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Teaching Through the Lens of Humane Education in U.S. Schools

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Kristine Tucker

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Walden University

2016

Abstract

Teaching Through the Lens of Humane Education in U.S. Schools

by

Kristine Cecilia Tucker

MA, Kean University, 2006

BSW, Kean University, 1995

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

August 2016

Abstract

Humane education (HE) is a specialized niche in higher education and adult learning. HE provides a curricular framework positioning environmental ethics, animal protection, human rights, media literacy, culture, and change processes as the nexus for understanding and inspiring social change. Research-derived experiences illuminating how educators conceptualize and implement HE in U.S. schools are absent from the scholarly literature. Facing this gap, practitioners and administrators of HE programs cannot access nor apply research-derived practices to inform instruction. To address this gap, a conceptual framework was advanced weaving together HE teaching experience, Freirean philosophy, hyphenated selves, reflection-in-action, transformative learning, and transformative education to explore and understand what it means to be a practitioner teaching through the lens of HE in U.S. primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. A qualitative, multicase study was designed wherein purposeful and maximum variation sampling resulted in the recruitment of 9 practitioners working in Kindergarten to postsecondary contexts. Eight practitioners were alumni of HE programming, and 1 practitioner engaged self-study of HE pedagogy. Each bounded system included the HE practitioner, his or her classroom context, and local school community. Interviews, document review, within-case analysis, and cross-case analysis resulted in key themes illuminating the need to design a comprehensive system of field-based learning and ongoing professional support to benefit HE practitioners. A policy recommendation is provided to shape programing, policy development, and resource allocation to improve and sustain HE as a field of study and professional practice.

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Dedication

At a threshold, completion of this dissertation marks an end and new beginning. For several years now, I have been immersed in the world of higher education and adult learning, following that which allures me most: humane education, holism, growth, experience, learning and ultimately, transformation. I live my life diving head first into immersion experiences that are beautiful, awe inspiring, and creative, yet also fraught with ambiguity, chaos, mind-boggling iterations, and at times, darkness. Journeying through this expanse, the becoming of a scholar-practitioner culminates here in the confines of this document, this exploration into the world making of humane education practitioners, and I must admit, I have not been alone on this journey.

This project is dedicated to family, friends, and colleagues who in so many ways encourage me to follow my passions, all the while providing a safe haven for this work to creatively emerge. This is for those who love me during the ebb and flow of beautiful emergence and the darker hours I experienced across this journey. With your help, I find myself, at last, finishing and now ready to be immersed and fully engaged in my life's work as that of a seeker, guide, educator-activist, and scholar-practitioner, living deeply to actualize a humane and socially just world.

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Sue Corcoran

Krissy Caggiano

Dan Egan

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Ryan Diggle

Kasey Errico

Maggie Vetter

Rachel Weinrich

Galaxy Students

World making with you shapes the very essence of who I am in totality.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Higher education and adult learning constitute a vast field of professional practice dedicated to nurturing life-long development and change making. Across a variety of educational niches to include formal and nonformal learning, adult education is purposed and repurposed in response to the changing needs of local and global society (Merriam & Brockett, 2007). Although adult education may be angled toward liberal, occupational, relational, remedial, political, or scholastic ends, the essence of adult education is to develop a citizenry embodying the values and goals of society, capable of crafting solutions to complex social issues (Merriam & Brockett, 2007).

Within a diverse network of adult education and adult learning paradigms, humane education (HE) is a field of study and professional practice intending to address contemporary challenges. Understanding the interconnectedness of environmental ethics, animal protection, human rights, media literacy, and culture and change is prerequisite in developing as a change agent. In learning to apply HE pedagogy, practitioners develop as *solutionaries*; educator-activists who identify local and global social issues and inspire restorative and sustainable change on behalf of humans, animals, and Earth (Institute for Humane Education, 2013). In this manner, practitioners embody the values and goals of society, and act as citizens and change agents capable of nurturing personal and social transformation (Weil, 2004).

Although the intention of HE is evidenced in supporting literature, the conceptualization and operationalization of what it is like to be a practitioner of HE

continues to need grounding in research and scholarship. Understanding what it is like to be a practitioner of HE in the United States is best explored through qualitative, multicase study research. Section 1 of the proposed study delineates the inherent problem within HE ascribed as the lack of a descriptive research base. Evidence of the problem is detailed along with key terms relevant to the problem and corresponding inquiry. In addition, Section 1 establishes the significance of an inquiry into HE while advancing research questions, a conceptual framework, and a review of current research literature relevant to HE. Section 1 concludes with implications for the field.

Definition of the Problem

The problem that compelled this study was the need to understand how a specialized approach to education is actually implemented in the field. Founded in 1996, and international in scope, a nonprofit institute was created to advance positive social change through its offering of humane education workshops, online professional development, and graduate programs delivered in partnership with accredited universities. Faculty at the institute host adult learning experiences whereby learners develop as humane educators who understand and work to redress critical, global issues of the twenty-first century using a transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary systems thinking approach (Weil, 2004).

As a field of study and core curriculum, HE is a critical and experiential inquiry into environmental ethics, animal protection, culture and change, human rights, media literacy, and education related concerns (Weil, 2004). The core curriculum emphasizes the importance of accessing accurate information; nurturing curiosity, creativity, and

critical thinking; engendering reverence, respect, and responsibility as motivation for solutionary work; and encouraging proactive choice-making and problem-solving skills as key elements for change (Weil, 2004). Through their work, faculty at the institute hopes to inspire an ethos of consciousness-raising, choice-making, and solution-finding. The HE philosophy is an approach to adult education that values knowledge, compassion, integrity, and wisdom (Weil, 2004).

In addition to the nonformal adult learning opportunities offered, the institute partners with accredited universities to implement online, graduate level HE programs. With over 100 graduates of the HE curricula, faculty launched an alumni listserv and has plans for developing an alumni association to offer professional development and continuing education courses (M. Champeau, personal communication, November 19, 2012). In addition, faculty is in collaboration with an accredited university, offering doctoral level HE courses embedded within a leadership degree thereby extending HE scholarship (M. Champeau).

Although formal and nonformal HE programs exist, and plans are being made for professional learning, continuing education, and PhD level research, study, and scholarship, faculty at the institute did not yet have a focus for inquiry into how alumni conceptualize and implement HE in U.S. primary, secondary, and college classrooms. Also absent was a process for capturing teachers' concerns as practitioners of HE, as well as research investigating professional learning experiences, and the role of continuing education in the lives of HE practitioners (M. Champeau, personal communication, November 19, 2012).

The problem that gave impetus for this research was the need to understand how HE is conceptualized, operationalized, and critiqued in primary, secondary, and college classrooms in the United States. The lack of HE research initiatives suggested the need for exploratory research developed as a qualitative case study approach to (a) build a descriptive knowledge base of scholarship within the field of HE; (b) describe practitioner philosophy and pedagogical decision making as conceptualization and operationalization of teaching HE; (c) capture and address practitioner concerns; (d) position how professional learning, professional development, and continuing education is situated in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of HE as a form of critique; and (e) better inform the community of humane educators.

Conducting exploratory research in the field may benefit both practitioners and administrators who are responsible for the design and implementation of adult learning experiences. For example, resulting data may be used for shaping policy, programming, and resource allocation to improve HE core curricula, adult learning experiences, and learning outcomes. Collecting and sharing resulting data from educators who have completed HE programs should also facilitate and enhance the application of HE for current and future educators. While research can assist practitioners and administrators of HE programs in general, the faculty and administration of the institute and partnering universities may benefit directly from research that will inform and shape current programming, future plans for alumni, professional development, continuing education, and PhD level scholarship. Using exploratory research to capture and describe the

experience of alumni who are now implementing HE should be a natural extension of the institute's mission and vision to create a more just and humane society.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The problem that gave impetus to the current research was the need to understand how HE is conceptualized, operationalized, and critiqued in education. Better understanding the implementation of HE becomes more poignant when current procedures for following the implementation are examined. As indicated, neither the institute nor partnering universities conduct inquiry to understand how alumni of HE graduate programs, workshops, or online professional development experiences conceptualize and implement HE (M. Champeau, personal communication, 2012). Neither is there a process to capture their concerns as practitioners of HE, and there is no research conducted to understand professional learning and the role of continuing education in the lives of HE practitioners. Evidence of a HE research agenda cannot be found in the scholarly literature. In response, I sent a personal communication to three leaders in the field of HE to better understand their position regarding the absence of a scholarly HE research agenda. All three leaders in the field agreed that a research agenda is very much needed, especially research as a form of assessment (M. Champeau, personal communication, January 14, 2014; M. Feldman, personal communication, January 11, 2014; Z. Weil, personal communication, January 14, 2014).

As alumni of HE programming, a full-time educator at a charter school dedicated to earth literacy and outdoor education, and an adjunct instructor teaching HE graduate

level courses, I believe I would benefit from professional development and continuing education in the field to more fully implement HE. With 14 years of teaching experience across general education, special education, and literacy leadership, I am again shifting perspective and professional practice, learning how to conceptualize and operationalize what it means to teach as a humane educator. In doing so, I believe I would benefit from additional assistance to more fully integrate psychological, convictional, and behavioral dimensions related to being a practitioner of HE (Clark, 1991).

In reflecting upon my professional practice, I understand how my own growth and development is linked to this research inquiry. Exploring the research-derived experience of others may inform my own growth as an educator and researcher working in the field of HE. As a recent graduate and practitioner, I am unable to access research-based scholarship detailing best practices in the field of HE because none exists. This inability to access research-based HE practices is further rationale supporting the importance of this inquiry.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

A recent index search on HE using ProQuest corroborated the lack of available research and scholarship across the field. As a certified practitioner and scholar of HE, the absence of literature related to research on the implementation of HE impacts my ability to use research-derived practices in the context of classroom instruction. Without research-derived scholarship, there is no comparison point for professional reflection, no assistance in developing curriculum, instruction, and assessment pedagogy, nor baseline data for critiquing student assessment outcomes. The lack of available HE research and

scholarship indicated a need in the field for systematic inquiry to better understand what it means to be a practitioner of HE, as well as what HE contributes to education across primary, secondary, and college classrooms in the United States.

The intent of qualitative research into HE was to explore, describe, and understand what it is like to teach HE in the United States as perceived by alumni of HE graduate programs, online professional development courses, and workshops offered through the institute and partnering university HE programs.

Definitions

Experience: As articulated by Dewey (1997), personal experience is the milieu for learning, encompassing the inner life of the individual and the external environment in which the individual acts in accordance with others, and this serves as the holistic context for educative experiences.

Freirean philosophy: Freirean philosophy contextualizes the purpose of schooling as education for liberation (Freire & Shor, 1987) and critical consciousness-raising (Freire, 2006; Freire, 2008) wherein teachers are cultural workers committed to catalyzing social justice (Freire, 2005).

Humane education: HE is an approach to teaching and learning which promotes an interdisciplinary understanding of human rights, animal rights and animal protection, environmental ethics and environmental stewardship, and cultural issues for social change (Institute for Humane Education, 2013).

Hyphenated selves: Borrowing from Fine and Sirin (2007), the concept of hyphenated selves is applied to this inquiry and understood as identity development

wherein the merging of two seemingly disparate selves (example: English Teacher and Humane Educator) produces teaching that occurs within a socially, psychologically, politically, and culturally charged classroom space.

Reflection-in-action: Reflection-in-action is defined as practitioners' ability to critically analyze their own thinking and behavior in the midst of action, acting as a researcher of their own beliefs and pedagogy, in order to create change (Schon, 1983).

Social constructivism: Social constructivism is an interpretive framework and philosophical belief system placing value upon the existence of diverse perspectives and multiple realities within the context of world making, wherein such perspectives and realities are cocreated through lived experience and relational dynamics (Creswell, 2013).

Solutionary: Someone who is able to identify local and global social issues and works to develop plans for restorative and sustainable change on behalf of humans, animals, and Earth (Institute for Humane Education, 2013).

Transformation: An outcome, transformation is defined as a significant and enduring change in understanding of self, belief system, and behavior (Clark, 1991; Fisher-Yoshida, Geller, & Schapiro, 2009)

Transformative education: An intentional course of learning designed to catalyze change in understanding, beliefs, and behavior (Clark, 1991; Fisher-Yoshida, Geller, & Schapiro, 2009). Valuing a holistic approach to transformative learning, practitioners design educational experiences resonant with Earth consciousness, global consciousness, integral growth, quality of life, spirituality, and wisdom (O'Sullivan, 2012).

Transformative learning: With a focus on the learner, transformative learning is defined as the process through which learners experience a deep change in understanding of self, belief system, and behavior acknowledging the integration of individual, spiritual, and social dimensions of change (Clark, 1991; Fisher-Yoshida et al., 2009; O’Sullivan, 2012).

Significance

Inquiry designed to address the existing research and scholarship gap within the field of HE may contribute to its scholarly knowledge base by adding to it a research-derived description of what it is like to teach HE across primary, secondary, and college classrooms in the United States. Thus, the bridge between HE’s conceptualization, implementation, and its critique seems important for sustaining HE as a practical and important element in education. This research may prove valuable in shaping policy, programming, and resource allocation as it may illuminate how HE practitioners conceptualize a philosophy of HE, how practitioners implement HE, practitioner concerns in the field, the nature of professional learning experiences, and the role of continuing education for the implementation and sustainment of HE. Resulting data may also be used to improve current learning experiences and outcomes while also contributing to the design of new continuing education programs, professional learning experiences, and doctoral level initiatives for graduates of the institute and partnering universities.

Guiding Research Questions

Exploring the teaching of HE in U.S. schools across primary, secondary, and postsecondary education necessitated the development of a guiding research question and related subquestions. The guiding question and related subquestions served to create a framework for inquiry and a corresponding research design to best illuminate a rich description of practitioner experiences. The inquiry itself and derived research questions were created to address the lack of research and scholarship in the field of HE. Resulting data may be used to develop a base of research and scholarship while at the same time providing critical information to shape policy, programming, resource allocation, curricular change, adult learning experiences, and adult learning outcomes. The guiding question for this study was:

What does it mean to be a practitioner of HE teaching in U.S. schools?

Subquestions included:

1. How do practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of HE?
2. How do practitioners implement HE?
3. What are the concerns of practitioners implementing HE?
4. What is the role of professional learning for practitioners of HE?
5. What is the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of HE?

Conceptual Framework

In developing a conceptual framework for this inquiry, five theories were combined in an effort to derive meaning from an exploration into the experiences of practitioners implementing HE in U.S. primary, secondary, and college classrooms:

- Dewey's (1997) conception of experience as the context for learning
- Fine and Sirin's (2007) theory of hyphenated selves
- Freirean philosophy (1987; 2006; 2008) recognizing the purpose of schooling as education for liberation and consciousness raising, and the role of teachers as cultural workers inspiring social justice
- Multiple perspectives on transformative learning and transformative education (Boyd & Myers, 1988; Brookfield, 2012; Clark, 1991; Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Dirkx, 2012; Fisher-Yoshida et al., 2009; Kreber, 2012; Mezirow, 2012; O'Sullivan, 2012; Tisdell, 2012)
- Schon's (1983) reflection-in-action.

The primary, secondary, or college classroom as a learning space, and the operationalization of HE within it, may exist all at once as a site of possibility, conflict, and contested terrain. Developing a conceptual framework that takes into account and celebrates this complexity is needed to derive meaning from research-based accounts of lived experience.

Drawing from scholarly literature researchers have proposed that HE practitioners are solutionaries and cultural workers who purpose schooling as education for liberation and critical consciousness, design systems of transformative education, and nurture

transformative learning. Researchers proposed that solutionaries experience such work as hyphenated selves attempt to construct an identity by blending the traditional content driven professional role with that of the practitioner of HE. In potential, HE is holistic and transformative, serving as catalyst for further change in practitioners' own knowledge, belief systems, pedagogical decisions, and world making.

Dewey's Perspective on Experience

According to Dewey (1997), experience is the context for learning and growth. Taken together, the inner life and external, social environment is the milieu for experiential learning (Dewey, 1997). In this inquiry, practitioners' experiences in conceptualizing a philosophy of HE, implementing HE, and reflecting on this work are paramount. For the practitioner of HE, professional experiences are the context for educative or miseducative adult learning. As experience is learning, outcomes shape belief systems and therefore choice of pedagogy. Collecting experiential accounts and making meaning of such accounts may illuminate practitioner philosophy, pedagogy, concerns, professional learning experiences, and the role of continuing education. Resulting data may be used to inform and improve adult learning experiences in the field of HE.

Fine and Sirin's Hyphenated Selves

Fine and Sirin's theory of hyphenated selves originates in their work with youth. However, the theory itself is widely applicable to alternative situations. Used within the context of this inquiry, the theory of hyphenated selves acknowledges the possibility that practitioners of HE may experience identity development as the merging of two

seemingly disparate selves, the English teacher and humane educator, which produces teaching pedagogy within a socially, psychologically, politically, and culturally charged classroom space (Fine & Sirin, 2007). Including hyphenated selves as part of the conceptual framework offers a wide-angle lens to detect and better understand practitioners' beliefs systems, pedagogical decisions, concerns, professional learning experiences, and views on continuing education. In addition, use of this theory helps to develop an overall research design responsive to complexity and possibly the acknowledged or unacknowledged influence of identity development.

Freirean Philosophy

Drawing from the available literature describing HE as the interconnected teaching of human rights, animal protection, environmental stewardship, and cultural issues, the practitioner role of humane educator, or solutionary, can be compared to Freire's depiction of cultural workers (Freire, 2005) engaged in liberatory praxis (Freire & Shor, 1987), consciousness raising (Freire, 2006; Freire 2008), and redressing social inequities through radical love, not hate. Although Freire's cultural context was Latin America and South America, the Western world also benefits by applying Freirean philosophy and praxis to address local and global challenges. Freirean philosophy offers a critical contribution to the conceptual framework for an inquiry into what it means to be a practitioner of HE because, in potential, the HE classroom may be a site for liberation wherein teacher and students break free of the banking style of education (Freire, 2006) favoring a reading of words and the world and consciousness raising to understand and

address current societal challenges perpetuated by unjust social, cultural, and political systems.

As another thread in the conceptual framework, Freirean philosophy widens the research design lens even further, creating space to understand the potentiality of practitioners' experiences in conceptualizing and implementing liberatory, consciousness raising, and solution oriented HE pedagogy. With the possibility of such belief systems and implementing HE in this manner, it also follows that practitioner experiences, and their reflection upon those experiences, may shed light on field-based concerns and the role of professional learning for the continuation and sustainment of HE.

Transformative Learning Theory and Transformative Education

Transformative learning theory is situated within the rich, cultural tradition of adult learning, often used as a framework to guide research and professional practice (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Linked to constructivism, humanism, and critical social theory, transformative learning theory embraces both individual and social change (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). According to Tisdell (2012), three primary transformative learning discourses exist in the scholarly literature and include Mezirow's perspective transformation, O'Sullivan's philosophy of transformative education and learning, and emancipatory education, with special emphasis on social transformation. Fisher-Yoshida et al. (2009) described several overlapping theoretical frameworks used to understand transformation, transformative learning, and transformative education and include the (a) cognitive rational approach; (b) depth psychology approach; (c) structural developmental

approach; (d) social emancipatory approach; (e) cultural-spiritual approach; (f) race-centric approach; and (g) planetary approach.

Regardless of approach, focusing on the learner, transformative learning embodies the change process experienced by the learner as a shift in understanding of self, belief systems, and behavior (Clark, 1991).

According to Mezirow (2012),

transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (p. 76)

Brookfield extended the importance of reflection and discourse to that of critical reflection and critical discourse, each an integral process in transformative learning and transformative education and used to disrupt dominant hegemony for individual and social change (Brookfield, 2012; Mezirow, 2012). Additionally, Kreber (2012) addressed the concept of critical reflection, emphasizing the creative, emotional, and authentic dimensions of self also involved in the process of critical reflection, and therefore transformative learning. Also important is the perspective on nurturing the soul within the context of transformative learning and education, drawing from depth psychology to include an exploration of the conscious and unconscious (Boyd and Myers, 1988; Dirkx, 2012). In addition, O'Sullivan (2012) offered a philosophical approach to transformative learning and transformative education describing a vision for planetary consciousness,

integral development, quality of life for all sentient beings, embracing wisdom, and honoring the sacred. For O’Sullivan, the process of transformative learning and transformative education is evidenced as education for survival, critical understanding, and integral creativity.

Available literature describing Weil’s (2004) conception of HE can be aligned with the multiple perspectives of transformative learning and transformative education. Including a variety of perspectives acknowledges the potential for HE philosophy and praxis to be experienced by practitioners as a form of transformative learning and transformative education. It creates the space for transformation to possibly emerge as an intention and outcome of humane education philosophy and praxis. Nuanced transformative learning theory and transformative education discourse are offered as part of the conceptual framework to best explore what it means to be a practitioner of HE.

Schon’s Reflection-in-Action

The final thread of the conceptual framework pulls in Schon’s theory of reflection-in-action. This theory is integral to the conceptual framework as it fleshes out the need for a particular research design wherein it is acknowledged that practitioners of HE are able to reflect on their lived experiences, and able to illuminate nuances of those experiences (Schon, 1983). According to Schon, practitioners are able to be reflecting metacognitively on their own belief systems, decision making and teaching pedagogy, and the ability to make change while they are in the midst of their professional practice. In the midst is defined as the action-present wherein new thinking, decisions, and behavior can still make a difference in the current, professional context (Schon, 1983).

Reflection-in-action is the final thread added to the conceptual framework, and in synergy with the other threads, shapes the overall research design whereby sampling, data collection, and data analysis illuminates practitioners' reflection-in-action of their lived experiences as humane educators.

Literature Review

Limited HE research and scholarship prompted an exploratory survey of relevant literature to derive a beginning understanding of how educators in related fields conceptualize, operationalize, and critique their professional work. An in-depth search for current literature across 2007 through 2013 was conducted using Academic Search Complete, Education Research Complete, and ProQuest Central. Several search terms were used to survey the literature including HE, Earth education, environmental education, sustainability education, animal rights education, animal welfare education, animal protection education, human rights education, citizenship education, engaged citizenship, global citizenship education, teaching global citizenship, critical literacy education, teaching critical literacy, media literacy, and media literacy education. As a result, the following categories for analysis emerged from the literature: (a) HE; (b) environmental education; (c) animal protection/animal rights education; (d) human rights education; (e) citizenship/global citizenship education; (f) critical literacy education; and (g) media literacy education.

Humane Education

International in scope, HE has been defined in the scholarly literature in three distinct ways, including (a) as a field of inquiry and practice focusing solely on the

humane and ethical treatment of animals (The National Humane Education Society, 2010), (b) as an initiative prioritizing moral reasoning and critical thinking within the context of animal rights and environmental education (Horsthemke, 2009), and (c) as a professional field of education dedicated to the interconnected and transdisciplinary teaching of human rights, animal protection, environmental ethics, and cultural issues (Institute for Humane Education, 2013; Weil, 2010). In the latter instance, HE exists as a world view, domain of knowledge, and skill set understood as a form of educational activism dedicated to nurturing the development of students as positive change makers, or solutionaries (Institute for Humane Education, 2013; Weil, 2010). The philosophy and praxis of HE intends to raise awareness and incite action-oriented solutionary work to redress the oppression, exploitation, and marginalization of humans, animals, and Earth in an effort to cultivate healthier systems with equity, justice, and sustainability in mind (Institute for Humane Education, 2013; Weil, 2010).

In addition to the study of human rights, animal protection, and environmental ethics, cultural issues are explored to unpack “aspects of society that influence beliefs, opinions, and choices, such as advertising, media, public relations, economic globalization, religion, and politics” (Institute for Humane Education, 2013). Understanding local and global issues in all their complexity sets the stage for citizens worldwide to assess how cultural influences affect choice making and problem solving (Institute for Humane Education, 2013). Weil (2010) claimed the purpose of education and schooling as prevention and suggested that the uniqueness of HE can be found in the provision of accurate information, development of curiosity, creativity, and critical

thinking, engendering of reverence, respect, and responsibility, and the teaching of positive choice making and decision making skills.

Adding to this conception of HE, Kahn and Humes (2009) described the potential of HE as a form of total liberation pedagogy, a pedagogy wherein practitioners espousing critical intersectional literacy unpack and transform systems of oppression, domination, and marginalization within and across interconnected issues of human rights, animal rights, and environmental rights. Practitioners using pedagogy within this paradigm attempt to analyze and redress systems of power, systems of advantage and disadvantage, and systems that indoctrinate and perpetuate speciesism (Kahn & Humes, 2009). Liberation is arrived at through consciousness raising, critique, and transformation, liberating humans and nonhumans who have been silenced and living at the periphery of society due to dominant hegemony (Kahn & Humes, 2009). Weaving informal interview communications into their essay, Kahn and Humes described practitioner experiences and perceptions, and illuminated a lack of available resources and stakeholder support for HE within the context of elementary and secondary schools in the United States. In addition, Kahn and Humes hypothesized that to develop HE programs in elementary and secondary schools, total liberation pedagogy, with HE content knowledge, must be woven into the fabric of higher education. Implementation and scholarly research are needed to determine outcomes of this pedagogical orientation in the making of just, humane, and sustainable systems.

Formal empirical research exploring HE conceptualized as the interconnected teaching of human rights, animal protection, environmental ethics, and cultural issues,

does not exist. As a result, there are no U.S.-derived research studies offering an empirical description of HE and its philosophy, aims, outcomes, field-based practices, practitioner concerns, the role of practitioners' continuing education and professional development, or practitioners' self-care strategies. A definitive gap in the HE literature, therefore, exists.

While this gap in the research literature needs to be addressed, it is noteworthy to add that two studies, both originating in Turkey, lend credibility to the idea that humane values education ought to be included in a U.S. HE/total liberation pedagogy research agenda. Researchers Dilmac, Kulaksizoglu, and Eksi (2007) conducted a pretest/posttest experiment to measure the efficacy of a humane values education program for high school students. With resulting data in mind, the researchers pointed to program efficacy, having displayed a significant difference in higher scores across students who participated in the humane values program as opposed to those who did not.

In like manner, Dereli and Aypay (2012) developed a research study to investigate the relationship between empathic tendency and collaborative, humane values among high school students. Through this research, Dereli and Aypay illuminated variance in students' humane values based upon gender, parental education levels, familial levels of income, and school-based class/grade level: females scored higher than males, students from low income and middle income families scored higher, and students whose parents attained minimal education scored higher than those parents with high educational attainment (Dereli & Aypay, 2012). As a result, Dereli and Aypay emphasized the importance of implementing humane values education programs in

schools, while also conducting research to determine program efficacy regarding educational outcomes. Researching humane values as part of a U.S. initiative legitimizes the importance of understanding how perceptions, beliefs, experiences, and values shape choice making, problem solving, and behavioral change.

Environmental Education

Qualitative researchers exploring classroom-based environmental education pedagogy and outcomes offered descriptive accounts detailing how environmental education is conceptualized and operationalized within primary, secondary, and higher education. Of the studies analyzed for this inquiry, designs emulated basic qualitative research, questionnaire and survey research, case study, phenomenological interviewing, and pretest/posttest experimental survey research. On the whole, researchers suggested student participation in environmental education lessons often proved beneficial as environmental health knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of upper elementary and middle school students varied across age, gender, and grade level (Naquin, et al., 2011).

Although various researchers indicated possible positive outcomes for teacher implementation of environmental education, Forbes and Zint (2011) surveyed elementary education teachers to better understand their (a) beliefs regarding the necessity of environmental education for students; (b) self-efficacy regarding the use of scientific inquiry to support student learning; (c) teacher experiences in the field of environmental education; and (d) professional development experiences related to the field of environmental education. Forbes and Zint identified how teacher beliefs supported students learning about the environment, yet teachers did not feel confident to implement

environmental education pedagogy, nor did teachers spend much time engaged in such practices. With researchers calling into question teacher efficacy and professional learning, Strife (2012) explored the ways in which children voiced their own concerns about the environment and discovered that of the 50 children interviewed, 82% experienced a range of negative feelings when discussing environmental issues, thus suggesting the need to immerse students in a hopeful, solutions oriented, and stewardship-based environmental education.

Within the context of secondary education, Howley, Howley, Campo, and Perko (2011) explored variables promoting and constraining the implementation of place-based environmentally conscious education. Researchers illuminated the positive effects of school leadership, surrounding community, diverse teacher practices, and inquiry-based school culture as having contributed to successful implementation of place-based environmental education. Adding to this research, Ernst (2009) and Stevenson, Peterson, Bondell, Mertig, and Moore (2013) identified teacher development as critical to successful implementation and student outcomes in environmental education initiatives. In addition to spotlighting professional learning as a need for the field, McBeth and Volk (2009) discovered a gap between middle school students' verbal commitment to environmental stewardship and their actual practice of environmental stewardship even when environmental literacy skills ran high. Skinner and Chi (2012) explored the relationship between garden-based education and student motivation, finding increased on task behavior, enthusiasm for learning, and academic achievement. At the high school level, researchers explored teacher intentions and corresponding practices related to

environmental education pedagogy. Researchers illuminated the ways in which teacher beliefs shaped implementation and student experiences (Moroye, 2009) and the role of constructivist learning (Harness & Drossman, 2011).

Within higher education, embodied environmental education using indigenous theory and theatre practices has proven effective as Lane (2012) identified its positive impact upon identity, sense of self, attitude, behavior, and responsible living. According to French (2011), eco-justice education is used as a source of community-based education within higher education teacher training programs and exposure to curricula has yielded changes in graduate students' own teaching pedagogies and practices. Also within higher education, Hart (2010) explored the purpose of environmental education, positioning it as vital for the development of an active citizenship and argued for a transformational model of professional development for educators to produce change agents. Hart argued for critical reflection, social critique, activism, and intellectual engagement as the core of a transformational professional development model. Adding on, although Schusler, Krazy, Peters, and Decker (2009) conducted phenomenological research linking environmental education pedagogy to individual, community, and societal development, there still remains an absence of research describing how participants conceptualize and operationalize environmental education as connected to animal protection, human rights, and culture and change. Additional research is needed.

Animal Protection/Animal Rights Education

Analyzing current literature in animal protection and animal rights education yielded a variety of articles wherein researchers varied methodology and research designs

across experimental research, program evaluation research, survey research, and archival research. Researchers demonstrated the positive effects of animal protection and welfare programs on young students' attitudes toward animals (Nicoll, Trifone, & Samuels, 2008), first graders' assimilation of animal welfare concepts (Aguirre & Orihuela, 2010), high school students' humane values (Dilmac, Kulaksizoglu, & Eksi, 2007), animal welfare camp having catalyzed a reduction in inhumane behavior and increase in compassionate understanding (Bexell, Jarrett, Ping, & Xi, 2009), the link between household pets and development of positive attitudes toward animals (Prokop & Tunnicliffe, 2010), and increased empathy in boys (Arbour, Signal, & Taylor, 2009).

According to Daly and Suggs (2010), within the context of elementary education, teachers believed the use of live, classroom pets contributed to an increase in children's empathy and social emotional development. In addition, Helton and Helton (2007) explored the relationship between deep ecology, nature-based values, anthropocentrism, and Christianity. Although researchers indicated that Christianity had little impact on participants' beliefs in deep ecology, nature-based values, and anthropocentrism, Helton and Helton argued that environmental educators ought to be aware of the potential conflict between values inherent in deep ecology and Christianity.

Moving beyond animal protection and welfare as a classroom experience, Bischur (2012) explored how using a phenomenological theory of body can unpack, and contribute to, empathic feelings scientists experienced toward laboratory animals during scientific practices. To best understand animal ethics, Kupper and Buning (2011) proposed a set of four pluralist frameworks to be used within the context of animal ethics

debates. Within the frameworks, Kupper and Buning privileged reflexive awareness, deliberative attitudes, and collective engagement in moral inquiry as a creative-intellectual endeavor.

HE may be understood in the literature as a single issue encompassing animal protection, animal welfare, and animal rights. Within this context, Lewis (2007) investigated the significant life experiences of humane educators to understand how sensitivity toward animals developed. Drawing from the resulting data, Lewis illuminated four of the most common significant life experiences leading to increased empathy toward animals, all of which included situations in which participants (a) experienced a relationship with animal or animals during childhood; (b) explored animals and/or animal issues through reading; (c) engaged in meaningful discussions in adulthood about animals; and (d) interacted with positive adult role models during childhood.

Taken as a whole, findings from animal protection and animal rights research provided a general understanding of how within the context of HE, animal protection, animal welfare, and animal rights pedagogy led to an increase in positive behavioral and social emotional outcomes for students in primary and secondary classrooms. Additional research is needed to better understand how practitioners experience conceptualizing and operationalizing animal protection, animal welfare, and animal rights pedagogy when it purposefully intersects with environmental ethics, human rights, media literacy, culture and change.

Human Rights Education

Although there is a research base describing the field of human rights education, research detailing classroom-based practitioner experience within the United States was difficult to retrieve. Therefore, in addition to available classroom research, international research was used to fill gaps, as well as research conducted within nongovernmental organizations, refugee camps, and ministries of education. Overall, researchers indicated that human rights education (HRE) was often implemented to facilitate democracy (Bajaj, 2011), active citizenship (Francis, 2012), global citizenship (Levin-Goldberg, 2009), and non-violent conflict resolution (Reimers & Chung, 2010).

In addition, human rights education was explored by researchers in the context of (a) Kenyan child labor issues (Munene & Ruto, 2010); (b) human rights violations against educators in Columbia (Novelli, 2010); (c) Northern Ethiopian refugee camps and the need for teacher development, professional support, and student centered practices (Kirk & Winthrop, 2007); (d) education policy in Latin America and the Caribbean and development of human rights education curriculum (Suarez, 2007); (e) varying conceptual frameworks detailing human rights education including the values and awareness model, accountability model, and transformative model (Bajaj, 2011); (f) holocaust education (Boersma & Schimmel, 2008; Bromley & Russell, 2010); and (g) arts-based outreach programs (Amatullo, 2009).

Using an international lens, researchers described the field of human rights education, detailed the varied conceptions and applications of HRE, illuminated how human rights education ideology drew from Freirean philosophy, critical pedagogy, and

civic consciousness (Bajaj, 2011; Francis, 2012; Levin-Goldberg, 2009), and identified how pedagogy was often implemented within systems of nonformal education, elementary education, secondary education, and higher education (Bajaj, 2011; Francis, 2012; Levin-Goldberg, 2009; Reimers & Chung, 2010).

Within the context of formal education, Levin-Goldberg (2009) advocated for the use of an experiential human rights education curriculum in her doctoral research (2008) and illuminated positive change in middle school students' attitudes and behaviors after exposure to human rights curricula. While Levin-Goldberg affirmed positive student outcomes, Aslan and Karaman-Kepeneci (2008) investigated the prevalence of human rights issues in French and Turkish textbooks, finding more emphasis placed in Turkish textbooks. In addition, Merey (2012) compared Turkish and U.S. primary education social studies curricula and indicated how much less space was allotted for human rights education in U.S. social studies curricula. Also investigating curricula, Meyer, Bromley, and Ramirez (2010) conducted an inquiry to examine the prevalence of human rights themes in secondary science textbooks across 69 countries. In analyzing 465 textbooks published since 1970, researchers detailed an increase in human rights issues since 1995 and identified how textbooks having an international focus tended to allocate more space for human rights issues as opposed to distinctly national perspective-driven texts.

Focusing on middle school students' perspectives, Akengin (2008) highlighted how youth in Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus were not aware of their own rights after the implementation of a citizenship and human rights course, and therefore placed teacher development center stage as a profound need within the field of

human rights education. Also in Turkey, focused on college level preservice educators, Gundogdu (2010) investigated the application of constructivist pedagogy within human rights education. As a result of this research inquiry, Gundogdu indicated an increase in positive attitudes toward human rights education, and highlighted the use of constructivist approaches as effective in learner development. Also investigating human rights at the college level, Reyes (2010) sought to better understand how teacher education shaped social justice issues in the classroom and how schools upheld human rights. As a result, Reyes detailed the ways in which teachers understood classroom and school-based inequalities as violations of human rights.

Surveying scholarly literature in the field of human rights education, findings indicated a need for additional research describing U.S. educators' conceptualization and operationalization of human rights education across primary, secondary, and postsecondary education. As scant classroom-based human rights education research exists, it is difficult to illuminate connections between human rights education and HE. Additional research is needed.

Citizenship/Global Education

While numerous research articles from the fields of citizenship education and global citizenship education exist, five were deemed pertinent to an inquiry exploring the experiences of HE practitioners. Case study research, survey research, and content analysis research was used by researchers to better understand teacher beliefs (Chin & Barber, 2010), curricular design (Camicia & Zhu, 2012), implementation of multicultural democratic citizenship (DiCamillo & Pace, 2010), how educators blended science and

citizenship education (Erikson & Carifio, 2009), and the placement of global citizenship in state social studies standards (Rapoport, 2009).

While Chin and Barber (2010) illuminated teacher beliefs as a driver in the conceptualization and operationalization of curricula, Camicia and Zhu (2012) developed an international inquiry to explore how elementary education teachers synthesized and placed multicultural, global, and civic education into their social studies curricula. As researchers, Camicia and Zhu demonstrated that teachers' content knowledge and teaching practices were exemplary, curricula was culturally and contextually responsive to student needs, a high degree of cultural knowledge was evident, and student empowerment and connections to the community were understood as an important thread in teachers' professional work. Camicia and Zhu's findings shared much in common with the intent of HE wherein both fields attempt to develop a way of teaching and learning that is culturally relevant, empowering, and grounded in the tenets of social justice work. It is here that DiCamillo and Pace (2010) added to the literature base by having detailed the ways in which deliberative pedagogies were used in secondary education, preparing students to solve complex social issues through active and engaged citizenship. Researchers described deliberative pedagogies as teaching moves wherein educators worked with students to address social issues, understood issues through multiple perspectives, developed solutions, and reflected upon learning. As a result, DiCamillo and Pace found deliberative pedagogies just as important as teaching moves typically identified within the teaching of critical pedagogy, and therefore positioned deliberative pedagogies as a substitute for critical pedagogy.

Although there are no specific researchers describing HE, key features of citizenship education and global citizenship education connect with the conception of HE offered by Weil (2004). This relationship is yet another thread of evidence highlighting the importance of collecting multiple accounts of HE practitioners' lived experience and remaining open as researcher to the possibility that HE practitioners may share much in common, or not, with teachers weaving citizenship and global citizenship education into their curricula. As Rapoport (2009) found global citizenship neglected in the United States' educational standards, I sought to learn whether practitioners of HE identify similar concerns of marginalization and whether concerns arise as HE is not specifically codified in the new common core state standards.

Critical Literacy Education

Critical literacy education, aligned philosophically with critical pedagogy, is a form of social and textual critique wherein educators teach students to critically examine a variety of texts with the intent to identify and redress societal injustices (Damico, 2012). Although this niche in the field of education is vast, 27 research articles were analyzed to better understand possible connections between critical literacy education and the work practitioners of HE may be experiencing in the field. A variety of research designs are represented and include basic qualitative research, narrative inquiry, survey research, case study research, ethnography, critical ethnography, action research, collaborative action research, discourse analysis, and self-study using naturalistic inquiry. To best conceptualize findings, articles were organized into categories according to

research conducted within primary grade classrooms, secondary classrooms, and university level classrooms.

Researchers explored critical literacy education at the primary level and identified (a) variations in reader response (Chafel & Neitzel, 2012); (b) processes that make up critical literacy (Damico, 2012); (c) the connection between poetry, critical literacy, and social justice issues (Flint & Laman, 2012); (d) community as a site for storytelling, critique, and action (Johnson & Rosario-Ramos, 2012); (e) when, where, and why teachers engaged critical literacy education in their classrooms (Jones & Enriquez, 2009); (f) how young readers positioned themselves when analyzing texts (Jones, 2012a); (g) student identity construction as social theorists with lived experience having intellectual value (Jones, 2012b); (h) the connection between critical literacy, new literacy studies, and common core state standards (Lapp, Moss, and Rowsell, 2012); (i) narrative construction of texts (May, Holbrook, & Meyers, 2010); and (j) use of image theatre to critique texts (Rozansky & Santos, 2009).

In addition, researchers at the primary level also highlighted arts integration, specifically the use of poetry (Flint & Laman, 2012), acting (Rozansky & Santos, 2009), and personal narrative storytelling (Jones, 2012a; Jones, 2012b) as three additional pathways that engaged and developed critical literacy skills in young students. While arts can nurture a deepening of critical literacy, Lapp et al. (2012) described the relationship between teacher and students as reciprocal wherein coconstruction of knowledge and colearning was valued within the learning community. Adding on, Damico (2012)

detailed critical literacy education as two main classroom practices unpacked as reader reflexivity and textual critique.

Within the context of secondary education, several strands of critical literacy have been researched. For example, Keyes (2009) identified the connection between critical consciousness and critical literacy, Avila and Moore (2012) aligned critical literacy and the common core state standards, and Encisco (2011) identified how drama and poetry were used to illicit and place value upon episodes of student storytelling. Extending this work, Johnson (2011) unpacked students' body language, gesture, and voice as critical literacy practices, Leland, Ociepka, and Kuonen (2012) explored how a variety of interpretive stances, or lenses, can be used to develop critical literacy skills, and Rozansky and Aagesen (2010) identified how image theatre was used to simultaneously improve teaching of critical literacy and improve students' reading ability. Adding on, Sawch (2011) worked with fiction and nonfiction text sets to interrogate textual themes, Lu (2010) demonstrated how multimodal graphic novels were used to connect visual literacy and critical literacy, and Lopez (2011) connected culturally relevant pedagogy and critical literacy. Wolfe (2010b) demonstrated how teachers conceptualized and operationalized two different constructions of critical literacy education, and Masuda (2012) explored teacher identity and the teaching of critical literacy.

Taken together, research-derived critical literacy practices in primary and secondary education was arts-based, culturally responsive, student-centered, multimodal, and positioned the teacher and students as colearners and coconstructors of knowledge. Noteworthy across several methodological designs, researchers used Lewison, Flint, and

Van Sluys' (2002) theoretical framework to position four components of critical literacy which include:

- “disrupting the commonplace” (p. 382)
- “interrogating multiple viewpoints” (p. 383)
- “focusing on sociopolitical issues” (p. 383)
- “taking action and promoting social justice” (p. 383).

While researchers used this framework to illuminate their own findings, it is possible that this construct may also shed light upon the ways in which HE pedagogy is understood and implemented in the field.

At the university level, critical literacy researchers offered an understanding of the connection between teacher reflection and critical literacy practices (Minott, 2011), shed light on the role of approximations within critical literacy and critical practice highlighting how pedagogical decision making shapes the learning environment, identity, and teaching practices (Mosley, 2010), and underscored the integration of critical literacy practices into the social studies context (Reidel & Draper, 2011). In addition, researchers unpacked how learning experiences impacted teachers' desire and capacity to use critical literacy for social justice (Skerrett, 2010), how teacher exploration of the school community was a means of raising awareness and civic responsibility to catalyze teaching for social justice (Stribling, DeMulder, & Day, 2011), and described the ways in which student teachers conceptualized and operationalized critical literacy as part of their unit planning processes (Wolfe, 2010a).

Most important at the college level, critical literacy researchers demonstrated the ways in which preservice teachers critically evaluated their own belief systems, values, assumptions, and biases and articulated how this work connected to consciousness raising, critical reflection, critical thinking, and critical literacy for the adult learner. This research-derived knowledge opened the possibility of considering to what degree HE practitioners engage in critical literacy and related reflection work, and if there is a need for professional development in this skill area. Researchers' descriptions of critical literacy aligned with aspects of HE pedagogy as conceptualized by Weil (2004). Also noteworthy, researchers illuminated practitioner pedagogy while also raising important questions for further exploration.

Media Literacy Education

Within the field of media literacy education, various researchers utilized qualitative case study research, ethnography, and survey research. Taken as a whole, researchers demonstrated adolescents' use of multimodal literacies (Gainer, 2010), identified the content included in media literacy curricula and related teaching pedagogy (Redmond, 2012), unpacked teacher perceptions regarding students' media literacy competencies, and described the extent to which teachers addressed competencies and valued the import of media literacy education (Schmidt, 2013). Stein and Prewett (2009) defined teacher training needs. In addition, a bridge was created linking traditional literacy practices and media literacy education (Young & Daunic, 2012).

Having explored media literacy education across primary, secondary, and higher education, Schmidt (2013) discovered how, although media literacy was valued as

important, teachers tended to believe that students failed to possess high level media literacy competencies, media literacy education occurred more frequently within higher education, and teacher training and experience catalyzed or limited the implementation of media literacy education. Stein and Prewett (2009) delineated how 51% of research participants surveyed indicated the purpose of media literacy education as citizenship education while 59% purposed media literacy education as a tool for learning and self-expression. Although media literacy education coincided with citizenship and democratic education pedagogy, Stein and Prewitt also indicated that many teachers lacked confidence in their ability to teach media literacy education.

Gainer (2010) furthered the notion that critical media literacy was inherently connected to critical pedagogy, existing as a medium for disrupting dominant hegemony and discourse. Using ethnographic data, Gainer revealed the ways in which middle school students operationalized democracy and citizenship through their critical engagement with text and also identified students having lived as change agents. In addition, according to Gainer, when teachers used media literacy education, students critically examined a variety of text sources, unpacked the kind of media used, identified targeted audiences, evaluated and critiqued information contained within media messages, and created alternative texts to disrupt dominant hegemony and discourse. This work directly connected to how Weil (2004) conceptualized HE and the role of media literacy in HE teaching pedagogy.

Within the context of case study research and grounded theory data analysis, Redmond (2012) developed critical enjoyment as a theoretical construct and described

the intersection of purpose, pedagogy, and outcomes in media literacy education. As outlined by Redmond, critical enjoyment included student voice and choice, social learning, value placed upon student ideas and opinions, teacher use of responsive language, and an environmental milieu created as one of mutual learning, inquiry, and respect. While Redmond further detailed possible purpose, content, and outcomes for media literacy education, Young and Daunic (2012) illuminated the connection between traditional literacy practices and media literacy education, highlighting that for some students, engagement in media literacy sparked further interest in and use of traditional literacy practices. As students used media literacy strategies and competencies increased, traditional literacy strategies and skills were practiced and therefore improved (Young & Daunic, 2012).

In having synthesized research-derived descriptions of HE, animal protection and animal rights education, citizenship and global citizenship education, environmental education, human rights education, critical literacy and media literacy, each category illuminated one aspect or another of the intention of HE as conceptualized by Weil (2004). However, results did not offer a rich, holistic understanding of practitioner experiences in the field of HE specifically. Research exploring HE is needed to better understand how educators conceptualize and operationalize environmental ethics, animal protection, human rights, and culture and change as bricolage; an interdisciplinary montage describing teacher intention, pedagogy, and student outcomes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011b; Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011).

My extant review of the literature confirmed the need for a research-derived, holistic understanding of HE to illuminate education practitioners' philosophy, pedagogy, concerns, professional learning experiences, and level of importance ascribed to the role of continuing education for the improvement and sustainment of HE as a field of adult learning.

Implications

Although project directions are based upon findings articulated through data collection and analysis, possible projects included development of HE course and workshop revisions, creation of new HE courses and workshops, planning and implementation of HE annual conferences and retreats, a professional development model to assist practitioners with implementation of HE philosophy and praxis, creation of online networks for continuing education and collaboration, writing of a manuscript describing what it is like to be a practitioner of HE for possible publication as a journal article or book, and planning and implementation of annual appreciative inquiry summits to promote sustainable cycles of learning, renewal, and change for practitioners of HE.

Summary

Section 1 established the need for a research base in the field of HE. The lack of scholarly research within the field illuminates the importance of qualitative inquiry to explore how practitioners conceptualize a philosophy of HE and implement HE in primary, secondary, and college classrooms, while also seeking to understand practitioner concerns, professional learning experiences, and the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners. Evidence of the problem was established through an extant

literature review and synthesis, and a conceptual framework was advanced demonstrating how meaning derived from this inquiry is best understood using a lens blending experience as a site for learning, Freirean philosophy, reflection-in-action, hyphenated selves, transformative learning, and transformative education. An exploratory survey of the research literature illuminated practitioner experiences and current issues in related fields thus necessitating a research-derived description specifically detailing HE. In answering the research questions, resulting data from this inquiry may be used to shape policy, programming, and resource allocation to improve adult learning experiences within the field of HE.

Section 2 will detail the overall qualitative research design and approach demonstrating how multicase study research will best illuminate what it means to be a practitioner of HE across primary, secondary, and postsecondary public and private schools in the United States. Sampling, data collection, and data analysis techniques will be delineated, modeling the necessary steps for conducting this inquiry to better understand the field of HE.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

An absence of scholarly research-derived descriptions detailing what it means to be a practitioner of HE teaching in U.S. primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms was impetus for this doctoral study. Advancing such an inquiry necessitated making methodological and design decisions to align the study, the guiding research question and corresponding subquestions, and ultimately the research methodology and specific design. Exploring the experiences of HE practitioners to arrive at holistic and richly detailed descriptions indicating what it means to be a practitioner of HE required an inquiry situated within the qualitative research tradition, specifically designed as a multicase study. Section 2 details the justification of both qualitative research methodology and the multicase study research design while advancing specific procedures for participant selection, ethical protections on behalf of participants, data collection, data analysis, verification of findings, and dissemination of results to stakeholders.

Qualitative Research Methodology

Education professionals interested in research-derived field experiences and best practice approaches for implementing HE will find it difficult to locate scholarly literature describing the field. An inquiry exploring lived experiences to better understand what it is like to be a practitioner of HE addressed this gap in the literature and was best situated within the qualitative research tradition. As detailed by Merriam (2009), research exploring the lived experiences of humane educators is aligned with the key

principles of qualitative research as this inquiry was based on meaning making and the desire to understand, created as a flexible and emergent design, shaped for inductive analysis, and seeking rich, thick descriptive accounts of lived experience.

Embracing multiple perspectives, exploring professional life worlds, valuing an individual's point of view, collecting data to arrive at a holistic understanding, and writing rich descriptions of lived experience is the work of a scholar-practitioner engaged in the qualitative research tradition (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011a). Qualitative research was an appropriate choice for exploring, understanding, and describing the lived experiences of HE practitioners teaching in primary, secondary, and college classrooms across the United States. A deductive study situated within the quantitative tradition and designed as an intervention or experiment to accumulate and statistically analyze a large amount of data would not have yielded the holistic and narrative-rich description of lived experience sought within the context of this research study (Creswell, 2012; Merriam 2009).

In developing a study within the qualitative tradition, taking into consideration the purpose of the research, research questions, and conceptual framework assisted in identifying an interpretive stance bringing related ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological beliefs in alignment across the study (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011a). Attempting to understand, find meaning within, and arrive at detailed, holistic descriptions of what it means to be a practitioner of HE required the use of an interpretive stance rooted in constructivist beliefs. According to Creswell and Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011), an inquiry embracing a constructivist stance places value upon (a) reconstruction of participants' lived experiences; (b) coconstruction of

knowledge between participant(s) and researcher; (c) coconstruction of the meaning of the lived experience between participant(s) and researcher; (d) presence of multiple perspectives within the findings; (e) contextualizing findings within the local environment and culture; and (f) meaning making and understanding to improve professional practice. Working within the qualitative research tradition, embracing constructivist beliefs, and shaping the design of the study to achieve alignment philosophically, the stage was set for the methodological choice of multicase study research.

Multicase Study Research Design

Multicase study research was an appropriate research design to explore the experiences of HE practitioners teaching in U.S. schools, specifically within diverse contexts of primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. According to Stake (1995), case study research is an effective design selected by researchers hoping to arrive at deeper understandings of human experience. In addition, Stake, Merriam (2009), and Yin (2014) further delineate the purpose of case study research as an in-depth, holistic inquiry used to better understand a particular phenomenon within its natural context arriving at rich, thick description of experiential understanding and multiple realities. Focusing on the phenomenon of HE in primary, secondary, and college classrooms, each bounded system in this multicase inquiry included the HE practitioner within the context of his or her classroom nested within a particular school community (Stake, 2006). Purposeful sampling was used to identify and select research participants. Interviewing was the primary method of data collection with document analysis as a secondary feature

in this inquiry. Within-case analysis and cross-case analysis was used to develop findings, themes, and possible assertions regarding what it means to be a practitioner of HE (Stake, 2006).

Multicase study research was the optimal design choice for this inquiry. Arriving at multiple thick, rich, descriptive, and holistic accounts of what it means to be a practitioner of HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms was best undertaken through multicase study research. In comparing case study research to other possible methodologies, others either fell outside the aim of this inquiry or fell outside the resources available for this particular research enterprise. For example, a phenomenological explanation detailing the essence of HE was not sought in this inquiry and conflicted with the aim of acquiring a unique and situated understanding of multiple lived accounts. Likewise, grounded theory was not the best match as theory building was not a stated purpose within the context of this study. Although a possible match, ethnography fell outside resource allocation for the current inquiry in terms of time and financial support. In addition, narrative research methodology could have been selected as the best research design to explore the lived experiences of HE practitioners but was not chosen as multicase study research offered the use of a holistic lens and bounded system which both expanded and focused the study at the same time. In addition, and most important perhaps, was the reality that by design, narrative elements are a natural feature within the multicase study research process (Creswell, 2009, 2012, 2013; Merriam 2009; Stake 2006).

With these nuances differentiated, multicase study research was the most appropriate design for exploring the experiences of HE practitioners teaching in U.S. schools as aligned with the field's current maturation and development.

Participants

Exploring the experiences of HE practitioners teaching in U.S. schools required careful consideration of multicase sample size, sampling strategies, attributes detailing criteria for participant inclusion or exclusion, procedures needed to obtain contact information, screening procedures, potential risks and benefits to participants, privacy protection, conflicts of interest, use of noncoercive practices, and anticipated benefits of the research for participants involved in the study. In addition, through each of the aforementioned processes, upholding beneficence, justice, and respect for persons was paramount to the development of an ethical multicase research study.

Understanding multicase inquiry as a research design wherein individual cases are studied for their uniqueness, complexity, and situational particulars (Stake, 2006), a sample size comprising eight to 12 cases of humane educators teaching in U.S. schools was developed. Purposeful sampling was used along with maximum variation to ensure demographic diversity within the collective of the eight to 12 cases (Creswell, 2013; Merriam 2009; Stake, 2006). Although the research literature advocates small sample sizes, maximum variation and a sample size of eight to 12 participants offered the possibility of thick, rich data describing multiple accounts of lived experience from the perspective of humane educators teaching in differentiated contexts (Creswell, 2013; Merriam 2009; Stake, 2006). Findings may offer a depth perspective and holistic,

research-derived understanding of what it means to be a practitioner of HE in varied contexts within the United States (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006).

With these goals in mind, desired participant attributes and criteria for participant inclusion are detailed within the appendices, titled as Appendix B Maximum Variation and Purposeful Sampling Criteria. As selection criteria, these attributes were used to locate participants who were a best match for this inquiry capable of offering rich accounts of varied experiences crossing lines of gender, years of teaching experience, teaching placement within primary education, secondary education, postsecondary education, urban settings, and rural schooling contexts. In addition, the possibilities of who should be included in the participant pool were narrowed to best address the guiding research question and related sub questions within this inquiry, also avoiding conflicts of interest between researcher and participants. As attributed to the design of the study, several inclusionary criteria served also as exclusionary criteria, automatically protecting vulnerable populations as outlined in the IRB application packet. However, it may come to pass that certain vulnerable groups do participate in the study with minimal risk as being pregnant, in crisis, less fluent in English, elderly, living as a resident of a facility, having mental or emotional disabilities, and suffering economic disadvantage will not be automatically, overtly, or intentionally screened. With informed consent, individuals had the opportunity to participate or not, or terminate participation at any time across the inquiry.

Gatekeeper assistance was needed to develop a participant pool, screen participants, and query for initial participant interest. Mary Pat Champeau, Director of

Education and faculty member at an institute and affiliated university offering graduate programs in HE, and Marsha Rakestraw, Director of Online Courses and Education Resources, assisted in participant recruitment for this inquiry. Upon receipt of the Letter of Cooperation and IRB approval, Ms. Champeau and Ms. Rakestraw identified and screened potential participants using data available to them; data that was aligned with the criteria for participant inclusion in this study. Once a list of possible participants were generated, to protect individual privacy, Ms. Champeau and Ms. Rakestraw sent an invitational email to those persons listed, querying interest in being a participant of this study. I created the invitation letters for both Ms. Champeau and Ms. Rakestraw but they sent the query to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of potential participants. The consent form was added as an attachment to offer possible participants a description of the study including (a) introduction to the study; (b) background information; (c) procedures; (d) sample questions; (e) voluntary nature of the study; (f) risks and benefits of being in the study; and (g) assurance of privacy.

Also included in the invitational email query was my contact information as lead researcher and a statement indicating that participants should send an email directly to me within 72 hours to initiate participation in the study. Requiring alumni interested in possible participation to contact me directly minimized risk of coercion as Mary Pat and Marsha were their instructors when students were enrolled in the HE programs, prior to their graduation and alumni status. This protection extended across data collection, data analysis, and dissemination of results as demographic and identifying information was withheld or concealed through the use of pseudonyms. Mary Pat and Marsha were not

able to identify participants nor nonparticipants in the study. Therefore, possible coercion due to an inferred position of authority was eliminated or minimized to the greatest extent possible.

Upon receipt of participant interest, I began to develop the researcher-participant working relationship by sending an email to introduce myself while demonstrating my thanks and appreciation regarding participants' decision of involvement. Within the body of this email, I initiated scheduling a brief phone conversation to again introduce myself, further detail the study, respond to questions and concerns, and develop an arrangement for consent forms and letters of cooperation to be signed by participants and their school administrators as needed. Given a one-week period to further consider participation, sign the consent form, provide the letter of cooperation to school administrators, and return forms to me either through email using electronic signatures or through the traditional mail system, I worked with participants to develop a schedule for the interview and collection of documents for analysis. As needed, through email or phone communication, I reached out and also introduced myself to participants' school administrators to outline the study and related activities, ethical protections, and necessity of the consent form and letter of cooperation. Moving deeper into the various phases of this research study, ongoing communication with participants occurred via email unless participants preferred telephone conversations.

Agreements protecting participants from harm were outlined by the Walden Institutional Review Board, codified within the IRB application, and upheld through the researcher's ethical conduct across the research study (Creswell, 2012, 2013; Lodico,

Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2006). Protection from harm encompassed physical and psychological harm done to participants (Lodico et al., 2006). As the inquiry into HE was a qualitative study and not requiring an experimental or treatment group, protection from harm was easily established. Potential risks were outlined in the IRB application and posed no risk or minimal risk to participants. My commitment to upholding beneficence, justice, and respect for participants was also evidenced by the National Institute of Health certificate indicating completion of the course, Protecting Human Research Participants.

In addition to informed consent, protocols to maintain confidentiality were used to prevent improper disclosure. Safeguarding privacy rights protected individual participant's identities and the identity of partnering institutions (Christians, 2011). I used pseudonyms throughout data collection, data analysis, dissemination of the findings, and plan to maintain this beyond the close of this inquiry. I am the only individual able to access data and final reports which are stored in password protected computer files, locked filing cabinets, and free of identifying information. Less detail was rendered in the writing of case reports if it appeared that too much detail compromised confidentiality, anonymity, or privacy (Creswell, 2013).

As described, a variety of safeguards, including IRB approval, were in place to protect participants so they experienced beneficence, respect, and justice as related to ethical conduct within the context of this HE inquiry (Creswell, 2012). For this study, IRB approval existed as a cooperative agreement between Walden University (# 03-20-

14-0141906) and Valparaiso University, with Walden University as lead in the IRB approval process.

Data Collection Procedures

Drawing from Stake (1995; 2006), exploring the experiences of humane educators necessitated the development of an instrumental multicase study, or collective case study research design. With a potential sample size of eight to 12 teachers of HE, this inquiry was instrumental with each case of the collective an example of the particularity, uniqueness, and complexity ascribing what it means to be a practitioner of HE teaching in U.S. primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. Each case was bounded as a whole, focusing on the humane educator. As part of each bounded case, the humane educator's perspectives, teaching activities, and relationships were explored within the nested system of classroom and school community. Interviewing and document review was used as methods of data collection to illuminate ideology, perspectives, and activities of eight to 12 humane educators, each working within the context of their own bounded system. Interviews and documents were transcribed and analyzed to spotlight what was particular, unique, and complex within each case. In addition, what was discovered within each single case was used to illuminate what may have been particular, unique, and complex about the multicase collective in its entirety as it demonstrated multiple realities in the teaching of HE. To arrive at such an understanding, interviewing and document review were the best data collection tools available at the time to answer the guiding research question and sub questions in an exploration of what it means to be a practitioner of HE (Stake 1995, 2006).

With data collection tools in mind, data collection officially began when Walden IRB provided approval and was in receipt of participants' letters of cooperation. In the interim, I prepared a storage system used at the onset of data collection (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). The storage system was used for data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and to hold the raw data and resulting reports for five years postdissertation and graduation, when, at that point, all data will be shredded or otherwise destroyed. I purchased one two-drawer filing cabinet, which locks. Keys for the filing cabinet are stored in a fireproof safe. I purchased hanging file folders, manila folders, markers, blank computer discs, privacy envelopes, notebooks, and multicolored printer paper. I created a file for each participant in the case study using hanging files, manila folders, privacy envelopes, one computer disc, and one notebook. All signed agreements, interview data, transcripts, and document review data are organized and stored in the locked filing cabinets. Each notebook served as a research journal, one for each case; these too are stored in the locked cabinet. Transcription materials are also stored in corresponding file drawers for each case. Moving from data collection to analysis, interpretation, and reporting, computer discs were used to organize and save case documents and computer generated files. Case documents and computer generated files are stored on my password-protected office computer. Computer discs were copied twice for storage purposes. One computer disc is kept in the locked filing cabinet and a second copy is kept in a fireproof safe. Privacy envelopes were used to transport research materials, as needed. Multicolored printer paper was used during data analysis and interpretation so interview data and document review data could be color coded.

Implementing the described storage system strategies served to protect research participants' privacy, minimizing risk to participants regarding breach of confidentiality. In addition, these strategies were a means of operationalizing the ethical principles of beneficence and respect for persons.

With IRB approval, letters of cooperation received by IRB, and implementation of a storage system, participant recruitment began in collaboration with Mary Pat Champeau and Marsha Rakestraw. I provided Ms. Champeau and Ms. Rakestraw with case selection criteria which included the following participant attributes as mentioned previous in the body of this proposal. While waiting for all consent forms and letters of cooperation from research participants, I asked Ms. Champeau to identify and contact one or two practitioners of HE teaching in U.S. public schools, inviting their assistance to critically examine the interview and document review protocols. Although not a formal pilot, asking practitioners of HE teaching in U.S. primary, secondary, or college classrooms to examine the protocols and to provide feedback on the clarity and utility of each protocol allowed me an opportunity to make critical changes prior to the start of data collection. As experienced practitioners in the field, their insight was valuable in modifying protocols to increase face validity (Lodico et al., 2006).

According to Merriam (2009) and Stake (1995), the intention of case study research is to arrive at a description and interpretation of participants' multiple perspectives and therefore multiple realities. Interviewing is a primary means of collecting case study data illuminating multiplicity and complexity, and document review helps support what is discovered through interviewing, while also shedding light on that

which cannot be solicited through other means of data collection. With this in mind, to illuminate what it means to be a practitioner of HE, data collection was designed as two phases with phase one as interviewing, and phase two as document review.

Upon receipt of all consent and cooperation documents, I developed an interview schedule in collaboration with each case study participant. Semistructured phone interviews were the primary means of exploring participants' philosophy of HE, implementation of HE, concerns, professional learning experiences, and the role of continuing education (Creswell, 2013). An interview protocol was used as a general guide to collect participants' ideology, beliefs perceptions, and stories of experience. Phone interviews were scheduled according to date and time of convenience for participants. With a sample size of eight to 12 participants, each interview was 40 to 60 minutes in length, not surpassing 60 minutes to maintain respect for participants' time and energy (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2006). However, I asked that as participants continued to think about their philosophy, implementation, concerns, professional learning, and the role of continuing education beyond the scope of the 40 to 60 minutes interview, they were welcome to share additional information with me through email. An interview protocol was used as a general guide for the interview process and can be found in the appendices as Appendix C: Interview Protocol. The interview was recorded using a telephone recording system. While interviewing, I also used a notebook as research journal to capture what appeared to be general impressions and key ideas. At the close of each interview, I collaborated with research participants to plan for document review.

Following the interview, I created a transcript for data analysis (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Stake 1995). For each case, phone interview recordings, transcripts, and the research journal are kept in filing cabinet drawers, locked to ensure privacy. All computer-based documents were saved to the computer discs, one locked in the filing cabinet and the other locked in a fireproof safe. Information stored on my home office computer was organized in files and password protected.

The second phase of data collection included document review (Creswell, 2013, Merriam, 2009; Stake 1995). I asked participants to share any relevant documents that may illuminate what it means to be a practitioner of HE specific to philosophy, pedagogy and implementation, concerns, professional learning experiences, and the role of continuing education. Documents may have included mission and vision statements, newspaper clippings, reports, curriculum maps, scope and sequence charts, lesson plans, correspondence, meeting minutes, professional development goals, professional development logs, professional development certificates, professional reflections, continuing education catalogues, and state level curricular content standards. I invited participants to send me documents via email or through the postal service. If the postal service was used, I planned to reimburse participants the cost of shipping charges. Upon receipt of documents, I read through each document searching for identifying names, switching each to a pseudonym. I used a black Sharpie marker to strike the identifying information from each document. Data were stored in the locked filing cabinet drawers in addition to maintaining the emailed files in the password protected email system of my

home office computer. A document review checklist can be found in the appendices, titled Appendix D: Document Review Checklist.

In addition to outlining specific plans for data collection procedures, it is important to make note of the role of researcher. Merriam (2009) described how researchers identify the ways in which personal and professional subjectivity or bias could possibly influence both data collection and data analysis. In addressing this critical feature, it should be noted that my involvement in HE is bounded by my roles as researcher, graduate of the HE certification program, my work as a full-time educator attempting to implement HE with sixth and seventh grade students, and my newly appointed position as adjunct faculty teaching HE courses. Across these roles, I view myself primarily as a learner building a knowledge base to more fully and holistically understand what it means to be a practitioner of HE. My stance as a learner does create bias in the sense that I favor the idea of HE as an important framework for personal, institutional, community, and societal change.

Although I hold a bias favoring HE, I was capable of entering relationships with participants demonstrating care and concern, mindfulness, and a nonjudgmental attitude. I was able to create an open space for participants to reconstruct and reflect upon their lived experiences as practitioners of HE without privileging my own and thereby clouding the experiences of others (Creswell, 2013; Merriam 2009). Also noteworthy, my role as researcher was not a conflict of interest for research participants according to criteria outlined in the IRB application. I was not in any position of authority over

participants volunteering to participate in this research inquiry as participants were alumni of programs and not currently enrolled in the graduate level course I teach.

In summation, a two-phase data collection process was implemented to capture what it means to be a practitioner of HE using resulting data from interviews and document review. Planning data collection as two phases helped me to stay highly organized once the study began upon IRB approval. Protecting beneficence, respect, and justice on behalf of research participants was a primary concern across the data collection process and strategies for doing so, including my role as researcher, have been detailed.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Procedures

Data analysis and interpretation was a critical step in understanding what it means to be a practitioner of HE teaching in U.S. primary, secondary, and postsecondary public school classrooms. Case by case, as raw data was amassed from interviewing and document review, transcripts were created and raw data were prepared for analysis and interpretation. In the interest of time management, data analysis and interpretation occurred in tandem with data collection and informed next steps in data collection. In this way, and taken together, data collection, analysis, and interpretation was an iterative and recursive process within the context of this inquiry (Creswell, 2013; Merriam 2009).

To prepare raw data for analysis and interpretation, transcripts were created shortly after the interview conversations that were captured through electronic audio-recording. Identifying information was removed from all transcripts, replaced with pseudonyms. Case data were organized chronologically and all information labeled with case number, date, location, and circumstances of data collection whether it was

interview data or document review data. For each case, files were created to hold interview data and document review data. All documents were saved to computer discs for each case. Content was copied to two computer discs per case, with one saved in the case file, and the second saved in a fire proof safe. Each computer disc was updated across data analysis, interpretation, and report writing to ensure safety and protection of case study content.

Once data were prepared for analysis and interpretation, within-case analysis was used to answer the research questions, arriving at an understanding of what it means to be a practitioner of HE teaching in U.S. public schools. Drawing from Stake (1995) and Saldana (2013), strategies for effective within-case analysis and interpretation included the use of first and second cycle coding procedures, eclectic code development, and pattern finding processes. As a first cycle coding procedure, provisional coding and process coding strategies were used to address the research questions aiming for an understanding of what it means to be a practitioner of HE teaching in diverse primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. For this inquiry, a set of predetermined, provisional coding categories were drawn directly from the wording of the research questions adding on an –ing gerund to ascertain action, interaction, processes, and strategies used by participants related to each of the research questions. Provisional codes as process phrases included (a) conceptualizing philosophy of HE; (b) teaching HE; (c) engaging in professional learning and/or professional development; (d) visioning continuing education, and (e) sharing concerns. In addition to using provisional coding categories, as unexpected findings still related to the research questions emerged in the

data, additional process coding categories were developed. Two emergent process coding categories proved useful to further illuminate what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools. These coding categories as process phrases were titled *arriving at HE* and *learning HE*. Both process phrases were transformed as part of within-case and cross-case analysis titled *Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Arriving at HE* and *Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Experiencing initial learning of HE* to maintain coherence when reporting findings providing a direct link to the guiding research question.

Using the first cycle coding procedure, each participant's interview data and document review data were read several times to organize the data and to highlight patterns and correspondence in the data. Additional file folders were created, one folder per coding category. Sections of relevant data were assigned codes, cut from the whole, and collated into respective folders as a repository for all data bits corresponding to arriving at HE, learning HE, conceptualizing philosophy of HE, teaching HE, engaging in professional learning and/or professional development, visioning continuing education, and sharing concerns. First cycle coding procedures resulted in an organized system for understanding within-case descriptive data directly aligned to each research question.

Second cycle coding procedures were used as a means of cross-case analysis. Each case was opened, and now side by side with all other cases, coding categories were recoded, resorted, and recategorized as a means of condensing and synthesizing the data to illuminate the multiple perspectives and experiences of research participants as a collective. With this synthesis complete, resulting categories of data were analyzed to

develop triangulated themes in service of understanding and describing what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary settings for a particular group of nine educators. Research-derived descriptions of practitioner experiences, perceptions, and beliefs were analyzed and interpreted to determine how findings might influence policy, educational programming, and resource allocation to improve adult learning within the field of HE.

Participant Demographics

Maximum variation sampling and purposeful sampling procedures were used as a means of capturing participant diversity, varied experiences, and multiple perspectives to best illuminate facets of what it means to be a practitioner of HE. Resulting from this process, a total of nine participants volunteered to take part in this study, eight female practitioners and one male practitioner. Demographic features included variation across HE alumni status, years of teaching experience, years of HE experience, grade levels taught, subject-specific disciplines taught, and local community and school contexts. Details for each participant are situated within the context of each within-case profile.

Reporting Research Findings

Resulting from the methodological decision to implement a multicase research design, and the need for arriving at a research-derived description of what it means to be a practitioner of HE teaching in U.S. schools, findings are first presented in part one as within-case descriptive analysis for each case, followed by a summary statement describing implications for stakeholders. To complete data analysis and reporting procedures, part two provides a cross-case analysis illuminating triangulated themes,

followed by a summary statement describing implications for policy, programming, and resource allocation as a means of addressing the research findings.

Part I: The Within-Case Descriptive Analysis

Drawing from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), within-case descriptive analysis as a process included the use of coding procedures, displaying results, and drawing conclusions to explore, understand, and describe what it means to be a practitioner of HE teaching in U.S. schools. Aligned with the research questions, coding processes were applied, and throughout analysis and interpretation, the coding scheme itself was used as a conceptual framework to better understand and arrive at a description of “the what” for each construct. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship of the constructs used to explore, understand, and describe what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE. Future research hold promise for exploring the “how” and “why” relationships among the constructs, adding additional research-derived contributions to the scholarly literature, also providing breadth and depth to HE as a field of study and professional practice.

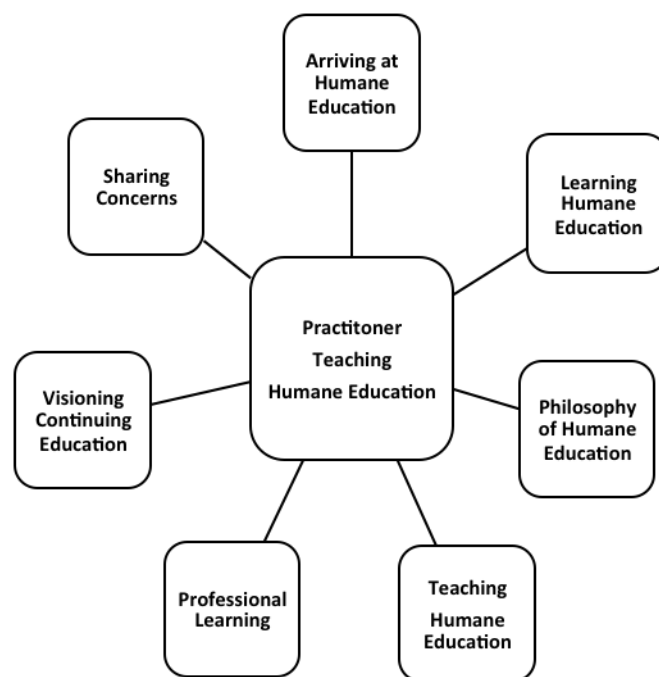


Figure 1. Coding scheme as conceptual framework for within-case descriptive analysis.

Within-case descriptive analysis was reported for each participant in the study.

Case 1: Ashley. Ashley (Participant 1) volunteered to participate in the study sharing her experience, perceptions, and beliefs as alumni of an online HE professional development course. Located in the Midwest, Ashley’s narrative detailing what it means to be a practitioner of HE teaching in U.S. schools is contextualized within her 25 years of teaching experience in postsecondary education, four years of which included a HE focus. Ashley’s work teaching Spanish takes place in an urban setting, specifically a private university.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Arriving at humane education. Ashley described arriving at HE by way of animal-focused email listservs,

eventually receiving emails from the institute. After receiving several emails, Ashley decided to enroll in an online professional learning experience during the summer of 2010. Ashley described her initial learning of HE as “a really transformative experience” and perceived it to have “opened a lot of doors... in terms of thematics to be explored and types of assignments to be developed.” In addition, “it provided a framework... for thinking about learning outcomes and differentiation of assignments.” Ashley elaborated further, describing her experience as “enlightening” and “very exciting.” Arriving at HE by way of an email connection, subsequently enrolling in an online summer course, and experiencing the learning as transformative inspired Ashley to engage in deeper study of HE. In result, Ashley enrolled in the graduate level HE certificate program.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Experiencing initial learning of humane education. Continuing her initial learning, Ashley enrolled in the graduate-level certificate program to more deeply explore HE as a field of study and professional practice. Ashley described her experience as “humbling” and “eye-opening” referring to what it means to be a student again, and what it means to embrace her new understanding of HE as interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. Ashley remarked how HE “seemed like limitless possibilities” and “very exciting.” Also illuminating, Ashley stated, “I was challenged and stretched far outside of my comfort zone in terms of content as well as assignments and I’m even more convinced that this is the revolution we need.”

RQ 1: How do practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of humane education? Ashley conceptualized her philosophy of HE as something she is still working on developing, and therefore a philosophy still in process. Ashley did

communicate her philosophy of teaching Spanish, conveying how this philosophy relates to her philosophy of HE, and therein described the importance she ascribed to “connecting students with lived realities of Spanish speaking people.” Ashley elaborated further, weaving in HE.

It’s about connecting with another culture and finding those points of connection and cultural comparisons. It’s figuring out how I use humane education to connect my students with realities of Spanish speaking countries, whether it’s dealing with immigration issues, economics, political issues, human rights issues, and even animal protection.

RQ 2: How do practitioners implement humane education? Within the context of teaching Spanish as foreign language and literature, Ashley intentionally invoked HE terminology to provide a specific context for students to achieve Spanish language proficiency while learning environmental education, human rights, and animal advocacy through HE-focused courses, HE woven into assignments, or HE elements woven into specific class sessions. Ashley developed thematic units to engage real-world learning and perspectives, systems thinking, and critical perspectives with much attention to the variety of materials and tasks appropriated to best nurture student motivation. Examples of materials included essays, poems, novels, songs, artwork, and films.

Course development was informed by Ashley’s continued learning, discipline specific research, research on teaching and learning, and the backgrounds, learning style preferences, and needs of students as learners. Also valued was building rapport in the classroom and developing a community of learners through validation of learners’ needs,

sensitivity in error correction, sense of humor, patience, appreciating students' need for additional processing time, and checking for comprehension and comfort with learning materials. Application of language skills and developing proficiency through critical reading, writing, and viewing surfaced in the data as important. Ashley designed and facilitated interactive learning experiences which included critical visual and textual analysis, projects and presentations, and essay writing. Applying a HE lens, Ashley integrated learning experiences for students to explore representations of Latin American history, culture, and HE issues. Also part of her courses, students engaged in journaling about nature and researched the mission and program activities of nonprofit organizations doing work in Latin America. A list highlighting curricular approaches and learning activities can be found in the appendices, titled Appendix E: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, Participant 1.

RQ 3: What are the concerns of practitioners implementing humane education?

Ashley described her main concern as having to do with other people's perceptions, resistance, and fear related to assumptions held regarding what HE is and is not. Ashley's concerns are contextualized within state, community, and classroom-level values and norms perhaps in opposition to what HE offers.

This is not a friendly state... so it's a little bit of a tough sell I think to some of my students to be talking about some of these issues, and it's usually not going to be my primary focus in class, but I always do worry a little bit about how things are going to be perceived.

Ashley experienced some support in trying to develop colloquia and workshops on campus, yet also experienced reluctance through offices not responding to requests, silence around HE as a possible workshop topic, and reactions when colleagues have asked, “so, am I an inhumane educator?” Ashley remarked that negative perceptions and negative reactions may be coming from an automatic assumption that HE only refers to humane societies and animal welfare groups.

Also important, Ashley commented how “there seems to be hostility... resistance... fear” to humane education within state public schools, although this may be improving as a local school was noted as embracing the elements of HE. Ashley described resistance as possibly connected to the influence of “big agriculture and the sporting goods stores” and the influence within families wherein parents hunt and fish. Ashley’s experience draws attention to the need to better understand the influences at work embracing or rejecting HE, how values shape engagement with HE, and the need to make visible how HE is a comprehensive field of study and professional practice addressing environmental stewardship, animal protection, human rights, and cultural issues.

RQ 4: What is the role of professional learning for practitioners of humane education? Ashley described her professional learning as including her own graduate level coursework in the certificate program, attending conferences for teaching and learning related to Language and Literature, and participating in panels associated with HE themes. Important, Ashley stated, “I think you can’t do excellent course development if you are not a continuous learner yourself” and shared her belief that the “scholarship of

teaching and learning should always inform what we are doing in the classroom.” Ashley commented that “excellent teachers are just always trying to learn and incorporating what they learn into what they do in the classroom.”

As critique, Ashley described her wish for “unlimited time to explore the basic topics of humane education” situated within the countries she includes in her teaching and learning curriculum. Ashley stated, “I think one of the big challenges is the amount of content we teach, the faster pace, and trying to find out how also to incorporate humane education.” She elaborated further, stating, “There is much additional research we will need to do in our fields to be able to do this effectively.”

RQ 5: What is the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of humane education? Ashley described her role within the context of continuing education as “introducing more humane education sessions into conferences that are not necessarily humane education conferences” and “to get the word out” that HE is a field of study and professional practice, how HE can be transformative in teaching and learning, and the need for visibility as evidenced in the following vignette.

There’s a need for people to know what this is and how it can really transform your teaching and your students’ experience. For myself, it opened up possibilities for engaging topics I hadn’t taught before, and more creative kinds of assignments. My students handled assignments well, and I was able to provide them with more of a variety of ways to improve their language skills. They are interested in exploring contemporary issues in Spanish-speaking countries, and

looking at advocacy and activism and also focusing on media analysis gave us a way to do that.

Case 2: David. David (Participant 2) volunteered to participate sharing his experience, perceptions, and beliefs as an alumni of the HE master's degree program. Also located in the Midwest, David holds three years of teaching experience; all three serving as a humane educator working within elementary and middle school classrooms. David's HE work was contextualized by his role as a visiting educator teaching within urban public schools and urban public charter schools.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Arriving at humane education. David described his arrival at HE as being recommended for an employment position as a humane educator, the work finding him. Important, David shared how once he was in the field and working as a humane educator, he desired more formal education to explore HE as field of study and professional practice.

After I started working... I decided that I needed a better understanding of the philosophy and theory behind humane education so I started the graduate school program and that's where I learned the whole theory and practice of it.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Experiencing initial learning of humane education. David described learning HE as practical because he was already in the field working as a humane educator. Notable, David communicated that he liked being able to put into practice what he was learning and enjoyed being able to learn about topics that he already considered his passions and interests.

RQ 1: How do practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of humane education? David conceptualized his philosophy of HE as having shifted. At the start of his field-based experience, David's teaching was focused more on the HE problem or issue, less on finding solutions, and he realized that focusing in this way "sometimes left the kids feeling depressed." Realizing a shift was appropriate, David is now focused on supporting students to learn "skills and knowledge they need to be problem solvers especially for issues connecting people, animals and the environment." David described how "identifying problems isn't enough. You have to give those solutions and really focus on the positive and empowering kids so that they can make a difference."

RQ 2: How do practitioners implement humane education? David approached the teaching of HE using a visiting educator model as the context for and application of pedagogy. HE units were designed to include 10 lessons, often with a service learning component. Unit and lesson content was focused on human rights, animal protection, and environmental ethics to nurture compassion and respect, foster advocacy through real world learning, and engage in perspective taking to understand how personal choices and actions affect people, animals, and the environment locally and globally. A problem-solution-activism framework was used within the context of the unit which is typically oriented for project development focused on teaching content knowledge and skills so students engage as problem solvers regarding issues connecting people, animals, and the environment. Student empowerment, creativity, and experiential learning were positioned as primary outcomes through the teaching of HE-focused and interdisciplinary units of study.

David described implementing HE as “exciting” and identified how “it’s been really interesting seeing kids... want to learn about these things and when we give them the opportunity to do it, when they go the extra mile, it’s been some of what I’ve really liked.” David further described how he has been “blown away and surprised by how far they go and how interested and excited they get about projects and learning about issues and doing things to help.” Interview and document review data illuminated skill development strategies and learning activities within the context of unit and lesson plan design. A list detailing skill development and learning activities can be found in the appendices, titled Appendix F: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, Participant 2.

RQ 3: What are the concerns of practitioners implementing humane education?

David shared three concerns related to implementing HE. First, David described his concern that people may not recognize the boundaries of HE.

I feel like sometimes people try to make humane education to be more. They try to make it be everything. They try to make it social-emotional learning, they try to make it character education, and they try to make it all these different things... I think sometimes that complicates it when it tries to be too many things.

For David, a second concern included the lack of skills and strategies available for use by volunteers who become humane educators. David described how it takes time to develop as a proficient educator and communicated the need for HE groups to develop learning experiences to help volunteers, volunteer-practitioners, and practitioners better

understand how to “manage a classroom... make an engaging lesson... how to teach and be engaging yourself.”

As a third concern, David communicated the need for reflection, assessment, and feedback to grow as a practitioner. David described his own reflection process as he explored his ability as an educator, and then reflected upon program evaluation. David asked, “Am I getting better at education? How can I be a better educator myself? How effective is our program?” David’s questions and reflection process prompted further discussion about the role of feedback and assessment in his experience as a practitioner of HE. David described the use of surveys, assessing student projects, using questioning strategies to measure understanding, each of these being formative or summative assessment strategies. David elaborated further, describing the benefit of feedback as it relates to his work as a practitioner.

Feedback from students has allowed me to understand the common misconceptions that students have about the topics that I teach... Feedback from the classroom teachers has given me insight into how our program benefits students... Using this feedback, I’m better at explaining our program and its benefits to other teachers who might be skeptical about the program.

RQ 4: What is the role of professional learning for practitioners of humane education? David described the role of professional learning in his life as a practitioner as attending conferences and workshops, presenting at conferences, reading about education-related topics, and learning by doing, and researching online. As part of David’s narrative, he offered critique describing a gap in what the graduate program

offered related to learning specific teaching strategies such as “classroom management... being engaging... how to teach critical thinking... the skills for education.” David contextualized his critique by communicating how the graduate program is not specifically a degree in teaching, still drawing attention to these underlying skills as a possible recommendation for further developing the program.

RQ 5: What is the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of humane education? David described his professional learning experiences as synonymous with continuing education and shared how he wasn’t planning to enroll in a program for advanced degree attainment while paying back student loans resulting from his master’s degree experience. David described “focusing on less expensive resources” and the value of webinars as a “practical way of doing continuing education.”

When asked to describe his vision for next steps in the field of HE, David shared the importance of HE “becoming a standard way of doing education.” In addition, David drew attention to the need for “more resources for teachers... more ideas spread about different ways of teaching humane education” and “more awareness about humane education... what humane education is... show how humane education is a great way of getting kids excited and get that buy-in for what they’re learning.”

Case 3: Maria. Maria (Participant 3) came to the research inquiry as alumni of a HE summer teacher institute. Living and working in the South, Maria’s experience, perceptions, and beliefs are contextualized by eleven years of teaching experience, five months of which included a HE focus. In addition, Maria’s narrative is nested within the

ongoing story of the suburban private school where she teaches World Geography to fifth grade students.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Arriving at humane education. Maria contextualized her arrival experience within her teaching World Geography and “already looking at environmental sustainability and human rights... as we studied different parts of the world, like how people were treated and different industries in those areas.” Maria stated, “I never even heard of humane education until this past March. I didn’t know that I was sort of teaching humane education.” Maria described wanting to further develop her curriculum, as she does each year, and was connected to the institute through her principal. Resulting from this connection, Maria attended a summer institute for teachers and learned how to include animal protection as part of her World Geography curriculum.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Experiencing initial learning of humane education. Maria described “liking” HE and feeling “drawn to it... like it’s a kind of calling.” Maria elaborated further, describing HE as what she should be doing “because it’s so important, one of the most important things students can be learning.” For herself, Maria described learning HE as an experience in which she is confronted with analyzing her own life and decisions. Also important, Maria stated, “It reiterated the fact that I must practice what I teach and preach. My awareness in most of my decisions has become deeper and broader.”

RQ 1: How do practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of humane education? Maria shared her conceptualization of her philosophy of HE as matching the

institute's mission, vision, and definition. Maria stated, "I think it's seeing the connection between environmental preservation, animal protection, human rights, and looking at all of our choices and how they impact all of these things."

RQ 1: How do practitioners implement humane education? Maria approached the teaching of World Geography applying the lens of HE and engaged students in the work of real-world problem solving. Students studied different parts of the world and principles of environmental sustainability, human rights, and animal protection. Design thinking surfaced as an integral approach to curriculum development and implementation wherein students researched issues, acquired a felt sense of the problem or issue through stakeholder perspectives and experiences, experimented with possible solutions, and aimed to produce prototype solution.

Although using Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011), Maria also privileged a student-directed and emergent experience and therefore refrained from planning all details of curricular design and implementation. In addition, engaging multiple perspectives, grade wide collaboration, and the development of solutionary teams was valued. Applying Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011) as a unit and lesson planning framework, interview and document review data illuminated skills and corresponding learning activities aimed at achieving teaching and learning goals. A list highlighting skill development and learning activities can be found in the appendices, titled Appendix G: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, Participant 3.

RQ 3: What are the concerns of practitioners implementing humane education?

When asked to share her concerns related to teaching HE, Maria described her experience of not knowing exactly what she is doing and feeling like she was “kind of winging it.” Elaborating further, Maria described how as she goes deeper into the work of HE how she will need to frontload her intentions to families so they are able to support their children when working through difficult content and cognitive dissonance between what they are learning and family values. Also important, Maria questioned how HE will become more widespread. She stated, “Majority of the people in this country haven’t heard of it” and yet “humane education is being implemented all over the place, all the time... it’s not called humane education.”

RQ 4: What is the role of professional learning for practitioners of humane education? In describing the role of professional learning in her life as a practitioner, Maria shared the importance of learning design thinking, or “human-centered problem solving.” Maria described the design thinking process and then questioned, “Why does it have to be human-centered?” Maria shared how she intended to change the focus to HE. Also important, Maria described the advantages of accessing Twitter and the internet as a form of professional learning; reading blogs, staying connected allows her to “keep growing, probably at a much faster pace” than not accessing technology. Maria communicated how she also wanted to make use of resources available to her and described creating a Twitter chats for educators to focus on implementation of HE and concerns.

RQ 5: What is the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of humane education? Maria communicated having a young family, and already having earned a master’s degree, and therefore not pursuing an advanced degree at this time. Maria did share that working on an advanced degree in HE or leadership may be an option in the future, and for now, continuing education for her is informal. In sharing strategies for how the role of continuing education may further develop and sustain HE as a field of study and professional practice, Maria drew attention to the need for HE programming “at local universities, especially around big cities” and this being a means of providing visibility and access. Also important, Maria advocated for in-person learning, perhaps in a group or small group setting. Maria also shared her desire for more people to be connected and to learn how HE is being implemented as a field of study and professional practice.

Case 4: Heather. Heather (Participant 4), also alumni of a HE summer teacher institute, decided to participate in the study sharing five years of teaching experience, all of which included a HE focus. Of the Midwest, Heather’s experience, perceptions, and beliefs are contextualized by her work teaching within middle and high school classrooms across both urban and rural settings. At the time of this inquiry, Heather was teaching Humanities at the high school level within the context of a private charter school.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Arriving at humane education. Heather described her arrival at HE as connecting with the institute and realizing that she had been doing the work of HE for a long time without realizing it was

called such. Heather described her experience bringing HE topics into her work having created an after school club called *Be the Change*. The inspiration for the club and integration of HE topics was drawn from her previous internship experience focused on global perspectives in the classroom and the work of the United Nations. Unfulfilled in her teaching position, Heather resigned yet continued to facilitate the after school club for a few years. She ascribes this work as the beginning of her application of HE in the classroom. Heather described her moving away from education for a while, also describing her recent return.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Experiencing initial learning of humane education. Heather described learning HE as useful, placing special emphasis on the importance of a “common vocabulary around it” which helped her to connect her professional work at school as “part of a larger movement.” In addition, Heather described her learning as “inspiring” and at the same time “overwhelming” when discussing “real issues in the classroom and how to deliver them.”

RQ 1: How do practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of humane education? Heather conceptualized her philosophy of HE as necessity. She described “that it just needs to be taught... there isn’t really any other option” and “that if it’s not globally relevant, then it shouldn’t be taught.” Elaborating, Heather described that “if students don’t find any application to their life or to the world, then there’s no point in teaching it.” In addition, Heather also described how her philosophy has shifted. She described how at first she was “teaching the traditional curriculum and then adding humane education topics, kind of peppering them in” and now her “focus is to teach

humane education topics and then through that... teach math... science... grammar.”

Heather also illustrated that “there has to be a bigger purpose” or reason for students to learn those skills and how to apply them.

RQ 2: How do practitioners implement humane education? Heather worked within a school mission and vision already positioning global citizenship and real-world learning as the defining context for learning. Through real world application, experiential learning, exploring complex issues and content aligned to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, and positioning students to question and investigate, a holistic approach to HE was developed to nurture mind, body, and spirit. Heather described her experiential approach as “students have to feel what we are trying to teach them or the ideas we are trying to get across” and “everything we do, we try to make the kids really, really experience it because it’s hard to understand something until you kind of simulate it.” HE topics were explored using a problem-solution framework. Through each HE topic, students engaged the subject specific disciplines of math, science, grammar, and others. Interview and document review data illuminated skills and learning activities. A list is provided in the appendices, titled Appendix H: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, Participant 4.

RQ 3: What are the concerns of practitioners implementing humane education? Heather contextualized her concerns related to the implementation of HE as a “challenge in how to deliver the information and how to talk about these issues without making the kids totally hopeless and depressed.” Heather provided additional detail, illustrating more of this concern.

The hardest thing is trying to make it uplifting somehow; presenting the information, but also presenting solutions, and teaching students how to come up with their own solutions, and how to write their own project proposals, how to take action.

After contextualizing the importance of introducing content as complex and multifaceted, also describing how students are open to this work, Heather described concern regarding parent perceptions.

I think a lot of parents are resistant. They want their kids to go to school and just learn algebra, and biology, and all the traditional subjects so I think we have to be a little bit careful how we present the information because people can be very resistant and very turned-off by some of the topics we present.

In addition, Heather described how families are aware of the curriculum ahead of time, understanding the scope and sequence during the application process for student enrollment into the school. Heather shared the importance of transparency and open dialogue as related to parent concerns.

We also are very, very open about dialoguing and at any time a parent wants to have a meeting, we're open to having that conversation with them. I think the best thing is not being subversive about it; just being very open and clear about what we are doing and why we are doing it; and always making sure that the purpose of what we are doing is clear and transparent.

RQ 4: What is the role of professional learning for practitioners of humane education? Heather described the role of professional learning in her life as “staying

informed on issues and staying current on current events.” In addition, Heather identified engaging with the HE network as a means of professional learning, as well as taking into consideration the role and benefit of school-based professional development.

We do tons of professional development. We do an hour every week, and we have in-service days, and all the teachers were back for a month before the students came back. A lot of that is not necessarily learning about humane education topics, but it’s learning about our model of education and how we can make it relevant for students. I feel like the ongoing professional development is really useful in just making sure that we are staying current on topics and teaching courses that are relevant to students’ lives.

RQ 5: What is the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of humane education? Heather identified continuing education as synonymous with being a continuous learner and practitioners organizing their own professional development. In addition, Heather described how her school developed an “entire high school curriculum... an entire school that practices the beliefs that we teach in the school” which they would like to share with other schools. Heather also drew attention to the need for rethinking and revisioning school structures to manifest change.

I think it has to be a holistic approach to humane education... I feel the entire structure of high school needs to change because if the content doesn’t reflect the high school structure, then it’s kind of hypocritical I think, or contradictory. We need to build new schools. We have to figure out how to change the system itself

because just having a couple of classes or a couple of lesson plans doesn't really get the point across. It doesn't really make any lasting change.

Case 5: Rachel. Rachel (Participant 5) volunteered to participate in the study, identifying herself as a self-educated practitioner of HE. Rachel's experience, perceptions, and beliefs are contextualized as encompassing 12 years of total teaching experience, six years of which included a HE focus. Living and working in the Midwest, Rachel's urban experience spanned six years teaching at the middle school level which included one year teaching a stand-alone HE course, three years integrating HE into seventh grade English/Language Arts, and two years integrating HE into 6th grade reading classes. Recent work included a contracted position as a 6th grade special educator. Also noteworthy, Rachel designed and facilitated after school animal advocacy clubs and humane teen clubs.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Arriving at humane education. Rachel described her arrival at HE as a shift from being an experienced "software trainer creating technical materials, training manuals, and teaching an engineering package" to feeling as if her work wasn't fulfilling, nor aligned with her desire to participate in the world as a change-maker.

I was making good money but I just didn't feel like I was doing what I was supposed to be doing because I just feel there were a lot of things going on in the world... and I feel like legislatively we can fix it, but I believe that the biggest impact is from consumers and everyday people making better choices, and also just the power of individuals to work together, to unite, and for individuals to use

their own voice to make a change. That was all stirring inside me and I did not feel I was accomplishing that through the engineering role that I was in, so I decided to go back to school.

Rachel elaborated further, describing going back to school to earn a master's degree in education. She identified herself as entering the field of education with a “nontraditional background and a nontraditional mindset” and used the metaphor of battle to describe aspects of her experience in education. She stated, “It has been a battle with the framework of education because it is very traditional, it is very archaic, and it is very difficult to change it.”

Rachel communicated her experience of bringing HE into her classroom work, not realizing it was called HE at the time, by integrating Einstein's circle of compassion into her teaching. She identified her curriculum as a “compassion curriculum” and worked with students to support them in understanding compassion for self and compassion for “other people, animals, and the environment.” In 2008, Rachel came across the institute and began learning about HE through Google searches, community organizations, and having developed and implemented a stand-alone HE-focused curriculum and class titled, Empowering Urban Youth. Rachel described her work as bringing “humane education into every public school classroom I've been a part of and I've done that through being a special education teacher... a reading teacher... a Language Arts teacher.”

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Experiencing initial learning of humane education. Rachel described learning HE as a self-directed experience through reading, activism, attending conferences, use of HE-focused resources, writing and implementing curriculum, research, and her own lifestyle choices. Rachel considered taking HE graduate courses but needed to prioritize paying off student loan debt accrued during her master's degree to become a certified teacher. Drawing attention to the context of teaching as a learning experience, Rachel described her frustration with public education and shared how she is evaluating whether or not to continue her career in the field of education.

RQ 1: How do practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of humane education? Rachel conceptualized her philosophy of HE as a kind of education that “should be in every single classroom, in every single school, in every part of the world.” Rachel described how HE inspires student empowerment, love of learning, empathy, academic achievement, students experiencing their own sense of connection to the world around them, lifelong learning, and less violence in schools and society. Ascribing HE as an antidote to violence, Rachel described her perspective on root cause.

All over, we have kids acting out violently in our schools. We see it with all the school shootings and the increasing amounts of violence...the root of the problem is that kids are internalizing violence, they feel isolated, and they don't know what to do about it. I feel like humane education can fix all of that.

Rachel also described that in the midst of school and community violence, and increased access to violence through technology, what is most prominent in education is the agenda

to raise student test scores in lieu of working for change and to alleviate violence. Rachel stated, “It will take an entire paradigm shift from where we are right now because right now all that public education cares about is test scores, and that is it.” Rachel was then asked, how might HE address the issues you’re describing? In response, Rachel drew attention to HE focused outcomes.

By helping to expand kids’ sense of community, develops empathy, and shows students how they can make a positive difference in the world, show them how to feel “powerful” in a positive way instead of via current violence, make them feel valuable and help them connect with their purpose in life.

Understanding Rachel’s philosophy of HE further, how she described the importance of being in relationship with students demonstrated her underlying belief of what makes HE successful. Rachel contextualized her explanation within her work teaching inner city students and the challenge of building rapport with students who may not otherwise trust easily.

In my mind the impact I had made with humane education wasn’t necessarily the lessons themselves, but it was me as a person... When I was working in the public schools, I felt like I was making a difference because I had that relationship with the kids. And so, whenever I was teaching my compassion curriculum, or my Empowering Urban Youth class, I feel like the kids were responding because they trusted me, and they trusted what I was telling them, and they knew that I believed in them and that they could do really amazing things and that’s why they did do awesome things because we had that relationship. They were willing to go

out on a limb. They were willing to step out of their comfort zones and try something new because they knew I wasn't going to judge them and that I had their back, and that I was there for them.

RQ 2: How do practitioners implement humane education? Rachel approached HE as building student awareness of the impact each individual has on the world. HE was embraced as linking to all content areas as an awareness-action approach to learning: awareness plus action equals change. Rachel put special emphasis on compassion and adjusting personal decisions and actions to live a more humane life. HE-focused units of study were developed with differentiated instruction, multisensory instruction, and Einstein's circle of compassion in mind; compassion toward self and self-understanding to be able to then care about others, animals, and the environment.

When needing to teach subject specific disciplines such as Language Arts and Reading, Rachel accessed and designed HE-related materials about self, other people, animals, and Earth while also focused on the teaching of national and state standards. Critical to the design and implementation of HE initiatives was relationship building and the establishment of trust. Relationship-building and trust- building endeavors led to student engagement in HE and created a safe space and context for students to experience stepping out of their comfort zones to learn. Also important, Rachel approached the teaching of HE through after school clubs. She created an after school course focused on animal protection and welfare with a service learning component. Rachel further elaborated, describing the powerful effects of service learning.

There is something very powerful that I've personally witnessed when my students have left the classroom to engage in projects where they can put what they've learned into action. For example, after learning about homeless animals, my students and I started volunteering every Saturday morning at an animal shelter. These visits helped both my students and the animals. Walls came down, broken hearts started to heal, confidence was gained, and trust was reborn. Those visits did more than anything I could have done solely in the classroom. Other examples of this same thing are my summer camp and when my children wrote and illustrated children's books about HE topics and then delivered and donated their books to kindergarten and first grade classrooms. They were featured in the local paper and on the local news, and were proud to be part of something positive. They also received a letter from the mayor.

Further illuminating Rachel's experience in implementing HE, examples of skill development and learning activities can be found as a list in the appendices titled Appendix I: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, Participant 5.

RQ 3: What are the concerns of practitioners implementing humane education?

Rachel contextualized her concerns as burnout related to problems within the current system of public schooling in inner cities. In particular, Rachel described her concern with the way schools are "heavily regimented with routines and procedures" and the over-reliance on scripted programs, standardization, and "state testing rehearsals, practices, and pep rallies." In addition, Rachel described her concern with less creativity

in the curriculum; less time and room for it. Elaborating further, Rachel summarized her perspective and experience.

It's just becoming suffocating, and it's becoming increasingly difficult to incorporate any real world, global issues into the classroom... I still do it, but it's a constant fight and I'm seen as the radical person and the one not wanting to always follow the rules type of person because I'm questioning what's going on.

RQ 4: What is the role of professional learning for practitioners of humane education? Rachel drew attention to the need for career development to be available as a form of field-based support for practitioners of HE. She also drew attention to the importance of more available support from school districts and HE organizations. Rachel shared her concern regarding the possibility of additional HE-focused training in a way that continued to illuminate her frustration with public education.

Part of me wants to say that teachers need to be trained on how to teach humane education, but then you are just going to have a bunch of people like me who know how to teach humane education, but can't do it, and then get really frustrated because of the system.

As a way of working against this, Rachel suggested that humane educators come together as a network or group "to share information on a regular basis." In addition, Rachel also suggested coaching and mentoring as professional support made available to all HE practitioners. She stated, "Each one should have a coach or mentor or someone checking in with them to offer lesson help, current research, marketing materials, data to gain acceptance and buy-in from school leaders, career suggestions, networking assistance,

etc.” Rachel also suggested opening charter schools to serve as exemplars in public education, demonstrating working examples of HE.

RQ 5: What is the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of humane education? Rachel described the need for a creative, progressive, and financially sustainable system of doctoral education. She shared how she only recently discovered one or two possible higher education pathways, yet previous to that, she had not come across “a PhD program that is creative enough, open-minded enough, or progressive enough” to invest her time or my money into it as a learning experience.

Case 6: Pam. Pam (Participant 6), alumni of the HE master’s degree program, decided to participate, sharing five years of total teaching experience, two years of which included a HE focus. Living and working in the Midwest, Pam’s work encompassed elementary and middle school experience. Her experience, perceptions, and beliefs were contextualized by her role teaching sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students English Language Arts within a suburban setting. The local school context was identified as a public charter school.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Arriving at humane education. Pam arrived at HE having “stumbled upon it” as she was searching for a master’s program to acquire an advanced degree. As the school where she had been teaching was dedicated to environmental education and placed-based learning, HE “seemed like it would be a good fit.”

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Experiencing initial learning of humane education. Pam described her initial learning of HE as experiencing mostly new information and making “a lot of personal changes while going through the program.” Pam described one change in particular, sharing how she was already a vegetarian beforehand and changed to vegan as part of her experience in the program. Pam also described her learning as “interesting... engaging... and very welcoming information.” Pam elaborated further drawing attention to how HE may be a values-based education connecting to people’s core beliefs and experienced as a form of praxis respectful of teaching without indoctrination.

It was clearly teaching something and it had a point of view, but I never felt like during any of my coursework, during any of my talks with any of the teachers, that they were trying to make me make any personal changes one way or the other. It felt like they were presenting all this information and then they were giving really interesting pieces, and really interesting videos, things to read, but they were never trying to force anything down anyone’s throat. I never felt like I was being told, you need to make this change in order to be a good person. It just felt welcoming because it let you explore with the ideas and think about what that meant for you, but I never felt like I was being pushed to believe something if I didn’t already want to believe it.

RQ 1: How do practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of humane education? Pam conceptualized her philosophy of HE as “opening the eyes of students... opening their eyes to the different aspects of humane education.” Pam described her

purpose in teaching HE as impetus to “open their eyes to the world outside of the classroom” and “bringing in that community involvement and engagement.” Pam drew attention to what she believed to be most poignant in HE illuminating the importance of “understanding your place in the world and how you do affect it.” Pam described how her responsibility in teaching HE was centered on illustrating for students the “consequences of their action of the things they are doing every day.”

Also important, Pam described her role as a practitioner teaching HE within the context of a charter school “still beholden to state standards and still beholden to standardized assessment.” Pam drew attention to the way she conceptualizes her philosophy and teaching of HE as a “second layer” of what she does because she needs to “teach the standards first and find ways to work humane education in through the standards and place as opposed to doing it the other way around.” Pam stated, “I would love to have humane education as my standards and then happily infuse the state standards when I can, but right now, it’s the other way around.”

RQ 2: How do practitioners implement humane education? Pam shared stories of her teaching experience, illuminating the benefit of working within a school context focused on place-based education. Environmental ethics was already aligned to the school mission and vision.

We’re a place-based school so our focus from the get-go has always been that environmental piece so we compost as a school, we recycle, and we do a lot of environmental improvements. I have an eco-team of middle school students who are trying to get green certification for our school. So, infusing environmental

issues on a humane level has been really easy for me to do just because it fits really well with what we are already doing.

Pam elaborated further, describing how she worked with students out in the community, specifically at local lakeshores, and this provided opportunities to teach issues like water pollution, placing special emphasis on how water pollution affects the environment and wildlife.

In addition to place-based teaching, Pam is responsible for teaching a sixth, seventh, and eighth grade English Language Arts curriculum. Pam shared her approach to HE, identifying that for her “teaching humane education within my classroom is more about as I’m planning, looking for books that meet the standards I need to teach, but finding ones that also give us an opportunity to talk about some humane education ideas.” Also noteworthy, Pam described the teaching of grammar as an opportunity to clarify how language is used and can illuminate how people “think of other beings and other animals... the difference between using *it* to talk about a dog versus *he* or *she*.”

Further elaborating her approach, Pam described her use of Socratic seminars with students, each week reading an article together using a HE lens to guide the conversation on topics students may not normally get the opportunity to discuss. Pam shared her approach, understanding and valuing how some topics related to HE may be contested terrain for students and families as evidenced in the following vignettes. First, Pam shared her perspective on school and home.

It’s a fine line because it can easily turn into a conversation that maybe they’re not ready for, that they’re parents aren’t comfortable with, especially at middle

school. It's finding that balance between what they're mature enough to talk about on their own and what maybe needs to be saved for home.

Pam continued, elaborating on her decision-making process drawing attention to how she negotiates this possibly contested terrain.

I think a lot of it goes back to two central things: one, knowing your parents really well, and two, learning how to open discussions instead of directing discussions.

Pam went on to communicate the underlying rationale as related to her own comfort in negotiating some of the HE-focused content.

One thing I always come back to is my personal comfort level with the topic. There are topics within humane education that I do not feel well-versed in enough to facilitate dialogue, so I may not make them the focus of class time, but will certainly bring in articles and share what I am learning with my students. I think topics that are a fit for home have more to do with the types of students and parents I have in any given class. Some families, sixth grade families in particular, would prefer that conversations related to lifestyle changes, race relations, and LGBTQ remain in the home. When I know the sentiments of the families, I will allow questions on topics to emerge and then ask that students finish the conversation at home with their parents instead of making it a focus of the class. Once students have opened that dialogue with parents, it becomes easier to discuss within the class.

Pam added on, sharing how topics related to the environment and human rights were prioritized in her work because each easily tied into social studies, science, and school philosophy.

In addition, Pam described her approach to animal protection as another facet of teaching HE. She shared how “issues about animals often come up- even in little ways like pronoun lessons, but for me this area is more about pushing their thinking and trying to avoid sounding like I am trying to change them.” Illustrating Pam’s approach in teaching English Language Arts through the lens of HE best illuminates the importance of place-based education as a school mission and vision, and the ways in which HE content, pedagogy, and change possibly exists as contested terrain for stakeholders.

Also critical to understanding how Pam integrates HE into her work as an English Language Arts teacher, document review analysis resulted in synthesizing key findings related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. A list of skills and learning activities can be found in the appendices titled Appendix J: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, Participant 6.

RQ 3: What are the concerns of practitioners implementing humane education?

Pam described her “biggest concern” as “trying to toe that line that I think humane education master’s program teachers do so well which is finding that line with how you present information without it seeming like you have an agenda behind it.” Pam shared how this might be more challenging to do with younger students in kindergarten and first grade “because they take you at your word and they believe everything that you say, and they go home and say, no this is the truth, my teacher told me.” Pam differentiates this

with how the process unfolds for older students. She stated, “When students get a little bit older, I think it’s difficult to make sure that you are letting them discuss and letting them think through it. You’re not telling them what to think.” Pam described what she experienced as the “tougher part” of being a practitioner teaching HE as “finding the line between when I am exposing them to new ideas and showing them new ways of thinking versus when I am trying to push my point of view and not listen to theirs.”

Additional concerns Pam shared included the challenge of finding topics she is confident in to best facilitate student discussion and inquiry. Pam communicated her beliefs and experience supporting her approach and concerns.

Being a humane educator requires a lot of research on the front end... to make sure you are knowledgeable about the subject before you bring it to the students because the minute you can’t answer the question it can easily turn into a not factual discussion... and I think that’s the last thing we want as humane educators is to just end up not having an answer or giving incorrect information because we are not sure about something.

RQ 4: What is the role of professional learning for practitioners of humane education? Pam described professional development in her life as having “always been hit or miss” and identified her preference for experiential and active professional learning wherein the expectation is to create a useful product based on the content of the professional development opportunity. Pam communicated her interest in collaborating with other educators to analyze teaching standards and “envision what a humane education unit would look like or what lessons would look like and actually build and

create them while there.” Pam contextualized her preference within an understanding of the isolation sometimes experienced as educators, coupled with the reality that it becomes easy to “fall into the trap of what’s comfortable to teach and not push yourself as hard.” Pam stated, “The more you can sit with other educators and actually create something new that you wouldn’t have thought of on your own makes it better.”

Also important, Pam described her role as a grade level chair and how she facilitated summertime professional development for her teaching team. Pam supported her colleagues to envision ways to incorporate HE into subject area disciplines of social studies and science. In addition, HE was also infused into the curriculum through the reading materials and resources selected for student use.

RQ 5: What is the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of humane education? Pam described the role of continuing education for practitioners as perhaps unsustainable due to cost outweighing the opportunity for advancement as practitioners of HE. Pam stated, “I think it’s just hard as a teacher to know whether it’s worth spending that kind of money if it’s not a degree that you can use to further your spot within a school.” Pam did communicate the importance of offering more access to HE within undergraduate programs, perhaps connecting people to their passions earlier.

Also important, Pam described the need for more resources that teachers can use to teach HE, specifically the development of HE-focused units of study or “something that teachers could grab on to as a starting point to help them understand that teaching humane education is not something that’s too difficult to do.” In addition, Pam drew

attention the usefulness of a scope and sequence for teaching HE units; a “scope and sequence explaining to a teacher how you slowly move to a shift in understanding.”

Case 7: Diane. Diane (Participant 7) volunteered to participate in the study as alumni of the HE master’s degree program, an online HE professional development course, and as alumni of a HE workshop. Diane’s experience, perceptions, and beliefs were contextualized as encompassing 10 years of total teaching experience, all of which included a HE focus as a guest speaker visiting primary and secondary classrooms, K-12. Residing in the Midwest, yet offering support on the East coast as well, Diane’s recent work was identified as twofold: visiting a seventh grade urban setting and designing HE-focused professional development for educators.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Arriving at humane education. Diane described how growing up she was “concerned about different problems facing the world” and found herself wanting to be a teacher, yet unable to locate a content or subject area niche. While interning, Diane realized that she wanted “to do work for animals” and “wanted to do work for human rights and the environment.” She described already understanding how “issues in the world are connected” and realized that many people didn’t know about these issues. A colleague drew her attention to HE and once connected to the field of study and professional practice of HE, Diane decided this would be her life’s work. As part of her narrative account, Diane communicated how learning HE has influenced her approach to education.

The reason why it really spoke to me so much is because as I started to learn about different things going on in the world, and with a lot of the research I had

found on my own, I felt like I had been supporting things my whole life that I didn't agree with without knowing it. If I had known sooner, I would have made changes in my behaviors and in my actions and tried to create institutional change sooner. I felt like that's what learning is all about and I wanted to be a part of helping young people to know the things I didn't get to know so they could make decisions about what they really believed in and help them to align their values with their actions and behaviors by knowing about these issues sooner... in a classroom it is this really safe space to have a dialogue and to allow the kids to really think, and so to me, humane education is such an effective way of teaching students what's going on in the world and then letting them decide how they feel about it and they can make change in a deeper way than other activism allows.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Experiencing initial

learning of humane education. In sharing her experiences learning HE, Diane described her developing sense of self and the ways in which she valued her HE work as connecting to the purpose of schooling and educational philosophy. Diane explained, "Learning humane education was really about becoming who I always wanted to be, and it was a really effective way of learning about different issues in the world, and effective ways of teaching." Diane went on to describe how at first she thought of HE as a pathway to engage in activism, yet soon expanded her own vision understanding and embracing HE as purpose and philosophy. Diane stated, "It was really about the purpose of education, learning about things going on in the world, understanding our role in it, and becoming globally conscious choice makers." Diane extended this idea, adding on how learning HE

“was really learning about educational philosophy.” Diane illuminated her belief that issues most important to her doubled as issues which seemed important for others to learn about as well.

In addition, Diane also spotlighted her care and concern for teaching HE-focused issues effectively and shared how she learned to do so through coursework requiring learners to engage in and share demonstration lessons. “That’s where I feel like I really started to understand and grow as an educator was seeing how people took those concepts and found ways to implement it into an educational program.”

RQ 1: How do practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of humane education? Diane conceptualized her philosophy of HE as “teaching students issues related to human rights, environmental ethics, animal protection, and how all these different issues are connected, letting them think critically about these issues, building reverence for others that may not have been there before.” Diane elaborated further, adding that her philosophy included supporting students to discern whether or not “they’re concerned about the issues” and to identify “positive choices and action that they can take.” Diane stated, “humane education is about helping students to gain skills and tools for looking at the world in general.”

Also important, Diane described how with field-based experience her philosophy of HE changed from at first being content-based and issue-based and now evidenced as “focusing on building empathy, or focusing on building critical thinking skills, or focusing on what it means to be a change maker and how to use effective strategies to be

a change maker.” As part of this change, HE issues are explored in service of learning these core skills.

RQ 2: How do practitioners implement humane education? As guest speaker, Diane approached curriculum development and implementation as an iterative, multistep process. Beginning with researching HE-focused topics and content in alignment with school stakeholder requests, Diane developed learning objectives, created corresponding lessons, and reviewed the overall project with attention to time management, flexibility for course correction to add or omit content and learning activities as dictated by in the moment needs, and processing time for students to dialogue and share ideas to work through student feelings associated with helplessness. In addition, Diane spent time gathering materials needed and provided unit and lesson plans for review by school administrators and cooperating teachers. Diane also shared how throughout the planning and implementation process, self-assessment as a critical educator was important for professional growth. Diane described how she reflected upon student learning, student engagement, and her own professional ability and areas for growth.

Included within the planning and implementation process was a focus on the four elements of HE, objectives of her organization, content schools asked for, student interests or needs, multiple pathways for learning, student-directed learning, and alignment with national and state education standards. Diane shared how units and lessons were designed to teach content and skills while also nurturing empathy development, critical thinking, and what it means to be a change-maker. HE topics served as the context for learning content, skills, and dispositions. Lessons were designed as a

single HE focus on environmental ethics, animal protection, or human rights, or designed as interwoven HE topics.

Also a critical thread of Diane's approach to pedagogy was the safe classroom space she created for students to learn about world issues wherein they decided for themselves how they felt, what their perspectives included, and how they could initiate change. Diane illuminated her belief that this approach may offer the opportunity for deeper change in a deeper way than other activism allows.

Within the context of units and lessons, HE content was the container for skill development and corresponding learning activities. Skill development reflected the four elements of HE. As evidenced through document review and analysis of unit plans and lesson design, learning activities to achieve skill outcomes can be found as a list in the appendices titled as Appendix K: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, Participant 7.

Also noteworthy and critical for the growth and development of HE as a field of study and professional practice, Diane described her work as a humane educator as including the responsibility for designing and implementing HE-focused professional learning experiences for adult learners, specifically classroom educators. Diane's experience, perceptions, and beliefs related to adult learning shed light on the importance of HE-focused programming for field-based educators, K-12, and also illuminated the positive reception she has experienced in working with classroom educators as they designed units of study for their own students.

Diane shared how as part of the organization where she is employed, designing and implementing professional development for educators “is one of the most exciting things we do.” Diane identified and described how reaching out to as many educators as possible, and by proxy through educators reaching as many students as possible, exists as an effective strategy to grow the field of HE. When designing and implementing professional development courses for educators, Diane focused on weaving together common core standards, HE, and standards embedded within local school-based teacher evaluation tools. In this way, Diane created a relevant professional development approach in her work with educators to address school-based priorities as embedded within their learning of HE.

In addition, through anecdotal reporting, Diane stated, “the evidence has been just incredible: the effectiveness of humane education. It infuses into schools easily, and the students are really interested.” Diane elaborated further, stating “many teachers say to us that the reason why their students love it so much is because it really is making those real world connections” and “it’s not learning standards in a vacuum, but it’s learning it in a context of things students really care about... how they treat other people... bullying... treatment of other species... the environment.” Diane shared how HE provides students an opportunity “to really think about what’s going on and feel empowered that they can make a difference.”

Although outside the scope of formal primary, secondary, and postsecondary schooling, Diane’s narrative drew attention to the need for relevant humane-focused professional development as part of primary, secondary, and postsecondary education

initiatives. Diane envisioned how in creating and implementing professional development “courses to states all across the country, we’d be having teachers then teaching humane education all the time.”

RQ 3: What are the concerns of practitioners implementing humane education?

In describing her concerns, Diane drew attention to the importance of being a reflective educator as she self-assesses the degree to which she is teaching to the best of her ability and meeting students’ needs. In addition, Diane described the need for HE as a field of study and professional practice to develop more of a community to support each other in learning and applying best practices. Also, important, Diane drew attention to the need for field-based research to achieve credibility as a field of study and professional practice. Diane described the importance of longitudinal research to measure behavioral change. Diane stated, “Because we are still a new field, we haven’t necessarily had the resources or time to do a longitudinal study to really see the effectiveness of the work that we’ve been doing and show it to others.” Diane elaborated further, sharing reasons substantiating the need for field-based research.

We really need to put more time into longitudinal studies not only to hopefully give credibility to the field, but to also improve our practice and be the most effective educators possible. If we’re not doing longitudinal studies, we don’t really know if we’re meeting the objectives that we’re hoping to.

Also included in her narrative account, Diane shared her care and concern for being an educator who reflects upon and takes into deep consideration “the demand that schools have, and the demands on the students, and really infusing what the schools have to do

already with humane education.” As related to her own work designing professional learning experiences for educators, Diane further elaborated upon her view and experience.

HE fits into the expectations that a lot of teachers have already, and when teachers become aware of that, they’re really excited to be able to use the tools that we’ve shared with them, seeing that humane education is not going to be an extra, but it’s something that meets with what they have to do anyway.

RQ 4: What is the role of professional learning for practitioners of humane education? Diane described the role of professional learning in her own life as informal, and in her description, organizational learning, or workplace learning, held priority, as illuminated in her narrative.

I haven’t necessarily had the opportunity to do a whole lot of what would be considered professional learning. As an organization, we try to stay current on the common core standards, Danielson, different expectations of educators so that if we’re going to do professional training, we can be on top of what the expectations of the educator are, and we try to stay current on different humane education resources.

Also important, Diane drew attention to the challenge of finding time for professional learning, being “aware of different professional development opportunities and to take advantage of them” when working sometimes 80 hours per week. Diane did describe how attending professional conferences as a presenter also serves as an opportunity for professional development as she has been able to participate in workshops as a learner for

the remainder of a conference experience when her presentations are finished. In addition, Diane shared how enrolling in a PhD program would help to prioritize time for field-based learning and research connected to the work she is already doing as her career. Given an opportunity to participate in professional learning, Diane described several topics for further exploration.

I think the things that I am interested in besides just being on top of the issues include really thinking about best educational practices, the most effective ways to engage students in learning, challenge on higher order thinking questions, how to really get students to think deeper, the most effective ways to help students put what they're learning into practice if we want to teach them a certain skill, really effective ways of doing student-directed learning while still being prepared in advance... and developing a curriculum based on all the subject matters and how we are infusing humane education into it.

RQ 5: What is the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of humane education? Diane described the importance of continuing education, drawing our attention to the possibility of HE as ubiquitous within colleges, universities, and continuing education programs.

I think it would be exciting if all universities had different humane education programs and continuing education opportunities where you could take an elective on humane education and focus on different things, the most current issues, and how to effectively teach them... if you could really go to any institution and they would be offering courses related to humane education... and

it would be really exciting if there were continuing education courses throughout universities. People often say that when a field is really infused into the university level, then it sort of spreads... I think it would be really exciting to see if a lot more colleges and universities had humane education as part of the content, it was just expected to be there.

Elaborating further, Diane described how she would “really like to see as a society that we change and evolve the purpose of education” wherein HE becomes “what education is about.” Diane described how she would like to support this movement.

I want to help be a part of thinking about how we change what the purpose of education is and encourage people to consider that it is really about recognizing that we're this global world, and we share this world with so many people, and so many species, and we only have this one world to take care of, and so to be aware of the impact we are having on our world and on others, whether it's our day to day interactions or the humane consequences of our choices, and to be conscious of our connections with the whole world so that when we make choices, we're aware of that. I think a lot of times people don't necessarily think of that being the purpose... I want to help that to become something that people think about... and hopefully embrace.

Case 8: Cheryl. Cheryl (participant 8) decided to participate in the study as alumni of the HE master's degree program. Her experience, perceptions, and beliefs were contextualized within 10 years of total teaching experience, four years of which included a HE-focus at the high school level. Living and working in the Southwest, Cheryl

identified her current practitioner experience as teaching ninth and tenth grade Humanities courses within an urban private school.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Arriving at humane education. Cheryl described her arrival at HE as precipitated by her experience of school perpetuating systematic inequities against students and therefore her subsequent departure from education for a period of time. Cheryl offered a description of her experience, illuminating the difference in treatment of students across a magnet program and the regular education program.

I became increasingly troubled by what I saw as some of the ways the system was functioning that seemed unfair and potentially discriminatory against students, and it just seemed like the system itself was perpetuating those kinds of inequities and I became so frustrated I didn't know if I could continue teaching. I witnessed vastly disparate treatment of students by administrators, security guards, and teachers. While the students in the magnet, who were largely white and Asian, were treated respectfully and were supported in every way by the adults on campus, I regularly witnessed students from the regular school, who were largely Latino, with some black and Asian, being harassed by adults, forced to do push-ups if they were late to class, or otherwise treated as if they had done something wrong or were in need of punishment.

Although Cheryl shared concerns with school administrators, and the administrators were supportive of students, "the culture of the school remained the same." Cheryl stated, "I just didn't see a purpose in working in that kind of system, and so I left teaching for a

little while. It was in this interim that Cheryl met someone who participated in HE programming and Cheryl took note of her “positive spirit and sense that things can change and we can be the ones to help raise awareness and bring about change.” Having been inspired, Cheryl decided to “check out humane education as a way to see, is there a way back into education for me?”

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Experiencing initial learning of humane education. Cheryl described being in the master’s program to learn HE as “amazing” and “exactly the kind of support and inspiration” she needed to reconnect with her confidence, trusting that what she “was seeing was worth seeing” and that what she “was doing as an educator needed to be done.” Cheryl described HE as helping her to reconnect with education.

RQ 1: How do practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of humane education? Cheryl conceptualized her philosophy of HE as “constantly evolving,” and described learning as “a process of constant evolution and change.” Elaborating further, Cheryl described her philosophy of HE as a “sense of working collectively to cultivate a better world, a world that meets the needs of all people and that strives to work in harmony with the environment and other species.” In addition, Cheryl drew attention to the link between philosophy and pedagogy.

I think it cannot be a standardized one-size-fits-all this is humane education in a box. That’s just not how it works. It really is a process of community-building, a process of ongoing growth and development, and consciousness-raising and action taking in service of making the world a better place.

RQ 2: How do practitioners implement humane education? As a Humanities teacher, Cheryl designed and implemented units of study rooted in the principles of multiculturalism, HE, identity and perspective development, and differentiated instruction. Approaching her teaching in this way created a pathway for students to embrace multiple perspectives while exploring “historical circumstances” alongside coming to understand the complexity and root cause related to why conflict exists, and options for addressing conflict. Cheryl described how curriculum and instruction was “oriented toward inquiry and a quest for deeper understanding” and about “bringing to the forefront perspectives, voices, and experiences that students have not experienced in their own lives.”

Also noteworthy, for Cheryl, implementing HE was really about asking and responding to the question, “what does it take to engage the curiosity and compassion of my students to try to have them interested in considering things from other people’s perspectives?” Exploring other people’s perspectives and developing a “historical empathy for people and societies and cultures that have been colonized” were critical approaches in her course design and teaching pedagogy. Also embedded in this work, Cheryl nurtured the ability of students to be in relationship together, to dialogue respectfully, and to learn from each other. In addition, document review data illuminated how Cheryl utilized Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011) to create units of study and corresponding lessons.

As a means of further elaboration, a list in the appendices titled Appendix L: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, Participant 8, offers examples of

unit plans, lesson plans, and learning activities situated as part of Cheryl's work planning and implementing humane education.

RQ 3: What are the concerns of practitioners implementing humane education?

Contextualizing her concerns within the statement, "I definitely feel deeply invested in a broader understanding of what education is and I feel even more confident in my distrust and dislike of the conventional systems that we have in place currently," Cheryl first described a form of a marginalization and oppression she experienced related to curriculum development and implementation. Within her local teaching context, philosophy and praxis is rooted in multiculturalism and "looking at issues of identity and how those issues impact learning" yet her experiences ran counter to progressivism. Cheryl stated, "What I am experiencing now I think is actually part of the larger national trends, sort of like a conservative backlash against any sort of more progressive attempts to revise curriculum or question dominant narratives." Cheryl described her experience as being "shut down" with curriculum "scrutinized and questioned as a result of supposedly some parent complaints regarding their belief that we have a political agenda we are pushing in our class." Administrators named having "received complaints" that the curriculum was "promoting a social justice agenda and as being sort of biased to the left."

In part, Cheryl attributed this as needing to better frontload information detailing an explanation and rationale to contextualize her curriculum and instruction, yet she never had the chance to move in this direction as her director informed her that she needed to "move away from teaching about these things" and they put a stop to one unit wherein she was teaching revolutions using the text, *Animal Farm*. Cheryl described the

response from administrators as a “miss” related to how the situation was handled and not understanding the intention of the approach to curriculum and instruction, and in consequence, Cheryl and her colleagues were left “feeling constantly on edge and constantly scrutinized and not in charge anymore of... classes... curriculum... whereas previously” they “had complete freedom.”

A second concern Cheryl described was related to her own self-perception as a practitioner. Cheryl stated, “For myself as a practitioner, I sometimes think and feel that I am not doing enough to draw the connection between all the different components of humane education as they were outlined in content areas in the master’s program.” Cheryl described not doing a lot with the component of animal protection and rhetorically asked, “Am I supposed to be doing more of that to really call myself a humane educator?”

As an additional concern, within her communities of practice wherein her and her colleagues are oriented toward activism and “activist movements for social justice, racial justice, and then peripherally environmental justice as it relates to environmental racism,” Cheryl described the challenge she has experienced at times when wanting to demonstrate how this activism “is all very much humane education,” yet the “notion of humane education, it sounds *nice*.” Cheryl described how within her current school culture, HE would be perhaps more readily embraced than the language of social justice. Cheryl stated, “It’s less provocative, it’s less confrontational, potentially. And yet, in the circles where I think really important work is happening in the realm of social justice... they’re just not interested in hearing anything other than justice.”

Cheryl drew attention to another important concern; this concern related to who populates HE as a field of study and professional practice, and the corresponding concern related to access to HE programming.

The people who are attracted to the study and practice of humane education... it's a lot of white women in particular so the movement of humane education, or the study and practice of humane education, does not necessarily seem to be reaching communities of color or working class communities in the ways that I'd like to see.

Cheryl also described the need for “more opportunities- more life-affirming opportunities for people to have access to the tools necessary to work effectively in the world and to work effectively to making change in the world.”

RQ 4: What is the role of professional learning for practitioners of humane education? Cheryl described herself as being “one of those people always wanting to learn more” and “always seeking support.” Cheryl contextualized learning as “a very collaborative undertaking.” She described her appreciation for self-directed learning yet drew attention to her belief that “the deepest learning happens in dialogue with other people.” Cheryl described the role of professional learning in her life as important, taking place in communities of practice designed as “teacher inquiry” wherein practitioners engage in reading, dialogue, and reflection to better understand how concepts are applied in their diverse teaching niches. Cheryl described this professional learning as “ongoing practice, support, and reflection. In other communities of practice, Cheryl participates in storytelling and counsel, both practices being experiences that help her stay connected to

her purpose. Cheryl stated, “in order to practice humane education, I need to be connected with my purpose and with my sense of who I am.” Cheryl also described a professional development training she was planning to attend designed to enhance “communication skills, community building skills, and how to communicate effectively across difference.” Of all the school- based training Cheryl was part of, she described the “multicultural leadership team” as the community of practice in which she experienced as most supportive of her ongoing growth, learning, and development.” Cheryl described the essence of this learning as “deep, deep work in understanding how issues manifest on the institutional and cultural level in addition to interpersonal and internal conflict.”

RQ 5: What is the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of humane education? Cheryl reiterated that what she previously described as her professional learning was synonymous with continuing education, all of it being her means of professional development, and “profound learning experiences.” Cheryl described how her understanding of professional development also included “any kind of therapeutic or healing practice” as an “essential part of this work, whether it’s meditation or exposure to homeopathic medicine or just straight-up therapy because there is so much that needs to be processed.” Cheryl described the possibility of attending a PhD program as she was “feeling like there is such a lack of leadership in the field” and “wanting to somehow consider how to cultivate leadership in myself, or others.” Cheryl did identify a possible program to attend, the importance of connecting with people in this particular program, and then named that is it “really helpful to go and find mentors in how to sustain this work.”

In describing the role of continuing education to develop and sustain HE as a field of study and professional practice, Cheryl drew attention to the need for “more solutionary spaces” contextualized as schools or community-based centers and stated, “I think just calling out for that solutionary kind of focus and energy I think is really important.”

Case 9: Katherine. Katherine (Participant 9) volunteered to participate as alumni of the HE master’s degree program and alumni of an online HE professional development course. Katherine’s experience, perceptions, and beliefs were contextualized as encompassing 11 years of elementary education experience, one year of which included a HE focus. Residing in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S., Katherine’s recent work included K-12 curriculum development, and as instructor facilitating HE-focused online adult learning.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Arriving at humane education. Katherine described arriving at HE at a time in her life when she was experiencing dissonance. She shared, “I was an elementary level classroom teacher in my 11th year and I felt that in both my personal and professional life I was having difficulty really manifesting my beliefs and aligning them with my behaviors.” Katherine provided an example to illustrate her experience.

For example, one of the state standards for first grade is to teach the golden rule-treat others the way you want to be treated. I would do lessons around that standard through stories and writing and a moment later I would send my students off to lunch and they’re eating sub-standard foods and eating animals and it didn’t

align and I was really struggling with that, but not really knowing how to resolve that for myself and for my work.

Katherine described how in her 11th year she was teaching in a new state, therefore a first year teacher in this context, and due to budget cuts, was laid off. In cleaning out her classroom, she came across a beloved quote, looked up the book associated with the quote, and arrived at the HE graduate program. Katherine elaborated further, describing the experience connecting her to HE.

I realized after reading the website, book, and more about the grad program, it was really the solution to the issue of these compartmentalized ideas that I had, or these beliefs that I had, but I had no way to connect them, and humane education did that for me. It gave me the language to connect those issues.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Experiencing initial learning of humane education. Katherine described her initial learning of HE as the “lifting of veil after veil after veil.” Katherine shared how she had been a vegetarian for approximately 17 years with a “narrow view” of why she was a vegetarian. She described knowing “some information” about human rights and identified not really knowing the extent of it all; how “all these universal and global issues fit under the umbrella of humane education.” Katherine drew attention to an important question: “Why don’t I already know this?” She shared how she believed herself to be a “concerned citizen” and called herself “an environmentalist” and “vegetarian.” Katherine described having “probably experienced shell shock and anger and sadness that this information or these

connections or this level of critical thinking wasn't intuitive" as part of her education and schooling.

In addition, Katherine described her experience learning HE as "exciting, overwhelming, and very frustrating" and identified herself as still learning HE even now as a graduate. Katherine shared how graduating was not an "end point" in her learning and identified how "there's a visceral feeling to learning the information and knowing how it connects like a spider web across all issues." Also poignant, Katherine stated, "It's a very awake feeling... I feel much more awake."

RQ 1: How do practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of humane education? Katherine conceptualized her philosophy of HE as having developed from the "four elements of humane education." Katherine described how "providing accurate information, the three C's, the three R's, positive choice for one's self and others, Earth, and animals" is the "foundation" of her philosophy of HE. Katherine also described the way in which HE is "systemic" and drew attention to Parker Palmer's work illuminating how her thinking is aligned with his words as she stated, "so much of education is currently thinking the world apart and compartmentalizing things and my philosophy of humane education is that we don't do that as humane educators. Everything is systemic thinking; everything is connected." Katherine elaborated further, drawing additional attention to the importance of understanding how issues are interconnected.

There's not one issue that I can't connect and look at, so I don't think of just the Earth or environmental issues or just animal issues or just human issues. They are all on this interconnected web and asking the questions, what is the root to that

root and what is below that question? Really getting down to finding the solutions to those issues is all part of my philosophy. It really stems from seeing the world through this interconnected lens and it is just and sustainable, both/and, and interconnected.

Most illuminating within her philosophy of HE, Katherine drew attention to the way in which she understands, appreciates, and applies HE philosophy and pedagogy as a way of being. “It is really a lens through which to see everything- all actions and feelings-, and it’s more of a way of being than just a method for teaching or educating.”

RQ 2: How do practitioners implement humane education? Katherine described the teaching of HE as “extremely challenging... extremely rewarding... extremely liberating.” Communicating the essence of her approach, Katherine shared how she believed “there is no untouchable or third rail topic... there’s nothing that I wouldn’t discuss with someone or a student, obviously there is age appropriateness, but in my work with adults, and creating curriculum with adults, there’s no topic that can’t be unpacked.” For Katherine, age-appropriateness was embedded in her use of Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development as she described how

It’s really taking students no matter what age they are at, where they’re at, and taking them to that next level and that can be very challenging in humane education because of those more difficult topics... and the goal is to guide them along that process without shutting them down or making it too overwhelming and that I think can be very difficult because it can feel slow, but I think that’s also the process. I think that it’s very important to gently guide people on this

journey. I think it is exhilarating and also exhausting. It's another layer to educating.

In addition, Katherine shared how this layer of educating also included “making sure those components of humans, animals, and Earth are the lens through which and how we are doing everything, how we're disciplining, how we're viewing our classroom management, how we're interacting with parents, administrators, other students, and visiting teachers.”

Also integral to her approach, Katherine shared her belief that everyone encountered is a teacher and compassion and soft eyes provide a context for meaning making. She viewed failure as an opportunity for learning and growth and described the importance of letting go of expert mentality to create space for learning. In addition, Katherine shared how developing compassionate solutions to local and global issues and being open to all moments including confrontation provide a context for holistic growth and development.

In sharing her perceptions, beliefs, and experience, Katherine illuminated the need for a new educational paradigm and a holistic HE model; one incorporating philosophy and a corresponding pedagogy. Themes within would include HE principles, critical pedagogy, experiential learning, social-emotional learning, relationship-building, interdisciplinary approaches and thematic study, most good-least harm decision making, activist-solutionary learning, and use of nontraditional classroom spaces. Critical to this approach would be a solutionary education wherein educators design and implement a

curricula and corresponding pedagogy positioning students as empowered to envision and create healthy, just, and sustainable social, economic, political, and cultural systems.

Teaching HE was positioned by Katherine as all-encompassing, holistic, and an opportunity for shaping philosophy, content and pedagogy, classroom management, stakeholder relationships, and social change. As found in the appendices, Appendix M: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, Participant 9 is a list illuminating Katherine's approach in implementing HE.

RQ 3: What are the concerns of practitioners implementing humane education?

Katherine described two concerns related to implementing HE; concern with the term *humane education*, and concern that a foundation of deep pedagogy for classroom application is yet to be fully explored. Regarding her concern for the term *humane education*, and its initial association to animal welfare only, which makes the term itself limiting, Katherine stated, "People may see that term and dismiss it even before they delve deeper into what it is because of the animal connection." Describing her second concern, Katherine drew attention to her belief and understanding stating, "There are next steps... a next evolution of the work of humane education in schools that I don't see existing." Katherine described her position further, contextualizing in within what it means for her to bring HE into the classroom experience.

For humane educators going through the program and returning to classrooms, I am concerned that there's not a foundation of really deep critical pedagogy; really understanding this deeper kind of work and how it manifests in a classroom... deeply unpacking and really laying out this refined and beautiful humane

education-solutionary pedagogy, this methodology. From the moment you arrive to the moment you leave, there is very little time to explore that discourse, to have those conversations, because they are not built into the typical teacher's day.

In drawing attention to this concern and field-based need, Katherine questioned the degree to which educators, advocates, and social justice workers implementing HE “who are going back into classrooms... may be struggling, not knowing how to really do this work on a much deeper and system-wide level.”

RQ 4: What is the role of professional learning for practitioners of humane education? Katherine described her approach to professional learning as self-study.

I would say beyond the graduate program that to my knowledge, there is no professional learning; there is no second phase of the humane education work... and so my professional learning for both my own knowledge base as an educator and also for my curriculum development work is really self-study. It's really driven by my own decisions and my own wanting to extend my learning.

Katherine described her self-designed professional learning activities as including reading, subscribing to websites, connecting with professional HE groups, staying present in education, advancing her own knowledge of curriculum development, and valuing her relationships with faculty and colleagues as mentoring relationships. Katherine described “establishing very close personal relationships with humane educators and communicating with them on a regular basis” and meeting “with a group of humane educators on a fairly weekly basis, and that is personal, but often delves into the professional.”

When asked to identify special interests and topics she would like to explore as part of her professional learning, Katherine described wanting to explore the work of Dewey, Freire, Bell Hooks, and Parker Palmer “to really explore their work with a humane education lens.” She also described wanting to engage in a “year-long retreat of really unpacking this kind of work... to talk about solutionary pedagogy... critical consciousness... sustainability... systems thinking... storytelling... book studies... mindfulness... and to have the time to really learn about what that could look like in a classroom.” Regarding mindfulness, Katherine described seeing “mindfulness as becoming a big movement in education (and our culture in general) and also a necessary component of humane education.” She asked, “How can I make most good, least harm choices without being contemplative and reflecting on what my current choices are? Mindfulness is already here in our work, it just needs to be named and explicitly taught.”

RQ 5: What is the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of humane education? Katherine suggested several pathways as important for professional learning and continuing education related to the implementation and sustainment of HE: course work, book studies, online courses or workshops, attending conferences, and “staying connected to other humane educators who are out in the world bringing HE into the world.” As Katherine elaborated further, she drew attention to the role of continuing education in shifting the education paradigm.

Because part of humane education’s goal is to shift the educational paradigm, I think continuing education needs to be part of that in order to make this movement viable. We need to shake up what professional development looks like

and what its purpose is. I see it being more holistic in nature including the mind, body, and spirit of the educator.

Katherine also illuminated the role of technology as critical in an online movement to support field-based practitioners increasing the development of “webinars, online professional communities, virtual books clubs, etc.” In addition to virtual learning experiences, Katherine advocated for the development of “in-person opportunities” and perhaps a “yearly summit for humane educators to come together to continue learning, connect, share, and inspire.” Katherine drew attention to the importance of professional learning communities and the “creation of new models for teacher training and professional development.”

I would love to see a humane education professional community... for classroom teachers and administrators and anyone else involved in education and schooling... that is small enough to support monthly or twice monthly meetings, virtual meetings, since we are all over the world... to come together and talk about the work, and commiserate, and brainstorm, and share resources and share ideas... for educators anywhere in the world who want to bring the solutionary lens, solutionary standards, and solutionary curriculum to their classroom or to their school or to their district.

Part II: The Cross-Case Analysis

Cross-case analysis was applied to synthesize patterns and correspondence of the beliefs, insights, and experiences of research participants based on evidence drawn from the within-case narrative accounts relating to each of the research questions. Illuminating

instances of patterns and correspondence inspired the development of thematic assertions important for policy, programming, and resource allocation to improve HE as a field of study and professional practice. Valuing triangulation of data, thematic assertions were developed only when three or more participants shared similar beliefs, perceptions, and experience as related to each of the research questions.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Arriving at humane education. Participants arrived at HE by way of internships, volunteer work, connecting with nonprofit organizations, networking through friends and colleagues, email lists, and through the application of HE materials. Multiple and diverse entry points into the field of HE were apparent in the data. Cross-case analysis illuminated instances wherein participants shared particular impetus experiences in common. Exploring participants' common arrival vignettes inspired a way of understanding and describing two kinds of impetus experiences found in the data and positioned as themes.

Theme: Arriving with interest, experience, and values alignment. One kind of impetus experience found in the data can be understood as participants arriving at HE with interest, experience, and values aligned to one or more of the facets of HE related to environmental ethics, animal protection, and human rights, and a desire to engage in deeper study. As an illustration of this theme, Ashley arrived at HE through her interest in animals, animal welfare, and animal protection. Perhaps it was this interest in one of the threads of HE that inspired her to move from receiving HE-focused emails to enrolling in a HE summer course. Furthermore, participation in this online learning experience served as impetus for Ashley's desire to engage in a deeper study of HE and

her subsequent decision to enroll in the graduate certificate program as part of a sabbatical experience.

In like manner, David described his passion for animal protection issues, shared his experience as a humane educator, and identified his need for “a better understanding of the philosophy and theory behind humane education.” This realization underscored his decision to enroll in a HE-focused graduate program. Along the same lines, Maria was teaching World Geography and already including two facets of HE, environmental sustainability and human rights. She was rewriting her curriculum as she does each year, refining it, and needed help. Her principal came across the institute, shared the information with Maria, and supported Maria in attending a summer institute. As a result, Maria learned about animal rights and animal protection. She stated, “I never really looked at that before. I never even considered it. So now that’s another aspect of World Geography.”

Pam’s experience at a place-based charter school with a mission and vision embracing environmental education served as another illustrative example of arriving at HE with a vested interest in learning more. Although valuing self-motivated inquiry and having access to school-based professional learning, Pam stated, “I was looking for a master’s program... something to keep me grounded and up on what was going on outside of our walls.” In seeking out further study, Pam came across the HE graduate program, decided it was an appropriate fit, and enrolled.

Also with interest, experience, and an affinity for HE, Diane described growing up concerned with problems of the world. When interning at a farm sanctuary, she came

across the institute and its comprehensive approach to HE programming. Interested, Diane read through relevant information and literature and reported on the experience. She stated, “I felt like I was reading what was inside of me my whole life and I never knew that something like that existed. I knew that’s what I wanted to do with my life.” For Diane, her arrival at HE was inspired by her interest, experience, and desire to learn and be in alignment with her core values. As a result, she connected to her life’s work.

Attention to this theme revealed how some practitioners arrived at HE already with interest, experience, values alignment, and desire to engage in a deeper study of HE. Findings were corroborated by trends found within the scholarly literature intersecting with the relevancy and credibility of humane values education (Dilmac et al., 2007; Dereli & Aypay, 2012), the relationship between teacher beliefs and student learning (Chin & Barber, 2010; Forbes & Zint, 2011; Moroye, 2009), and role of teacher education in the development of practitioners’ philosophy and implementation pedagogy (Minott, 2011; Mosley, 2010; Reyes, 2010; Skerrett, 2010).

What surfaced as critical was the understanding that some practitioners arrive at a comprehensive approach to HE with knowledge and experience. How practitioner knowledge and experience intersects with predetermined courses as part of the graduate program and online professional development offerings is an area of needed study and discernment. Improving, expanding, and funding HE-focused adult learning initiatives necessitates a need for ongoing dialogue illuminating how adult learning is positioned as flexible, responsive, and able to meet the interests and needs of diverse learners already working in the field.

In addition, it is also important to query the role of professional development providers' ongoing learning interests and needs for the improvement and sustainment of HE as a field of study and professional practice. Therefore, in part, what it means to be a practitioner teaching through the lens of HE in U.S. schools includes a desire and need to engage in deeper professional inquiry.

Theme: Seeking relief from oppression and marginalization. A second kind of impetus experience found in the data can be described as arriving at HE seeking relief from schooling as a system of oppression and marginalization. Freirean philosophy provided a lens for seeing, understanding, and making meaning of arrival vignettes illuminating school as a marginalizing and oppressive force in the lives of both students and educators. Participants seeking relief surfaced as a theme and critical contribution for better understanding what it means to be a practitioner arriving at HE interested, experienced, and perhaps disillusioned.

To illustrate, Rachel's arrival at HE was the result of her own self-motivation and self-design related to professional learning. Prioritizing Einstein's concept of the circle of compassion as guiding pedagogy in her work with youth, Rachel came across HE in 2008 and realized she had been doing HE since the beginning of her teaching career. Along with interest, experience, and values alignment toward HE, Rachel experienced teaching as a "battle with the framework of education because it is very traditional, very archaic, and it is very difficult to change it."

Similar to Rachel's experience and perspective, Cheryl was teaching high school on the west coast and grew frustrated by the marginalization and oppression she

witnessed. Cheryl stated, “I became increasingly troubled by what I saw as some of the ways the system was functioning that seemed unfair, potentially discriminatory against students, and it just seemed like the system itself was perpetuating those kinds of inequities.” As a result, Cheryl left teaching for a while. While working in the nonprofit sector, Cheryl remembered being inspired by an acquaintance who had attended the institute, and although troubled and frustrated by past experience, Cheryl decided to approach HE asking herself, is there a way back into education for me? Ultimately, Cheryl enrolled in the HE graduate program.

Also illustrating the theme of seeking relief, Katherine’s arrival experience offered a vignette detailing the ways in which school practices supported a link between inconsistent and misaligned personal beliefs, professional beliefs, and pedagogical initiatives. Katherine described how she experienced difficulty manifesting her beliefs and aligning them with behavior. She illustrated an example of teaching the golden rule through stories and writing; treat others the way you want to be treated. Katherine stated she would teach in this way, afterward sending “students off to lunch and they’re eating sub-standard food... eating animals... it didn’t align and I was really struggling with this but not really knowing how to resolve that for myself and my work.” Lack of alignment, budget cuts, and letting go of nontenured faculty were impetus experiences underpinning Katherine’s arrival at HE.

Attention to this second theme revealed how some practitioners arrived at HE already with interest, experience, and values alignment toward HE, yet also carrying with them disillusionment toward systems of schooling and disenfranchisement with the

perpetuation of misaligned, marginalizing, or oppressive schooling practices. Also recognized, practitioners arrived with an understanding of and ability to apply a social justice and liberation pedagogy (Kahn & Humes, 2009). What was elucidated was the need to study systems of schooling through the lens of HE as a means of carrying out the mission and vision of restoring unjust and unsustainable systems. Findings link back to the scholarly literature corroborating the need for Lewinson et al.'s (2002) critical literacy framework and DiCamillo and Pace's (2010) deliberative pedagogy to better understand, challenge, and change dominant hegemony.

Also important, additional research is needed to discern how to best support field-based practitioners who continue teaching through the lens of HE within systems perpetuating marginalization and oppression. Developing a responsive support system for field-based practitioners working in these circumstances is an example of humane pedagogy in action and critical for growing and sustaining HE as a field of study and professional practice.

Cross-case analysis findings and research-derived themes can be positioned within the scholarly literature alongside Weil (2010), Kahn and Humes (2009), Dilmac et al. (2007), and Dereli and Apay (2012), defining HE as holistic and comprehensive, values-based, and promoting a social justice orientation. How practitioners arrived provided clues to lived experience (Dewey, 1997), hyphenated selves (Fine & Sirin, 2007), constructivist-developmental identity development (Kegan, 1982), and the possibility of humane educators akin to cultural workers (Freire, 2005). Also significant is the link between arrival stories and listening to wisdom within for clues to selfhood,

authenticity, and the calling of vocation (Palmer, 2000). What it means to be a practitioner teaching through the lens of HE in U.S. schools includes finding momentum for deep learning and an application of critical, deliberative, and solutionary pedagogies to nurture health and wellness, growth, development, and sustainability as integral to the experience of teaching and learning.

Emergent research foci based on thematic analysis: Experiencing initial learning of humane education. In addition to understanding how practitioners arrived at the study and practice of HE, participants also illuminated how learning HE was experienced adding contextual complexity to the developing description of what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE. Conversation and questioning as part of the interview process created a pathway for research participants to reflect upon their adult learning experiences. Descriptive phrases within the data portrayed feelings and sensory experience. Participants described the learning of HE as amazing, challenging, engaging, enlightening, eye-opening, exciting, demanding, humbling, inspiring, interesting, rigorous, slightly overwhelming, welcoming, and wonderful. Multiple perspectives were generated and synthesized as themes offering additional meaning making opportunities related the guiding research question exploring what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools. Experiencing change and transformation as part of the initial learning of HE emerged as a single theme triangulated within the context of cross-case analysis processes.

Theme: Experiencing change and transformation. Critical to understanding what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools are the concepts of change

and transformation. Change and transformation surfaced as a key theme experienced by several practitioners who identified growth, development, change and/or transformation as part of their experience learning HE. Participants identified HE content and the learning process as a transformative experience, one of limitless possibilities, high quality, and the revolution needed in education. For Diane, learning HE was the context for the realization of her own becoming and self-awareness that she was developing into who she always wanted to be as an educator. Similar to Diane's experience, Maria described learning HE as "a kind of calling" and "one of the most important things students can be learning." Maria described how learning HE encouraged her to engage in self-reflection and assess her own decision-making. Maria stated, "It reiterated the fact that I must practice what I teach and preach. My awareness in most of my own decisions has become deeper and broader."

Pam shared her experience working through change processes. "I made a lot of personal changes while going through the program. I was a vegetarian before I started, but I became a vegan during the program." In addition to food-related health and wellness, Pam also illuminated how her way of being shifted. "I think overall I became a lot calmer and focused on my goals. Graduate school in general helped to ground me a bit, but humane education gave me a focus for what I wanted to be part of." As a result of her learning experience, Pam detailed how she craved to be a lot more informed about the world around her, both locally and globally. She also found herself engaged in more discussions and taking the lead in more change initiatives within her school environment. Critical to her development, Pam stated, "I also think that the program helped me to find

my voice as an activist” and “helped me to understand that there is no one correct type of activism.” In addition, Pam described how learning HE taught her to engage in productive dialogue and feel comfortable knowing that she didn’t need to shout to be heard.

Katherine described her experience learning HE as a journey wherein veils of understanding and awareness were explored, recognized, lifted, and new understandings valued. For her, learning HE surfaced content realizations relating to interconnection, depth, and universality of issues. New learning inspired awareness and understanding, and the letting go of resistance, ignorance, and fear. Through this learning experience, she grew closer to her true, inner self, and aligned her beliefs and behavior.

Katherine shared details of her life as a vegetarian and how holding narrow understandings of why she was a vegetarian shifted as she learned “how deep and universal a lot of the issues were” and how she “didn’t know that all of these issues fit under the umbrella of humane education, so it was like lifting veil after veil after veil.” Katherine further explained how even in the introductory course, she found herself feeling and asking, “Why don’t I know this?” Most illuminating, Katherine stated, “I felt I was a concerned citizen. I called myself an environmentalist. I was a vegetarian. I probably experienced shell shock, anger, and sadness that information, connections, or this level of critical thinking wasn’t intuitive in my schooling.” Providing evidence of her felt sense experience, Katherine reported it “was exciting, overwhelming, and very frustrating to learn all of the different pieces, and I am still learning them all, but I feel much more awake.”

As practitioners of HE reflected back upon their learning of HE, positive regard for their experience surfaced. Understanding the value practitioners placed upon their learning, appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) and transformative learning theory (Cranton & Taylor, 2012) can be used within current and future programming to support practitioners in their continued growth and development along a lifelong learning trajectory. Herein also exists an opportunity to apply the principles of andragogy (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2011), identity development (Fine & Sirin, 2007; Kegan, 1982; Palmer, 2000), and self-directed learning (Merriam & Bierema, 2014) as a means of engaging in a holistic consideration of the interests and needs of practitioner-scholars learning within a transformative HE paradigm (O'Sullivan, 2012).

RQ 1: How do practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of humane education? Exploring commonalities in how practitioners conceptualized their philosophy of HE provided meaning making opportunities adding description to an emergent understanding of what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools within primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. Three triangulated themes emerged within the data.

Theme: Valuing consciousness-raising, decision making, and community building. Philosophy of HE was described in the cross-case data corpus as a consciousness-raising activity; the process of opening the eyes of students to HE work, global issues, and consequences of day to day personal decision-making and actions. Cheryl described her conceptualization of HE as “a process of community-building, a process of ongoing growth and development, consciousness-raising and action taking in

service of making the world a better place.” Cheryl offered further detail, stating, “What grounds my sense of what humane education is, is working collectively to cultivate a better world, a world that meets the needs of all people and strives to work in harmony with the environment and with other species.”

In addition, Pam described how her philosophy of HE can be understood as “opening the eyes of students” and “introducing them to the consequences of their actions.” Also part of this, Pam shared how an important element of HE included “understanding your place in the world, and how you do affect it.” Equally important, and similar in perspective, beliefs, and experience, Maria identified her philosophy of HE as reflecting upon choices made each day, and understanding how these choices impact Earth, animals, and humans.

Participants’ philosophies of HE as consciousness-raising, choice making, and community-building shared resonance with Freirean philosophy (Freire, 2005; Freire, 2006; Freire, 2008), specifically the importance of consciousness-raising as part of educational praxis and the role of educators as cultural workers in the midst of community-building and change-making. Patterns in the data revealed how practitioner philosophies were also aligned with the mission and vision of HE envisioned and articulated by Weil (2004), total liberation pedagogy as called for by Kahn and Humes (2009), education for global citizenship (Oxfam, 2006), and a comprehensive theory of transformative learning to include planetary consciousness, integral development, and quality of life for all species (O’Sullivan, 2001).

In addition, these philosophies can be contextualized through the scholarly literature detailing frameworks for developing human rights education (Bajaj, 2011; Francis, 2012; Levin-Goldberg, 2009), deliberative pedagogies (DiCamillo & Pace, 2010), and critical literacy practices (Keyes, 2009; Lewison et al., 2002; Skerrett, 2010). Additional research is needed to better understand how a practitioner's philosophy of HE may or may not influence identity development, implementation pedagogy, and learner outcomes, all of which is deemed important for improving and sustaining HE as a field of study and professional practice.

Theme: Seeing connection and interconnection. Three participants shared common sentiments, describing their philosophies of HE as seeing connection and interconnection among the threads of what makes up HE as defined by Weil (2010). Maria identified her investment in the institute's definition of HE and went on to further describe her philosophy of HE as "seeing the connection between environmental preservation, animal protection, human rights, and looking at all of our choices and how they impact all of these things." In addition, Diane also stated how she believed "humane education is really about teaching students issues related to human rights, environmental ethics, animal protection, and how all these different issues are connected."

Similar to descriptions shared by Maria and Diane, Katherine described her philosophy of HE as connected to Weil's (2010) approach to HE with specific emphasis placed on the four elements of HE to include (a) providing accurate information; (b) fostering curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking; (c) instilling reverence, respect, and responsibility; and (d) positive choice-making for self, other humans, Earth, and animals.

Extending her philosophy further, Katherine added how “everything is systemic; everything is connected.” For Katherine, environmental issues, animal protection issues, and human rights issues are an “interconnected web” and her philosophy “stems from seeing the world through an interconnected lens and it is just and sustainable, both/and, and interconnected.” HE is “a lens through which to see everything, all actions and feelings, and it’s more of a way of being than just a method for teaching of educating.”

Patterns in the findings demonstrate how participants’ philosophies of HE connect with Freirean philosophy (Freire, 2005; Freire, 2006; Freire, 2008), with Weil’s (2010) approach to HE, as well as the scholarly literature describing deliberative pedagogies (DiCamillo & Pace, 2010), and critical literacy practices (Keyes, 2009; Lewison et al., 2002; Skerrett, 2010). Additional research is needed to better understand how practitioner philosophy may or may not influence identity development, implementation pedagogy, and learner outcomes. Also noteworthy, an intentional philosophy and corresponding pedagogy for transformation and change may be needed to better support field-based practitioners as they continue to grow and develop across their experience implementing HE (Kegan, 1982; O’Sullivan, 2001).

Theme: Positioning humane education as an educational imperative. Another theme evidenced in the cross-case data depicting how practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of HE included the rendering of HE as an educational imperative and catalyst for transforming systems of schooling. Within this context, HE was described by practitioners as a values-based education wherein compassion, respect, empathy, empowerment, community, consensus-building, change-making, and skills of critical

discourse need to be taught explicitly as school structures are designed anew to be more in alignment with the mission and vision of just and sustainable society. Also noteworthy, HE was identified as a strategy for changing the current educational paradigm to include fresh perspectives on transparency, learning as transformation, humane focused themes as course topics and the context for learning, and positioning HE as the philosophy and purpose of education; all of this manifesting through a globally inspired and globally relevant real world learning pedagogy.

When asked to describe her philosophy of HE, Heather conveyed her belief that HE was indeed an educational imperative. Succinctly, she stated, “It needs to be taught.” Providing further explanation, Heather described her local school context and the importance of schooling as a relevant global education. “If it’s not globally relevant, it shouldn’t be taught. If students don’t find any application to their life or to the world, then there’s no point in teaching it... it’s a necessity... there isn’t really any other option.”

Also supporting HE as an educational imperative, Rachel described how “humane education should be in every single classroom, in every single school, in every part of the world.” Rachel shared her belief that HE “will empower students and their grades will go up... they’ll see how they are connected to the world around them, and they’ll actually want to come to school. They will want to learn.” Rachel also offered the perspective that HE holds the potential to improve students’ reading and writing ability and “will improve society because as kids are reaching out, as they are improving academically that will obviously make them lifelong learners.” Rachel continued to elaborate, stating “as we

develop empathy and kids' classroom problems go down, schoolwide behavior improves. There's less violence in our schools... and that will lead to less violence in our communities."

Rachel communicated her understanding of behavioral issues and violence in present day schooling, both exacerbated by testing protocols, student isolation and disconnection due to modern day technology, with school discipline transforming education as more rigid and procedural. Illuminating her philosophy, Rachel stated, "The root of the problem is that kids are internalizing violence, they feel isolated and they don't know what to do about it. I feel like humane education can fix all of that." When asked to describe how HE might serve this purpose, Rachel shared how she believed HE develops empathy and community. She went on to describe how HE "can show students they can make a positive difference in the world... how to feel powerful in a positive way instead of through violence... it can make them feel valuable and help them connect with their purpose in life."

Adding another layer, the way in which Diane conceptualized her philosophy of HE offered further evidence of a shared desire to privilege HE as an educational imperative. Diane described her philosophy of HE as the purpose of schooling and identified her desire for a societal shift as related to the purpose of schooling.

I'd really like to see as a society that we change and evolve the purpose of education... I hope that humane education organizations that really value the comprehensiveness of humane education can really think about what we can do to move the educational system forward in thinking about what the purpose of

education is... I want to help us think about what we can do as an organization to help change what the purpose of education is... and encourage people to consider that it's really about recognizing that we're this global world, and we share this world with so many people, and so many species, and we only have this one world to take care of, and so to be aware of the impact we are having on our world and on others, whether it's our day to day interactions or the humane consequences of our choices, and to be conscious of our connections with the whole world so that when we make choices, we're aware of that... people don't necessarily think of that being the purpose and I want to help that to become something that people think about when considering it and hopefully embrace.

David too described his desire for HE to develop as a standard way of educating students.

David shared his belief that if HE was a ubiquitous approach and methodology, there would be an increase in buy-in.

RQ 2: How do practitioners implement humane education? Exploring what it means to be a practitioner of HE teaching in U.S. schools, and more specifically how practitioners implement HE, yielded a large data corpus resulting from interview and document review processes. Diverse approaches in curriculum, instruction, and assessment were evidenced and patterns in the data only hinted at correspondence regarding practitioners' use of Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011) as a curriculum development tool, application of the four elements of HE, linking national and/or state standards to unit and lesson planning, and approaching pedagogy as experiential, real-world learning.

In consequence, within-case descriptive analysis gave better insight into how this practitioner group implemented HE using diverse approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. Privileging this diversity, cross-case analysis did not render enough common practices from which to develop meaningful themes that could be verified through triangulation of the data. The decision was made to rely upon within-case descriptive analysis for conveying the particular realities, unique classroom contexts, and differentiated approaches of each practitioner. Each within-case description offers a beginning context and set of perspectives for appreciating what it may mean to be a practitioner implementing HE in U.S. schools across primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms.

Resulting themes related to the implementation of HE holistically, and patterns in the data revealed a direct link to Fine and Sirin's (2007) theory of hyphenated selves as practitioners teaching HE may have been bridging two selves, or hyphenated identities as the subject-area self and the HE self. Noteworthy, patterns in the data provided evidence demonstrating how primary, secondary, and postsecondary educators extended their reach as practitioners of humane educators by developing and implementing professional workshops, professional courses, and professional conference experiences in addition to their work with students in their own classrooms.

Also important, identity development and hyphenated selves (Fine & Sirin, 2007; Kegan, 1982; Palmer, 2000) surfaced as integral to understanding what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE as practitioners held responsibility for educating diverse learner groups within both formal and nonformal education niches.

Within-case findings may contribute a scholarly research derived description of implementation strategies as experienced by practitioners teaching HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. No longer fully absent from the research, practitioner implementation strategies and pedagogical decision-making can be included as scholarly literature in a transdisciplinary fashion and nested within HE, environmental education, animal protection and animal rights education, human rights education, citizenship and global citizenship education, critical literacy education, and media literacy education.

Matching the philosophical and pedagogical intention articulated by Weil (2004; 2010), the implementation of HE was experienced by practitioners within a variety of contexts as sites of possibility, conflict, and contested terrain. Additional research is needed to determine the link between diverse professional roles, diverse teaching contexts, and the degree to which these factors contributed to or influenced the development of a diverse pedagogy regarding implementation of HE.

Within-case descriptions may serve as impetus for the development of future classroom-based ethnographic research studies to explore what it means to implement HE privileging direct observation, on-site interviews, and document review processes. Selecting a research design privileging three data collection procedures increases triangulation possibilities and therefore verification of thematic assertions and theory development.

RQ 3: What are the concerns of practitioners implementing humane education? Utilizing cross-case analysis to better understand what it means to teach HE

in U.S. schools, specifically focusing on practitioner concerns helped illuminate similarity across practitioners' field-based challenges and concerns. Three themes emerged in the data conveying practitioner concerns related to perceptions, the breadth and depth of HE as a field of study and professional practice, and field-based professional development.

Theme: Understanding and negotiating varied perceptions of humane education. Six participants illuminated concern regarding the ways in which HE is perceived and experienced by others and self. As situated within the cross-case data, Katherine illuminated how the term or label HE may be easily misperceived or dismissed as others misappropriate meaning ascribing HE as only related to animal welfare. Katherine shared in her view that approaching HE as understanding the animal welfare and animal protection component is positive, and at the same time, she was cautious as she described the potential for how “people may see that term and dismiss it even before they delve deeper into what it means because of the animal connection.” Again, how HE is perceived and valued possibly influences engagement and understanding.

Also related to concern with how HE is perceived, Ashley situated HE in the context of difference, identifying the possible influence of personal, familial, and societal values in contrast to values nurtured within HE.

This is not a friendly state particularly for environmentalists or animal protectionists, so it's a little bit of a tough sell to some of my students sometimes to be talking about some of these issues... I always do worry a little bit about how things are going to be perceived... I've seen some support, but I've also seen a

little bit of reluctance... reactions I get to the name of the program along the lines of *so, am I an inhumane educator?*... People were thinking that the word humane might be off-putting to prospective students... because of associations in people's heads with the humane society or animal protection groups. People didn't understand that it's much broader than that, so I am always... thinking about how to get around that I guess with my colleagues because if I can't get around that with my own colleagues here who know me... how am I going to sell it to the students?

Ashley elaborated further, describing her concern regarding HE within primary and secondary education, also illuminating the influence of business and societal norms and value systems.

I guess the biggest concern when I've talked to people who know more about it than I do, mainly people at K- 12, is that there seems to be some hostility to it in the public schools. People get nervous about it, the same people who let big hunting stores come in and teach archery as physical education. They're worried about having humane education in their schools... I think with K-12 there are concerns about parental reactions to things, and many kids have parents who hunt and fish. There's also a lot of influence from big agriculture and the sporting goods stores... I just think there's resistance, there's fear about it. And so, I wonder sometimes how much progress we're actually going to be able to make, and we have to keep trying. But again, this is not the most progressive part of the world to be trying to do this in.

Emerging from the data is a pattern demonstrating the ways in which perceptions and values are interconnected and influential as related to the teaching of HE.

In addition, Maria shared similar concerns, wondering as she planned to go deeper in her implementation of HE, “how controversial are people going to perceive it?” Also part of Maria’s narrative, she wondered about the possible perceptions colleagues hold, described concern related to possible parent perceptions, and articulated the need to frontload communication with parents describing the HE-focused unit she planned to teach students. Maria described the importance of sharing HE content knowledge with colleagues, as well as sharing her plans for implementation. Within the context of Maria’s narrative, transparency may have emerged as a strategy for negotiating “othered” perceptions.

Heather shared her concern regarding parent perceptions, identified the presence of parental resistance, and described caution and discernment in how she presents information to students because of resistance and people being turned off by some topics presented. In addition, Heather described her school’s enrollment process illuminating how students and families move through a rigorous application process and therefore made aware of the curriculum and pedagogical approach ensuring intentions are overt and transparent.

Cheryl described how it was challenging to speak with colleagues in her professional circles about HE because of the way in which the concept of social justice is positioned within various professional communities, with the language of HE at times part of the mainstream narrative, and at other times perhaps on the periphery. Cheryl’s

account illuminates the complex terrain of perception, experience, and language within professional learning communities.

I am much more situated in activist movements for social justice, racial justice, and then peripherally environmental justice as it relates to environmental racism. I feel like I have a hard time sometimes explaining what I see as this all very much humane education... In some of the circles I am in, the notion of humane education, it sounds *nice*. I think in a way that's great because at a place like my school, I think they would be willing to hear the term *humane education* much more readily than they'd be willing to hear *social justice* right now. It's less provocative, it's less confrontational potentially, and yet in the circles where I think really important work is happening in the realm of social justice, like the people organizing around Ferguson... they're just not interested in hearing anything other than *justice*.

Also a critical concern regarding stakeholder perceptions, Cheryl described an experience related to her implementation of progressive curriculum and instruction, detailing an example of marginalization and oppression she needed to negotiate as situated within her teaching context. Cheryl first provided a brief description of her experience arriving at her current position.

I am now teaching at a private school where I thought, it's a progressive school, things are going to be great, they are really supportive of me as a teacher, they really want me to be bringing more of an analysis of the systems at work, and that seemed to be why I was hired to begin with because they really have a strong

multicultural program looking at issues of identity and how these issues impact learning. And so I felt like wow, this is where I belong, this is awesome, and for the past four years, it really has been. It's been an amazing space to work and I've had the opportunity to work with some great students and I think have a really good impact...

Cheryl then described a shift in how her work was understood, contextualizing her work as part of a national marginalizing trend.

What I am experiencing now I think is actually part of the larger national trends, sort of like a conservative backlash against any sort of more progressive attempts to revise curriculum or question dominant narratives... and so for the first time ever at this school, my colleagues and I who teach the 9th and 10th grade Humanities class, we've been sort of shut down and our curriculum is being scrutinized and questioned as a result of supposedly some parent complaints regarding their belief that we have a political agenda we are pushing in our class... promoting a social justice agenda and being sort of biased to the left...

Cheryl also offered her point of view and experience regarding the consequences of stakeholder decision making as related to this specific example of teacher-focused marginalization and oppression.

There's just been top down, arbitrary decisions around things that I don't think would fix any of the origins, the potential origins of those kinds of complaints, but it's like they need to feel like they are doing something and they can show those parents that they have cracked down on those leftist teachers... but that's not ever

where we were coming from so it seems like a miss. It's just a miss in terms of how they've chosen to handle it and it's led me and my coworkers to be feeling constantly on edge and constantly scrutinized and not in charge anymore of our own classes and our own curriculum whereas we previously had complete freedom... I just feel totally shut down... that kind of backlash mirrors what's happening on the national level at least from what I've been hearing.

Adding yet another lens, Cheryl also communicated concern embedded in her own sense of identity and self-perception regarding *enoughness* as related to her implementation of HE.

I sometimes think and feel like I am not doing enough to draw the connections between all the different components of humane education as outlined in content areas in the master's program. I don't do much around animal protection issues... So, I feel like, gosh, am I supposed to be doing more of that to really call myself a humane educator?

Cheryl's question is poignant, indicating a possible need to explore the relevance of professional identity development as part of professional learning and growth, and perhaps a call to action to more fully explore the lifeworld of humane educators as related to selfhood and identity development.

Also related to concern with field-based perceptions, David's narrative account offered another view highlighting concern for teacher buy-in as related to the experience of being a visiting educator. David described the relationship between teacher buy-in and its potential impact upon student learning and student attitudes.

Some teachers they'll be involved... real interested... asking questions of the kids... helping with classroom management. Other teachers, they might sit in the back and grade papers... it's really important to have the buy-in of the teachers because the kids can tell if the teachers don't care about the program. They pick up on that, and there's really a different change in attitude of the kids depending on how the teachers react to the program.

David's concern reveals the need to be aware of the potential interconnectedness of teacher perceptions, student perceptions, and the way in which perception as value-laden influences learning experiences, attitudes, and outcomes specific to the experience of teaching and learning HE.

In combination, participant narratives shed light on the perhaps fragile and contested nature of HE as a term, label, or phrase serving as gatekeeper to a comprehensive approach for better understanding the interconnected issues affecting Earth, animals, and humans.

Theme: Critiquing the breadth and depth of humane education as reach, access, and boundary issues. Three participants made vivid their concerns related to identifying the reach, access points, and boundaries of HE. In example, Cheryl's narrative account illuminated the importance of problematizing the reach of HE, also making apparent the need to envision additional entry points into HE as a field of study and professional practice.

The people who are attracted to the study and practice of humane education, at least the ones who I've met, it's a lot of white women in particular, and so the

movement of humane education, or the study and practice of humane education, does not necessarily seem to be reaching communities of color or working class communities in the ways that I would like to see.

Cheryl elaborated further, communicating the need for “more opportunities, more life affirming opportunities for people to have the access to the tools necessary to work effectively in the world and to work effectively to making change in the world.”

Additional evidence supporting practitioner concern for better understanding the reach of HE was made apparent within Katherine’s interview data. As part of her narrative account, Katherine framed her concern as the need for stakeholders to consider next steps with HE to envision and pioneer the next iteration of HE as a school-based pedagogy. Katherine stated, “For humane educators going through the program and returning to classrooms, I am concerned that there’s not a foundation of really deep critical pedagogy; really understanding this deeper kind of work and how that manifests in a classroom.” Katherine offered further elaboration.

I just don’t think the next evolution of that has been named yet, and so I see the graduate program graduating classroom teachers along with all sorts of other advocates and social justice workers who are going back into the classroom and maybe struggling, not knowing how to really do this work on a much deeper and system wide level.

Also sharing concern, David illuminated the need to question the boundaries of HE, identifying what HE includes and excludes, and portrayed the consequence of having too far a reach as creating difficulty implementing HE.

Sometimes people try to make humane education to be more, they try to make it everything. They try to make it social-emotional learning... character education... they try to make it all these different things... I think sometimes that complicates it when it tries to be too many things.

Cheryl, Katherine, and David shared common concerns related to the breadth and depth of HE. Communicating concern for reach, access, and boundaries of HE, participants illuminated the need for stakeholders to review, critique, and revise current programming. Appreciative inquiry strategies may support the review, critique, and revision process while also serving as a theoretical framework for the design of new programs to support adult learners and field-based practitioners.

Theme: Identifying concerns related to professional development. Emerging from the interview data, five participants shared their concerns related to professional growth. Diane described herself as a critical educator, illustrating the importance of self-reflection and self-assessment as integral to professional growth and development.

I am definitely always a critical educator... I try to be very self-aware of myself to after a program is over think about how many students were engaged, in what ways were they engaged, what did I do well, what could I do better? I am always concerned if I'm teaching to the best of my ability, if I'm meeting the needs of students as well as I can, and I never want to lose that because as an educator, if I really care about what I am teaching, and about the students who I'm teaching, it's really important to continue to self-reflect.

Elaborating further, Diane shared the need for a professional learning community wherein humane educators support each other in the implementation of best practices as a means of professional growth and development.

I'm not always good at having a community of humane educators that I can talk to about our self-reflection and ways that we can improve. If I am very concerned about a challenge, I will try to talk to my colleagues and say, this was a challenge, and does anyone have suggestions how to do it better? But I think in humane education as a whole, maybe we could have more of a community set up to help each other with best practices.

Sharing similar sentiments as Diane, Maria conveyed concern regarding the need for time and space to engage in ongoing, school-based professional learning. She described the importance of sharing HE content knowledge and developing collaborative support networks, and when asked if she felt supported in her work, Maria stated, "I feel supported but don't feel like people are seeking me out to collaborate, and I don't seem to have the time and opportunity to seek others out." In addition, Maria expressed concern, feeling like she was "kind of winging it" regarding her planning and implementation of HE.

As part of his narrative account, David communicated concern regarding a lack of skill development sometimes apparent when volunteers and education groups enter schools to teach HE without classroom-based strategies.

A challenge for a lot of people is that humane education groups get volunteers that know very little about how to manage a classroom... If you don't know how

to work with kids, and you don't have any experience in teaching, I think it'll be very difficult for you to be a humane educator. I think a lot of people assume that teaching is easy, and not just people in humane education, just the general public. They think that working with kids in schools, anyone can do it. But from my experience, it has taken a lot of time to get pretty good at it... it takes a while to get good at being an educator and I feel like a lot of humane education groups, they don't give the skills that people need to manage a classroom, or to make an engaging lesson, and how to teach and be engaging yourself.

Also within the context of describing the need for field-based practitioner support, David expressed concern related to assessing program efficacy and assessing professional growth, highlighting the need to ask, "How effective is our program? Am I getting better at education? How can I be a better educator myself?" These questions illuminate the importance of program evaluation, performance feedback, and self-assessment to nurture the development of practitioners and programming.

As part of her narrative account, Pam expressed concern regarding professional confidence and the need for practitioners to be consumers of information and research. Pam described the importance of working with topics and issues within her comfort zone which was also a means of being prepared to facilitate student discussion.

I think being a humane educator requires a lot of research on the front end as a teacher just to make sure you are knowledgeable about the subject before you bring it to the students because the minute you can't answer the question, it can easily turn into a not factual discussion anymore and I think that's the last thing

we want as humane educators is to end up either just not having an answer or giving incorrect information because we are not sure about something.

Offering additional insight related to practitioner concerns, Rachel identified professional burnout and a lack of career development support as integral to her experience of frustration and disenfranchisement when working within marginalizing and oppressive systems of schooling; systems of heavy regimentation and school-based routines, prioritization of standardized assessment practices, school and community violence, and students experiencing isolation and disconnection. Rachel shared, “I am getting burned out. I am getting to the point where I am at a loss for what I should do. I feel that I have a lot to offer... but defeated right now.” Rachel elaborated further, communicating the need for a system of field-based support.

The challenge for humane education is that who knows how many people are like me around the United States right now feeling defeated and feeling like, what can you do? I don't need more training on how to do humane education... I know what the issues are or I can get access to more information on the issues. I just need career development.

Aligned with the research of Kahn and Humes (2009), practitioner critique resisted standardization, honored growth and development, and shared counter narratives in the form of concerns to advance HE within the context of liberation pedagogy. These findings shed light on concern with perceptions, the breadth and depth of HE as a field of study and professional practice, and the role of professional development. Designing a model of field-based support may be valued by stakeholders as an important opportunity

to nurture the growth and development of practitioners through a responsive, holistic, and HE-focused pedagogy for personal, professional, and lifelong learning.

RQ 4: What is the role of professional learning for practitioners of humane education? In analyzing cross-case data to understand and describe the role of professional learning in the lives of practitioners, three themes emerged. Practitioners identified the importance of (a) the scholarship of teaching and learning as synonymous with the activities of professional learning; (b) collaboration within communities of practice; and (c) the reality of self-directed learning and self-designed professional development. Within the data corpus, participants used the terms professional learning, professional development, and continuing education as interchangeable, and often synonymous, in their narrative accounts.

Theme: Valuing the scholarship of teaching and learning as a form of professional development. Evidenced within the cross-case data, three practitioners identified the scholarship of teaching as synonymous with professional learning. Illustrating this theme, Ashley offered a description of the way in which she approached being a continuous learner through the scholarship of teaching and learning, placing value in incorporating her study of HE within the context of her role as an educator at the postsecondary level. For Ashley, there was a relationship at play within the context of her learning HE, incorporating HE into her professional work, and identifying the scholarship of teaching and learning as a means of professional growth and being a continuous learner.

I'm just trying to do what I can to connect what I do professionally teaching language and literature with what I am learning all the time with humane education classes... I think excellent teachers are just always trying to learn and incorporate what they learn into what they do in the classroom... I think you can't do excellent course development if you are not a continuous learner yourself. I think that the scholarship of teaching and learning should always inform what we are doing in the classroom.

Also considered the scholarship of teaching and learning, Ashley described her involvement in professional conferences, chairing humane-focused panels, presenting sessions, and sharing her process for bringing new topics into her course development work which has complimented her own engagement in further learning, research, and writing for publication. Attending professional conferences and presenting sessions was understood as part of the scholarship of teaching and learning, and a pathway for professional learning and growth. Also valuing engagement in professional workshops and conferences, Diane and David described this professional activity as a form of continuous learning. In addition, David identified professional learning as important for improving one's professional work, also referencing the scholarship of teaching and learning as "ways of seeing if what you're doing works."

Theme: Valuing collaborative learning within communities of practice. Six practitioners conveyed the importance of connection and collaboration as integral to professional learning. Noteworthy, collaboration within communities of practice was

contextualized as being a continuous learner, desiring connection, and valuing organizational learning and ongoing professional support.

To illustrate, Maria described herself as a continuous learner and privileged “the need for connection with other humane educators” as important. For Maria, learning from other people and connecting to other humane educators online through Twitter, articles, and blogs sustains her as a continuous learner.

With the internet and Twitter, people are just posting articles and reading people’s blogs, that helped me to be connected and to just keep growing, probably at a much faster pace; I think at a much faster pace than if I didn’t have access to that... I want to be connected with people... so I keep learning from other people. I think it’s probably the best way.

Cheryl communicated similar sentiments, stating “I feel like I am just one of those people always wanting to learn more, and I’m always seeking support.” Cheryl also described her belief in the role of professional learning as “a very collaborative undertaking” and remarked that for her, the deepest learning happens when she is in dialogue with other people. Cheryl described her work within multiple communities of practice emphasizing how each community supports her ongoing learning, growth, and development. First, Cheryl offered a description of her participation on a multicultural leadership team.

I would say, at my school site, the space where I have been most supported in ongoing growth, learning, and development has been on our multicultural leadership team... I would say that the training that I have undergone at my

school around multiculturalism and how to explore concepts from multiple perspectives, understanding the relationship between specific aspects of identity and how that informs an individual's perspective has really helped me in considering how to plan lessons that cultivate an opportunity for multiple viewpoints to be included in discussion and for people with differing perspectives to disagree respectfully and to learn from each other... that's been a really powerful framework for me.

In addition to professional learning on-site at her school, Cheryl described her participation in a local teacher inquiry group which self-organized to self-design their own professional learning.

There's a community here... and they are a group that has organized to provide for ourselves the kind of professional development that you don't see in the public school system. Most of the teachers in the group are public school teachers. It is an amazing space where once a month they offer a teacher inquiry group space where there is a reading and then we discuss the reading and think about how we're applying that to our different teaching contexts. It is ongoing practice, support, and reflection. I am really appreciative of that space.

In a third description, Cheryl communicated the importance of her participation in council as connecting to her purpose, also illuminating the sense of connection and support she values as a practitioner of HE

I also have been doing council, which is a form of circle work, just really grounded in storytelling, and that for me really gets me connected with my

purpose. I feel like in order to practice humane education, I need to be connected with my purpose and with my sense of who I am, so those circles I find to be really supportive and I participate in those at least once a month, if not more.

Alongside the positive experiences Cheryl communicated as related to the role of professional learning in her life and special emphasis placed upon the importance of learning within communities of practice, Cheryl also recognized the need for additional connection and community among practitioners of HE.

I would love to have more of an opportunity for ongoing dialogue with other humane educators where we share ideas and support each other with the challenges that we face in our respective settings... I would love to see more solutionary spaces created... and really feel there needs to be more community-based institutions. So, whether it's a school per se, or a community center, or whatever it might look like, I think just calling out for that solutionary kind of focus and energy I think is really important.

As additional supporting evidence communicating the value placed on professional learning within communities of practice, Pam described the importance of a hands-on, in-person, and experiential approach to field-based learning.

For me, professional development has always been hit or miss. I prefer a lot more professional development that allows me to dig in and create something while I am there as opposed to sitting and listening to someone else tell me about great things but not give me an opportunity to try them.

Pam went on to describe the kind of professional learning opportunities she would appreciate, still within the context of a collaborative community.

If I was looking for humane education professional development or some type of extension, I guess I'd be most interested in sitting with other educators and looking at the standards and trying to envision what a humane education unit would look like or what lessons would look like and actually being able to build and create them while I was there would be helpful because I think the more isolated you feel in a school as a humane educator, or even just as an educator in general, I think the easier it is to fall into a trap of what's comfortable to teach and not pushing yourself as hard. I think the more you can sit with other educators and actually create something new that you wouldn't have thought of on your own makes it better.

Describing the role of professional learning in her life as a practitioner, Diane offered a view on organizational learning as a form of professional learning illuminating the organization as a community of practice.

As an organization, we try to stay current on the common core standards, the Danielson model, and the different expectations of educators so that if we're going to do professional training, we can be on top of what the expectations of the educators are, and we try to stay current on different humane education resources... Recently at our organization, in their manual, they've added that if there's any professional development courses or programs that we want to participate in, that they'll review it and they'll compensate us for it, or they'll

cover the cost of it so we can get further professional development whether it's in education or one of the content areas to stay aware of the issues.

Within her narrative, Rachel identified the need for field-based connection and support, hinting at the need for differentiation to best support practitioners of HE teaching in schools.

I think every teacher doing humane education should be part of a group, possibly a Facebook group, to share information on a regular basis. Also, each one should have a coach or mentor or someone checking in with them to offer help, current research, marketing materials and data to use to gain acceptance and buy-in from school leaders, career suggestions, networking assistance, etc. I'm guessing these could come from organizations that are leaders in humane education.

Also in agreement, Katherine described the role of professional learning within communities of practice as offering connection, support, and both professional and personal growth. She described this as “establishing very close personal relationships with humane educators and communicating with them on a regular basis, on a personal-friendly level, and also about the work itself.” She added, “I meet with a group of humane educators on a fairly weekly basis, and that is personal but often delves into the professional, and that definitely helps to expand my professional learning.”

Further elaborating on the value of professional learning within a community of practice, Katherine offered suggestions encouraging stakeholders to develop field-based support for practitioners.

I would love to see a humane education professional community that is small enough to support monthly or twice a month meetings, virtual meetings, since we are all over the world, where teachers can come together and talk about the work, and commiserate, and brainstorm, and share resources, and share ideas, but that it is on a very personal level, not like an organization where it is this very large group and website and there is no personal connection. I would love to see some type of personal/professional guild created where humane education teachers can come together to work to further the field of humane education through classroom work and school work.

Theme: Valuing self-directed professional learning. In addition to valuing collaboration within communities of practice as a form of professional learning, three participants identified self-directed learning and self-designed professional development as a field-based reality. Heather described her perception and experience of professional learning as an expectation that in the role of educator, learning automatically continues. Referring to self-directed learning, Heather described that as educators, “you do your own professional development.” Adding to the evidence substantiating self-directed learning as a reality and form of professional learning for educators, Rachel described herself as a continuous learner by taking ownership of her own ongoing professional learning.

Everything I’ve done, I’ve pretty much just done on my own. I’m an avid reader so I devour books on topics related to the environment. I am a huge animal rights person. I’ve been vegan since 2008. I’ve been to some conferences... and got a lot

of materials there on animal issues. I've read lots of animal rights books so that I know what the issues are that are going on with animals. It's hard. Social justice. Research. I have used some institute created HE topics and then designed my own lessons... as far as class a class or learning, I've just done all of that on my own. Also critical, Katherine identified an absence of institute-endorsed professional learning opportunities beyond the graduate program, therefore situating the context of her professional learning as self-study, or self-designed learning.

As far as an organized professional setting, as far as I know, there is nothing that exists through the institute, or supported by the institute, and so my professional learning both for my own knowledge base as an educator and for my curriculum development work is really self-study. It's really driven by my own decisions and my own wanting to extend my learning, and that includes numerous books on my bedside table, and subscribing to professional websites, and really trying to maintain connection in the professional humane educators group, really trying to stay present in education and in just education itself as a field, really trying to advance my own professional knowledge, specifically in regards to curriculum development... and I think I see myself as a lifelong learner, and it's just not formal.

RQ 5: What is the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of HE? Critiquing the efficacy of professional learning, professional development, and continuing education, practitioners communicated suggestions for improving HE as a field of study and professional

practice. Practitioners offered strategies for improving field-based professional learning opportunities to address implementation concerns while also communicating strategies for growing and sustaining the field of HE. Three themes emerged in the data corpus drawing attention to the need for field-based support for practitioners, increased visibility and awareness of HE as a field of study and professional practice, and the development of financially sustainable pathways for professional learning and advanced degree attainment.

Theme: Recognizing the need for field-based support. Cross-case analysis revealed participants communicating the need for fully developed teaching and learning resources, widespread access to HE content in higher education and continuing education programs, and more time for professional learning. Pam described the importance of “more information and resources that public school teachers and general practitioner teachers could use” and shared how accessing complete units of study would be beneficial.

I think it would be easier for me to present to other teachers if there were finished units that teachers could start with because I think that’s the most intimidating thing, figuring out how to sit down and plan for something like that, especially if you’re not super comfortable with the content. It is very labor intensive to do the research and then plan accordingly and figure out how to best evaluate whether you got through to the students in any kind of meaningful way... Looking for more units or concrete plans or book studies... a scope and sequence... or something that teachers could grab onto as a starting point to help them

understand that teaching humane education isn't too difficult to do. It's just a little shift in the way you perceive the content that's in front of you.

David shared similar sentiments, communicating that it would be helpful to have more lessons detailing how to teach discipline specific content using HE, as well as content knowledge to demonstrate "different ways of teaching humane education."

In addition to the recognized need for the development and availability of teaching and learning resources, Diane communicated the need for more access to HE courses through higher education and continuing education opportunities.

I think it would be exciting as a field if there were more colleges that had electives you could take related to educational practices and teaching humane education. I think it would be exciting if all universities had different humane education programs and continuing education opportunities where you could take an elective on humane education and focus on different things like the most current issues and how to effectively teach them... curriculum writing... whatever the interest was... but if you could really go to any institution and they would be offering courses related to humane education... it would be really exciting if there were continuing education courses throughout universities.

Diane elaborated, drawing attention to HE gaining credibility and recognition as a field of study and professional practice if it were ubiquitous within higher education.

People often say that when a field is really infused into the university level, then it sort of spreads, like with feminism there became women's studies and it got a lot of credibility, and with the environmental movement, when there was

environmental ethics at the university level and you could get degrees in it. I think it would be exciting to see that a lot more colleges and universities had humane education as part of the content, that is was just expected to be there.

Also an example of the need for field-based support, Diane and Ashley expressed the need for more time to engage in professional learning. To illustrate, Diane stated, “teachers are always asking for professional development, but it’s not something that’s necessarily expected of us and it is something where it’s challenging to carve out the time to do it.” Diane elaborated further, communicating her desire to engage in more professional learning, also highlighting the challenge in doing so.

I haven’t necessarily had the opportunity to do a whole lot of what would be considered professional learning. I think that is something that as a practitioner I need to do more of... There have been times at my work that I’ve been working 80 hours a week and so it’s just been challenging to be aware of different professional development opportunities and to take advantage of them, so I think that’s definitely something I need to work on.

In addition, Diane described the possibility of enrolling in a PhD program as a means of prioritizing time for professional learning and research.

As part of her narrative account, Ashley illustrated the importance of time, contextualizing it within her description of teaching and learning challenges at the postsecondary level of education.

I wish I had unlimited time to explore the basics of HE in the countries I teach. I am sure there are many organizations I’m not aware of, and of course concerns

about human rights, animals, and the environment are different in each area. For postsecondary teachers, I think one of the big challenges is the amount of content we teach, the faster pace, and trying to find out how also to incorporate humane education. There is so much additional research we will need to do in our fields to be able to do this effectively.

Implementing the philosophy and praxis of HE necessitates time for field-based professional learning and support.

Theme: Recognizing the need to increase visibility and awareness of humane education as a field of study and professional practice. Three participants communicated the need for increased visibility and awareness of HE as a field of study and professional practice. This understanding also connects back to the concern practitioners conveyed regarding the varied, and perhaps contested, perceptions students, parents, colleagues, and communities may hold of the philosophy, intention, and implementation of HE. As part of their narrative accounts, David, Maria, and Ashley each drew attention to the need for visibility and awareness.

David communicated his sentiments regarding the need for visibility and awareness in describing how “most people don’t know what humane education is and they think it has to do with dogs or cats. A lot of kids or teachers I visit think it has to do with the human body.” David further elaborated, stating, “I think there needs to be more awareness about what humane education is... and to get teachers excited, show how humane education is a great way of getting the kids excited and get that buy-in for what they’re learning.”

Maria described that “people talking and publicizing their work” would advance the initiative to increase visibility and awareness of HE. Maria elaborated noting how “humane education is being implemented all over the place, all the time...it’s not called humane education” and therefore stakeholders should consider the need to “publicize the work already being done and call it humane education.” In addition, regarding HE programming, Maria shared how “it would be nice to see programs at local universities, especially around big cities... then people would hear about it, want to do it, and it is accessible.” Also important, Maria identified the need for an in-person HE presence as a pathway for adult learning.

Ashley communicated her desire to increase the visibility and awareness of HE as a field of study and professional practice by “introducing more humane education sessions into conferences that are not necessarily humane education conferences” and by infusing HE into “teaching and learning conferences... to bring to people’s attention that this exists, that it’s an approach that can be really productive and fruitful.” Ashley also described wanting to see “more colleagues at the postsecondary level take advantage of these humane education degrees” and hopes for more visibility for the field to show that HE can transform the experience of teaching and learning. Ashley elaborated further, continuing to describe how visibility and awareness would be beneficial at the post-secondary level of education to advance HE as a field of study and professional practice.

I’d like to see the university take a leadership role in programming a conference, a national conference, to bring teachers together. I’m particularly interested in getting Midwestern teachers together because I think we’re the ones who are up

against the hardest sell probably with some of this stuff. Part of my sabbatical project is to really kick-start the conversation here on campus to see where we can take it with the conference, with presentations. Just getting the word out I think at this level is what needs to happen.

Theme: Recognizing the need to develop financially sustainable pathways for professional learning and advanced degree attainment. Within the context of cross-case analysis, David, Rachel, and Pam communicated similar sentiments identifying the need for financially sustainable professional learning and advanced degree attainment. David described not having plans for additional formal education because of student loans, and in result, he was therefore focused on engaging in less expensive means of professional learning and professional development. Rachel, too, described cost being a deterrent when considering the possibility of working toward an advanced degree in HE. Pam also identified continuing education as expensive, critiquing the feasibility of advanced degree attainment for field-based practitioners.

Continuing degrees are a lot less inviting than maybe they used to be... it doesn't seem like most teachers feel a whole lot of value in getting advanced degrees anymore, unless it is for a pay raise unfortunately or if it's to go and become an administrator. To me, it seems like a lot of people see it as a lot of money spent without a lot of return... so it's going to take a lot of work at the undergraduate level in order to push people to take that leap and do an extended study. For humane education, you have to go into it because it either seems like it's a clear fit or because it's something you are passionate about and I think a lot of people

might see a price tag of a graduate degree and think ooh, I'm not quite that passionate... I think it's just hard as a teacher to know whether it's worth spending that kind of money if it's not a degree that you can use to further your spot within a school.

Elaborating further and sharing a strategy for addressing financial concerns, Pam described developing undergraduate offerings in HE.

I think having some type of undergraduate degree offering opens people up to the passion of the program would maybe help to encourage people to enroll. I do like that they do the certificate as opposed to a full-on master's program which I think is a nice alternative, and some of the online programs to kind of help you decide whether it's a right fit for you, I think is a good way to go. I think it's all about aiming toward people's passion.

Alongside offering a possible solution, Pam's narrative account also encourages stakeholders to notice and consider that advanced degrees in HE do not always guarantee career advancement supporting a change in roles, responsibilities, and financial remuneration for practitioners because the role of humane educator may not be recognized in policy and programming, nor offered as a contractual employment position.

Understanding how participants experienced professional learning and the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners provided critical insight into what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools. Findings emphasized the importance of being a continuous learner and brought into focus ways in which professional learning, professional development, and continuing education can be

improved to better respond to the learning needs and interests of practitioners within the context of their lifeworld. Resulting themes synthesized practitioners' perceptions, beliefs, and experiences related to professional learning, professional development, and continuing education and provided evidence of the need for field-based support within the context of an evolving and holistic paradigm for improving and sustaining HE as a field of study and professional practice.

Guiding research question: What does it mean to be a practitioner of humane education teaching in U.S. schools? What it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools is complex, multifaceted, and specific to each participant's philosophical worldview, value system, personal and professional experience, and teaching context. Within-case analysis descriptions and cross-case thematic assertions contributed to the development of a beginning understanding of what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools. Based on the representativeness of beliefs, perceptions, and experience of practitioners who participated in this inquiry, being a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools means:

- arriving at HE with interest, experience, and values aligned with environmental ethics, animal protection, and human rights
- seeking relief from marginalization and oppression contextualized as standardized schooling practices
- experiencing the learning of HE as transformative
- valuing consciousness-raising, decision-making, and community-building
- seeing connection and interconnection on behalf of Earth, animals, humans

- positioning HE as an educational imperative
- implementing HE through diverse approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- understanding and negotiating varied connotations, denotations, and perceptions of HE
- working to improve the reach of HE, access to HE, and boundaries of HE
- identifying opportunities, interests, and needs related to field-based professional learning, development, and growth
- engaging the scholarship of teaching and learning as professional learning
- valuing collaborative learning within communities of practice
- recognizing self-study and self-directed learning as a form of professional development
- illuminating the need for field-based support
- strategizing to increase visibility and awareness of HE
- advocating for the design of financially sustainable pathways for professional learning, professional development, continuing education, and advanced degree attainment.

Research-derived accounts were shared describing what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools, contributing to the field a developing understanding of practitioner philosophy, implementation strategies, practitioner concerns, professional learning and continuing education experiences, and strategies for developing and sustaining HE as a field of study and professional practice. Research

findings illuminated an absence of practitioner-centered professional learning communities and ongoing support. Therefore, research findings also illuminated the need for policy recommendations to develop a system of field-based professional learning and support for practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. Findings were contextualized through the conceptual framework prioritizing experience as a context for learning (Dewey, 1997), the presence of hyphenated selves (Fine & Sirin, 2007), liberation pedagogy (Kahn & Humes, 2009) consciousness raising (Freire, 2006, 2008; Freire & Shor, 1987), transformative learning and transformative education (Boyd & Myers, 1988; Brookfield, 2012; Clark, 1991; Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Dirkx, 2012; Fisher-Yoshida et al., 2009; Kreber, 2012; Mezirow, 2012; O'Sullivan, 2012; Tisdell, 2012), and reflection in action (Schon, 1983).

Verification Processes

Stake (1995), Creswell (2013), Merriam (2009), and Yin (2014) identified several strategies used by researchers to maximize accuracy, comprehensiveness, clarity, validity, and reliability of resulting analyses and the interpretation of findings. In developing data analysis and interpretation, several strategies were used to maximize the verification of findings. Strategies included (a) methodological triangulation; (b) member checking; (c) applying rich, thick description; (d) maximum variation; (e) developing an audit trail; and (f) managing discrepant cases.

The first strategy, methodological triangulation was used across data collection, analysis, and the writing of profiles and reports to provide additional confirmation of questionable descriptions, key themes, and critical interpretations (Stake, 1995). When a

portion of data was questionable requiring triangulation, I sought evidentiary support within the context of the interview data and document review data. If findings were confirmed across multiple data sources, descriptions, key themes, and critical interpretations were included as verified findings (Stake, 1995).

A second verification strategy included the use of member checking. In preparation for data analysis and interpretation, interview transcript profiles were created and sent to individual research participants via email. Participants were asked to examine the interview profile checking for accuracy and comfort level with content description, assertions, and interpretations. Participants were asked to provide feedback to the researcher via email regarding change in wording or interpretations. Participants were asked to complete the case profile review, forwarding all comments via email, within seven days of receiving the profile for examination (Stake, 1995).

A third verification strategy included rich, thick description to assist readers in understanding how findings within individual case descriptions and cross case analysis descriptions may be transferable to other settings because of shared characteristics within each case and across cases (Creswell, 2013). This should not be confused with engaging in inquiry to generalize findings on a grand scale, expecting findings to be similar or the same across a wide variety of instances and settings. With enough detail and description used, readers are able to understand how what it means to be a practitioner of HE is contextualized within particular settings and if readers deem the contextualization similar to their own, findings can possibly be transferred. In this regard, readers may learn from the findings (Merriam, 2009).

Three additional verification strategies were used and include the use of maximum variation, development of an audit trail, and dealing with discrepant cases. Maximum variation relates back to the sampling procedure wherein criteria were developed to select participants working as humane educators in a variety of public or private schooling contexts. Understanding what it means to be a humane educator as evidenced through multiple perspectives and diverse contexts provided a broader applicability of the research findings for readers (Merriam, 2009). In addition, developing an audit trail describing all aspects of the research process enhances verification and offers potential for replication of the study by researchers (Merriam, 2009). Managing discrepant cases was included within the context of data analysis and interpretation to weigh the atypicality of cases (Stake, 1995). Discrepant findings served as additional rendering of multiple perspectives in the development of a holistic picture of what it means to be a practitioner of HE. Taken together, these six strategies help spotlight accuracy, comprehensiveness, clarity, validity, reliability and atypicality of research findings as readers seek to understand what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms.

Dissemination of Findings

Findings from data collection, analysis, and interpretation were presented to individual research participants, Mary Pat Champeau as community partner, the Walden University community, and readers of the ProQuest dissertation database. Findings were disseminated to the named stakeholders upon receipt of doctoral study approval by Walden University's Chief Academic Officer. Stakeholders and readers of the ProQuest

dissertations received findings in the body of the final, published draft of the doctoral study paper. It is hoped that stakeholders engage the findings as consumers of research valuing the contributions within as having established a scholarly knowledge base and to inform HE practice, policy, and program development (Merriam, 2009).

Conclusion

Section 2 detailed how qualitative research methodology, an interpretive stance of constructivism, and an instrumental multicase study research design was derived logically from the problem and research questions providing impetus for an inquiry exploring what it means to be a practitioner of HE. The qualitative research tradition and interpretive stance of constructivism was described followed by a description of multicase study research. Justification for the use of both a qualitative research methodology and multicase study design was provided and compared to other possible research traditions and corresponding designs. Also described was the use of maximum variation and purposeful sampling strategies, procedures for participant recruitment, methods of gaining access to participants, and processes for establishing working relationships and ethical protections. A specific plan for data collection, data analysis and interpretation, verification of findings, management of discrepant cases, and procedures for disseminating the findings was included.

Section 3 will detail the development of a policy recommendation paper created to specifically address the research findings. Rationale for selecting this project genre will be included and substantiated through a review of the research findings. In addition, a second scholarly literature review will contextualize policy recommendations and a

plan for program evaluation will be included. Policy recommendations will be analyzed to ascertain and describe implications for social change.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The breadth of the research findings substantiated the need to create a policy recommendation paper to best support the implementation and sustainment of HE as a field of study and professional practice for practitioners working in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. Section 3 begins with a rationale for creating a policy recommendation paper as an appropriate project genre, followed by a second scholarly review of the literature to contextualize policy recommendations. A description of existing resources, supports, potential barriers, and stakeholder roles and responsibilities will be included as a needs analysis strategy for implementing policy recommendations. Implications for social change will be described substantiating local and far reaching policy recommendation outcomes. The complete policy paper is located in the appendices and titled, Appendix A: Policy Recommendation Paper.

Description and Goals

Creating a policy recommendation paper provided the opportunity to address the research findings illuminating the absence of HE-focused professional learning communities and ongoing support for practitioners teaching through the lens of HE. The research findings provided impetus for developing a system of field-based professional learning experiences and support for practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. The primary goal of the policy recommendation paper is to offer a comprehensive approach for supporting the ongoing

growth and development of practitioners teaching through the lens of HE as a means of improving and sustaining humane education as a field of study and professional practice.

Rationale

Drafting a policy recommendation paper was the best choice for addressing the research findings and absence of HE focused professional learning communities and ongoing support for practitioners. Developing a curriculum plan or a series of professional development experiences would not fully capture the scope of the research findings, nor address the concerns expressed by practitioners and strategies they suggested as a means for improving and sustaining HE as a field of study and professional practice. Also important to note, an evaluation report was not an applicable choice for project selection as the impetus for the inquiry was to arrive at a description detailing what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools, not to implement a system for evaluating program outcomes using research methodology. Addressing within-case and cross-case findings, a policy recommendation paper was the best design for communicating a comprehensive system of field-based professional learning experiences and support for practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms. When implemented, strategies recommended within the policy paper become a natural extension of the institute's mission and vision to create a more just and humane society.

Analyzing the within-case and cross-case findings provided impetus for designing a comprehensive system of field-based professional learning experiences and support for practitioners. Practitioner narratives provided a context for better understanding the role

of field-based professional learning and support for improving and sustaining HE as a field of study and professional practice. Practitioners identified interests, needs, and suggestions as strategies for developing ongoing field-based learning and support to improve professional practice, simultaneously advancing the development of the field of HE. Drawn from the research findings, practitioners suggested the need for:

- financially sustainable opportunities for professional learning and continuing education
- connection, community, and solutionary spaces for collaboration
- creating support networks and collaborative learning communities
- a system for ongoing coaching and mentoring
- diversity and reaching communities of color
- developing a variety of differentiated virtual and in-person, place-based professional learning opportunities through retreats or summits, book studies, conferences, workshops, and online courses
- field-based research to improve professional practice, learning outcomes, and program efficacy
- time to explore and research the topics and issues of HE
- learning different ways of teaching HE and learning to teach a values-based education without indoctrination
- exploring special topics relevant to classroom practice such as classroom management, critical thinking, critical pedagogy, design thinking, multiculturalism, Einstein's circle of compassion, systems thinking, solutionary

approaches, critical consciousness, storytelling, sustainability, student-centered learning, curriculum writing, mindfulness, wellness, healing practices, and self-care

- developing HE-focused resources such as lessons, units of study, and scope and sequence possibilities
- revisioning school structures to manifest change
- ongoing support to incorporate HE into one's life and professional practice
- exploring self-hood and professional identity development
- developing as a critical educator applying reflection and self-assessment to grow as a practitioner
- addressing marginalization, oppression, and professional burnout
- and career development.

These findings can be synthesized as key principles and rationale for creating a system of field-based professional development to best support practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary U.S. classroom contexts. In consequence, a second literature review was needed to explore and better understand the design and implementation of professional learning communities, communities of practice, and corresponding evidence-based practices. Combined, the research findings and scholarly literature contributed to development of the policy recommendation paper.

Review of the Literature

A second scholarly literature review was accomplished to explore and better understand the design and implementation of professional learning communities, communities of practice, and corresponding evidence-based practices. Academic Search Complete and ProQuest Central databases were used to search for evidence-based practices related to professional learning, professional development, and continuing education across 1999 through 2016. Search terms were selected based on the research findings and included phrases such as *communities of practice*, *continuing education*, *faculty development*, *growing as a professional*, *professional development*, *professional learning*, *professional learning communities*, *retreats*, *transformative learning*, and *workplace learning*. With a vast number of scholarly articles available, maintaining a narrow focus proved critical to best synthesize evidence-based practices related to the design, implementation, and assessment of the three areas of concern that included (a) centers of pedagogy and teacher networks, (b) communities of practice, and (c) professional development schools.

Centers of Pedagogy and Teacher Networks

In surveying the scholarly literature, Zimpher and Howey's (2013) call to action for the development of 21st century centers of pedagogy provided a comprehensive model for designing field-based pre-service and in-service teacher education and professional learning experiences. Sharing examples of successful features of centers already in existence, the authors provided a history of the centers of pedagogy movement and contextualized the importance of teacher training and adult learning as experiential

learning, place-based learning, and interdisciplinary learning, while also placing high value upon inquiry approaches and teacher study groups, assessment, research, policy development, collaboration, and university partnerships; all of this a means for developing teacher excellence, knowledge of best practices, and improved student achievement in primary, secondary, and postsecondary education. Within the context of university and local school district partnerships, several evidence-based, adult learning activities are also described, all of which included teaching clinics, lesson study, instructional rounds and rotations, clinical supervision, professional learning communities, coaching models, and case study development.

Supporting Zimpher and Howey's (2013) call to action with their suggested design for the development of centers of pedagogy, a seminal text by Patterson, Michelli, and Pacheco (1999) corroborated Zimpher and Howey's professional learning framework. In similar fashion, Patterson et al. described the historical roots necessitating centers of pedagogy, offered strategies for successful development, and provided three case study examples of centers in practice. Noteworthy, Patterson et al. identified higher education faculty in college of education departments, higher education faculty in the arts and sciences, and faculty in primary and secondary public schools as key, collaborative stakeholders. Three essential qualities of centers of pedagogy, which can be used as strategies in the design, implementation, and assessment of centers, included (a) cultivating a shared vision; (b) critical role and reciprocal relationship of inquiry, research, and renewal; and (c) meaningful and sustainable collaborative partnerships among key stakeholders.

Also important, in surveying the scholarly literature in this second review, there was much evidence corroborating Zimpher and Howey's (2013) examples of lesson study, coaching models, collaborative research, and communities of practice as examples of successful learning experiences taking place as the work of centers of pedagogy. For example, lesson study was found useful as a form of teacher-driven professional development in the context of teaching fifth grade history (Halvorsen & Lund, 2013), elementary and middle school mathematics (Lewis, Fischman, Riggs, & Wasserman, 2013), aligning literacy and response to intervention (Benedict, Park, Brownell, Lauterbach, & Kiely, 2013), developing teacher efficacy in high schools (Chong & Kong, 2012), applying teaching standards (Kriewaldt, 2012), engaging collaborative research (Groves, Doig, Widjaja, Garner, & Palmer, 2013), and as a strategy for developing pre-service teacher expertise (Cheng, 2011), student teacher expertise (Cluphf, Lux, & Scott, 2012), graduate teaching assistant expertise (Dotger, 2011), and college level instruction (Demir, Czerniak, & Hart, 2013).

Likewise, instructional coaching models are prevalent in the scholarly literature and described as a beneficial form of school-based, job-embedded professional development for educators and administrators. Several studies illustrate the scope of research initiatives discerning the efficacy of instructional coaching and application of coaching psychology in education. In particular, available studies illuminated:

- contributions of literacy coaching as a form of professional development for teachers in primary and secondary classroom contexts (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011; Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolten, & Zigmond, 2010; Gross, 2010; Dean, Dyal,

Wright, Carpenter, & Austin, 2012; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2011; Gross, 2012; Hindman & Wasik, 2012; Kennedy, 2010; L'Allier, Elish-Piper, & Bean, 2010; Matsumura, Garnier, Correnti, Junker, & Bickel, 2010; Neuman & Wright, 2010; Onchwari & Keengwe, 2010; Pomerantz & Pierce, 2013; Powell & Diamond, 2013; Sailors & Price, 2010; Taylor, Zugelder, & Bowman, 2013; Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010; Vernon-Feagans, Kainz, Amendum, Ginsberg, Wood, & Bock, 2012)

- coaching methodology as a form of professional development for special educators (Wilson, Dykstra, Watson, Boyd, & Crais, 2011)
- differentiated coaching approaches and strategies (Stover, Kissel, Haag, & Shoniker, 2011)
- application of coaching methodology to implement positive behavioral supports in individual classrooms and schoolwide contexts (Becker, Darney, Domitrovich, Keperling, & Ialongo, 2013; Cavanaugh & Swan, 2015; Hershfeldt, Pell, Sechrest, Pas, & Bradshaw, 2012)
- coaching and mentoring strategies used in the development of school administrators' self-efficacy and leadership skills (Rhodes & Fletcher, 2013)
- nuances of coaching discourse and implications for professional learning (Heineke, 2013)
- effects of coaching on inquiry learning in secondary classrooms (Wang, 2013)
- teachers experience learning coaching skills (Barr & van Nieuwerburgh, 2015)

- and root cause of a failed academic coaching program to develop future recommendations for success (Wickersham, 2015).

Furthermore, with the recent publication by Weil (2016) advocating for a renaissance in primary, secondary, and postsecondary education and providing a call to action to nurture students as solutionaries, exploring scholarly literature related to goal-focused and solution-focused coaching models was relevant to best develop policy recommendations benefitting practitioners teaching through the lens of HE. Both theoretical and research-based articles established a foundation for understanding the value and pedagogy of appreciative and solution-focused coaching methodologies. The resulting literature illuminated:

- the application of appreciative inquiry as a strategy for mentoring, organizational development, inquiry, and program evaluation (Aldred, 2011; Alston-Mills, 2011; Assudani & Kilbourne, 2015; Calabrese, 2012; Calabrese, 2015; Calabrese, Hester, Friesen, & Burkhalter, 2010; Cooper, 2014; Cooperrider & McQuaid, 2012; Dewar & Sharp, 2013; Doggett & Lewis, 2013; Fletcher, 2012; Giles & Kung, 2010; Jacobs & Brandt, 2012; Jones, Lyrantzis, & Kastens, 2010; Lewis & Emil, 2010; Lilja & Richardson, 2012; Orr & Cleveland-Innes, 2015; San Martin & Calabrese, 2011; Santos, 2014; Wendt, Tuckey, & Prosser, 2011)
- differences between problem-focused thinking and solution-focused thinking within the context of solution-focused coaching (Hicks & McCracken, 2010)
- solution-focused team coaching strategies applied to organizational development (Eaton, Kay, & Moon, 2010)

- a framework for developing a solution-focused coaching model (Grant, 2011)
- effects of solution-focused coaching on coaching outcomes as perceived by clients (Visser, 2011)
- an application of solution-focused coaching as a professional development strategy for staff working with intellectual disabilities (Roeden, Maaskant, Bannink, & Curfs, 2012)
- research comparing solution-focused and problem-focused questioning strategies within the context of coaching relationships (Grant, 2012b)
- the efficacy of goal-focused coaching (Grant, 2012a)
- solution focused coaching strategies applied as support to enhance doctoral student motivation (Barclay, 2013)
- relationships between solution-focused leadership and solution-focused coaching methodology (Godat, 2013)
- key principles in the application of solution-focused coaching strategies (Grant, 2013)
- and the value of vision-based coaching within the context of leadership development (Passarelli, 2015).

In addition, collaborative research was well documented in the scholarly literature, positioned as an effective strategy and valuable means of professional learning and professional development. To illustrate, Jones, Stanley, McNamara, and Murray (2011) reported on the importance of designing sustainable, research-focused professional learning networks; Vetter and Russell (2011) explored how the construction

of research identities is critical for improving teaching and learning initiatives; research conducted by Hill and Haigh (2012) illuminated the importance of developing communities of research practice in higher education; and Pareja Roblin, Ormel, McKenney, Voogt, and Pieters (2014) explored the relationship between applied research and collaborative lesson design. Also important, several studies illustrate the benefits of action research in education when applied as:

- methodology to explore collaborative discourse and its impact on student learning (Nelson, Duel, Slavit, & Kennedy, 2010)
- pedagogy illuminating “knowledge-of-practice” (Goodnough, 2010)
- a reflective tool for improving teaching and learning (West, 2011)
- a way of understanding and experiencing professional identity development (Feldman & Weiss, 2010; Goodnough, 2011)
- practice-research networks (Appleby & Hillier, 2012)
- a process for improving language education (Yuan & Lee, 2015).

Noteworthy, by design, centers for pedagogy are created as networks; collaborative relationships among primary, secondary, and postsecondary faculty, administrators, researchers, and community stakeholders (Zimpher & Howey, 2013). Relevant to HE as a field of study and professional practice, outcomes of Ritchie’s (2012) qualitative research exploring critical pedagogy and social justice education illuminated the importance of teacher networks in supporting, incubating, and sustaining the work of practitioners. Ritchie identified the importance of recognizing how formal and informal networks of like-minded individuals are organized, or self-organized, and serve as a

meeting ground for collaboration, sharing, and support. In practice, these networked relationships are local, regional, national, and international in scope, and facilitated in person and online.

Adding to Zimpher and Howey's (2013) contributions, an earlier study conducted by Hanraets, Hulsebosch, and de Laat (2011) illuminated the importance of successful facilitation of teacher networks in which educators develop collective knowledge and improve their practice. Recommendations for successful implementation were arrived at by exploring the challenges practitioners faced in facilitating networks. Several challenges and difficulties were identified. Facilitators experienced difficulty embracing what is required for self-organization of networks in lieu of preplanning learning experiences, supporting participants to experience shared ownership and responsibility for the network and corresponding learning activities, negotiating varied levels of existing participant competencies with competencies required for networked learning, balancing in-person and online learning experiences, and working with limited time and space for professional learning. In response, Hanraets et al. offered several recommendations for facilitators as a means of addressing challenges experienced, all of which included appropriating a nondirective approach, coaching into self-organization and competency development, initiating learning activities first through in-person experiences to engender later participation online, and providing much support to maximize participation.

In combination, strategies for designing centers of pedagogy (Patterson, Michelli, & Pacheco, 1999; Zimpher & Howey, 2013) and teacher networks (Hanraets,

Hulsebosch, & de Laat, 2011; Ritchie, 2012) can be applied to HE as a field of study and professional practice, and particularly useful in addressing the absence of a field-based, professional development model for practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classroom contexts. Also important, research-derived, evidence-based, and theoretical descriptions of lesson study, coaching methods, and collaborative inquiry are all opportunities for differentiated learning experiences available for use within the context of centers of pedagogy and teacher networks as pathways for professional learning, development, and growth.

Communities of Practice

Within the scholarly literature, the terms communities of practice and professional learning communities are used synonymously. Several articles and seminal texts provide the evidence base needed for designing, implementing, and assessing communities of practice and professional learning communities. Theoretical and research-derived descriptions provide an important synthesis of strategies which can be applied to the development of policy recommendations for creating and sustaining healthy professional learning communities as part of a comprehensive model of field-based professional development for practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in U.S. schools. Wenger (1998) and Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) offered theoretical propositions positioning the constructs of knowledge and meaning, identity development, and community as an emergent social learning theory essential for better understanding how to design and sustain healthy systems of professional experience and practice. Critically, Wenger (1998) declared, “learning cannot be designed: it can only be designed for- that is,

facilitated or frustrated” (p.229). With this as a pivotal proposition, creating a model for field-based professional learning and growth relies not upon organizing the learning, but instead focuses energy and intention toward designing for learning and combining processes to facilitate healthy and sustainable professional experiences. With this intention, design processes are applied to support learning, thereby valuing learning itself as emergent, integrative, and embedded within the construction of not only knowledge for practice, knowledge in practice, but also for knowledge of practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

According to Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), the knowledge educators need can be found within the contexts of their own classrooms; classrooms as sites of inquiry and therefore already established as communities of practice, or professional learning communities. Within such communities, learning is integrative to the process of knowledge making, and both learning and designing for learning processes are emergent, constructivist in nature, connected to critical pedagogy and teaching for change, and therefore always holding the possibility of transformation. By extension then, when teacher learning is understood and privileged in this way, the terminology “field-based support” presents a duality, and suggested in that language is the possibility of transmission or banking styles of professional learning. To work against this, the terminology “field-based support” when applied to the professional practice of humane education should be avoided, and replaced with language privileging teacher learning as developing “knowledge of practice” within communities of practice, or professional learning communities. As a word of caution, also related to terminology, the term

“professional” may marginalize students and parents as stakeholders, members of communities of practice, and integral collaborators in the development of “knowledge of practice” and collective learning. Semantics and language acquisition appear to be critical in designing for learning and cultivating communities of practice.

In their 2002 publication, “Cultivating Communities of Practice,” Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder elaborated further to develop a conceptual understanding of communities of practice, with propositions illuminating key design elements, processes for cultivating and sustaining communities of practice, and negative features, or the downside, experienced in communities of practice. Noteworthy, Wenger et al. (2002) define “communities of practice” as “groups of people who share a concern, set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (p.4). In addition, the concept of communities of practice is differentiated from various work structures such as departments, teams, communities of interest, and informal networks, and understood according to key features of purpose, belonging, boundaries, unifying principles, and duration. Therefore, according to Wenger et al., communities of practice are understood as a context wherein:

- people come together to create knowledge, share knowledge, and develop individual abilities
- membership is self-selected based on topical interests and expertise
- boundaries are emergent

- what holds the group together is interest, expertise, identification, and sense of belonging
- and formation and dissolution is emergent and predicated on learning experienced as relevant, interesting, and of value.

Also important, Wenger et al. advocated seven design principles which include valuing (a) organic and evolutionary processes, (b) open dialogue mirroring that of an open system, (c) various levels of participation and engagement, (d) public and private meeting work spaces, (e) commitment and focus on shared value, (g) familiarity and novelty, and (h) the unique rhythm of the community.

In positioning Wenger et al.'s (2002) conceptual framework as integral in the development of policy recommendations addressing the absence of a field-based professional learning model for practitioners teaching HE, it was important to also identify associated challenges, pitfalls, and downsides that may befall communities of practice. According to Wenger et al., the challenges that may occur within communities of practice include:

- imperialism
- narcissism
- marginality
- factionalism
- cliques
- egalitarianism
- dependence

- stratification
- disconnectedness
- localism
- documentism
- amnesia
- dogmatism
- and mediocrity.

In addition, communities of practice may also be impacted in positive or negative ways resulting from boundary issues, organization and culture issues, and inability to manage complexity (Wenger et al., 2002).

Surveying the scholarly literature proved useful to better understand what researched described as evidence-based practices related to how communities of learning and professional learning communities operate in practice. Within the last six years, researchers explored:

- the nature of conversation within communities of practice and its relationship to teacher learning (Nelson, Deuel, Slavit, & Kennedy, 2010; Richmond & Manokore, 2011)
- factors promoting and inhibiting successful strategies for creating and sustaining communities of practice in schools (Borg, 2012; Green, Hibbins, Houghton, & Rutz, 2013; Huffman, 2011; Schechter, 2012; Stanley, 2011)
- identity development within professional learning communities (Hodges & Cady, 2012)

- collective learning (Castelijns, Vermeulen, & Kools, 2013)
- and leadership strategies related to the implementation of communities of practice and ethical leadership strategies as part of professional learning communities (Bouchamma & Brie, 2014; Evans, 2014; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014).

Moving to synthesis, findings in the scholarly literature are recognized as value added, further contributing to the development of evidence-based policy recommendations benefitting practitioners teaching HE in U.S. schools. Critical are research-derived strategies and suggestions shaping the design, implementation, and assessment of communities of practice for learning building upon the theoretical frameworks provided by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), DuFour and Fullan (2013), and Fullan and Quinn (2016), Wenger (1998), and Wenger et al. (2002). What seems most obvious in the findings is the need for applying evidence-based practices related to implementing, sustaining, and assessing communities of practice in a manner that is metacognitive; group meta-awareness of these practices as a simultaneous and parallel thread working in synergy with designing for learning and the development of knowledge for practice. Four specific, research-derived findings helpful for creating policy recommendations and designing for field-based learning within communities of practice include (a) privileging the nature of dialogue, language, and semantics as integral to learning processes (Nelson, Deuel, Slavit, & Kenneday, 2011); (b) developing shared values, shared visioning, shared leadership, collective learning, and sustainability measures (Bouchamma & Brie, 2014; Castelijns, Vermeulen, & Kools, 2013; Evans, 2014; Huffman, 2011; Richmond & Manokore, 2011; Stanley, 2011; Thornton &

Cherrington, 2014); (c) awareness of individual and group identity development (Green, Hibbins, Houghton, & Ruutz, 2013; Hodges & Cady, 2012); and (d) apply critical pedagogy when assessing constraining factors that may be limiting functionality, success, and sustainability of the learning community (Borg, 2012).

Professional Development Schools

Professional development schools were created by researchers and practitioners to benefit both preservice and in-service educators. In addition to theoretical and research-based articles, seminal texts provided descriptive frameworks for creating and sustaining professional development schools (Byrd & McIntyre, 1999; Clark, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Teitel, 2003). Professional development schools, closely resembling the intention in centers of pedagogy, are described in the literature as schools that:

- “provide a clinical setting for preservice education, engage in professional development for practitioners, promote and conduct inquiry that advances knowledge of schooling, and provide an exemplary education for a segment of P-12 students” (Clark, 1999, p.9)
- “are innovative institutions formed through partnerships between professional education programs and PreK-12 schools. They have a fourfold mission: the preparation of new teachers, faculty development, inquiry directed at the improvement of practice, and enhanced student achievement” (Teitel, 2003, p. xiii)
- and “aim to develop school practice as well as the individual practice of new teacher candidates... As they simultaneously restructure school programs and

teacher education programs, they redefine teaching and learning for all members of the profession and school community” (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. ix).

It is important to note that the development of centers of pedagogy, teacher networks, differentiated strategies for professional learning, collaborative inquiry, communities of practice, and professional development schools are historically situated within the context of national and international education discourse and policies angled toward student achievement, accountability measures, professional standards movement, and education reform and renewal (Clark, 1999; Teitel, 2003; Trachtman, 2007). Further, although it was this context which gave rise to education strategies for change, applying these frameworks and strategies to the study and professional practice of HE is worthy of consideration.

Of particular importance, Trachtman (2007) described the value of school-university partnerships engaged in collaborative inquiry, the application of self-study as an important tool for assessing outcomes, shared responsibility across students and faculty for collaborative inquiry, and understanding the challenges to sustainability in terms of time management, available fiscal resources and materials, and false collegiality and collaboration. Heller, Wood, and Shawgo (2007) contributed to the research base having illuminated positive learning outcomes for stakeholders involved in professional development schools. Castle, Arends, and Rockwood (2008) added to this line of query by demonstrating improved learning outcomes for students enrolled in professional development schools than measures experienced by students in the control group.

In addition, Breault (2014); Colwell, MacIssac, Tichenor, Heins, and Piechura (2014); Doolittle, Sudeck, and Rattigan (2008); and Fuentes and Spice (2015) elaborated further, having explored factors contributing to, or interfering with, the successful design and implementation of professional development schools. Accordingly, as related to professional development schools, researchers claimed it is important to recognize:

- the uniqueness of each learning community
- effective partnerships require parity and reciprocity
- growth and development over time
- the need for supportive, shared, and distributed leadership
- integral movement toward collective creativity, shared visioning, shared values, and democratic processes
- power differentials among participants and stakeholders.

Valuing theoretical and research-derived evidence found in the scholarly literature, supporting the creation of professional development schools is an important strategy added to the development of policy recommendations benefitting practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in U.S. schools.

In summation, a second scholarly literature review was valued as an important opportunity to survey evidence-based practices across recent years as a means for best addressing the research findings and develop a field-based model of professional learning to benefit practitioners teaching HE in U.S. schools. Drawing from the research findings exploring what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in classroom contexts, and adding to it a layer of evidence-based practices from the literature, policy

recommendations can be created as a strategy for suggesting how the institute can extend its mission to offer and financially support the creation of systems to purposefully nurture and develop practitioners' knowledge of practice; all of this accomplished by applying designing for learning pedagogy. In summary, seven evidence-based strategies positioned to support designing for learning pedagogy include (a) centers of pedagogy, (b) teacher networks, (c) communities of practice, (d) professional development schools, (e) lesson study, (f) coaching methodology, and (g) collaborative inquiry and research. In combination, designing for learning pedagogy and the associated evidence-based strategies are opportunities for positive social change.

Implementation

To best implement policy recommendations as suggestions for creating a system of field-based support for practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in U.S. schools, it is important to consider an overarching implementation strategy and corresponding timetable. In addition, also important for consideration are potential resources and existing supports, potential barriers, roles and responsibilities, strategies for project evaluation, and implications for social change.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

Sharing policy recommendations with the institute is only the first step in making manifest a flexible system of field-based support for practitioners teaching HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classroom contexts. In this regard, implementation is best understood as emergent, ongoing, organic, and structured enough to hold momentum and take shape according to the creative impulse of the founding

stakeholder group to include myself, core faculty, and field-based practitioners interested in connecting with the group to pioneer this work. The founding group would be in relationship with the institute's board of directors, advisory councils, and university representatives as an important stakeholder group throughout the life of the project. The project begins by sharing policy recommendations with the core faculty and continues along a trajectory and timetable similar to next steps as follows:

- policy recommendations are shared with core faculty (August 2016)
- core faculty share initial feedback in writing, as desired, and then meet virtually or in-person to discuss the viability and sustainability of suggested policy recommendations (August-September 2016)
- founding group coalesces as a community of practice and collaborates to develop a strategic one-year plan, three-year plan, and five-year plan to best address budgeting and fundraising, outreach, marketing, capacity-building, ongoing assessment and program evaluation needs (October-November 2016)
- founding group applies evidence-based protocols to create a design for their own learning as related to policy recommendations, capacity-building needs, and emergent goals (November-December 2016; understood to be ongoing)
- founding group secures financial support to regionalize in the U.S., creating a network to develop and sustain centers of pedagogy located in the Northeast, Southwest, West, Southeast, and Midwest (January-June 2017)
- and founding group supports regionalized centers of pedagogy in the development of local capacity-building, budgeting and fundraising, program design, outreach,

and assessment/program evaluation needs in ways that manifest healthy, sustainable, and socially-just field-based experiences for practitioners teaching HE in U.S. schools who desire to engage in professional experiences intentionally designed for career-long learning (June 2017-ongoing).

These preliminary steps and corresponding timetable lay the foundation for a sustainable development process taking into consideration the need for planning, capacity-building, budgeting and fundraising, outreach initiatives, program design, assessment and program evaluation tools, and most of all, the prioritization of time and space for the founding group to engage in collective learning to best manifest a HE-focused system of field-based learning and support for practitioners.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

In addition to the founding group members' individual and collective contributions, a vital resource supporting the design, implementation, and assessment of regionalized professional learning networks benefiting practitioners teaching HE in U.S. classrooms is the application of Caffarella and Daffron's (2013) Interactive Model of Program Planning. Inspired for use by its potential in fostering "individual, organizational, and community and societal change" (2013, p.6), the Interactive Model of Program Planning is flexible in nature and takes into account evidence-based practices illuminating the need for, and importance of

- adult learning
- experiential learning
- culturally responsive pedagogy

- relationship building
- critical pedagogy
- role of technology
- other ways of knowing
- ethics
- importance of differentiation
- complexity
- transformational learning
- and lifelong learning.

Practitioners rely upon the iterative nature of Caffarella and Daffron's (2013) model by selecting strategies for use from the major components which include (a) discerning the context; (b) building a solid base of support; (c) identifying and prioritizing needs; (d) constructing program goals and objectives; (e) designing instructional plans; (f) devising transfer of learning plans; (g) formulating program evaluation plans; (h) determining formats, schedules, and staff; (i) preparing and managing budgets; (j) organizing marketing; and (k) remaining sensitive to details as part of all processes. The Interactive Model of Program Planning is therefore an essential resource available for use across the life of this project designing for field-based professional learning.

Also critical to the success of this project, existing organizational support (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013) includes processes emboldened through the institute and partnering university's current collaboration, and includes all of the following:

- organizational structure

- mission and vision statements
- operating policies
- strategic goals
- fiscal responsibility and budgets
- grant writing and fundraising expertise
- stakeholder groups and advisory boards
- strategies for decision making
- access to technology
- and respect for virtual, hybrid, in-person, and lifelong learning.

Also important to include are evidence-based strategies drawn from the second literature review depicting what works as related to developing centers of pedagogy, communities of practice, teacher networks, professional development schools, lesson study, coaching methodology, collaborative inquiry, and social learning theory (Byrd & McIntyre, 1999; Clark, 1999; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Hanraets et al., 2011; Patterson et al., 1999; Ritchie, 2012; Teitel, 2003; Wenger, 1998; Zimpher & Howey, 2013).

Potential Barriers

Potential barriers impacting the success of this project are in inverse relationship to strategies for success. Resulting analysis illuminated several potential barriers to successfully implementing the policy recommendations, eight of which include: (a) lack of support for the initial policy recommendations; (b) organizational constraints; (c) misappropriating time or not having enough time to achieve objectives; (d) financial

challenges; (e) political realities experienced within primary, secondary, and postsecondary contexts; (f) challenges in collaboration and communication; (g) failure to follow through during any phase of the shared work as related to design, implementation, and assessment processes; and (h) challenges identified in the scholarly literature related to the sustaining communities of practice, teacher networks, and professional development schools (Borg, 2012; Breault, 2014; Caffarella & Daffron, 2013; Colwell et al., 2014; Doolittle et al., 2008; Fuentes & Spice, 2015; Green et al., 2013; Hanraets et al., 2011; Huffman, 2011; Schechter, 2012; Stanley, 2011; Wenger et al., 2002).

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

Beyond sharing policy recommendations with core faculty, the primary persons responsible for the design, implementation, and assessment of the regionalized centers of pedagogy and corresponding learning experiences rests with the founding group, local on-site faculty at each region, stakeholders and advisors, and practitioners as learners engaged in center experiences. Adopting a conceptual framework that integrates both pragmatic and radical philosophies orienting program planning for personal, organizational, and social change, best positions the experience of learning as constructing and sharing knowledge for practice, while also prioritizing the selection of participatory approaches and strategies across program design, implementation, and assessment processes (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

First and foremost, founding group members, stakeholders, advisors, and students all hold collaborative responsibility for taking part in the design, research, implementation, and assessment protocols and processes associated with putting into

practice the original policy recommendations. As part of the conceptual framework and mission and vision, all participants engage in processes as designers, researchers, and lifelong learners contributing to the ongoing and iterative conceptualization, implementation, assessment, and sustainment of a regionalized, field-based network for learning of benefit to practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in U.S. schools.

It may prove necessary, however, to create additional structure at each center of pedagogy to best implement organizational processes, and in this regard, a circle process will be used as a tool for collaboration, dialogue, decision-making, and holding responsibility for day-to-day operations of each center of pedagogy (Baldwin, 1998; Baldwin & Linnea, 2010). In addition, as center of pedagogy work scales up, each center will ultimately host a curriculum coordinator and team of coaches responsible for supporting field based practitioners in the context of virtual, in-person, school-based, and community-based professional experiences taking shape as professional development school networks within which participants may be engaged in communities of practice hosting lesson study, coaching support, and collaborative inquiry.

Applying circle process pedagogy (Baldwin, 1998; Baldwin & Linnea, 2010), the founding group hosts overarching leadership responsibilities overseeing the work of all regional centers of pedagogy. This leadership circle reports to the institute and partnering university's board of directors to engage all levels of decision-making needed as per nonprofit articles of incorporation at each partnering institution. Likewise, the founding group leadership team and faculty at each regional center of pedagogy will meet as a larger team to design, implement, and assess ongoing operations supporting field-based

practitioners taking part in professional development school activities and communities of practice. The founding leadership team, regional teams, and board of directors will have opportunities to meet seasonally as well to engage in conference activities, professional experiences, assessment, and program evaluation work. Applying a circle process pedagogy, rather than a hierarchical system to organize the work, promotes distributed leadership, shared visioning and responsibility, creativity and emergence, collaboration, interconnectedness, collective learning, and cross-pollination of ideas to engage the ideals of professional learning as knowledge for practice (Baldwin, 1998; Baldwin & Linnea, 2010; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Wenger et al., 2002).

Project Evaluation

Assessment is an integral facet in the project development process, often applied to gather data for needs assessment purposes, decision-making, and to discern whether or not goals and objectives have been accomplished. To best determine what works and what does not as related to the design and implementation of a field-based system of support for practitioners teaching HE in U.S. schools, it is critical to prioritize needs assessment, formative assessment strategies, and summative assessment strategies as a comprehensive program evaluation plan for use across the trajectory and life span of the policy recommendations made.

Stakeholders will be invited to participate in program evaluation research processes which include data collection, analysis, and dissemination of results. In addition, processes may reflect qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approaches. Eight corresponding data collection procedures may include (a) observations, (b)

interviews, (c) questionnaires or surveys, (d) focus groups, (e) document and artifact review, (f) performance reviews, (g) portfolios, and (h) self-assessment protocols. Also important to note, as a system for program evaluation, needs analysis, formative assessment, and summative assessment protocols are applied as a never-ending or reiterative process to best discern next steps related to policy development, programming, and resource allocation (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013; Creswell, 2009).

Within the context of the day to day operations and ethos of the centers of pedagogy, professional development schools, teacher networks, and communities of practice, collaborative inquiry is embedded as a cultural norm and way of being. Collaborative inquiry can focus on program evaluation to accomplish needs analysis, formative assessment, and summative assessment. Applying participatory approaches, it is the responsibility of each community or team to shape the research purpose and corresponding methodology.

As articulated in the policy recommendations, appreciative inquiry and self-study are two approaches to research that embody principles associated with educators and students as solutionaries (Weil, 2016), developing knowledge for practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), social learning theory (Wenger, 1998), and program planning for individual, systems, and societal change (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013). Appreciative inquiry, applied as a research method, is understood as an iterative, “whole systems” experience acknowledging “the importance of different stakeholders from different groups or agencies in shaping the way things are done, and it seeks to include them in any process of discovery and change” (Reed, 2007, p. 3). As a strengths-based approach,

appreciative inquiry processes are inclusive and positioned to better understand and further develop the “positive core” of an organization; a system’s “strengths, goals, and achievements... what gives it life” (Reed, 2007, p. 32). Applying the 4D cycle, stakeholders experience inquiry as (a) discovering the best of what exists; (b) dreaming of what could be; (c) designing next steps; and (d) delivering on action items for change (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Reed, 2007; Watkins, Mohr, & Kelly, 2011). Also noteworthy, in practice, appreciative inquiry summits are applied as a short term experience to accelerate research and change processes (Ludema, Whitney, Mohr, & Griffin, 2003).

A second approach that can be included as part of a comprehensive plan for program evaluation research, is that of self-study. According to Samaras and Freese (2011), self-study is a form of practitioner inquiry applied to critically examine one’s own professional practice and work context with a focus on improving understanding, knowledge, teaching, and leadership. Designed in the traditional of qualitative research, self-study is highly regarded and purposed for “personal renewal, professional renewal, and program renewal” (p. 14). Like appreciative inquiry, self-study may prove helpful as a needs assessment, formative assessment, or summative assessment tool as stakeholders work as solutionaries (Weil, 2016), develop knowledge for practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), apply social learning theory (Wenger, 1998), and apply program planning for individual, systems, and societal change (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013).

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

Strategies outlined within the body of the policy recommendation paper address the needs of participants who shared their perceptions, beliefs, and experiences as part of the inquiry to better understand what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools. As alumni of the institute and the partnering university's programs, participants illuminated the absence of an ongoing, field-based system of professional support benefitting practitioners of HE teaching in primary, secondary, and postsecondary school contexts. As lifelong learners, research participants identified the need to create a system of professional support. Therefore, in potential, research participants will benefit from active participation in, and support found within regionalized centers of pedagogy, practitioner networks, communities of practice, professional development schools, lesson study experiences, coaching support, and collaborative inquiry.

Far Reaching

By way of invitation and marketing campaigns, this local community of research participants can be expanded to include any practitioner with a vested interest in exploring how HE and solutionary work is conceptualized and operationalized in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classroom contexts. In scaling up and engaging a wider audience of educators, administrators, students, and families as learners, the HE and solutionary network expands, and with it the institute's mission and vision for individual, organizational, and societal change.

Conclusion

Section 3 detailed the development of a policy recommendation paper suggesting strategies for the design, implementation, and assessment of a field-based system of professional support benefitting practitioners teaching HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classroom contexts. A descriptive rationale was provided, followed by a scholarly review of the literature illuminating an evidence-base for the creation of centers of pedagogy, teacher networks, professional development schools, and communities of practice. Also included was evidence substantiating the positive impact of lesson study, coaching methodology, and collaborative inquiry as strategies to shape plans for professional development. The review of the literature was followed by an overarching implementation strategy and corresponding timetable. In addition, potential resources and existing supports, potential barriers, roles and responsibilities, strategies for project evaluation, and implication for social change were also considered. The policy recommendation paper was included in the appendix and titled, Appendix A: Policy Recommendation Paper.

Section 4 provides an analysis of project strengths, recommendations for remediation of limitations, and self-reflection related to my development as a scholar-practitioner. Also included in this self-reflection is an analysis of project development skills, program evaluation skills, and the potential this work holds as impetus for positive social change. Section 4 concludes with a description of implications, application and a direction for future research.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

Applying reflection and drawing conclusions, Section 4 will address project strengths, limitations and remediation of limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, and the integral and iterative role of scholarship, project development, evaluation, leadership and social change. In addition, an analysis of self as scholar, practitioner, and project developer will be included. Section 4 concludes with a description of the project's potential impact on social change and implications, applications, and directions for future research.

Project Strengths

Exploring what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools provided the opportunity to engage in scholarly research experienced as a process of discovery, knowledge creation, and an application of positive social change through project development and program evaluation to address the research findings. A positive outcome or strength in having developed a policy recommendation paper to best address the research findings was the overarching emphasis placed on systems for change as project development and program evaluation pedagogy. With a theoretical framework including appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Ludema et al., 2003; Watkins et al., 2011), circle process (Baldwin, 1998; Baldwin & Linnea, 2010), constructivism in education (Gagnon & Collay, 2001; Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, & Szabo, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 2013), social learning theory (Wenger, 1998), systems thinking (Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Meadows, 2008; Stroh,

2015), and what it means to be a solutionary (Weil, 2016), policy recommendations were well grounded in the scholarly, evidence-based literature and impetus for improving professional practice while taking into consideration the reality of nested systems and interconnected relationships. With the development of a healthy, just, and sustainable system designed for professional learning, practitioners teaching HE in U.S. schools will have access to ongoing support and thus be better positioned to support, nurture, and possibly inspire change in self, school, and society. In addition, the institute and partnering universities may experience and benefit from change processes through revising and creating a responsive, field-based support network for alumni teaching HE in U.S. schools. One system inspires another.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

A limitation embedded within the policy recommendations is that of funding and scalability of services. At present, it may be possible for the institute and partnering universities to fold policy recommendations into their individual or shared strategic plans, budgets, and resource allocation protocols. If not, developing a system for regionalized, field-based support will need to rely on local grant writing, fundraising, and fee for service policies and practices. While this is not insurmountable, what is needed among stakeholders is the belief, and possibly the felt sense, that creating such a system is worthwhile and that capacity building can be achieved for scalability of services. It may prove wise, given limited resources, to begin small and develop HE capacity, and human potential, one region at a time.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Based upon the work of this study, alternative approaches could have been taken at any point across problem identification, developing a conceptual framework and guiding research question, analyzing the scholarly literature, selecting an appropriate research paradigm, designing and implementing the corresponding research design, and analyzing and interpreting the findings. Any shift in these processes would have possibly resulted in a different needs analysis outcome and resulting project design to address the findings. In considering alternative approaches, I could have first given additional consideration to the original problem which served as impetus for the inquiry; the problem as impetus for the research was positioned as a gap in the existing literature and an absence of scholarly, evidence based descriptions demonstrating how practitioners of HE conceptualize and operationalize their teaching of HE in U.S. schools. Although as a final outcome, I wanted to provide a scholarly, research derived description detailing what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools, I could have narrowed the research focus to include just an exploration of practitioner philosophy and concerns, or perhaps just practitioner implementation strategies and concerns with follow-up studies to include the other areas addressed in this study. Narrowing the focus may have provided an improved opportunity for depth instead of attempting both breadth and depth at the same time.

In addition to narrowing the focus, an alternative approach could have included maintaining a qualitative research tradition while applying narrative methodology design in lieu of case study methodology. Data collected were in the form of practitioner stories

and it would have been enough to still utilize interviewing techniques to access these stories relevant to practitioner perceptions, beliefs, and experiences as related to the teaching of HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary contexts. In this way too, I could have narrowed the study by focusing on a single grade band in education to achieve depth of understanding as related to primary, secondary, or postsecondary implementation and classroom contexts. Most important, in narrowing the field of inquiry, I may have had the time and financial resources to conduct observation alongside interviewing and document review as another data collection method which would have provided nuanced data, perhaps resulting in depth over breadth.

Reflecting upon alternative approaches in defining and positioning the problem as impetus for this inquiry, I cannot propose alternatives as this research study was the first of its kind to be documented in the field of HE. However, based on the research findings, alternative approaches for addressing needs identified by practitioners could have included the revision or development of courses and workshops to address the specific topics practitioners identified as areas for continued learning and professional study. While doing so would have yielded the potential for positive social change on the individual and organizational level, and perhaps family level, there was far greater potential for ongoing learning and social change in developing policy recommendations describing a regionalized, field-based system of support for stakeholders who are invested in applying HE and solutionary work in designing for learning.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

Across my doctoral journey, I learned a great deal about scholarship in higher education, adult learning, and HE including content and processes related to research, project development, program evaluation, and leadership and change. Through my studies, I fell in love with adult learning theories, qualitative research, and designing experiences for career long and lifelong learning. Many times as a scholar practitioner and lifelong learner, I decided to slow down to best explore a variety of adult learning theories, the qualitative research tradition, and associated design approaches. I spent time exploring narrative research methods, grounded theory, arts based research, autoethnography and self-study, phenomenology, and ultimately how to design and implement case study research. Time devoted to learning several research approaches became impetus for making a wise choice in applying the qualitative research tradition and case study methodology to explore and better understand what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools.

Also noteworthy, by developing proficiencies evidenced as scholarship and reflective practice, I was able to successfully identify a local problem, analyze scholarly literature, design an inquiry to achieve breadth and depth of understanding, and create policy recommendations and a plan for program evaluation to address challenges and improve HE as a field of study and professional practice. In doing so, I discovered a theoretical framework and corresponding set of evidence-based strategies applicable as a system of support for practitioners teaching humane education in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classroom contexts. Learning and then applying higher education and

adult learning focused content knowledge, processes, and dispositions as a scholar practitioner across inquiry, project development, and program evaluation was an opportunity to develop leadership and efficacy as a change agent. Aligned with Walden University's program outcomes (Walden University, 2013), I was able to demonstrate my commitment to:

- analytical, critical, creative, and reflective thinking processes
- reflective teaching and learning
- effective communication and presentation skills
- use of technology
- understanding current literature in adult learning and HE
- identifying and proposing evidence-based solutions to improve professional practice
- ethical leadership within the context of diverse, global interrelationships
- and collaborating with a variety of stakeholders to inspire social change.

In summary, I have truly developed important skills as a reflective scholar, practitioner, and project developer capable of effecting positive social change.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

Reflecting upon the importance of this work necessitates another application, or continuation of, the journey metaphor. It was the year 2008 when I enrolled in Walden University's doctoral program. I was attracted by the university's commitment to online learning, the higher education and adult learning curriculum, and above all else really, Walden's commitment to social change. I was an engaged, lifelong learner immersed in

higher education and adult learning as a field of study and professional practice. My goal was to develop expertise as a leader in the field. Little did I know, I would soon extend my immersion experience to explore HE as a field of study and professional practice. After completing requirements in studying Walden's core curriculum in higher education and adult learning theories, along with research methodology and design, I completed graduate level coursework in HE that was external to Walden University's curriculum and through those combined experiences crafted a dissertation prospectus, proposal, and final study. Also noteworthy, during this process, I was invited to serve as faculty teaching Environmental Ethics, and now I also teach additional courses which include Research Methods, Master's Thesis Proposal, Master's Thesis, and a course I designed titled, Writing for Personal and Social Change. The power of my experience and this journey lies in understanding the synergy, interconnectedness, and mutually enhancing relationships found within all of the nested systems within which I live, work, and contribute as a lifelong learner, educator activist, leader and mentor, and agent of social change.

Within the context of this journey, I fell in love with scholarship, research, project development, and program evaluation; all of it. I am so proud to have developed as a capable scholar practitioner and truly value theory and praxis, inquiry and research, improving professional practice, and designing for learning; all of this in service of the greater good. Specific core content contributing to my overall professional knowledge, skills, and disposition as a scholar practitioner includes:

- adult learning theories

- humane education
- experience as context for learning
- Freirean philosophy and critical pedagogy
- hyphenated selves
- reflection in action
- transformative learning
- transformative education
- constructivism
- social learning theory
- systems thinking
- solutionary approaches to education
- and APA requirements.

Specific processes contributing to my overall professional knowledge, skills, and disposition as a scholar practitioner included:

- qualitative research methodology
- multicase research design
- problem identification
- scholarly literature review
- IRB processes
- sampling, data collection, and data analysis
- within-case and cross-case analysis

- project development and policy analysis
- designing centers of pedagogy and teacher networks
- creating professional development schools and communities of practice
- lesson study, coaching methodology, and collaborative inquiry
- circle process
- program evaluation strategies
- appreciative inquiry and self-study methods protocols
- lifelong learning
- and inspiring social change.

Also critical, the importance of this learning and inquiry exploring what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools is contextualized as the first research of its kind and therefore an important contribution to scholarly knowledge located within HE as a field of study and professional practice. In addition to pioneering research, this inquiry and corresponding policy recommendations also contributes to the scholarship and professional practice of humane education as a way of inspiring social change, positioning HE and solutionary approaches as the purpose of education.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Critical for faculty, students, alumni, and community stakeholders, Walden University inspires “positive social change through the development of principled, knowledgeable, and ethical scholar-practitioners who are and will become civic and professional role models by advancing the betterment of society” (Walden, 2013, p. 5). Also important, Walden describes positive social change as “a deliberate process of

creating and applying ideas, strategies, and actions to promote worth, dignity, and development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, and societies” and “results in the improvement of human and social conditions” (Walden, 2013, p.5).

As an outcome of this research inquiry, project development, and program evaluation experience, implications for positive social change related to better understanding what it means to be a practitioner teaching through the lens of HE U.S. schools include:

- development of a scholarly, research derived description detailing how practitioners operationalize, conceptualize, and critique the implementation of HE
- conceptual and theoretical frameworks for understanding and addressing problems, issues, and complexity as part of the implementation experience
- policy recommendations describing strategies for designing a system of ongoing, field-based support for practitioners teaching HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classroom contexts
- and ideas for programming, resource allocation, and policy development.

In addition, the potential impact for positive social change can be contextualized within nested systems of practitioner, students, families, school community, stakeholder organizations, and in potential, society. Without overextending reach and importance, the knowledge created within the context of exploring what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools, corresponding project development, and program evaluation procedures, may influence and inspire improvement in the lives of stakeholders, improvement in HE as a field of study and professional practice, and improvement in

how society gives purpose to education. Recommendations for future research include the development of replication studies to achieve breadth and depth of understanding, designing studies to incorporate observation alongside interviewing and document review as data collection protocols, and creating studies that are much more narrow in focus to better understand practitioner beliefs, perceptions, and experiences as related to the conceptualization, operationalization, and critique of HE philosophy, implementation, and need analysis.

Conclusion

What it means to be a practitioner teaching through the lens of HE in U.S. schools was described as inspiring positive social change for individuals, communities, and society and accomplished through my development as a scholar practitioner and role model working for the betterment of HE, higher education, and adult learning as an integrated field of study and professional practice. Section 4 provided an analysis of project strengths, limitations, remediation of limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, and the integral and iterative role of scholarship, project development, evaluation, leadership and social change. In addition, an analysis of self as scholar, practitioner, and project developer was included. Section 4 concluded with a description of the project's potential impact on social change and implications, applications, and directions for future research.

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Appendix A: Policy Recommendation Paper

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Background of Existing Problem and Project Study Design

This policy recommendation paper has been prepared for the president, board of directors, and faculty collaborating on behalf of the institute to conceptualize and operationalize graduate programs and professional development courses for adult learners participating in HE as a field of study and professional practice. Offered to benefit practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in U.S. schools across primary, secondary, and postsecondary classrooms, policy recommendations outline one possible approach in designing a comprehensive system for field-based professional learning. Evidence to support a design for field-based learning is drawn from Teaching through the Lens of Humane Education in U.S. Schools, a project study developed and implemented by Kristine Tucker as part of her work as a doctoral candidate through Walden University.

The impetus for exploring the beliefs, perceptions, and experiences of teachers implementing HE in U.S. schools was inspired by a lack of scholarly research describing HE as a field of study and professional practice. Absent in the literature were descriptions of practitioner experience depicting HE philosophy, implementation processes, practitioner concerns, examples of professional learning, and an understanding of the role of continuing education experienced by practitioners. With this gap, practitioners and administrators responsible for designing and implementing HE programs cannot refer to research-derived literature and evidence based strategies to inform and improve professional practice. A descriptive knowledge base detailing how HE is conceptualized, operationalized, and critiqued in primary, secondary, and postsecondary contexts was needed for stakeholders in the field. A need for exploratory research was identified to

- build a descriptive knowledge base of scholarship
- describe practitioner philosophy and pedagogical decision making experienced when teaching HE
- capture and address practitioner concerns
- understand how professional learning, professional development, and continuing education is experienced by practitioners
- illuminate issues related to implementing and sustaining HE as a field of study and professional practice
- and better inform the community of humane educators.

In response, to discern how a specialized approach to education is actually implemented in the field and to better understand what it is like to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools, a plan for exploring the experience of practitioners was designed using a qualitative, multi case study research. It was hoped for that resulting data would benefit practitioners, administrators, faculty, and partnering stakeholders responsible for designing and implementing HE focused adult learning experiences with data used for shaping policy, programming, and resource allocation to improve the core curriculum, adult learning experiences, learning outcomes, and enhance the application of HE in the field. Also critical, using inquiry to explore and develop a scholarly base of research was identified as a natural extension of the institute's mission and vision to create a just and humane society. To best address these needs as a research initiative, the guiding question for this inquiry was

What does it mean to be a practitioner of HE teaching in U.S. schools?

Sub questions included

- How do practitioners conceptualize their philosophy of HE?
- How do practitioners implement HE?
- What are the concerns of practitioners implementing HE?
- What is the role of professional learning for practitioners of HE?
- What is the role of continuing education in the lives of practitioners for the implementation and sustainment of HE?

To best explore what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools within primary, secondary, and postsecondary contexts, a conceptual framework was developed to position the research design, analysis and interpretation of the findings, and to contextualize derived understandings. Five theories were integrated to enhance meaning making and included (a) experience as the context for learning; (b) theory of hyphenated selves; (c) Freirean philosophy; (d) diverse perspectives on transformative learning and transformative education; and (e) reflection in action. Weaving together this particular conceptual framework recognized:

- the relationship between experience and learning
- classroom spaces as sites of possibility, conflict, and contested terrain
- practitioners as solutionaries who value schooling as education for liberation, critical consciousness, and transformation
- practitioner identity as hyphenated selves
- the ability of practitioners to engage reflection in action.

Following the development of the conceptual framework, qualitative research methodology was further delineated and contextualized within an interpretive and constructivist paradigm to embrace coconstruction of meaning and multiple perspectives. The multicase study research design took shape. Maximum variation sampling and purposeful sampling strategies were used to identify and select nine participants, all of whom agreed to volunteer, sharing their time, experience, and expertise. Data collection techniques included interviewing and document review. Strategies for provisional coding, emergent coding, and within-case and cross-case analysis were used to categorize and interpret the findings, developing themes and possible assertions to best understand and describe what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in U.S. schools.

Summary of Research Findings

Within-case findings were best formatted as rich, narrative descriptions detailing the beliefs, perceptions, and experiences of each of the nine participants illuminating what it means to be a practitioner teaching HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classroom contexts. A coding scheme was developed to best contextualize within-case findings and themes emerged, best articulating how each participant experienced and made meaning of the all the following:

- arriving at HE
- learning HE
- philosophy of HE
- teaching HE
- professional learning

- visioning continuing education
- sharing concerns.

Cross-case findings were developed as a synthesis and correspondence of the beliefs, perceptions, and experiences of research participants and drawn from the within-case narrative accounts relating back to each of the research questions. Triangulated patterns and correspondence inspired the articulation of thematic assertions important for improving HE as a field of study and professional practice. Findings illuminated how participants:

- arrived at HE with interest, experience, and values alignment
- sought relief from oppression and marginalization
- experienced change and transformation
- valued consciousness-raising, decision-making, and community-building
- understood the importance of connection and interconnection
- positioned HE as an educational imperative
- approached the teaching of HE through diverse means
- needed to understand and negotiate varied perceptions of HE
- critiqued the breadth and depth of HE as reach, access and boundary issues
- identified concerns related to professional development
- valued the scholarship of teaching and learning as a form of professional development
- embraced collaborative learning within communities of practice
- engaged self-study and self-directed professional learning

- articulated the need for field-based professional support
- valued the need to increase visibility and awareness of HE as a field of study and professional practice
- identified the need to develop financially sustainable pathways for professional learning and advanced degree attainment.

Also part of the research design, verification processes were used to address accuracy, comprehensiveness, clarity, validity, and reliability as related to analyzing and interpreting the findings. Triangulation, member checking, use of rick, thick descriptions, maximum variation in sampling, creating an audit trail, and managing discrepant cases were all strategies applied to address issues of reliability and validity.

Evidence from Research and Scholarly Literature

Six policy recommendations were developed from the research findings and corresponding review of the scholarly literature. Recommendations are offered as strategies in designing a comprehensive system for field-based learning and ongoing support benefiting practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classroom contexts. Designing, implementing, and sustaining a comprehensive system for field-based learning and ongoing support was an opportunity for improving professional practice while also advancing HE as a field of study and professional practice. Drawn from the research findings, practitioners' suggestions served as evidence substantiating the need to design a comprehensive system of field-based learning and ongoing support. Practitioners identified the following needs:

- financially sustainable opportunities for professional learning and continuing education
- connection, community, and solutionary spaces for collaboration
- creating support networks and collaborative learning communities
- a system for ongoing coaching and mentoring
- diversity and reaching communities of color
- developing a variety of differentiated virtual and in-person, place-based professional learning opportunities through retreats or summits, book studies, conferences, workshops, and online courses
- field-based research to improve professional practice, learning outcomes, and program efficacy
- time to explore and research the topics and issues of HE
- learning different ways of teaching HE and learning to teach a values-based education without indoctrination
- exploring special topics relevant to classroom practice such as classroom management, critical thinking, critical pedagogy, design thinking, multiculturalism, Einstein's circle of compassion, systems thinking, solutionary approaches, critical consciousness, storytelling, sustainability, student centered learning, curriculum writing, mindfulness, wellness, healing practices, and self-care
- developing HE-focused resources such as lessons, units of study, and scope and sequence possibilities

- revisioning school structures to manifest change
- ongoing support to incorporate HE into one's life and professional practice
- exploring self-hood and professional identity development
- developing as a critical educator applying reflection and self-assessment to grow as a practitioner
- addressing marginalization, oppression, and professional burnout
- and career development.

Practitioner suggestions can be organized as a comprehensive system for field-based professional learning and ongoing support by designing regionalized centers of pedagogy and teacher networks, communities of practice, and professional development schools. Within these contexts, professional experiences such as lesson study, coaching, and collaborative inquiry serve as pathways for learning and support benefitting practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in U.S. schools. Developed through a review of the scholarly literature, *Figure 2* illustrates practitioner suggestions as evidence based strategies for professional learning and ongoing support.

Practitioner Suggestions	Evidence in the Scholarly Literature
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financially sustainable opportunities for professional learning and continuing education • Connection, community, and solutionary spaces for collaboration • Creating support networks and collaborative learning communities • A system for ongoing coaching and 	<p><i>Centers of Pedagogy:</i> Baldwin (1998); Baldwin & Linnea (2010); Fullan & Quinn (2016); Gagnon & Collay (2001); Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, & Szabo (2002); Lincoln & Guba (2013); Meadows (2008); Patterson, Michelli, & Pacheco (1999); Weil (2016); Stroh (2015); Wenger (1998); Zimpher & Howey (2013)</p>

<p>mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuing diversity and reaching communities of color • Developing a variety of differentiated virtual and in-person, place-based professional learning opportunities through retreats or summits, book studies, conferences, workshops, and online courses • Field-based research to improve professional practice, learning outcomes, and program efficacy • Revisioning school structures to manifest change • Ongoing support to incorporate HE into one's life, professional practice, and career development • Exploring self-hood and professional identity development • Developing as a critical educator applying reflection and self-assessment to grow as a practitioner • Addressing marginalization, oppression, and professional burnout 	<p><u>Teacher Networks:</u> Baldwin (1998); Baldwin & Linnea (2010); Fullan & Quinn (2016); Gagnon & Collay (2001); Hanraets, Hulsebosch & de Laat (2011); Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, & Szabo (2002); Lincoln & Guba (2013); Meadows (2008); Ritchie (2012); Stroh (2015); Weil (2016); Wenger (1998); Zimpher & Howey (2013)</p> <p><u>Communities of Practice:</u> Baldwin (1998); Baldwin & Linnea (2010); Borg (2012); Bouchamma & Brie (2014); Castelijns, Vermeulen & Kools (2013); Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999); Dufour & Fullan (2013); Evans (2014); Fullan & Quinn (2016); Gagnon & Collay (2001); Green, Hibbins, Houghton & Rutz (2013); Hodges & Cady (2012); Huffman (2011); Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, & Szabo (2002); Lincoln & Guba (2013); Meadows (2008); Nelson, Deuel, Slavit & Kennedy (2010); Richmond & Manokore (2011); Schechter (2012); Stanley (2011); Stroh (2015); Thornton & Cherrington (2014); Weil (2016); Wenger (1998); Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2002); Zimpher & Howey (2013)</p> <p><u>Professional Development Schools:</u> Baldwin (1998); Baldwin & Linnea (2010); Breault (2014); Byrd & McIntyre (1999); Castle, Arends & Rockwood (2008); Clark (1999); Colwell, MacIsaac, Tichenor, Heins & Piechura (2014); Darling-Hammond (2005); Doolittle, Sudek & Rattigan (2008); Fuentes & Spice (2015); Fullan & Quinn (2016); Gagnon & Collay (2001); Heller, Wood & Shawgo (2007); Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, & Szabo (2002); Lincoln & Guba (2013); Meadows (2008); Stroh (2015); Teitel (2003); Trachtman (2007); Weil (2016); Wenger (1998); Zimpher & Howey (2013)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection, community, and solutionary spaces for collaboration • Creating support networks and collaborative learning communities • A system for ongoing coaching and mentoring 	<p><u>Communities of Practice: (again applicable)</u> Baldwin (1998); Baldwin & Linnea (2010); Borg (2012); Bouchamma & Brie (2014); Castelijns, Vermeulen & Kools (2013); Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1999); Dufour & Fullan (2013); Evans (2014); Fullan & Quinn (2016); Gagnon & Collay (2001); Green, Hibbins, Houghton & Rutz (2013); Hodges & Cady</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuing diversity and reaching communities of color • Developing a variety of differentiated virtual and in-person, place-based professional learning opportunities through retreats or summits, book studies, conferences, workshops, and online courses • Field-based research to improve professional practice, learning outcomes, and program efficacy • Time to explore and research the topics and issues of HE • Learning different ways of teaching HE and learning to teach a values-based education without indoctrination • Exploring special topics relevant to classroom practice such as classroom management, critical thinking, critical pedagogy, design thinking, multiculturalism, Einstein’s circle of compassion, systems thinking, solutionary approaches, critical consciousness, storytelling, sustainability, student centered learning, curriculum writing, mindfulness, wellness, healing practices, and self-care • Developing HE-focused resources such as lessons, units of study, and scope and sequence possibilities • Revisioning school structures to manifest change • Ongoing support to incorporate HE into one’s life and professional practice • Exploring self-hood and professional identity development • Developing as a critical educator applying reflection and self-assessment to grow as a practitioner 	<p>(2012); Huffman (2011); Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, & Szabo (2002); Lincoln & Guba (2013); Meadows (2008); Nelson, Deuel, Slavit & Kennedy (2010); Richmond & Manokore (2011); Schechter (2012); Stanley (2011); Stroh (2015);Thornton & Cherrington (2014); Weil (2016); Wenger (1998); Wenger, McDermott & Snyder (2002); Zimpher & Howey (2013)</p> <p><u>Professional Development Schools:</u> <u>(again applicable)</u> Baldwin (1998); Baldwin & Linnea (2010); Breault (2014); Byrd & McIntyre (1999); Castle, Arends & Rockwood (2008); Clark (1999); Colwell, MacIsaac, Tichenor, Heins & Piechura (2014); Darling-Hammond (2005); Doolittle, Sudek & Rattigan (2008); Fuentes & Spice (2015); Fullan & Quinn (2016); Gagnon & Collay (2001); Heller, Wood & Shawgo (2007); Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, & Szabo (2002); Lincoln & Guba (2013); Meadows (2008); Stroh (2015); Teitel (2003); Trachtman (2007); Weil (2016); Wenger (1998); Zimpher & Howey (2013)</p> <p><u>Lesson Study:</u> Baldwin (1998); Baldwin & Linnea (2010); Benedict, Park, Brownell, Lauterbach, & Keily (2013); Cheng (2011); Chong & Kong (2012); Cluphf, Lux, & Scott (2012); Demir, Czerniak, & Hart (2013); Dotger (2011); Fullan & Quinn (2016); Gagnon & Collay (2001); Groves, Doig, Widjaja, Garner, & Palmer (2013); Halvorsen & Lund (2013); Kriewaldt (2012); Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, & Szabo (2002); Lewis, Fischman, Riggs, & Wasserman (2013); Lincoln & Guba (2013); Meadows (2008); Stroh (2015); Weil (2016); Wenger (1998); Zimpher & Howey (2013)</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing marginalization, oppression, and professional burnout • Career development 	<p><u>Coaching Methodology:</u> Atteberry & Bryk (2011); Baldwin (1998); Baldwin & Linnea (2010); Barclay (2013); Barr & van Nieuwerburgh (2015); Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolten, & Zigmond (2010); Becker, Darney, Domitrovich, Keperling, & Ialongo (2013); Cavanaugh & Swan (2015); Dean, Dyal, Wright, Carpenter, & Austin (2012); Eaton, Kay & Moon (2010); Elish-Piper & L'Allier (2011); Fullan & Quinn (2016); Gagnon & Collay (2001); Godat (2013); Grant (2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2013); Gross (2010, 2012); Heineke (2013); Herschfeldt, Pell, Sechrest, Pas & Bradshaw (2012); Hicks & McCracken (2010); Hindman & Wasik (2012); Kennedy (2010); L'Allier, Elish-Piper, & Bean (2010); Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, & Szabo (2002); Lincoln & Guba (2013); Matsumura, Garnier, Correnti, Junker, & Bickel (2010); Meadows (2008); Neuman & Wright (2010); Onchwari & Keengwe (2010); Passarelli (2015); Pomerantz & Pierce (2013); Powell & Diamond (2013); Rhodes & Fletcher (2013); Roeden, Maaskant, Bannink & Curfs (2012); Sailors & Price (2010); Stover, Kissel, Haag & Shoniker (2011); Stroh (2015); Taylor, Zugelder, & Bowman (2013); Vanderburg & Stephens (2010); Vernon-Feagons, Kainz, Amendum, Ginsberg, Wood & Bock (2012); Visser (2011); Wang (2013); Wenger (1998); Weil (2016); Wickersham (2015); Wilson, Dykstra, Watson, Boyd, & Crais (2011); Zimpher & Howey (2013)</p> <p><u>Collaboartive Inquiry and Research:</u> Aldred (2011); Alston-Mills (2011); Appleby & Hillier (2012); Assudani & Kilbourne (2015); Baldwin (1998); Baldwin & Linnea (2010); Calbrese (2012, 2015); Calabrese, Hester, Friesen & Burckhalter (2010); Cooper (2014); Cooperrrider & McQuaid (2012); Dewar & Sharp (2013); Doggett & Lewis (2013); Feldman & Weiss (2010); Fletcher (2012); Fullan & Quinn (2016); Gagnon & Collay (2001); Giles & Kung (2010); Goodnough (2010, 2011); Hill & Haigh (2012); Jacobs & Brandt (2012); Jones, Lyrantzis, & Kastens (2010); Jones, Stanley, McNamara, & Murray (2011); Lambert, Walker, Zimmerman, Cooper, Lambert, Gardner, & Szabo (2002); Lewis & Emil (2010); Lilja &</p>
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	Richardson (2012); Lincoln & Guba (2013); Meadows (2008); Nelson, Duel, Slavit & Kennedy (2010); Orr & Cleveland-Innes (2015); Pareja Roblin, Ormel, McKenney, Voogt & Pieters (2014); San Martin & Calabrese (2011); Santos (2014); Stroh (2015); Vetter & Russell (2011); Weil (2016); Wenger (1998); Wendt, Tuckey & Prossner (2011); West (2011); Yuan & Lee (2015); Zimpher & Howey (2013)
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Figure 2. Practitioner Suggestions as Evidence-Based Strategies for Professional Learning and Support.

Policy Recommendations

Six policy recommendations are offered as a set of strategies in designing a comprehensive system of field based learning and support for practitioners teaching through the lens of humane education in U.S. schools across primary, secondary, and postsecondary classroom contexts. Creating a comprehensive system of field based learning and ongoing support benefits practitioners, administrators, faculty, and organization stakeholders hosting the shared responsible for designing, implementing, and sustaining programming, resource allocation, and policy development to continually improve humane education as a field of study and professional practice. Putting into practice the policy recommendations to create a comprehensive system for field based learning and ongoing support is a natural extension of the institute and partnering university's mission and vision to create a more just and humane society.

Recommendation 1: Comprehensive System for Field-Based Learning and Support

Faculty and stakeholders representing the institute and partnering university are encouraged to collaborate as a community of practice visioning and brainstorming

possibilities, benefits, and risks associated with the development of a comprehensive system for field-based learning and ongoing support (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Dufour & Fullan, 2013; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Zimpher & Howey, 2013). This community of practice is considered the founding group and responsible for designing, implementing, and sustaining the comprehensive system for field-based learning and support. As a community of practice, it is recommended that the founding group study the benefits of circle process (Baldwin, 1998; Baldwin & Linnea, 2010) to understand the intention of circle as a “council of ordinary people who convene to create a sacred space and from that space accomplish a specific task, supporting each other in the process” (Baldwin, 1998, p. 14). Circle is described by Baldwin as an organizing structure with

...shared, verbalized intention so that everyone knows why they are gathered.

The circle self-governs and corrects course through the adoption of commonsense agreements of behavior. And when confusion arises, or the way is momentarily lost, everyone agrees to fall into reflective silence, refocus on the group’s highest purpose, and follow protocols for problem solving that reestablish trust and cohesion. In such a circle leadership rotates, responsibility is shared, and the group comes to rely deeply on spirit (Baldwin, 1998, p. 14).

It is recommended that the founding group explore circle process through book studies, experimentation, guest speakers, and observation of experienced groups engaging in circle process. Exploring how circle process may be used by the founding group in-person and in virtual environments is a first step in working together to explore the

possibility of designing a comprehensive system for field-based learning and ongoing support.

In addition to circle process, it is recommended that the founding group explore adult learning theory, leadership strategies, and systems thinking to create a theoretical or conceptual framework guiding the design, implementation, and sustainment of a comprehensive system for field-based learning and support. Possibilities include:

- constructivism (Gagnon & Collay, 2001; Lambert, et al., 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 2013)
- educating solutionaries (Weil, 2016)
- experience as the context for learning (Dewey, 1997)
- Freirean philosophy (Freire & Shor, 1987; Freire 2006; 2008)
- Humane education (Weil, 2004)
- knowledge for practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999)
- reflection-in-action (Schon, 1983)
- theory of hyphenated selves (Fine & Sirin, 2007)
- transformative learning and transformative education (Boyd & Myers, 1988; Brookfield, 2012; Clark, 1991; Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Dirkx, 2012; Fisher-Yoshida et al., 2009; Kreber, 2012; Mezirow, 2012; O’Sullivan, 2012; Tisdell, 2012)
- social learning theory (Wenger, 1998)
- and systems thinking (Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Meadows, 2008; Stroh, 2015).

Developing a theoretical framework also sets in motion crafting mission and vision statements positioning a comprehensive system for field-based learning and ongoing support for practitioners teaching HE in U.S. schools as a natural extension of the institute and partnering university's collaborative work.

For the institute and partnering university, it is recommended that a comprehensive system for field-based learning and ongoing support include the development of regional centers of pedagogy, and through these regional centers of pedagogy, teacher networks, communities of practice, and professional development schools are to be created. Also important, lesson study, coaching methodology, and collaborative inquiry and research are evidence based strategies available for use by educators, administrators, and community stakeholders in their learning and improvement of professional practice. In combination, the theoretical framework, mission and vision statements, and circle process will support the design, implementation, and sustainment of all field-based experiences and ongoing support designed for professional learning and the sustainment of HE as a field of study and professional practice. Responsibility for the design, implementation, and sustainment of a comprehensive system for field-based learning and ongoing support may be incorporated into the institute and partnering university's current and future strategic plans, fiduciary policies, and budget, or new plans, policies, and budgets will be created to include grant writing and fundraising.

Recommendation 2: Regional Centers of Pedagogy and Teacher Networks

It is recommended that the founding group design, implement, and sustain regionalized centers of pedagogy (Patterson, Michelli, & Pacheco, 1999; Zimpher &

Howey, 2013) and teacher networks (Jones, Stanley, McNamara, & Murray, 2011; Ritchie, 2012; Zimpher & Howey, 1999) across the United States to best support practitioners teaching HE in primary, secondary, and postsecondary classroom contexts. It is advised that the founding group first study the scholarly research to best understand the potential centers of pedagogy and teacher networks hold for supporting practitioners, improving professional practice, and extending the reach of HE. In addition to studying the scholarly literature, connecting with practitioners experienced in designing, implementing, and sustaining centers of pedagogy and teacher networks would be helpful. This stakeholder group also includes practitioners benefitting from corresponding professional experiences. Program planning, resource allocation, and policy development related to the design, implementation, and sustainment of regional centers of pedagogy and teacher networks would be the responsibility of the founding group and all newly hired coordinators and support faculty responsible for daily operations of each center and network. Important to note, teacher networks should be developed within the context of centers of pedagogy with networked relationships being regional, national, and international in scope and experienced in person and online.

Recommendation 3: Communities of Practice

It is recommended that the founding group study the scholarly research and professional literature describing frameworks for the design, implementation and assessment of communities of practice for application within HE centers of pedagogy, teacher networks, and professional development schools. According to Castelijns et al., (2013), Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), DuFour & Fullan, 2013), Fullan and Quinn

(2016), Wenger (1998), and Wenger et al. (2002), creating, sustaining, and assessing communities of practice promotes all of the following:

- collective learning
- developing knowledge of practice
- distributed leadership
- individual identity development
- group identity development
- healthy and sustainable professional experiences
- opportunities for ongoing learning and support.

It is recommended that the founding group include communities of practice as an integral strategy for designing a comprehensive system for field-based learning and ongoing support benefitting practitioners teaching through the lens of HE in U.S. schools. In potential, and when applied to HE as a field of study and professional practice, communities of practice can be understood as a strategy for inspiring individual, systems, and societal change (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013; Weil, 2016).

Recommendation 4: Professional Development Schools

To maximize the potential for professional learning and ongoing support, it is recommended that the founding group explore the value of professional development schools as part of a comprehensive, field-based approach benefitting practitioners teaching HE in U.S. schools. Frameworks for designing, implementing, and assessing professional development schools is evidenced in the scholarly research and professional literature as a strategy for professional learning, networking, and conducting research by

developing partnerships among primary, secondary, and postsecondary faculty, administrators, and community stakeholders (Breault, 2014; Byrd & McIntyre, 1999; Castle et al., 2008; Clark, 1999; Colwell et al., 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2005; Doolittle et al., 2008; Fuentes & Spice, 2015; Heller et al., 2007; Teitel, 2003; Trachtman, 2007). Contextualized within the potential of professional development schools as a strategy for preservice and in-service learning and ongoing support is the potential for HE as a field of study and practice to grow in reach and accessibility as part of a comprehensive plan and housed within the regionalized centers of pedagogy. The design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of professional development schools may prove an influential catalyst for social change.

Recommendation 5: Lesson Study, Coaching, and Collaborative Inquiry

Drawing upon the scholarly literature referenced in Figure 2: Practitioner Suggestions as Evidence Based Strategies for Professional Learning and Support, lesson study, coaching, and collaborative inquiry (Zimpher & Howey, 2013) are three evidence based practices available for use to encourage personal, professional, and organizational learning. It is recommended that the founding group explore, study, and consider embedding each of these strategies as part of programming, policy, and resource allocation initiatives within centers of pedagogy, communities of practice, and professional development schools; all available for use when sought out by practitioners, faculty, and stakeholders. When applied to the practice of HE, lesson study, coaching methodology, and collaborative inquiry are protocols for deepening engagement and learning. Offering three, evidence based strategies to inspire and support practitioners'

ongoing learning and improvement of professional practice, contributes to the tandem development of accessible pedagogy available to HE practitioners, faculty, administrators, and community stakeholders responsible for implementing, sustaining, and evaluating HE as a field of study and professional practice.

Recommendation 6: Plan for Ongoing Assessment and Program Evaluation

Designing and implementing a comprehensive system for field-based learning and support necessitates a corresponding plan for ongoing assessment and program evaluation. It is suggested that the founding group explore scholarly research and professional literature to best understand how formative assessment, summative assessment, and program evaluation is designed and implemented within the context of centers of pedagogy, teacher networks, professional development schools, and communities of practice. In addition, equally important is studying the scholarly research and professional literature to better understand how ongoing assessment and program evaluation can be applied to best evaluate lesson study, coaching methodology, and collaborative inquiry as part of the professional experiences within centers of pedagogy, teacher networks, professional development schools, and communities of practice. Caffarella and Daffron (2013) illuminated the importance of evaluation protocols and resulting data as integral to:

- ongoing needs analysis before, during, and after programming, policy development, and resource allocation projects
- assessing impact of goals, objectives, and outcomes
- revising, discontinuing, and/or creating programming and policies

- resource allocation
- modifying assessment and program evaluation protocols.

Also recommended, the founding group should design a plan for data collection, analysis, and dissemination selecting from the most appropriate qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approaches (Creswell, 2009) to best match program, policy, and resource allocation objectives. Drawn from Caffarella and Daffron (2013), a flexible system of ongoing assessment and program evaluation may include:

- observations
- interviews
- questionnaires
- surveys
- focus groups
- document and artifact review
- performance reviews
- portfolios
- and self-assessment protocols.

It is also encouraged that the founding group explore the potential benefits in using the evidence based practices of appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Ludema et al., 2003; Reed, 2007; Watkins et al., 2011) and self- study (Samaras & Freese, 2011) to evaluate program planning, policy development, resource allocation, and the overall implementation of the Interactive Model of Program Planning to continually inspire individual, systems, and societal change (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013).

Conclusion

Drawn from the inquiry titled Teaching through the Lens of Humane Education in U.S. Schools and evidence available in the scholarly literature, six policy recommendations were offered as a set of strategies in designing a comprehensive system for field-based learning and support to benefit practitioners teaching HE in U.S. schools across primary, secondary, and postsecondary classroom contexts. Policy recommendations included an overview detailing a comprehensive system for field-based learning and support, and the development of centers of pedagogy, teacher networks, communities of practice, and professional development schools. Embedded within these larger systems, lesson study, coaching methodology, and collaborative inquiry were suggested as experience for inspiring learning and the improvement of professional practice. A plan for ongoing assessment and program evaluation was also recommended. As a comprehensive system for field-based learning and support, practitioners, administrators, faculty, and organization stakeholders were identified as responsible for programming, resource allocation, and policy development to continually improve HE as a field of study and professional practice. Policy recommendations should be exercised as a natural extension of the institute and partnering university's mission and vision to create a more just and humane society inspiring individual, organizational, and societal change.

Appendix B: Maximum Variation and Purposeful Sampling Criteria

- 100% of participants will be alumni of a HE master's level or graduate certificate program, online professional development program, or workshop
- 100% of participants will self-identify as using HE pedagogy in their current teaching placement, although the degree of use may vary among participants
- 100% of participants will be working in the United States;
- 50% of participants will be male
- 50% of participants will be female
- 25% of participants will have one to five years primary, secondary, or college level teaching experience in public or private education
- 25% of participants will have six to 10 years of primary, secondary, or college level teaching experience in public or private education
- 25% of participants will have 11-15 years of primary, secondary, or college level teaching experience in public or private education
- 25% of participants will have 16 or more years of primary, secondary, or college level teaching experience in public or private education
- 50% of participants will be teaching at the primary level of education, pre-kindergarten through fifth grade
- 50% of participants will be teaching at secondary and post-secondary levels of education, sixth grade through college
- 50% of participants will be teaching in rural contexts
- 50% of participants will be teaching in urban contexts

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Date/Time of Interview:

Location:

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Pre-Interview

- ✓ Review description of the project: purpose, participants, data to be collected, confidentiality and voluntary participation agreement, and length of interview.
- ✓ Set up the microphone and tape recording device. Test devices.

Questioning Protocol:

Please share stories of your beliefs, perceptions, and experiences as a practitioner teaching humane education in U.S. public schools.

- ✓ What was it that brought you to the study of humane education?
- ✓ What was learning humane education like for you?
- ✓ What is your philosophy of humane education? How did this develop? How does it continue to develop?
- ✓ Within the context of your classroom, school, and community, what is teaching humane education like for you?
- ✓ Do you have any concerns as a practitioner of humane education? Do you have any concerns related to the teaching of humane education? Do you have any concerns about, or for, the field of humane education? If so, please describe your beliefs, perceptions, and/or experiences related to the concerns you hold.

- ✓ Beyond the scope of HE programs, what is your professional learning like as related to your teaching of humane education? What do you value in professional learning? How do you continue to learn as a practitioner of humane education?
- ✓ What is your personal/professional vision of continuing education as a practitioner? What is it like and what would you like it to become?
- ✓ What is your vision of continuing education for the field of humane education?
- ✓ What next steps would you like to see for the field of humane education?

Post-Interview

- ✓ Thank participant for cooperation/participation and assure confidentiality.
- ✓ Establish likelihood of future contact for member checking

Appendix D: Document Review Checklist

Participant:

Location:

Date:

Ask research participants to share relevant documents that may illuminate what it means to be a practitioner of humane education specific to

- philosophy
- pedagogy and implementation
- concerns
- professional learning experiences
- role of continuing education.

Documents may include

- mission and vision statements
- newspaper clippings
- reports
- curriculum maps
- scope and sequence charts
- lesson plans
- correspondence
- meeting minutes
- professional development goals
- professional development logs

- professional development certificates
- professional reflections
- continuing education catalogues
- state level curricular content standards
- other:

Appendix E: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, P1

- Intercultural connection
- Connecting with lived realities of Spanish speaking people
- Exploring interconnections among economic issues, political issues, human rights issues, environmental issues, and animal protection
- Understanding immigration issues
- Research nonprofit organizations in Latin America
- Language skill development
- Research and presentation skill development
- Nature awareness activities
- Nature writing and journaling
- Exploring mindfulness
- Eco-critical approach to literary analysis
- Utopian novel study of Nicaragua
- Exploring how literature, film, and visual arts represent and shape humane attitudes toward nature
- Compare and contrast representations of nonhuman animals, plants, and elements in natural world
- Critical analysis
- Reflective writing
- Essay writing

- Creative activities
- Study themes related to nature, humanity, culture, imagination, ecocriticism, and identity
- Writing research papers
- Analysis of visual and written texts
- Collaborative projects
- Presentations

Appendix F: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, P2

- Vocabulary development
- Personal choice making and decision making
- Building consensus
- Applying group change strategies
- Critical literacy and media literacy
- Lobbying, boycotting, and advocacy
- Educating others
- Games, simulations, and role playing
- Solution-oriented project development
- Service learning
- Voting with your dollar
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Observation skills, active listening, verbal and written communication
- Community mapping, community development, auditing skills
- Student self-reflection
- Critical thinking, synthesis, and analysis
- Compassion, empathy, respect, empowerment, perseverance
- Research, note-taking, interviewing, and presentation skills
- Citizenship and democracy
- Social-emotional intelligence

Appendix G: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, P3

- Exploring enduring understandings and essential questions
- Journal writing and creating diaries
- Games and online gaming
- Labs and field experiences
- Design thinking process challenges
- Independent, self-designed research projects
- Dialogue, discussion, and debate
- Critical literacy and critical media literacy
- Action-oriented projects
- Reflective writing
- Exploring learning centers
- Internet research, note taking, assessing and citing sources
- Collaboration, communication,
- Critical thinking and creative thinking
- Empathy development and ethical decision making
- Innovation
- Systems thinking
- Goal setting and attainment

Appendix H: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, P4

- Global citizenship and life-long learning
- Critical literacy and media literacy
- Solution-oriented project development
- Games and simulations
- Application of technology
- Collaborative learning
- Autonomy, accountability, self-advocacy
- Self-directed learning
- Gratitude and humility
- Executive functioning skills
- Goal setting and attainment
- Inspired learning
- Action projects, apprenticeships, field experiences
- Honesty, self-awareness, and responsibility
- Dialogue, discussion, communication
- Calculated risk taking
- Conflict resolution, relationship building
- Blogging
- Digital portfolio development
- Student reflection and feedback

Appendix I: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, P5

- Journalism
- Research
- Collecting data
- Use of graphic organizers
- Exploring websites
- Creating art-based products to show learning (posters, flyers)
- Article writing
- Informational and action-oriented projects
- Reflection
- Collaboration
- Critical reading, viewing, and writing for social change
- Design-oriented projects
- Gallery walks
- Quizzes
- Homework
- Student self-reflection.

Appendix J: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, P6

- Reading short fiction and novels
- Viewing films
- Critical discussion and dialogue
- Narrative writing
- Personal narrative writing
- Portfolio development
- Theme-based argument writing
- Informational writing
- Drama studies and modernizing drama
- Reading nonfiction news articles
- Poetry
- Author studies
- Independent reading
- Reading comprehension work
- Comparing and contrasting through written expression
- Reading memoirs

Appendix K: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, P7

- Critical dialogue and discussion
- Think-pair-share
- Critical appraisal of visuals, written text, and films
- Guided visualization
- Reading fiction and nonfiction text
- Writing within the nonfiction, fiction, and letter writing genres
- Use of graphic organizers
- Vocabulary development
- Questioning techniques
- Games, role play, and acting experiences
- Collaborative learning experiences
- Research through real-world data collection
- Exploring personal beliefs, attitudes, perspectives, and worldview
- Articulating personal philosophy and humane messages
- Art-integrated activities
- Service learning
- Gallery walks
- Empathy-building exercises
- Observation activities
- Student self-reflection and debriefing experiences

Appendix L: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, P8

- Exploring enduring understandings and essential questions
- Reading comprehension and literary analysis
- Primary source analysis, critical perspective analysis quote analysis
- Critical pedagogy and multicultural understanding
- Document based question analysis
- Model United Nations experience
- Creating scripts and oral history project
- Research skills and hypothesis generating and testing
- Critical literacy and critical media literacy
- Active reading and comprehension development
- Analytical essay writing related to theme analysis
- Compare and contrast essay writing
- Communication and presentation skills
- Application of geography skills and mapping
- Collaboration
- Connecting literature to historic context
- Understanding and applying stylistic devices in literature
- Ability to convey meaning through performance and exhibitions of work
- Social action projects
- Use of web tools and wiki projects

Appendix M: Pedagogical Skill Development and Learning Activities, P9

- Accessing accurate information
- Nurturing curiosity, creativity, critical thinking
- Inspiring reverence, respect, responsibility
- Positive decision making and solution finding
- Application of systems thinking
- Seeing interconnection
- Inquiry-based learning
- Zone of proximal development
- Failure as opportunity for learning and growth
- Critical pedagogy
- Experiential learning
- Social-emotional learning
- Relationship building
- Interdisciplinary and thematic approaches
- Confrontation as opportunity for growth and development
- Most good, least harm decision making
- Activist-solutionary learning
- Developing compassionate solutions to local and global issues
- Observing natural habitats
- Nature writing

- Gratitude journals
- Hands-on learning
- Sensory explorations
- Critiquing gender stereotyping