will evaluate the impact of recent events, such as the pandemic, on distance learning and pedagogical practices. Through the faculty case stories and data analysis, topics of discussion will be provided for best practices in distance education for adult learners.

Keywords: distance learning, faculty, online practices

The current role of effective distance learning practices in both public and higher education has been impacted by recent major events such as the COVID-19 outbreak. Due to the acceleration of COVID-19, there is a shift to learning in a solely online or virtual environment (Blakenberger & Williams, 2020). In public education, there is a need to provide instruction virtually and in a hybrid format, as many teachers have responded to this need. There are options for students to select in which format they prefer to learn in. Such options have called for educators to be available in a traditional face-to-face format and virtually in an online classroom in both synchronous and asynchronous environments.

This study seeks to explore how faculty members have responded to the need for virtual classroom learning and engagement practices to meet the modern needs of diverse learners. Classroom teaching practices have been solely accessible online in the time of COVID-19 (Barrett-Fox, Bayne, Cooper, & Espinosa, 2020). First, a literature review and conceptual framework will be discussed. Next, the research methodology will be described along with findings that will be shared. Subsequently, a discussion of the implications and future research will be examined.

Literature Review

Because faculty incur many challenges during COVID-19, the conceptual framework for this study relied on persistence theory (Tinto 1975; 1993) as a means to continue instruction and teaching, especially in a time of crisis due to the unprecedented pandemic. Recent events blurred all forms of instruction into online classrooms and assignments (Barrett-Fox, Bayne, Cooper, & Espinosa, 2020). Additionally, "K-12 and postsecondary education has had to shift to distance education formats" (Blakenberger & Williams, 2020, p. 415). Currently, many instructors and students have relied on available technology and online learning platforms to meet the needs of

diverse students in both public and postsecondary education. Additionally, Hazelkorn and Locke (2020) reported, "At a time when liberal democratic systems are coming under sustained pressure across the world, the potential role of education at all levels in underpinning democracy and human rights needs to be acknowledged and emphasized" (p. 134). The 2020 current epidemic, COVID-19, has revolutionized the role of K-12, adult, and higher education.

According to Thomas and Foster (2020), historical epidemics have been no stranger to higher education institutions, which were precursors to COVID-19, such as yellow fever of 1878, the typhoid outbreak of 1910, and the Spanish flu of 1918. "Higher education did not respond universally or with any consensus" (Thomas & Foster, 2020, p. 6). Considering over 100 years later, the same holds true with regard to system responses to the recent pandemic. There still appears to be no consensus with each response left to individual university systems, colleges, and school districts. Research on the instructional practices of university faculty members is important for educators to grow and provide additional perspectives on teaching practices in modern times.

Limitations. Because this study focused on distance learning practices currently in 2020 during COVID-19, literature on this topic was somewhat limited as the peer review process is lengthy. Additionally, previously mentioned historical epidemics existed before the advancements of technology and digital online learning platforms. Therefore, a limited number of published peer-reviewed sources were available at the time this study was conducted.

Research Design

Basic qualitative inquiry was used in this research study as Denzin and Lincoln (2003) described as seeking how meaning and experiences are created. They stated that qualitative research seeks answers to questions about how meaning and social experiences are created. Since this study's main concern relied on understanding faculty member's experiences of teaching during COVID-19, this design was selected.

Research Questions. Three questions guided this case study and include: (a) how did you teach and provide distance learning opportunities for students? (b) What did you find to be the most challenging teaching if anything? (c) What did you find to be the easiest teaching virtually if anything?

Data Collection. Basic interpretive qualitative inquiry of semi-structured, open-ended interviews were used to examine how faculty members in higher education institutions taught and provided distance learning opportunities to their students. The sample for this study included eight faculty members within the College of Education who were either presently teaching or had been a former graduate student instructor teaching at a university in central Texas (see Table 1). All interviews were conducted via Zoom or the phone and lasted no more than 30 minutes.

Data Analysis. Demographic data was compiled in a chart form to provide a snapshot of gender and years of experience in the current faculty role of each participant with the criteria that they taught or were teaching in 2020 during the spring, summer and/or fall semester. Interviews were transcribed and organized in a matrix for the purpose of cross analyzing the data to determine

common themes after comparing participant responses. A constant comparative approach to analyze the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was used. First, each interview transcript was carefully read and analyzed to identify similarities and differences in faculty teaching practices (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Second, a thematic analysis to code and categorize specific practices (Miles & Huberman, 1994) took place. Subsequent to data analysis, thematic findings were determined.

Table 1. *Participant Demographics of Faculty Participants*

Pseudonym	Gender	Years in current role
Chris	Male	3
Lily	Female	5
Rebecca	Female	6
Kay	Female	4
Kyra	Female	3
Gwen	Female	7
Susan	Female	7
Karen	Female	4

Based on the demographic data, all participants were in their current faculty role for a minimum of three years and reported prior experience teaching in online classes.

Findings

Findings reveal that four themes were prevalent in this study, including *motivation, prior experience, flexibility, and immediate feedback.*

Motivation. The theme of motivation was found after all eight participants reported that they were motivated by their students in various ways such as mentoring them into their profession, building a learning community in the classroom, or building relationships with students in an online community. Kay stated, "This is our class. This is our journey, and I'm going to learn just as much from them, as they are learning from me. Being able to serve as a resource for them, but also knowing that they're going to serve as a resource for me, that is what I find the most motivating." Students were the primary factor that drove the participants to keep going with online instruction and to adjust the syllabus if need be regarding the scheduling of assignments.

Prior Experience. All participants reported that they had had prior experience teaching online, which indicated what was found to be the easiest circumstance during the pandemic. In this regard, the issues of distance learning calling for teaching practices during the time of COVID-19 were nothing new to the participants. According to a participant named Rebecca, "All of my classes were online, so I didn't have as much impact as my colleagues who had fully face-to-face classes. They had to adjust their syllabi to reflect possibly different assignments, different times to meet possibly." While the majority of participants found it relatively easy to adjust their online courses to meet the instructional needs of their students, they did mention the need to recognize that the pandemic is a time of crisis and to be mindful of the emotional or personal experiences of their students.

Flexibility. Participants discussed how they may have had a few students who reported that they were sick with COVID-19 or feeling major anxiety during the pandemic practicing socially distancing during these unprecedented times and constantly wearing masks in public. Faculty members must be flexible with regard to the course timeline, especially during the pandemic. Susan reported, "That was really the key for this past year, what I think is flexibility. Yeah, I know we have some major learner outcomes I feel that we need to address in this course, but how we address them and when we address them can be really flexible." It was important for participants to be flexible about syllabus timelines in efforts to adjust deadlines where needed as well as be sensitive to students' emotional needs.

Immediate Feedback. When faculty members were asked about key challenges while teaching virtually, the idea that students may assume that instructors are available 24/7 was reported in that there is a false sense of immediate feedback by virtual students especially in a time of crisis. A participant named Gwen stated, "People who are studying or doing classes online tend to expect higher return of emails, responses, things like that." It is important to be mindful that faculty members are also experiencing stressors from the pandemic in both their personal and professional roles. That being said, available virtual office hours and feedback timeline communications are imperative between faculty members and virtual students.

Implications and Future Research

This study offers implications and informs future research. The findings indicate that all faculty were motivated by their students; however, all faculty participants were within one College of Education at one university. This may not be true of all academic disciplines. Additionally, all participants had prior experience teaching virtually, which may not be the case for other academic disciplines. The themes of flexibility and immediate feedback regarding the teaching responsibilities of virtual instructors were evident in this study.

Future research as discussed in this round table virtual presentation, indicated the fact that other content areas such as science, which requires a lab component, may not be as easily formatted to an online classroom for both faculty and students. How does a faculty member adjust their virtual teaching practices to be all-inclusive of hands-on learning strategies that are difficult to provide in a virtual classroom? The same may hold true for other content areas that require a hands-on learning component, such as a science lab. Additionally, future research may examine digital learning technology platforms for teachers and instructors to acquire professional development learning opportunities to understand best practices for virtual teaching and learning to meet the needs of online students.

Conclusion

Distance learning during modern unprecedented times concerning COVID-19 is mandated within all K-12 and postsecondary classes at diverse levels in efforts to prioritize health, safety, and wellness for students. The prior levels of virtual teaching experiences by faculty members are imperative and relative to the successful experiences of students in virtual classes. Interestingly, faculty members in a College of Education though somewhat challenged, did not struggle to

provide online learning for their students as most had prior experience, were motivated by their students, and understood the need to be flexible and provide feedback when time allowed.

References

Barrett-Fox, R., Bayne, B., Cooper, V. C., & Espinosa, G. (2020). How the coronavirus pandemic will change our future teaching. *Atla Religion Database, 30*(2), 147-186

Blankenberger, B., & Williams, A. M. (2020). COVID and the impact on higher education. The essential role of integrity and accountability. *Administrative Theory & Praxis, 42*(3), 404-423. https://doi.org/10.1080/10841806.2020.1771907

Corbin, J., & Strauss A. (2008). Basics of qualitative research (3rd ed.). Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2003). Strategies of qualitative inquiry. Sage.

Hazelkorn, E., & Locke, W. (2020). The pandemic, the recovery and broadening our perspectives on higher education policy. *Policy Reviews in Higher Education, 4*(2), 131-134. https://doi.org/10.1080/23322969.2020.1790865

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook. Sage.

Thomas, J., & Foster, H. (2020). Higher education institutions respond to epidemics. *History of Education Quarterly, 60*(2), 185-201. https://doi.org/10.1017/heq.2020.11

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research, 45*(1), 89-125.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving College: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Profound Leadership and Adult Education: An Empirical Study

Heidi K. Scott[1], Laura Holyoke[1], Davin Carr-Chellman[2], Leslie Hammes[1], Michael Kroth[1], George Watson[1], and Rusty Vineyard[1]
[1]*University of Idaho and* [2]*University of Dayton*

Abstract: The intentional teaching application of leadership theories is not often addressed in leadership development programs comprising the field of adult education. The purpose of this study is to understand more deeply the quality, characteristics, and practices of profound leaders. This is an exploratory, empirical study, interviewing seven participants chosen for leadership acumen and vetted by the research team: employing a two-interview sequence, research apprenticeship model, and thematic analysis. Initial findings include commonly elicited elements, viewed through the lens of integrative literature review findings. Understanding and applying the profound leadership concept offers the field of adult education useful implications with information about leadership development, teaching leadership in higher education and organizations, and practicing leadership allowing flourishing in individuals, organizations, and society.

Keywords: profound learning, profundity, profound leadership

We investigated the profound leadership phenomena by collecting data via interactive interviews. Findings from our integrative literature review formed the basis of our research question and initial interview questions. The lens of profound learning provides an opportunity to further solidify contributions to adult education, connecting adult learning and leadership. The purpose of this study was to explore the concept of profound leadership to understand more deeply the qualities, characteristics, and practices of profound leadership.

Leadership is well-researched and contributes substantially to the adult education field (Scott et al., 2019); our research team questions if adult education intentionally teaches nascent leaders how to apply leadership theory to practice. Adult educators interact with educational, organizational, and community leadership who would benefit from intentionality. We suggest the profound leadership concept enhances teaching and learning of practical leadership skills. This empirical study uses a thematic analysis to look more deeply into the concept of profound leadership.

McCrory and James (2016) suggested the gap in "lack of qualified leadership candidates who are able to perform from a global perspective" (p. 207) may be filled through adult education programs. Citing the CPAE (Commission of Professors of Adult Education), McCrory and James (2016) referenced "the study of leadership, including theories of organizational leadership, administration and change" as suggested in Standards for Adult Education Graduate Programs (CPAE, 2014, p.9). Adult educator usage of profound leadership theory with adult learners may be useful, forward-thinking, and valuable to the adult education field.

Background

An integrative literature review on Profound Leadership, formed by Profound Learning, and five key leadership theories contributes to this empirical study. Kroth's (2016) foundational profound learning concept informs the integrative literature review and holds as a theoretical framework for the purposes of the empirical study. Kroth defined a profound learner as "someone who pursues deeper knowledge regularly over time" (p. 29). This foundational learning concept supports profound leadership conceptualization in the integrative literature review and provides the lens through which to view profound leadership in this empirical study.

The key contributory leadership theories include spiritual, authentic, servant, transformational, and level five leadership. Each leadership theory examined through the lens of profound learning, elicited key elements to build the profound leadership concept. The built concept is a direct outcome of the integrative literature review. It informs and guides this empirical study's participant selection, interview questions, interview protocol, and methods. Components from the five reviewed leadership theories informing profound leadership include empathy, humility, intuition, listening, servitude, balanced processing, ethical approaches, promoting growth and development, resolve and will, reflection and awareness, respect and fair treatment, motivation and stimulation, and goal orientation (Scott et al., 2019). Participant selection and interview questions were formed around these pillars and used to elicit added or differing elements, building from the initial literature review, and moving into the empirical study.

A definition of profundity also lends itself to this study, incorporating "profundity as intellectual depth, something profound or abstruse, and the quality or state of being profound or deep" (Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary, 1997, p. 931). Empirical study questions and interview protocol elaborate on a deep or profound orientation and solicited participant insights into this orientation in the context of leadership.

Methodology

We framed this study as exploratory with aims of understanding more deeply the quality, characteristics, and practices of profound leaders. The main research question asks, what constitutes profound leadership? Supporting research focus areas include practices (actions and behaviors), individual traits and characteristics, and contextual elements to inform profound leadership.

Participant selection was based on researcher input, collective consensus, and collaborative discussion. Early in the empirical study, and informed by the integrative literature review, each member of the research team identified one to three candidates for participation. The interview candidates were captured on a shared worksheet, documenting the nominator, candidate location, affiliation, selection criteria, contact information, and justification. As names were added to the list, the research team discussed each candidate and their potential contributions to the study. Participants were selected when justification for inclusion in the study could be validated by at least two research team members, participants were viewed as accessible and available, and candidates could be considered appropriate first interviewees for doctoral students learning both process and content. The research team rated seven candidates for the first round of interviews.

The first group of participant interviews included both a first and second interview, pairing a faculty member and doctoral student for interviewing mentorship purposes. Interview participants remain confidential with identities known only to the research team; the University of Idaho Institutional Review Board approved the project as an exempt study. Each participant was reminded of the voluntary nature of their study engagement and rights to leave or abstain at any time. Interviewees were invited with an initial informal inquiry, followed by a formal interview invitation letter. Participant acceptance of study terms included acknowledgement that study participants were over the age of 18, identified as experts with valuable insights to contribute to the topic of profound leadership, and informed that research results would be used to identify qualities, characteristics, and practices of profound leadership; with contributions to help adult educators prepare students for lifelong learning.

Interview questions were generated and curated by the research team. Initial brainstorming and collaborative dialogue elicited long lists of questions, eventually culled down to a clear and concise interview protocol supported by Seidman's (2006) phased interview approach. Participants were introduced to the exploratory study, potential future contributions to organizational leadership, and preparations for adult learning and improved performance. Interviews were recorded in audio format using virtual Zoom meetings to accommodate co-located interviewers and participants, as well as COVID-19 pandemic driven ways of remote working. Participants were thanked for their participation, reminded of their voluntary participation, and implied consent, and that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

The two-interview sequence draws on Seidman's (2006) three interview structure for phenomenological data collection. Seidman's structure facilitates a deep dive into participants' background, their experience with profound leadership as a research topic, and the meaning they make of the research topic, all while building strong rapport. For this empirical study, we collapsed Seidman's three interviews into two. Interview one explored participant's biography and history, then moved into the participant's current lived experience with the profound leadership research topic. The biographical and contextual questions asked during the first interview focused on participants' historical context and current lived experience with leadership, personal, educational, and professional background, life growing up, school experiences, college, first jobs, and life outside of work. Moving beyond these informational and contextual background questions, interview one segued into leadership questions, focusing on the role of leadership in day-to-day life, qualities, and traits of leaders, influences on leadership, and processes of becoming a leader.

Interview two started with additional questions about the participant's current lived experience, transitioning into the meaning of that experience, eliciting leadership components, stories, and experiences. The second interview centered on profound leadership questions, inquiring about leader role models, what profound leadership may look or feel like, essential profound leadership qualities, experiences or observations of leaders doing profound things, and undesirable leadership traits. As time allowed, participants were also asked about building trust as profound leaders, opportunities for learning, defining "profound leadership," their views about profound leaders, and direct experiences with these leaders. The interviews focused on questions to elicit and evoke stories, cultivating richness and depth. Interview two finished by establishing closure with the participant and fostering opportunities for future research participants through the

snowball method. Castillo-Montoya (2016) and Seidman (2006) informed and guided our interview protocol and process. In the initial phases of the study, faculty led the interviews with doctoral students observing and learning in an apprenticeship model. As the study progressed and doctoral students on the research team understood and learned the process, they took advantage of opportunities to lead interviews, switching interviewer roles with faculty, who continued to provide mentorship, guidance, and support.

Data analysis employed a qualitative, thematic analysis approach, with a goal of making sense of information participants shared (Merriam, 2009). We selected a thematic analysis approach for its use in electing relationships, similarities, and differences from the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2019). The research team used collaboration tools and shared files to follow Lester et al.'s (2020) seven phases of thematic analysis: (a) preparing and organizing data, (b) transcribing the data, (c) becoming familiar with the data, (d) memo-ing the data, (e) coding the data, (f) moving from codes to categories, and categories to themes, and (g) cultivating transparency. In support of phases one and two, each interview included a process of memos and observations, and post-interview debrief discussion. Interview audio recordings were submitted and transcribed by an independent transcriptionist and returned to the research team for review and analysis. To become familiar with the data as part of phase three, each research team member reviewed interview notes and transcripts to elicit initial codes, explored and documented profound leader participant demographics. Memos and interview notes used along with interview transcripts begin to elicit codes and commonalities among the interviews and participants. Initial coding is based on Saldana's (2016) open coding process, breaking data into specific parts and exploring potential similarities and differences. Transparency throughout this process garnered through frequent research team meetings, documenting notes and findings in shared files, and open discussion throughout the course of this study.

Findings

As an empirical study using qualitative methods, initial findings included commonly elicited elements from the interviews, as viewed through the lens of findings from the integrative literature review (see Figure 1). Humility, noted by multiple participants, suggested profound leaders embody humility or are "super humble," or may demonstrate a "quiet humility, making others feel comfortable." Profound leaders were described as having a deep awareness of self and others. Awareness extended to areas of self-work, understanding their part in the world, embodying self-awareness, knowing, and accepting themselves, even achieving self-transcendence. Several participants described deep spiritual beliefs and spirituality influencing their upbringing and values. We anticipate future interviews needing to validate the prominence of this as a theme. Consistency and stability are noted as integral elements, and as demonstrated by modeling behavior, showing class, keeping a calm head, choosing behavior based on values, remaining level-headed, and being approachable. Multiple participants spoke of their vocation as being driven by the heart, finding something that you love to do and that earns your attention, work that is felt in the heart and soul.

Participants described profound leaders as having an aura of positive magnetism. Part of the drawing towards these types of leaders, was that they meet people where they are, speak their language, and invite them into the conversation. Participants noted profound leaders portrayed a

sense-of-self, stepped up when needed, skillfully drew out people's strengths, and exhibited a willingness to sacrifice. Profound leaders again reinforcing humility, exemplified listening deeply, practiced self-compassion, and kept themselves motivated to not become complacent.

Figure 1. *Initial Profound Leadership Elements*

humility	magnetism	assuredness	coolness under fire
deep awareness	sense of self	true to principles	familial foundations
deep spiritual beliefs	mentoring influences	costs of being a leader	skilled boundary setting
consistency and stability	well integrated personality	respect in taking responsibility	meeting people where they are
driven by work that speaks to the heart	unintended outcome: being a good leader	does not always integrate with partnership	family influence on the individual's true north

Participants commonly noted mentoring influences during different times of their life originating from family members, friends, and professional colleagues. Mentors influenced values-formation, behaviors and best practices, opportunities, and self-awareness. Becoming a good leader was less of a goal and more often an unintended outcome. Regardless of the intention, the result shone with success. This attitude portrayed as an outcome reinforces participant humility and humility in those they identified as profound leaders. While humble, the noted leaders exemplified a sense of assuredness, confidence, and competence, reinforced with discipline, values, continuous learning, and solid work ethic.

Participants communicated a variety of values (family, faith, taking responsibility, ownership, hard work, efficiency, effectiveness, goodness, human approaches, learning, interdependency). The theme of values, as a guiding construct, rang true across the interviews. Personal costs noted by leader participants, related to lack of integration with partnerships or home life impact. Revealing personal struggles impacted by leadership opportunities, reflected leader's willingness to acknowledge mistakes, remember human fallibility, express regret, and focus on transparency. Sharing these experiences strengthened acknowledgement of profound leaders' honesty, integrity, and respect for those who assume responsibility. Remaining cool in tough situations links to consistency and stability, and demonstrates compassion, empathy, and thinking of others in a manner that is focused on betterment, humanity, safety, and needs of the greater good. Strong familial foundations were common among study participants, remarks alluded to early leaders in immediate or extended family influence on values, formed work ethic and gratitude for support, history, and influencing perspectives. Other commonly noted elements included an ability to set boundaries, finding and achieving balance, and leveraging resilience.

Discussion

After completing a two-interview sequence with seven participants, common elements were captured and coded by the research team. Shared files and regular collaboration sessions allowed for group analysis of findings and formation of next steps. The student-teacher apprenticeship model lent to an effective adult learning experience, providing for growth in both content and process areas. Specifically, the study's qualitative research processes demonstrated through practical application by the faculty mentors provided for process learning and apprenticeship for doctoral students. Content and concept elements elicited through these qualitative research processes further enhanced the apprenticeship model and informed the profound leadership concept. Considering both the "how" and the "what" of profound leadership, we find this concept to provide solid contribution to adult education in a way that may inform leadership development, teaching leadership in higher education and organizations, and practicing leadership in a manner that lifts up individuals, organizations, and society alike.

References

Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol refinement framework. *The Qualitative Report, 21*(5), 811-831.

Commission of Professors of Adult Education (CPAE). (2014, November). *Standards for graduate programs in adult education (Revised).* American Association for Adult and Continuing Education.

Kroth, M. (2016). The profound learner. *Journal of Adult Education*, *45*(2), 28-32.

Lester, J. N., Cho, Y., & Lochmiller, C. R. (2020). Learning to do qualitative data analysis: A starting point. *Human Resource Development Review, 19*(1), 94-106. https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484320903890

McCrory, A. R., & James, W. B. (2016). Global leadership competencies in selected adult education graduate programs in the United States and western Europe. In M. Boucouvalas & M. Avoseh (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Commission on International Adult Education of the 67th Annual Conference of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education* (pp. 207-220). https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED581862.pdf

Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. (1997). *Profundity*. In *Merriam Webster's collegiate dictionary* (p. 931).

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* Jossey-Bass.

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2021). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Scott, H., Carr-Chellman, D. J., & Hammes, L. (2019). Profound leadership and adult education: An integrative review of the literature. *New Prairie Press.*

Scott, H., Carr-Chellman, D. J., & Hammes, L. (2020). Profound leadership: An integrative literature review. *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership, 13*(1), Article 11. https://doi.org/10.22543/0733.131.1293

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers College Press.

A Test of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Concept by a Correlational Model Among Adult Learners

Yuewei Shi[1] and Xi Lin[2]
[1]*Auburn University and* [2]*East Carolina University*

Abstract: Maslow's hierarchical needs theory has a unique approach to classifying human needs into five different levels. Some researchers agree that Maslow's need theory followed a "low-high" order and that there is a dominance level for five needs in a hierarchical structure. At the same time, some researchers argue that Maslow's needs are approached randomly. Therefore, this study uses correlation and regression models to examine the relationship among five diverse Maslow's needs levels among adult learners. It is expected that this research would assist adult education educators and practitioners in understanding the relationship of the five needs' levels and craft adaptable teaching or training strategies based on the similarities of the five needs' levels for adult learners.

Keywords: Maslow's needs, adult development, motivation theory

What are human needs? From a drive theoretical perspective, needs reflect a set of continual physiological and psychological desires for human beings (Patrick, Knee, Canevello & Lonsbary 2007). In 1954, Abraham Maslow published *"Motivation and Personality"* that introduced the personal needs theory in various contexts (Gawel, 1996). In this book, Maslow found that humans have five types of needs. They are driven by innate needs for survival, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-realization. Additionally, there is a general pattern of needs recognition and satisfaction that humans follow in the same order (Abulof, 2017; Gawel, 1996 & Kaur, 2013).

Maslow constructed a pyramid shape hierarchy of needs for the five different levels. Physiological needs are positioned at the bottom level of Maslow's needs pyramid, and this level includes fundamental biological needs such as food, water, air, and shelter. Safety needs occupy the second level of Maslow's needs pyramid, and this level reflects the needs for finding safe circumstances, stability, and protection. Belonging needs are located on the third level of Maslow's needs pyramid, and they represent the human desire for seeking affectionate relationships with friends, partners, children, or even a sense of community. Esteem needs are situated at the fourth level of the Maslow's needs pyramid. This level includes the need for self-respect such as confidence, competence, achievement, mastery, independence and freedom, approval from others such as status, fame, glory, recognition, attention, reputation, appreciation, dignity, even dominance. Self-actualization sits on the top level of Maslow's needs pyramid, and this level refers to the continuous desire to develop one's fullest potential (Boeree, 2006; Goodman, 1968 & Poston, 2009).

According to Maslow's theory, many inventories were developed. For example, Porter (1961) developed Need Satisfaction Questionnaire (NSQ) to apply to the managerial job attitude in the human resource development field. To examine the needs of students with learning disabilities, Skirrow and Perry (2009) created the Maslow Assessment of Needs Scale (MANS) tool in the

academic field. Meanwhile, those survey tools of Maslow's hierarchy of needs are also examined by many studies. For instance, Waters and Roach (1973) conducted a comparative study and examined the validity of Porter (1961) Need Satisfaction Questionnaire (NSQ). The results revealed that the question items used in representing Maslow's need categories are not valid for testing professional workers in working contexts. Similarly, Roberts, Walter & Miles (1971) used a factorial analytical method to measure the Porter's (1961) categories of Maslow's hierarchical needs, and their study showed that Maslow's needs investigation is not an effective tool to apply to the test of job satisfaction levels. However, Weber and Hadd's (1974) study indicated that Need Satisfaction Questionnaire (NSQ) was valid to measure five dimensions of psychological need satisfaction. Thus, it seems that there is not a consistent survey assessment tool that is broadly accepted by academic scholars and professional practitioners. Rennie (2008) noted that people use their own linguistic way to interpret and represent their actions and experiences. The Maslow's needs assessment is open to interpretation in many different perspectives on the different fields such as school or workplace.

Additionally, Rennie (2008) pointed out that "the satisfaction of higher needs is contingent on the lower needs having been met" (p. 445). Rauschenberger, Schmitt, and Hunter's (1980) study proved Rennie's (2008) statement, and their study found Maslow's need of satisfaction follows low-high order in the hierarchical structure. Wahba & Bridwell (1976) also supported that "people seek objects and engaging behavior that are no way related to the satisfaction of needs," and questioned the pyramid structure of Maslow's needs (p. 519). Conversely, Taormina, and Gao's (2013) study found that the satisfaction of a lower level need immediately below any given need in the hierarchy of Maslow's needs can predict the next higher-level need's satisfaction.

The majority of previous literature focused on Maslow's hierarchy of needs in work settings. Fewer studies have investigated this hierarchy of needs in academic settings among adult learners. Therefore, this study aims to explore the correlation between each level in the hierarchy of Maslow's needs among adult learners. In response to the purpose of this study, the following questions were addressed:
1. Is the self-actualization needs level the single motivation governing other human needs?
2. Can lower-level needs of satisfaction predict the higher-level needs of satisfaction in Maslow's hierarchy of needs?

Research Design

Data were collected from one higher education institution in China. A total number of 189 participants responded to the self-reported online survey for this study. The Five Need Satisfaction Measure (Taormina & Gao, 2013) was used in this study. This 52-item 5-point Likert Scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*) inventory aims to measure human physiological needs, safety-security needs, belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship among five levels of Maslow's needs satisfactions. A series of multiple regression using a stepwise procedure was then conducted to investigate the relationship between the predictors (lower level needs satisfaction) and the criterion variables (higher-level needs of satisfaction) to seek the best prediction model for each criterion variable. Data were analyzed through SPSS 27.

The Box's M was set as 0.001 (Mertler & Vannatta, 2002), and the alpha level was set at 0.05.

Findings

RQ1 Is the self-actualization needs level the single motivation governing other human needs?

Pearson's correlation analysis results show that the correlations among the five needs level's satisfactions are all positive and significant (all $p < .01$; see Table 1). Additionally, the results also revealed that the satisfaction of the needs levels are adjacent and have high correlations. Specifically, the correlation between the physiological needs and the Safety-Security needs is $r = .712$. The correlation between the safety needs level, and the belongingness needs level is $r = .508$. The correlation between the belongingness needs level, and the esteem needs level is $r = .838$. The correlation between the esteem needs level, and the self-actualization needs level is $r = .831$. The average r value is .67, and the correlation value between the first four needs levels and the self-actualization needs level are .752, .539, .769, .831, respectively. Rauschenberger, Schmitt, and Hunter (1980) stated that if a person is governed by any one of the five needs levels in Maslow's needs hierarchical structure, the correlation between any two needs level will be negative. According to the correlation analysis results, the average r is .67 and the correlation between the first four level needs and the self-actualization needs indicates that the self-actualization needs level is not the dominant level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramid.

Table 1. *Means, SDs, Correlations for Satisfaction of the 5 Maslow's Needs*

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Physiological needs	3.24	0.78	--	.712**	.705**	.697**	.752**
Safety-Security needs	3.42	0.76		--	.508**	.394**	.539**
Belongingness needs	3.17	0.93			--	.838**	.769**
Esteem needs	3.07	1.04				--	.831**
Self-Actualization needs	2.76	1.00					--

Note: *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .005. ****p < .001.

RQ2 Can lower-level needs of satisfaction predict the higher-level needs of satisfaction in Maslow's hierarchy of needs?

To further assess the relationship between the lower-level needs and higher-level needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a series of multiple regressions using a stepwise procedure was then conducted to investigate the predictable relationship among the five different levels of needs (see Table 2). Results indicate that the level of Esteem Needs, Physiological Needs, and Safety-Security needs can predict the level of Self-Actualization ($F_{(2, 185)} = 153.081$, $p < .01$). The linear combination of the level of Physiological Needs, Safety-Security Needs, and Esteem Needs can be accounted for by 73% of the variance of the Self-Actualization Needs ($R^2 = .73$). For every unit the level of Esteem Needs increases, the realization of Self-Actualization Needs increases by 0.578 unit, whereas the level of Physiological Needs and Safety- Security Needs remain the same ($b = 0.578$, $t = 10.970$, $p < .001$). For every unit, the level of Physiological Needs increases, the realization of Self-Actualization Needs by 0.293 unit when the Esteem Needs and Safety-

Security Needs stay the same (b = 0.293, t = 3.113, p = .002). For every unit the level of Safety-Security Needs increases, the realization of Self-Actualization Needs increases by 0.183 unit, while the level of Physiological Needs and Esteem Needs maintains the same (b = 0.813, t = 2.452, p = .015). That is, the variable of physiological needs, safety-security needs, and esteem needs can predict the self-actualization needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Table 2. *Multiple Regression Results*

DV	R^2	F	df	p	Predictors	b	t	p
Self-actualization needs	.658	325.169	2, 187	<.001	Esteem needs	.775	18.032	<.001
Self-actualization needs	.724	220.051	2, 187	<.001	Esteem needs Physiological needs	.552 .448	10.540 6.322	<.001 <.001
Self-actualization needs	.733	153.081	2, 187	<.001	Esteem needs Physiological needs Safety-security needs	.578 .293 .183	10.970 3.113 2.452	<.001 .002 .015

Discussion of Findings

Maslow (1943) assumed an underlying needs structure that humans would be dominated by one of the five needs. In other words, one need could govern the other four needs. Maslow established the concept of dominance, which means "deprivation or dissatisfaction of a need of high prepotency will lead to the domination of this need over the organism's personality" (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976, p. 515). In response to the concept of dominance in Maslow's theory, the study of Agrawal and Sharma (1977) illustrated that Maslow's needs follow a descending pattern, and the higher-level needs would dominate the lower-level needs. According to the results of this study, results are inconsistent with the concept of dominance from Maslow's underlying needs assumption. Thus, the higher-level needs are not the dominant needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs for adult learners in academic settings.

Maslow described that the five needs appear sequentially as one moves up the phylogenetic scale (Lester, 2013). In other words, "need hierarchy is like a ladder with which one reaches the summit, step by step" (Agrawal & Sharma, 1977, p. 267). Mathes (1981) stated that the five classes of needs (physiological, security, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization) are organized hierarchically, and each level is prepotent to the next higher level. Findings in this study support these statements. According to the results, the lower-level needs can predict higher-level needs. Therefore, Maslow's hierarchy of needs should follow the low-high order to test human needs.

Implications and Future Research

The present study examined Maslow's hierarchy of needs among adult learners from a sequential order perspective. It is expected that this study could assist adult education researchers and practitioners to better understand the responses for each level of Maslow's theory among adult learners. Indeed, the low-high order model of Maslow's hierarchical structure could apply among adult learners. Adult educators and practitioners should actively know the contents of the five different needs and analyze which needs' levels are their learners' positioning. Understanding the levels of the needs among learners could be beneficial for educators and practitioners to craft more active and optimal teaching or counseling strategies. Finally, this study only investigated adult learners from one college; thus, further research should recruit more participants from diverse higher education institutions or adult training programs. In addition, more influential factors such as gender, age, ethnic group, and major should be involved for further examination.

References

Abraham, M. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, *50*(4), 370-396.

Agrawal, K. G., & Sharma, B. R. (1977). Gratification, metamotivation, and Maslow. *Vikalpa*, *2*(4), 265-272.

Abulof, U. (2017). Introduction: Why we need Maslow in the twenty-first Century. *Society, 54*(6), 508-509.

Boeree, C. G. (2006). *Personality theories*. http://www.social-psychology.de/do/pt_intro.pdf

Gawel, J. E. (1996). Herzberg's theory of motivation and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 5(1), 11-14.

Goodman, R. A. (1968). On the operationality of the Maslow need hierarchy. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, *6*(1), 51-57.

Kaur, A. (2013). Maslow's need hierarchy theory: Applications and criticisms. *Global Journal of Management and Business Studies*, *3*(10), 1061-1064.

Lester, D. (2013). Measuring Maslow's hierarchy of needs. *Psychological reports*, *113*(1), 15-17.

Mertler, C. A., & Vannatta, R. A. (2002). Advanced and multivariate statistical methods. Oyrczak.

Mathes, E. W. (1981). Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a guide for living. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *21*(4), 69-72.

Patrick, H., Knee, C. R., Canevello, A., & Lonsbary, C. (2007). The role of need fulfillment in relationship functioning and well-being: A self-determination theory perspective. Journal of personality and social psychology, 92(3), 434.

Poston, B. (2009). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. *Surgical Technologist*, *41*(8), 347-353.

Porter, L. W. (1961). A study of perceived need satisfactions in bottom and middle management jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 45*(1), 1-10.

Roberts, K. H., Walter, G. A., & Miles, R. E. (1971). A factor analytic study of job satisfaction items designed to measure Maslow need categories. *Personnel Psychology*, *24*(2), 205-220.

Rennie, D. L. (2008). Two thoughts on Abraham Maslow. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *48*(4), 445-448.

Rauschenberger, J., Schmitt, N., & Hunter, J. E. (1980). A test of the need hierarchy concept by a Markov model of change in need strength. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 654-670.

Skirrow, P., & Perry, E. (2009). The Maslow assessment of needs scale (MANS). Mersey Care NHS Trust.

Taormina, R. J., & Gao, J. H. (2013). Maslow and the motivation hierarchy: Measuring satisfaction of the needs. *The American Journal of Psychology*, *126*(2), 155-177.

Porter, L. W. (1961). A study of perceived need satisfactions in bottom and middle management jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 45*(1), 1-10.

Weber, R. J., & Hadd, T. A. (1974). A factor-analytic examination of the internal structure of a Maslow-type need satisfaction instrument. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/A-Factor-Analytic-Examination-of-the-Internal-of-a-Weber-Hadd/2024ed250a19bea5202723a42edfd22ad10e09af

Wahba, M. A., & Bridwell, L. G. (1976). Maslow reconsidered: A review of research on the need hierarchy theory. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, *15*(2), 212-240.

Challenging Monolingual Ideology Through a Critical Lens: Multilingual Literacy as a Key Element of Holistic Global Citizenship Education

Maja Stojanovic
Louisiana State University

Abstract: This paper focuses on the importance of multilingual literacy in the 21st century and, specifically, how adult learners across the globe can develop multilingual literacy skills necessary for successful communication and global citizenship. The paper includes a theoretical (research background, definitions, critical framework) and a practical (strategies and activities for developing multilingual literacy) component and should be useful to both researchers and practitioners interested in successful intercultural communication and the development of multilingual literacy.

Keywords: multilingual literacy, adult learner, global citizen, critical literacies advancement model

Globalization has had a significant impact on all areas of life, including education, increasing the need for continuous educational development. It has influenced educational sectors, educational goals, and educational topics. Sparked by this influence, researchers and practitioners have devoted much attention to how education happens in informal and non-formal settings (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2012), placing focus on non-traditional learners and life-long education, while educating learners for global citizenship (Shultz, 2007). In terms of goals, globalization has emphasized the need for understanding and practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion (Hardy & Woodcock, 2015) at all educational levels, in both teacher and student populations. To support these changes, developing critical literacy skills has also become elemental for global citizenship education.

The traditional and widely known definition of literacy refers to the ability to read and write. As society has evolved in light of globalization, multiple contexts within which we need to read and write, but also understand, analyze, and produce, have also emerged. Such contexts include digital and cyber spaces, visual spaces, and multicultural environments. These new contexts demand that we teach new literacies as a way of developing critically thinking global citizens (Robinson, 2020). Speaking of the need for developing new literacies, The New London Group (1966, p. 60) scholars posited that developing new literacies can foster "critical engagement" and help individuals to negotiate "the multiple linguistic and cultural differences." In line with this, in this paper, I focus on why developing multilingual literacy is needed for adult learners as global citizens and how it is interconnected with other non-traditional literacy skills.

Although the focus of language literacy education, including multilingual literacy, has started to shift, current research is predominately centered in the field of linguistics and focused on early linguistic development (e.g., Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Cross, 2011; Dagenais et al., 2006). The research on the development of specific non-traditional literacy skills in adult education settings is still scarce. To start bridging this gap, this paper includes a brief overview of the existing multilingual literacy literature while specifically focusing on adult language learning. I discuss

the importance of developing multilingual literacy from an anti-deficit perspective (Gorski, 2011), using Robinson's (2020) critical literacies advancement model (CLAM). Lastly, focusing on how educators can address adult learners' specific needs, I include practical strategies for developing multilingual literacy skills in adult education settings.

Background and Definitions

Due to multiple definitions of terms *literacy* and *multilingual*, the concept of multilingual literacy may be challenging to define. Considering that the focus of this paper is on developing multilingual literacy as a key element in global citizenship education (which should support social justice), the preferred definition of literacy is that offered by UNESCO (2003, p. 3), which defines it as "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts." Such contexts, as stated earlier, are diverse, multicultural, and digital spaces that required a complex literacy skillset.

Expanding on UNESCO's (2003) definition of literacy, multilingual literacy would entail the same ability in multiple languages. Here, in line with the anti-deficit approach, multiple is used to mean more than one, thus including the concepts of bilingualism, trilingualism, and so on, and standing in direct contrast to monolingualism. Further, I agree with Aronin and Hufeisen (2009), who argue that multilingual literacy should not assume equal proficiency in each of the languages. I consider multilingualism as a collective skill (Nevárez-La Torre, 2014) with the focus on the overall linguistic repertoire rather than on each individual language. As adult educators advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion, multilingual literacy should be reflected in supporting linguistic diversity, as opposed to achieving the native ideal (Holliday, 2006) in language learning and communication. This means that developing linguistic skills in multiple languages is more facilitative of intercultural communication in a globalized society than "native-like" proficiency.

Theoretical Approach

To frame my analysis and present a more holistic picture of adult literacy development, I used Robinson's (2020) critical literacies advancement model (CLAM). The purpose of the model is to provide a tool for understanding how developing multiple non-traditional literacies can help challenge dominant systems of power and privilege and help work toward a more equitable society (Robinson, 2020). As suggested by its title, the model is based on critical theory and critical literacy, which is, then, interconnected with multiple other categories of literacies and specific literacies within those categories. The CLAM encompasses five literacy categories, namely foundational literacies, sociocultural literacies, technological and informational literacies, psychosocial and environmental literacies, and social justice literacies (see Robinson, 2020 for more details about the specific literacies within each category). The key result of developing these non-traditional literacy skills lies in the practical skillset which helps achieve informed behaviors and actions (Robinson, 2020). The CLAM is, therefore, a complex, linear model for achieving social justice through the development of multiple literacy skills.

The CLAM is a useful model for framing this paper as it offers a holistic framework for understanding multilingual literacy in connection to other literacies in the model, as well as

subsequent behaviors and actions. Based on the CLAM, multilingual literacy is a Sociocultural Literacy, as are global, cultural, and intercultural, among others. Given the focus of the model on critiquing societal inequities stemming from issues of power, as well as its practical orientation, it clarifies how developing multilingual literacy can affect linguistic power and privilege. It is useful in understanding how multilingual literacy, along with other non-traditional literacy skills, can help critically literate individuals make better-informed decisions and, as global citizens, advocate for social justice.

Benefits of Multilingual Literacy

In line with the CLAM (Robinson, 2020), multilingual literacy has specifically emerged as a tool for challenging social inequities while increasing community engagement (Gurnah, 2001). This point is also supported by the idea that adult education cannot be detached from the society (Merriam et al., 2007). The development of multilingual literacy allows easier intercultural communication and understanding, as well as the development of cross-cultural partnerships.

Further, in supporting critical thinking, multilingual literacy serves as a tool for accessing information in multiple languages (Okech, 2002). This works in conjunction with the development of other non-traditional literacy skills needed in contemporary society (Robinson, 2020), such as digital and media literacies. More so, Aronin (2019) argued that accessing diverse social media platforms and engaging in other ways of virtual communication would not be possible without multilingual literacy, as the availability of resources depends on the language. Thus, while computer- and internet-mediated communication opens the door to information for around the globe, to use this medium of communication, one needs to develop literacies such as digital, information, cyber-security, multilingual, and so on.

Multilingual literacy has also been deemed important for cognitive and affective dimensions. Examining the effects of lifelong bilingualism with a sample of 184 patients, Bialystok et al. (2007) determined that bilingual literacy can maintain cognitive functioning and decrease risks of dementia. Similarly, a study with multilingual elderly patients in Canada found that multilingual literacy can delay "the diagnosis of Alzheimer disease by almost 5 years" (Chertkow et al., 2010, p. 118). These show connections between multilingual literacy and cognitive health. Further, in a study which included speakers of four languages, Keysar et al. (2012) found that using a foreign language in decision-making can reduce decision making biases. In this regard, multilingual literacy is also connected to emotional intelligence and literacy. Considering the importance of multilingual literacy for different areas of an adult's life, learning how it can be developed and promoting it within the area of adult learning is vital.

Discussion and Implications for Adult Education

"[D]ominant ideology of monolingualism in multilingual societies raises questions of social justice, as such an ideology potentially excludes and discriminates against those who are either unable or unwilling to fit the monoglot standard" (Blackledge, 2000, p. 25). As adult learning is based on the premise that, by promoting critical thought, education should serve as a system for fighting injustice and inequity (Robinson & Stojanovic, in press), it should also provide an avenue for developing multilingual literacy by challenging dominant linguistic ideology. To

support this goal, this paper provides a list of sample activities that adult education practitioners may use in developing multilingual literacy and, parallelly, other Sociocultural Literacies (Robinson, 2020).

In facilitating adult multilingual literacy development, adult educators should bear in mind Knowles' (Knowles et al., 2014) principles of andragogy: internal motivation and self-directedness, using life experience and knowledge in learning, goal orientation, relevancy, practical nature of knowledge, and need for respect. With developing multilingual literacy, these tenets are highly interrelated; internal motivation will come from the relevancy of knowledge to life experiences and the ability to use personal experiences in learning; goal orientation will be supported by the importance of developing the skills for functioning in multicultural settings; and self-directedness will be developed as learners apply other non-traditional literacy skills for developing multilingual literacy.

To foster internal motivation, adult language educators should engage learners in sharing their personal experiences, which should, in turn, be used to develop and/or modify curricula. In formal settings, this may include an introductory class in which learners would discuss their routines, preferences, as well as hobbies. Learning about these would help the educator tailor course activities (inclusive of target vocabulary) to the learners' daily needs. Such activities would strengthen learner engagement and support the transfer of knowledge.

While intrinsic motivation is related to goal orientation, if we consider the goals set by the learners themselves, developing an understanding of the need for multilingual literacy in a globalized society through understanding diverse cultures and interculturality may support motivation and goal orientation, and promote learner engagement. The task of adult education in this regard would be to develop cross-curricular experiences for learners to engage in developing multilingual, cultural, intercultural, and equity literacies. Recognizing and valuing diverse individuals' experiences would support the development of a growth mindset, turning away from a monolingual perspective, and set multilingual literacy as a goal. A selection of activities and other resources to be used in cross-curricular settings is included in Table 1.

Lastly, it would be remiss not to mention multiple innovative language learning platforms and online tools designed specifically having in mind the needs of global citizens. Both formal and non-formal multilingual education may make use of social networking sites for engaging learners further. Popular language learning apps include the following:
- Duolingo, https://www.duolingo.com/
- Babbel, https://www.babbel.com/
- Memrise, https://www.memrise.com/
- FluentU, https://www.fluentu.com/en/
- Busuu, https://www.busuu.com/
- Rosetta Stone, https://www.rosettastone.com/

Note that this is not an extensive list as digital resources for developing multilingual skills continuously emerge. In addition to using digital apps for self-directed language learning, other online resources suitable for adult language learning include news articles and podcasts in the target language, as well as educational videos, such as TEDtalks.

Table 1. *A Selection of Resource for Developing Sociocultural Literacies*

Activity	Target literacy	More available information
British Council--Teaching English - A compilation of activities for adult English learners categorized by proficiency	Language literacy	https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/resources/adults/activities
John Corbett (2010) Intercultural Language Activities - A resource book with activities	Intercultural literacy Language literacy	https://www.cambridge.org/rs/cambridgeenglish/teacher-development/intercultural-language-activities
Cultural and intercultural literacy… What is it? - Activity available in four languages	Cultural literacy Intercultural literacy	https://www.digilanguages.ie/cultural-and-intercultural-literacy-what-is-it/#/roles?_k=xnkhag
UNESCO (2010) Education for Intercultural Understanding - Activities available on pp. 43-65	Cultural literacy Intercultural literacy Equity literacy	https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000189051

With a vast number of resources digitally available for developing multilingual literacy, it seems that the goal of developing a multilingual society should be easily achievable. However, considering that much is yet to be done to achieve this goal, adult educators have a vital role in promoting and supporting the development of multilingual literacy. This paper posits that, in doing so, a holistic approach, based on the critical literacies advancement model (Robinson, 2020) should be followed, with the goal of equipping individuals with relevant, critical thinking and global citizenship skills.

References

Aronin, L. (2019). Dominant language constellation as a method of research. In E. Vetter & U. Jessner (Eds.), *International research on multilingualism: Breaking with the monolingual perspective* (pp. 13-26). Springer.

Aronin, L., & Hufeisen, B. (Eds.). (2009). *The exploration of multilingualism: Development of research on L3, multilingualism and multiple language acquisition* (Vol. 6). John Benjamins Publishing.

Bialystok, E., Craik, F. I., & Freedman, M. (2007). Bilingualism as a protection against the onset of symptoms of dementia. *Neuropsychologia*, *45*(2), 459-464.

Blackledge, A. (2000). Monolingual ideologies in multilingual states: Language, hegemony and social justice in Western liberal democracies. *Sociolinguistic Studies*, *1*(2), 25-45. https://doi.org/10.1558/sols.v1i2.25

Cenoz, J., & Gorter, D. (2011). A holistic approach to multilingual education: Introduction. *The Modern Language Journal*, *95*(3), 339-343.

Chertkow, H., Whitehead, V., Phillips, N., Wolfson, C., Atherton, J., & Bergman, H. (2010). Multilingualism (but not always bilingualism) delays the onset of Alzheimer disease:

Evidence from a bilingual community. *Alzheimer Disease and Associated Disorders*, *24*(2), 118–125. https://doi.org/10.1097/WAD.0b013e3181ca1221

Cross, R. (2011). Monolingual curriculum frameworks, multilingual literacy development: ESL teachers' beliefs. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 34*(2), 166-180.

Dagenais, D., Day, E., & Toohey, K. (2006). A multilingual child's literacy practices and contrasting identities in the figured worlds of French immersion classrooms. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *9*(2), 205-218.

Gorski, P. C. (2011). Unlearning deficit ideology and the scornful gaze: Thoughts on authenticating the class discourse in education. *Counterpoints*, *402*(1), 152-173.

Gurnah, A. (2001). Languages and literacies for autonomy. In M. Martin-Jones and K. E. Jones (Eds.). *Multilingual literacies: Reading and writing different worlds* (pp. 233-245). John Benjamins Publishing.

Hardy, I., & Woodcock, S. (2015). Inclusive education policies: Discourses of difference, diversity and deficit. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *19*(2), 141-164.

Holliday, A. (2006). Native-speakerism. *ELT Journal*, *60*(4), 385-387.

Keysar, B., Hayakawa, S. L., & An, S. G. (2012). The foreign-language effect: Thinking in a foreign tongue reduces decision biases. *Psychological Science*, *23*(6), 661-668. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797611432178

Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F., III, & Swanson, R. A. (2014). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development*. Routledge.

Merriam, S., Caffarella R., & Baumgartner, L. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3rd ed.) John Wiley & Sons.

Nevárez-La Torre, A. (2014). Necessary paradigm shifts in bilingual education: Rethinking multilingual literacy. *Journal of Multilingual Education Research*, *5*(1), 5-10.

Okech, A. (2002). Multilingual literacies as a resource. *Adult Education and Development*, 117-125.

Robinson, P. A. (2020). The critical literacies advancement model (CLAM): A framework for promoting positive social change. https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/shrewd_pubs/1/

Robinson, P.A. & Stojanovic, M. (in press). The critical literacies advancement model (CLAM) as a tool for curriculum development: Advancing human rights literacy in adult education. In M. A. Alfred, P. A. Robinson, & E. Roumell, *Advancing the global agenda for human rights, vulnerable populations, and environmental sustainability: Adult Education as strategic partner.* The Adult Higher Education Alliance Book Series. Information Age Publishing.

Shultz, L. (2007). Educating for global citizenship: Conflicting agendas and understandings. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *53*(3), 248-258.

UNESCO. (2003). *Conference report of the information literacy meeting of experts Prague. September 20-23, 2003*. http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/ MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/themes/info_lit_meeting_prague_2003.pdf

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. (2012). *UNESCO guidelines for the recognition, validation and accreditation of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning*. https://plainsideout.org/index.php/home/article/view/39/41

The Effects of Attending Annual Professional Conferences on the Personal Development of International Faculty

Fujuan Tan and Lee Nabb
Morehead State University

Abstract: Especially given the current emphasis on internationalization and globalization, international faculty members constitute an important part of the overall faculty of higher education in the US and abroad. Personal as well as professional well-being is important in retaining international faculty. While annual professional conferences, by design, support and enhance professional development, little information exists as to the effect they have on personal development of international faculty members. This qualitative study was designed to provide foundational information on which to build further research as to the impact attending professional conferences have on the personal development and well-being of international higher education faculty members. Results indicate positive effects and support the notion that conferences are essential in fostering personal growth and development.

Keywords: international faculty, personal development, personal relationships, transformation, faculty retention

Academicians grow professionally through teaching, scholarship, service and other related activities and achievements within their institutions and fields. International academicians constitute an important part of any country's composition of higher education with respect to promoting concepts of internationalization and globalization (Altbach & Yudkevich, 2017; Huang et al., 2017). Of course, these professionals face additional challenges to their academic success compared to their more local counterparts (Museus, 2008; Varma, 2010); they also face unique challenges concerning personal growth and development, which is important to healthy social functioning, and ultimately affects, and determines, professional attainment, continuity and stability (Ahmed, 2012; Kuster et al., 2013; Lin et al., 2009; Pherali, 2012). This qualitative study was undertaken to determine whether attending professional conferences has a role in, or effect on, the personal growth and development of international faculty members living and practicing in the US.

Background

Although a lack of consensus exists in minutiae (Rumbley & Wit, 2017), international faculty members are typically, generally defined as those who are born, grow up and receive undergraduate (or equivalent) degrees in one country and then are hired in teaching positions in another (graduate degrees can be attained in either home or foreign countries. Thus, international faculty are academicians in foreign countries and cultures (Kim et al., 2011). In the US, internationalization of higher education curricula and the overall educational experience has become of paramount importance to meet the needs of globalization (Altbach et al., 2016; Gahungu, 2011; Munene, 2014). One important strategy in this endeavor is the recruitment of international faculty members (Gahungu, 2011; Munene, 2014). International faculty experience

additional challenges to stability and success compared to their native counterparts (Lawrence et al., 2014; Munene, 2014). Such challenges include visa and naturalization issues, a lack of cultural understanding, sensitivity, and support within the work environment and the broader community, being stereotyped and suffering careerism, and, ultimately, professional and social isolation (Gahungu, 2011; Munene, 2014). Studies that treat these issues tend to focus on professional aspects of what employing institutions can do to retain international faculty in their positions (Campbell et al., 2018; Gahungu, 2011; Lee et al., 2017). Despite that professionals experience stressors from personal as well as professional life (Bjorklund, 2015; Carver 1997), that notable adult educators have emphasized the importance of personal development for nearly a century (Dewey, 1938; Lindeman, 1926; Mezirow, 1991), that seeking (social) emotional support is one of the most effective coping mechanisms for professional and personal stress (Carver, 1997; Bjorklund, 2015), and that things such as mentoring can increase socialization growth and development (Alberts, 2008; Bryant-Shanklin & Brumage, 2011) which ultimately increases job satisfaction, and in turn stability and retainment (Lee & del carmen Montiel, 2011), little research concerning international faculty personal development is evident in the literature.

This research project frames itself on the theories that numerous behaviors used to cope with professional and personal stress, directly rely on, or are strongly related to, social interaction. For instance, using Carver's (1997) 14 styles of coping (of which four--denial, substance use, behavioral disengagement, and self-blame--are detrimental), four--use of emotional support, use of instrumental support, venting, and humor--directly invoke personal or professional social exchange. Four others--active coping, positive reframing, planning, and acceptance--bear a strong connection to such interactions. Moreover, various levels of professional and personal mentoring, which depend on more developed social interaction and relationships, can enhance the effects of such mechanisms (Livingstone & Naismith, 2018; Nolan-Arañez, 2020); and critical reflection, an essential element in transformative learning, requires critical reflection, which is fed by reflective discourse that seeks out and utilizes other perspectives and opinions to develop, test and refine new perceptions (Merriam et al., 2007; Mezirow, 1978). Using this theoretical framework, the researchers attempted to gather data to better understand the role attending professional conferences (which necessarily includes and requires social interactions and relationships) might play in the personal development and growth of international faculty members, or, more precisely to answer the following question: How do international faculty members perceive the role of attending annual professional conferences in their personal development?

Methodology

The researchers used semi-structured interviews to obtain data from four international faculty members employed in the US. Three of the interviewees—two females and one male—are originally from China, while one—a female—is from Korea. Using the Carnegie classification system, all are faculty members at universities, one at a doctoral university with high research activity, and three at master's colleges and universities. Interviewees were each asked the following initial questions:
1. Do you attend annual professional conferences? If so, why?
2. Does attending annual conferences in your field mean anything to you besides improving scholarship and professional achievement? If so, what?

3. What else would you like to add regarding the role of attending conferences with respect to your life?

Three of the interviews were conducted by phone and lasted approximately 30 minutes each. The other one was conducted via email. Phone interviews were recorded; email interviews were naturally transcribed. Responses were traditionally coded for themes. Obvious limitations of the study include the small number of interviewees and that they are all from Asian countries.

Results

In responses to the first interview question, all four interviewees indicated that they attend annual professional conferences regularly. They see such attendance and participation positively, as a necessary part of scholarship, which is required for successful maintenance of their academic employment and a good way to keep current in their fields. As one interviewee explained, "attending the conference has become something that I most look forward to each year."

Responses to question two reveal attending annual conferences, to the interviewees, means re-affirming, bolstering, and expanding feelings of being integrated into their professional fields, as well as feelings of inclusion, belonging, and community. It means catching up with existing friends and strengthening bonds of friendship. It means making new friends, expanding their existing circle of friends and the number and depth of personal relationships along with broadening and augmenting their overall social networks.

While the interviewees expressed fostering relationships with both native and international colleagues and friends at conferences, they emphasized the importance of relationships with people in similar situations--international faculty members, especially those from the same country or region--regarding coping with challenges and supporting personal growth and development. The interviewees expressed better relations with such people in obtaining emotional support--in understanding challenges unique to the group and confirming feelings of professional and personal stress. In this vein, an interviewee explained, "I have a group of friends to talk with about the struggles in work and life, and I have found that I am not alone in getting stressed and feeling frustrations. It helps me stay positive and confident; especially, it was very helpful during the years before tenure."

Discussion and Conclusions

The results of this study indicate the importance of conferences in the professional and personal development and well-being of international faculty members, at least in the US. They show that international faculty perceive this importance and use the conference experience to these effects. While not directly stated in the responses to the prescribed and follow-up questions (the researchers declined to ask specifically in fear of biasing the responses by presenting leading questions), the results support the notion of conferences attendance enhances personal growth through perspective transformation, by increasing opportunities for critical discourse and reflection.

Future research might expand the number of participants. They might take the methodological form of surveys, focus groups or further, more focused semi-structured interviews. Using the foundation provided by this study, future research projects might design questions or other data-gathering techniques to provide more depth as to the function of professional conferences on the processes and outcomes of personal growth, especially focusing on perspective transformation. This research can and should be conducted with respect to native and international faculty members for more informative comparisons. Taking another approach, future research might also ask questions and gather data with respect to the activities and opportunities conferences intentionally or unintentionally provide that (native and international) faculty members gravitate toward with respect to personal development.

Implications for this and future research have substantial potential. Information can be important with respect to increasing international faculty retention. It can also enhance personal understanding, and thus, more effective use, of conferences in personal development and transformative learning on the part of international faculty. It has the potential to inform program planners in developing more effective conference experiences, and native colleagues and employing institutions in developing support and collaboration with their international faculty members.

International faculty members are an important asset to institutions of higher education in the US, and elsewhere in maintaining the quality and relevance of the overall learning experiences provided. As such, fostering positive professional and personal environments for these people is essential in promoting job and life satisfaction, and, thus, retention and stability. Though rudimentary and basic, this study lays the foundation and justification of further study in this direction.

References

Alberts, H. C. (2008). The challenges and opportunities of foreign-born instructors in the classroom. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, *32*(2), 189–203. https://doi-org.msu.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/03098260701731306

Almeida, D. M. (2005). Resilience and vulnerability to daily stressors assessed via daily methods. *Current directions in Psychological Science, 14*(2)*, 64-68. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-7214.2005.00336.x

Altbach. P., Beisberg, L., & Rumbley, L. (2016). Tracking a global academic revolution. In P. Altbach (Ed.), *Globalization and internationalization in higher education* (pp. 15-28). Johns Hopkins University Press.

Altbach, P. G., & Yudkevich, M. (2017). Twenty-first century mobility: The role of international faculty. *International Higher Education, 90*(Summer), 8-10. https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2017.90.9995

Ahmed, M. A. (2012). The role of self-esteem and optimism in job satisfaction among teachers of private universities in Bangladesh. *Asian Business Review*, *1*(2), 114-120. https://doi.org/10.18034/abr.v1i2.322

Bjorklund, B. (2015). *The journey of adulthood* (8th ed.). Pearson.

Bryant-Shanklin, M., & Brumage, N. W. (2011). Collaborative responsive education mentoring: Mentoring for professional development in higher education. *Florida Journal of*

Educational Administration & Policy, *5*(1), 42–53.
https://eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=EJ961225

Campbell, T. A., Adamuti-Trache, M., & Bista, K. (2018). Employment and earnings of international science and engineering graduates of U.S. universities: A Comparative Perspective. *Journal of International Students*, *8*(1), 409–430.
https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v8i1.172

Carver, C. S. (1997). You want to measure coping but your protocol's too long: Consider the Brief COPE. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 4*(1)*, 92-100.*
http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327558ijbm0401_6

Dewey. J. (1938). *Experience and education*. The Macmillan Company.

Gahungu, A. (2011). Integration of foreign-born faculty in academia: Foreignness as an asset. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 6*(1), 1-22.
https://eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=EJ972876

Huang, F., Daizen, T., & Kim, Y. (2019). Challenges facing international faculty at Japanese universities: Main findings from the 2017 national survey. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *71*(C), e102103.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2019.102103

Kim, D., Wolf-Wendel, L., & Twombly, S. (2011). International faculty: Experiences of academic life and productivity in U.S. universities. *The Journal of Higher Education (Columbus)*, *82*(6), 720-747. https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2011.0038

Kuster, F., Orth, U., & Meier, L. L. (2013). High self-esteem prospectively predicts better work conditions and outcomes. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *4*(6), 668-675.
https://doi-org.msu.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/1948550613479806

Lawrence, J. H., Celis, S., Kim, H. S., Lipson, S. K., & Tong, X. (2014). To stay or not to stay: Retention of Asian international faculty in STEM fields. *Higher Education, 67*(5), 511-531. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10734-013-9658-0

Lee, C. D., & Del Carmen Montiel, E. (2011). The correlation of mentoring and job satisfaction: A pilot study of mental health professionals. *Community Mental Health Journal*, *47*(4), 482-487. https://doi-org.msu.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s10597-010-9356-7

Lee, T., Lim, D. H., & Kim, J. (2017, June 9-11). The effect of mentoring on U.S. vs. foreign-born faculty's self-esteem and job satisfaction. *Proceeding of the Adult Education Research Conference*, Norman, OK, United States*.*
http://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2017/papers/34

Lin, Z., Pearce, R., & Wang, W. (2009). Imported talents: demographic characteristics, achievement and job satisfaction of foreign born full time faculty in four-year American colleges. *Higher Education*, *57*(6), 703-721. https://doi-org.msu.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s10734-008-9171-z

Lindeman, E. (1926). *The meaning of adult education.* New Republic.

Livingstone, N., & Naismith, N. (2018). Faculty and undergraduate student perceptions of an integrated mentoring approach. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, *19*(1), 77–92.
https://doi-org.msu.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/1469787417723233

Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide* (3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1978). *Education for perspective transformation: Women's re-entry programs in community college*. Teachers College.

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass.

Munene, I. I. (2014). Outsiders within: Isolation of international faculty in an American university. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education, 19*(4), 450–467. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13596748.2014.955637

Museus, S. D. (2008). The model minority and the inferior minority myths: Understanding stereotypes and their implications for student learning. *About Campus, 13*(3), 2-8. http://dx.doi.org.msu.idm.oclc.org/10.1002/abc.252

Nolan-Arañez, S. I. (2020). The intersectionality of leadership and spiritual development through mentoring. *New Directions for Student Leadership*, 2020(166), 97-0110. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/yd.20385

Pherali, T. (2012). Academic mobility, language, and cultural capital: The experience of transnational academics in British higher education institutions. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *16*(4), 313-333. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315311421842

Rumbley, L., & De Wit, H. (2017). International faculty mobility: Crucial and understudied. *International Higher Education*, *88*(Winter), 6-8. https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2017.88.9681

Varma, R. (2010). India-Born in the U.S. Science and Engineering Workforce. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *53*(7), 1064-1078. https://doi-org.msu.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0002764209356239

Integrating Soft Skills Into an Academic Curriculum

Jennifer Warrner
Ball State University

Abstract: Technical skills are important in all industries. Most academic programs at higher education institutions focus on teaching technical skills. However, in addition to seeking candidates with strong technical skills, employers also seek candidates who have strong soft skills, such as communication, organization, and teamwork. This paper highlights the importance of soft skills and how one academic program at a four-year institution incorporates teaching soft skills into courses in the curriculum to help best prepare its graduates for the professional world.

Keywords: soft skills, curriculum development, professionalism, skill development

Each year, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) publishes a list of the top skills that employers seek in job candidates (NACE, 2016). This annual list includes both soft skills and industry-specific technical skills and knowledge. Both soft and technical skills are required to be successful professionals. However, most academic programs at four-year institutions focus on teaching technical skills. This paper discusses the importance of soft skills and how one academic program at a four-year institution incorporates teaching soft skills into courses in its curriculum to help best prepare its graduates for the professional world. In addition to demonstrating the importance of soft skills, specific assignments and activities to teach soft skills from two courses in the curriculum and plans for the future are shared.

Background

According to Robles (2012), soft skills are interpersonal qualities and personal attributes. Sample soft skills include leadership, teamwork, communication, flexibility, and work ethic. Soft skills are not unique to a certain industry or discipline. These skills can be transferred from industry to industry. Though employers seek both soft and technical skills in new hires, reports have shown that recent college graduates lack some of the skills required to be successful in the workplace. A survey conducted by LEAP and the Association of American Colleges and Universities reported that 63% of employers said that graduates lacked the essential skills needed to be successful in today's global economy (Banerji, 2007). In research conducted by Farner and Brown (2008), employers reported that the skills of college graduates are not at the level needed to complete tasks required in the professional world.

Both soft skills and technical skills are critical to employees' success on the job, and the two types of skills must complement each other. Employers want employees to have strong soft skills, as well as technical skills. However, technical skills are not enough to keep individuals employed. As Lancaster and Stillman (2010) note, candidates can be good hires even if they lack some of the technical skills necessary to succeed in a position. To best prepare graduates to be

successful in the professional world, higher education institutions must prepare students to have both strong technical and soft skills.

Example of Integrating Soft Skills Into an Academic Curriculum

To help prepare students for their careers, academic programs at higher education institutions can incorporate soft skills into their courses. The construction management program at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana implements soft skills into multiple courses in its curriculum. One such course is CM 222: Technical Presentation for Construction Managers. Most students take this course in the sophomore year of their studies. Students must complete core curriculum courses in Rhetoric and Writing and Fundamentals of Public Speaking as prerequisites for CM 222. The course covers various topics that pertain to communication in the construction industry, such as presentation skills, business writing, phone skills, meeting minutes, and interviewing skills. In addition to teaching these industry-specific communication skills, the course includes lectures and activities to teach several other soft skills including organization, time management, and problem solving.

Organization is imperative in the construction industry. In their professional careers in construction, graduates from this academic program will be responsible for multiple job responsibilities on a daily basis and could even be helping to manage several large-scale construction projects simultaneously. To help teach organization skills, students in CM 222 are introduced to a variety of methods to help stay organized. Due to the increased use of technology and course management systems used in higher education, many students do not have a developed system for how to stay organized and ensure that they meet deadlines. The organization systems presented in CM 222 are planners and notebooks, electronic calendars, and sticky notes. Examples of how alumni from the Ball State construction management program use these various organization systems are shared, so students have actual examples of how these systems are used in industry. Students are encouraged to develop these organization systems in their collegiate careers so they can start their professional careers with an established way to stay organized to help assist with their transition from college to career.

In addition to teaching organization skills, communication skills are taught continuously throughout the semester in CM 222. Two specific topics related to communications skills that are integrated into the course are email etiquette and phone skills. Lectures about each topic are first shared with the class. For email etiquette, students review various scenarios experienced by either interns or alumni from the construction management program. Students work in pairs to write appropriate emails in response to these scenarios. For phone skills, students have the opportunity to role play various scenarios with their classmates. Like the email etiquette scenarios, the phone skills scenarios are actual examples experienced by either interns or alumni from the construction management program. After both in-class exercises, the students come back together as an entire group to discuss and debrief about their experiences working on these activities.

Soft skills are also incorporated into the curriculum in CM 460: Capstone in Construction. Capstone in Construction is the final course for seniors in the construction management curriculum. In this course, students work in teams for the duration on the semester on the project

management components of an actual recent construction project in Indiana. Teamwork is imperative in the construction industry. Multi-million- or multi-billion-dollar construction projects cannot be completed by one person. After graduation, students will constantly work in project teams throughout their professional careers. Having students work in the same teams for a five-month semester during CM 460 helps simulate the experience of working with the same project team for months or even years in industry. Though all the course assignments in CM 460 require teamwork, one particular assignment, the mock bid, is specifically designed to help students further develop their teamwork skills and understand the importance of teamwork. The mock bid simulates a competitive bid, which is how many projects are awarded to companies in the construction industry. In a timeframe of two hours, students receive five bid packets, three caveats, and other information that simulates a bid in real time. Due to the time constraints and the large number of bids included in this exercise, teams must work well together to successfully complete the bid on time. Deadlines are critical in construction, and as in industry, no late bids are accepted during the mock bid. Prior to the actual bid day, teams are encouraged to develop a plan and a system to stay organized for this activity. Not all teams are successful in submitting the bid on time and in the correct format. Receiving a zero on this assignment helps reinforce the importance of working together effectively to complete a project. At the mock bid opening, after all of the bids have been opened and recorded, the course instructor debriefs the activity with the students to discuss what strategies worked well, how the teams could have improved, and what the teams learned about themselves that can be applied for the remainder of the semester.

Plans for the Future

Informal feedback from students about the various assignments and activities in the courses highlighted in this article has been positive. To help students further develop these soft skills, new exercises will be developed and included in these courses in the future.

One strategy to incorporate into CM 222 in the future is to have alumni assist with the phone skills activity. Students will be paired with alumni to role play using preassigned scenarios. Incorporating alumni will help students develop their construction network and will give them feedback on their phone skills from actual professionals in the industry.

One strategy to incorporate into CM 460 in the future to further teach teamwork is to have alumni participate in the mock bid exercise. Alumni would be invited to campus to observe the mock bid. At the bid opening, alumni would share their observations to offer feedback as to how the groups could have worked more effectively as a team. In addition, an alumni team would be created to participate in the mock bid. During the debriefing, the alumni team would reinforce the importance of teamwork and share how their group worked together during the exercise. Alumni would also relate their experiences from participating in actual competitive bids in the construction industry.

In addition to adding new exercises into these existing courses in the future, developing a new technical elective related to soft skills is another strategy to help students further develop soft skills. As part of the construction management curriculum at Ball State University, students must complete seven hours of technical elective credit. A soft skills technical elective could provide

further information about various soft skills and allow students additional opportunities to further develop and practice these skills.

Conclusion

The course examples shared in this article are a select representation of ways that soft skills are integrated into one academic curriculum at a higher education institution. Many soft skills, such as teamwork, communication, and leadership, are taught both directly and indirectly in multiple other courses through assignments like group projects and in class discussions.

Since employers place an emphasis on soft skills in the professional world, it is imperative that higher education institutions think of ways to integrate these skills into their curricula, so students are prepared to be successful in their professional careers.

References

Banerji, S. (2007). Report: Employers say college graduates lack essential skills to succeed in today's global economy. *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education, 23*(26), 18.

Farner, S. M., & Brown, E. E. (2008). College students and the work world. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 45*(3), 106–114. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1920.2008.tb00050.x

Lancaster, L. C., & Stillman, D. (2010). *The M-factor: How the millennial generation is rocking the workplace*. Harper Business.

NACE. (2016). *Job outlook 2016: Attributes employers want to see on new college graduates' resumes*. http://www.naceweb.org/s11182015/employers-look-for-in-new-hires.aspx#sthash.1yiZTvqJ.dpuf

Robles, M. M. (2012). Executive perceptions of the top 10 soft skills needed in today's workplace. *Business Communication Quarterly, 75*(4), 453-465. doi:10.1177/1080569912460400

Program, Policy, and Culture Factors Minority Millennials Perceive as Important Within Their Workplace for Retention

Tanesha Watts[1] and Vicki Dieffenderfer[2]
[1]University of Arkansas and [2]Tennessee Tech University

Abstract: Millennials make up the largest segment of the current workforce. However, research about minority Millennials and their needs are relatively unknown. The purpose of this study was to determine what minority Millennials deemed important within an organization's culture and the policies and programs that would persuade them to remain with the company. Purposeful sampling was used to identify participants for this study. The results of the study indicated that minority Millennials expect programs that promote continuing education and opportunities for career growth. They also expect competitive benefits packages, pay, and workplace flexibility. Companies can use this information to gain a better understanding of the culture, programs, and policies that minority Millennials expect at their workplace.

Keywords: minority Millennial, generations, heuristic elicitation methodology, workplace diversity

A polarizing generation that is both admired and critiqued, Millennials are serious about changing work environments to meet their needs (Alsop, 2008). "This newest generation seems to possess an entirely different set of values" (Allen, 2008, p. 24). Born between 1982 and 2005 (Howe & Strauss, 2007), the Millennials (also known as Generation Y) are currently the youngest generation in the workforce (Brack, 2012). At 80 million, the Millennial generation has officially surpassed Baby Boomers (those born between 1943 -1960) as the largest generation in the United States, thus making them the largest generation currently in the workforce (Sherman, 2008). As Baby Boomers and Generation X (those born between 1961 - 1981) employees approach their retirement stages, Millennial employees look to take the lead in management and senior-level positions within organizations.

Over the last decade, a common idea that Millennials are different has prevailed. "By all accounts, Millennials are unlike preceding generations," (Brack, 2012, p. 2). Some perceptions even cast negative stereotypes about Millennials. "Popular perception (that is not supported by substantial evidence) is that Millennials are impatient, self-important, and disloyal, among other unattractive qualities from an organizational standpoint" (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010, p. 226). With the accusations of how different Millennials are, organizations may be in search of ways to manage and retain them. The Pew Research Center found that about two-thirds of all employed Millennials stated that it is not very likely or not likely at all that they will stay with their current employers for the remainder of their working life (Keeter & Taylor, 2010). Furthermore, organizations are having to compete in an ever increasingly global and diverse economy with the Millennial generation as one of the most diverse group of employees to enter the modern-day workforce. This study will show that although much research has been done on Millennials as a whole, the diversity of the Millennial generation, and in particular, the minority voices of the generation, have been

understudied. This study will seek to find out what minority Millennials find as important within an organization's culture and the policies and programs that would persuade them to remain with the company.

Literature Review

Research shows that supporting a diverse set of Millennial employees can have a positive impact on an organization (Berman, 2012; Clark, 1999; Raines, 2002; Smith & Turner, 2015). Clark (1999) states that "forward-looking organizations, realizing the potential of diversity, have developed and employed strategic diversity plans that take advantage of this diversity to become more competitive in the global economy" (p. 3). Likewise, Raines (2002) states that in a "highly competitive business environment, companies across North America recognize that the differentiator is their people. Those organizations that emerge as winners in the battle for talent will have their fingers on the pulse of this newest generation" (p. 16). The Deloitte and the Billie Jean King study (Smith & Turner, 2015) found a vast contrast between what Millennials felt was considered diversity and inclusion versus the way Generation X and Baby Boomers defined the terms. The group felt that the results of the study would be a good eye opener for corporations as well as "critical to informing and elevating the inclusion conversations taking place across corporate America" (Smith & Turner, 2015, p. 3). An even more interesting fact the study found centered around engagement. The study reported that 83% of Millennials feel engaged when they believe their organization fosters an inclusive culture, compared to only 60% engagement in Millennials that feel their organization does not foster an inclusive culture (Smith & Turner, 2015). The results of this study tie back to the expectation Millennials have of an organization that embraces diversity and the outcomes it represents. However, all organizations are not clueless to the fact that diversity is needed and expected by its youngest generation. A study of CEO's and executive-level leaders conducted by IBM found that 75% believe that leveraging diversity is essential to organizational success (Berman, 2012). Research also shows that diverse organizations may help with stereotyping and bias. Rikleen (2011) states that "important that generational stereotyping not get in the way of the ability to understand the expectations and skill sets of each employee" (p. 8). Likewise, authors Kanter (1977) and Blau (1977) have argued that the greater the minority group is represented within the company, the more the majority can seek to understand their differences.

Methodology

The Heuristic Elicitation Methodology (HEM), as described in Nardi & Harding (1978) was used as the framework for this study. "The goal of the HEM is to describe "cultural meaning structures," or the rules of correspondence which relate behavior to socially" (Kupritz, 1996, p. 314). According to Nardi & Harding (1978) "the Heuristic Elicitation Methodology has been developed to assess the knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and preferences of a group of people through use of series of interlinked questions in which responses to one question determine the form of subsequent questions" (p. 39). In choosing a framework and research design, it was important to utilize one in that allowed the voices of the minority Millennial population to not only be heard verbatim but analyzed and quantified. The HEM is unique in that it is designed to extrapolate the respondent's own categories in his/her own language (Harding, 1974).

The first phase of the HEM is qualitative with the purpose of "discovering the range of knowledge about a particular domain as possessed by a given population" (Narding & Harding, 1978, p. 40). The intent of the first phase was to identify the domain or set of categories commonly used to describe situations, scenarios or problems in response to minority Millennial retention in the workplace. The HEM consists of different elicitation phases; however, any phase (Phase one in this study) can be used individually as a separate investigative study (Harding, 1974). To conduct the first phase of the HEM, the investigator conducted structured interviews with each of the 14 participants selected through purposeful sampling for this study.

The participants answered a series of interlinked questions where the first question identified the items in the domain and the subsequent questions identified the attributes. For example, one response to the first question was "diversity." This answer was plugged into the second question as follows: "For diversity, what workplace conditions or situations would indicate that your workplace values diversity." After this a probe question was asked "what other workplace conditions or situations would indicate that your workplace values diversity, other than what you just stated?" The probe question is presented to allow the participant to think of any other examples to describe the initial domain response. This sequence continued with questions three through five. At any point if the participant stated, "I do not know," "I cannot think of anything else" or "my workplace does not do this," it signaled to the investigator that this domain had been exhausted. The investigator would then start at the question one with the next domain item that the participant mentioned. The participants' responses were recorded verbatim by hand and digitally. This allows the respondents' language and patterns of speech to be preserved and utilized in later phases of the method (Harding, 1974; Harding & Livesay, 1984). An example of the domain definition questions is presented below in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *The HEM Phase 1 Domain Analysis—Interview Flow*

Question #1	Question #2	Question #3
What specific kinds of things (culture, policies, programs etc. are important to you for retention in the workplace? [Answers = "X"]	For/when X, what workplace conditions or situations would indicate that the workplace/organization values X? [Answers = "Y"]	What other workplace conditions or situations would indicate that the workplace/organization values X, other than Y? [Probe]
Question #4	Question #5	Question #6
For/when X, what workplace conditions or situations would indicate that the workplace/organization doesn't value X [Q1]? [Answers = "Y"]	What other workplace conditions or situations would indicate that the workplace/organization doesn't value X, other than Y? [Probe]	Describe your ideal workplace?

Findings

Programs

Inclusion and continuing education were the top two responses for programs required for minority Millennial retention. Participants felt strongly about the importance of their company investing in programs that promote diversity. The most common programs that participants mentioned were associate resource groups specifically focused on minorities. Other programs included an internal Diversity and Inclusion Certificate Program and maintaining a Diversity and Inclusion Office. In terms of continuing education, participants talked about informal educational opportunities that their organization hosts to provide internal learning opportunities. They also mentioned formal programs that their organization must accelerate their learning and growth.

Policies

Workplace flexibility and pay were the top two responses for policies required for minority Millennial retention. Participants felt strongly about their company having policies in place to allow for flexible working locations and hours. Minority Millennials also had expectations about time off and transition policies for maternal/paternal leave. In terms of pay, participants talked about the importance of being paid fairly and competitively. They preferred companies that had competitive leveling policies in place.

Culture

Diversity and company culture were the top two responses for culture required for minority Millennial retention. Participants determined diversity by the number of minorities at their organization. They wanted to see that their company interviewed and hired a diverse pool of candidates. In terms of culture, participants enjoyed a culture that was inclusive, authentic, and offered personal interactive with key leadership. They also preferred companies where the vision was modeled and consistent.

Discussion of Findings

Of the topics mentioned by the participants, fifteen were culture-related compared to six topics related to programs and seven topics related to policies. This demonstrates that for minorities, more than putting programs and policies in place, it is the overall culture and atmosphere of the working environment that really matters. Many participants could not recall a specific policy or the name of a certain program, but they each easily recalled how their company or department made them feel. Culture is something that is engrained starting with the executive leadership team and transferred to frontline leaders and managers. This study shows that, with minorities, culture matters. "Do you see me, do you hear me, do you value my thoughts?" These were the common threads that permeated throughout each interview. The results of this study align with the literature that 78% of Millennials prefer a company that may offer less money but is well known for having a great company culture (Shutan, 2016). Regarding culture, diversity and company culture were the two top listed factors that participants viewed as important for retention.

In researching many "what Millennial's expect at work" studies via the University of Arkansas Library, there were none that listed diversity, inclusion or culture as must have's or priority (Deal et al., 2010; Twenge & Campbell, 2012; Raines, 2002; Zemke et al., 2013). The list normally would include topics such as feedback, technology, work life balance, growth opportunities etc. Millennials that are a part of the majority do not have to worry about their ideas, opinions and thoughts not being taken seriously because of the color of their skin. They do not have to worry about being at a company with only one or two people that look like them in a leadership position. With this, Millennials are more likely to place higher value on factors such as pay, technology and workplace flexibility. However, minority Millennials may not be afforded that luxury. They need to feel secure that their workplace values and welcomes differences. They also need to feel confident that they can grow with the company and not encounter a ceiling because of their ethnicity. From the interviews, it was very evident that these are all very real factors that minorities deal with and are aware of. This is the reason the basic factors such as diversity, culture, inclusion and growth opportunities ranked the highest for most minority Millennials.

Implications and Future Research

Feedback from the minority Millennials in this study demonstrate that having all three components of culture, programs and policies work together to provide the best way to retain minority Millennials. From this study, culture was the most important when compared to policies and programs. In terms of culture, an authentic culture that not only accepts but celebrates diversity, and differences amongst people is a must. Rikleen (2011) found that it is important to "foster an appreciation of diversity within the organization. This will help all generations avoid the stereotyping that gets in the way of valuing the skills sets of each employee" (p. 5). LaCore (2015) also agrees saying that leadership in organizations must address possible generational stereotypes and the different values that demographic diversity introduces into an organization. For programs, implementing programs to foster inclusion are important to minority Millennials. An example of this would be hosting townhalls and other programs where employees can gain an understanding of the importance of diversity and start to realize any unconscious bias. One participant stated, "we'll have town halls and webcasts and things to discuss really hard topics." Programs on unconscious bias, the importance of diversity and other inclusion topics can help to retain minority Millennials while also helping all employees to embrace differences. When it comes to policies, a very important aspect is to implement human resource departments that govern diversity practices. Research has shown that effective diversity management can be obtained through implementing the appropriate human resource policies and practices (Dass & Parker 1999; Shen et al., 2009). Likewise, Roberge et al. (2011) state that "when organizational strategy and human resources policies and practices support diversity initiatives, diversity is more likely to lead to positive performance outcomes" (p. 11). A human resource department can set the foundation of how diversity practices will be managed within the organization which in turn contributes to the culture. A human resource department may also be needed to create policies to manage any issues that may arise around fair treatment and diversity. In all, times are changing and with each passing day and year, workplaces will continue to be more and more diverse. Keeter and Taylor (2009) maintain that "this generation is also the most diverse generation ever and will redefine diversity in the workplace" (p. 4). It will be important

for organizations to understand what minority Millennials expect and need so that they can stay competitive in their market and retain their top-level talent.

References

Allen, D. G. (2008). Retaining talent: A guide to analyzing and managing employee turnover. Society for Human Resource Management and SHRM Foundation. https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/special-reports-and-expert-views/Documents/Retaining-Talent.pdf

Alsop, R. (2008) *The trophy kids grow up*. Jossey-Bass.

Berman, S. (2012). Leading through connections–IBM global CEO study 2012. *IBM Institute for Business Value*. http://www-935. ibm.com/services/us/en/c-suite/ceostudy2012.

Brack, J., & Kelly, K. (2012). Maximizing Millennials in the workplace. *UNC Executive Development, 22*(1), 2-14.

Clark, J. C. (1999). Key components for strategic diversity initiative. http://Prometheon.com

Dass, P., & Parker, B. (1999). Strategies for managing human resource diversity: From resistance to learning. *Academy of Management Perspectives, 13*(2), 68–80. https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.1999.1899550

Deal, J., Altman, D., & Rogelberg, S. (2010). Millennials at work: What we know and what we need to do (if anything). *Journal of Business & Psychology, 25*(2), 191-199. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-010-9177-2

Harding, J. R. (1974). Heuristic elicitation methodology and FRM acceptability [Background paper]. W.H.O. Conference on Cross-Cultural Research Methods and Instruments and FRM Acceptability. Geneva, Switzerland.

Harding, J. R., & Livesay, J. M. (1984) Anthropology and public policy. In G. McCall & G. Weber (Eds.), *Social science and public policy: The role of academic disciplines in policy analysis* (pp. 51-90). Associated Faculty Press.

Howe, N., & Strauss, W. (2007). The next 20 years. How customer and workforce attitudes will evolve. *Harvard Business School Press, 85*(7-8), 41-52.

Kanter, R. M. (1977). *Men and women of the corporation*. Basic Books.

Keeter, S., & Taylor, P. (2009). The Millennials. *Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewresearch.org/2009/12/10/the-millennials/

Kupritz, V. W. (1996). HEM: Directed means for improving current limits of privacy research. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research, 13*(4), 310-328.

LaCore, E. (2015). Supporting Millennials in the workplace. *Strategic HR Review, 14*(4), 155-157. https://doi.org/10.1108/shr-06-2015-0046

Myers, K. K., & Sadaghiani, K. (2010). Millennials in the workplace: A communication perspective on Millennials' organizational relationships and performance. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 25*(2), 225-238. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-010-9172-7

Nardi, B. A., & Harding, J. R. (1978). Determining community attitudes and preferences for programs and services. *Carolina Planning, 4*(1), 38-45.

Raines, C. (2002). *Connecting generations: The sourcebook for a new workplace*. Crisp Learning.

Rikleen, L. S. (2011). *Creating tomorrow's leaders: The expanding roles of Millennials in the workplace*. Boston College Center for Work & Family.

file:///C:/Users/cac424/AppData/Local/Temp/Executive%20Briefing_Creating%20Tomo
rrows%20Leaders_Millennials-1.pdf

Roberge, M., Lewicki, R. J., Hietapelto, A., & Abdyldaeva, A. (2011). From theory to practice:
Recommending supportive diversity practices. *Journal of Diversity Management, 6*(2), 1-
20. https://doi.org/10.19030/jdm.v6i2.5481

Shen, J., Chanda, A., D'Netto, B., & Monga, M. (2009). Managing diversity through human
resource management: An international perspective and conceptual framework. The
International Journal of Human Resource Management, 20(2), 235-251.
https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190802670516

Sherman, L. (2008, October 1). *The new counterculture's buying power*. Forbes.
https://www.forbes.com/2008/10/01/hipster-buying-power-forbeslife-
cx_ls_1001style.html?sh=427029f41c69

Shutan, B. (2016, October 4). *Is workplace culture the hot new benefit?* Employee Benefit
Adviser. https://www.personnelperspective.com/2016/12/22/is-workplace-culture-the-
hot-new-benefit/

Smith, C., & Turner, S. (2015). *The radical transformation of diversity
and inclusion the millennial influence*. Deloitte. https://www2.deloitte.
com/us/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/radical-transformation-of-diversity-and-inclusion.
html.

Twenge, J. M., & Campbell, S. M. (2012). Who are the Millennials? Empirical evidence for
generational differences in work values, attitudes and personality. In E. Elgar, *Managing
the new workforce: International perspectives on the Millennial generation* (pp. 152-
180). Cheltenham.

Zemke, R., Filipczak, B., & Raines, C. (2013). *Generations at work: Managing the clash of
boomers, Gen Xers, and Gen Yers in the workplace*. Amacon.

Profound Learning of End of Life Caregivers

Elizabeth Wigdorski[1], Davin Carr-Chellman[2], Michael Kroth[1], Neal Ricks[1], and Donna Daniels[1]

[1]*University of Idaho and* [2]*University of Dayton*

Abstract: This study explores the learning of volunteer end of life caregivers (EOLCG). Using the profound learning framework, the researchers will use a grounded theory approach to generate transferable characterizations of how learning occurs for EOLCGs and what the content of that learning is. As a unique population of adult learners who perform an essential and sacred service for those passing through a mysterious and difficult time of life, there is much to be explored. The study seeks to understand how profound learning happens for EOLCGs.

Keywords: end of life care giving, end of life care learning, hospice training, hospice learning

This exploratory, theory-building study seeks to understand whether profound learning happens for end of life caregivers. This study focuses on caregivers and their profound learning during their experiences. This group was chosen because of conditions and experiences the researchers suspect are fertile ground for profound learning. The researchers' goal in this study is to provide qualitative, conceptual descriptions of the profound learning of EOLCGs. The research questions center around the practices, motivations, and processes of profound learning that takes place in the experiences of end of life caregivers. The results of this research will contribute to the existing scholarship of profound learning.

Literature Background

Grounded theory methodology suggests differing approaches to the timing of a literature review (Charmaz, 2014). One approach is to not include a comprehensive review until after the data has been gathered and analyzed so that researchers will not be unduly influenced prior to their initial conclusions. Another approach is to have a full review prior to the study so there is a deep understanding before interviews are conducted, data is collected, and coding proceeds. The research team for this study decided to take a middle approach, looking for only an initial collection of literature, which will be supplemented and integrated, along with other related sources, as the research analysis proceeds. A search was conducted of the following databases, JStor and Academic Search Premier, using these keywords: end of life caregiving, end of life care learning, hospice training, and hospice learning. Articles were gathered and assigned to members of the research team, who developed annotated summaries inserted into a project spreadsheet. This information will not be developed into an integrated review until the findings are completely interpreted.

Literature collected so far does not make clear connections between deep learning of volunteer caregivers and their end-of-life experiences. While there are several anecdotal descriptions, there are few empirical studies from which to draw. Several the articles discuss professional

caregivers, such as nurses, and their experiences and challenges (Ives-Baine et al., 2013; Lindsay et al., 2012; Rivera-Romero et al., 2019). Several findings and theoretical concepts found in the literature may be useful in later analysis, including relationship which is at the center of caregiver and patient (Ives-Baine et al., 2013); the importance of debriefing after a patient passes (Kelly & Nisker, 2010); the meaning-making process, including reflection (Lindsay et al., 2012); paradoxes, including sadness-happiness and individual-collective needs, and the importance of multiple perspectives brought by multiple participants involved (Loisell & Sterling, 2012); death and dying communication apprehension (Pagano, 2016); the sense of time, including the relationship of finitude and learning (Russell, 2008); learning the value of silence and presence (Foote, 2006; Sanders & Swails, 2011); the processes of meaning reconstruction and reorganized personal identity for the caregiver (Foote, 2015; Supiano & Vaughn-Cole, 2011); the need for ritual (Running et al., 2008); the narratives hospice volunteers use to reflect upon and to interpret their experiences, the idea of what "good death" means, and the way a hospice volunteer can become a hospice educator (Wittenberg-Lyles, 2006); the idea of anticipatory grief and a feeling of an uncertain future (Berinato, 2020); the concept of front-facing regions of a hospice workers (caring, compassion, professional) and back-facing regions (morbid, dark humor, detachment from death and dying, strategies to change patient and family behaviors) and how they divide time and space (Cain, 2012); and the process of censoring, an adaptive process which is used by nurses to allow themselves to continue as the patient moves toward death (Curcio, 2017).

Profound Learning

Profound learning has been recently conceptualized by Carr-Chellman and Kroth (Carr-Chellman & Kroth, 2017; Kroth & Carr-Chellman, 2018, 2020a), with initial theory-building studies (Carr-Chellman & Kroth, 2019; Kroth & Carr-Chellman, 2020b). Kroth (2016) originally conceptualized a profound learner as "someone who pursues deeper knowledge over time" (p. 29), and as someone who "has an ongoing proclivity and practice of seeking deeper learning . . . and are intentional about deepening as a way of life" (p. 29). Carr-Chellman & Kroth (2017) began to develop a framework for profound learning, suggesting that practices, or disciplines, are one approach for individuals to intentionally develop profound learning as a way of life instead of, or perhaps in resistance to, the shallow path that the internet and current society are pushing toward.

These authors suggest that qualities of profound learners are pursued over time, and so it would include but not be limited to transformative learning experiences; that profound learners "seek to open up, to ask, and to continually reveal rather than to close down, to answer, or to completely discover (p. 29); that extraordinary learning comes from the ordinary; and that "ordinary people can become profound learners, and profound learning can be found in the ordinary" (p.30). Carr-Chellman and Kroth continued to add substance to the conceptualization of profound learning by proposing three "building blocks" for a profound learning pedagogy (2018), which are: 1) that such an approach assumes that completely correct answers cannot be found and that the pursuit of truth can only be asymptotic and thus is a continuing exploration rather than an accomplishment; 2) that, ergo, there is no endpoint in the pursuit of deeper learning, such that learning capacity continues to develop over a lifetime; and 3) that developing practices such as disciplines, routines, and habits, are essential to intentionality, draw out one's full potentiality, and pursue depth over a lifetime.

Most recently, Kroth & Carr-Chellman utilized metaphor to develop more substantive ways of looking at what profound means rather than simply "deep". Metaphors for profundity included looking at profundity as a milieu and as moving toward a center. Qualities of milieu included being interconnected with everything, as being immersed and integrated with all that surrounds; and as moving from separateness to oneness. Profound learning includes structures and processes that can be returned to, where new ideas can be mixed with existing knowledge, but can never be filled; and is a path of discovery.

Methodology

Grounded theory research studies social psychological processes in the context of a particular experience generating an explanation of that process in new theoretical terms, elaborating the properties of the theory, illustrating the conditions under which the process materializes (Charmaz 2014). Following Charmaz's (2014) constructivist grounded theory approach, the researchers will apply an inductive lens to emergent conceptual categories present in the data to generate meaningful characterizations of the phenomena. A more robust understanding of profound learning, generally, as well as profound learning for EOLCGs more specifically, should result. As a guiding interest, the characteristics of profound learning will shape our data collection and analysis. Concepts such as disciplines, practices, and habits will provide points of departure. Likewise, the notions of formation, identity development over time, and agency will inform our methods. It is common for grounded theorists to begin research investigations with sensitizing concepts and guiding interests like these core concepts of profound learning.

Two empirical studies have been completed to date. The first was an inquiry into teachers' experiences of profound learning (2019). Here, profound learners were found: 1) to have depth of thought; 2) to be emotionally wise; 3) to take life seriously; 4) to be adventurous in thought and deed; 5) not constrained by age, ideological perspectives, or level of education, thus transcending structural identity and therefore able to consider matters holistically; and 6) to be humble. The second empirical study was an exploratory Delphi study which sought to find consensus among a number thought leaders in the field of adult education. Among the findings were qualities of profound learning, categorized into themes, which included: 1) deeply reflective, 2) a deepening process, 3) consequential, 4) a change process, 5) progress toward a more authentic truth, and 6) integrative. Also found were qualities of profound learners, which included themes of: 1) looks beyond their own existing knowledge, 2) is a deep thinker, 3) pursues on-going growth over a lifetime, 4) is open-minded, 5) is engaged in the world around them, 6) pays attention, 7) explores, and 8) is mature in their approach to life. The grounded theory study discussed here is intended as another step in this theory-building process.

Data Collection

In grounded theory, researchers are focused on gathering rich data to elaborate and address the research question. As such, the researchers drew on Seidman's qualitative interviewing techniques. This two-interview sequence draws on Seidman's (2006) three-interview structure for phenomenological data collection. All interviews are phenomenological, so Seidman's characterization doesn't necessitate that his sequence or structure be used only in the service of a

phenomenological study. All interviewing requires an understanding of both the context and the meaning one's participant associates with that context in light of the research question/purpose. Seidman's structure helps navigate the researcher into a participant's background, their experiences and the meaning they make of the research topic. Seidman also helps facilitate strong rapport as well. Interview one establishes the context of the participant's experience. Interview two allows the participant to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occurred. Interview three encourages the participant to reflect on the meaning of the experience.

For our two-interview structure; we collapsed Seidman's three interviews into two. Interview one began moving out of biography/history and into the participant's current lived experience with the topic. Interview two will begin with additional questions about the participant's current lived experience, transitioning into the meaning of that experience. Interview two will finish by establishing closure with the participant. Interviews were conducted using research pairs consisting of an academic researcher and a doctoral student, following an apprenticeship model. Initial interviews were conducted by the academic researcher and later interviews were conducted by the doctoral students. All interviews were 60 to 90 minutes in length, were conducted over Zoom, and then recorded and transcribed.

Study Participants Selection and Recruitment

The sample frame consists of volunteer end of life caregivers. The context for their work is caring for people who are in the final stages of life or actively dying. Using a purposeful sample of convenience to generate the richest possible data about our research question, our participants came to the study in multiple ways. We worked with gatekeepers at hospice organizations and hospitals who facilitated contact with potential participants. We also pursued a snowball sample as some participants provided contacts of others who might be interested in participating.

Participants for this study were recruited from a population of hospice volunteers. The rationale for this decision was to focus on those who choose to do this work and are motivated by a desire to provide hospice care without compensation. The sample goal for this study was initially set by the team at a minimum of 16 participants for the two-interview grounded theory study. However, that number is fluid depending on the data analysis process. Data collection is ongoing. Initial contact was made to volunteer coordinators at hospice centers and programs throughout the Treasure Valley of Idaho. Both hospital hospice programs and separate hospice entities were identified and contacted. This study was approved through the University of Idaho Institutional Review Board. However, two of the hospital hospice programs required additional institutional review and approval by their own hospital review boards. Recruitment efforts began during February and March 2020, which coincided with an Idaho state lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. This required the team to abandon face-to-face contact and to limit all recruitment and interview contact efforts to phone, email, and virtual conversations.

An email with research study details was sent to program volunteer coordinators after initial phone contact and conversation. Once volunteer coordinators approved the study, a recruitment email was sent on to hospice volunteers through the coordinators. This meant that participants were recruited by volunteer coordinators rather than by researchers. However, once the

volunteers responded to the research team contact, there was no further communication with the volunteer coordinators. Volunteers who responded via email directly to the team were sent additional information about the study either by email or through a phone conversation. None of the volunteers recruited were known to the team members prior to this research study. Participants were chosen using a convenience sample. All hospice volunteers who indicated an interest in the study, and agreed to be interviewed, were included in this study. A few of the hospice volunteers who initially indicated interest in the study voluntarily withdrew for personal reasons prior to the first interview.

Researcher Description

The research team consists of six members, three faculty and three doctoral students. The study emerged as part of the University of Idaho's doctoral research apprenticeship program. As such, it is part of and continuation of a larger body of research work on profound learning. The *a priori* guiding interests and sensitizing concepts include profound learning and the constituent elements of that theory.

References

Berniato, S. (2020). *That discomfort you're feeling is grief*. Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief.

Cain, C. L. (2012). Emotions and the research interview: What hospice workers can teach us. *Health Sociology Review*, 21(4), 396–405.

Carr-Chellman, D. J., & Kroth, M. (2017). The spiritual disciplines as practices of transformation. *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology, 8*(1), 23-35.

Carr-Chellman, D.J. & Kroth, M. (2019). Public school teachers' experiences of profound learning. *Studies in Adult Education and Learning*, *25*(3), 107-123. http://dx.doi.org/10.4312/as.25.3.107.123

Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol refinement framework. *The Qualitative Report, 21*(5), 811-831.

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Curcio, D. L. (2017). The lived experiences of nurses caring for dying pediatric patients. *Pediatric Nursing, 43*(1), 8-14.

Foote, L. S. (2015). Re-Storying life as a means of critical reflection: The power of narrative learning. *Christian Higher Education, 14*(3), 116-126. https://doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2015.1028580.

Ives-Baine, L., Lindsay, G., Vander Wel, E., Barker, C., Saini, J., & Cross, N. (2013). Essential engagement: NICU nurses' relationships within end-of-life care. *Illness Crisis and Loss, 21*(4), 297-314.

Kelly, E., & Nisker, J. (2010). Medical students' first clinical experiences of death. *Medical Education, 44*(4), 421-428.

Kroth, M. (2016). The profound learner. *Journal of Adult Education, 45*(2), 28-32.

Kroth, M., & Carr-Chellman, D. J. (2018). Preparing profound learners. *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development, 30*(3), 64-71.

Kroth, M., & Carr-Chellman, D. (2020a). Conceptualizing profundity through metaphor. *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development, 32*(1), 5-16. https://doi.org/10.1002/nha3.20269

Kroth, M., & Carr-Chellman, D. (2020b). Profound Learning: An exploratory Delphi study. *International Journal of Adult Education and Technology (IJAET), 11*(2), 14-23. https://doi.org/10.4018/IJAET.2020040102

Lindsay, G., Cross, N., & Ives-Baine, L. (2012). Narratives of neonatal intensive care unit nurses: Experience with end-of-life care. *Illness Crisis and Loss, 20*(3), 239-253.

Loiselle, C. G., & Sterling, M. M. (2012). Views on death and dying among health care workers in an Indian cancer care hospice: Balancing individual and collective perspectives. *Palliative Medicine, 26*(3), 250-256. https://ida.lib.uidaho.edu:3454/10.1177/0269216311400931

Pagano, M. P. (2016). Learning about dying and living: An applied approach to end-of-life Communication. *Health Communication, 31*(8), 1019-1028. https://ida.lib.uidaho.edu:3454/10.1080/10410236.2015.1034337

Rivera-Romero, N., Ospina Garzón, H. P., & Henao-Castaño, A. M. (2019). The experience of the nurse caring for families of patients at the end of life in the intensive care unit. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences, 33*(3), 706-711.

Running, A., Tolle, L. W., & Girard, D. (2008). Ritual: The final expression of care. *International Journal of Nursing Practice (Wiley-Blackwell), 14*(4), 303-307. https://ida.lib.uidaho.edu:3454/10.1111/j.1440-172X.2008.00703.x

Russell, H. (2008). Later life: A time to learn. *Educational Gerontology, 34*(3), 206-224.

Sanders, S., & Swails, P. (2011). A quest for meaning: Hospice social workers and patients with end-stage dementia. *Social Work, 56*(2), 129-140.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers College Press.

Supiano, K. P., & Vaughn-Cole, B. (2011). The impact of personal loss on the experience of health professions: Graduate students in end-of-life and bereavement care. *Death Studies, 35*(1), 73–89.

Wittenberg-Lyles, E. (2006). Narratives of hospice volunteers: Perspectives on death and dying. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, 7*(1), 51–56. https://ida.lib.uidaho.edu:3454/10.1080/17459430600964935

Addressing the Social-Emotional Needs of Adult Learners to Ensure Workplace Success: Combined Practices That Integrate Social Emotional Learning and Employability Skills

Robin Wisniewski and Laura Rasmussen Foster
RTI International

Abstract: Research on social emotional learning (SEL) and employability skills has shown positive outcomes for learners over the past three decades. They both represent skills and competencies that are important for adult learners in gaining workplace success. However, rather than focusing on each set of competencies separately in instruction, adult educators could benefit from understanding how SEL and employability skills can be combined. This paper focuses on defining both SEL and employability skills, identifying where the skills overlap as combined instructional practices, and discussing implications for adult education classrooms.

Keywords: social emotional learning, adult education, employability, work readiness

How can we prepare adult learners to not only get a job but also be successful on the job? Research suggests that employment success requires considerably more than just academic knowledge. Workers need skills and competencies for analyzing tasks, solving problems, managing themselves, and interacting with others on the job. These skills and competencies span two key constructs—social emotional learning (SEL) and employability skills—both of which have been shown to positively relate to adult learners' outcomes.

Fortunately, there are commonalities in these skill sets. This paper focuses on the intersection of SEL and employability skills and describes how they can be integrated to strengthen adults' preparation for and success in the workplace. It starts by defining SEL and employability skills and describing the research base for each concept. It then presents an integrated framework for addressing areas of overlap between SEL and employability skills and discusses implications for adult education classrooms.

SEL and Employability Skills

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL; 2020), SEL is the "process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions" (para. 2). SEL centers on five competencies: self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. In 1994, Daniel Goldman, an emotional intelligence researcher known for his 1995 New York Times best-selling *Emotional Intelligence*, co-founded CASEL. CASEL's charge was to integrate emotional with social learning to create an evidence base in response to youth development needs in schools. For the next two decades, CASEL and

collaborators advanced the research in SEL, culminating in the 2015 *Handbook of Social Emotional Learning Research and Practice* published by Guilford Press (Durlak et al., 2015).

Research on the effect of SEL in the K–12 environment can be applied to both adult education and employment contexts. Several research reviews and meta-analyses on SEL show student gains in achievement scores and in areas like improved social skills, attitudes, behavior, and overall well-being (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017). When applied to employment, SEL skills have been linked to problem-solving and self-regulation (a "critical thinking disposition," Arslan & Demitras, 2016) and employment skills, information development, and competence ("lifelong learning," Akcaalan, 2016). On the job, SEL has been related to increased job satisfaction and decreased stress among employed teachers (Collie et al., 2015).

The 1990s also saw an increased focus on defining employability skills—the general skills needed for workplace success. In 1990, the U.S. Department of Labor convened the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), which identified a set of work-readiness skills to better prepare individuals for employment and to meet employers' increasing needs for qualified workers (1991). Likewise, numerous employer surveys have documented the labor market need for employability skills and suggest that employers often prioritize these general skills over academic or technical knowledge (Bauer-Wolf, 2019; Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006). These findings extend to international labor markets as well. For example, an early investigation of skills demands among 25 of the largest employers in Canada identified three categories of skills: (a) communication, critical thinking, and lifelong learning; (b) positive attitudes and behaviors, responsibilities, and adaptability; and (c) teamwork (McLaughlin, 1995). More recently, Sarfraz et al. (2018) published a global, systematic research review of 43 studies across 17 countries, naming four skills categories: interpersonal and communication skills, relationship management skills, cognitive and problem-solving skills, and productive self-management.

Recognizing commonalities across different sets of employability skills, in 2012, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (n.d.) funded RTI International to conduct a scan of existing employability skills and develop a common framework for organizing the skills. The resulting product, the employability skills framework, categorized employability skills into nine sets of skills in three groups (see Table 1). This framework illustrates how the different sets of employability skills intersect and offers terminology for discussing employability skills across education and workforce systems.

Employability skills are recognized in federal legislation as a critical component of college and career readiness. For example, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (2014) lists employability skills in its definition of workforce preparation activities. The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (2018) references employability skills in its purpose, describing the role career and technical education programs play in developing students' academic, technical, and employability skills. Likewise, SEL has gained notice in legislative activity. In 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a 2020 congressional funding bill to include $260 million for SEL research and practice in schools (H.R. 2740, 2020). In September 2020, the U.S. Senate introduced a resolution to support evidence-based SEL programs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic (S. Resolution 691, 2020).

Table 1. *Employability Skills Framework's Skills and Groupings*

Group 1 Applied Knowledge	Group 2 Effective Relationships	Group 3 Workplace Skills
• Applied academic skills • Critical thinking skills	• Interpersonal skills • Personal qualities	• Resource management • Information use • Communication skills • Systems thinking • Technology use

SEL and Employability Skills Integration

At first glance, there are obvious connections between CASEL's five core SEL competencies and the skills identified in the Employability Skills Framework. These connections mostly address inter- and intrapersonal abilities, such as being able to effectively manage one's schedule to arrive at work on time and to appropriately interact with coworkers and supervisors. This overlap indicates that there are common factors for building social-emotional competency and being successful at work. What the overlap does not tell us, however, is how to integrate these constructs into a coherent framework for teaching.

Therefore, we have combined SEL competencies and employability skills to provide guidance for adult educators. Figure 1 shows the five SEL competencies on the left and related employability skills on the right. The middle column presents the overlapping practice that connects each SEL competency to a related employability skill. Each integrated practice provides instructors with a streamlined approach to incorporating SEL and employability skills in the classroom, as further described below.

Show a Growth Mindset for Self-Confidence

A growth mindset (Dweck, 2007) embraces challenges, persists in the face of setbacks, sees effort as a path to mastery, learns from criticism, and finds lessons and inspiration in the success of others. For example, an adult learner with a growth mindset will confidently embrace the challenge of having to use fractions to complete a work task even though they may have struggled with learning fractions in high school.

Take Initiative Then Manage With Self-Discipline

Accomplishing goals requires initiative to set the goal and begin working toward it and self-management to monitor progress and persist across multiple tasks. For example, if an adult learner sets a goal to get a job, they will then need to take the initiative to look for jobs. Once they find a job of interest, then they will plan, implement, and monitor steps toward getting that job, such as revising their resume, writing a cover letter, and applying by the position deadline.

Figure 1. *SEL Competencies, Related Employability Skills, and Combined Practices*
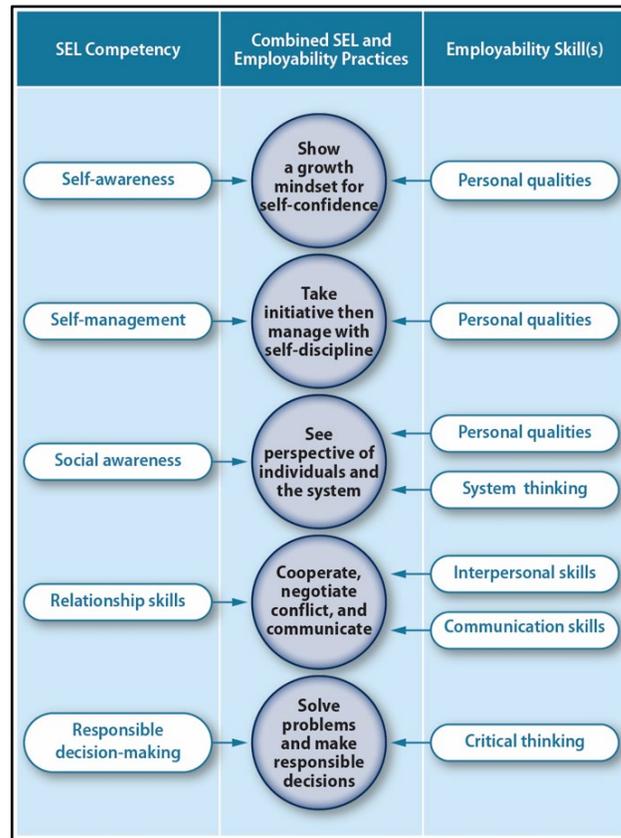
See Perspective of Individuals and the System

Understanding the perspectives of others can be challenging, especially in getting outside of our own perspectives, but the ability to do so can help with conflict resolution and improving communication. Taking the perspective of a *system* is imagining the viewpoint of *agencies* or *organizations*. Agencies are not people, but they have norms and rules that need to be followed. For example, adult learners may interact with many organizations, services, and resources along their chosen career pathways and need to understand the perspectives these systems offer to effectively navigate the pathway. A road map (see Figure 2) is one strategy for illustrating key decision points and perspectives along the pathway.

Figure 2. Systems Perspective Taking with a Road Map

The Data Quality Campaign (n.d.) provides an illustration of a road map, called Grace's Path to Success. In this example, Grace wants to be a nurse. After high school, she faces four potential next steps: enroll in basic training, enroll in a 4-year nursing program, work as a nursing assistant, or enroll in a 2-year college. Using the road map, Grace (and other adult learners) can visualize the community supports and various paths toward a goal. The road map visual can be adjusted for other goals, whether job, education, or citizenship related.

Cooperate, Negotiate Conflict, and Communicate

Getting along with coworkers, supervisors, and clients requires clear communication skills and the ability to productively deal with and resolve conflict. An individual cannot do so without the appropriate social or emotional skills. For example, an employee may be asked by their manager to make a sales call to a client, but maybe the employee feels uncomfortable with this client. Or the employee's boss wants them to work overtime the next day, but they had planned to attend their daughter's softball game. In either case, the employee will need to communicate with their boss about how to talk with the client or to negotiate the personal time off.

Solve Problems and Make Responsible Decisions

The ability to think critically about a goal involves problem-solving and decision-making. For example, if an adult learner is deciding between becoming a licensed practical nurse or a certified nursing assistant, they will need to think critically about each option by weighing the pros and cons and understanding the requirements of either path. By considering all options, they can be confident that they have made a responsible decision.

Implications for Practice in Adult Education

How can adult educators use these overlapping concepts to improve practice? The following suggestions can help educators deepen their understanding of SEL and employability skills, both as individual constructs and as an integrated concept.

Become Familiar With SEL Resources for Application in the Adult Education Context

CASEL has recently developed several resources to support SEL instruction. These include the following:
- the District Resource Center (https://drc.casel.org) with curated resources for school systems that can also assist adult educators in SEL implementation;
- an assessment guide for K–12 teachers (https://measuringsel.casel.org) to understand and use SEL measures; and
- the CASEL CARES Initiative (https://casel.org/weekly-webinars/), a weekly webinar series to respond to the current crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and the exacerbation of both economic and racial inequities, including the webinar published in August 2020, *Cultivating Adult SEL in Unprecedented Times.*

Become Familiar With Resources to Support the Employability Skills Framework

Employability skills can be integrated into instructional programs at all levels and in different contexts. In September 2020, the U.S. Department of Education released new resources to support employability skills instruction and assessment. Housed on LINCS (https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/employability-skills-framework), these resources include tools for aligning instructional programs to the employability skills framework, for selecting an assessment to measure employability skills, and for preparing learners to display their employability skills in employment interviews.

Incorporate Integrated Practices With Regular Classroom Content

We described the five combined practices above in the work-readiness context. But these practices can also be applied in other adult education content areas and domains, such as literacy, math, citizenship, and English language instruction. For example, instructors can use a goal-setting strategy for the practice, *take initiative and manage with self-discipline,* by providing a graphic organizer with four boxes: task to complete, strategies to use, timeline and steps, and reflection. If a learner's task is to read a text section about the executive branch of government, then the instructor can introduce the graphic organizer to help the learner plan how to approach the text. When the assignment is complete, the instructor can work with the learner to complete the reflection box to describe what strategies they used and steps they took to understand the content.

<center>**Summary**</center>

Adult educators prepare learners to be successful in their employment paths. Research over the past 30 years describes the social emotional learning competencies and employability skills needed to support workplace preparation and success. Adult educators who understand and incorporate a combination of practices reflecting this research could enhance learner success with employment and beyond.

<center>**References**</center>

Akcaalan, M. (2016). Investigation of the relationships between lifelong learning and social emotional learning. *International Journal of Educational Research Review, 1*(1), 14–20.

Arslan, S., & Demirtas, Z. (2016). Social emotional learning and critical thinking disposition. *Studia Psychologica: Journal for Basic Research in Psychological Sciences*, *58*(4), 276. http://doi.org/10.21909/sp.2016.04.723

Bauer-Wolf, J. (2019). Survey: Employers want 'soft skills' from graduates. *Inside Higher Ed*. https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2019/01/17/survey-employers-want-soft-skills-graduates.

CASEL. (2020). *SEL is…*. https://casel.org/what-is-sel/

Casner-Lotto, J., & Barrington, L. (2006). *Are they really ready to work? Employers' perspectives on the basic knowledge and applied skills of new entrants to the 21st century U.S. workforce*. Partnership for 21st Century Skills.

Collie, R. J., Shapka, J. D., Perry, N. E., & Martin, A. J. (2015). Teacher well-being: Exploring its components and a practice-oriented scale. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment, 33*(8), 744–756.

Data Quality Campaign. (n.d.). *Grace's path to success*. https://dataqualitycampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Graces-Path-to-Success-Infographic.pdf

Durlak, J. A., Domitrovich, C. E., Weissberg, R. P., & Gullotta, T. P. (Eds.). (2015). *Handbook of social emotional learning research and practice*. Guilford Press.

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, *82*(1): 405–432.

Dweck, C. S. (2007). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Ballantine Books.

H.R. 2740- Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Defense, State, Foreign Operations, and Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 116th Cong. (2020). https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/2740

McLaughlin, M. A. (1995). *Employability skills profile: What are employers looking for?* (ED399 484). https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED399484.pdf

S. Res. 691. 116th Cong., 166 Cong. Rec. S5575 (2020). https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2020/09/14/senate-section/article/S5575-1

Sarfraz, I., Rajendran, D., Hewege, C., & Mohan, M. D. (2018). An exploration of global employability skills: A systematic research review. *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, *9*(1), 63–88.

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. (1991). *What work requires of schools: A SCANS report for America 2000*. U.S. Department of Labor. https://wdr.doleta.gov/SCANS/whatwork/whatwork.pdf

Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, 20 U.S.C. § 2301 (2018). https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title20/chapter44&edition=prelim

Taylor, R. D., Oberle, E., Durlak, J. A., & Weissberg, R. P. (2017). Promoting positive youth development through school-based social and emotional learning interventions: A meta-analysis of follow-up effects. *Child Development*, *88*(4), 1156–1171. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12864

U.S. Department of Education; Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. (n.d.). *Employability skills*. https://cte.ed.gov/initiatives/employability-skills-framework

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 29 U.S.C. § 3272(17) (2014). https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title29/chapter32&edition=prelim

Improving Social Engagement:
Reflection as a Guiding Force for Constructive Dialogue and Mutual Respect

Rachel Wlodarsky
Cleveland State University

Abstract: Wlodarsky and Walters' study explored the reflective practices of college faculty, as they defined reflection and discussed processes, which they used to facilitate reflection on their professional development. A qualitative coding strategy was used, then an analytic concept mapping procedure described by Novak and Gowen (1984) was employed. Findings include the emergence of the *Event Path* model, and an unmistakable pattern of change that derived from identification and correction of deficiencies in practice. Second, reflection is a process of discovery of strengths and successes, to confirm and plan for continuation in that same path. Future research on how the *Event Path* model can facilitate constructive dialogue and mutual respect amongst college faculty model was discussed.

Keywords: reflection, faculty members, workforce development, adult development

Kouzes and Posner (2007) argue, there are no shortages of challenging opportunities for organizations and the people that work within them. In these extraordinary times, the challenges seem only to be increasing in number and complexity. They stated, "the abundance of challenges is not the issue. It's how we respond to them that matters. Through our responses to challenges, we all have the potential to seriously worsen or profoundly improve the world in which we live and work" (p. xi). At the core of this discussion of challenge and opportunity, threats and circumstances, is the issue of *change*. In higher education, the issue of change relates to a number of key stakeholders, one of which is faculty members.

The literature on reflection is vast; too much to capture, therefore, efforts were focused on reflection and its association with behavior change. Meryl Thompson (2010) suggested that reflection and reflexive practice are a close examination of one's own thoughts and behaviors, leading to learning from experience and an experimental disposition toward outgoing activity. This outgoing activity could be perceived as a change in behavior. According to Nguyen et al. (2014), although reflection has been viewed as a thinking process, it does not mean that *reflecting* and *thinking* are synonyms; it includes further elements such as "thoughts and actions; attentive, critical, exploratory and iterative processes; an underlying conceptual frame; a view on change; and self" (p. 1180).

Kahn et al. (2008) found a direct link was made in each educational program between reflective processes and professional development, with the use of reflection to support self-improvement and adaptation of practice prevalent to varying extents. This was typically set within a context of change within higher education.

Wlodarsky and Walters' study was developed to consider the influence of reflection as an element in bridging decision-making and change in professional contexts. The research questions answered using the data were as follows: what does the reflective *process* look like? Were there similarities among the individual respondents with respect to their specific processes? Lastly, how might this practice relate to the professional development and personal growth for professionals?

Research Design

A convenience sample was recruited comprised of 17 professors within a college of education at a private, liberal arts university in the Midwest. The faculty who volunteered comprised approximately 33% of the total college faculty at the time of the study. The sample included individuals who selected to participate at an anonymous level—completing the survey only. The specific survey item read as follows:

> *Write out a brief definition of reflection and describe how this practice might relate to your professional development as a faculty member. As part of your definition, describe the tools you use to facilitate your reflection(s).*

A constant comparative procedure, which is a qualitative coding strategy, was used to examine the process(es) described in the responses to the item above. Initial themes and categories among the narrative responses were established as a first step in enhancing the credibility of the project. The themes which emerged have been observed in related literature as cited throughout this paper, providing additional confirmatory support for the reliability and credibility.

An analytic concept mapping procedure described by Novak (1998) and Novak and Gowen (1984) was used to organize the narrative. This procedure allowed the researcher to organize and to label participant responses. The coding strategy, following Novak (1998), treated words and phrases (grammatical units) as discrete conceptual units of equal weight. Based on a logical-rational use of vocabulary definitions, these conceptual units were then clustered to establish themes. These themes were then cross walked to the literature cited previously to establish the reasonableness of the themes and to control or constrain researcher bias. The researchers employed a colleague with expertise in data coding to assist in the analysis process. The researchers/authors and this colleague/coder coded the first participant's survey responses together to standardize the coding process. Following agreement on the process to be used, two additional participant responses were coded, and compared to monitor agreement on the process and consistency of coding. Finally, the remaining responses were coded, creating a total of 17 concept maps.

Fourteen of the 17 concept maps were developed from participant responses have strong similarities. This implies that a preponderance of participants use the same reflective process to consider their own professional activities. The meta-map depicts the typical path followed by the respondents (Figure 1 below) and is consistent with the 14 maps developed around the respondents' narratives. For 3 of the 17 respondents, there was not a clear indication that a behavior change (new event) was implemented.

Figure 1. *Event Path for Professional Reflection*
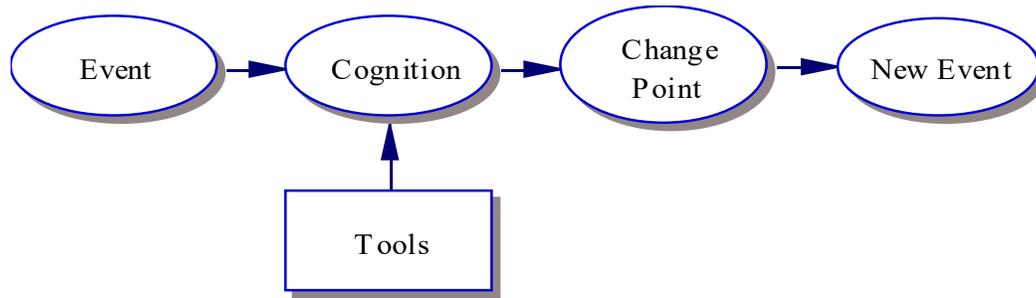
The typical path followed by the participants indicated a precipitating *Event*, followed by an intentional period of *Cognitive* processing of information. The *Cognition* component served as the point in which some problem was formulated. The information processed during this cognitive period was derived from *Tools,* which is a form of data collection by the respondents. Common types of tools used by these respondents varied from individual to individual; including but not limited to journaling, input from peers through direct observation, input from peers when the event is identified by the individual requesting feedback, and student input. For 14 of the respondents with strong similarities mentioned above, these phenomena are followed by a *Change Point*, where a decision or judgment is made about future behavior. The *New Event* terminology is limited to the occurrence of an actual change in behavior.

Discussion of Findings

It is believed that the *Event Path* model is a simplified approach for analyzing the professional reflections of college faculty members, and that the terminology supplied by the respondents in the survey narrative can be viewed as indicators of individual cognitive, epistemological, developmental, and reflective levels or stages. Furthermore, it was clear from the response language that affective elements such as satisfaction, and confidence or the lack thereof, were threaded through and not distinguishable from these other dimensions of human development and self-evaluation. Consequently, this model provides an organizing framework, which may be useful for self-evaluation and professional development of individuals, planning professional development for faculty members, or perhaps evaluating the professional growth of faculty.

Reflection allows individuals to confront and interrupt existing performance to insert an evolved and changed vision of the future, and then act to see that future materialize. A reflective approach to change protects the individual and the organization from repeating the mistakes of the past in the unrealized future. Reflection, as demonstrated in the *Event Path* model at the core of Wlodarsky and Walters' study, is a process that can lead to change, but which connects past practice and experience to the unrealized future in an informed manner. The information collected through the tools of reflection, processed cognitively in a way that leads to informed possible futures from which to select trial pathways, guards the professional against thoughtless, reactionary, and fad-driven pivots into a future that is in no way preferable to the past.

Implications and Future Research

The AAACE conference theme, *Improving Discourse Through Adult Education* became the catalyst for a future research project questioning how reflection can facilitate constructive dialogue and mutual respect amongst college faculty through the use of the *Event Path* model. As stated, the model emerged from a study that focused on existing performance. This model could be operationalized by faculty to reflect on existing opinions, expression of differing values and/or a general lack of discourse itself. In summary, could operationalizing the *Event Path* model improve discourse among adult educators and learners?

Through the use of this model, participants of this future study would engage in a mental process in which they may gain a stronger sense of mindfulness consciousness. This awareness could generate a more respectful and dynamic dialogue that allows for productive decision making and actions. In preparing for this study, "events" or issues in which there is a difference of opinion, differing values among faculty need to be identified, as well as determining the context in which the model would be operationalized, for example, individual interviews, focus groups, or peer observations.

References

Kahn, P., Young, R., Grace, S., Pilkington, R., Rush, L., Tomkinson, B., & Willis, I. (2008). Theory and legitimacy in professional education: A practitioner review of reflective processes within programmes for new academic staff. *International Journal for Academic Development, 13*(3), 161-173.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2007). *The leadership challenge*. John Wiley and Sons.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2010). *The truth about leadership: The no-fads, heart-of-the-matter, facts you need to know.* Jossey-Bass.

Nguyen, Q. D., Fernandez, N., Karsenti, T. & Charlin, B. (2014). What is reflection? A conceptual analysis of major definitions and a proposal of the five-component model. *Medical Education, 48(12),* 1176-1189. doi:10.1111/medu.12583

Novak, J. D. (1998). *Learning, creating, and using knowledge: Concept maps as facilitative tools in schools and corporations*. L. Erlbaum Associates.

Novak, J. D., & Gowen, D. B. (1984). *Learning how to learn*. Cambridge University Press.

Thompson, M. (2010). Where reflection and motivation meet. *Professional Development in Education 36 (3)*, 393-397.

Wlodarsky, R., & Walters, H. (2007). The event path for professional reflection: The nature and characteristics of reflective practice among teacher education faculty. *Journal of Cognitive and Affective Learning, 4*(1), 25-31.

Wlodarsky, R. & Walters, H. (2012). The event component as a phenomenological trigger in the pathway of professional reflection. *Ohio Journal of Teacher Educators, 25(1), 31-39.*

Wlodarsky, R., & Walters, H. (2014). *Reflection and the college teacher: A solution for higher education.* Information Age Publishing.

Warning! Not for Sensitive Viewers: Creating Exhibits Policies for Encouraging Healthy Public Discourse

Christina C. Wray and David Benjamin
University of Central Florida

Abstract: Exhibits offer insight into what an organization values while providing patrons the opportunity to be challenged and engaged. This paper explores ways exhibits policies can be crafted to move exhibits beyond the walls and cases to create a space for community discussion that promote growth and understanding by providing space for discussions, contextualizing information, and clear guidelines for organizers and participants.

Keywords: Exhibit Policies, Public Discourse, Community Engagement

The year 2020 is one in which many of us have thought deeply about how we engage in public discourse. We have been confronted in our personal and professional lives with times when incivility seems to reign supreme. Emotions run high in the echo chamber of our carefully curated media streams, and true discourse is often lost in all the noise. As the University of Central Florida (UCF) Libraries began planning for the opening of our new exhibits and gallery space, one thing we knew for sure was that we wanted an inclusive space that supported the mission of the university while highlighting the diverse community we serve.

Exhibits provide a gateway into our collections and communities. As interpreted narratives, they can be experienced on multiple levels from the passive to the transformative. We started to question how to create guidelines that would encourage learning opportunities that resulted in deeper engagement with the content. It is not enough to create well-designed exhibits that "hook" viewers, we also wanted to encourage healthy public discourse. In this paper, we will outline our approach to creating an exhibits policy that will guide the development of community-engaged exhibits which support the mission of the library and our university while encouraging public discourse.

Background

To understand how to craft policies that will support and encourage public discourse, it is necessary to identify the elements that must be present for healthy public discussions to occur. Throughout the literature, three characteristics are seen as necessary components for public discourse: space, balanced information, and rules of engagement (Bail et al., 2017; Brinker & Donk, 2020; Ginsberg, 2020). The first phase of the development of a new, comprehensive policy is to explore existing policies and identify ways to incorporate explicit supports for space for discussions to occur, balanced information and transparent expectations on patron engagement into policy documentation.

UCF, founded in 1963 as Florida Technological University, was established to support the space industry along Florida's eastern coastline. It would take five years of fundraising, planning, and construction before the University welcomed students in 1968. That first year, enrollment at FTU

was 1,949. Fifty-one years and a name change later, UCF's enrollment was 69,525 in 2019, making it one of the nation's largest universities.

The John C. Hitt Library is the main library on the UCF campus, with gate counts averaging around 46,000 per week during the fall and spring semesters. Library patrons are predominately UCF students, faculty, and staff. However, the Libraries also serves the greater Orlando community and scholars from around the world. The Hitt Library is more than just books. The building is one of the most heavily used spaces for studying and collaboration by UCF students, and we offer public programming and host Libraries and UCF sponsored events.

To create engaging exhibits and programming around those exhibits, we need to know who our target audience is and understand their viewpoints, their shared community standards and mores, and their core values. How does this play out for our exhibits? First, we look at the basic demographics of our student population--our primary target audience. UCF's student demographics for the 2019-2020 academic year included:
- 47.8% self-identify as a minority
- 55.15% self-identify as female
- 22% who are the first person in their family to go to college

Additionally, in 2019, UCF became a Hispanic Serving Institution, meaning at least 25% of the student population self-identified as Hispanic (University of Central Florida). Knowing the makeup of our target exhibit audience helps staff determine exhibit themes and programming. For example, we created programming around Women's History month, including an exhibit of bras decorated by students honoring women impacted by breast cancer. During campus Diversity Week, we curate exhibitions highlighting collections that document minorities and under-represented populations.

In 2017, the UCF Libraries began a multimillion-dollar renovation reimaging the physical spaces. Known as the 21st Century Library Project, the Libraries just completed phase 1 of this multiyear project, including over 38,000 square feet of new public spaces. UCF Libraries is preparing to open a new gallery space that includes eight new exhibit cases and an art hanging system. Before this renovation, the only public exhibit spaces in the Hitt Library were the "gallery wall," a 6' tall by 72" long exhibit wall located near the library's original entrance, plus some older exhibit cases throughout the building. Minimal written guidelines existed for the art wall and cases, and none of these guidelines were publicly available. Most staff were unaware that there even were guidelines. With the opening of the new gallery space the Libraries needed to revise the minimal existing guidelines.

Approach

We will examine exhibit policies from a variety of similar institutions to identify characteristics that create potential barriers to healthy discourse as well as those that support and encourage it. To capture broad representation of how exhibit space is managed across academic libraries, we identified four distinct categories of institutions: community colleges, liberal arts colleges, Research I institutions, and other universities. Ten library exhibit policies will be evaluated in each category. Eighteen of the forty institutions selected were privately funded, half of which

were liberal arts colleges. Textual analysis will be performed on each policy to identify ways in which exhibit policies inherently create barriers and opportunities for public discourse.

Nine tentative codes have been identified to define policy content:
- Barrie: Policy section limits public discourse by limiting the content, scope or messaging of the exhibit or related programming.
- Criteria: Explicit criteria that must be met in part or full for exhibit to be installed.
- Exhibit approvers: Section identifies who can approve or disapprove exhibits.
- Library mission: Section explicitly ties exhibit content to the library's mission.
- Library tights: Section establishes the rights of the library in relation to exhibits materials and content.
- Openness to the community: Section explicitly defines unaffiliated community members' rights to use the exhibit space.
- Promotes discourse: Section promotes public discourse by explicitly identifying way to engage the viewers with content and each other, or outlines ways to display controversial topics.
- Purpose of exhibits: Explicitly identifies overarching goals of exhibit content
- Safety: Explicitly addresses library, object, or patron safety

The results of this analysis will be used to help identify language of library exhibits policies that encourage and create barriers to public discourse, as well as guide the development of our own policy. The discussions around what supports and hinders public discourse, which began in our roundtable session, will also help us to craft policy that supports our goal of increased discourse.

At the 2020 American Association of Adult and Continuing Education Annual Conference, round table participants were asked two questions related to what they thought influenced public discourse in their exhibit spaces: What are the biggest barriers to discourse? and How could your institution improve discourse?

Barriers to discourse had two overarching themes: opportunity and scale. The global pandemic highlights current limitations for opportunities to engage in public discussion related to exhibits. Many employees were working from home and patrons had limited access to the exhibits. Institutions were not always equipped to pivot exhibit content to an online space. This was further compounded by financial uncertainty which could negatively impact the ability to purchase the software and equipment needed to create high-quality online content.

Another barrier to discourse was the size of institutions and how it impacts relations with surrounding communities. Some participants were from exceptionally large institutions, like UCF, which creates more diverse communities within the institution, but can also increase tensions with surrounding communities that do not identify as being aligned with the institution's mission or overarching political outlook.

Responses related to improving discourse can be categorized into three broad themes: employee training, opportunities for discourse and transparent communication. Participants felt that training on how to effectively respond to incivility and defuse volatile situations would help them feel more confident supporting discourse opportunities. Further, institutions could provide

more opportunities for visitors to engage in public discussions related to the exhibits. This could be achieved in several ways, including creating contextualizing content online that allowed for discussion, and providing space where discussions could occur near exhibits.

Offering additional programming in conjunction with the exhibit could help enrich public conversations. Without related events, there are limited opportunities for patrons to engage in public conversations. One participant mentioned concerns with how to engage visitors who do not self-select to participate in public discussions. How can organizations support discussions that represent the spectrum of opinions in the community instead of simply the loudest voices?

Finally, providing obvious ways for patrons and employees alike to know what the organizational expectations are and how to express concerns with exhibit content or programming would greatly improve authentic engagement with exhibits. Employees were hesitant to encourage deeper engagement because there were no clear guidelines on what to do if things got of hand.

Major Themes

There are several things you can do right away to make your policies more supportive of public discourse. These three things provide space for public discussions to occur, contextualizing information and clear guidelines for participants.

- Create open and transparent online forums for exhibits
- Create public programming around your exhibit
- Make your exhibit policies publicly available

Online forums are accessible to a broad audience and allow patrons to engage with staff and each other. Blog posts about exhibits enable people to provide comments and feedback and encourages them to engage with the exhibit. Including images of selected items from the exhibit, help illustrate your themes and exposes the exhibition to a broader audience. Use of QR codes linking to exhibit related content to encourage engagement and, again, expose more of your collections to your audience. Utilize social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc. to share different objects/items from an exhibit, provide additional information in online posts and allow patrons to engage with staff and other patrons through comments and posts.

Public programming around exhibits provides opportunities for patron engagement. Programs could be as simple as a gallery talk with a curator to speaker panels and artist/author talks. This type of programming allows for facilitated question and answer session and can be in-person, online, or a hybrid of both. Public programs can look at an entire exhibit or target a smaller subset of items or exhibition themes. Public programming is an excellent venue to broaden your intended audience, especially if you can present them online through posts or live streaming.

Finally, make your policies transparent, readily available, and accessible. If your institution has a website, post your exhibit policies and guidelines there, but ensure they are easily discoverable. Ensure staff knows about and understand these policies, and, most importantly, where the latest written version is available. Identify the staff member or team responsible for your policies utilizing their expertise to field questions or concerns. Including a way for patrons to contact

these individuals is key to transparency. Finally, ensure your administration is on-board and agrees with these policies. If an outside board governs your institution, ensure they understand your policies and are prepared to adopt them as policies. Minimize the use of jargon and ensure and avoid language that could seem to talk down to patrons.

Some of the changes that can support public discourse may require advocating and time convincing your organization administration that it is in the best interest of the community to make them part of your policies. Here are the top three long-term goals we believe will have the most impact:
- Invite unaffiliated community members to host and curate displays
- Create diverse selection committees
- Incorporate explicit promotion and programming requirements into policy statements

Regardless of your organization type, inviting unaffiliated community members to host and curate displays can strengthen ties between the community and your collections. Further, it can help you gain a better understanding of how the community sees your organization and the ways in which your artifacts and collections resonate with unaffiliated users. The benefits of allowing unaffiliated community members to exhibit also extends to the members of the selection committee.

The makeup of a selection committee greatly influences the types of exhibits which ultimately get displayed. Expanding membership beyond the primary organization will not only encourage more diverse displays but can also strengthen relationships with external communities. Diverse voices are necessary to achieve balanced information. Ensuring that all constituent groups have a part in the selection process can lead to more authentic engagement between patron groups. Further, creating an inclusive selection committee invites external communities to be part of the larger organizational community.

The next step is to make sure all potential patrons know about exhibits and opportunities to engage. Codifying the process of promotion and programming related to events can feel unnecessary and restrictive at first glance. However, incorporating guidelines into the official policy document creates transparent expectations. This becomes increasingly important as an institution starts to invite outside groups to curate exhibits. For increased flexibility, organizations may want to create a referenced sub-policy on exhibit promotion and planning that can be more responsive.

The fundamental ingredient to increased public discussions is bringing a group of people together. It can be difficult to make inroads into external groups to create awareness that exhibits are happening and that they are welcome to attend. Create a plan that identifies
- where to promote exhibits and programming,
- how to market to specific populations, and
- partnerships that can be utilized to increase awareness.

One thing that the COVID-19 global pandemic has taught us is that cultural institutions can provide comfort as well as enrichment in times of crisis. However, this is only true if we can meet patrons where they are at. In a recent study, museum patrons identified four key things

museums could provide during the pandemic "escape, hope, contextualization of pandemic experience, and fostering social connections with others…from a distance." (Wilkening Consulting, 2020). Creating the online space and high-quality content that will allow patrons to experience exhibits as well as have a place to engage with each other is more important than ever. Online spaces also lend themselves to communicating and enforcing community mores and expectations related to the rules of engaging in public discussion. Incorporating support for online exhibit content as an expectation in your exhibits policy identifies it as a priority while communicating the organization's commitment.

Conclusion

Organizations are responding to the long-term implications of a global pandemic and social injustice. Crafting transparent, intentional policies for exhibits and programming is one way that cultural institutions can positively impact the state of public discourse. Adult educators are uniquely placed to support lifelong learners engage with challenging ideas and constructs. It is our role to ensure that policies encourage opportunities for all patrons to learn, reflect, and have the tools needed to support public discourse.

As we engage in this work, it is important to remember that policies should support but not demand public discourse. Each learner comes to an experience with their own motivations and openness. Transformation can be exhausting and must happen in its own time. We encourage adult educators to play an active role in policy development to create a balanced environment conducive to public discussions and personal lifelong learning.

References

Bail, C. A., Brown, T. W., & Mann, M. (2017). Channeling hearts and minds: Advocacy organizations, cognitive-emotional currents, and public conversations. *American Sociological Review, 82*(6), 1188-1213. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122417733673

Brinker, T., & Donk, A. (2020). Collective memory and social media: Fostering a new historical consciousness in the digital age? *Memory Studies, 13*(4), 367-383. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698017750012

Ginsberg, D. (2020). Offering informal education in public libraries through exhibit design. *Teaching and Learning Anthropology, 3*(1), 61-66. https://doi.org/10.5070/T33147071

University of Central Florida. (n.d.) *UCF cacts 2019-2020.* www.ucf.edu/about-ucf/facts/

Wilkening Consulting. (2020, April 27). *Museums and the pandemic: Data story #2.* http://www.wilkeningconsulting.com/uploads/8/6/3/2/86329422/museums_and_the_pandemic_-_data_story_2_-_wilkening_consulting.pdf

Empowering Older Adults: Improving Senior Digital Literacy

Hyeon Jean Yoo
Auburn University

Abstract: As the world's population is more interconnected by the Internet and mobile devices, older adults are expected to use Internet-based services, such as education, health, finance, and even communication. Despite the recent research that an increasing number of older adults are embracing digital lives, they face unique challenges due to age-related changes. These unique barriers make it difficult for them to keep up with rapid technological advances. This study aims to explain the 7-weeks of an introductory course that was designed for older adults to enhance senior digital literacy. This study highlights the importance of creating a quality learning environment for older adults in leading more productive and enjoyable lives with mobile devices.

Keywords: older adults, mobile devices, digital literacy, technology course

Mobile device usage is one of the fastest-growing technological fields ever. In the United States, about 81% of people own a smartphone now, and about one-in-five people access the Internet solely via their smartphones instead of having traditional home broadband service (Pew Research Center, 2019). Digital technology has become a key component to fully participate in society, and it can also be a powerful empowering tool for older adults, such as helping them to maintain their independence, access information easily, and stay connected with their family and friends (Hardill & Olphert, 2012). The connection and communication using mobile devices can be especially significant for older adults living alone or who have limited mobility. Knowing how to use mobile devices got even more prominent for older adults to connect with society during the social isolation period.

This paper focuses on explaining important factors that need to be considered when developing a course for older adults in helping them improve digital literacy and increase confidence in using touch-screen mobile devices. Detailing a 7-week course that was designed for older adults to enhance digital literacy, this paper aims to propose a teaching format that would guide instructors who would be interested in creating a technology course for older adults. In this paper, we discussed the structure of the course and instructional materials provided for the participants, with suggestions and future implications of the digital literacy course.

Literature Review

Mobile devices can be an effective means to enhance the quality of older adults' lives (Tsai et al., 2017). Pimentel et al. (2016) found using mobile devices has a positive effect on older adults supporting their independence, entertainment, leisure, learning new repertoire, and cognitive activity improvement. Mobile devices were also reported to assist older adults in connecting with their family members and friends (Chan & Chan, 2014), supporting health and well-being (Blake, 2008), managing declining mental capacity (Klimova & Valis, 2018), and accessing health and social service information (Tsai et al., 2017). Mobile devices can help older adults

remember important schedules or health-related information as well as entertain themselves with fun and stimulating games (Leung et al., 2010).

Despite the considerable potential of mobile devices in improving the quality of life among older adults, they often face difficulties in learning new technologies and may need more training (Mitzner et al., 2008). These difficulties include a range of physical, cognitive, perceptual, and psychological issues, which are often associated with aging (Fletcher & Jensen, 2015). For example, older adults spend more time on tasks accompanied by errors and detours when learning a new technology due to a decline in motor skills (Ziefle & Bay, 2005). In addition to physical and cognitive changes, they often have low self-efficacy and confidence in learning a new technology (Czaja et al., 2006). These negative emotions may be the result of less experience in using mobile technology (Leung et al., 2012). Associated with less experience, older adults are more negatively affected by errors, which often occurs when learning a new technology (Leung et al., 2012). In sum, due to age-related characteristics, older adults may require special support when learning how to use mobile devices (Chen & Chan, 2014).

Research suggests that older adults can benefit from receiving some type of training in learning new technologies (Chao et al., 2020; Mitzner, 2008; Pimentel, 2016). In their eight-week classes with 40 participants, Chao et al. (2020) summarized suggestions for developing mobile and tablet courses for older adults, including the following:
- Design of curriculum linked to real-life situations
- Gathering participants' information, such as experiences and IT literacy prior to the instruction
- Group participants to have a mix of student abilities
- Having teaching assistance
- Adopting relevant learning aids to teach older adults
- Repeated reminders and reviews help improve older adults' learning
- A slower teaching pace
- Using handouts can help ease older adults' fear of learning
- Cut teaching objectives into smaller tasks to provide participants with a sense of accomplishment in learning

To enhance digital literacy among older adults, we need to understand the challenges in learning mobile devices and their learning processes to provide an environment that supports learning. This research highlights the importance of creating a positive learning environment and supportive materials for older adults in improving digital literacy, especially focusing on learning how to use smart mobile devices, such as smartphones or tablets.

Course Description

This section discusses an overview of the digital literacy course developed for older adults, including the settings and environment of the classroom, a conceptual framework and course structure, and topics discussed in each session.

Course Overview & Setting

This course was developed to help older adults learn about their mobile devices and become more confident in navigating mobile devices. The main goal of this course was to help older adults 1) increase senior digital literacy, 2) learn how to use their mobile devices and apps, 3) stay connected with family members, friends, and communities, 4) become a savvy information consumer. Participants were asked to bring their own devices for the course so that they can learn how to use their mobile devices in their daily lives and practice outside the classroom. We provided a seven-week course with 85 minutes per week. The participants were those who attend a local community center in a medium-sized city located in a southeastern state, which offers member-centered programs for adults 50 years and older. Twenty people, aged between 64 and 86, enrolled in this class.

The class took place in a small room that included wireless Internet access, a wide-screen monitor, a whiteboard, an Apple TV, a connector, desks, and chairs that can accommodate approximately 20 people. Inside the building, there were a restroom and a kitchen close to the classroom with refreshments. The participants had 5 minutes of break time during class hours.

Conceptual Framework and Course Structure

The conceptual framework that guided the course was a senior technology acceptance model (STAM; Chen & Chan, 2014). A STAM is an adapted model of a technology acceptance model (TAM; Davis, 1989; Bagozzi, Davis, & Warshaw, 1992), which is an information system theory that aims to predict technology acceptance and usage behavior. According to the TAM, how users come to accept and use technology are influenced by perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). PU is described as the extent to which a person perceives the particular technology would be useful for what they want to do. PEOU is related to the extent to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from effort (Davis, 1989).

The STAM takes into account the age-related health and ability factors, considering that the older adults experience multiple changes related to aging, including physiological and psychological abilities. It suggests that older adults are more prone to learn and use new technology when they consider such technology to be useful and relatively easy to use (Chen & Chan, 2014). Moreover, higher levels of self-efficacy and confidence are significant factors that lead to usage behavior, suggesting that older adults learn better when instructors provide a relaxed and comfortable environment to learn new technology while lowering anxiety levels.

Considering that psychological factors play an important role in learning a new device, we aimed to create a friendly learning environment and divided the learning tasks into small units so that participants can easily digest. We also asked the participants to share their motivation and experiences of using their mobile devices on the first day of the class to develop specific course goals and detailed content that participants would benefit from using in their daily lives.

Age-related characteristics were also taken into consideration when structuring the course. Due to the decline in touch sensitivity and psychomotor performance (Fletcher & Jensen, 2015), older adults may have difficulty in performing accurate and discrete movements, such as tapping

buttons or small icons, which are crucial in using touch-screen mobile devices. They may make many mistakes and errors while navigating their mobile devices, which may increase their anxiety levels as a result. Therefore, our course materials focused on guiding learners to perform the tasks successfully, assisting in a positive and encouraging manner.

In addition, older adults may need more time and require patience in processing information due to a decline in cognitive abilities (Tenneti et al., 2012). They are likely to experience more difficulty in understanding new technology and are slower in acquiring new skills than younger adults (Chen & Chan, 2014). Therefore, we gave sufficient time for the participants to learn a new function and provided a detailed process to complete the task. Previous research suggested that older adults learn better when they are provided with printed materials (Chao, 2020; Leung et al., 2012), so we prepared written materials for the participants. Those handouts included the general topic for the week, specific tasks, and step-by-step procedures to complete the particular task. The handouts were also shared through emails and a virtual group webpage so that anyone who missed the class can review and practice at home. Moreover, as social interaction was a crucial part of our goal, we created the learning tasks so that participants can interact with others and learn from peers (Chen & Chan, 2014).

A previous study pointed out that older adults learn better when individual learning is supported (Leung et al., 2012). Therefore, our course was designed as a two-part session: classroom-based learning and individual support. After each classroom-based learning, the instructors stayed in the classroom for 10-20 minutes to answer individual participant's questions and guide them in operating the devices and the applications. During this time set, participants were allowed to ask any questions that pertain to using their mobile devices and applications, including issues that were not discussed during the classroom-based learning. Examples of individual assistance included organizing screen, deleting the apps, closing unwanted windows, and filtering advertisements on social media.

Course Content

The course content was developed based on a needs assessment conducted on the first day of the class. Participants were asked to share the motivation, challenges, and topics they would like to learn in this class. Information gathered was used to develop course topics and detailed learning content to enhance digital literacy. The final themes for this course were as follows:

- Mobile phone essentials, such as apps and settings
- Focus group discussions
- Voice control of mobile devices
- Using map apps
- Connecting with mobile social media apps
- Streaming media apps
- Photo and video apps

Each session included multiple small tasks that required participants to interact with other members in the classroom. These learning activities motivated older adults to stay mentally active and support others' learning as well, facilitating a positive attitude toward mobile technology.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Studies show that older adults may benefit from using mobile devices, but they also meet multiple challenges in learning new technology. Due to challenges that associate with aging, they may need assistance in learning how to navigate such devices. When developing a technology course for older adults, instructors need to consider the unique characteristics of older adults to provide a supportive learning environment. Conducting a needs analysis at the beginning of the course can be an important first step to understand the characteristics of participants in the class. Even though older adults often have limited experiences in mobile technology (Leung et al., 2012), individual experiences with mobile devices and their expectations for the class may be different. Understanding participants' preferences in learning will assist in developing desirable programs as learners would be more likely to actively engage in learning when it meets their preferences.

Moreover, previous studies indicated that older adults learn better in a positive learning environment (Chen & Chan, 2014). Due to many age-related challenges, creating a learning environment that can boost their confidence is crucial. Dissecting learning tasks into smaller tasks and having participants interact with similarly aged peers are good ways to lower technology anxiety (Chao et al., 2020). Older adults are particularly sensitive to making errors and often get overwhelmed in navigating small icons. Hence, instructors need to be patient and provide individual assistance to help them perform a task successfully. Using handouts with a detailed procedure to learn a new function can help reduce fears in learning (Chao et al., 2020). Moreover, hands-on activities during the classroom and individual assistance after the class can boost confidence and reinforce learning.

Course content should be related to improving the activities of daily living. Previous studies on senior technology suggest that older adults are more prone to use new technology when they know the potential benefits of learning new functions (Chen & Chan, 2014). Before going into details on how to perform a particular task, explaining how they might benefit from using it will increase motivation in learning. For instance, when delivering a class on voice-control functions in mobile devices, we explained that the participants could benefit from learning this function when they cannot touch the screen, such as driving or cooking. We also explained that they could avoid having errors in typing or navigating small icons as these are common causes of increased anxiety when using mobile devices. In addition to explaining the potential benefits, we provided ample examples of how to use this function in various situations.

Handouts can be especially helpful for older adults in assisting their declined working memory and memory span. Even though PowerPoint slides were the primary material in guiding the task during the class, print-out materials were provided every week so that participants can review and practice outside the classroom. As older adults have less experience in using mobile devices, a step-by-step process with pictures were included. To avoid confusion, any technical words were explained with definitions and examples.

Physical changes that come with aging need to be considered when designing a course for the aging population. Instructors need to understand the changes in vision and hearing abilities, adapting font sizes, colors, typeface, and line lengths on PowerPoint slides as well as controlling

the volume of voice and audio. A decline in motor skills and cognitive abilities will require instructors not to move too quickly in delivering the content. Having a pause between each step and wait for the participants to perform a task is suggested.

Limitation and Implication

The purpose of this study was to develop a suitable course on how to enhance digital literacy among older adults in the US. All the participants in this course had their own mobile devices and were members of a senior community center located in a southeastern state of the United States. Despite the use of a theoretical model in developing the course structure, quantitative data is not included as it is not our purpose to test the model but to suggest a teaching course for older adults. The results of this study highlight the importance of creating a quality learning environment for older adults in leading more productive and enjoyable lives with mobile devices.

Acknowledgment

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Mike Akins, a co-instructor of a Basic Digital Literacy course, for all the support.

References

Bagozzi, R. P., Davis, F. D., & Warshaw, P. R. (1992). Development and test of a theory of technological learning and usage. *Human Relations, 45*(7), 660-686.

Blake, H. (2008). Innovation in practice: Mobile phone technology in patient care. *British Journal of Community Nursing, 13(*4),160-165.

Chao, J-Y., Kao, H-C., & Yeh, Y-H. (2020). Learning outcomes of mobile and tablet application courses for Taiwanese older adults. Recent *Development on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Engineering.* https://doi.org/10.35745/icice2018v2.040

Chen, K., & Chan, A. H. S. (2014). Gerontechnology acceptance by Hong Kong Chinese: A senior technology acceptance model (STAM). *Ergonomics, 57*(5), 635-652.

Czaja, S. J., Charness, N., Fisk, A. D., Hertzog, C., Nair, S. N., Rogers, W. A., & Sharit, J. (2006). Factors predicting the use of technology: Findings from the Center for Research and Education on Aging and Technology Enhancement (CREATE). *Psychol Aging, 21*(2), 333-352.

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly, 13*(3), 319-340.

Fletcher, J., & Jensen, R. (2015). Mobile health: Barriers to mobile phone use in the aging population. *On-Line Journal of Nursing Informatics, 19*(3). https://www.himss.org/

Hardill, I., & Olphert, C. W. (2012). Staying connected: Exploring mobile phone use amongst older adults in the UK. *Geoforum, 43*(6), 1306–1312.

Klimova, B., & Valis, M. (2018). Smartphone applications can serve as effective cognitive training tools in healthy aging. *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience, 9*(436), PMID 29379432. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fnagi.2017.00436/full

Tenneti, R., D. Johnson, L. Goldenberg, R. A. Parker., & F. A. Huppert. (2012). Towards a capabilities database to inform inclusive design: Experimental investigation of effective

survey-based predictors of human-product interaction. *Applied Ergonomics, 43*(4), 713-726. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apergo.2011.11.005.

Leung, R., Tang, C., Haddad, H., Mcgrenere, J., Graf, P., & Ingriany, V. (2012). How older adults learn to use mobile devices: Survey and field investigations. *ACM Transaction on Accessible Computing, 4*(3), 1-33.

Mitzner, T. L., Fausset, C. B., Boron, J. B., Adams, A. E., Dijkstra, K., Lee, C. C., Rogers, W., & Fisk, A. D. (2008, October 10). Older adults' training preferences for learning to use technology. [Paper presentation]. *Human Factors and Ergonomics Society 52th Annual Meeting, 52*(26), 2407–2051.

Pew Research Center. (2019). Mobile fact sheet: Mobile phone ownership over time. https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/#smartphone-dependency-over-time

Pimental, M. G., da Cunha, B. C. R., Antonelli, H. L., Rodrigues, S. S., Machado Neto, O. J., Rocha, A., Merlo, E., Costa, A. R., Uscamayta, O. M., Rodrigues, K. R. H., & Zaine, I. (2016, December 1-3*). Enhancing older adults connectivity by introducing mobile devices communication tools* [Paper presentation]. 7th International Conference on Software Development and Technologies for Enhancing Accessibility and Fighting Info-Exclusion, Vila, Real, Portugal. https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3019943.3019994

Tsai, H. S., Shillair, R., & Cotton, S. R. (2017). Social support and "playing around": An examination of how older adults acquire digital literacy with tablet computers. *Journal of Applied Gerontology, 36*(1), 29-55.

Ziefle, M., & Bay, S. (2005). How older adults meet complexity: Aging effects on the usability of different mobile devices. *Behaviour & Information Technology, 24*(5), 375-389. https://doi.org/10.1080/0144929042000320009